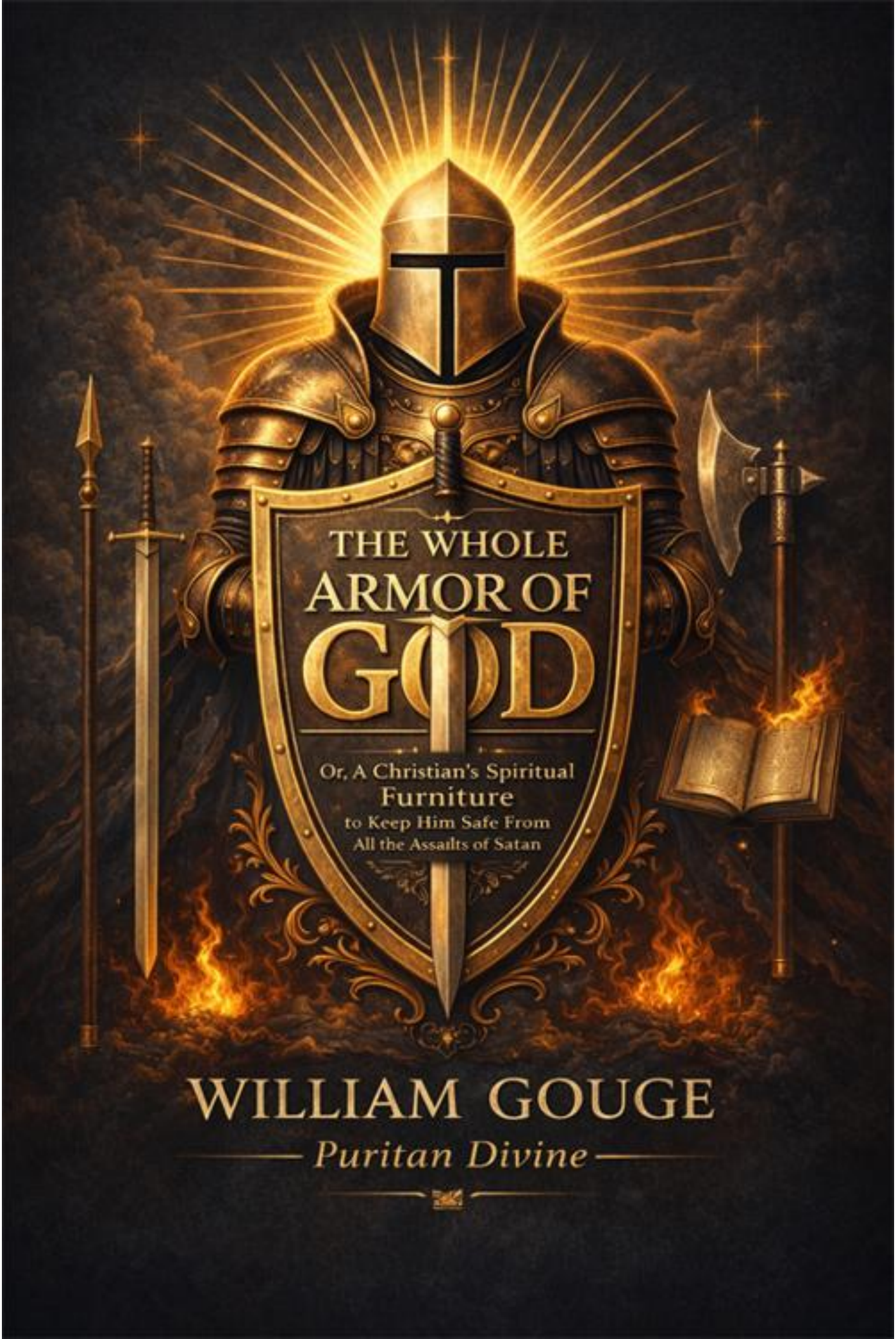

THE WHOLE
ARMOR OF
GOD
Or, A Christian's Spiritual
Furniture
to Keep Him Safe From
All the Assaults of Satan
WILLIAM GOUGE
Puritan Divine

# The Whole Armor of God:

Or A Christian's Spiritual Furniture to Keep Him Safe from All the Assaults of Satan.

The Second Edition Corrected and Enlarged:

To Which Is Added a Treatise of the Sin Against the Holy Ghost.

By William Gouge

Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

Printed in London by John Beale, 1619.

**Table of Contents**

[To the Right Honourable Sir Sebastian Harvey]

[To the Right Honourable, Right Worshipful, and Other My Beloved Parishioners]

An Advertisement to the Reader

The First Treatise: Of arming a Christian Soldier.

-- The First Part: Of the fountain of Christian courage.

-- The Second Part: The means of standing sure.

-- The Third Part: The reason why we must be well armed.

-- The Fourth Part: A repetition of the means.

The Second Treatise: Of the Particular Pieces of Armour

-- The First Part: The Duty of Those Who Have These Pieces.

-- The Second Part: The Kinds of the Pieces of Armour Prescribed.

-- The Third Part: Girdle of Truth.

-- The Fourth Part: Breastplate of Righteousness.

-- The Fifth Part: Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

-- The Sixth Part: The Shield of Faith.

-- The Seventh Part: The Helmet of Hope.

-- The Eighth Part: The Sword of the Spirit.

The Third Treatise: Of the Means to Use Spiritual Armour Aright.

-- The First Part: Of Prayer in General.

-- The Second Part: The Kinds of Prayer.

-- The Third Part: The Time of Prayer.

-- The Fourth Part: The Ground of Prayer.

-- The Fifth Part: The Help of Prayer.

-- The Sixth Part:. The means of prevailing by Prayer.

-- The Seventh Part: The Persons for Whom Prayer Is to Be Made.

An Analysis or Resolution of a Declaration Which Christ Made of the Sin Against the Holy Ghost:

-- The First Part: A Treatise of the Sin Against the Holy Ghost.

-- The Second Part: Of God's Justice.

--

# To the Right Honourable Sir Sebastian

# Harvey,

Knight, Lord Mayor of the Honourable City of London, and to the Right Worshipful Aldermen and Sheriffs his Brethren, and to the Right Worshipful Mr. Recorder, together with the whole estate of the said City, all true happiness.

Right Honourable, Right Worshipful,

Your Honour and Worships, being (by the good guiding providence of God) the General, Captains, and Lieutenants of this metropolis, this chief city and castle of the kingdom, wherein (by the same Providence) I am (though one of the meanest, yet) one of the watchmen; to whom ought I rather to present these fruits of my watchman's function, than unto your Honour and Worships? As duty in regard of your places, so gratefulness also in regard of your kindnesses, requires as much. My father, grandfather, and other predecessors, have of old from time to time been beholden to this Honourable City: the kindness which they formerly received, is still continued to me. Which as I do with all humble thankfulness acknowledge, so from my heart I desire the Almighty to remember your Honour and Worships, together with the whole estate of this Honourable City, in goodness, and not to wipe out the kindness which is shown to the ministers of His Word, and to poor distressed people. Long has the Gospel been purely, powerfully, plentifully preached in this Honourable City, and great countenance and maintenance has by many therein been given thereunto. Good orders

have within these later years been taken for the better sanctifying of the Lord's Sabbath. Much relief is from time to time given to the poor. These and such like works of piety and charity, are the beauty, honour, strength, and wealth of this city. I deny not, but that in the outward political government of this great corporation, and the many several companies therein, London may be accounted the glory of the earth. But the things which make it exceed in glory, are the fair houses of prayer and preaching the Word; the great assemblies of God's people frequenting the same to worship God; the spacious hospitals and places of charity, together with the liberal provision therein made for the relief of poor children and orphans, of aged and impotent men and women, of lame and maimed soldiers, and of many other like succourless persons; the thrones of justice and judgment, with the like, wherein London may be compared to Zion, the City of God, whereof great and excellent things are spoken. Right Honourable and Right Worshipful, go on this way, (which is the only right way) to procure the peace and prosperity of your city. Let the ministry of God's Word be more and more promoted; let the Lord's Sabbaths have their due observations, let the poor be relieved, and the oppressed be succoured; let profane persons and all evil doers (the enemies of Christian Policies) be punished: In a word, let God's ordinances be advanced, and right judgment executed, and so shall London be accounted the City of the Great King, where He will delight to dwell, and bestow His blessing. For in these things is God highly honoured: Now God, who can and will perform it, has said it; "Them that honour me, will I honour." It lies much in the power of magistrates to procure or hinder the blessing of God in those cities

and places over which they are set. For they being public persons, their good deeds are by the wise God publicly rewarded, and their evil deeds publicly revenged. Right Honourable and Right Worshipful, accept, I pray you, the duty, and pardon the boldness of your watchman. And, O Lord of Lords, do good to this city of Thine, continue the peace and prosperity thereof: so prays

Your Honours and Worships in all duty forever bounden, William Gouge.

# To the Right Honourable,

Right Worshipful, and Other My Beloved Parishioners, Inhabitants of the Precinct of Blackfriars London, Grace in Christ.

Right Honourable, Right Worshipful, Beloved,

Among the many great blessings which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on me, his poor servant, unworthy of the least, I count this to be a high favour: that he has put me in his service and appointed me to be one of the ministers of his word. Basely is this calling accounted of by the greater and common sort of people; but my conscience bears me witness that I receive such contentment therein, and hold myself so honoured thereby, as I prefer it to all other callings, and am provoked thereby to give some evidence of my thankful acceptance thereof. Which better I know not how to do than by employing and improving to my poor power, the talent which my Master has committed to my charge. I am not ignorant of how insufficient I am for it, and that not only in regard of the greatness of the work (to which who is sufficient?) but also in comparison of other ministers, whom God in great number has raised up in these our days. Yet withal I know that the great Master accepted the employment of two talents as well as of five; yes, if he that received but one talent, had employed it, even he also should have been

accepted. For God, the righteous judge, neither exacts nor expects more than he gives. If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not. This is what moves me, as by preaching, so also by publishing some part of my labours in print, to seek the edification of God's church. I account preaching the most principal part of my function: for this is Christ's charge, "Go preach the Gospel"; and this is that ordinance wherein and whereby God does ordinarily, and most especially manifest his own power, and bestow his blessing. This is therefore what hitherto I have most attended upon, and intend to continue as long as God shall afford me ability and liberty. Yet I doubt not but God's people do also receive much benefit by sundry treatises in diverse kinds published in print. For as preaching is of power especially to work upon the affections, so printing may be one especial means to inform the judgement. For what is printed lies by a man, and may again and again be read, and thoroughly pondered, till a man comes to conceive the very depth of what he reads. Besides, herein is a great benefit of printing, that the gifts and pains of God's servants are made much more common than otherwise they could be; hereby we partake of the labours of those who have lived in former times or in other countries, and whom we could never have heard speak. Now a good thing, the more common it is, the better it is. It cannot be denied but that knowledge and learning have wonderfully increased by the benefit of printing. Whereas there is a common complaint against the multitude of books, it is for the most part against idle and evil books, or else an unjust complaint. If it be said that there can nothing be written but what has been written

before, I answer, that though it should be true in regard of the sum and substance of matters, yet in regard of a more full opening, a more perspicuous delivering, a more evident proving, a more powerful urging and pressing of points, a more fit applying of them to present occasions, more and more may be, and daily is added by sundry authors, whereby the church of God is much edified. But may not the same argument be alleged against preaching? And do not many allege it? However, some, too enviously minded, censure the means which God in mercy has afforded for the building up of the body of Christ Jesus, my desire is every way to do what good I can; and therefore I have been bold to commit to your eyes and reading, some part of that which I have heretofore commended to your ears and hearing. I do now make a trial of my pains in this kind: if I shall observe that God's church reaps any benefit thereby, I shall be encouraged to take more pains hereafter, as I shall find any leisure. I am the servant of Christ, and of his church; so long as my life, health, strength, liberty, or any ability is by the good providence of God preserved unto me, my desire is to spend it in the service of Christ, and of his church. Among others, I especially entreat you (my beloved parishioners and auditors, of whatever rank or degree you be) to interpret in the best part, and with the best mind to accept these my endeavours; whereby, though I have aimed at a more general good, than I could by preaching (hoping that many whom I never knew, nor saw, may reap some benefit by my pains) yet especially I intend your good, whose proper and peculiar minister I am, and for whose souls I watch, as he that must give an account. In this trial which I make of publishing some of my meditations, I begin

with the last part of my labours, because they are freshest in your memories that heard them preached, and contain points more largely discussed, and, as I take it, of greater use than any other, which throughout the course of my ministry I have handled. For the time of our life being a time of war, a time wherein our spiritual enemies (who are many, mighty, malicious, sedulous, and subtle) put forth their strength, and bestir themselves to the utmost that possibly they can, "Seeking whom to devour", what can be more behoveful, than to discover their cunning stratagems and wiles, to declare wherein their strength lies, to furnish Christ's soldiers with complete armour and sufficient defence, and to show how our enemies may be disappointed of their hopes, and we stand fast against all their assaults? This is the scope of this treatise. The analysis and tables which I have caused to be set before and after the book, do point out the several and distinct points contained therein, so as I need not here make any repetition of them. I have laboured to be as perspicuous and brief as I could, in handling so weighty matters. I have in many places delivered no more than the heads of such points as I largely handled in delivering them out of the pulpit: which any may well conjecture to be so, that shall know that the substance of almost a hundred several sermons is contained in this treatise. My desire for brevity moved me to refer the quotation of most places of scripture unto the margin, and to leave the text to be searched out by the reader, which I wish thee to do as thy leisure will permit thee. To conclude, I commend this treatise to your diligent reading, and favourable acceptance, myself to your Christian prayers, and all of us to the good grace of God, and rest

Your servant in the Lord's work, William Gouge.

# An Advertisement to the Reader

Christian Reader,

The good reception which this treatise of The Whole Armor of God has found among God's people emboldens me again to publish the same. It is substantially the same as you had before; for I find no just cause to alter any part of its substance. Only here and there, something has been added to make certain points that seemed too concise and obscure more clear.

Some readers, upon finding the topic of Fasting in the table of contents, expected a distinct and more extensive discourse on that point. When they did not find it (as I only briefly touched on it as an aid to Prayer), they requested me to expand on it. To their good suggestion, I have agreed and, according to my modest abilities and limited leisure, have more thoroughly addressed the very needful but too often neglected duty of Fasting.

I was further informed that the topic of not praying for those who sin against the Holy Ghost could greatly trouble the consciences of some unless they were informed about the nature of that sin. Therefore, I have been prompted to annex a treatise concerning that sin. In discussing it, to prevent Satan from taking advantage upon weak consciences, from the fearful consequences thereof, to exclude

themselves or others (who have not committed that sin) from all hope of pardon, I have, following in the steps and path where Jesus Christ has led, balanced the severity of God's justice in affording no pardon for that sin with the richness of His mercy, offering pardon for all other sins. Thus, this treatise provides more matter for hope and comfort than for fear and despair.

In this edition, for your assistance, there are more distinctions of various points than before. What was previously presented as one treatise is now divided into three separate treatises, and the addition of the Treatise on the Sin Against the Holy Ghost makes a fourth.

These various treatises are also divided into their distinct parts and further subdivided into several sections, above each of which the summary and main point of the matter handled is set. This not only provides greater clarity for better understanding but also offers a convenient way to locate the various points contained in this book.

A table of all these divisions and the distinct heads of each is set before the book so that, if you please, you may at once take a brief overview of all.

What I have especially aimed at for you is your spiritual edification. What I earnestly desire from you is the help of your faithful prayers. Pray for me,

The servant of Christ, and of His Church, W. G.

# The Whole Armor of God

## The First Treatise:

Of Arming a Christian Soldier

## The First Part:

The Fountain of Christian Courage

> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. - Ephesians 6:10

§ 1. The Sum and Several Heads

Saint Paul, having delivered such doctrines of faith and precepts of manners (both general concerning all Christians, and particular concerning the distinct degrees of several persons in a family) as he thought most appropriate, in the closing up of his Epistle, gives a worthy direction for the better performing of them all; which is, to be

courageous and well-furnished against all those difficulties and dangers with which they are likely to meet in their Christian course. Well knew the Apostle that the best Christians, while here they live in this world, are both prone to faint by reason of their own weakness, and also in hazard to be foiled by reason of their enemies' power; therefore, he takes upon him the person of a wise, vigilant, and valiant Captain; and in soldier-like terms animates the Lord's Soldiers, that they neither faint in themselves nor be daunted by their enemies.

This Direction is continued from verse 10 to 21.

The parts of it are two:

1. That we be courageous, verse 10.
2. That we be well prepared: v. 11, etc. In the former note,
3. The manner
4. The matter of the Apostle's exhortation. The manner is in these words, "Finally, my brethren."

The matter in these, "Be strong in the Lord, etc."

In the latter note,

1. The Means, how

2. The Motive, why we must be well prepared. The means is to be well-armed, which point is first in general laid down: and then in particular exemplified.

The general is once declared, verse 11, and again, (because of the necessity thereof) repeated verse 13, and in both places amplified by the end.

In the particular exemplification, there are six spiritual graces, fitly resembled to six pieces of armour.

Now because of ourselves, we are as children, and no better able to wield this Armour of God, than David the armour of Saul, the Apostle adds that heavenly exercise of prayer, teaching them how to pray for themselves and others: especially for him who was one of their chief guides.

The Motive is taken from the danger, in which we are by reason of our spiritual enemies, whom he describes verse 12. Almost every word in this Direction is of weight and worthy to be searched into.

## §2. The Necessity of the Point

The first point in order is the manner of the Apostle's exhortation, which sets forth:

1. The necessity of the thing urged, "Finally."

2. The affection of the one urging it, "my brethren."

The original word translated as "finally" signifies a remainder and implies that there still remained one necessary point to be delivered before concluding, as if he had said with more words: Though I have sufficiently instructed you in doctrines of faith and precepts of manners, there is one needful point left behind. Without this, all will be in vain. There is still a remainder, the only remainder of all, by which you may make good use of all that has been delivered.

[Use] Is this direction so necessary? A point that cannot be omitted? Worthy of the last place, as most of all to be remembered? Then we ought to pay even more attention to it, lest we should let it slip. In hearing, we must heed it well; after we have heard it, we must keep it well and not let it slip like water put into a colander or split dish.

## § 3. The Apostle's Affection

To urge this point yet somewhat more forcefully, the Apostle next manifests his affection in these words, "My brethren," which declare both the humility of his mind and the gentleness of his spirit.

"Brother" is a word of equality: in calling them brethren, he makes himself equal to them, though he himself was one of the principal members of Christ's body, one of the eyes thereof, a Minister of the Word, an extraordinary Minister, an Apostle, a spiritual Father of many souls, a planter of many famous Churches, yea, the planter of this Church at Ephesus; and though many of them to whom he wrote

were poor, mean men, handicraftsmen, such as laboured with their hands for their living; and many also servants and bondmen; yet without exception of any, he terms and counts them all his brethren, and so makes himself equal to those of the lower sort. Behold his humility: For if to affect titles of superiority, as Rabbi, Doctor, Father, be a note of arrogance (as it is, and therefore Christ in that respect taxes the Scribes and Pharisees), then to take and give titles of equality is a note of humility. The like notes of humility may be often noted both in other Epistles of this Apostle and in the Epistles of other Apostles; yea, and in all the Prophets also.

Well they knew, that notwithstanding there were diverse offices, places, and outward degrees among Christians: yet they all had one Father, and were fellow members of one and the same body, and in regard of their spiritual estate all one in Christ Jesus.

[Use] Take my brethren the Prophets, take the Apostles, yea, take Christ himself for an example of humility. For Christ, though He were Lord of all, yet for as much as He took part with us, and so all were of one, He was not ashamed to call us brethren. Who then can disdain to call any Saint brother? This point of humility and meekness Christ wills us after an especial manner to learn of Him. It is a grace which will highly grace us before God and man. It makes us amiable in God's eyes, who gives grace to the lowly; and it makes our company very acceptable to men. A humble-minded man who makes himself equal to those of the lower sort, and accounts all his brethren, will be sociable and willing to converse with any for their

mutual good. But proud and ambitious spirits are full of scorn and disdain, so as men cannot well endure their company, and God will resist them. Wherefore, to conclude this point, whatever your parts of nature or gifts of God's Spirit be, whatever your place or calling be, whatever excellency or eminency you have above others, remember that all Saints have one Father, all are of one body, all are one in Christ, therefore, all account one another brethren. Let magistrates, ministers, and all of all sorts apply this.

[Use 2] As for such profane persons who deride the Saints for giving this title brethren one to another, do they not through those Saints' sides strike the Prophets, the Apostles, yea, and Christ Himself?

Note further the gentle and mild spirit of the Apostle; "Brethren" is a title of kindness and love: "My," an attribute which adds emphasis thereunto. In other places, he uses other attributes, which add greater emphasis, as "My beloved brethren," "My brethren beloved and longed for." So likewise, other phrases which imply as great meekness and gentleness, as "My little children," "My beloved children," etc.

It was not a want of authority to command that made him thus gently exhort, but rather an earnest desire that he had to persuade, and even provoke them to do that which was their bounden duty and tended to their good. Mark how he deals with Philemon, verse 9, 10, 20, by this meekness he insinuates himself into them and shows that

he seeks not himself and his own good so much as them and their good.

[Use] Learn ministers, masters, parents, and all Christians how to enforce your exhortations and persuasions: even with evidence of love, with all mildness and gentleness. ("The servants of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle toward all men.") Thus shall you give them a pleasant savor and sweet relish, yea though the things whereunto you exhort be unpleasing to men's natural taste and carnal appetite. When fulsome potions or bitter pills are sweetened with sugar, they will the sooner be swallowed and better digested: so exhortations seasoned with terms of mildness and gentleness.

Thus much for the manner of the Apostle's direction.

## § 4. The Need of Christian Courage

The matter follows, the first part of which is in these words, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might"; wherein note, first, what is required, secondly, how that which is required may be performed.

The thing required is to be strong. The Apostle here speaks of an inward spiritual strength, the strength of the inward and new man, and his meaning is that we should be valorous and courageous in the performance of those Christian duties which we take in hand.

Christian valor and spiritual courage is a needful grace. Note with what variety of phrase the Apostle does exhort hereunto, 1 Cor. 16:13. "Stand fast, quit you like men, be strong": hereunto God persuades His servant Joshua, and David, his son Solomon. David had in him this holy valor and courage when he went against Goliath, and Paul when he was going to Jerusalem. But most valorous and strong did Christ our Captain show Himself, when He was going up to Jerusalem to suffer. The Evangelist says, He steadfastly set His face, He settled Himself fully to go: though it was to drink a most bitter cup, He would not be drawn from it. Because Peter labored to dissuade Him, He sharply rebuked him, and called him Satan.

The reasons why this spiritual valor is so needful are especially two.

First, because of our own indisposition, timorousness, dullness, and backwardness to all holy and good duties. What Christian finds not this by woeful experience in himself? When he would pray, hear God's word, partake of the Sacraments, sanctify the Sabbath, or perform any other like Christian duty, there is I know not what fearfulness in him, his flesh hangs back, as a bear when it is drawn to the stake. This the holy Apostle found in himself: so that for the rousing up of our own dullness we have need of valor.

Secondly, because of those many oppositions which we are likely to meet withal. We heard before how the flesh would hang back, and so labor to hinder us. The world will likewise do what it can, either by vain enticements to seduce us (as it drew away Demas), or else by

reproach, trouble, and persecution, to terrify us (as those who forsook Paul). But above all the Devil will be ready to resist us (as he resisted Joshua) and to hinder us (as he hindered Paul), yea to buffet us (as he buffeted the same Paul). To omit other instances, most lively is this set forth in our Head and General, Christ Jesus. As soon as He was set apart to His public ministry, the Tempter came to Him: after He began to execute it, Satan stirred up the Rulers, Priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and many others to hinder Him; yea, He moved Peter to dissuade Him, and when Christ was about to offer up Himself a sacrifice, then again came the Prince of this world to discourage Him. The like oppositions are all Christ's members to look for; so as there is no hope, no possibility of holding out and enduring to the end without this Christian valor and magnanimity here spoken of.

[Use 1] Justly may they be taxed, who either too timorously or too securely and carelessly enter into a Christian course and undertake such Christian duties as are required at their hands. Hence it comes to pass that many duties are completely omitted by them, others intermitted and broken off before they are half done: and as for those which are done, so untowardly are they done, that little or no comfort can be found in doing them. Lamentable experience shows how small matters do discourage many who know the right way and are often in conscience moved to walk therein.

Such as lack this Christian courage would be better not giving up their names to be Christ's Soldiers, or profess that they intend to

fight the Lord's battles: for by their timorousness and cowardliness they discourage other Soldiers of the Lord and hearten the enemy. The Lord would not suffer any that were fearful and fainthearted to fight His battles on earth against earthly enemies, lest they made others faint like themselves. Can we think that He will entertain fainthearted soldiers in His spiritual battles against spiritual enemies, in which combats His own honor, and His children's salvation are so deeply engaged?

As for the Enemy, he is like a wolf; if strongly resisted, he will flee; if timorously yielded unto, he will more eagerly pursue and insult.

[Use 2] Endeavour we therefore to get unto ourselves a holy courage and spiritual valor, shaking off our natural fearfulness, that in nothing we fear our adversaries, but (as Christ our General did) endure the cross, and despise the shame. We that will be Christ's soldiers must duly consider the advice which our Lord gives, Luke 14:31, which is, to observe what kind of enemies, how many, how mighty, we are to encounter withal. We shall hereafter hear how hard a battle we are to undertake, how many, mighty, malicious, subtle our enemies be: if notwithstanding all this we be minded to fight under Christ's banner, then be we strong and courageous, bold as lions; so are the righteous.

## § 5. All Strength from God

But alas, what are we, weak flesh and blood? What strength can there be in us to fight against such enemies as will set upon us?

For removing this scruple, the Apostle adds this clause, "in the Lord, etc.", whereby he shows how we come to be strong, not by any strength in ourselves, but by seeking strength in the Lord, casting ourselves wholly and only on Him, and on His power.

The strength and valor whereby we are enabled to fight the Lord's battle is hidden in the Lord and to be had from Him. For all our sufficiency is of God; without Christ, we can do nothing. Hence it is that David says unto God, "I love thee dearly, O Lord my strength: The Lord is my rock and fortress," etc.

It is more evident than needs be proved that our Apostle was a strong and valiant champion of the Lord; but whence had he this strength? "I am able," says he, "to do all things through the help of Christ which strengthens me." That which in particular he says of himself, he also affirms of other Saints, who were strengthened with all might through God's glorious power.

The Lord has thus reserved all strength in Himself, and would have us strong in Him: partly for His own glory, and partly for our comfort.

1. For His glory, that in time of need we might fly unto Him, and in all straits cast ourselves on Him; and being preserved and delivered, acknowledge Him our Saviour, and accordingly give Him the whole praise.

2. For our comfort, that in all distresses we might be the more confident. Much more bold may we be in the Lord than in ourselves. God's power being infinite, it is impossible that it should be matched by any adverse power, which at the greatest is finite: were our strength in ourselves, though for a time it might seem somewhat sufficient, yet would there be fear of decay: but being in God, we rest upon an omnipotency, and so have a far surer prop unto our faith, as we shall hear in the next Doctrine.

[Use 1] Learn we to renounce all confidence in ourselves, and to acknowledge our own inability and weakness. Thus shall we be brought to seek help out of ourselves. Those who overween themselves, and conceive that they are sufficiently able to help themselves, will be so far from seeking strength that they will foully scorn it when it is offered unto them. Mark what is said of the wicked man, who is proud in his own conceit, "He contemneth the Lord": as he that is full despiseth a honeycomb, so he that is confident in his own strength, despises help from any other.

[Use 2] Having seen our own weakness, and thereupon renounced all confidence in ourselves, our care must be to fly to a sure ground and rest thereon; so shall we be safe and sure, yea so may we be quiet and secure. This sure ground and safe rock is only the Lord: strong He is in Himself, and can both strengthen us and weaken our enemies. In this confidence did David come against Goliath and prevailed. Thus

may we be sure of victory: "Through God we are more than conquerors."

[Use 3] But vain is the confidence of such as, trusting to themselves and their own strength, defy all their enemies. Proud boasters they are, whose pride at length shall have a fall. Such, in regard of outward power, were Goliath and Sennacherib. Intolerable is this presumption, even in outward strength: note their end, 1 Sam. 17:50 & Isa. 37:36-38. But more than most intolerable in spiritual strength, whereof we have not one dram in ourselves, but in that respect are as water spilled upon the ground. Peter was too confident therein: had he not seen his presumption after he began to be puffed up, and speedily humbled himself, fearful had been the issue thereof: for nothing more provokes God than spiritual pride, because nothing is more derogatory to His glory.

Vain also is their confidence who go from weak to weak, from themselves to other creatures; like the Israelites, who went to the Egyptians for help. Fitly does the Prophet compare them to a reed, whereupon if one lean, it breaks and rents his arm. Such are the silly Papists, among whom some think to be strong in Pope Gregory, Pope Boniface, Pope Alexander, and such others, whom without breach of charity we may think to be very fiends in hell: other in Saint George, Saint Christopher, and such other who never were: the histories of them are mere fictions: others (who think they have a far surer ground of confidence) in Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and such like holy and worthy Saints: but the best Saints that ever were had no

strength to help others; they only had a sufficiency for themselves. Thus it comes to pass, that in their greatest need, when they seek and look for the best help, they are all like those who came to the wells and found no water: they returned with their vessels empty: they were ashamed and confounded and covered their heads.

## § 6. God's Power Most Mighty

That we may be the more moved to renounce all vain confidence in ourselves or other creatures, and be bold, valiant, and strong in the Lord, casting our whole confidence in Him alone, the Apostle adds these next words ("in the power of His might") which are a very forceful amplification of this former point. Some distinguish these two words, power and might, as the cause and effect, attributing might to God, and power to the Saints, and so make God's might the cause of their power, as if he had said, be strong in that power which you receive from the might of God. But I take this distinction here to be, firstly, too curious, and without good ground; secondly, impertinent, because that which the Apostle aims at is to raise up our faith to God, and to settle it firmly in Him, and therefore he sets forth the power of God, as it is in God Himself; thirdly, not agreeable to the phrase, which is the same in this clause as in the former, "in the Lord, & in the power, &c.", which implies that the power here spoken of, is a power in the Lord, and that as the Lord Himself is without us, and above us, so is this power. The phrase therefore which the Apostle here uses, I take to be a Hebraism, which some for perspicuity's sake translate thus, "in His mighty power", and not

unfitly. This very phrase is used before, and by most translated "his mighty power": this Hebraism "power of might", adds great emphasis, and implies, that might by an excellency and propriety belongs to God's power only; and that all other power in comparison of it, is mere weakness.

The point hence to be noted is this, that

The power of God whereunto we are to trust, is a most mighty and strong power, a power able to protect us against the might of all adverse power whatsoever. In this respect, the Apostle calls God's power, "an exceeding greatness of power". He searches after rare and high phrases to set forth this power of God, because of the infinite greatness thereof, which cannot by ordinary and usual phrases be expressed.

According to God's greatness is His power, infinite, incomprehensible, inutterable, inconceivable: as a mighty wind which drives all before it; as a swift and strong stream against which none can swim; as a burning flaming fire which consumes and devours all; so is God's power. Whatsoever stands before it, and is opposed against it, is but as chaff before a strong wind, or bulrushes before a swift current, or stubble before a flaming fire; for all adverse power, though to our weakness it seems never so mighty, yet can it be but finite, being the power of creatures, and so a limited power, yea, a dependent power, subordinate to this power of might, of His might, who is Almighty, and so no proportion between them.

[Use 1] A strong prop is this unto our faith, and a good motive to make us perfectly trust unto the power of God without wavering or doubting, notwithstanding our own weakness, or our adversaries' power: though there be no strength in us, yet is there power in God: though we be on every side environed with strong and fierce enemies, our flesh and the violent lusts thereof, as headstrong rebels and traitors within us; the furious world, with the potent and raging persecutors thereof, on one side; that fierce Lion and cruel Dragon the Devil, with all his hellish host, on the other side; yea all these banding their forces together continually in arms against us, yet is there in God a power of might, in comparison whereof all the power of all our adversaries is but weakness. When we know not what to do, then may we, then must we with faithful Jehoshaphat turn our eyes to God, and to the power of His might. When we see potent enemies against us, and no outward means to defend us against them, we are ready to cry, "Alas how shall we do?" and with the Israelites to doubt of the power of God, and say, "Can God help in such straits? Can He support such weaklings as we are? Can He subdue such and such enemies as assault us?" Against such doubts, we are to meditate on this mighty power of God. God's power being a power of might, He needs nothing to help Him. The weaker we are, the more is His power manifested: for it is made perfect in weakness: neither can God's power be weakened or hindered by any adverse power. Many and mighty enemies are to Him a few and weak ones: so that the more mighty His enemies be, the more honor redounds to Him in subduing them. Wherefore for strengthening our faith, that we may be strong in the Lord, pray we that God would open our eyes, that we

may see what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe: so shall we neither fear because of our enemies' power, nor faint because of our own weakness, but stand still and behold the salvation of God.

[Use 2] It is no matter of presumption to be sure of victory, being strong in this mighty power. Indeed, if the ground of our assurance rested in, and on ourselves, it might justly be counted presumption; but the Lord, and the power of His might being the ground thereof, they either know not what is the might of His power, or else too too lightly esteem it, who account assured confidence thereon, presumption. No doubt but many so deemed of David's confidence when he undertook the combat with Goliath: yea, it is manifest that his eldest brother Eliab, and also Saul so judged: but David's eye was lifted up to God, he was strong in the power of God's might, which made him so bold and confident. Thus we with like confidence and assurance may trust unto the same mighty power, though all the world count us presumptuous for it. The truth is that our adversaries might well object this against us, if our confidence were in our own power, or rather weakness: but being in the power of God's might, unjustly they slander us, and most injuriously impeach God's mighty power.

## § 7. The Benefit of Confidence in God

To conclude this first general point of Christian courage and confidence in the Lord, and in the power of His might, great is the

benefit thereof, and that in three respects especially;

1. It will remove causeless fear, as in Nehemiah. Solomon says, that a slothful, timorous man is loath to step out of doors, fearing that there is a lion without, when he has no cause so to fear; and that "The wicked flee when none pursues." But he that is strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, will make the utmost trial.

2. It will make bold in apparent danger. Instance the example of David. In this respect, the righteous are resembled to a lion.

3. It will recover a man's spirit, though he should by any occasion be wounded, stricken down, and foiled, so as at first he prevails not, yet it will make him rise up again and renew the battle, like the Israelites:

Thus, at length, shall we come to be Conquerors.

## The Second Part:

The Means of Standing Sure

> "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against all the wiles of the Devil." - Ephesians 6:11

## §1. The Heads of Those Means

The second part of the Apostle's direction, which outlines how we may be well prepared against all danger, now follows.

Here, we first need to consider the means by which we can be prepared.

In discussing these means, the Apostle reveals:

1. What the means are.
2. How they are to be used.

The means are represented using the metaphor of "Armor."

This Armor is further described by:

1. Its nature, as the "Armor of God."
2. Its completeness, as the "whole armor."

§ 2. Christians are Soldiers

For the metaphor, it is taken from soldiers, who in time of war, when they enter the field against their enemies, are subject to much danger

and many annoyances of swords, spears, darts, arrows, bullets, and such like weapons of their enemies, and therefore for their better safeguard use to be well provided and fenced with good armour. In that the Apostle exhorts Christians to put on armour, he gives us to understand that,

A Christian's course of life is a warfare: for armour, especially the use of armour, is a token of war. Armour is not given to a man to sit with it at a fire, or to lie lazing on a bed, or wantonly to dance up and down, or follow pastimes and pleasures in it, but to fight. To this purpose, many like metaphors are used. Christians themselves are called soldiers; their course of life a fight; they which oppose against them enemies; the temptations wherewith they are annoyed assaults; in a word, this is a difference between the Church in Heaven and on earth, that this is militant, that triumphant.

Thus has God in wisdom disposed of our estate on earth for weighty reasons.

1. The more to manifest His pity, power, providence, and truth in keeping promise: the straits whereunto in this world we are brought, the promises which God has made to deliver us, and the many deliverances which we have, show that God pities us in our distresses, that He is provident and careful for our good, and wise in disposing of evil to good, that He is able to deliver us, and faithful in doing it. For this cause did God suffer the

Israelites to go into Egypt, to be there kept in hard bondage, to be brought into many dangers, and set upon by many enemies.

2. To make proof of the gifts He bestows on His children. A soldier's valor is not known but in war: in time of peace what difference is seen between a valorous man, and a timorous coward? By that sore combat whereunto Job was brought, were the graces which God had bestowed on him evidently made known.

3. To wean them the better from this world: for so long as all things are quiet in the world, without troubles, oppositions, and assaults, we are exceedingly prone to delight in it, and to say, "It is good to be here." Much prosperity makes many to be like that fool that bid his soul live at ease, etc.

4. To make Heaven the more longed for while we are on earth, and the more acceptable when we come to possess it. How earnestly does the soldier in tedious and dangerous combats desire victory? How welcome is triumph after war? As a safe haven to mariners tossed up and down in troublesome seas, is most welcome; so Heaven to Christians, whose life in this world is a warfare, a sea-fare.

[Use 1] Is our Christian estate a soldier-like estate, a warfare? Accordingly, let us carry ourselves; a little sleep, a little food is enough for a soldier, he lies not on beds of down, he pampers not his body with delicate fare: but he watches much, he fares hard, and lies

hard. Thus, Christians may not suffer themselves to be overtaken with the vain delights and pleasures of this world. Note what the Apostle says of a Christian soldier, "No man that warreth entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Those having this armour think to take their ease, follow their pleasures, embrace the world, they pervert the main end of it: for it is given to stand and to resist; which if they do not, unworthy they are of armour, and shall be cashiered. Ease and rest is not here to be looked for, but rather temptations and assaults which we must watch against, and when one conflict is past, look for another, and resist all as they come: of all things, we must take heed of security, and provide that at any time we be not unfurnished: read the history of the people of Laish, and make a spiritual application thereof.

Thus much for the Metaphor.

## § 3. The Use of Spiritual Graces

Consider we now what is meant thereby. It is evident by the Apostle's exemplification hereof, that such spiritual sanctifying graces as God endows His Saints withal are the armour here meant. In that these are compared to armour, observe that

The graces of God's Spirit are for safeguard and defence. This is the main and principal end of armour, as the Apostle himself in this, and in the 13th verse, plainly shows: for in both places expressly he says, that we must put on and take to us the whole armour of God for this

very end, to stand against, and to resist our enemies. Thus, righteousness as a breastplate, hope as a helmet, faith as a shield, all for defence, as we shall after more distinctly show: in the meantime, let this general observation be noted, both by such as yet have none of those graces, and also by such as have them, or at least think they have them.

[Use 1] For the first sort, with what care and diligence are they to desire and seek after them, being so needful and necessary? What rest can they give unto their souls, till they have obtained them? Would we not count him a mad man, or at least weary of his life, who should rush naked without any armour into the field among his deadly enemies? What then may we judge of those that live in this world, among the mortal enemies of their souls, utterly destitute of all saving graces? How many thousands thus live, as it were, weary of their souls, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life?

[Use 2] For the other sort which have these graces, they are to use them for their defence, as armour is used, and not for ostentation. Armour is not given to jet up and down in it, and be proud of it, as many are of apparel. Let those who have no better gifts than such as are called parts of nature, as wit, strength, beauty, and the like, boast in them, if they list: these are like light, slight, gay stuffs, which make children and fools brag. God's graces are of a more sound and solid substance, and therefore to be used accordingly, and not made a matter of show and ostentation. Let this be noted by such as are

over-conceited, and so proud of their knowledge, faith, patience, and other graces.

## § 4. Christians' Armour Spiritual

Thus, having handled the Metaphor and the meaning thereof, we come to the amplification. The first point whereof is the kind of armour here set forth. It is called the armour of God, and that in four especial respects,

1. It is made by God, even in heaven.
2. It is prescribed by God, even in His Word.
3. It is given by God, even by His Spirit.
4. It is agreeable to God, even to His will. All these do show that,

The armour wherewith Christians are fenced is divine and spiritual. In this respect, says the Apostle, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal": by denying one contrary, he affirms the other: not carnal, that is, spiritual. The several pieces mentioned afterwards do evidently prove this point.

Our enemies are spiritual, and their assaults spiritual: must not then our armour needs be spiritual? What other armour can stand us in good stead against such enemies, such assaults? As good have a sheet of paper on our naked breasts to keep off a musket shot, as use any other armour than spiritual, against the spiritual assaults of spiritual enemies.

[Use 1] Hereby is discovered the egregious folly of many in fencing themselves against spiritual enemies: as

1. Of Conjurers, Sorcerers, and such like, who imagine that the Devil may be driven away by charms, and they kept safe from him by spells, circles, etc.

2. Of superstitious Papists, who think to drive the Devil away with Holy water, Holy oil, Crosses, Crucifixes, Agnus Dei, etc.

3. Of sottish worldlings, who seek to arm themselves against the spiritual assaults of Satan by outward means, as against grief of mind and terror of conscience, by music, company, gaming, etc. The truth is, that by these means great advantage many times is given to the Devil: for thus he gets a surer possession in them.

Not much unlike to these are they, who think by physic to purge away trouble of conscience: as soon may an Ague be purged away by drinking cold water. All these are very childish and ridiculous toys, mere scarecrows, which the Devil laughs at.

[Use 2] For our parts, seeing there is an armour of God, let us be wise in distinguishing between this and all counterfeit armour: for this end observe we diligently God's word which describes it, and that so plainly as we may easily discern it: we have no warrant to use any other: neither can we safely trust to any other. Having therefore found which is the armour of God, seek we it from above of the Father of lights, from whom it comes down, and it shall be given.

Having received it, give we the praise and glory thereof to Him that has given it, and use it according to His will, so may we confidently trust unto it.

## § 5. Christians' Armour Complete

The next point is the sufficiency of this armour, termed "whole armour." The Greek word is a compound word and signifies both all manner of armour that is needful, and also such complete armour as covers all the body, and leaves no part naked or undefended. This is thus set down both to commend unto us this armour, and also to instruct us how to use it. In the first respect, I observe that

The armour of God is a complete armour, every way sufficient: sufficient to defend us in every part, and sufficient to keep off and thrust back every assault and every dart of our spiritual enemies. For the first, if we well note the particular pieces of this armour hereafter described, we shall find the Christian soldier armed from top to toe. For the last, the Apostle says of one piece, that by it all the fiery darts of the wicked may be quenched: if by one piece, much more by every piece jointly together, may all assaults be repelled. Hence it is that the Scripture which prescribes this armour is able to make the man of God absolute.

This armour being of God, it must necessarily be complete, or else question might be made of His power, as if He were not able to provide sufficient armour; or of His providence, as if He cared not to have His soldiers well-armed; or of His goodness, as if He were not

moved with the wounds and foils of His servants, which for want of good armour they must necessarily receive: but God's power, providence, and goodness being without all defect, we may conclude that this armour of God is complete.

Never were any of the Saints so sufficiently armed: for the Devil has still found some part or other undefended, even in the best; and thereby wounded them. Instance Noah, Lot, Abraham, David, Peter, etc.

Answer. The fault was not in the insufficiency of their armour, but in the negligent and careless use thereof, as if a soldier which has very good armour of proof, every way complete, should either not at all, or very loosely put on his headpiece, or breastplate, or any other piece: and this is evident because in such parts where some were wounded, others were well fenced. Noah and some others failed in the use of their breastplate of righteousness: Peter failed in holding out his shield of faith. If the fault were in the armour, either in the weakness or want of this or that piece, then would the Devil without fail foil every Christian in one and the same part.

[Use 1] This sufficiency of God's armour ought to incite us diligently and carefully to seek after it. A soldier who is to go into a dangerous fight, if at least he has any care of his limbs and life, will not be quiet until he has got good and complete armour of proof. How careful was Saul to well furnish David when he was to enter combat with Goliath? Rather than he should want, Saul was ready to have

afforded him his own, if it had been fit. Look here is the complete armour of God, sufficient to keep us safe: let us first labor to get it.

[Use 2] Having got it, let us be bold and confident in this armour of God because it is of proof and complete. It was this armour that made David so confident against Goliath, though he had no outward armour on him. Those who are well-armed and yet faint-hearted dishonor Him that gave them their armour, abuse the gift itself, and make themselves ridiculous to all that see or know them.

## § 6. The Armour of God to be Used

Hitherto we have handled the means appointed for our safety: now we are to declare how this armour is to be used. "Put on the whole armour."

Here are two points to be noted,

1. That we put on armour.
2. That we put on the whole armour. This word "put on" is a word of practice, by which the Apostle follows his former metaphor, taken from soldiers who are in the field: they do not, as householders in the time of peace, let their armour hang on the walls without use of it, till it rust, but they make use of it by putting it on, wearing it, and putting it to the proof; so

Christians ought to be well-furnished always and well-prepared with the graces of God's Spirit: they must ever have them in readiness at

hand to use them and make proof of them. In this sense, this phrase of "putting on" is often used and applied to many particular graces, yea, to Christ Himself, whereby is implied that we should apply Christ to ourselves, and so make use of Him, and of all His actions and sufferings: yea, also of all those graces which He conveys into us. Other metaphors are also used to set forth the same point: "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (says the Apostle). The metaphor is taken from a fire, which is of little use when it is covered over and smothered up with ashes, but stirred and blown up, it is of great use. Again, our Lord uses another metaphor to the same purpose, "A good man (says He) brings forth good things." As a wise man that has a store of treasure will not let it lie rusting and cankering in his chest (this is a note of a covetous miser, who were as good to be without treasure as to have abundance, for he wants in his greatest abundance because he uses not what he has) but brings forth and employs it for his own and others' good: so does a good man with the treasure of grace which God has bestowed on him. Excellent metaphors to illustrate and urge this point.

All the benefit and good of a thing come from the use of it: as armour rusting by the wall's side, as fire smothered with ashes, as money cankering in chests, so are the graces of God's Spirit if they be not employed: though in themselves they be never so excellent, yet to us and others they are fruitless and unprofitable, without a right use of them. This David, no doubt, well knew, and therefore did not hide God's righteousness in his heart.

[Use 1] Far short come they of this Apostolical direction, who upon conceit that they have as good armour as the best, please themselves therein, and yet show forth no practice thereof: knowledge they have, and well are they able to discourse of the kinds of graces, and of the differences between current and counterfeit grace, as also of the many wiles of Satan, and of the means to avoid them, and yet no proof do they give of the soundness of any grace in themselves. For example, many imagine that they have very good and sound faith, and yet live altogether by sense: for while all things go well, according to their desire, they can believe and depend upon God: but when any cross falls upon them, then their shield of faith is to seek, every dart pierces them to the very heart. Others conceive they have a good breastplate of righteousness, and yet no practice of piety, none of charity, to be observed in them. They are like those of whom Saint James speaks, who can say to such as are naked and destitute of daily food, "Be you warmed and filled," notwithstanding they give them not those things which are needful for the body.

[Use 2] Let us for our parts make proof of the graces we have: what armour we seem to have, let it be seen on our backs. Think we that we have the shield of faith? Let us live by our faith, as the Patriarchs did: or the breastplate of righteousness? Let it cover us as a robe: let us be so conscientious in practicing the several duties thereof, that with the testimony of a good conscience we may say to God as Nehemiah did, "Remember me, O my God, for good, for all that I have done for Thy people." Or the girdle of truth? Let us so uprightly and sincerely behave ourselves, as we may with comfort say with

honest Hezekiah, "Lord, remember how I have walked before Thee in truth." Thus may the general doctrine be applied in all the particular branches of this Christian armour: which that we may the rather do, note what is further required: that the whole armour be put on.

## § 7. Every Grace to be Used

As this particle, "whole," is annexed to armour, to commend unto us the sufficiency of the armour of God, whereof we have heard before: so this compound word, "whole armour," is inferred upon that action of putting on, to teach us that it is not sufficient to put on some parts and pieces thereof, but every part and piece, the whole armour must be put on. From the true scope of the Apostle's meaning, I gather that,

The power of every sanctifying grace must be manifest in the life of a Christian. This was it whereunto he exhorted before, saying, "Let us in all things grow up," etc. There he uses a metaphor taken from the members of a natural body, implying that spiritual graces are to the spirit as bodily members are to a body; now if the body grows in some parts only, and not in every part proportionally, (as if it should grow all in the head, and not answerably in the legs, or all in the shoulders, and not at all in the thighs) it would be but a monstrous body. Or if it abounds with noisome humours, which make it swell in some parts, those humours will be so far from preserving the body that they will rather impair the health, and shorten the life of it. So, if a Christian shall be hot in faith and cold in love; or have great

knowledge and show little obedience; or be full of devotion and empty of discretion, surely he is a monstrous Christian: the want of some graces makes the others to be of no use. Such professors are a shame and dishonour to others; they are full of noisome and distempered humours, which will destroy that show of spiritual life which they seem to have. Fitly may they be compared to Nebuchadnezzar's Image, whose head was of gold, but his feet of iron and clay: what was the end of that Image? The feet thereof were smitten, and so all broken together. Such is likely to be the end of all monstrous Christians.

But is it possible that any one Christian should have all sanctifying graces?

Yea, verily, it is not only possible, but also necessary that not only any one, but every one be endued with every kind of sanctifying grace, which appertains to the essential being of a Christian. For regeneration is as perfect in the kind thereof as our natural birth.

Men ordinarily are born with all the parts and members of a man: if not, they are either monsters or at least imperfect: but in the spiritual birth, which is from above, even of God, there is no imperfection of parts, there are no monsters: all that are born of the Spirit, have all the essential parts of the Spirit; and thus are all alike, though not in measure, yet in number of graces. For as the flesh has corrupted every power of the soul and part of the body, so does the Spirit renew every power and part of both. The Apostle testifies of

the Corinthians, that in all things they were made rich, and not destitute of any gift.

Forceful and weighty motives there are to urge this point, as

[1] God makes nothing in vain. Now then, God having made this whole armour, whole armour must be put on. If a careful and wise Captain should provide sufficient armour for all his soldiers, and some of them be careless in putting on every piece thereof, might he not be offended with them, and that justly? Much more should we provoke God by neglecting anything which He, in His good providence, has provided for us.

[2] We stand in great need of every piece of this armour: for unless we put on every piece, we lie open to our enemies, even as if we had put on never a piece: for they are very subtle, they narrowly view us on every side, and soon can espy if any part be naked. What if a soldier have a helmet and want a breastplate, if a dart light upon his breast, and pierce to his heart, what good gets he by his headpiece? Or if he has a breastplate, and wants a girdle to knit it close, or tassets and cuisses to cover his belly? Thus, if faith, or hope, or righteousness, or truth, or any other part of the Christian armour be wanting, the Devil can thereby take his advantage to destroy the soul: so as not only duty to God, but the safety of ourselves may move us to put on the whole armour.

[3] True trial of the truth of those graces, which we seem to have, is made by the concurrence & meeting of all together. Single graces,

that is, graces which stand alone, are counterfeit graces. Faith without righteousness is presumption; righteousness without truth is hypocrisy, and so in the rest. All come from the same fountain: he that has not all, has none at all.

How needful is it that we follow the counsel of Saint Peter, [Use 1] which is, to give all diligence to join one grace unto another, to knowledge faith, to faith hope, to hope righteousness, to righteousness truth, to truth patience, and so in the rest? Thus will it not repent the Lord to have provided whole armour for us when we shall use all. Thus shall we give no advantage to our spiritual enemies; thus shall we have evident proof of the Spirit's abode in us, and be assured that indeed we are born anew.

### § 8. Man's Endeavour to be Added to God's Assistance

The two general parts of the Apostle's direction have hitherto been distinctly handled: now let us consider them jointly together. The first part is that we be strong in the Lord. The second, that we use those means which God has appointed for our safety. Whence observe that

God's assistance and man's endeavour concur together; they may not be severed. Without God's mighty power, man can do nothing; unless man puts on the whole armour of God, God will do nothing. This the Church knew right well, and therefore both prays unto God to be enabled by Him ("draw me") and also promises to do her utmost endeavour, and follow His direction ("we will run after

thee"). The like we read of David: but most clearly is this point laid down by Christ, who having said, "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him" (whereby he shows that God must enable man to come to Him), adds, "Every man that has learned of the Father comes to me" (whereby he shows that man enabled by God adds his own endeavour).

Why God's powerful work is necessary has been shown before in verse 10, namely, because of our own utter inability to do anything of ourselves. Before God quickens us, we are dead in sins, no more able to do any spiritual function than a dead corpse to do any natural function; yea, after we are quickened, we are still supported by God's grace, which works in us. Yet being quickened, we must do our endeavour because of that order which the Lord has in wisdom appointed to bring us to glory.

For this end does God work in us both to will and to do, that we should work out our own salvation, Phil. 2:12-13. God works not upon us, as upon stocks or stones, but gives us life and ability, as when He raised the widow's son, the ruler's daughter, and Lazarus, He put life into them and enabled them to move, rise up, walk, eat, and do other functions of the living.

[Use 1] By this is discovered the error of proud, presumptuous Papists on the one side, and of secure, careless Libertines on the other. The Papists, to establish their own power and strength, hold and teach that after the first motion and stirring of the heart, which

they acknowledge to be of God only, a man absolutely by his free will may do well if he will. But Christ says of the branches which were in the vine, whose hearts were stirred up, "Without me you can do nothing."

The care which the Apostle has to direct them unto the fountain of strength, the Lord, even then when especially he urges them to arm themselves, argues that without continual strength supplied to them from the Lord, they are not able to stand of themselves against the assaults of their enemies.

Libertines fall into another extreme; they, to pamper their flesh and pursue their carnal delights, so refer all to the work and power of God that they are altogether careless in using any means themselves, upon the conceit that God is able of Himself to save them, and that when God pleases, He will save them, do they in the meantime what they list. But fondly they argue from God's power, who neglect the means which God has appointed and revealed, wherein and whereby He will manifest His power. His revealed will is the ground of our faith and obedience: if we follow the direction of it, then may we safely trust to the power of God; otherwise, in attributing all to the grace of God, we abuse it, and turn it into wantonness. Were it not necessary for us to do what God enables us to do, as well as trust to the power of God's might, the Apostle needed not have been thus careful in stirring us up to arm ourselves.

[Use 2] As we presume not in trusting to our own strength, lest we provoke God to resist us, so neither tempt we God in neglect of the means which He has appointed, lest we cause God to forsake us. But as we look for help and strength from God, so must we be careful in well-using all those means which God has ordained for our help and safety. To this purpose tend all the exhortations in the Scripture, whereby any duty is required at our hands. Note the complaint of our Lord against Jerusalem; "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not?" Be we not like to them, lest we be rejected as they were. Know we this for certain, that God will not with cart-ropes by force and violence, against our wills, draw us to Heaven.

To this end does God take out of us that stony and inflexible heart which is in us by nature, and gives us a heart of flesh which is flexible, that it, being made pliable by God's Spirit, should apply itself to God's work, as David did, Psal. 119:112. The truth is, that many Christians are wonderfully wounded and foiled by the Enemy, because of their own idleness and security, in that they are backward in putting forth themselves, and negligent in endeavouring to do what God enables them to do.

Lo, here is a complete armour of God provided for our defence and safety; be we careful in putting it on and well using it.

Thus much for the means to be used.

## §9. The Purpose and Advantage of Christian Armor

The end why this means is to be used follows in these words; "That you may be able to stand, etc." In setting down this end, he declares the benefit of the aforementioned armour, which is an ability to stand, amplified by the enemy against whom we stand, the Devil, and his subtlety, in this word, "wiles".

The Apostle still follows and continues his metaphor taken from soldiers, who being every way well-fenced and prepared against their enemies, stand stoutly against them, neither fall down, fly away, nor give ground. Wherefore this word "stand" is a word of safety and freedom from danger; yea, of victory and conquest, implying that they who are well prepared with the armour of God, so long as they well use it, can neither be slain, nor taken captives, nor beaten down, nor made to fly, nor yet foiled or put back, and forced to give ground, but stand fast and safe upon their ground, yea stand fast in the field when their enemies are driven away, and so remain conquerors, as we shall after hear. And this is all the conquest which in this world we can look for, to keep ourselves safe, that we be not conquered or foiled, and that we give no advantage to our enemies. As for the utter subduing of the Devil and his host, that belongs to Christ our Captain and Champion.

This safe standing being laid down as the end why this armour of God is given, and declaring the benefit which follows upon the well using of the armour, these two doctrines naturally flow from thence,

1. There is no hope, no possibility of remaining safe without spiritual armour.

2. Those who well put on the armour of God, and use it as they ought, are safe and sure, and so may be secure.

### § 10. Who Are Without Armour, Can Have No Hope to Stand

For the first, that which the Prophet says of one piece of this armour, the shield of faith, I may well apply to the whole armour, "if you have it not on you, surely you shall not be established, you cannot stand."

Without this armour, we are naked and lie open to every dart and shot of our spiritual enemies: and are no more able to free ourselves from the power of the Devil than a poor silly lamb or kid from a roaring lion or ravenous bear. If being unfenced, we stand safe, it must be either by reason of the goodness of the Devil, that he pities us and cannot find in his heart to take any advantage against us; or of his carelessness and blindness, that he prys not about us, or observes when, & where we are fenced or naked; or of his weakness, that he is not able to pierce and wound us, though we be naked: but such is his malice, his subtlety, and sedulity; such also his power (as we shall after hear) that none can imagine there should be any such goodness, carelessness, blindness, or weakness in him.

Besides, by neglecting to use this armour provided by God, we provoke God to cast us into the power of our enemies, and to give them power over us, as He dealt with Ahab.

[Use 1] How egregiously do they deceive themselves, who conceive that though they have no part or piece of this armour of God, they can be as safe and sure, and may be as secure as those who have the whole armour on them; much like to the seven sons of Sceva, who overboldly ventured to adjure an evil spirit (Acts 19:14-16), but what was the issue? Being unarmed, they could not stand, they were overcome and forced to fly.

Many think there needeth no such care about faith, righteousness, sincerity, etc., as some do take:

For ought they see, they are most assaulted and most foiled, who are most busy and diligent in putting on this armour, and fitting it to them.

To grant that they who put on this whole armour of God are most assaulted because the Devil, without any great assaulting, prevails against such as have it not on; I utterly deny that they are most foiled: for those who are without it are clean vanquished and in the power of the Devil, which the others never shall be.

Yes, but say they, we find and feel no such matter; we are very quiet, no way molested.

I easily believe it: but what is the reason? Because the Devil has them in his power, he needeth not eagerly pursue them.

Miserable is that rest and quiet which they have: even like to that which the poor kid has when it is brought into the lion's den, or the mouse when it is in the cat's mouth. The cat can play with the mouse when she has once caught it: and the lion can let the kid lie quiet in his den, while he ranges and roars after that prey which is out of his clutches. But what security of life have those that are so taken? Their security is, that they are sure to be gnawed to pieces and devoured. This is the case of those who, being destitute of the armour of God, yet think themselves quiet and well. They are fast bound with the chains of sin and wholly in the Devil's power, where he ceases to molest them for a while but rather dallies with them while he eagerly pursues such as have on this armour, and are out of his power, and stand manfully against him. Against these, he casts all the darts he can, but all in vain, as the next doctrine shows.

### § 11. Who Well Use Their Armour Are Sure to Stand

They who well put on the armour of God and use it as they ought, are safe and sure, and may be secure. Saint Peter, exhorting Christians to seek after such graces as may be comprised under this armour, expressly says, "If you do these things, you shall never fall." Saint John says of one piece of this armour, namely faith, that it is the victory which overcomes the world. What then may be said of this whole armour, of every piece of it together? Saint Paul goes yet further and says of himself, and of other Christians like himself, who have put on this armour, "We are more than conquerors."

The points which have been before delivered, that this is complete armour, the complete and whole armour of God, do sufficiently confirm this point.

[Use] A strong motive this is to persuade us to put on the whole armour of God. This is the main end which the Apostle aims at in laying down this end, to show that as this is armour of proof in itself, so it will sufficiently defend us, and keep us harmless. If at any time we be foiled, the fault is our own; we can blame none but ourselves, because the Lord gives such means whereby we may be able to stand. Is it a benefit to stand fast and safe? Is it a matter to be desired to be kept free from spiritual wounds and hurts, yea, from eternal bondage and slavery under sin, Satan, and other mortal enemies of our souls, and from everlasting torment and torture that follows thereupon? (how blind are they which see it not! how foolish are they which regard it not!) If this (I say) be a benefit, then take notice of the means whereby we may be enabled to stand fast in that liberty which Christ has purchased for us, and made free from the forenamed slavery: and withal make conscience, and give all diligence to use the means aright. It is a point of notorious folly to be desirous of a thing and careless in doing that whereby our desire may be accomplished. Yea, it is a cunning wile of the Devil in good things to make men separate the means from the end, but in evil, the end from the mean; as to make men desire and look for the good and happy end of righteousness, and yet be backward in walking in that way that leads thereto: and contrariwise, eagerly and swiftly to run in the way of sin, and yet not fear the wages of sin, and the issue of that course. In the

first kind, Balaam was deceived. In the second, Eve was deluded. Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous; but careless he was in leading such a life as brought forth such a death. Eve was persuaded she should not die, and yet feared not to eat of that fruit, against which death was denounced. Let the fearful end of both these make us wise against these wiles. Worldly men are wise enough herein; if they observe a good benefit to be had, they will seek how it may be obtained, and do with all diligence that whereby it may be obtained. This makes them pass over sea and land to get such commodities as their own land affords not; this makes them when they fear enemies, to have all warlike provision ready; often to muster their men, to keep continual watch and ward at their chief port-towns, with the like. Now this end here laid down, being a matter of so great consequence (for if we stand not fast, but suffer ourselves to be foiled and overcome, no less damage and danger follow thereof, then loss of eternal happiness on the one side, and utter destruction on the other), why should we be more foolish in spiritual matters than worldlings are in temporal? They indeed are more sensible of temporal things, whether good or evil. Let us therefore in spiritual matters give the better heed to the direction of God's word: that faith may make us as wise as sense makes them.

### §12. Satan, Our Adversary

Understanding the necessity and advantages of this armor becomes clearer when we consider the identity of our enemy and the nature of his assaults.

Our adversary, against whom God's complete armor equips us to stand, is the Devil. Known also as our Enemy, Tempter, Murderer, and more, the Devil's creation, nature, fall, and other aspects are rich topics of discussion. However, I will focus on characteristics that underline how formidable and terrifying an enemy he is for our current discussion.

## § 13. Satan a Terrible Enemy

For the better understanding of this, know that the Devils, by creation, were good Angels, as powerful, wise, quick, speedy, invisible, immortal, etc., as any other Angels: equal in every respect, but inferior in no respect to the very best Angels.

When they fell, they did not lose their natural substance and the essential properties thereof, no more than man lost his when he fell: for as man remained to be not only flesh and blood but also a living, yea, and a reasonable creature after his fall, so the Devil remains to be a spirit, invisible, immortal, quick, speedy, etc., as before: only the quality of his nature and properties is altered from good to evil: as powerful as he was before to good, so powerful is he now to evil; invisible and quick he is, wonderfully close and speedy in working mischief, he was not more desirous of good before his fall, than since he is mischievous, and even set upon evil.

There are four especial things which make the Devil very fearful;

First, his power.

Secondly, his malice.

Thirdly, his subtlety.

Fourthly, his sedulity and speed.

Who fears not a powerful enemy? This made Goliath seem so terrible. If an enemy be malicious, even for his malice, he is feared as Doeg: or if he be crafty and subtle, for which Achitophel was feared: yea, also the enemies of Israel were accounted fearful in regard to their swiftness, "That they came hastily with speed." How terrible will all these make an enemy, when they all meet together? It may be thought that if an enemy be malicious and wants power, he may consume himself with malice, and do little hurt to others: or if he be powerful and malicious but wants wit, craft, and subtlety, he may like an unbridled horse run headlong in his powerful malice to his own ruin and destruction: or though to his power and malice, subtlety be also added, yet if he be slow and careless, he is the less feared, in hope that he may be prevented in all his enterprises. But where malice is strengthened by might, might whetted on by malice; both malice and power guided by craft, craft and all stirred up by diligence, sedulity, and speed, who can stand against such an enemy?

Now, all these do in a very high degree concur in the Devil, as Saint Peter does notably set them down in this description of the Devil; "Your adversary the Devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." His name "Devil," and that which he seeks for, "to devour," show his malice. The beast whereunto he is

resembled, lion, shows his power and craft, and the attribute, "roaring," adds terror thereunto: lastly, his walking up and down, shows his sedulity. Of his power, malice, and sedulity, I shall have occasion more distinctly to speak on the 12th verse.

## §14. The Devil's Wiles

Satan's subtlety is particularly expressed under this word, "wiles." The Greek word signifies artificial, crafty, cunning conveyances of matters, windings up and down, and turning every way to get the greatest advantage. Fittingly is this word used by the Apostle, for his temptations and assaults are very cunning, full of much deceit, of many windings, which make him so mightily prevail against the greatest sort of the world, even against all that are not strong in the Lord, and wise in well using the whole armour of God.

The titles which in Scripture are given to the Devil, do evidently imply his great craft. He is termed a Dragon, and a Serpent, which of all other beasts are counted the craftiest and wisest: yea, to show that he has had a long time of experience to make him more subtle and crafty; he is called an old Serpent, a great red Dragon. There are names in Greek which we ordinarily translate Devil, that yet further signify his great subtlety, for they note out his great knowledge and experienced skill.

As his names are, so is his practice, full of many windings, full of much craft. It is an infinite task, a matter of impossibility, to discover all his cunning stratagems and subtle devices. He has old tricks,

which he has long used, because by long continued experience, he has found that silly men are soon deceived with them, and that the harm of some cannot warn others: and yet does he daily invent new upon new, ever shifting from one to another: if one will not serve, he has another presently in readiness. For diverse persons, diverse conditions, and dispositions, he has diverse temptations. Sometimes he plays the part of a roaring ravenous Lion; sometimes of a crafty fawning Fox; sometimes appearing in his own shape, sometimes changing himself into an Angel of light, doing anything for his advantage. Because the Apostle holds himself close to the metaphor taken from war, I will also follow it, and under it discover some few particular stratagems, leaving it to the particular meditation of others to find out others.

1. He can well tell how to marshal and set his army in array; he well knows how to order his temptations: For first, he uses to make the onset with light skirmishes and begin with small temptations; and then by degrees follow with greater and mightier forces. Thus he came to Eve; first, only he made a question whether God had forbidden them any of the trees: and then by degrees, he came directly to contradict the express word of God. So when he tempted Christ, he began with a doubt whether Christ were the Son of God or no, and lastly tempted Him to monstrous idolatry.

Thus, he makes men careless at first, and his temptation lightly to be regarded, till he has gotten some advantage; which when he has

gotten, he will follow with all the might and main that possibly he can.

2. If thus he prevails not, but at first, he is put back, he can change his ranks and weapons: he can alter his temptations, and begin with fierce and violent assaults. Thus he set on Job. If he cannot seduce men by moving them to make light account of sin, he will persuade them that every sin is most heinous, that their sins are unpardonable. If he cannot make them superstitious, he will strive to make them profane: and thus help one temptation with another.

3. If he observes the forces of the Lord's Soldiers to be strong and well-ordered and fortified, then his endeavour will be politically to allure some out of their ranks, and so make a breach; it seems that thus he prevailed much, and got great advantage in the Church of Corinth. For thus he bred schisms and contentions among them. Whereupon the Apostle exhorts every man to abide in the same vocation wherein he was called. Thus, in these our days, has he caused much trouble in God's Churches by the inordinate walking of many persons; who leaving their own places, have caused divisions, sects, and separations from the Church.

4. If he observes some provident Captain, watchful over the Lord's armies, and careful to keep his soldiers in good order, animating and encouraging them, then will the Devil use the King of

Aram's stratagem: all his forces shall be bent against that Captain. Thus he fiercely set upon our chief Captain in the wilderness, and throughout the whole course of his life; but especially in the Garden, and on the Cross. Thus did he desire to winnow the Apostles: Thus does he sorely tempt Magistrates, Ministers, & such as have charge over others.

5. If he does not prevail against them, rather than fail, he will set upon the weakest. Thus, he dealt by the ministry of Heretics, who led captive simple women. And thus, in our days, he deals through the ministry of Papists, Anabaptists, Separatists, and all other Sectaries.

6. If by none of these means he can accomplish his plots, as he desires, face to face, or force against force, then he will lay some secret ambushments or other, to set on the Lord's soldiers unawares behind their back, akin to the strategy of Joshua and the Israelites: as when he allows Christians to go on in doing the work of the Lord and performing such duties as belong to them but will come behind and cast into their hearts some conceits of merit and pride. Thus, he gave Paul a back-blow. Thus, he overcomes the Papists and many ignorant persons among us. Sometimes also, he will cast lustful and worldly thoughts and cares into them, and so choke all.

7. If the Lord's soldiers are so circumspect, as neither by force nor fraud he can prevail, he will not hesitate to change his flag: and seem to fight under the Lord's banner, as Tobiah, Sanballat, and

> other deadly enemies of the Jews endeavoured to do. In this respect, the Apostle says, Satan transforms himself into an Angel of light, and his Ministers into the Apostles of Christ. Thus, oftentimes he prevails with those of tender consciences to make many needless scruples, by accounting such things to be sin, which God's word never made sin, and by thinking many things to be necessary duties, which belong not at all to them.

Thus, we have a taste of some of his wiles. I will not further range forth into this spacious field, lest I be too tedious.

[Use] Having such an enemy as the Devil, had we not need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might? This enemy having so many wiles, had we not need to be always prepared with the whole armour of God? Assuredly if we are not strong in the power of God's might, there is no standing against the Devil. If at any time we are without the whole armour of God, doubtless we shall soon be overtaken with some of his wiles.

[Use 2] How does this, which has been said of the Devil and his wiles, commend unto us the provident care of God over us, who keeps us safe from such an enemy, and from such wiles? And how does it set forth the excellency of the forenamed whole armour of God? Very excellent must that armour be, which is able to keep us safe from so potent and malicious an enemy, who has so many wiles to deceive us. This shows it to be very complete and every way sufficient, for while we have it on, well-fitted to us, all the craft of the

Devil cannot find a naked place where to wound us, his strength is not able to pierce it; no, though his craft and strength are both whetted on with malice. Is there not now great reason we should put it on and always keep it on? That we neither wake nor sleep, be alone or in company without it?

[Use 3] Labor to have our eyes enlightened (that we may discern those wiles of the Devil) and to be filled with spiritual prudence and wisdom, that we may escape these snares. Let us preserve in us a holy jealousy over ourselves, and suspicion of the Devil and his wiles, fearing lest he should find us somewhere unarmed, and sometime unprepared (for otherwise we are safe). God's word is able to afford unto us wisdom enough to avoid his wiles. For David thereby was made wiser than his enemies. Let us exercise ourselves therein, and withal pray with David, that God would turn the wiles and counsels of the Devil into foolishness: For God catches the wise in their own craftiness.

# The Third Part

## The Reason Why We Must Be Well Armed

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." - Ephesians 6:12

## § 1. The Coherence

In this verse, the motive which the Apostle uses to urge the previously mentioned direction is laid out. It may have a dual reference: First, generally to the earlier exhortation, "Be strong, etc., and put on the whole armour, etc.," because we face such enemies as are here described. Secondly, particularly to the last part of the previous verse, where it was shown that we were to stand against the Devil. So, it serves as an amplification of them: for if the question be asked, what is the Devil, that we should be so prepared against him? These words present him; not flesh and blood, but principalities, etc. The first word "for," being a causal particle that indicates a reason, implies the first reference: the immediate connection of this verse to the last part of the previous verse implies the second. Both can coexist: for both convey one and the same message: namely, that because we face such dreadful and deadly enemies, we ought to be well prepared against them.

## § 2. Danger Makes Watchful

From the inference of this verse, and from the strength of the Apostle's argument, I deduce that the greater danger we are subject to, the more watchful and careful we must be for our safety. When Christ saw the severe agony he was about to enter into, he did not

only watch and pray himself but also called upon his Disciples to watch and pray: and because they did not, he rebuked them for their sluggishness. Saint Peter urges this duty of watchfulness for a similar reason; namely, because we have such a fearful enemy. External, temporal dangers make natural men watchful and careful for their temporal estates and lives, as the histories of all times and ages show. Seeing then that spiritual dangers are much more fearful, should we not be much more careful?

If we are, we do not only show that we care for our souls and seek their wellbeing, but also we will procure much good for them, and prevent and keep away much harm from them.

[Application] What false conclusions do most draw from that spiritual danger, to which they understand they are subject because of their spiritual enemies? Even completely contrary to this inference of the Apostle, and the wisdom thereby taught to us; and that in two extremes: one of presumption, the other of despair: for some, when they hear of such enemies as are described, they too vainly, carelessly, and proudly disdain them, like Gaal; others too meekly, basely, and slavishly dread them, like Ahaz.

### §3. Against Presumption

The former extreme, which is presumption, arises partly from too great a notion of ourselves and of our own strength, and partly from too ready a belief of what is recorded about the Devil.

This self-belief makes us foolishly imagine that we are fully capable of resisting all temptations of the Devil or any of his agents. Whereupon many are ready to say (when they are advised to be wary of the Devil and his strong temptations), "I defy the Devil and all his wicked crew; he can do no harm to me: I can (I thank God) easily evade his temptations; the gates of hell shall not prevail against me." And yet, these proud foolish individuals are overtaken and defeated by every minor temptation. Peter (though otherwise a man of good abilities) was somewhat too full of himself, and too much inclined to this extreme, and yet, when he needed to stand firm, was intimidated by a mere girl.

A too ready belief makes us think the Devil cannot be as terrifying as he is portrayed; but that the things written and said about him and his schemes are merely scare tactics to frighten people, akin to old wives' tales about ghosts, fairies, hobgoblins, etc. This disbelief greatly diminishes the impact of such exhortations, directions, admonitions, and reprimands, which are provided for our benefit. Both Peter and the other Disciples were somewhat affected by this: for when Christ told them all that they would all be led astray by him, and that Peter in particular would deny him, none of them would believe it. Peter said, "Even if all fall away, I will not." And again, "Even if I have to die, I will not deny you." And so said all the Disciples.

## §4. Against Despair

The latter extreme, which is despair, arises partly from an overly intense perception of the power of the Devil (as if his power were infinite, and he were able to do whatever his malice prompted him to, and thus could do what he wanted; or unlimited, God allowing him free rein, and not restraining him any more than He wished, and so he might do what he could, like an untamed horse that is not curbed and bridled) and partly from too slight a regard for the power that is available in God, and for the great help and benefit which the whole armour of God provides, as if God were not capable of making us strong enough, nor that whole armour sufficient to make us safe.

These two causes of despair led the Israelites many times to make the most desperate statements against God: for when they heard that in Canaan (the Land given to them for an inheritance), the people were strong, that there were men of great stature, even Giants there, that the cities were walled and exceedingly large, they desperately questioned the Lord, why he had brought them into that Land to die by the sword, and in despair of ever possessing Canaan, wished to return to Egypt: and another time they openly doubted God's power, saying, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? Can he provide bread?" As these Israelites grumbled against God, and doubted His power and truthfulness in fulfilling His promises, in light of their temporal enemies, whom they judged to be too strong for them: so do many in regard to their spiritual enemies. Thus, we see how prone we are to misuse those things intended for our instruction, leading to our destruction. Here the Apostle outlines both the means for our defence and also the danger to which we are subject, that we should

be more diligent in arming ourselves: we either presumptuously challenge our enemies, neglecting any means of protection; or else are too timidly frightened by our enemies, thinking the Lord's defence can offer us no help.

Therefore, in hearing about the great danger we are in because of our enemies as described here, we should not take this as an occasion to fall into any of these extremes, but rather more diligently avoid them, and keep to the middle path, which is, all the more earnestly to seek the power of God's might, and all the more diligently to hold fast to the whole armour of God. I thought it good to deliver this instruction beforehand, which naturally arises from the force of the Apostle's arguments.

Now, let us come to handle the words themselves more distinctly.

## § 5. Exposition of the Words

In this verse, we have a description of a Christian's battle.

The parts are twofold. Firstly, the kind of battle is noted as a wrestle. Secondly, the combatants or the persons who maintain the battle on either side are set forth. These are on one side the defenders; on the other side the attackers, which are described in detail; both negatively, not flesh and blood, and affirmatively, but principalities, etc.

The first point to be addressed is the kind of battle, implied under the term wrestle. In the original language, it is stated verbatim as "There is a wrestling." We must not think that this refers to a matter of sport, as our English word 'wrestling' might imply. Although the Greek word, like the English, can be attributed to a sporting contest, it is also used for a serious and fierce fight. The Greek term signifies such a struggle that causes the body of the one striving to tremble.

It implies then that the battle spoken of here is not a light skirmish with distant enemies, but a grappling with them hand to hand; making it all the more fierce and dangerous. If they were far from us, shooting or throwing their weapons, we might think to spot their darts before they hit us, or they might miss their mark. But being a grappling hand to hand, all such hopes vanish; for they are close enough to find where to harm us, thus assaulting us more fiercely.

## § 6. The Danger of a Christian's Combat

Our spiritual warfare is severe, fierce, and dangerous. It's a kind of combat that will test our prowess and courage, soon revealing whether our armor is indeed protective, and whether we have donned the full armor. The truth of this was demonstrated in Christ our leader, whom the devil took from wilderness to pinnacle, and from pinnacle to mountain. What the devil did to Christ outwardly and visibly, he does to others inwardly and secretly. The life and condition of Christ on earth are a vivid depiction of the state and condition of His Church in this world. Peter experienced such a

wrestling, so did Paul, as do all who do not willingly yield themselves to the power of the Devil.

God orders our state to 1) further reveal and glorify the power of His might and the adequacy of His armor. The harsher the fight and the more perilous, the greater that strength appears, and the more exceptional the means by which we are supported. 2) Encourage us to depend on Him with greater and firmer confidence, like David and Jehoshaphat did. 3) Prompt us to more diligently use the appointed means, like the Jews who prepared against their enemies even while working.

[Use 1] This can help us assess our condition: if all is calm within us, with no wrestling or fighting, or at most occasional light skirmishes, it's worrisome that our enemies have overtaken us, and we have submissively surrendered to them, making a pact with them. Intense combats give us more assurance that the Lord is still our God, and we His soldiers, than light or no attacks. If the Devil rules over us, he can let us be at peace; but if he's our enemy, we will assuredly feel his influence.

[Use 2] This explains why so many falter and are defeated. It would be no significant challenge to withstand light and easy battles. But when we are truly tested, standing firm is a sign of exceptional bravery. This is what tested the patience and courage of Job.

[Use 3] Don't think we've done enough when we've overcome some minor trials; prepare for greater ones. We must face a wrestling.

Consider what the Apostle says about those who endured a great fight, "You need patience;" and again, "You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."

[Use 4] For our comfort, note that though wrestling implies a severe combat, it does not suggest defeat. There's no need to fear conquest, for Christ our leader has vanquished our enemy and defeated him who had the power of death, to liberate all those who, for fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He has led captivity captive and delivered us from the power of darkness, so that we might be free from being overcome, though not from wrestling.

## § 7. None Exempt from the Fight

The defendants who maintain this wrestling are encompassed within this term "we," which includes the author and all similar to him, along with those to whom he wrote, and all similar to them. This means that all of every type are to engage in and fight this spiritual battle. Neither ministers nor laity, poor nor rich, male nor female, newly converted nor long-established, none of any rank, condition, status, age, or quality are exempted. Whoever is of the seed of the woman must anticipate having his heel bruised. There is enmity between the two seeds; the Devil did not spare the woman, who was the weaker vessel, nor did he fear the head, Christ Himself, who was the strongest of all. Who then might think to be spared? Who can imagine that Satan will fear to wrestle with him?

God intends for all of every type to be tested, and the Devil bears equal hatred against all: he seeks whom he may devour. So long as he can devour them, he cares not who they are: like a wolf spares none of the flock, ram, sheep, or lamb that he can catch.

[Use 1] Let all, ministers and people, strong and weak, everyone of every kind, apply all the exhortations and instructions here provided to themselves. Let not the weaker group dismiss them under the belief that fierce combats are only for strong Christians; Satan, hoping most to overcome the weakest, will surely attack them. Nor should the stronger dismiss them, thinking the devil dares not engage with them. For although there may be differences between them and the weaker Christians, yet the strength of the strongest is negligible compared to the devil's might if they rely on it and not on the Lord's strength. Moreover, Satan, knowing that their fall would dishearten others, will launch the greatest assaults against them.

[Use 2] Let ministers remember that the precepts they impart to others also apply to themselves, which the Apostle implies here. Though his instructions were in the second person ("be strong, put on"), he introduces the motive in the first person ("we") to indicate that he faced as much danger as they, that he required as much assistance as they; and therefore, the aforementioned instructions applied to him as well as to them. Ministers are human as well as others, prone to the same passions as others. If they do not preach to themselves, what means of edification, direction, and encouragement belong to them? Hence, just as the laity should not assume that

matters of spiritual warfare only concern ministers, as if they alone were the Lord's soldiers, so neither should ministers deflect these concerns from themselves to the laity, as if they were merely to observe, and the people to fight. Instead, everyone should apply them to themselves.

## § 8. Exposition of Words

We have heard of the Defendants. Who then are the challengers and assaulters? They are described negatively as not flesh and blood. The term "not" relates to this latter clause, as if there were a comma between "wrestle" and "not," thus, "we wrestle, not with flesh, etc."

By "flesh and blood," we mean creatures that possess a bodily substance consisting of flesh and blood, in which respect man is termed "flesh," and Christ is said to have been made "flesh" because He took on a bodily form. This differentiates a spirit from a body.

Do we then have no enemies with bodily forms in this spiritual combat? Are only spirits our adversaries?

Our own flesh is an adversary to us. Other people are also enemies: there are many adversaries, such as infidels, idolaters, heretics, materialists, all types of persecutors, and even false brethren.

Why then is "flesh and blood" here excluded?

They are not excluded entirely, for this negative clause should not be taken literally, but:

1. Comparatively, not so much with flesh and blood as with principalities. It's with these we primarily wrestle. Thus, when the Apostle forbids servants from serving "men," he means not exclusively but in addition to others. Or, as Christ says, "call not thy friends to dinner," meaning not them alone but also the poor. Or not with flesh and blood alone, in its own weak and frail state, but as empowered, assisted, and guided by spirits. As if English soldiers served under the Turk or Spaniard, against whom we maintain war, though they battle against us, it might be said we do not fight with English men.

2. By way of exposition, not with those who are weak, frail, foolish, visible, and mortal, as flesh and blood are. Thus, the horses of the Egyptians are called "flesh," that is, weak, as opposed to "spirit": so this phrase "not flesh and blood" implies more than, or other than, merely flesh and blood.

## § 9. How Our Spiritual Enemies Exceed Flesh and Blood

Our deadliest enemies are more than flesh and blood, surpassing in number, greater in power, craftier in their strategies, of longer continuance, more envious, malicious, fierce, and cruel. They are not

as open and visible but invisible, covert, and secretive, and in many other aspects more fearsome and dangerous.

1. Among flesh and blood, no one is so mighty that they cannot be confronted, as shown in Daniel's visions of the beasts. The great monarchs of the world have been vanquished by others, but no flesh and blood can stand against the Devil.

2. Among flesh and blood, none so politically astute that they do not eventually find their match, even outmanoeuvred. Achitophel, whose counsel was esteemed as an oracle, was surpassed by Hushai. Yet, all the world's wit cannot equal the subtlety of the Devil.

3. Assume that among flesh and blood some are so mighty, unrivalled in their strength, so subtle that none can surpass them, yet they are persuadable, their fury can be allayed by fair means, as David did by wise Abigail; even the wicked Saul was appeased by David's humility and plea of innocence. But the Devil lacks such flexibility; his malice is unyielding, unmoved unless it serves a greater advantage.

4. Suppose some among men are relentless, their fury might still be escaped by flight, as David fled from Saul, Elijah from Jezebel, Joseph and Mary from Herod. From the Devils, we cannot escape; they are omnipresent, swiftly overtaking us.

5. Even if no means of escape were possible, and we were subjected to the rage of flesh and blood, in their peak of pride, power, and fury, they can be utterly vanquished by death, as were Pharaoh and his army drowned, as died Herod the Great and the other Herod who persecuted the Apostles. However, our spiritual enemies are not subject to death. In many other respects, comparing flesh and blood with Spirits shows there is no comparison; these entities are not flesh and blood but infinitely more terrifying.

[Use 1] This significantly intensifies the dread of our spiritual enemies: if the wrath of a King (who is but flesh and blood) is like the roaring of a Lion; if a man of great strength, like Goliath, is frightening; if a cunning man, like Achitophel, induces fear and trepidation; if a malicious individual, like Doeg, is harmful; if an army of flesh and blood is formidable; how much more so are these enemies that are not flesh and blood?

[Use 2] It is no trivial task to overcome them or evade their attacks. Not outward bravery and strength, not physical might, the force of a sword, troops of armed men, not statecraft or military cunning can harm them or shield us from them. To pit the wit or power of flesh and blood against those who are not flesh and blood is to set dry straw against raging fire. The weapons of our warfare must not be physical but spiritual, powerful through God, to safeguard us from these adversaries. For since our enemies are not flesh and blood, any

armour that protects only against flesh and blood is utterly ineffective.

## § 10. The Devil's Role in Every Temptation

In battles, even those against flesh and blood, our primary adversary is Satan. Flesh and blood serves merely as Satan's instrument; he is the general, the captain, setting flesh and blood to task, supporting them so that he is both the originator and culmination of the evil they perpetrate. Though they act as his vassals, seeking to harm us, our true battle is not with them but with a higher power. When the Serpent tempted Eve, it was actually the Devil she contended with, hence why the Devil is labeled a murderer from the beginning. The Sabaeans and Chaldeans robbed Job, yet Satan was deemed responsible. Though a maid and a man led Peter to deny his Master, it was Satan who sifted him. Christ addressed Peter, who tempted him, as Satan. The persecuting Jews obstructed Paul's journey to the Thessalonians, yet he identified Satan as the hinderer. Satan is accused of incarcerating some of the Smyrnians, though it was men-persecutors who acted. This is why he is termed the god of this world, the father of murderers, a spirit operating in the children of disobedience, and false apostles as ministers of Satan. The influence of flesh and blood in prompting sin or deterring from good applies equally to our internal corruption and evil desires, stirred by Satan; he is the mischief's architect and finisher, making those temptations

arising from our flesh Satan's domain. Thus, the Apostle, advising against anger, cautions against giving the Devil a foothold. When greed led Ananias to deceit, Saint Peter questioned why Satan had filled his heart. David's pride, prompting a census, was instigated by Satan, for as the Spirit of God propels us towards good, so does the devil's spirit urge every evil.

[Use] Learn from the Arameans' wisdom. In all conflicts, whether against our own sins or against evil men—persecutors, seducers, and alike—strive to repel the Devil with spiritual armour, praying for God's rebuke. Flesh and blood's harm is minimal if Satan is resisted. Historical records of battles across ages reveal that once generals and captains fall, the rank and file soon capitulate or flee.

The Devil fans the flames of lust, pride, greed, and other vices within us, presenting tempting evils suited to our nature, inflaming persecutors, blinding idolaters, leading heretics astray. Recognizing this should inspire pity towards flesh and blood that opposes us rather than envy; it should prevent us from futilely lashing out.

[Use 2] The plight of those fighting against Christians could be detailed, showcasing their servitude under Satan's banner and their doomed recompense of death, but further discussion will ensue under "worldly-governors."

## § 11. Facing Principalities and Powers

The affirmation of our adversaries' description follows, juxtaposed to flesh and blood with "but," indicating our enemies, with whom we wrestle, are far more formidable than flesh and blood. This assertion, previously established, will become clearer as we dissect this description further. One observation suffices here.

[Use 1] Those daunted by mere flesh and blood cannot hope to withstand these spiritual foes. A person frightened by a small dog's bark would be terrified by a lion's roar; someone who cannot in faith declare fearlessness against humans will falter against principalities. This serves as a caution to those swayed from righteousness by human threats, scorn, and maltreatment: do not expect to triumph and reign with Christ. The Sabaeans, Chaldeans, and all machinations of flesh and blood could not defeat Job. Thus, when faced with human adversaries, remind ourselves of even greater foes lurking: if we falter here, how will we endure against them? Let this bolster our courage against anything flesh and blood might unleash.

## § 12. Exposition of Words

Now, let us consider the specific elements of this description of our enemies, which are distinguished by the term "against." This description is fraught with complexity and ambiguity, which I will attempt to clarify as simply as possible.

From these various segments, many infer different and distinct orders of Devils, arranged hierarchically, similar to human societal

structures with Kings, Dukes, Earls, Barons, etc. They regard the Devil mentioned earlier as the supreme ruler, with Principalities beneath him, Powers beneath those, and so on. Personally, I find these distinctions overly meticulous in this context. While I do not refute the existence of a hierarchy among Devils, akin to that among thieves, pirates, and con artists, with a leading figure among them (as the Devil and his angels are referenced), the notion of distinct and specific roles among them (such as tempters, accusers, executors of vengeance) is plausible. However, the idea that certain demons are perpetually bound to one place, person, or function is both uncertain and improbable. Furthermore, the interpretation of so many ranks and categories of Devils in this passage as distinct entities is also uncertain, with no solid basis for such a deduction.

I interpret these titles used by the Apostle more as representations of their conditions and effects rather than a strict hierarchical order.

The first title, Principalities or governments, refers to their significant rule, power, and dominion, less over other Devils and more over wicked humans.

The second title, Powers, emphasizes that their principality is substantial, equipped with power enabling them to exert significant influence.

These two titles, principalities and powers, are chosen to magnify both aspects.

The third title is worldly Governors, likely clarifying or limiting the first title to indicate over whom the Devils hold sway: not over God's chosen and called, but over the worldly. Hence, the Apostle employs a compound term indicating both their governance and their subjects.

However, the elect are also considered part of the world during their earthly lives, due to their upbringing and residence here. They are in the world but not of it, once effectively called. For clarity, the Apostle adds "of the darkness of this world," specifying the realm of the Devils' dominion as those engulfed in ignorance and wickedness—specifically, the ignorant and wicked people of the world.

The fourth title, spiritual wickedness, reveals their nature as spirits and their condition as evil and malicious. The original phrasing used by the Apostle, "Spirituals of wickedness," implies they are egregiously wicked spirits.

Lastly, an ambiguous phrase, "in heavenly places," lacks a direct reference point. Some interpretations add "places," suggesting these evil spirits inhabit the air above us. Scripture refers to three "heavens": the atmosphere where birds fly, the firmament of stars, and the divine realm of God's throne. If referring to the location of spirits, "heavenly places" likely denotes the air, the lowest heaven, as they are barred from the highest heaven. Others suggest adding "things" to imply the combat is over not earthly matters but heavenly, spiritual treasures.

Regarding these four segments, the first and third generally highlight the Devils' dominion, while the fourth encompasses three aspects: the nature, quality, and realm or cause of the conflict.

Thus, in this affirmative part, our enemies are described by five characteristics: 1. Their governance. 2. Their power. 3. Their nature. 4. Their quality. 5. Their abode or cause of conflict.

## § 13. Of Satan's Dominion

Firstly, the term "principalities," when attributed to Devils, indicates that our spiritual adversaries possess dominion, rule, and governance. This title, typically reserved for those in authority due to their power to govern, underscores the control wielded by Devils, who are explicitly called governors in this context and elsewhere described as a prince and a god.

Question: How did Devils attain their regime? Is their governance ordained by God?

Answer: In response, one might recall Christ's explanation to Pilate, suggesting Devils would have no authority if it were not permitted from above. Therefore, their dominion exists by God's allowance, who, in just judgement and as punishment for the wicked, has granted Devils the liberty to rule over them. As God delivered rebellious Israelites into the hands of harsh rulers as a form of

punishment, so does he allow the world to fall under the Devil's influence.

However, Devils do not possess a legitimate claim to their rule, as if directly appointed by God, unlike the governance of lawful kings and magistrates on Earth. Similar to foreign invaders who temporarily dominated Israel and served as instruments of punishment (yet were considered oppressors), the Devils' rule is similarly unauthorized. Their dominion stems partly from their own usurpation and ambition and partly from the willful submission of their followers—the wicked of the world—who freely succumb to their tyranny.

[Use 1] Beware of granting the Devil any foothold, for he is exceedingly ambitious and will establish his reign wherever he gains entry. His tyranny knows no bounds; if given the slightest concession, he will assert complete control. Reflect on the misery of those under earthly tyrants and recognize that the Devil's malice far surpasses any worldly despot, illustrating the despair of those under Satan's sway.

[Use 2] The folly of those who consider the Devil their subordinate, a common delusion among witches, conjurers, and sorcerers, as well as many profane individuals, is profound. Though the Devil may feign servitude, it is merely a strategy to deepen his dominion over them. To believe in mastering the Devil is a gross misunderstanding of both his nature and one's own.

[Use 3] We must instead pledge our allegiance to Lord Christ as our sovereign, to defend us against these dark principalities. No king tolerates rival dominion over his subjects; if Christ reigns over us, he will not permit the rule of enemies, especially those opposed to him. Failure to accept Christ's sovereignty invites divine judgement, leaving us vulnerable to Satan's tyranny. The absence of a middle ground between Christ's kingdom and Satan's domain is clear: those not aligned with Christ fall under the Devil's rule. This will be just with the Lord to give them over to Satan's power, who rebel against him; that so by their hard bondage under him, they might the better see their folly, and if they have so much grace, bewail it, and become wiser.

## § 14. Of Satan's Power

The second characteristic by which Devils are described is their power. This demonstrates that our spiritual enemies not only possess a dominion but also have the power to maintain it. They are capable of keeping their subjects and captives in subjugation. Satan is often referred to as a "Prince of power," with many titles in Scripture underscoring his might, such as the strong man armed, the roaring lion, the great red dragon, and the god of this world. Job's ordeal clearly illustrates Satan's significant influence and strength.

The Lord allows Satan to wield such power:

1. To more profoundly manifest His divine power through the defeat of such a formidable foe.
2. To provide a rigorous test of His saints and children's bravery and strength, as exemplified by Job.
3. To administer more severe punishment upon the wicked.

Having established that the Devil is a powerful entity, let's explore some specifics about the nature and extent of Satan's power through addressing several questions:

1. Can Devils accomplish whatever they desire?
2. If their will is limited, can they perform acts beyond natural laws?
3. If their abilities do not surpass natural order, what constitutes their exceptional power?
4. Has their power diminished since their fall from grace?
5. Are they always free to exercise their capabilities?

## § 15. Of the Restraint of Satan's Power

1. Firstly, the Devil cannot achieve everything he wishes; this capability is exclusive to God, whose power is limitless. Were Satan able to enact his will entirely, it would imply that God lacks authority over him, contradicting the fact that Satan is a created being with inherent limitations.

2. Secondly, Satan cannot directly contravene or surpass the natural laws ordained by God for His creation. All creatures are bound to these laws, with the exclusive right to alter them reserved for God, the master of nature. Consequently, the Devil:

    - Cannot perform genuine miracles.
    - Cannot override human free will.
    - Cannot discern the secrets of the heart.
    - Cannot predict future events.

These acts are either beyond or directly against the natural order, emphasizing the limitations placed upon Satan's power.

## § 16. Of Satan's Power in Miracles

Regarding miracles, it's stated that the Devil cannot perform any true miracles. Miracles performed by Christ, the Prophets, and Apostles were clear indications of divine power, distinguishing them as servants of God. If the Devil were capable of performing miracles, these acts wouldn't serve as such definitive evidence of God's power. Even the sorcerers in Moses' time recognized divine intervention, acknowledging, "This is the finger of God."

Objection: It's argued that the sorcerers replicated some miracles performed by Moses.

Answer: While there might appear to be a superficial resemblance between the actions of Moses and the sorcerers, such as turning rods into serpents, water into blood, and summoning frogs, significant differences underlie these acts. Moses' actions were genuine miracles. The sorcerers' feats, on the other hand, could have been achieved through natural means (e.g., the secret introduction of serpents, blood, and frogs into Egypt) or were merely illusions—deceptive visions without substance. This latter explanation is supported by specific details from these accounts, such as Aaron's rod consuming the sorcerers' rods, indicating a true transformation on Moses' part, unlike the sorcerers' rods which offered no resistance and were thus likely not genuinely transformed.

## § 17. Of Satan's Power Over Man's Will

Regarding human will, the Devil cannot directly coerce it. Compromising the will's freedom would essentially nullify its very essence. Hence, in converting sinners, God doesn't force the will but instead inspires the desire to change.

Objection: It's noted that Satan can bend the will of natural men to his desires.

Answer: Satan influences the will through enticements and fears, employing external means to persuade individuals to succumb to his will. Not everyone succumbs to these influences at all times. If Satan could forcibly control the will, he would draw everyone to his cause.

This distinction between God's approach to influencing human will and Satan's tactics highlights the inherent freedom of choice granted to humanity. While Satan can tempt and deceive, he cannot override the fundamental liberty that characterizes human volition.

## § 18. Of Satan's Power over Man's Heart

Concerning the human heart, a bottomless pit of unsearchable depth and deceit, only God possesses the inherent attribute of scrutinizing hearts, a truth that led Nathanael to recognize Christ as the Son of God.

Objection: It's noted that many of Satan's temptations align closely with the inner dispositions and secret intentions of individuals.

Answer: While Satan cannot directly know these secrets, he is adept at inferring them. This inference is not only based on meticulous observation of outward speech and actions but also on understanding the internal humors, temperament, and physical constitution, which he, being a spirit, discerns as readily as visible behaviors.

## § 19. Of Satan's Power in Foretelling Things to Come

Predicting future events without relying on natural signs, effects, or causes is beyond natural capabilities, a divine prerogative that validates the true Jehovah and authenticates His prophets. Satan lacks this ability.

Objection: Instances are cited where Satan and his agents have seemingly predicted future events, as in the encounters with Saul and the divining maid, suggesting even God acknowledges their predictive capacities.

Answer: Satan and his instruments might predict events that can be deduced from natural causes or previously revealed divine secrets. The Devil's extensive knowledge and experience with natural processes allow him to extrapolate outcomes from minimal information, akin to retrieving a bucket from a well by sequentially pulling up a chain link by link. Moreover, he pays close attention to divine revelations, enabling him to appear prescient about matters already divinely foretold. Predictions by the divining maid and similar figures likely stem from subtle natural indications or are mere conjectures.

## § 20. Of the Extent of Satan's Power

Satan's extraordinary capabilities are confined to the realm of natural phenomena, allowing him to execute actions that can be achieved through natural means. For instance, he can manipulate the weather, causing tempests, thunder, and extraordinary fires; disturb

the seas to the point of engulfing ships and lives; provoke floods by causing waters to overflow; on land, he can trigger earthquakes, demolish structures, uproot trees, and transport objects, including humans and animals, through the air. He can enter bodies, inducing self-destructive behaviors or inflicting diseases, possess individuals causing them to become mute, deaf, blind, or exhibit violent behavior. He can provoke negative emotions like anger, pride, greed, and lust; manipulate dispositions to lay or lead into temptations; cloud judgement, and incite mental distress to unbearable levels. Additionally, Satan can fuel conflicts among men, kingdoms, and within political hierarchies, leading to wars, treasons, and other societal chaos. His capacity for causing harm is as vast in variety as it is in number, encompassing a wide array of afflictions and discord.

## § 21. Of the Power of Evil Angels Compared to Good

When comparing Devils with good Angels, to whom they were initially equal in power, it's clear their strength has somewhat diminished following their fall. Whenever conflict arises between good and evil Angels, the latter are consistently outmatched, unable to withstand the former. However, relative to other creatures, their power remains formidable, appearing undiminished by their fall and maintaining their capacity for malevolence.

# § 22. Of the Restraint of Satan's Power

Despite the liberty implied by the power attributed to Devils, it's undeniable that their capabilities are curtailed by a higher authority, the power of God. This limitation prevents them from exercising their full potential or acting entirely as they please, akin to the sea restrained by God's command to go no further. This concept is metaphorically represented by the notion of Devils being "chained," restricted in their ability to harm as one would restrain a dangerous dog.

God's restraint on Satan is evident through several biblical instances, from limiting the Serpent's damage to bruising the heel rather than crushing the head, to specific examples where Satan's influence is clearly checked or permitted by God, such as in the cases of Saul, Ahab, and notably, Job, where Satan's actions are expressly limited to what God allows.

Objection: Some argue that Satan is now "loosed" and enjoys greater freedom to enact his will.

Answer: This perceived loosening is relative, akin to extending a chained dog's leash rather than an absolute freedom. God's limitations serve to distinguish His infinite power from Satan's and assert His sovereignty over all, including those who resist Him.

For humanity, made in God's image, these restrictions are a mercy, preventing Satan from causing utter destruction. Without these

bounds, Satan's wrath would be as unchecked as the sea without shores, potentially overwhelming all creation.

Understanding both the extent and limitations of the Devil's power is crucial. It warns us not to underestimate him, encouraging vigilance and seeking strength beyond ourselves, as advised in the scriptures. Yet, knowing that his power is not absolute nor unchecked by God, we should not despair. Like Job, who endured Satan's assaults but ultimately prevailed, we're reminded of the balance between acknowledging the threat and trusting in God's protective restraints.

## § 23. Of the Place Where Satan Rules

This section reveals further restrictions on the Devil's power by identifying those under his dominion, initially referred to as "worldly governors" and further explicated thereafter.

From the general observation, we deduce that the dominion of Devils is confined to this world and its inhabitants. Their influence stretches no further than this lower world beneath the heavens and lasts no longer than the lifespan of this earthly realm. The Devil's dominion, therefore, is limited to the air, and he is specifically called the god of this world. With the conclusion of this world, Christ will abolish his authority and power.

The Lord has designated this world and its duration as a period of testing to determine who is suited for His kingdom and who is not.

Part of this test involves allowing Satan to exercise dominion and power within this world.

Use: This understanding serves as a significant source of encouragement for us to endure patiently and steadfastly all challenges brought upon us by the Devil's malice and power in this world. These trials cannot extend beyond the bounds of this world; upon departing from it, we escape their jurisdiction and join Christ, our leader, in victory over these principalities. In Heaven, where Christ's physical presence resides, along with the spirits of just and perfect men and the assembly of good Angels, Devils have no place; they have been expelled. Just as Christ, after enduring Satan's assaults in this world, ascended and triumphed over them, so too, if we endure, we shall reign with Him. Death marks our transition from this battleground to a realm of triumph, the final adversary, with its throes being the last conflicts. Reflecting on this, we are inspired to resist steadfastly, even to the point of bloodshed and death.

## § 24. Of the Parties Over Whom Satan Rules

Yet more distinctly are the parties over whom Satan rules, expressed in these words, "Darkness of this world," whereby are meant such ignorant and wicked men as have no light of spiritual understanding, no life of grace in them, and therefore deservedly called darkness.

The Devil's rule and dominion are properly and principally over ignorant and evil men: even such as are described in Chapter 4, verse 18-19, and before that called children of disobedience, or of unbelief, for the original word will bear both. For ignorant men, the Devil is said to be the god of those who are blinded. For the wicked, those who commit sin are said to be of the Devil.

These resist him not but yield to him: for ignorant persons know not his power, malice, subtlety, diligence, mischievous enterprises, with the like: no marvel therefore that they suffer themselves to be guided and governed by Satan. When the men of Aram were stricken with blindness, they were easily, without any resistance, led into the midst of the chiefest and strongest city of their enemies, for they saw not where they went. So, ignorant men, not seeing in whose power they are, suffer themselves to be there.

Wicked persons believe not that the Devil is so cruel a tyrant as he is reported to be: They think him to be the best lord because he suffers them to do as they list, and his temptations are agreeable to their corrupt humors and carnal desires; they take most delight in doing the work of the Devil; yea, as Christ says, they will do the lusts of their father the Devil. Is it then any marvel that the Devil is their governor?

Neither ignorant nor wicked persons will subject themselves to the Lord's government: not ignorant, because they know not the benefit of it; not wicked, because they think it too strict, too much crossing

their licentious humor. Therefore, in justice, God gives them over to the rule of the Devil.

Hereby may trial be made whether we are under the rule and power of the Devil or not. If we love darkness more than light, if we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, we are in the power of the Prince of darkness. Hearken to this, O ignorant persons, you that are neglecters and despisers of the light of God's Word, that cry out against so much preaching: if at least your ears be better than your eyes, and you can believe that which by others is declared unto you. Hearken to this also, O you wicked persons, who pursue so eagerly the evil desires of your hearts, and the foolish customs of the vain world; if at least your evil hearts will let you yield to anything that may turn to your good. Oh, if it were possible, for these two sorts of persons, to see in what a miserable plight they are by those governors under whom they live, then would the ignorant learn knowledge, and sinners enter into a new course. Fondly they think they live in great liberty, whereas in truth, they live in most slavish bondage. I may justly in this case take up the complaint of Wisdom, and say, "O you foolish, how long will you love foolishness," etc.

[Use 2] Hereby also men may learn how to come out of Satan's power; namely, by coming out of darkness into light. So long as we live and lie in darkness, there is no hope, no possibility of freeing ourselves from the tyranny of Satan. God first delivers us from the power of darkness and then translates us into the kingdom of His Son.

This use provides a good direction to magistrates, ministers, to all who have charge of others, and to private persons.

To magistrates, that they take order to establish the ministry of the Word in such places as are under their rule.

To ministers, that they be diligent and faithful in preaching it.

To all who have charge, that they bring such as are under them to the Word.

To private persons, that they be willing to hear, and careful to practice what they hear.

Note what Christ says of the issue and power of the Word preached by his disciples, "He saw Satan fall down like lightning": for by it, men's minds are enlightened, and their hearts converted, so that Satan cannot bear such sway over them, as he does over ignorant and wicked persons.

That which is in general said of freeing men from the tyranny of Satan may particularly be applied to those who are in bondage under his great Vice-roy on earth, even Antichrist, which deceives the greatest part of the world. His kingdom is a kingdom of darkness: where the light of the Gospel shines forth, the clouds and mists of that darkness vanish away. Experience shows that where the preaching of the Word is rare, there is the greatest number of Antichrist's vassals. God grant this may be duly considered by them,

who for the safety of the kingdom, and the furtherance of religion, do treat of means whereby the number of Papists may be diminished.

For ourselves, let us first labor for the light of knowledge to enlighten us, and then for the light of grace to renew us; so shall we be freed from the kingdom of darkness. For attaining hereunto, we must diligently attend to the light of God's word, and also pray for the spirit of revelation and sanctification.

They who have sure evidence that they are light in the Lord may from this reap comfort, in that thereby they may be assured that though they live in the world, yet they are not under the rule of the god of this world: he is Prince only of the darkness of this world. Live, therefore, as children of light, as the Lord's freemen: have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness. For what communion has light with darkness?

## § 25. Of the Nature of Devils

Devils are described as spiritual beings, consistently referred to as spirits throughout both the Old and New Testament. Despite their fall, they remain spiritual entities, as changing their essence would mean the nature that sinned couldn't be held accountable.

Use 1: Misunderstanding the nature of Devils as merely bad qualities or emotions arising from human flesh is a profound error. By defining them as something more substantial than mere affections,

the Apostle clarifies that spiritual beings can be true substances, not merely qualities or sensations. The actions Devils perform, their dwellings, the power they wield, and the suffering they endure, all point to them being substantial entities. Rejecting this understanding diminishes the serious nature of teachings about Devils, turning profound truths into mere myths.

## § 26. Of the Advantage Which Satan Has

The spiritual nature of devils aggravates their terror in many ways. For they being spirits, it follows that they are:

1. Invisible: though they see us in every place and on every side within and without, yet they cannot be seen by us. And as their nature is, so are their assaults, such as cannot be seen by the eyes of flesh and blood. Consider what advantage one who sees has against a blind man. The Sodomites, who fiercely assaulted Lot's house, being stricken with blindness, could do no harm. Elisha himself, alone, led an army of his enemies (being made blind) wherever he wished. To spirits, we are as blind men: we can neither see them nor their assaults. I speak of men as they are flesh and blood, natural men. God gives to those who are born of the Spirit spiritual eyes to discern them and avoid them.

2. Privy to whatever we do or speak, whether we are in company or alone, in light or darkness: scarcely a thought can pass from us, but they can shrewdly guess it. They can soon discern all our

devices against them. The King of Aram found it to be a great disadvantage that his enemy had one who could disclose the words he spoke in his private chamber; and his heart was troubled for this thing. What a great advantage these spiritual enemies have against us, who are flesh and blood!

3. Not hindered by any bodily impediments: no sensible substance can in any way impede their course or slacken their enterprise. They can pass through or pass over all such things that would stop and hinder us: armies of men, stone walls, iron gates, woods, waters, yes, seas, and oceans, and the like. They need not such space of time to pass from place to place as we do; but can suddenly be in diverse places, which are many millions of miles asunder. For they have no corporeal gravity to hinder them, neither can they be stopped by any bodily obstacle. The sun is not swifter than they: the sight of a man's eye, the lightning from heaven is not more quick or speedy. This also is a very great advantage.

4. Not subject to any fainting, wearisomeness, failing, or decaying, as bodies are: for they are simple substances, not formed of any external matter or contrary qualities, which cause fainting, decaying, etc. Hence it is that after they have done many thousand great exploits, they are as fresh and ready to do many more as they were at first. They need no resting time, but continually, night and day, they assault men without intermission and without ceasing. Some comfort it is to those who are sorely assaulted by bodily enemies that the night comes

> on, which usually causes some respite. But in the combat with spiritual enemies, there is no hope of any such matter. No, they are not subject to death: from the beginning of the world, they have assaulted man; and to the end of the world, they shall continue: whereby they must gather much experience, which is a great disadvantage.

I might further proceed to set down other particular points of advantage they have against us, in this respect that they are spiritual beings. But these may suffice, and surely these may be enough to discourage many and make them say;

## § 27. Of the Help We Have Against Satan's Advantages

Despite the formidable advantages our spiritual enemies possess, there's hope in resisting and fighting against them. God, the supreme Spirit and essence of infinite might, surpasses all, including the Devils. His invisibility to them, His omnipresence, and His eternal nature far exceed their capabilities. God endows His followers with the Holy Spirit, granting them spiritual vision to recognize and evade demonic temptations, unveiling the enemy's schemes, and offering divine protection through His angelic hosts.

Use 3: The spiritual nature of our adversaries compellingly reminds us to seek refuge in God, depend on His strength, and arm ourselves

with spiritual armor against their attacks.

## §. 28. Of Satan's evil quality.

The fourth argument by which the devils are described is their quality, which is wickedness.

Some restrain this to their malice in particular. Their malice has been in part laid forth by discovering their manifold wiles, and shall further be declared in the last clause of this verse. Here I will speak of their wickedness in general, for so I take the extent of this word in this place.

The devils are extremely evil: they are wholly and only set upon mischief and wickedness. Therefore, as by a kind of exaggeration they are here called spirits of wickedness, so elsewhere Satan is termed by a kind of propriety that wicked one. Many attributes in Scripture are given to them to set forth their wickedness, as unclean, evil, foul spirits, and the like.

In many respects, the Devil may be accounted most monstrously wicked.

1. Because he was the first author of wickedness: that which Christ says of one particular branch of wickedness may be applied to the general; he is the father of wickedness, and in that respect is said to be a murderer from the beginning.

2. Because by nature he is most impure: no jot, no dram of goodness in him. If that is true of a natural man, "That all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually," much more is it true of the Devil.

3. Because he is most willing and forward unto evil, taking delight therein. Not unfitly may I apply the words of the Psalmist to him, "He loves evil more than good, and lies more than to speak truth." He is so set on mischief that he needs none to egg him forward, neither does it ever repent him of any evil that he does.

4. Because evil is his continual practice: whatever good he can, he hinders, and draws as many as he can to evil: all his temptations are to wickedness. First, he tempted man to sin, and ever since, he ceases not more and more to stir him up thereunto, and that not only by himself but also by his instruments—the flesh, the world, persecutors, idolaters, heretics, profane men, etc.

[Use 1] Hereby may we take notice of the Devil's meddling with us when he prevails against us: Whenever we are solicited to any wickedness, then is the Devil at our elbow; when we commit any wickedness, then has the Devil beguiled us and prevailed against us. As by our disposition to righteousness and the fruits of holiness, we may know the powerful work of the Spirit on us, so we may know the rule of Satan in us by the works of wickedness. Christ proves that the Jews were of their father the Devil because they did the lusts of their

father the Devil. For he that commits sin is of the Devil, who works in the children of disobedience.

This also may serve as a strong motive to dissuade us from all wickedness because it is a diabolical quality: therein we are like not only to filthy swine but even to the infernal spirits. By committing wickedness, we make ourselves the Devil's instruments, yes, his imps and limbs, and we bear his image. If it is a good motive (as needs it must be a good motive, for oft it is urged by the Holy Ghost) to stir us up to holiness and righteousness because the Lord God is holy, because that is his image, that beseems his children; then by the consequence of contraries, it is also a good motive to keep us from wickedness because the Devil is a most wicked spirit.

Note this, all profane men, all impious despisers of God and of his holy ordinances, all cursed swearers and blasphemers, all cruel, malicious, rebellious, riotous, lascivious, beastly persons: in a word, all wicked persons, note this; as here you carry the Devil's image, so assuredly shall you in hell partake of his punishment and torment if you repent not.

They who will have nothing to do with these spirits of wickedness must have nothing to do with wickedness itself. Whosoever lets wickedness reign in them, lets the Devil reign over them. Satan enters not into us but by wickedness.

## § 29. Of the Number of Devils

As a general amplification of all the forenamed arguments, in this description of our spiritual enemies, note how every branch is set down in the plural number: Principalities, Powers, Worldly Governors, Spirits, whereby is implied that

the devils are many. If the question be asked how many they be, I answer that it is a needless, a curious, and doubtful question: there is no ground in Scripture for the resolution of it. If the holy Scripture decides not this question, what Book can decide it? Yea, what need is there that it should be decided? Too curious and too bold they have been who have gone about to divide them into nine orders, opposite to their conceited nine orders of good Angels, and in every order to place certain millions.

But to let pass these uncertainties, certain it is that there are a very great number of hellish spirits: for they made a Host to fight against Michael and his Angels: yea, we read that there were not only seven Devils, but a whole legion in one Man: now a legion is computed to contain about 6666. If at once in one Man there were so many, how many were there in all the World besides: for we may suppose that no man is free at any time but has Devils attending on him to solicit him to evil; so that it is evident, that though their just number cannot be reckoned up, yet that there is a very great number, yea (as the Apostle says of good Angels) an innumerable company.

Quest. Seeing there be so many Devils, how is it that oftentimes there is mention made but of one whom we are to resist, and stand

against?

Answer. This shows that they have a head amongst them; and that he and they concur in the same mind, and all aim at the same end: their forces are so united and combined together, as if they were all but one Devil. Besides, this word Devil is a collective word, which comprises many under it: as Turk, Spaniard, etc. Thus we say, all Christendom together raised an army against the Turk: or England sent forth an army against the Spaniard. Whether, therefore, we use these words Satan, Devil, etc. in the singular number, or Principalities, Powers, etc. in the plural number, all is one. Under one many are comprised, and by many an united power is meant.

[Use] This their number aggravates all the former points: If it be a fearful and terrible thing to be under the bondage of one earthly Tyrant, what is it to be slaves to an innumerable company of Principalities, who have such power, are so malicious and mischievous, and are all spirits, and devils? One Devil is able to foil many armies of flesh and blood: what then is one poor man consisting of flesh, to legions of devils? who have no other hope but in flesh and blood, have no hope of safety at all, but are in a most miserable plight. This hellish Host (if it were seen) could not but be much more terrible to such, than the Host of the Syrians was to him that cried out; Alas master, how shall we do? But to us that fight under Christ's banner, there are two strong props. One, that they which are with us, are more than they which are with them. The other, that there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by

few. That there are more with us than against us, is apparent: for all the good Angels are with us, watch over us, and fight for us. Now it is out of doubt that there are more good Angels than evil: for the Scripture speaks much more of the number of those, than of these. As the Devil had a host of evil Angels with him, so had Michael a host of good Angels with him. Mention is made of one legion of Devils in one man, but Christ could have had more than 12. legions of good Angels to guard him (which amount to about 80,000.) Daniel mentions a far greater number, as thousand thousands, yea, ten thousand thousands: yea, yet further, to show that all the set numbers which we can set, come short of their number, the Apostle terms them, A company of innumerable Angels: surely then there are more with us than against us: for the good Angels are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for their sakes, which shall be heirs of salvation.

The consideration of this is sufficient to uphold us, notwithstanding the multitude of devils. But the other prop for our faith is much stronger and surer; which is God's infinite power, whereby he is able to save as well against many as few. For when we consider that thousand thousands are as one to him, what need the number of millions astonish us, more than one? So that although the devils be many ways fearful to them that are out of the guard of good Angels, and protection of God, yet not to be feared of such as belong to Christ.

# § 30. Of Satan's Abode in the Air

The fifth and last argument whereby our enemies are described is in the last clause of this verse, which of all the rest is most doubtful. Most interpreters so expound it, as if the place of the devils were here set down, namely, the air, which is often called heaven; which being so, hereby is implied, that they have a very great advantage against us, by reason of the place where they are. For the devils being in the air,

1 They are above us, over our heads, everywhere round about us, and so still ready to annoy us: this among men is counted a very great advantage: a few men on a hill, or on high walls and towers are able to do much mischief to a great army in a low valley beneath them.

2 They can espy all things that we do: so that in this respect we are to be the more circumspect over ourselves, and vigilant against them. They who have envious, malicious enemies, which overlook them, and so can see whatsoever they do, will be careful that they do nothing whereby those espers may take advantage to accuse them, or to work any mischief against them.

3 They are in their own kingdom: for the Devil is a prince that rules in the air: Now amongst men, they who are in their own dominion, where they have all at command, where they may still have new supply, have a great advantage. And they who war in their enemies' dominions, had need be backed with a far greater power than their

enemies have: but we of ourselves are far weaker, and less in power than our spiritual enemies, and we fight with them in the air, which is their kingdom, where they have all at command: have they not then in this respect a great advantage? have not we need to be backed with a far greater power?

These and suchlike observations may be drawn from this circumstance of the place: which I have the rather noted because most do so interpret this clause.

## § 31. Of the Cause of Satan's Quarrel

But yet freely and ingenuously to make known my own judgment (with submission to better judgments) I rather think that the Apostle here means the cause or prize of this combat, for which it is maintained, as if it were thus translated, In heavenly things. My reasons are these:

1 In the original, places are not expressed, but indefinitely the Apostle says, In heavenlies. Now when an adjective is so set alone, most usually the substantive understood is thing or things.

2 In other places being thus indefinitely set down, it is taken for heavenly things, and so translated, as Heb. 8. 5. They serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.

3 This word, being often used in the New Testament, at least twenty several times, is never used in any man's opinion (this place only excepted) of any aerial place or thing, but of those things which are truly heavenly and spiritual: the word itself, according to the proper notation thereof, signifies the upper heavenlies: so as most improperly it is taken for the lowest Heavens, the air.

4 It is not a matter of so great weight and moment for spirits to be in high places over us, for they can as much annoy us being beside us, within us, beneath us, as above us: high places may be a help to men who are clogged with flesh and blood, to spirits they can be small advantages.

5 The words being expounded of heavenly things, this last clause adds as great weight to the description of our enemies as any of the former, as we shall see when we handle the Doctrine.

6 Both ancient and later divines, and those of good learning and judgment, have thus expounded this clause; so as it is no new or private conceit of mine.

Objection: This very word is often indefinitely used, as here; and yet it signifies Places, as Chap. 1. Vers. 3. 20. & 2. 6. &c.

Answer: Though it signifies heavenly places, yet not such as are in the lowest heaven the air, but the highest, which is not the place of devils; thither because the devil cannot come, I expound it Heavenly things.

Object. 2. The phrase will not bear this exposition: for the preposition in, is never put for the cause.

Answ. One of the Greek Fathers, who was very skillful in the propriety of that tongue, so expounds it. Besides, this particle is so used in other places of the New Testament: twice in one verse, namely Mat. 10. 32. Whosoever shall confess me, I will confess him, &c: word for word, in me, in him. Here the preposition in signifies the cause, as if he had said; he that shall make confession before men for my sake, I will make confession before my Father for his sake. So again, Mat. 11. 6. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me, that is, for my sake: and Mat. 26. 31. All ye shall be offended in me. The Kings Translators turn it, because of me. So in this my Text, this last clause having reference to the principal verb, may be thus translated; We wrestle because of heavenly things.

The Doctrine then which hence I gather is this:

The main things for which the devils fight against us are heavenly matters. Before I proceed further to prove or apply this point, I will a little more fully explain it.

1 By heavenly matters, I mean such as principally respect God's glory (for God being himself Heavenly, whatsoever tends to his Honour is in that respect Heavenly) and then such as respect our souls' salvation: for as the things which concern the temporal good of our body are earthly, so the things which concern the eternal good of our

souls are Heavenly: for to Heaven they aspire, and in Heaven shall they enjoy their happiness.

2 Where (I say) the devils fight for heavenly matters, my meaning is, not that they desire to get them, but that they endeavour to spoil us of them: so that in this combat the prize propounded to us is heavenly; namely, whether we will serve our Heavenly Father, or the hellish foe: whether we will let go, or fast hold that heavenly treasure which Christ hath purchased for us, all those heavenly things whereby God is honoured, and our souls are saved.

For proof that they be heavenly things which Satan especially aims at, observe those several temptations recorded in the Scripture: I will give a taste of some. What aimed he at in tempting Adam and Eve? was it not to deface God's Image in them, and to strip them of that happiness wherein God had created them? The issue shows as much. What sought he in tempting Christ? was it not to make him doubt whether he were the Son of God or no? yea, and utterly renounce God, and worship the Devil? Was it not Peter's faith that he sought to winnow? Doth he not blind men's eyes, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which is the Image of God, should not shine unto them? As for earthly things, he makes not much account of them, he can be well content to let men enjoy them, he casts them to men as baits: we read how he offered to Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, if Christ would have worshipped him.

Objection: He deprived Job of his temporal estate.

Answer: It was a higher matter which Satan aimed at, namely, to bring him to deny God, and blaspheme him to his face; as may be gathered by Satan's answer to God.

He would make all like to himself. Through his pride he is fallen from Heaven, and utterly spoiled and deprived of all heavenly goodness and happiness; wherefore he seeks also to deprive man of the like.

Behold here the malice of the Devil: it is no good that he seeketh for himself by this fierce and long conflict which he maintaineth, but our woe and misery. He seeks whom to devour. Malice first moved him to assault man, and malice still whets him on to continue his fight against mankind. Durst he ever have ventured on Christ Jesus the Son of God, but that malice wholly possessed him? Not unfitly therefore are many titles given unto him in Scripture to set forth his malice, as Satan, which signifies an adversary; Devil, an accuser, Tempter, Evil one, Enemy, Murderer, and Father of lies. If the reasons of all these names (which are not hard to gather) be duly weighed, they will show that he is even made of malice.

Among other motives to stir us up to arm ourselves well, and constantly to stand and fight against the Devil, this is none of the least. It is no small matter that we fight for, but a matter of the greatest weight and consequence that can be. Satan could say (Job 2. 4.) All that a man hath will he give for his life: yet is life but a temporal and earthly matter. If all for his life, what for his soul, and

the salvation thereof, which is a heavenly matter? so as there is no comparison betwixt them. What then shall it profit a man, though he should win the whole World, if he lose his own soul? or what shall a man give for recompense of his soul? When wise Captains see that a sore and fierce battle is to be fought, which with the very rumour thereof may dishearten their soldiers, they use to hearten and encourage them by bringing to their mind, and setting before them the prize, or cause of their fight: some will say, Lo, ye fight for whole Towns, and Cities, and Kingdoms: others, Ye fight not to get that which is other men's, but to keep that which is your own; ye fight for your Country, your lands and inheritances, your wives and children: others, It is not honour and conquest, they are not goods and lands that ye fight for, but liberty and life: stand to it therefore, if the day be lost, ye are either dead men, or slaves.

Note how the Philistines encouraged one another, Be strong and play the men, O Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews. Now all these are but earthly matters; but I may say to the Lord's soldiers, It is the Lord of Heaven whose battles ye fight, his honour is engaged therein; it is your souls' salvation, and heavenly happiness, which is in hazard: your enemies seek to spoil you of the precious graces of God's sanctifying Spirit, and to deprive you of that rich & glorious inheritance, which Christ by no less price than his own blood hath purchased for you: if ye yield to your enemies, all these ye lose, and become vassals unto your mortal and malicious enemy the Devil, ye are even fire-brands of Hell. Be strong therefore, and of a valiant

courage: fear not, but fight and stand it out to the uttermost; so shall ye be more than conquerors.

The things which especially we ought to look unto, to be watchful over, and to labour to keep safe, are the forenamed heavenly things: and that not only in regard of the excellency and worth of them, but also in regard of Satan's main opposition against them. What he in malice doth most assault, we in wisdom must most defend, and set foot to foot against him: if an enemy bring all his forces against the chiefest Tower of a City, wise Citizens will thither bring their best munition, and strongest defence: if thus we deal with Satan, we shall oppose godly wisdom to his wicked subtlety, and so keep ourselves safe from all his assaults. This is the wisdom which the Apostle here teaches us by those several pieces of Armour, which follow to be handled: for they are all concerning heavenly things, and tend to the salvation of the soul.

## The Fourth Part:

## A Repetition of the Means

"For this reason, take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand." - Ephesians 6:13

## §1. On Repeating the Same Thing

Here the Apostle returns again to the second part of his former direction, and repeats in effect the very same things which he delivered in verse 11: namely, how we may keep ourselves safe against the forenamed enemies.

We may not think that this repetition is vain and idle: for he was guided by God's Holy Spirit, who does nothing in vain. Note what Joseph says of the iteration of one and the same thing to Pharaoh in two dreams, "The dream was doubled the second time, because the thing is established by God, and God hastens to perform it." Many good reasons may be given why here the Apostle repeats his direction, as, to show,

1. That what he had delivered before was upon very good advice delivered: not rashly, so as he doubted whether he might stand to it or not, but so as he dares avouch it again and again, as being an infallible truth, which he also knew to be a truth. Like to that thundering denunciation of a curse against all that should preach another Gospel, which he lays down twice together.

2. That it was a needful, behooveful, and profitable truth: a most sovereign and necessary means to keep us safe: necessary for us,

in regard to our own inability to stand fast without it; sovereign in regard to the sufficiency of the means, which can and will (being rightly used) keep us safe. Mark the reason why it was not grievous to the Apostle to write the same things, even because to them to whom he wrote, it was safe.

3. That naturally we are backward and sluggish in using this armour: therefore he thought it not enough once to urge the point, but again presses it. Thus Solomon often repeats diverse exhortations. So Captains, when they see their soldiers loath to arm when there is great need they should arm, will call upon them again and again to arm.

Ministers may here learn, as just occasion is given, to call their people to the remembrance of weighty points, especially such as they observe their people most backward unto. It is not sufficient once to have delivered such a point, but again, and if need be, again it is to be urged. The Apostle having propounded Christ as a pattern of patience to the Hebrews, because he was a most worthy and perfect pattern, he calls them again to consider him. Thus shall Ministers show that they make a difference between points of less or greater need; and that they have respect to the good of their people.

Objection. Many will say that Ministers want matter, and therefore repeat the same things.

Answer. The very same may be objected against the repetitions used by the Prophets, by Christ himself, by his Apostles, and other faithful

and able Ministers. But let Ministers see that they do it not out of idleness, but just cause, and then need they not fear such cavils.

People must here learn patience, not to snuff or be discontent if they hear the same thing again, which before they heard. This impatience argues an itching ear, which cannot endure a repetition of anything, and it shows that they have more respect to the ear than to the heart: like the Israelites, who had more respect to their outward taste than to their inward nourishment, and thereupon loathed Manna because they had so often tasted of it. This makes people get them a heap of Teachers.

In particular concerning the present point in hand, persuade ourselves that it is a point worthy to be attended to with all diligence, and to be observed with good conscience; that so we may give the more earnest heed thereto, and not let it slip. Have we also a holy jealousy and suspicion over ourselves, fearing lest we should be too careless in using these means for our safety, yea, too incredulous in believing the good use and benefit of them. Therefore, rouse ourselves up: for where the Spirit is most earnest in urging a point, we must be most heedful in marking it.

### §2. Danger Must Make Watchful

Before we come to the particular branches of this verse, note the inference of it upon the former, which is plainly implied in these words, "For this cause," that is, because you have such terrible enemies as have been described unto you, "Take the whole Armour,"

etc. By this inference, the Apostle gives us to understand that the more dreadful and dangerous our enemies are, the more careful we ought to be to stand upon our guard and to look to our defence. This is, in effect, the same as what was delivered in the beginning of verse 12; we will, therefore, no longer insist upon it..

### §3. A Resolution of the Verse

This verse may be divided and branched forth as verse 11 was.

The sum of it is a direction to instruct us how to defend and keep ourselves safe against the Devil.

The parts are two. The first shows what are the means of safety. The second declares the end why these means are to be used.

In the first, he declares, 1. What the means are. 2. How to use them.

The means are the very same as were delivered in verse 11, namely, the whole Armour of God. I shall need to speak no more thereof.

For using the means, the Apostle sets down another word than before: there he said, "Put on." Here, "take unto you." Both words, in general, imply one and the same thing. This latter word is a compound word and signifies sometimes to take up or to take unto yourselves; sometimes to take again or recover. We are said to take up unto ourselves such things as we have not of ourselves and to take again or recover that which we have lost or let go. Both significations may be here applied.

§ 4. Whence Our Defence Cometh From the first I gather that,

The graces whereby we are armed are not virtues or qualities which arise from ourselves; for then it would be improperly said; Take unto you. These graces are some of those special gifts which come from above, which we receive.

By nature, we are born in our souls as naked and destitute of spiritual armour, as in our bodies of outward clothing. Read Ezekiel 16:4-5, etc.

[Use] If we find ourselves destitute of this armour, we must seek it, not in ourselves, but outside of ourselves, even where it is to be had; and that is in the Lord: for every perfect gift comes from the Father of lights. He gives it to such as seek it by faithful prayer in the means appointed by Him, which are His holy word and Sacraments. When there is news of the enemy's coming to invade our Land, and thereupon Proclamations and Edicts are sent forth to charge all to arm themselves: then everyone that either regards his own safety, or his Sovereign's charge, seeks out armour: and to the Armouries do they who have none, resort. We have the same motives to stir us up to seek spiritual armour.

§ 5. Of the Repair of Grace From the second I gather that,

The graces which are decayed in us, or seem to be lost, may be resumed and recovered. Thus much intimates Christ unto Peter, saying, When thou art converted, etc. This cannot be meant of his

first conversion, which long before was wrought in him, but of his recovery. The Prophets often call upon God's people, who had made themselves naked, and fallen off from their Lord and Captain the Lord God, to return again unto Him. Very express and direct for this purpose is the charge of Christ to Ephesus, Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works. Was it not the recovery of grace which David so earnestly prayed for? In faith he prayed, and was heard.

Two strong props there be to strengthen our faith in the recovery of grace. One without us, which is the Author of grace. The other within us, which is the seed of grace.

1. It is God who is the author of grace, who as in His nature, so likewise in His properties, is unchangeable: so that the same cause which moved God to bestow the graces of His Spirit on a man, still remains in Him to make him renew His Spirit, and that is His mercy and goodness, which can no more be turned from His children than the Sun can be pulled out of Heaven. A cloud may hinder the bright beams of the Sun, yet still it shines, and will at length break forth: so the beams of God's kindness by the clouds of our infirmities may be kept from us, but still there remains mercy in God, which will at length break through those clouds. For whom God once loves He loves unto the end: and in this respect, the graces of His holy Spirit are termed gifts without repentance.

2. The seed of grace is not corruptible, but incorruptible. The Apostle calls it the seed of God: this seed is the holy sanctifying Spirit of God, which Christ very fitly compares to a springing well, out of which flow rivers of water of life, whereby supply and repair of grace, if it fails, may be made. Now this seed remaining in them who are born of God, who can doubt but that which is decayed or impaired in them through negligence, security, pride, or any infirmity, may by repentance be renewed and recovered?

This highly commends the riches of God's mercy, who contents not Himself that once He hath well armed and prepared His soldiers against their enemies, but is still ready to make repair of that which is battered, shattered, or lost through the violent assaults of the enemy, or through their own negligence. One would think it sufficient that once He bestowed on us whole Armour, even such as is sufficient to keep us safe, if ourselves be not in fault. But when through our default any of the pieces thereof are faulty or missing, to make it all up whole again, much amplifies His goodness.

This also shows a main difference betwixt the Law and the Gospel. 'For the Law leaves no place for repentance, nor affords any means to resume that which is lost, or recover that which is decayed, but utterly condemns a man for that which is lost or decayed: for it says; Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them. Galatians 3:10: But the voice of the Gospel is Repent, sin no more, Turn you, turn you from your

wicked ways; for why will you die? I may in this respect resemble the Law to Abishai, the Gospel to David: Both of them found their enemy: Abishai would presently have smote him stark dead: but David wakes him, tells him in what danger he was, admonishes him to look better to himself. Thus the Law sets forth the rigour of God's justice, the Gospel the riches of His mercy.

## § 6. Why the Whole Armour is to be Used

The reason why this whole armour is to be used now follows. It consists of two branches, first to withstand, which implies a fight. Secondly, to stand fast, which implies the issue of the fight, victory, and conquest: both of them amplified with a circumstance of time, but in a differing manner. The first has respect to the present time (in the evil day). The second to the past time (having done all). In setting down the end, he also declares the benefit of this armour (that you may be able) whereof we have spoken in the 1st verse.

The word whereby the end in the first branch is expressed, is not altogether the same that was used in the 11th verse. The word there used was simple to stand. Here it is compound to withstand, or stand against. This is a word of defiance and combat, and it also implies the manner of fight, which is face to face, hand to hand, foot to foot, not yielding an hair's breadth to the enemy.

## § 7. Of Manful Standing

Here then are two duties to be observed by all such as have taken unto them the whole Armour of God.

1. That stoutly they stand against their enemies, and bid them defiance: Hereof we shall speak more on the first word of the next verse.

2. That they give no place unto them. This is a duty which the Apostle in express words commands. Often it is implied under this word that is here used. A worthy pattern we have hereof in the example of our Lord and General, Christ Jesus, who still withstood Satan in every assault, and would not yield any whit at all in any of his temptations.

Our arch-enemy is both crafty as a fox, and cruel as a lion: his craft will make him soon espy and take advantage: his cruelty will make him follow it to the utmost.

Great is their folly who first yield a little, and then think well enough to acquit themselves: they much deceive themselves: for after they have once yielded, they have neither will nor power to stand, as they had before. For as Satan is subtle, so is sin deceitful: whoever once has tasted of it, will scarcely content himself with a taste, but will still more and more hunger after it. Thousands are deceived therewith, and by small yieldings at first, at length are completely overthrown. An especial point of wisdom it is to duly consider our own folly and weakness together with the devil's craft and power, how in ourselves (without this armour) there is no comparison between us and our

enemies: yea, also to consider the nature of sin, and our proneness thereto; that so we may resolutely set ourselves against all temptations, not yielding any whit at all to any. Who almost finds not by woeful experience that a little yielding has caused a great overthrow?

## § 8. Of the Evil Day

The time against which the aforementioned armour is prepared is next to be handled. It is here termed the evil day. By evil is meant not so much sin as trouble; and day is put for any continuance of time. Some take the evil day for the whole time of a man's life, yea, for the continuance of this world, all which time Satan assaults us, but no longer.

This I take to be too large an extent of this phrase, for in the original there is to each word adjoined an article, that day, that evil day, which implies some set and distinct time; wherefore others restrain it to the day of a man's death: but that I take to be too strict a restraint: there are many other days and times wherein use is to be made of armour. Wherefore, in the mean between both, I expound the evil day to be that time wherein Satan shall any way set upon us and assault us, whether by outward afflictions or otherwise. All his temptations tend to evil; and therefore, the time wherein he assaults us may well be termed an evil day.

Question: When comes that day?

Answer: It is no more known beforehand than the day of death or the day of judgement. Whenever the Lord lets loose the reins to Satan, then is that evil day. That time wherein the Devil deprived Job of all he had, smote his body with sore boils, vexed him by his wife and friends, were evil days to Job.

## § 9. Of Satan's Being Loose

In that the Apostle tells us of an evil day, he implies

There are times appointed wherein the Devil shall be let loose, and have liberty to assault us. This the Apostle expressly foretold, saying, "There shall come perilous times." Mark the answer that was made to the souls under the altar, "That they should rest until their brethren who should be killed as they were, were fulfilled." Thereby is declared, that as they who were dead had their evil days, so the living should have their evil days. The Apostle makes a necessity hereof, and puts a must unto it, saying; "We must through many afflictions enter into the Kingdom of God." As there are common times of trial for whole Churches, so for particular persons. There is little reason for anyone to doubt hereof, but it is a point of good wisdom for all to look for it. For who is there that has not felt some experience hereof, and by his own experience can verify the truth of this point?

The Lord will have all his tried: for so is His own power, mercy, and wisdom the more manifested in His Saints; and so are His enemies the more confounded. Besides, the Lord will hereby make a difference between His Church here on earth and in Heaven.

Be not secure, as if no evil day could or would come: this is a most dangerous conceit, whereby the Devil gets great advantage, for thus he suddenly surprises many: and yet it is the conceit of too too many; In their peace and prosperity, they think there shall be no alteration, they shall never be moved: not only careless worldlings, but oftentimes God's children fall into this conceit, as David. Take heed hereof, though for a while we think all well, yet always it shall not be so: the evil day comes sooner upon some; later upon others; longer it tarries with some, shorter with others, yet it comes upon all: though it be uncertain when it comes, and how long it tarries, yet most certain it is that it will come.

## § 10. Of Preparation Against Trial

As another use of this, note the next point, for in regard hereof the Apostle counsels us to prepare against it: yea, he mentions the evil day, as a motive to make us watchful and careful to arm ourselves against it. Now then, in that he bids us take armour, that we may stand in the evil day, his counsel is that

Preparation must be made beforehand, against the time of trial. The care which Job had for his children beforehand, must we have for ourselves. It would seem that he himself looked for the evil days that came upon him: for he says; "The thing which I greatly feared has come upon me," etc. And this was what made him so well endure such sore assaults. Very careful was Christ in preparing the disciples against his departure, because he knew there were evil days coming

upon them. The last petition of the Lord's Prayer tends to this purpose.

If preparation is not made beforehand, we may suddenly be surprised and overcome, like the people of Laish. But if we are well prepared, we may well be more secure.

What is likely to be the outcome for those who put the evil day far away from them, and never think of resisting the evil one until he sets upon them? Many thus plunge themselves into much misery. The children of this world are in this respect wiser than many Christians: for they use in times of peace to have their trainings, musterings, tiltings, and many other martial exercises, that thus they may be beforehand prepared for war.

Let us in the time of our greatest tranquillity meditate on the evil to come: and for our help herein, observe what evil falls upon others, and consider the like or worse might have befallen, or may afterwards befall us: and therefore thoroughly examine ourselves, and search what faith, what hope, what righteousness, what sincerity, what other good and needful graces we have in us, that we be not found wanting in our armour when the Devil comes to assault us.

Hitherto of the first branch, concerning the end of arming ourselves.

## § 11. Of the Multitude of Trials

The second follows, wherein the circumstance of Time is first laid down, and first to be handled: It is in these words, "having done all things"; that is, having well passed over all those challenges, whereunto you shall be brought, and well acquitted yourselves.

Here first the Apostle implies that

Many trials are to be undergone, many assaults to be withstood, before we can look to be free and safe. Through many afflictions, we must enter into the Kingdom of God. Many are the troubles of the righteous. This was presented to us in Christ our head, and in all His faithful members in all ages, in Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, etc.

The ancient Jews were a special type hereof. Canaan, a place of rest and quiet, was promised to them; but before they entered into it, they went into Egypt, and were there bondsmen; from thence they came into the Wilderness, where they were brought to many straits and difficulties; and lastly, many sore battles fought, before they could have rest in Canaan.

This partly arises from God's good and wise ordering of matters to His own glory, and His children's good: and partly from Satan's insatiable cruelty, who never thinks he has assaulted enough, so long as a Christian soldier stands: It was a sore blow he gave Job when he deprived him of all his goods and children; a blow that might have struck another down, yea, stark dead: but because he stood stoutly, he lent him another blow, which was much sorer; yea, still he laid on with all his might, till God would suffer him to strike no longer. The

like insatiableness is manifested in his instruments: Instance Saul's pursuing of David, and the Pharisees persecuting of Christ: they were never satisfied.

Think not the Christian combat ended when some few battles are fought, and that you are now out of all danger, because through God's mercy and power you have hitherto been delivered; rather expect and prepare for more. No doubt but Peter thought himself safe enough, when one maid who would have betrayed him was gone away: but we read that a second came to him, yea others also. Wherefore, so long as Satan has liberty, (which will be so long as we, or any other man lives in this world) let us be watchful, and still prepared for many assaults one after another. Many stout victorious monarchs have been overthrown, because after a conquest they feared no fresh assault, and so have been suddenly surprised. It would seem that Belshazzar was so overtaken, because the same day that he made his royal feast, he himself was slain, and his kingdom taken by Darius.

[Use 2] Many think, that by reason of those many assaults which the Devil makes against them, and the many trials whereunto they are brought, God has utterly forsaken them, and given them over to the power of their enemies; this then may serve for their comfort, and as a prop to uphold them, that God does thus order the estate of His children, that many things must be done and finished before we can look for rest.

## § 12. Of Holding Out

The word which the Apostle uses to set down the time of conquest is a word of perfection and implies a full and final ending of a matter: to it, he adds a very general particle, all; whereby he teaches us that,

It is not sufficient to begin the fight well and make a good onset, nor yet to hold out the brunt of some assaults, but all, however many and of whatever kind, must be held out; all must be finished before we can look for victory. He that says all, excepts not any at all. This perfect finishing of all is what the Apostle so earnestly exhorts the Hebrews to and plainly tells them, that yet longer they were to endure, because they had not resisted unto blood, and therefore not finished all. In this respect, says Saint James, "Let patience have her perfect work." This was Christ's care, to finish all; therefore, when he was going to his triumph, he said, "I have finished the work," etc., and again, "It is finished." So the Apostle (who would have us follow him, as he followed Christ) "I have fought a good fight, and have finished my course."

The promises of reward are restrained to this condition, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." To all those seven Churches of Asia, to which Christ wrote, he promised a reward, but with a proviso of overcoming. He that prevails in some conflicts, and is at length overthrown, cannot properly be said to overcome: so that all which is done, is in vain, if all be not done. For mark what the Lord says; "If

any man draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Saul fought many of the Lord's battles valiantly; but he withdrew himself, and the Lord forsook him, so as at length he was overthrown. Was not the glory of all the former victories utterly dashed hereby? Did not the Philistines as much (if not more so) insult over him? So will the Devil.

Be careful to add constancy to courage if you desire the crown of conquest; and though you have done many things, yet give not over so long as there remains anything to be done. Do not so much consider what conflicts have been endured as how many are yet still to be endured. Regard what is to come, rather than what is past. This was Saint Paul's mindset. Many in all ages, who have done many things, have lost the crown of glory because they have not done all. I wish the times and ages wherein we live did not afford so many examples of backsliding as they do. Many have fallen, more are likely to fall: the times are evil, men are weak, all of us prone to faint.

## § 13. Of the Issue of Constancy

Yet for our encouragement, note the last word of this verse, "to stand," wherein the second branch of the end here propounded is laid down. To stand, in this place, is a note of victory; it implies that Satan, notwithstanding all his power, malice, subtlety, fury, diligence, and the like, cannot overthrow those that are well-armed; but as conquerors, when all the conflicts are ended, they shall stand safe and sure, even the last in the field. It is here added as the issue

of the former point, as if he should have said; "If manfully you withstand your enemies, at length you shall stand as conquerors over them." The point here to be noted is this, that courage and constancy bring assured conquest and victory. The promises before mentioned intimate as much. That which Saint James lays down as the issue of resisting the Devil is in effect the very same which is here laid down. There it is said; the Devil will flee; here, we shall be able to stand: The Devil's flight and our standing both imply a conquest. This was the end which we know the Lord made at the end of Job's patience. Hence it is that the Apostle counts the man blessed that endures temptation.

God's honor is otherwise impeached if those who finish all are not crowned as conquerors: of all men, Christ's soldiers are otherwise the most miserable. Where then is the privilege of enduring? Wherein lies the difference between those who fight under Christ's banner and others, if not in prevailing? For the time, Christ's soldiers are commonly much more sorely assaulted. But herein consists the difference, that they are never forsaken, that the Lord will give a good issue; that though they are brought unto temptation, yet they are never cast into it: "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest on the lot of the righteous."

In all conflicts, have an eye to this end; though your enemies be many and fierce, yet fear not, you shall stand when they shall flee. Patiently wait, and faint not. "He that believeth shall not make haste:" for God, who alone can end the fight, stands by: he orders all

the assaults, for number, measure, kind, continuance, and every other circumstance; and knows when and how to determine all. Therefore, courageously withstand your enemies, that you may victoriously stand. For to give no place to the devil is to overcome the devil.

# The Second Treatise

Of the Particular Pieces of Armour.

# The First Part.

The Duty of Those Who Have These Pieces.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt, &c. - Ephesians 6:14

§. 1. Of the Coherence.

Unto the aforementioned general direction, the Apostle adds a particular exemplification of the same, distinctly setting down certain special graces by which, as with pieces of armour, we may stand fast. This exemplification is set forth in the form of an exhortation, wherein note,

1. The duty to which he exhorts.

2. The means and manner how it is to be performed.

The duty is in this word: stand. Though this word is the same as that which immediately before is set down, yet it is not of the same mood, nor of the same tense. That was a standing after the battle is ended, and so a word of conquest; this is a standing in the battle, and so a word of conflict. This is of the imperative mood and implies a duty; and not one duty only, but many duties: for it is a metaphorical word taken from soldiers, and according to the diverse acceptation of the metaphor, it implies diverse duties.

## §. 2. Of a Soldier's Standing

1. A soldier-like courage: for as white-livered, fresh-water, faint-hearted soldiers are ready upon every brunt to yield and run away, so valiant courageous soldiers stand stoutly against every brunt; and will rather stand and die, then stir and yield.

2. A settled abiding in one's proper place, or standing in his rank, neither straggling abroad nor going into any other's place. Experienced soldiers well know what a safeguard it is to have the ranks well kept, and therefore will not step aside.

3. A watchfulness opposed to luskishness and sluggishness: a heavy-headed, idle, luskish soldier, is ever ready to lie down, like a tired ox or horse; but a wise watchful soldier stands to receive his enemy whenever he makes any assault.

4. Perseverance with armour still on the back: faint-hearted weak soldiers being loath long to bear the burden of their armour, will

oft put it on and off; when a skirmish is past, off goes the armour, and so is laid aside till they be forced again to put it on. But old well-experienced soldiers stand still with their armour, looking for a fresh assault, and for more conflicts.

## §. 3. Of Christian Valour

1. We must be of a valorous courageous mind against all our enemies, standing stoutly against them, and bidding defiance to them all, even as David stood against Goliath. How needful this is in war against flesh and blood, appears by God's earnest urging of it to Joshua. But much more needful it is in war against spirits.

For they, though bold enough, yet are daunted with the stout standing of Christ's soldiers; but heartened with timorousness. Besides, the courage of some valorous soldiers adds spirits to all their fellows.

That we may with courage stand against our enemies, observe these and such like grounds of encouragement:

1. That the Lord is with us, and will not fail us.

2. That we fight in his name and power, but our enemies in their own.

3. That our battle is most just, and we fight in a just cause.

4. That we fight with enemies spoiled, whose weapons are blunted, whose power is limited.

5. That we have the promise of victory, and so are sure not to be overcome.

## §. 4. Of Keeping Our Rank

We must be careful to abide in the place where our Lord has set us. For this, know that we have a dual calling, one general, as we are Christians, and the other particular, as we are distinguished in the Church, Commonwealth, or Family. Accordingly, these two points are to be observed:

1. That we remain steadfast in the true Church where the Lord's banner is displayed: that we retain our profession, and not start from it for gain as Demas, or due to persecution, as those who forsook Paul. Straggling soldiers lose the succour of their Captain and the help of their fellow soldiers. Such stragglers from Christ's armies are separatists, heretics, time-servers, and all revolters.

2. That we be conscientious and diligent in the various functions of our particular callings: as in the Commonwealth, Kings, Judges, Justices, all Magistrates, all Subjects also, all of any Office, Trade, &c. In the Church, Ministers, other Church Officers, and people. In the Family, Masters and Servants, Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children. For this end, particular duties are

prescribed to particular functions in God's word. Many weighty reasons there are to urge this:

1. God has appointed to everyone his distinct place. Now, it was the commendation of Christ, and of Moses, that they were faithful to Him who appointed them.

2. Everyone shall be called to account for those duties which belong to his particular calling; according to that which was said to the Steward, "Give an account of thy stewardship." Luke 16:2.

3. The order in which everyone is set is the very beauty of the Church, and of the body of Christ: as the several places of several members are the grace of a natural body; yes, this order is the strength of the Church, as in an army: in this respect, the Apostle says that the body of Christ is fitly joined together and firmly compacted.

4. The graces which God bestows on us, such as faith, love, obedience, patience, wisdom, &c., are best exercised and manifested in our particular callings.

5. In our proper distinct places, we have the Lord's promise of protection, but not out of them. Many judgements have God executed on busybodies that entered upon others' places; instance Korah and his conspiracy, Absalom, Uzziah, &c

Wherefore, we are to take good notice of our particular places, and of the particular duties belonging unto them, and both pray and labour for skill and ability to perform them. It is the wisdom of the prudent to understand his way.

### §. 5. Of Watchfulness

We must be watchful, and stand upon our defence against our enemy; he, as a thief, will suddenly set upon us; coming when we are not aware of him. For the better performance of this duty, we must take heed of such things as may breed in us a spiritual slumbering and drowsiness, such as earthly delights and pleasures, worldly cares, &c. Those who wish to watch must be sober.

### §. 6. Of Perseverance

We must persevere and continue in well employing the graces of God's Spirit for our defence: thus may we better stand in the spiritual combat than in our outward bodily fight: for our bodies have need to have the armour put off, for their ease and refreshing; but our souls have no such need. The armour of God is not burdensome to the spirit. Of this duty, I spoke more fully in the 12th section of the fourth part.

Thus much for the duties which this first word stand implies.

# The Second Part.

The Kinds of the Pieces of Armour Prescribed.

§. 1. Of the Several Pieces of the Armour of God in General.

The next point concerns the means or manner of standing, in the words following, having your loins girt, &c.

In verses 14, 15, 16, and 17, there are six several graces of the Spirit, compared to six different pieces of armour, which are special means to make us stand fast. They are these:

1. Verity. Compared to a Girdle.
2. Righteousness. Compared to a Breastplate.
3. Patience. Compared to Shoes.
4. Faith. Compared to a Shield.
5. Hope. Compared to an Helmet.
6. Word of God. Compared to a Sword.

From this particular enumeration of these several graces and pieces of armour, I will deliver three or four general observations, and then distinctly handle them one by one, as they lie in order.

§. 2. Of Defending Ourselves

Most of these several pieces, even all of them but one, are defensive; that one which is offensive, namely the Word of God, compared to a sword, is also defensive, as well as the rest: whereby it is intimated that,

[Use] We that are Christians must rather seek to defend ourselves than annoy others. This was represented in the combat which our Lord fought with the devil: For Christ was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and being there, the tempter came first unto him, and first set upon him: here we see that there was a necessity to move Christ to fight, and that in a double respect. First, in that he was brought into the lists. Secondly, that being there, he was assaulted. In this fight, Christ especially aimed to defend himself and to repel his adversary's weapons. Therefore, all his answers are framed directly according to Satan's objections. The like we may observe in his conflicts with the instruments of Satan, the Scribes, Pharisees, Herodians, etc., as also in those conflicts, which his Prophets, Apostles, and other Saints have had with Satan and his instruments.

Hereby we see that we fight in a just quarrel: for what juster cause can there be, then for a man to defend himself and his own right?

Object. But defendants are oft in the greatest blame.

Answ. True, when they keep men from their own right, and make them recover it by force. But we keep nothing from Satan which is his due: he seeks to get those from Christ, whom Christ has dearly bought, even with the price of his own blood. It is therefore a diabolical property to raise unjust quarrels and by force to seek to wring from any that which he has no right to. If we be thus set upon, lawfully we may defend ourselves, and with confidence call for God's aid, yea also in faith depend upon him.

### §. 3. Of Resisting

One offensive weapon, the Word of God, which is a Sword, is put into our hands, so that just occasion being offered, we may and ought to do our best to repel and drive away the devil, and his instruments. Hereof I shall speak more largely at the beginning of verse 17.

### §. 4. Of Standing at Defiance

Every part and piece of this Armour is for the forepart of a man, not a piece for his back or hindparts. What does this imply, but that we should always stand against our enemies face to face, and never show them our backs, never fly from them? But have Nehemiah's holy resolution, and say, should such as we fly? Often we are stirred up to fight, wrestle, stand, resist, etc., never persuaded in the whole book of God to fly, that is, to yield the victory unto Satan. We may wisely avoid his temptations and not yield to them when by them he seeks to draw us from the service

of our Lord to his slavery; and thus, we are commanded to flee from idolatry, to flee from the lusts of youth, etc. But timorously to cease from resisting temptations and withstanding the Devil is dangerous to ourselves and dishonorable to God; it makes Satan even insult over God Himself, whose soldiers we are, and get great advantage against us; for flying from God whom have we to fly unto? Being out of God's protection, the Devil will soon make prey of us. Let us not think that if we yield the field, the Devil will be contented: It is not the glory of conquest that he seeks so much as our destruction: He seeks whom to devour.

### §. 5. Of the Sufficiency of Our Armour

In this particular enumeration of these several pieces, I find a Christian soldier armed from top to toe: for here is a Helmet for his head and face, a Breastplate, together with the tassets and cuisses, from neck to middle, and from thence to the knees; a Girdle to knit them together; greaves from knees to the soles of the feet; a Sword for the right hand, and a Shield for the left. Well, therefore, might the Apostle term it whole armour.

[Use 1] So whole and complete is this armour, as we need seek for no other to add to it, or to cover it over. As it is madness to reject this, and trust to the clout and paper armour of Papists and worldlings, so it is childishness and mere folly to cover this whole armour over with any other, and so needlessly clog the soul; yea, it is derogatory to God's honour and wisdom, and a

degree of presumption. Such are they as acknowledge and believe that the word of God is perfect, and yet think it no harm to have human traditions added thereto; or that Christ only is able to save, and yet the help of Saints to do no harm; or that faith only is sufficient for justification, and yet no hurt to join works also with faith, in the office of justifying a sinner, etc.

[Use 2] Let our care be to be armed with this whole armour, and every piece of it, and so we may well content ourselves therewith. Boldly may we defy our enemies having it on, and not fear what they can do unto us. These uses have been largely handled, so as I need not now further insist upon them.

# The Third Part

# Girdle of Truth.

"Having your loins girt about with Truth." Ephes: 6. 14.

§. 1. Of the Diverse Kinds of Truth

The first piece of spiritual armour here in order set down by the Apostle is truth. In handling this, I will show, first, what truth is here meant. Secondly, how fitly it is compared to a girdle.

Thirdly, what account is to be made of it. Fourthly, what wiles the devil has to wrest it from us.

For the first, there is in man a four-fold truth:

1. Of judgement. 2. Of heart. 3. Of speech. 4. Of action.

Truth of judgement is when a man's judgement agrees with God's word, which is the touchstone of truth: so that the principles of the religion which he professes, and his opinion concerning the same, are grounded thereon, and may be warranted thereby. When the understanding of man, being enlightened by God's Spirit, and informed by His word, remains settled and established in that doctrine which the word of God teaches, then there is truth in his judgement. This truth was it for which Saint Peter commended the distressed Jews to whom he wrote, and which Saint Paul exhorted the Ephesians to follow. This is opposed to error.

Truth of heart is the singleness and sincerity thereof, whereby a man seeks to approve himself unto God, the searcher of all hearts, and to be accepted by Him. This is that truth in the inward affection which God loves, and with which Hezekiah comforted himself, yea, which he pleaded before the Lord when he had received a sentence of death. This is opposed to hypocrisy.

Truth of speech is an agreement of the word of a man's mouth both with his mind and also with the matter which he utters. This is it, to which we are exhorted in Ephesians 4:25, "speak the truth." And which the Apostle often affirms of himself. This is opposed to lying when a man speaks against his mind and conscience, and to falsehood when a man speaks contrary to the thing itself.

Truth of action is a plain, faithful, and honest dealing in all things, whether we have to do with God or man; when men neither make a show of doing that which indeed they do not, or of doing it otherwise than they do. This truth was in Nathanael, in which respect Christ called him an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit. This is opposed to dissimulation and deceit.

### §. 2. What Kind of Truth Is Here Meant

Some apply the truth here mentioned to doctrine and religion, as if only the soundness of it were meant; others restrain it to the uprightness and sincerity of our hearts and affections; others understand it of the truth of our words and speeches; and others expound it of the purity and innocence of our practice and carriage.

But whoever excludes any of these forenamed branches of truth comes (as I take it) short of the Apostle's meaning; all of them must concur to make up the strength and beauty of this girdle. For truth is a general property, which, like salt, seasons

everything and makes it savoury to God and man: the whole lump must be leavened with it, I mean the whole man throughout, his opinion, his affection, his communication, his conversation.

1. Truth of judgement is the ground of all the rest: for though our hearts be never so sincere, our speeches never so true, our actions never so plain, yet if in judgement we be misled, all is but as straw and stubble, which when it comes to the fire of trial, will soon be consumed. It seems that before Paul was instructed in the truth of the Gospel, he had a kind of truth in his heart, for he was zealous towards God; yea also in his speeches and actions, for he was unrebukable concerning the righteousness which is in the Law; yea, he thought in himself he ought to do what he did. He had not a double heart, a double tongue; he pretended not what he never intended; yet because he lacked truth in judgement, all was but dross, and loss unto him.

2. To truth of judgement, must truth of heart be added, or else notwithstanding the soundness of doctrine which we profess, we make ourselves odious and abominable to God. For God gave man but one single simple heart; if any have a heart and a heart, the Devil has given him a double heart; it is no part of God's image, God will not acknowledge it. Judas knew the truth of religion, and preached it as well as the other disciples, but lacking truth in his other parts, what

good got he thereby but the witness of his conscience against himself?

3. But what if a man who professes the true religion thinks he has a single heart and yet is given to lying and to deal deceitfully? Surely he disgraces his profession and gives just cause for suspicion that he has no honest heart. For the heart is like a fountain. Out of the abundance of the heart, proceed a man's words and actions; yes, the heart is like a queen and has command of a man's tongue and all his outward parts. So that if there be truth in it, there will be truth in all the other parts; sincerity in the heart will keep the tongue from lying and the whole carriage of a man from dissimulation and deceit. We see then that of necessity all these four branches of truth must be joined together to make up this girdle.

## §. 3. What Kind of Girdle Is Here Meant

[Point 11] The next point concerns the metaphor, and the fit application of this grace of truth. This speech of girding the loins is in Scripture taken in a double sense: one for trussing up a man's garments, the other for close and fast tying his armour together. In the former sense, the metaphor is taken from travellers or runners: for in those countries, they were wont to wear long aside garments, which if they were not tucked up, would hang dangling about the heels of such as travelled or ran a race, and so be a great hindrance to them. In this sense, this

metaphor is often used, and thereby God's people were taught to remove all impediments in their Christian course and journey, and to be as well prepared as they could be to perform the work of the Lord. In the latter sense, the metaphor is taken from soldiers, who are wont to knit their armour close and fast unto them, and so tie their loins hard, partly to keep their armour from loosening and shaking, and partly to keep their body steady. In this sense, the Lord said to Job, "Gird up your loins like a man." That last phrase "Like a man," shows that he speaks to him as unto a soldier, whom he would have to stand steadfast and to hearken unto him.

Here it is to be taken in this latter sense and signifies a soldier-like girding of the loins: for which purpose, those who wear armour use to have a strong fair girdle, commonly called a belt, whereby they knit fast together and close unto their middle the upper and lower pieces of their armour, such as their breastplate, and their tassets and cuisses. These belts, as they were strong, so they were set with studs, being fair and large. There is a double use of them: one to keep the several pieces of armour fast and close together, and to hold the loins of a man firm and steady, that he might be able to stand the surer and hold out the longer. The other to cover the joints of the armour, that they might not be seen. The first use was for strength; the second for ornament.

### §. 4. Wherein a Girdle Is Resembled to Truth

Thus, truth is both an ornament to a Christian soldier and also an excellent means of strength to uphold him. For it does both grace and honour him before God and man; and also fast holds together other graces of God's Spirit, especially in temptation, when they are most shaken, and so upholds him. This will more evidently appear by the particular branches of truth mentioned before.

1. What greater ornament and beauty to religion than soundness and evidence of truth? This is the very glory and crown thereof: all other vain glosses, such as antiquity, universality, unity, uniformity, succession, consent, multitude, pomp, revenues, etc., being separated from truth, are but as many pearls in a blind eye, which make it so much the more deformed. For the more ancient, universal, uniform, and pompous superstition, idolatry, or any false religion is, the more odious and detestable it is; but the more true and sound it is, the more excellent and glorious it is.

So for strength, what can better settle and establish the judgement of a man than truth? "Great is truth, and prevails." It is like a sharp sword in a weak man's hand, which is able to pierce deep though there be but small strength to thrust it. Truth cannot be overcome, nor is daunted with the multitude of enemies. This is what has made martyrs in all ages stand to their profession unto death, and to seal it with their blood, rather

than start from it; yea, though many of them were illiterate men and weak women.

The like may be said of the other branches of truth: an upright and sincere heart makes a man amiable before God Himself. David, being a man of a single heart, is termed "A man after God's own heart." And Noah, being an upright man, found grace in the eyes of God.

No eloquence or learning can so grace and commend a man's speech as truth: for lying and falsehood are parts of that foul and filthy communication which the Apostle condemns. The Lord hates a lying tongue: it is an abomination unto Him.

No outward comeliness of body can so commend a man as plain, faithful, and honest dealing. This made Nathanael so gracious in Christ's eyes. But none are more odious and detestable to God and man than dissembling and deceitful persons: the conscience of such makes them shun the light and be afraid of God's presence, as Adam. So likewise, truth in all these does very much strengthen and uphold a man in time of trial and keeps him from fainting. This was the ground of Job's courage and constancy. This added an edge to Hezekiah's prayers. This made David bold to refer himself to God's trial and examination. This upheld Paul against all that could be laid against him.

## §. 5. Of Getting Truth

[Point 3] The account which we are to make of this spiritual belt is declared by Solomon, who exhorts to buy the truth and not sell it. This advice concerns two sorts of people: 1. Such as have it not: they must labor to get it. 2. Such as have it, they must hold it fast. That this direction may be the better applied, we are well to search whether we have this girdle of verity or not. Fitly may I apply that to truth, which the Apostle speaks of faith; "Examine yourselves whether you have truth, prove yourselves." There is no grace which makes a more sensible difference between the children of God and of the Devil, then truth. In this examination, we must proceed in order.

## §. 6. How Trial of Truth May Be Made

1. Trial is to be made of the truth of our judgment: whether the religion which we profess, and all the principles thereof be assuredly sound and true. To this tends that exhortation of Saint Paul, "Try all things," and that of Saint John, "Try the spirits." For this end, the direction given by Christ ("Search the Scriptures") is to be observed and followed, as it was by the men of Berea: for the Scriptures are the word of truth, and the voice of God, the highest and chiefest Judge: a most perfect, sufficient, impartial Judge. Those who make any other judge may soon be deceived.

Here see what wrong Papish guides do to their followers, in keeping from them this touchstone of truth. See what idiots they

are who think it sufficient to believe as the Church does. Such are they among us, whose only ground of faith is the commonly received Doctrine, be it true or false. No wonder they are soon shaken and removed: they lack this girdle of truth, which should strengthen them.

2. If we find truth seated in our understanding, then are we further to observe whether, like the ointment poured on Aaron's head, and the dew that fell on the mountains of Zion, it descends from the head to the heart: whether the heart be upright before God or not. It appears that David thoroughly searched his heart for the truth thereof, or else he would not with such boldness and confidence have referred it to God's trial: the like I might instance in Job, Hezekiah, Paul, and many others. Great need there is of thoroughly trying the heart: for it is deceitful above all things, and that not only to others who cannot discern the secrets thereof, but also to men themselves, if at least they dive not into the bottom of it. Some are such gross hypocrites, that they cannot but in their hearts condemn themselves, as Ananias and Sapphira: others so simple as they beguile themselves, like Peter and the other Disciples. In all ages, many have thought better of the integrity of their heart, then by proof and event it has turned out to be. The best trial of our heart will be by our disposition when we are alone, or when we can conceal our thoughts and cogitations from all men, yea, even from the very suspicion

and conjecture of men: if then they be upright, and therefore upright, because we desire to approve ourselves to God, as Joseph, then may we be assured there is truth in them.

3. From the heart which is a fountain, we are to proceed to the streams thereof, our speeches and actions; and search whether from this clear spring there flow forth clear waters, and so see what correspondence there is between them. Now here we are not only to observe whether our speeches do agree with our knowledge of the thing we utter, and with the evidence of the thing itself, or whether our actions be plain, or fraudulent and deceitful; but also whether that true and good communication which we utter, and those true and honest actions which we perform, do come from the good treasure of a true heart. For our help in this trial, note these few directions.

### §. 7. Directions for Trial of Truth in Speech and Action

1. What is the ground of truth in our words and actions? What moves us thereunto? Whether popular applause (as the Scribes and Pharisees, who did all to be seen of men, for they loved the praise of men more than of God), or credit and estimation (as Saul), or profit (as the Shechemites), or respect to some men (as Joash and his people), or desire of quiet and avoiding trouble (as those who became Jews in Mordecai's time), or company and example of others (as

Ananias and Sapphira), or intent to work some mischief (as Jezebel, and Ishmael). These and such other by-respects being the ground and cause of our actions, do plainly argue that there is no sound truth in them.

2. What is the extent of that truth we make a show of? Whether it be in all things. This was the proof of the Apostles' good conscience: for truth is a leaven that seasons the whole lump. So as those who at sometimes, and in some things are watchful over their words and actions, but careless at other times in other things, lack this leaven of truth, as Herod.

3. What the things are wherein we are most strict? Whether they be matters of greatest weight and moment? Those who pretend much truth in small and light matters and are careless and dissolute in great and weighty matters, have no sound truth in them. Such were the Scribes and Pharisees.

4. What order we observe? Whether first we begin with ourselves and look to our own speeches and actions. Many will be more forward and zealous in stirring up others to all manner of truth than themselves; yea, they will check others for failing in such things wherein themselves are most faulty: surely, there is no sound truth in such. Christ makes this a note of hypocrisy.

## §. 8. Of Buying Truth

Thus, we are to search ourselves throughout, and if upon this search we cannot find that we have this girdle of verity, then we must observe the first part of the Wiseman's advice, "Buy the truth," that is, use all the means which possibly we can, for attaining unto, and possessing it; yea, though it be with a departing from, and forsaking of many things which seemed profitable and pleasant unto us because they and truth could not well stand together. The metaphor of buying implies a letting go of some things, for the attaining of other things. Excellently is this set forth unto us by two parables which Christ uttered, one of a man that bought a treasure, and another of a merchant that bought a pearl. Truth is a rich treasure and a precious pearl: if the worth of it, and the need which we have of it, were well known, I doubt not but easily we should be persuaded to part with much for the getting of it. So excellent it is, that for itself it is to be loved.

## §. 9. Motives to Buy Truth

I will therefore first lay down some motives to stir up in us a desire for truth, and then some directions to instruct us how to get it.

For the first, note the excellency, the necessity, and the benefits of truth.

1. Excellent must that needs be, which makes us like to God: but nothing can make us more like to Him than truth: for

> He is the Lord God of truth, His Son is truth, His Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth, His word, the word of truth; His promises, commandments, judgments, ways, works, all truth. Herein do the glorious Angels and Saints resemble God, whom to imitate is an excellent thing: most contrary is the Devil, and all that bear his image.

Besides, truth is a kind of perfection in all Christian graces; yea, the greatest perfection that we can attain unto in this life, one and the same word in Hebrew signifies both integrity or uprightness and perfection, so as some translate it upright, some perfect. In regard to this quality, we may appeal to God's judgment, but not in any other kind of perfection, whether of degrees, parts, measure, or the like, so that in this respect it has an excellency above all other graces.

2. So needful it is and necessary, as without it no other grace can be of any use. Faith, hope, love, & all other graces, are as corrupt and putrefied meat without it. Therefore the Scripture commends faith unfeigned, love without dissimulation, wisdom without hypocrisy, etc. Yea, also lips unfeigned, innocent hands, etc.

No knowledge, no righteousness, no good thing can stand a hypocrite in any stead. What good got Saul, Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magus, and such other hypocrites, by all those seeming excellent gifts, which they made a show of? All they did

was odious before God: Therefore, notwithstanding the Pharisees prayed often, gave much alms, fasted often, duly paid their tithes, with the like; yet Christ denounced many woes against them, Matthew 23. Hypocrites receive no reward of God the searcher of hearts, but the punishment of deceit.

3. Such is the benefit of truth, that the least measure of grace seasoned with it is acceptable to God, and in that respect very profitable to us. It is noted of those which in Hezekiah's time came out of Ephraim, and other tribes of Israel, unto Jerusalem to keep the Passover, that they had not cleansed themselves according to the Law, whereby they provoked the Lord to inflict some judgment upon them: but Hezekiah putting the Lord in mind how they came with their whole heart to seek the God of their Fathers, the Lord healed them. Well might David pronounce the upright blessed, for as God loves truth, so the upright are His delight, and He has promised to withhold no good thing from them.

Thus, we see what good reason we have to buy truth. Observe now how it may be gotten.

## §. 10. Means to Get Truth

For truth of judgment, we must resort to the place where it may be had, that is, the true Church, the pillar and ground of Truth. In it is the fountain of Truth, the Holy Scriptures; in it flow forth

the streams of Truth, by the Ministry of the Word. Be thou one of the members of the true Church, so shalt thou have a right thereunto. Search the Scripture, frequent the Ministry of the Word, so shalt thou find Truth. Rather than go without it, let go honour, wealth, pleasures, ease, and all thy natural and carnal lusts; let go all. Paul had surely a good mind to buy the Truth for he counted all things loss for the excellent knowledge of Christ.

For truth in heart, speech, and carriage, remember that thou standest always in the presence of God, and that thou hast to do with Him whether thou art alone or in company, doing any duty that appertains to God or man; and in respect hereof, let thy care be to approve thyself to God. Thus shalt thou get Truth. For mark the charge which God Himself gave to Abraham, "Walk before me, and be upright." The former part of this charge is a cause of the latter; the latter a fruit and evidence of the former. Joseph had well acquainted himself with God's presence, which made him so honest and upright.

This is what makes men such dissemblers in their words and actions, that either they know not God's presence in every place, believe it not, think not of it, or regard it not. Man's presence makes many be faithful, just, honest, etc. Surely God's presence must need work much more if it were duly weighed, or else men have atheistical hearts. Let us set God always before us and depart with anything rather than offend Him, and thus shall we come to be upright.

## §. 11. Of Keeping Truth

After that Truth is gotten, our next care must be fast to hold it, and thereby manifest that great account which we make of it. "Sell it not" (saith the Wise man), by no means, upon any condition, for any respect let it go; for then it had been better for us never to have had it. All the good we reap by verity and integrity, after it is lost, is this, that another day it will rise up in judgment and be a heavy witness against us. Some men make such an account of some jewels they have, that no preferment, no favour, no wealth, no office, nothing can purchase them; and yet it may be that their jewels are not worth the price which is offered for them. Should not we much more esteem of Truth, for which no sufficient price can be given? The holy Confessors and Martyrs in all ages have well known the value of this jewel, and in that respect preferred it before their livings and lives: they would not let go Truth of doctrine; Joseph would not let go Truth of heart and action, for love nor fear.

## §. 12. How Truth of Doctrine

Is Assaulted This latter point of fast-holding and safekeeping Truth is the rather to be regarded because the Devil and his instruments (not ignorant that if this Girdle be wanting, all other pieces of Armour will stand us in no stead) have been in all former ages, and still are busy to get it away from us, sometimes by fair enticements and allurements to draw us from truth of

doctrine: on the one side are brought many plausible arguments, agreeable to the natural humour and reason of man (such are most of the arguments which Papists use); on the other side much trouble and great persecution is raised. If they cannot clean overthrow Truth, yet they will do what they can to adulterate it: witness the Prophets and Apostles times, and every age ever since. I wish our age and country were free from it. Behold how busy Papish Jesuits, Priests, and Friars are: what would they not give? what would they not do, to dispossess us of the Truth of Religion?

## §. 13. How Sincerity Is Assaulted

So likewise, for sincerity, how do profane worldlings seek to wrest it from us? Endeavoring to make us odious to all because we will not yield to them. These are as spitefully bent against us for sincerity, truth, and honesty in our hearts, words, and actions, as Papists are for verity and soundness of doctrine. For some hate those who are honest and upright (as Ahab hated Micaiah); some scoff at them (as Ishmael at Isaac), saying, plain dealing is a jewel, and he that uses it will die a beggar. Yea, they will not stick to brand them with the odious terms of hypocrisy and dissimulation, though of all sorts of people they are farthest from it; especially if God suffer any affliction to fall on them (as on His servant Job), then with Job's wife and friends, they will be ready to upbraid unto them their integrity and uprightness, as if all had been only in show to blear men's eyes. But if any

that indeed with a hollow heart have made a profession, do fall away, and so be discovered (as Judas, Ananias, Demas, and such others) their examples shall be cast in the teeth of the most upright.

And if, notwithstanding all this, they shall remain constant (as Job did) and not suffer their innocence and integrity to be outfaced, then will they object against them the censure of other men, and say of them, "Howsoever you think of yourselves, yet others, and those good men too, think not so well of you: if you were wise, you would give more credit to other men's judgment than to your own: for men are blind and partial in judging themselves."

Many by these and such like discouragements have been moved to make no account of truth but to leave it to such as better esteem it than they; others, to cast it away and to yield to the times, both for religion and conversation, showing themselves as superstitious or profane as the worst. I will therefore as an antidote against those poisonous objections, discover the vanity of them and show how these wiles may be avoided.

## §. 14. Of the Necessity of Truth in Religion

1. Against fast holding truth in judgment, two things are especially objected. One, that it is not necessary; the other, that it is dangerous.

Object. 1. They say it is not necessary because a man may be saved in any religion.

Answ. This is a most false and impious position, the very bane of true religion. The Apostle expressly says, there is one faith. In that Christ terms himself the Way, the Truth, the Life, does he not imply that he is the only true way that leads to life? That curse which the Apostle thunders out against all that preached any otherwise than he had preached, ought to terrify us from yielding to anything but the truth. He pronounces them damned which believe not the truth.

### §. 15. Of the Pretended Danger in Maintaining Truth

Object. 2. The danger which they allege is either in regard to conspiracies, treasons, and insurrections which princes and governors are subject to if they be too stiff in maintaining the truth of religion; or persecutions which subjects are like to fall into if they be too resolute in professing the truth.

Answ. For the danger of princes and magistrates, they need not to fear it because they have God to watch over them and to be their protector, so long as they maintain the truth. Not to search after examples of other ages and places, consider how miraculously God preserved Queen Elizabeth (of blessed memory) both from invasions of enemies abroad and also from many conspiracies of traitors at home. After 44 years and 4 months of prosperous reign, in peace, she ended her days,

notwithstanding all dangers whatsoever. Many treasons, close, cruel treasons, such as the like in all former ages have not been heard of, have also been intended against our present royal sovereign: what has been the issue? They who laid the snares were caught themselves, and he yet remains safe (and long may he remain safe). Surely, God has respect to the truth, which has been, and still is maintained in this land. Our neighbor king thought to avoid danger by letting go of the truth and yielding to idolatry: but thereby he cast himself out of the protection of the God of truth. What followed thereupon? One sorry villain slew him in the midst of his guard.

As for the persecution which is raised against others, it is a note of blessedness, a matter of rejoicing: and in this respect a strong motive to persuade us fast to hold Truth.

## §. 16. Of the Pretended Trouble of Conscience, Which Sincerity Is Said to Cause

Against truth of heart and remaining steadfast therein, objections include 1. Vexation of mind. 2. Wearisomeness. 3. Outward troubles. 4. The judgment of other men.

Object. 1. The Devil suggests to many that it is impossible always to keep the heart upright and that if there be a little failing, the conscience is so troubled as it can hardly (if at all) be quieted; and thereupon infers that it is best not at all to regard truth of heart.

Answ. There can be no better, no more sovereign preservative against trouble of conscience than truth of heart. This kept Job from despair; this made Hezekiah bold. Truth of heart is a strong prop to a man in the midst of his manifold infirmities: for it is impossible to keep the heart free from all corruption, but yet there may be truth in heart. Every corruption, though it argues imperfection, yet does not argue hypocrisy if it steals into the heart against our honest purpose and against our earnest desire, and being discerned, causes godly sorrow and Christian watchfulness, both in purging the heart of that which has entered in and also in keeping it so that the like enter not in again. But where there is no truth of heart, it is utterly impossible that there should be any sound comfort. If such a man's conscience is ever troubled, it will be overwhelmed and drowned in despair.

§. 17. Of the Pretended Wearisomeness of Sincerity Object.

2. Again, he suggests that it is a wearisome thing to keep the Girdle of Truth always close to us. None can hold out; the most upright have fallen away, as Demas and others.

Answ. It seems wearisome only to those who never felt it, never knew it. I may say of it, as Christ of His yoke, It is easy and light. Yea, it is sweet and pleasant to him that indeed tasted of it. As for those who have fallen, they never had a grain of Truth in their hearts: all the show they made was only a show. They fell

because they had no Truth in them. Had they been upright, they would have continued so, for mark the upright man: the end of that man is peace.

§. 18. Of the Pretended Judgments on the Upright Object.

3. Further, he infers that the uprightest are plagued as much, if not more than others. How then can their uprightness be pleasing to God?

Answ. Corrections are not tokens of God's wrath but of His love when they are laid upon His children. The upright have many judgments inflicted on them for the proof of their uprightness, (as Job) and therefore for their good, and for their glory, yea also for the glory of God.

§. 19. Of Others' Opinions Concerning a Man's Sincerity Object.

Besides, he labors to persuade men that they deceive themselves, thinking they have truth of heart when they have none, because other men judge not so well of them as they themselves.

Answ. No other man can so well discern the Truth of heart as a man's own self: "For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him?" As other men may judge a hypocrite to be upright when the hypocrite in his own conscience knows himself to be so, so they may judge an upright

man to be a hypocrite. But another man's judgment cannot make the hypocrite to be upright; why then should it make an upright man a hypocrite? The hypocrite's conscience condemns him, though all the world acquits him: and the upright man's conscience will uphold him, as Job's did, though all the world condemn him. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then we have boldness towards God. For everyone stands or falls to his own master.

### §. 20. Pretended Hindrances of Plain-Dealing

Against Truth in words and deeds are objected, I know not what hindrances and inconveniences.

Object. 1. Truth is a hindrance, in that it keeps men from much gain: for some say, there is no living without lying, and using the common secrets of trades.

Answ. It would be much better to want gain than to get it by any deceit of word or deed. The bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward, his mouth shall be filled with gravel. A curse remains upon that gain which is deceitfully gotten.

But this pretext of hindrance is a mere pretext, utterly false: for there is not a more sure means of gain than truth in word and deed: and that in a double respect.

1. Because most men desire to deal with such: so as they shall have the best custom. No man is willing to be deceived, but all desire that others should truly and plainly deal with them, howsoever they deal with others.

2. Because God's blessing (which brings gain and makes rich) goes with the upright.

### §. 21. Pretended Inconveniences of Plain Dealing

Object. 2. The inconveniences are that the upright are laughed to scorn: they are a by-word in every man's mouth, yea, they are trodden under everyone's feet, and they are made a prey.

Answ. All these we may put as flowers into our garland of glory and rejoice in them, as we heard of persecution: for Christ makes them kinds of persecution.

Thus, we see that Truth, notwithstanding all that can be objected against it, is worth keeping. All the cavils of the Devil and his instruments are of no force to make us little regard this girdle of verity or lightly let it go. Yea, such is the virtue of Truth that, like the palm tree, the more it is pressed down, the more it grows.

### §. 22. Of Holding Truth More Steadfastly for Opposition

Let us do with this and other pieces of spiritual Armour, as men do with their cloaks which cover their bodies: if the wind blows

hard against them, they will so much the faster and closer hold their cloaks. Even so, the more Satan strives to deprive us of our spiritual robes, the more careful and steadfast ought we to be in keeping them.

In particular, for this girdle of verity, it is so much the more highly to be accounted of by us, who are the Lord's faithful soldiers, by how much the less reckoning is made thereof by the greater number of people.

In these days, all is for show, little or nothing in truth. As building, wares, apparel, and the like, are all of the sleightest stuff, but with the fairest gloss and show that may be; so our religion and all things else. That religion which outwardly is most glorious and pompous is most embraced, as being the best; whereby it comes to pass that Popery has gotten such a liking of many. Who almost is careful to set himself always in God's presence, and as Enoch to walk with Him? Many who seem very devout at Church, seldom or never have any religious exercise at home in their family, much less in their closets before God. For their words, they shall be as fair as may be before a man's face, but full of falsehood, yea, most bitter and virulent behind a man's back. And for actions, all are to blear the purblind eyes of men. All the care is to keep credit with men: wherein, while men think to deceive others, they do most of all deceive themselves and their own poor souls, which shall another day answer for this deceit.

# The Fourth Part.

Breastplate of Righteousness.

> And having on the breastplate of righteousness. - Ephesians 6:14

§. 1. Of Righteousness in General

The second piece of our Spiritual Armour is Righteousness, compared to a breastplate. Fitly is this inferred upon the former: for truth is the mother of righteousness; they cannot be severed. In handling this point, I will show, first, what righteousness is. Secondly, how fitly it is compared to a breastplate. Thirdly, how this breastplate is put and kept on. Fourthly, what is the benefit of it. Fifthly, what are the wiles of the Devil to keep us from it.

[Point 1] Righteousness is our conformity unto God's Law, a holy quality wrought in us by God's Spirit, whereby we endeavour to square and frame all our thoughts, words, and actions, unto the righteous rule of the Law of God. It is that which we commonly call Justice, a virtue whereby is given to everyone their due, whether it be to God or man. Righteousness is often restrained to that part of justice, which respects man, and so is the sum of the second Table; but then either some

other word is joined with it, which has reference to God, as Holiness, Luke 1:75; or else some circumstance of the place restrains it to man, as Deut. 24:13. But otherwise, when there is no other word or circumstance which restrains it, then it extends itself to the whole Law, as here.

The Law of God is a right and perfect rule and declares what is due to God and man, so that conformity thereunto is righteousness.

§. 2. Of the Kinds of Righteousness Object.

This is such a piece of armour, as none in this life can attain unto, but Christ Jesus the true natural Son of God, who by an excellency and propriety, is called That just one. Of him, it is properly said; That he put on righteousness as a breastplate. Indeed, at first, God made man righteous, and in Heaven the Saints shall be all just and perfect: but on earth, there is none righteous, no not one.

Answer. There is a double righteousness mentioned in the Scripture, one legal, framed according to the exact rule and strict rigor of the Law. The other Evangelical, accepted according to the gracious favour and limitation of the Gospel. The Law requires two things. First, an absolute perfection in every part, point, and degree thereof. Secondly, this perfection in that very party who is justified thereby. For Moses thus describes the righteousness which is of the Law, that the man (even the man

himself, in and by himself) which does those things (even all those things which are written in the Law, according to the uttermost extent of them) shall live thereby; but cursed is every man that continueth not in all things, &c.

By the Gospel, both those are limited, and the rigor of them mitigated. For there are two parts of Evangelical righteousness, one of Faith, the other of a good conscience.

The righteousness of faith is Christ himself, with his righteousness imputed to us and by faith received of us; in which respect, Christ is said to be the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. The end of the Law is to justify and save those which fulfill it. Now we, by reason of the flesh dwelling in us, cannot fulfill it. Christ, therefore, subjected himself thereto; he perfectly fulfilled it. To them which believe, his perfect righteousness is imputed; so as they are justified and saved thereby. Thus is Christ the end of the Law, and that, which by the Law was exacted of our own persons, by the Gospel is accepted for us in Christ, who performed it. This Righteousness of Faith is comprised under the fourth piece of Spiritual Armour, verse 16. Here therefore is especially meant the righteousness of a good conscience.

### §. 3. Of that Righteousness

Which Is Here Meant This Righteousness is a powerful work of God's Spirit in the regenerate, whereby they endeavour to

approve themselves unto God and man by performing what God's Law requires to be performed unto both.

I term it, first, a work of God's Spirit, because it is the Spirit which quickens and enables us to do what we do.

2. Powerful, because we are by nature dead in sins, and not able of ourselves so much as to think a good thought.

3. In the regenerate, for that only which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

4. Endeavour, for this being true and earnest with the very utmost of our power, is the greatest perfection which in this world we can attain unto.

5. To approve to God and man, because duties are required towards both.

6. What God's Law requires, because that shows what God does approve, and what man should approve. This was that righteousness for which Zachary and Elizabeth were commended.

This consists of two branches: First, to abstain from evil. Secondly, to do good. David describing a righteous man, says; "Surely he does no iniquity, but walks in the way of God." Often does the Scripture join those two together, as two essential parts

of righteousness: except these two do concur, the breastplate is not sound.

### §. 4. Of Resembling Righteousness to a Breastplate

[Point 2] The second point is concerning the fit resemblance of Righteousness to a breastplate. The original word translated breastplate properly signifies that part of the body wherein the vital parts, such as the heart, lungs, liver, and the like do lie; the whole upper part of a man's body before, even from the neck to the thighs, is comprised under this title. Hence it is that that piece of armour which covers this part of the body has the same name. The use of this piece is to keep safe the vital parts and preserve a man from being mortally wounded or killed outright.

Thus does righteousness keep the Christian soldier safe and sure, that the Devil with all his assaults cannot pierce his soul and so utterly destroy him. A lion, which is strong among beasts (Prov. 30:30), may be taken and destroyed (1 Sam. 17:34-36) but so cannot the righteous. This use of righteousness will yet more evidently appear if we consider what it is that does indeed mortally wound the soul and draws forth the vital blood and very life of it. It is sin, and nothing but sin, that can destroy the soul. By it did Satan first wound and kill our first parents. By it has he from time to time prevailed in the world. For sin first provoked God's wrath; procured the curse of the Law; brought death and all the consequences thereof. The very sting of death

is sin. Sin first kindled hell fire and still continues to blow up and inflame the same.

Where the breastplate of righteousness is well put on, there sin has no power. Righteousness is as contrary to sin as water to fire, and it will soon quench the heat of sin.

### §. 5. Of Putting on the Breastplate of Righteousness

[Point 3] This breastplate of Righteousness is put on by the right practice of true repentance, which, according to the proper notation and true meaning of the word, is a change of the mind, namely, such a change as brings forth a reformed life. This true alteration of the mind and heart first causes a thorough detestation of our former wicked course, together with an utter abjuration and renouncing of the same, and then a holy resolute purpose to lead another kind of life and, instead of former sins, to practice contrary duties: as if a man in former times has been profane, to be so much the more religious for the time to come; if a blasphemer before, more careful to honor the Name of God; if riotous, so much the more sober, etc. These are fruits worthy of repentance. So long as these two fruits of repentance, First, an utter detestation of all former wickedness, Secondly, a constant resolution and faithful endeavour to perform new obedience, remain in our hearts, the Devil cannot easily, if at all, prevail against us. But if the mind be not altered and a thorough change wrought therein, though there should be some means to restrain

us from sin and provoke us to do many good things, yet would the Devil soon get an advantage against us. Sin is deceitful; Satan is subtle and busy; if therefore, we are not altered in our hearts, the means of restraint being removed, soon shall we be brought to return unto our old wicked course, like the dog to his vomit, and the sow to the mire: for though the sow be outwardly washed never so clean, yet because her swinish nature is not altered, as soon as she comes at mud, she besmears herself again by wallowing in the mire.

### §. 6. Of the Benefits of Righteousness

[Point 4] The benefits of putting and keeping on this holy and spiritual breastplate are many and great.

1. It keeps us from being mortally wounded, as we heard before: for so long as we retain a true purpose and faithful endeavour answerable thereto, we shall never give ourselves over to commit sin.

Object. They who have had the most holy resolution have been wounded, and that very deeply: witness many of the best Saints, as Noah, Lot, David, Peter, & others.

Answer. 1. At such times as they fell so foully, they forgot their resolution; their breastplate was laid aside. 2. Though the sins of such seemed gross and mortal in the kind or outward act, yet were they not so in their manner of performing them: they did

them not with a full swing & sway of will; their soul was not (to speak properly) mortally wounded: for all their wounds (though they seemed very sore and deep) were cured; yea, many times their slips and falls were like unto the breaking of a man's arm or leg; which being well set again, is the stronger.

2. It brings great assurance of our effectual calling and spiritual union with Christ, yea even of our eternal election and salvation. For God having chosen us that we should be holy, they that indeed are holy, may be sure they are chosen of God and born of God. To this purpose says Saint John, "If ye know that he is Righteous, ye know that everyone which doth Righteousness, is born of him." Being sure of these, how can we be mortally wounded?

3. It procures a good name in God's Church while we live, and a blessed memory after we are dead, if any speak evil of us, they shall be ashamed. Thus, this Breastplate keeps them from many scars and scratches.

4. It confirms the truth of Religion, and so it may be a means to win such as are without, to strengthen those that stand, and to stir up all to a holy emulation.

5. It does highly honor our Lord and captain, whose soldiers we are. This motive does Christ use to stir us up to put on the Breastplate of Righteousness.

## §. 7. Whether Man's Righteousness

Be Meritorious Many and sundry are the wiles which the devil has against this Breastplate, and those either to make it of no use or to make us either not regard it or to wax weary of it.

He draws on some to crack and break this Breastplate of Righteousness, by beating it out further than the metal thereof will bear it, that is, (to speak plainly) by making Righteousness to be meritorious. Herewith he beguiled the Scribes and Pharisees, and such as embraced their doctrine, and egregiously has he besotted the Papists herewith.

For avoiding this deceit, we are duly to consider what things are required to cause merit, and how far short our righteousness comes thereof.

Merit respects both the parties that give and receive the reward, and also the work for which the reward is given.

He that upon merit rewards, must receive something for that he gives, and in that respect is bound in Justice, to give the recompense which he gives.

He that merits, must

1. Be free, and not bound by duty to do that which he does.

2. Be able of himself, and by himself, even by his own power to do it.

3. Do nothing afterward whereby he forfeits that which once he has merited.

The work must both be perfect every way, so as no just fault can be found with it, and also worth the reward that is given for it.

Our righteousness can attain to the height and pitch of none of these. For

1. It is God who gives the reward. But is it anything to the Almighty that you are righteous? Or is it profitable to him that you make your ways upright? If you be righteous, what give you to him, or what receives he at your hands? If God receives nothing by our righteousness, what is the bond whereby he is indebted and obliged to us? Mark the answer of the Lord himself, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" Whatever the Lord gives, upon mere mercy and favor he gives, and in rewarding our righteousness, he rewards his own work.

2. It is man who works righteousness: but man is a servant unto God, many ways bound to perform all the service that he can: yet is he not sufficient of himself to think anything as of himself: but his sufficiency is of God, "It is God who works in him both to will, and to do." Besides, if it were

granted that a man had at any time of himself, through his own power done anything, to which he was not bound, yet in other things has he sinned, (for all have sinned) and thereby made forfeiture of his former merit.

3. All our righteousness being as filthy rags, what show of perfection can there be? If otherwise it were perfect, yet this conceit of merit would make it imperfect: for this is not the end why it was commanded. If Adam in his innocence had had any conceit of merit, he had thereby stained his obedience: this conceit does so deface the best work, that it makes it most odious: for it is directly contrary to the free grace and all-sufficient merit of Christ Jesus. But if notwithstanding all this it were perfect, yet such is the glory which God gives, that our righteousness can no way be worthy of it. It is a far more excellent and an eternal weight of glory.

If these points be seriously weighed, and if withal we daily take a view of our righteousness, and compare it with the rule of God's Law, and be truly humbled for the defects and imperfections thereof, this erroneous and arrogant conceit of merit will not easily seize upon us.

## §. 8. Of the Use of Righteousness

If Satan does not prevail that way, he will labour to persuade men that this Breastplate of Righteousness is needless because

Christ has wrought a full and perfect redemption and left nothing for them to do: by His Righteousness, they shall be justified and saved. So, as those who have the shield of Faith, need not this Breastplate. By this wile did Satan beguile many Christians in the Apostles' time, taking advantage of Saint Paul's sound and orthodox doctrine of justification by faith without works. For the redress whereof, Saint James and Saint Jude were moved to write their Epistles. Hereby also has he beguiled many in these our days, who have been delivered from the darkness of Popery.

For avoiding this, we are duly to weigh what is the end and use of Righteousness. Though it is not a meritorious cause of salvation, yet it is a means of attaining salvation, the way appointed by God for us to walk in thereunto; so that although we are not saved for our Righteousness, yet we cannot be saved without it. The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Without holiness, no man shall see God. For God has chosen us that we should be holy: and Christ has redeemed us that we should serve Him in holiness and Righteousness. For this end appeared the grace of God, which brings salvation unto all men, that we should live righteously. Unto holiness, God has called us: and we are created unto good works. Thus, we see how false a suggestion it is, that Righteousness should be needless. It is clean contrary to the express charge of the Apostle, that we should learn to show forth good works for necessary uses.

Whereas it is pretended that the shield of Faith is sufficient, we are to hold it for a ruled case that God makes nothing in vain. Those things which God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Therefore, though we saw no diverse and distinct ends of Faith and Righteousness, yet God having appointed both, both must be used. But there are diverse uses, apparent to all that will observe them. Righteousness is needful to testify our obedience and thankfulness to God, to profit our brethren, to prove our faith, to give evidence of our election, vocation, and justification, and to maintain our cause against the cavils of profaneness, impiety, wickedness, etc. Faith is needful to apply Christ's Righteousness, to support us against the imperfections and defects of our Righteousness, and for many other good uses, whereof we shall hear in verse 16.

## §. 9. Of the Issue of Righteousness

A third sleight that the devil has is to persuade men that this Breastplate of Righteousness is very cumbersome and toilsome, and it will make us weary; for it is against our natural disposition and will be a hindrance of honor, wealth, ease, pleasure, etc. Herewith he beguiled Esau, Demas, and many others. I may too truly say it, that herewith he beguiles most who profess the truth of Religion. Some cast away this Breastplate for promotion's sake, not caring how they bribe, flatter, please and fawn upon great men; others for wealth, oppressing, defrauding, and many ways wronging their neighbors; others for their

pleasures, profaning the Sabbath, swearing, eating and drinking unto gluttony and drunkenness, using unlawful games, immoderately pursuing lawful pastimes, attiring themselves in strange apparel above their estate, unbefitting their place, etc. Others to avoid outward reproach, for fear, directly against their heart and conscience (I speak it with great horror of heart), are profane and unrighteous, because it is counted a disgrace to be Righteous.

For avoiding this, we must have more respect for the assured issue of Righteousness than for some present seeming inconveniences thereof. We know that the Armor which soldiers wear on their bodies is for the time cumbersome and heavy; yet for safety, they refuse not to wear it. They consider that it is much better to endure a small burden for a while than to endanger their lives and lose the victory. Now such is the blessed fruit and issue of Righteousness that all the honor, profit, and pleasure that can be lost, or all the reproach or shame that can be endured for it, are not worthy of the Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to his righteous servants. It would be almost an infinite task to declare what the Scripture, the word of Truth, has delivered concerning the issue of Righteousness. Generally, it says, "The Lord loves Righteousness." "Verily there is a reward for the Righteous: Blessings are on the head of the Righteous," etc. Particularly, for the righteous person himself in this life, it is said that "The eyes of the Lord are upon the Righteous." "God will grant the desire

of the Righteous." "The Lord delivers the Righteous out of all trouble." "The Righteous shall never be forsaken." "The Righteous shall be glad." "The Righteous shall flourish like a Palm tree." "The Righteous are bold as a Lion." "The way of the Righteous shines as the light," etc. For his death, "The Righteous has hope in his death." "The Righteous are taken away from the evil to come." After death, "The memorial of the Righteous shall be blessed." "The Righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." At the resurrection, "The Righteous shall go into life eternal." "The Righteous shall shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father." For their posterity, "The generation of the Righteous shall be blessed." "Their seed shall not beg their bread," etc.

Here we see matter enough to answer all the disadvantages that may be objected against Righteousness. Moses, having an eye on the recompense of the reward, forsook the honors, pleasures, and riches of Egypt: three such baits as all the world most greedily snap at. Christ, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame. Thus, if we set the end and issue of Righteousness before us, it will make us let go of all earthly matters to hold it fast: for our souls find much ease through the burden that the flesh feels hereby. In a word, great is the dignity, and admirable are the privileges of the Righteous.

## §. 10. Of the Comfort of Righteousness

Out of the answer to his first suggestion, (if the devil prevails by none of the former) he will seek to persuade us that this Breastplate of Righteousness can stand us in no stead: because "All our Righteousness is as filthy rags"; all is but dung and loss. Thus, he beguiles many weak Christians and often brings them to utter despair.

Answ. For avoiding this, we are to be informed that though our Righteousness, considered in itself and compared with the perfect rule of the law, be exceedingly defective; or opposed to the Righteousness of Christ, be dung and loss; yet as it is a work of God's Holy Spirit in us, proceeding from a heart purified by faith, all the imperfections thereof being covered with the perfect Righteousness of Christ, it is acceptable unto God, and such a thing as we may receive much comfort in. Therefore, though our Righteousness in itself affords no matter of boasting, yet in regard of God's gracious acceptance, it is a thing much to be labored after; yea also to be rejoiced in.

## §. 11. Of All the Parts of Righteousness

United If the devil cannot by any means bring us wholly to reject all Righteousness, he will endeavour to make us careless in some parts thereof, or at least negligent in taking the present opportunity: as if it were sufficient only in some things to be righteous because God is merciful to forgive us all our defaults; or upon our death-beds to turn from our unrighteousness,

because "When the wicked turns away from his wickedness, he shall save his soul alive." Herewith in all ages, he has beguiled many thousands.

Against the first part of this suggestion, we are to know that the several parts and branches of Righteousness are so firmly and inseparably knit together, that the parts cannot be severed without the destruction of the whole. For Righteousness is as a chain of many links; the several links of this chain are those several duties which the law requires to be performed to God & man; let any one of the links be taken away, the chain is broken; if the chain be broken, that which did hang by it must needs fall down. To this purpose says the Apostle, "Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet fails in one point is guilty of all." Righteousness is compared to a garment, as well as to a Breast-plate. A garment must cover us all over: yea, our Righteousness must be like Christ's coat that may not be divided: If it be cut in the middle, it cannot but make us ashamed, as David's servants were when their coats were cut.

Object. If this were so, who should be saved? for in many things we all sin.

Answ. Indeed all sin in many things: but all do not sin after the same manner. The righteous when they sin are drawn into sin either through their own weakness or through the violence of some temptation: they do not take liberty wittingly and willingly

to nourish any sin or omit any duty: in which respect they are said not to commit sin: and it is noted as a property of the righteous to walk in all the Commandments of God. When a righteous man is thus careful and watchful in avoiding sin and doing his duty, then will the Lord be merciful to pardon him his infirmities: but if any wilfully continue in any sin, what remains but a fearful looking for of judgment?

### §. 12. Of the Danger of Deferring Repentance

Against the second part of the suggestion, we are to know that although whenever an unrighteous man truly repents, he shall be pardoned, yet he cannot truly repent whenever he will. He that refuses to turn when God calls him, provokes God to give him over to the hardness of his heart. As for such as think to repent at their death, how know they what warning they shall have of their death? May they not suddenly be taken away as Belshazzar, and the rich fool? But what if some sickness comes before as Death's harbinger? Surely there is little hope that such as before have not should then turn unto God: For then commonly is the body weak, the spirits faint, the heart dull, the mind troubled, and the Devil most busy about us; and God has given no promise to the unrighteous to succour him at that time, but rather the contrary.

Objection: Christ was merciful to a thief at the time of his death.

Answer: 1. That one example of that kind is recorded, that none should utterly despair. 2. Only that one, that none should presume. 3. It cannot be proved that purposely he put off his repentance to that day. 4. It is not safe to make an extraordinary action (as this was) a pattern; for Christ did then miraculously work on that thief, to give in that moment of his humiliation evidence of his divine power.

## §. 13. Of Being Over-Just

Lastly, he beguiles many by suggesting that they may be over-just, and so makes them the less careful in putting on the breastplate of righteousness.

Answer: For avoiding this, know for an undoubted truth, that in true righteousness a man cannot be over-just: that is, too strict in avoiding any sin or too conscientious in performing any bounden duty. For why? Every sin is mortal. And of every duty, an account is to be given: for they are the Talents which God has committed to our charge.

But for a man to make a righteousness unto himself which is not grounded on God's word, and therein to be strict, is to be over-just. To count such things to be sin, which by God's Law are not made sin, is to be over-just: to be a busybody is to be over-just: to be censorious without just ground is to be over-just, etc. But go along by God's word, which is the rule of righteousness, hold close to it, and you cannot be over-just.

Thus, we see how God's word is able to make us wise against all the wiles of the Devil. Let our care be to make good use of that wisdom.

## §. 14. A Direction for the Use of Righteousness

1. Learn what is true Righteousness, that we trust not to a counterfeit breastplate and be pierced through while we think ourselves safe.

2. Acquaint ourselves with the use, end, beauty, benefit, and necessity of Righteousness, that we may be the more desirous to get it if we have it not: or if we have it, the more careful in keeping it fast on and close to us.

3. Let a daily examination be made of our life past, that of all our former unrighteousness we may truly and soundly repent: and with the true evidences of our former righteousness, our consciences may be comforted in the day of trial. The Apostle comforted himself in the midst of his troubles with the testimony of his good conscience.

4. Let there be a holy resolution for the time to come to walk on in the way of righteousness, without turning to the right hand or to the left. Behold David's resolution and Paul's practice.

For the better performance of this most holy resolution,

1. Put on Righteousness with all the parts thereof.

2. Remove all impediments at the first, and give no place to the Devil.

3. Wax not weary, but be constant.

# The Fifth Part.

Shoes of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

> And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. - Ephesians 6:15

§. 1. Of the Grace Here Meant

The third piece of Spiritual Armour is not so plainly and distinctly laid down as the former. It will be needful 1. To search out what is that particular grace which is here meant. 2. How fitly it is compared to that part of harness which is here implied. 3. How the grace here meant is gotten. 4. How needful and profitable it is. 5. How it has its perfect work. 6. What are the extremes contrary to it. 7. What wiles the Devil uses to deprive us of it.

1. Because the phrase which the Apostle uses is somewhat doubtful and ambiguous, there are many discrepant opinions about that which is meant thereby.

Among those many, there are two which come nearest to the point, and are implied under the description of this grace, though neither of them (as I take it) be the grace itself. One is

Knowledge of the Gospel, the other is Peace of Conscience. The former is implied under this word Gospel, (for without knowledge of the Gospel the soul cannot be settled. The Gospel to him who knows it not, is no Gospel, of no use at all.) The other is implied under this word Peace, whereby is meant that Peace of Conscience, which by the knowledge of the Gospel is wrought in us. But the Preparation here spoken of is another grace distinct from both these; even an effect which follows from them both. Wherefore, as the causes of a thing are not the thing itself, so neither of those graces severally considered in itself, is the distinct piece of Armour here meant. The Syriac Translator well clears the meaning of the Apostle, who thus turns it; "Put as shoes on your feet the preparation of the Gospel of Peace." Under this word Preparation then (according to the literal and grammatical construction, which is the best and surest) is the grace itself comprised; for it implies a furniture which the Gospel of Peace procures and prepares: or a heart settled, resolved, and prepared by the Gospel of Peace, to go on to God through all difficulties. Now the very grace itself which thus settles the soul, I take to be Patience: for it is without all doubt, the drift.

1. Some take the preparation of the Gospel to be a readiness to preach the Gospel, thinking that the Apostle alludes to that prophecy of Isaiah; "How beautiful are the feet of him that declares peace." Isa. 52:7.

Answ. Thus, this piece of armour would pertain only to Ministers, whereas it is clear that the Apostle prescribes the whole Armour to all Christians.

2. Others, to be a promptness to profess the Gospel, agreeable to Saint Peter's counsel, "Be ready (or prepared) to give an answer," etc. 1 Pet. 3:15.

Answer: This promptness and readiness is rather an effect of the grace here meant than the grace itself, as we shall hear later.

3. Others, to be an Evangelical obedience.

Answer: Thus, it would be confounded with the former grace. For Righteousness is an obedience to God's word.

4. Others, to be the Gospel itself, alluding to that of David, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet." Psal. 119:105.

Answer: The phrase which the Apostle here uses shows that not so much the Gospel itself, but something wrought thereby, is here meant.

and scope of the Apostle, to arm the Christian soldier against trouble and affliction, by this particular piece of spiritual Armour here meant: but what grace so fit thereunto as patience? This was it with which Job, to use Christ's phrase (Luke 21:19), did even possess his soul. And this is it which Saint James

prescribes as a means to arm us against trouble, James 1:3, 4, etc. For patience is a gift of God, whereby we are enabled to bear those crosses which God lays upon us. Many were the troubles which the Christian Hebrews endured for the profession of the Gospel: to enable them to endure all those troubles, the Apostle says; "They had need of patience." Under this word Patience, I comprise all those first graces of the Spirit, whereby the Gospel teaches that men are prepared to go with Christ into the field; as the denial of oneself, that taking up of one's cross, with resolution to follow Christ. It is here called a preparation because by it a man is fitted, prepared, and made ready to go on in his course, notwithstanding all dangers and distresses whatsoever meet with him in the way to hinder him. It is said to be the preparation of the Gospel because it is the Gospel which teaches it, and is the cause thereof: nothing but the Gospel can prepare a man's heart against trouble. Lastly, this epithet Peace, is added to show what the Gospel brings unto us, and works in us, namely, peace with God, as we shall hear more fully later. To conclude this first point, in brief note, that it is the knowledge of the glad tidings of reconciliation, which pacifying our conscience, prepares our hearts, and works in them true sound Christian patience, whereby we are ready to march on in our course against all annoyances.

## §. 2. Of the Resemblance of Patience to Shoes

[Point 2] The piece of harness to which patience is here resembled is that which covers a soldier's feet or legs, for feet are here expressed, and the metaphor of being shod implies as much. By feet, he means legs also: the pieces of armour that are proper to this purpose are called greaves, or leg-harness; they are also called soldiers' shoes and boots. The metaphor may either be generally taken of all shoes or particularly of greaves. For the general, we all know that the use of shoes is to keep our feet from sharp stones, hard clods, and the like: for our feet are naturally tender, insomuch that if we go abroad barefoot, every hard stone hurts them, every sharp stick and pricking thorn pierces them. Therefore, we use not to venture abroad barefoot. If anyone be so foolhardy as to venture, soon will he wax weary, and either sit down and go no further or else turn back again. But if we have good boots or shoes on, then we think ourselves well fenced, and so with boldness and courage go on, whatever the way be.

To apply this: Stones, sticks, thorns, and the like, are not more grievous to our bare feet than troubles, crosses, and afflictions are to our naked heart and soul. Now then, this world through which we must pass to Heaven, being a very hard and rough way, stony and thorny, full of all sorts of afflictions; if our souls be naked and bare, not fenced with patience, and so fitted and prepared well to endure all crosses, we shall either never venture to enter into this hard way or at least not endure to hold out therein. But if our souls be thoroughly possessed with sound and

true patience, then shall we with undaunted courage pass through all the troubles of this World.

For the particular (which is the rather to be considered because the Apostle's whole direction is taken from war) the use of greaves and leg-harness were to keep the legs and feet from hurts and wounds because if they were wounded or broken, a man could no longer stand but was overthrown. Such soldiers as stand in the front of the battle, or single themselves out alone as Goliath, most commonly have their legs fenced with these. Besides, it being a stratagem which enemies often use, to stick the way by which they know that the adverse parties must need pass, with short stubs and pikes, ends of spears, and such like, of purpose to gall their feet and legs, and make them weary of going on; soldiers use to wear boots and greaves, to prevent such mischiefs. Surely the Devil uses such a stratagem against Christian soldiers: for knowing in what way they are to walk to Heaven, he sets many pricks and crosses therein, as reproaches, disgraces, troubles, vexations, persecutions, by loss of goods, liberties, and lives; yea, many times grievous torments and tortures. Now if our souls be not fenced with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, what hope, yea, what possibility is there of going on, and holding out in that way?

## §. 3. Of the Ground of Patience

[Point 3] The Apostle himself in the last words of this verse shows how this Preparation, this fence and furniture of the soul, namely patience, may be gotten, even by the Gospel of Peace: for it is such a preparation as the Gospel of Peace teaches and works, whence it follows, that the Gospel of Peace is the only true ground of this piece of Armour.

For the better clearing of this point, I will distinctly show,

1. What the Gospel is.
2. What Peace is here meant.
3. Why Peace is thus attributed to the Gospel.
4. How the Gospel of Peace effects this preparation.

### §. 4. Of the Gospel

Gospel, according to the proper notation of the original word, signifies a good message or glad tidings: so it is sometimes translated, as in Rom. 10:15, "How beautiful are the feet of them which bring glad tidings?" &c. The same notation may our English word Gospel admit: for 'spell' in ancient times signified speech: Gospel then is a good speech. The most elegant and learned languages retain the Greek word.

The good and glad tidings which this word implies is that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is given unto the sons of men. An Angel

from heaven thus expounded this word; for having said, "I bring you glad tidings," he adds, "that unto you is born a Savior which is Christ the Lord." Therefore, the Histories which purposely write of Christ Jesus, declaring his Deity and humanity, his conception and birth, his life and death, words and deeds, humiliation and exaltation, etc., are by an excellency and propriety termed Gospels, or to speak as the Scots do, Evangelies, and the penmen of them Evangelists. If it be duly considered into what a woeful estate man by sin had plunged himself, how no creature in Heaven or earth was able to succor him, what full redemption Christ has wrought, and to how excellent an estate he has redeemed us, it will appear that never the like glad tidings were or could be brought to mankind then this, that Christ, a Savior, was given unto them; so that this message may well be called a Gospel or Evangel. In it is the very fullness of God's favor manifested.

### §. 5. Of that Peace Which the Gospel Causes

The Peace here spoken of is our reconciliation with God. In the beginning, God made man after his own Image, by virtue whereof, there was a sweet harmony and concord between God and man; God having revealed unto man what was his good will, pleasing and acceptable unto him; man being both able and also willing to do that which was acceptable to God. But long this Peace did not last: it was soon broken, and that wholly and only through man's default. For man wittingly sinned against his

Creator and thereby justly provoked his wrath: thus came enmity between God and man. Such a breach was made by man's rebellion, that all creatures in Heaven and earth were not able to make it up. Christ therefore, the eternal, true, natural, proper, only begotten Son of God, took upon him to be a Mediator between God and man. He satisfied his Father's Justice, pacified his wrath, procured his favor towards man, whereby God was moved to offer reconciliation to man; withal, he gave unto man his sanctifying Spirit, to breed faith in him, that thereby man might receive and embrace this reconciliation. In this respect, God is called the God of Peace (Rom. 16:20) and Christ our Peace (Eph. 2:14), Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). And God is said in Christ to reconcile the world unto himself (2 Cor. 5:19). Thus, through the mediation of Christ, God offering, and man accepting reconciliation, a most perfect and inviolable peace is made between them, and this is the peace here meant. As fruits of this peace, there flow from it remission of sins, quietness and comfort of conscience, joy of heart, willingness and ability to do that which is pleasing unto God, freedom from the dominion of sin, from the power of the Devil, from the evil of all crosses, from the sting of death, and of the grave, and from the fear and fire of Hell.

### §. 6. Why It Is Called the Gospel of Peace

This Peace is so appropriated to the Gospel that it is called the Gospel of Peace, and that in a double respect: First, of the

matter. Secondly, of the effect.

1. The subject matter of this glad tidings is the forenamed Peace and reconciliation between God and man. The Gospel first declared and continues to publish the same: neither the Law nor any human writings can do this. Therefore, as soon as one Angel had declared this glad tidings, a whole troop of heavenly soldiers cried out, "Peace on earth." It was the Gospel that declared peace to Adam, Noah, Abram, and the rest of the Saints in all ages, before and since Christ's time. They, therefore, who preach the Gospel, are said to publish Peace.

2. It is a powerful effect of this Gospel to work Peace in those that hear it and believe it. For in and by the Ministry of the Gospel, the Spirit of Christ is conveyed into our hearts, in which respect it is called the ministration of the Spirit. This Spirit first moves us to embrace reconciliation offered in the Gospel, and then it quiets our conscience, and so works Peace therein.

How admirably does this commend to us the love of God and of His Son, our Savior? He thought it not enough that at first he made all in peace, though he might justly have rejected man forever, as he did the Devils because man willingly and rebelliously broke this Peace; yet to magnify His mercy towards man, He spared not His Son, but gave Him to be our Peace, who,

(to use the Scripture phrase) slew hatred and made Peace. Yea, not so only, but also gave His Gospel, thereby making open proclamation of Peace and inviting men to embrace it. Excellently is this set forth in the parable of the King's son's wedding; if we do as they who were invited thereunto, how justly do we deserve to be deprived of this Peace?

What a blessing is it to have the Gospel preached among us: the Gospel of Peace, such a Peace as passes understanding? Is it not a heavy curse to want this Gospel? This should be a strong motive to stir up Ministers diligently and faithfully to preach the Gospel, and to stir up people earnestly to give heed and credence thereunto, even as they tender their Peace.

### §. 7. Of the Ground of True Patience

From what has been delivered of the Gospel of Peace, that main point which we have in hand, by necessary consequence, follows, that the only means of preparing our souls patiently to bear all crosses, and constantly to go through all troubles in our Christian course, is a right knowledge of the glad tidings of our reconciliation with God. It was this Gospel of Peace with which God encouraged Abraham to come out of his own country, and with a patient and prepared heart to pass over all these difficulties whereunto he should be brought. This was that glad tidings which the Lord brought to Moses, to Joshua, to Gideon, and many others for that very end. I might instance this in many

thousand examples and show how the courage and patience of the Saints, which has been admirable to the world, has been grounded on this sure foundation, the Gospel of Peace. For the truth is, that all the Prophets, all the Apostles, all the true Christian confessors, and Martyrs in all ages, who have endured more than flesh and blood could possibly with patience bear, have had their feet shod, that is, their hearts armed and prepared with the assurance of their reconciliation with God. But having such a cloud of witnesses, I will content myself with naming two or three.

Many and sundry were the troubles, inward and outward, by open enemies and deceitful friends, on Sea and land, which Saint Paul went through, and that with an invincible courage and resolution: the cause of all is evident to be that knowledge which he had of God's love to him, and of his reconciliation with God. On this ground of confidence, he did after a holy manner insult over all adverse power. But Job yet suffered much more, and his patience was so admirable that the holy Ghost makes choice of him above all others, as a mark to behold, and a pattern to follow. What was the ground of his patience? Surely many of those divine speeches which he uttered to his wife and friends, evidently show, that the knowledge of his reconciliation with God was it which made him so confident and patient. There is yet another who far exceeded these and all other Saints both in suffering and patient bearing, namely, Christ: the assurance of his Father's love was the ground of his patience, as it appears

both by that profession which he made thereof, a little before his suffering (saying unto his Father, "Thou loved me before the foundation of the world,"), and also by those titles which in his most bitter agony he gave unto God, as in the Garden, "O my Father," &c. On the Cross, "My God, my God."

### §. 8. Of the Means Whereby Patience is Wrought

Thus, we see the truth of this point sufficiently proved; that the Gospel of Peace is the ground of Patience. Now, let's further consider how it prepares the soul of man to endure. It does this by persuading man's mind and resolving his heart of these two principles:

1. That nothing shall hurt him.

2. That all things shall turn to his good.

For the first, it's most certain that nothing can make us miserable but only sin. Sin is the very sting of all troubles and crosses; it's what makes them heavy burdens. This makes the trouble of conscience intolerable, death and the grave most terrifying, the devil, which has the power of death, so horrifying, and even the Law of God, and God Himself, full of dread and terror. Let sin be removed, and our conscience assured thereof; then we can, then we will comfort ourselves in all troubles. For then, we shall appear before the Throne of God as before the mercy seat of a gracious Father and take His Law as a direction

to teach us how to please Him. Then shall we esteem all crosses as corrections of the Lord for our profit, even as His physic to purge out our corruptions, and as proofs of His graces in us. Then will our conscience rest quiet and contented; then shall we think of death as of a gate to heaven, and of the grave as of a sweet bed to rest in, until the day of the consummation of our eternal bliss in body and soul; yea, then shall we not need to fear the devil, because he can have no power over us, much less hell and its torment. Therefore, David annexes blessedness to the remission of sin, so that upon this ground, Christ could well say to the man sick of palsy, "Son, be of good comfort."

This being so, the Gospel of Peace, which assures us of our reconciliation with God and the remission of our sin, also assures us that nothing can hurt us, because the sting of everything, which is sin, is pulled out. If the forked tongue of an adder, the poisonous teeth of a snake, the sharp sting of a wasp be pulled out, what hurt can they do?

For the second, by the Gospel, "We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God." For the Gospel, assuring us of reconciliation with God, how can we but be assured that He tenderly cares for us as His children and with a fatherly affection seeks our good in all things which by His good providence He brings upon us? The prosperity of those with whom God is reconciled is a blessing; afflictions are for their good; so are death and the grave. I may truly say that the sins of

those who are accepted by God turn to their good—not that sin is any way good in itself, being itself the greatest evil that is or can be and the cause of all evil of punishment—but that God, through His infinite power and wisdom (who can bring good out of evil, as at first, He caused light to shine out of darkness), does so order it. Like a skillful apothecary who can so order and temper rank poison that it shall prove very medicinal.

Quest: What good can come from sin?

Answ: 1. In regard to God, whose mercy and grace are manifested and magnified in forgiving sin: for "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

2. In regard to sinners (I mean repentant sinners, for of their sins I speak), it works in them godly sorrow (a sorrow not to be repented of, because of the excellent fruits thereof, noted in 2 Cor. 7:10, 11). It also works an high esteem of God's free grace and rich mercy, a longing desire after Christ's righteousness, a diligent watchfulness over ourselves for the time to come, a Christian readiness to bear with the slips and infirmities of others, among other effects.

These are two such grounds of Patience that all the writings of all the men in the world cannot afford the like. It is the Gospel, and the Gospel alone, which has made them known, and not only so, but also instrumentally works faith in our hearts:

whereby we give credence to the truth of them, and with strong confidence, rest and stay ourselves thereupon.

### §. 9. Of the False Grounds of Patience

Hence learn that all the pretended patience of heathen men, and others who knew not this Gospel of Peace, was but a mere shadow of patience. For what were the grounds thereof? Surely nothing as much substantial as by the Gospel is revealed, but such as man's natural reason invented, as these:

1. It is no part of manhood, but mere childishness and cowardliness to be impatient.

2. Sorrow, mourning, all impatience, and the like, may much aggravate our troubles, but can in no way ease them or take them away.

3. Others are subject to troubles; it is a common condition of mankind.

4. There is an inevitable necessity, or (to use the words and phrase) a fatal destiny; they cannot be avoided.

5. They are not forever to endure, but will have an end, if by no other means, yet by death. These and such like may make men bold and hardy, or stupid and blockish. I may resemble them to opium and such like medicines which

stupefy men's senses and make them the less impatiently bear their pains, but they bring no true ease.

The Gospel of Peace breeds not a senselessness, but such a patience as is seasoned with comfort and joy.

### §. 10. Of the Manner of Working True Patience

As we desire true patience, so let us labor that it be rightly grounded in us. For this end, we must acquaint ourselves with this Gospel of Peace, and labor for true, saving, sanctifying knowledge thereof. For the attaining whereunto,

1. The promises of God in His word are to be observed, especially such as concern our reconciliation with God, and His favor towards us, as David did. Without knowledge of God's promise, there can be no sound confidence: all the show that we may seem to make thereof will prove but mere presumption.

2. The cause of those promises is to be well noted, which is God's free grace and mere mercy.

3. The parties to whom they are made are to be marked: All that shall believe.

4. The properties of such as believe are also to be noted. Of these, we shall speak on verse 16.

When we come to any that are sick or in any other distress and desire to persuade them unto true patience, we must bring them to the knowledge of the Gospel of Peace, that they, having assurance thereof, may be the more quiet under God's correcting hand. Bring them to believe that their sins are forgiven, and then you may well bid them, "Be of good comfort," and patient.

## §. 11. Of the Necessity of True Patience

[Point 4] The fourth general point to be considered is the necessity of this piece of Spiritual Armour. Though it is compared to leg-harness, which may seem to be the least necessary, yet indeed it is no less necessary than any of the rest. We know that if a man is not well-fenced on his legs, he may receive such a blow upon them as will completely overthrow him, notwithstanding the other pieces of armour. But if the way is rough and thorny, and the man is barefooted and bare-legged, and in that respect dares not march on, what benefit reaps he by the furniture of the other parts? To let the metaphor pass; the gift and grace itself which we now speak of, Patience, is so absolutely necessary, as without it, there can be no hope of attaining victory, glory, and rest, where Christ our chief Captain is. The Apostle expressly says that patience is needful: to show that he speaks of an absolute necessity, he implies that the promise (meaning eternal life promised) cannot be received without it. For he had shown before that the Saints in former times through faith and patience inherited the promise, and in

that respect, both that Apostle and also Saint James exhort Christians to follow them.

## §. 12. Of the Troubles to Which We Are Subject

Many troubles and crosses must be undergone in this world before we can come to enjoy rest and happiness in Heaven. Note John 16:33, Luke 14:27, Acts 14:22, 2 Tim. 3:12, Heb. 12:6-7. These passages show how rough and full of pricks the way to Heaven is.

The experience of all ages verifies the truth of those Scriptures. Consider the histories of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, their posterity in Egypt, in the Wilderness, in Canaan; under Judges, under Kings, and in their captivities. Consider the lives of Christ, the Prophets, Apostles, and other Saints; the state of Christ's Church in the Apostles' time, after their time, and ever since, even unto these our days. It would be infinite to recount all the persecutions, troubles, afflictions, and sundry kinds of crosses which God's people from time to time have been brought unto. In a word, it is as possible for sheep to live quietly among wolves without hurt as for the Church in this world without trouble and persecution.

Objection: All ages and times have not been times of persecution. The Church in Solomon's days, and under the reign of many other good Kings, had great peace and quiet. Yea, it is written that in the Apostles' times, (which were most

troublesome times) the Churches had rest; so in Constantine's times, and in the time of other good Christian Emperors. Likewise here in this land under the reign of King Edward the sixth, Queen Elizabeth, and King James, who now liveth.

Answer: Though the Church and children of God be somewhat, for a time, freed from outward public persecutions of the Magistrate, or from open invasions of the enemy, yet not from all manner of troubles. Many are the troubles of the righteous, even in the most halcyon and peaceable days that ever were. For in the bosom of the Church (while the Church remains on Earth), there have always been, still are, and ever will be some born after the flesh, as well as some born after the spirit, which being so, persecution there will be. If not with fire and sword, banishment and imprisonment, outward torture and torment; yet with that which goes as near to the heart and pierces through the soul as deeply, namely, ignominy, reproach, disgrace, and such like Ishmaelitic persecution.

In the most quiet times of the Church, "He that refrains from evil makes himself a prey." Manifold injuries do the true Saints receive from their wicked neighbors; they are disgraced and oppressed by the greater sort, reviled and wronged by the meaner sort. If they should have peace abroad, yet at home, even in their Families, they shall find troubles enough, arising from their Parents, Husbands, or Wives, Children, Servants, Friends, Kinred, and the like. We read of, hear and see the crosses of

others; everyone feels his own, and so best knows them. Show me the man (let it be he that has seemed to himself and others the most happy) who in truth can say his life has been every way so free from all troubles and crosses, that in his own experience he knows not what they mean. If any should so say, I might more truly say to his face that either he is of a most stupid, blockish, and senseless disposition, or else that plainly he lies. But suppose for the time that it were possible for a man to be freed from all outward troubles, has he none within? Is all quiet in his soul and conscience? Had he never any grief of mind, anguish of spirit, vexation of heart, trouble of conscience? Then never had he any sin, or at least never any sense and feeling of sin.

## §. 13. Of the Authors of Our Troubles

This is brought to pass partly by the good guiding providence of God and partly by the malice of the Devil: God both aiming at and also bringing forth good thereby; the Devil aiming at evil but crossed in his purpose.

That troubles and crosses do not fall on us without God's permission is evident by many express testimonies of Scripture, such as Isaiah 45:7, Amos 3:6, Job 1:21, 2 Samuel 16:11, Ezekiel 20:37, and Hebrews 12:6-7. The good which God aims at and effects by those troubles he inflicts on his children is manifold, such as:

1. The preventing of some great mischief and evil.
2. The purging out of some festering poisonous sin.
3. The upholding and keeping us safe and steadfast in the right way.
4. The proof and trial of such gifts and graces as he has bestowed on his children.

That the Devil also has his hand in afflicting God's children is clear by these (among many other) Scriptures: Job 1:9-10, 2:5, 1 Chronicles 21:1, Zechariah 3:1, Luke 22:31, 2 Corinthians 12:7, and Revelation 2:10. The Devil's aim herein is to discourage us and to turn us out of the right way, to hinder the progress of the Gospel, and in a word, to devour us. The Devil well knows how weak and feeble our nature is, how soon our flesh is quailed, how irksome troubles are to us by nature. Therefore, he labors by all means he can, secretly and openly, by himself and instruments, to annoy us.

## §. 14. Of the Necessity of Patience

The point then being so clear, that of necessity, many troubles must be passed through before we come to our heavenly rest, it necessarily follows that of necessity we must be shod and fenced with patience. The lack of this grace has been the cause that many, who for a while have made a hot onset in the Christian battle, at length (when they felt the hard and rough way wherein they marched, and when they found themselves galled and

pricked with the troubles which they met with) have fallen away and refused to go on any further in their Christian course, as those who forsook Saint Paul.

## §. 15. Of the Benefit of Patience

As this grace is necessary, so also is its benefit exceedingly great. If we are well shod with it, no trouble will dismay us or hinder us in our Christian course. It makes burdens that seem very heavy to flesh and blood to be light and easy to bear, and such things tolerable which natural men consider intolerable and unsupportable. Indeed, it keeps us from being foiled and overcome. This allowed Job to pass over such grievous assaults as never any, that we read of, ever endured the like.

When the Holy Ghost speaks of the victory that the Saints have obtained, he says, "Here is the patience of the Saints," implying that through their patience, they overcame all their troubles.

## §. 16. Of the Perfect Work of Patience

[Point 5] The counsel of Saint James (Chapter 1, verse 5) is worthy to be noted; it is this, "Let patience have her perfect work." The work of patience is said to be perfect in respect of the condition, the extent, and the continuance.

1. For the condition, it must be true, hearty, and sound, not feigned and counterfeit. As integrity and uprightness are

kinds of perfection in all Christian graces, so also in patience.

2. For the extent, it must reach all manner of crosses, heavy and light, inward and outward, at home and abroad, whether they come from the Devil or any of his wicked instruments; or from God Himself and His own hand, of whatever kind, quality, quantity they be. In this respect, the Apostle said, "We approve ourselves in much patience."

3. For the continuance, it must endure to the end, so much does the notation of the word, which the Apostle uses, imply. To the end, I say, not only of that present affliction that lies upon us but also to the end of our life: so as we must both patiently bear the present and also prepare ourselves for future crosses. In this respect, Christ says, "He that endures to the end shall be saved."

Among other Saints, Job's patience had her perfect work in all these respects. Had it not been upright and sound, he could not have so stood against his friends, who, suspecting his uprightness, thoroughly sifted him. The many trials to which he was brought and his patient enduring of all (for he was overcome by none) manifest the extent of his patience. Never any (Christ excepted) endured more; never any (the same excepted) more patiently endured all. The History itself, his own testimony, God's also, and the witness of His Apostle, all verify the continuance of his patience to the end.

## §. 17. Of the Kinds of Crosses

To better apply this apostolic direction, as we have shown in general the necessity of patience, we will now detail how essential it is for patience to have this perfect work.

This becomes apparent by considering the kinds of crosses we are subject to:

1. They are not scarecrows, troubles in show and appearance only, but such as pierce both body and soul, making even the stoutest stoop and shrink. Therefore, counterfeit patience will stand us in no stead.

2. The number of trials we shall face is uncertain; one calamity may follow another, like waves. The story of Job, where one messenger followed another, all bringing doleful news, shows what may befall any of us. Now, suppose we endure some trials as patiently as Job but falter under others; what benefit is our former patience then? Some have endured imprisonment, banishment, and such like trials, yea, have been ready to endure sword and fire in times of persecution, but have been discouraged and turned from their course by reproach and disgrace in times of peace. Others who can patiently endure public troubles are so disquieted by private losses and crosses at home that they become unfit for any Christian duty to God or man.

3. It's also uncertain how long we shall be subject to trials because the duration of our life is uncertain. This world is the field of the Lord's battle, and as long as we are in the field, enemies will assault us. To yield before the battle ends is worse than never to have endured at all; the glory of all our former patience is not only lost but also turned into shame and ignominy, and God provoked utterly to give us over.

This point is especially to be regarded because most fail in it; many can endure a heavy burden and a sore brunt for a while, but if it persists, they faint. This was where the Hebrews failed, for which the Apostle is very earnest.

## §. 18. Of Too Light Regard of Crosses

Two extremes, to which we are very prone and which much hinder the perfect work of patience, are noted by the Apostle: one is too light regard, the other is too great fear of such crosses as God lays on men. Some despise them, as matters not much to be regarded; others faint and sink under their burden as if they were insupportable. It's often stupidity of mind or stubbornness of will that causes men to fall into the former. Those naturally stolid have not a spiritual sense of crosses and endure many troubles without benefit. Such were the Israelites Jeremiah complains of and Pharaoh. Those of a stubborn disposition despise God's corrections, like the fool whose foolishness will

not depart from him, even if you were to crush him. Such were the Israelites Isaiah complains of, and Ahaz.

These are dangerous pitfalls that cause many to suffer spiritual ruin. Yet many consider the first of these, enduring all crosses without being moved, a virtue. This is akin to the practice of many who profess to be Christians. Let public judgments fall, or personal tragedies strike; they are little moved. If they can be freed from them or delivered, they think it well; if not, they consider it destiny, they must bear it, and so lie under their burden like beasts or blocks. This is how many lie on their deathbeds, without remorse, like Nabal, whose heart died within him, and he became like a stone.

### §19.Of Despising God's Corrections.

The other sort, who through a rebellious will despise God's corrections, are the worse sort: they provoke God to show himself as a God of vengeance, even a consuming fire. For with the froward, he will show himself froward. Read what God threatens (Lev. 26. 18, 21, 24, 28.) and how he executes those threats (Amos 4. 6, etc.). That in these our days, men carry themselves stoutly against God, is too evident, both by God's dealings and men's. For God is very merciful, slow to anger. What is the cause then that he has of late sent so many judgments one after another unto this land? We may truly say with Jeremiah unto God, "We have sinned and rebelled,

therefore thou hast not spared." For man, who is bettered by the Lord's correcting hand? What sin is left? Oh beloved, let us take heed we provoke not God to lay his rod aside, and to take up a staff, or if that does not make us stoop, to unsheathe his sword, and cleanly cut us off.

## §20. Of Fainting Under the Cross.

This extreme the wickeder sort fall into, into the other fall the weaker sort, but the better, yea, many of the dear Saints of God. David seems, by his own confession, to have fainted in his mourning: for such is the feebleness of our nature, such our forgetfulness of God's power and promises, that we often let go from us those stays and props which the Lord has afforded unto us, to uphold. The Apostle implies that even God's children, without great watchfulness and continual observation, are very ready to wax faint. Experience, as of all other times, so of ours also, does verify as much. For how is it that there should be such slackness in many who have been heretofore very forward and zealous, and that men's after proceedings should be so unlike to their former good beginnings, but that they faint by reason of that hard way, and those manifold troubles, by which we must pass unto heaven? Great is the danger and damage of this fainting: it makes men weary of well-doing, it causes them to repent of the good which is done, and to turn back into an easier course (as they suppose), and so to lose all the glory of that good which has been done: yea, it often causes fearful doubting and

despair, and so makes all the help which the Scripture affords to be in vain.

### §21. Directions to Keep Men from Despising the Cross.

We ought therefore to be watchful against both these extremes, that we fall not into the former. Observe these few directions:

1. In all afflictions, look (as David did) unto him who smiteth, and know that they come not by chance, but by God's wise disposing providence: and that purposely to breed in us true remorse.

Know also that the Lord can add cross unto cross, till he pulls down our stout stomachs, or breaks our proud backs, and bring us to utter confusion. Yea, know that his wrath is as his greatness, infinite, unsupportable: on whomsoever it lighteth, it crusheth him down to hell: so that though a man might think he could bear all outward crosses, yet God's wrath can press him much more heavily.

2. Take notice of the judgments which other men, by despising the Lord, bring upon themselves: this may work upon thine hard heart. It is an especial point of wisdom to be warned by other men's harms. This was the wisdom of the third captain who was sent to Elijah. Note the issue.

3. Make use of the least crosses, and begin speedily to humble thyself. If thy heart begins to be touched, suffer it not presently to be hardened again, but more and more humble thyself. Thus will the Lord repent of the judgment he intended, and turn from his wrath, as he did in the time of Hezekiah.

### §22. Directions to Keep Men from Fainting.

That we fall not into the latter extreme, observe these directions:

1. Cast not both eyes on ourselves and our own weakness, and the weight of the crosses that lie upon us, but lift up one unto God, and unto his goodness, and consider how ready he is to succour in all times of need.

2. Call to mind his manifold promises: both those which respect his gracious assistance of us in the trial, and his mighty deliverance of us out of it.

3. Remember examples of former times, how he never oppressed them that patiently endured his corrections.

These two extremes are directly contrary to the two branches of this verse, namely to the preparation here spoken of, and to the ground thereof, the Gospel of Peace. If we be prepared, we shall not despise God's corrections: if prepared by the Gospel of Peace, we shall never faint: that will uphold us, or nothing.

## §23. Answer to Satan's Suggestion against the Need of Patience.

The last point remaining to be handled is to discover the cunning devices of the devil, whereby he labours to keep us unfurnished and unprepared against troubles: they are many; I will discover only four of the principal, by which all the rest may be discerned.

Two of these four are against the furniture itself; the other two against the ground thereof, the Gospel of Peace.

Against the furniture he suggests:

1. That there is no need of it.
2. That if there should be need of it, yet it would stand a man in no stead.

The first he suggests before troubles come, to make them fear none, but be careless.

The second when they come, to make them despair and sink under the burden. First, therefore, to this effect he objects:

Suggestion 1. If ye be God's children, what needeth such ado about preparation? Do you think that God will not more tenderly respect his own than to suffer them to fall into troubles? You may well enough be secure and fear nothing. Thus

the devil tempts many in their peace and prosperity: it appears that David was in this manner assaulted.

Answer: Experience of all men in all ages does sufficiently refute the substance of this suggestion, and plainly discover the falsehood of it (as I showed before.) David, who was a while beguiled with this vain conceit, quickly found out by woeful experience the deceit of it, and thereupon saith unto God, "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." It is very likely that then the Devil beguiled him when his kingdom was fully established, and he had rest from all his enemies: observe the history of his troubles, which came upon him after that, and ye shall find it to be a very vain and false conceit.

As for the ground whereupon the suggestion is built, namely the good respect which God bears to his children, know that God is even thereby moved to lay many crosses upon them: for as he is a loving Father, so he is a wise God: in wisdom he sees that it is needful his children should be corrected: his very love therefore moves him to correct them.

That we may oppose godly wisdom against the wicked policy of our enemy, let us have this furniture in readiness, even in the time of our greatest peace and prosperity, and so prepare ourselves against trouble. To prepare for troubles in time of prosperity before they come is an especial means to make us well bear them in time of adversity when they come. We know

that death is most fearful and terrible to them that least look for it: so are all afflictions whatsoever.

## §24. Answer to Satan's Suggestion against the Benefit of Patience.

Suggestion 2. All the patience in the world can neither prevent nor remove the least cross that falls on man. In what stead then will this furniture stand him?

Answer: Though it were granted that patience could neither prevent nor remove any cross, yet it will stand us in very great stead. For (to follow the metaphor) we know that though shoes and greaves make not the way plain without stones, stubs, and thorns; yet they make a man better able to tread on them, and pass through, or over them, and keep his legs or feet from being galled or pricked. So patience enables us well to bear all troubles, and with some quietness to pass them over, and it keeps the soul from being pierced: Yea, it makes great and heavy burdens seem much lighter than otherwise they would. The heathen who were guided only by the light of nature observed thus much. I have myself observed two several persons lying under the same cross. What could make such a difference, but this preparation of the Gospel of peace? The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?

Further, I add that this preparation does prevent and remove many sore troubles; as anguish of soul, vexation of spirit,

disquietness of mind, distemper in affections, with the like: which though they often rise from outward crosses, yet they often prove more heavy burdens than those same from whence they did arise. For example, a covetous man having a small loss which he might well bear, if he were shod with this furniture, by his disquietness of mind, and impatience for that loss, brings a much heavier cross upon him. So in sickness, in outward disgrace, banishment, imprisonment, etc., the anguish of soul which proceeds from an impatient heart often proves to be the greatest cross. So the fear of troubles is often worse than the trouble itself: and fretting against the malice of an enemy does a man more hurt than the enemy himself can. Now this furniture of the soul may both prevent and also remove these great and grievous crosses, such as anguish of mind and spirit, needless fears, fretfulness, envy, murmuring, with the like.

## §25. Answer to Satan's Suggestion against God's Love in Correcting.

Against the ground of this preparation, which is the Gospel of Peace, Satan objects one while that there is no reason to rely on it: another while, that it procures more troubles to them that rest on it.

Suggestion 3. Troubles are fruits of God's wrath: to conceive any peace with God while troubles lie on us is to call darkness light, and hatred love. To build patience on assurance of reconciliation

with God is to cast anchor upon quicksands, or in a bottomless Sea. A man may better hope for life when the tokens of the plague appear upon his skin, than hope for reconciliation with God, while troubles, the tokens of God's wrath, lie upon him. The assaults of Job's wife and friends tended much to this purpose.

Answer: The ground of this suggestion, being applied to the Saints, is directly false, and contrary to the current of the Scripture, which often testifies that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. The ends which God aims at in correcting his children, and the fruits which answerably issue from thence (whereof we have heard before) evidently demonstrate that the troubles of the righteous are no fruits of God's wrath, but rather of his love. Yet a wonder it is to see how many are deceived with this diabolical suggestion; and they not only profane and wicked men, but even dear Saints of God, while the cross lies upon them, as David. The reason is, because at that time Sense works more than Faith. Wherefore for the avoiding of this assault, we must let faith have the predominance and highest rule in us, even above reason and sense: we must walk by faith, and not by sight. Faith rests on God's word, and believes what it says, though sense contradict it never so much. Now the word of God affirming that God correcteth whom he loveth; if faith bear sway in us, it will persuade us that in our greatest troubles God loveth us, and in love bringeth those troubles upon us. Wherefore for

the strengthening of our faith, let us often meditate on the consolations of the Scripture.

## §26. Answer to Satan's Suggestion of the Many Troubles which God's Love Causes.

Suggestion: The Devil, to show that he cares not which way he prevails, so he prevails any way, has a contrary fetch. He will grant indeed that God scourges every son whom he loveth; but withal adds, that the more God loveth any, the more troubles he brings upon them; and therefore infers that the Gospel of peace is so far from being a means to defend us from trouble, that it is the cause of much trouble; and therefore the best way to be free from trouble is to be without the Gospel of peace. Thus was David tempted: yea, thus were the Israelites' hearts hardened against God in Jeremiah's time.

Answer: It is false that the more God loveth any, the more he scourges them: For as God's wisdom moves him to correct his children, so his love moves him to moderate his correction. Besides, the inference that therefore reconciliation with God is no good remedy against troubles, is unsound and absurd: for assurance of our reconciliation with God sweetens all troubles. But for a more full answer to this suggestion, note these four points concerning the benefit of our peace with God in the case of afflictions.

1. That it keeps many judgments from us which fall upon the wicked: yea, which otherwise would fall on us.

2. That it alters the nature of all troubles which befall us.

3. That by it we are assisted and supported in all.

4. That by reason thereof we shall be delivered and freed from all.

These four comfortable points I will distinctly prove, because by them all the evil suggestions of Satan may be answered.

For the first, observe the threatenings in God's word, and you shall find them made against such as hate God, and are hated of him. Read the 26th chapter of Leviticus and the 28th of Deuteronomy. There God's curses are denounced against the wicked, but his blessings promised to the righteous: read the 91st Psalm, where David expressly confirms this point, and shows how they who trust under the shadow of the Almighty, and so have peace with him, are delivered from many troubles. Note the histories of the Jews under idolatrous and wicked kings, and under religious and good kings; God being forsaken by them, brought many calamities upon them: but being loved of these, delivered them from many which their enemies intended against them: Yea, when general judgments were brought upon the land, God sent forth one to mark those whom he loved, that they might be spared in the judgment. The reason is clear: for it

is sin which causes the most grievous judgments: Now the Gospel of peace being a means to move God to forgive us the sins which we have committed, and to move us to forsake our sins, and to seek to please him, it must needs be a means to keep us from many judgments, which otherwise would fall upon us. Besides, it keeps us from a reprobate sense (whereunto the heathen were given, and the Jews after they had lost their peace with God): from despair, whereunto Judas fell; and from hell fire, which shall torment wicked men. These of all are the most woeful judgments, and from these does the Gospel of peace wholly free men.

Here note what an egregious point of folly it is to fear to please God, for fear of troubles; as if a man should fear to put on shoes, lest his shoes should cause stones to lie in his way: yet many fear to be at peace with God because it makes men hate, revile, reproach, scorn, wrong, and persecute them: not considering that God's wrath is infinitely greater than man's. Are they not like the fish that leaps out of the warm water, into the flaming fire? Or rather like self-murderers, who to free themselves from some momentary anguish in this world, cast themselves into hell torments, which are endless, and easeless?

### §27. Of the Nature of the Saints' Affliction.

For the second; the afflictions which befall the righteous are called chastisements, and corrections, even such as tender

parents lay upon their dear children; to show that the nature of them is altered, the sting is pulled out, the curse is removed; so that although the original ground of all afflictions was sin, and they first were vengeance executed for sin, yet now inflicted on the Saints, they are not vindictive for revenge, but rather medicinal for physic: for Christ hath paid the full price and ransom for all our sins, he hath endured the full punishment for them, and left nothing to be by way of expiation endured of us.

Object. The Saints are punished for sin, as David.

Answer. True it is that God taketh occasion from sin to punish his children, but not in vengeance for the sin committed which is past, but for a warning to make them the more careful and watchful over themselves for the time to come. And herein lieth a main difference between the punishment of a judge and a father: a judge respecteth the fact past; if it be against the law, though the delinquent party be never so penitent, and though there be never so great hope of his amendment, yet he denounceth the sentence of law against the malefactor: but if a father be verily persuaded that his child will never commit the like trespass again, which he hath committed, assuredly he would remit the punishment: but when he correcteth, it is to prevent the like in the time to come.

God carrieth himself as a judge to the wicked, but as a father to the Saints: his corrections are for their instruction, not for their

destruction. As God aimeth at his children's good and profit in correcting them, so also he giveth them a sweet taste of the good they receive thereby, which maketh them acknowledge as much, and be thankful for it; and so carry themselves towards God, as a good patient towards his physician, who hath prescribed bitter pills unto him: for the time he digests them willingly, and after he hath felt a kindly work of them, he thanketh them.

### §28. Of God's Assisting His Children in Affliction.

For the third, many faithful promises hath God made to stand by his children, to be with them, and assist them in their several afflictions, and never to forsake them. Hence is it that the Saints, to the great admiration of others, have patiently endured such crosses, as many have thought they would have been utterly pressed down with the heavy burden of them, even as the Barbarians looked when Paul should have fallen down dead.

### §29. Of God's Delivering His Children out of All Afflictions.

For the last, many faithful promises hath God likewise made to deliver his children out of all their troubles. Saint James setteth before us the issue of Job's trial, as an evidence of this point, (saying, Ye have seen the end of the Lord; and withal he rendereth a good reason thereof, The Lord is very pitiful and merciful, (James 5:11.)

Object. Some lie all their lifetime under the cross.

Answer. Yet at the end of life, by death shall they be delivered; in which respect the divine oracle pronounceth them blessed that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours.

Object. So are the wicked delivered by death.

Answer. Nothing so: they fall from one misery to another, from a lighter to a greater, from an earthly, to an hellish woe: so that herein lieth a main difference, between the death of the wicked, and of the Saints. Death thrusteth the wicked from temporal troubles into eternal torments: but it delivereth the Saints from all trouble, and bringeth them to everlasting glory: their misery shall soon have an end, their felicity shall never have end.

Thus then we see patience grounded upon the Gospel of peace, to be much profitable every manner of way.

## The Sixth Part.

The Shield of Faith.

> Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. - Ephes. 6:16.

## §1. Of the Apostle's Manner of Pressing the Point of Faith.

The fourth piece of spiritual armour is more largely set forth and more forcibly urged than any of the rest. For the Apostle does not content himself with a bare exhortation to stir us up to use it, but with weighty reasons presses his exhortation, and that on both sides, before and behind: Before, comparatively, preferring it to all other graces (above all.) Behind, simply, declaring the virtue and efficacy of it, (whereby ye shall be able to quench, etc.) By the first, he makes way to his exhortation; by the last, he knocks it down fast, even to the head, as we speak.

## §2. Of Urging Matters of Moment:

Here, by the way, we may learn a good instruction both for Ministers and people.

For Ministers, that they observe what points are of greatest weight and, by some special item and memento, raise up their people's attention thereto, yea, and with some special evidence of reason and argument to enforce the same. Thus, because the observation of the fourth commandment is an especial means to bring men to keep all the other commandments, the Lord prefixed a memento (Remember the Sabbath day) and withal uses many strong reasons, the more to stir us up to keep it.

Thus an expectation is wrought in the hearers, of some point of moment; which will be an especial means to move them the

better to observe it, and to ponder it.

## §3. Of Giving Heed to Weighty Matters.

For people, that when they observe any one point above others to be urged and pressed, they give the more diligent heed thereto: for if every duty laid down in God's word be steadfast, that is, firm, sure, and inviolable; so as the transgressors thereof shall reap a just recompense of reward, how shall they escape who neglect those main and principal duties, which above others are most earnestly urged? Let that therefore which is most pressed by the Spirit and Ministers of God be best regarded by the people of God.

Object. This especial heed of one point will make men careless of others.

Answer. Nothing less: for the end thereof is not to make us slothful in any point, but to quicken us up, and make us extraordinarily careful in that which is so urged. Suppose a master sends his servant of a message, and gives him many things in charge to do, but gives him an especial item for one, and uses many reasons to make him careful of it, does he give his servant any occasion to neglect the others? or will a good servant take any occasion from thence to neglect them? Such conclusions are made only by man's slothful flesh; they who gather them abuse the wisdom and care of God to help our weakness; they who are guided by God's Spirit will be otherwise

minded, knowing that an extraordinary urging of one point is to make us extraordinarily careful of that, but careless and negligent of none.

## §4. The Resolution of the Text.

Two points are to be noted in this verse. First, the transition, whereby the Apostle passeth from other points to this. Secondly, his exhortation unto the grace here mentioned.

In his exhortation note:

1. The matter thereof.
2. The motive thereto: That layeth down a duty to be performed (Take the shield of Faith.)

This declareth the benefit of performing that duty in the last words, that ye may be able to quench, etc.

In the duty observe, the action required (take), and the object thereof: which is both plainly expressed (Faith) and also illustrated by a metaphor (shield.)

The motive declareth the power, virtue, and efficacy of Faith; which is, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Touching this grace thus set down, I will deliver these points.

First, in general, by way of preface and preparation, I will show how excellent a grace it is: and then more particularly and

distinctly declare,

2. What faith is.

3. How fitly it is resembled to a shield.

4. How it is wrought.

5. How it must be proved.

6. How it may be preserved.

7. How it is to be used.

8. What is the benefit and power of it.

9. What are the wiles of the devil to keep us from it, and how they may be avoided.

### §. 5. Of the preeminence of Faith above other graces.

I. The excellency, yea and necessity also of Faith is implied in this translation (above all). The original phrase is diversely translated, as thus in all, as if he had said, in all things whatsoever ye do, use the shield of Faith: and thus, to all, as if he had said, to all other graces, add this: and thus moreover, or especially, or (as we translate it) above all. All these in effect imply one and the same thing, only this latter is somewhat more emphatic, and as proper as any of the rest. This is somewhat like

to that Hebrew phrase, which Solomon uses, "Keep thine heart above all keepings," implying thereby, that the heart of all other parts is most narrowly to be watched over, most carefully and diligently to be looked unto, so is Faith above all to be regarded.

Question: Is Faith simply more excellent and necessary than other saving graces?

Answer: All saving graces are in their kind very excellent and necessary, as has before been shown of verity, righteousness, and patience: neither can a Christian well spare, and be without any of them: for they are as several links of one chain, whereby a Christian is held out of hell; if but one link break, the chain is broken, and down falleth he that was held thereby: yet some links in a chain may be put to the greatest stress, and so be of greatest use. Faith serves to bear the greatest brunts, and in that respect may be counted most excellent, and most necessary; even as the shield of all other parts of armour is the most needful, as we shall after hear.

### §. 6. Of pressing the doctrine of Faith.

The Apostle uses this phrase (above all) in the beginning of his exhortation, to set an edge upon it, and to make it the sharper, that so it may pierce the deeper into us: as if a captain should give diverse directions to his soldiers, to instruct them to arm, and fence themselves, and among those several directions, set some special item on one of them, and say, "Above all remember

this," would not this item make him the more to regard it? As where the Apostle says, "Do good to all, especially to them who are of the household of Faith," does it not make a Christian so much the more to be moved with compassion when he sees any of the faithful stand in need of his help? Hence then I observe that,

Among, and above other points and principles of Christian Religion, and mysteries of godliness the doctrine of Faith is especially to be opened and urged by God's Ministers, and to be learned and observed by God's people. What point throughout the whole Scripture is more urged? all the rites and types of the Law, set forth the doctrine of faith, Moses, and the Prophets preached it, so did the forerunner of Christ, Christ himself, and his Apostles. For some especial instances of this point, read and observe Christ's conference with Nicodemus, and Paul's Epistles to Rom. and Gal.

No other doctrine more sets forth the glory of God, and more makes to the good of his Church and children.

### §. 7. Of the honour which Faith doth unto God.

God is then honoured, when he is acknowledged to be as he is, namely, most holy, wise, true, powerful, merciful, just, &c. But the believer, and the believer only so acknowledgeth him.

1 For God's holiness, how approacheth the believer before God? Surely in an utter abnegation of himself, and in the mediation of Christ Jesus: for well he knoweth that himself is all over defiled with sin, and that Jesus Christ the Just, is an advocate with the Father, who by his blood purges us from our sins, and with his righteousness covers us. This manner of appearing before God, shows that the believer acknowledges God to be so perfectly holy, as he cannot endure the sight of any unclean thing.

2 For God's wisdom: who are they that subject themselves to God in all estates of prosperity and adversity? Believers only. Why then? Their faith persuades them that God is wisest, and best knows what estate is fittest for them, and so even against their own sense and natural reason, faith makes them wholly resign themselves to God's wise providence, and in that respect to be thankful in all things.

3 For God's truth: he that believes, has sealed that God is true: for what makes men believe, but that they judge him who has promised that which they believe, to be faithful and true? Faith then is an acknowledgment, and a confirmation of God's truth, which is a high honour given to God, for God makes great reckoning and account of his truth.

4 For God's power: many of the promises which God makes to his children, are of things which seem impossible: yet faith gives assent thereto, and thereby testifies that God is Almighty, that

nothing is impossible to him. Thus Abram by his faith did magnify God's power, and so did Jehoshaphat also.

5 For God's mercy: that is the especial and most proper object of Faith. If the poor sinner were not persuaded that God were rich, yea even infinitely rich in mercy, he could never believe the pardon of his sins: faith then is it which above all commends God's mercy.

6 For God's justice: what makes believers so strongly trust unto, and wholly rely upon the sacrifice of Christ? Because on the one side they believe God to be so perfectly just, that without expiation and satisfaction for sin, there can be no hope of mercy: and on the other side, the sacrifice of Christ being of such infinite value, as to make full satisfaction to God's justice, they believe that God will not exact that of them, for which Christ has satisfied, but will manifest favour to them, because Christ has purchased favour for them. These are points of justice, to require satisfaction, to remit that for which satisfaction is made, to bestow that which is merited and purchased. But Faith acknowledges all these, and so commends God's justice; for it has respect to God's justice, as well as to his mercy.

Object: Sinners (repentant and believing sinners) use to appeal from the bar of God's justice, to his mercy-seat: what respect then has Faith to God's justice?

Answer: In regard of themselves, and their own manifold pollutions and imperfections, even in their best works, they dare not stand to the trial of God's justice, but cry for mercy and pardon: but yet in confidence of the All-sufficient sacrifice of Christ Jesus, they may appeal to God's justice: for God is not unjust to require a debt that is paid.

In these and other like respects, it is said of Abraham, "That he was strengthened in the Faith, and gave glory to God." So does every believer in some measure: the stronger faith is, the more glory is given to God. But on the contrary, no sin is more dishonourable to God than infidelity: for that which is said of one particular, "He that believeth not, makes God a liar," may be applied to the rest, he makes God unwise, impotent, merciless, unjust, &c.

### §. 8. Of the good which Faith bringeth unto man.

In regard of man's good, Faith of all other graces is the most necessary, profitable, and comfortable.

It is the first of all saving graces wrought in the soul of a Christian, as the heart is the first member framed in the body. Yes, it is a mother-grace, which breeds and brings forth other graces, as the heart, being quickened, sends forth life into all the other parts.

That it is the first is evident: for Christ is that fountain in whom all fullness dwells, (Col. 1:19.) of whose fullness all receive, (John 1:16.) without whom we can do nothing, (John 15:5.) Now it is Faith whereby we touch Christ: By Faith, Christ dwells in our hearts, (Ephesians 3:17.) The spiritual life which we live, we live by Faith in the Son of God, (Galatians 2:20.) therefore till by Faith we are engrafted into Christ, no true, saving grace can be in a man. Without Faith, it is impossible to please God, (Hebrews 11:1.)

That also it is a mother grace is clear, for from Faith spring repentance, love, new obedience, &c. Repentance is a change of the heart, as the notion of the Greek word implies. Now what is it that changes the heart of a sinner? Is it not the apprehension of God's infinite love and rich mercy? a persuasion that a man's sins are pardoned? The apprehension of God's wrath, and fear of hell fire, may work some sorrow for sin committed; yes also it may restrain a man from committing many sins, at least for a time: but that which alters the natural disposition of the heart, which changes and reforms it, is Faith in the remission of sin: By Faith God purifies the hearts of men.

True Christian love also is a reflection of God's love to man: till a man feels God's love to warm his heart, and to set it on fire, he can love neither God nor man. He that loves his brother aright, must love him in and for the Lord, and so must love God before: but it is not possible for any to love God, except he believes that

God loves him. Can a piece of iron give heat and burn, except it be first heated by the fire? But our hearts are naturally more destitute of love to God, than any iron of heat: they must therefore be set on fire by God's love, and a sweet apprehension thereof, before they can love God: We love God, because he loved us first: It is Faith which works by love. Thus I might further show how all other sanctifying graces spring from Faith. But what follows from thence? surely this, that if any sanctifying and saving grace be needful, then is Faith especially, which is the Mother of all; without it, no grace at all, no life at all: for the just shall live by his Faith, (Habakkuk 2:4.) From faith comes the spiritual life of a Christian in this world. (Galatians 2:20.) and eternal life in the world to come (John 3:16, &c.) Yes, no benefit from Christ without Faith: though Christ received the spirit without measure, and it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell: yet to such as have no faith, he is as a deep well, out of which no water of life can be had.

But when a man has faith, what is the profit and benefit thereof? Much every way. By faith Christ dwells in our hearts, and so we are united to him. By Faith we live: by Faith we are reconciled, justified, sanctified, saved. It were infinite to reckon up all the benefits of Faith. In regard of profit and benefit to ourselves, it far surpasses all other graces. By other graces, as love, mercy, kindness, wisdom, and the like, we may be profitable to others: but Faith is it which draws and brings in to ourselves, bodies and souls, all the profit.

It is also a grace of admirable comfort: this is it which brings peace of conscience, That peace of God which passes all understanding: this upholds in all troubles, and that many times above and against sense and reason. All comfort without Faith is in vain: when all other comforts fail, then may faith uphold us. Thus faith upheld Job, David, Jehoshaphat. When other graces, and the testimony of our conscience fail, Faith may support us: for the conscience has respect to the man himself, to his disposition and carriage, which is subject to many temptations, and many alterations: but Faith has respect to GOD and his promises, to Christ and his sacrifice, which are props, or rather rocks that never fail. In this respect is Faith fitly compared to a shield: for as a soldier who has a good shield, and is able well to use it, will not utterly be discouraged, but stand out in the battle, though his head-piece be cracked, his breast-plate battered, his girdle loose, &c: So when verity, righteousness, patience, and other like graces seem to fail, he that has sound faith will not utterly be quailed and confounded.

Faith being so excellent a grace, as that whereby God is most honoured, so necessary, profitable, and comfortable a grace as has been shown; what point of Christian Religion is rather to be made known, is more to be pressed, oftener to be inculcated? about what can a Minister of God's word better spend his time, study, and pains? For Faith is the most proper and principal object of the Gospel, which is therefore called, The Word of Faith, The preaching of Faith, yes, Faith itself.

## §. 9. Of the high account which we ought to make of Faith.

As ministers are most to preach this doctrine, so are people to learn it above all, to be very well instructed in it, that they may know what true faith is: yes, to examine themselves whether they have in them this grace or not: if not, to inquire how it may be gotten, how discerned and proved: if they have it, to labour well to preserve, increase, and use it: for faith is a capital grace. We must therefore in this respect learn wisdom of the serpent, who has an especial care of his head: if he be assaulted and cannot fly, he will cover his head with the rest of his body, and suffer it to be stricken and wounded rather than his head. We ought to be the more careful of this head virtue because Satan (who well knows the worth of it) seeks most to assault it. Is it not good wisdom to look to that most of all, which he most of all sits? Of these points I shall more distinctly speak afterwards. This I thought good to premise by way of preparation unto the discourse following, taking occasion from the Apostle's preface, above all.

## §. 10. Of the Papists' quill against Faith.

If any popishly minded shall think, or say, that so much preaching and learning of faith, is a hindrance to good works, and makes men careless of all piety and charity.

I answer, that if any be so minded, they are blinded by the god of this world, that the light of the glorious Gospel should not shine

unto them. The truth is, that no other doctrine can make men more conscientious in performing all duty to God and man than the doctrine of faith. From faith proceed all good works: for it is faith in God's love which moves a man to love God again, and love to God is it which moves a man to love his brother, who is made after God's image and stands in God's room and stead. Now there can be no stronger motive to stir up a man to any duty than love: a loving child will much more seek to please his father than a servile bond-slave: and a loving friend will do much more kindness for a friend than a stranger, though he be hired thereunto. He that indeed believes that God so loved him, as he spared not his only begotten Son, but gave him a price of redemption; that in his Son God has vouchsafed to be reconciled to him, to give him pardon of all his sins, freedom from hell and damnation, and to bestow on him all things pertaining to life and happiness, he that is thus persuaded of God's love to him, cannot but have his heart enlarged to do what may be pleasing and acceptable to God: no hope of reward, no fear of revenge can so provoke a man to all good works as love which faith works. Besides, whatsoever is performed without faith and love is not acceptable to God: God accepts a cup of cold water given in faith and love infinitely much more than thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil given in way of presumptuous merit or else of slavish fear.

The objection therefore of our adversaries against the doctrine of faith is a mere cavil and slander. They who take liberty

thereby, either to commit any evil, or to omit any good, turn the grace of our God into wantonness (Jude 4) and pervert it to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

### §. 11. Of Faith in general.

Thus much concerning the transition. The exhortation follows: wherein we are first to consider the thing simply set down, and to show what faith is.

[Point 2] Faith in general is a believing of a thing to be true. Our English word faith seems to be taken from the Latin fides, which according to the notation thereof is as much as fiat dictum, be it so as is spoken. The notation of the Greek word implies as much: so also of the Hebrew, in which language one and the same word signifies truth and faith, from whence is derived that common Hebrew word which is usually uttered at the end of our prayers, Amen; which signifies an assent of the mind to that which is spoken, as to truth.

### §. 12. Of the kinds of Faith.

This assent may be either to the word of the Creator, or of the creature. The faith of which now we speak has reference to the Creator and his word and may, in general, be defined as a belief in the truth of God. Faith thus taken is either common to all or proper to the elect. That common faith is extraordinary or ordinary.

Extraordinary Faith is a belief that some extraordinary and miraculous thing shall occur. This is grounded either upon some special promise or extraordinary revelation made to the party in whom it is: and it is given but at some special times, to some special persons, on some special occasions: by it, things to come may be foretold, or other great works done: It is a gift of the Spirit, but one of those which are given, rather for the good of others than of that party which has it; so it may be in a wicked reprobate, as in those who shall plead it at Christ's Judgment Seat, but in vain. This is that which commonly is called a Miraculous Faith.

Ordinary Faith is either that which rests only in the mind of a man, or else draws the will also. The former of these is that faith whereby an assent is given to the truth of God's word. This is commonly called historical faith: because thereby credence is yielded to the history of God's word, that is, all things which are written in God's word, are believed to be true. This may one do which is not any whit the better affected towards God's word, either to love God, or fear him, or trust in him the more for this faith. For thus the very devils are said to believe.

The latter kind of ordinary faith common to all sorts, as well reprobate as elect, is that faith whereby such an assent of the mind is given to the Gospel, and to the gracious promises thereof, as the heart is affected with them, and rejoices in them for a season. This was in Simon Magus, who in regard thereof

yielded to be baptized: and in those Jews who were willing for a season to rejoice in John's light. This is commonly called a temporary Faith, because it lasts not forever, but fades away, and that for the most part while a man lives here in this world, especially if he is brought to any trial. Christ fitly compares this faith to corn sown in stony ground. I deny not but that it may continue so long as a man lives, but then with his life, it ends without any fruit, as smoke that vanishes away to nothing: in which respect The hope of a wicked man is said to perish when he dies. This faith is also called a hypocritical faith, not because he that has it only makes an outward flourish in show, purposely to deceive men; for then could not the heart be affected, nor the man rejoice therein: but because it is not sound, but appears both to the party himself, and also to others, to be better and sounder than indeed it is: for there is a double hypocrisy, one whereby men purposely seek to deceive others, as the Pharisees: another whereby they deceive themselves, as Paul. That former arises from vain-glory, covetousness, and such by-respects: this latter from ignorance, simplicity, slothfulness, carelessness, security, and the like, which keep men from trying that grace which appears to be in them, whether it be sound or not. This faith is called hypocritical, in opposition to an attribute proper to true saving faith, namely unfeigned.

### §. 13. Of the titles given to true Faith.

The faith which is here meant by the Apostle is a far more precious Faith than any of these: it is proper to the Elect, and by a propriety called, The faith of God's Elect: for none but the Elect have it, and all the Elect have it at one time or another: when once they have it, they never utterly or totally lose it, but it continues with them till it has brought them to the purchased inheritance, even to the possession & fruition of that which they believed, at which time they shall have no more need of it. It is therefore called saving Faith, because it brings us unto salvation; and justifying Faith, because it is that means or instrument which God's Spirit works in us, whereby we apply unto ourselves Christ Jesus, in and by whom we are justified: and sanctifying Faith, because by it God purifies our hearts.

### §. 14. Of the definition of justifying Faith.

This true, sound, unfeigned, justifying, sanctifying, saving faith, whereof we now speak; I say, this faith is a belief of the Gospel, whereby Christ and all his benefits offered therein are received.

In this definition note the two usual parts of a definition: 1. The common matter of it (A belief of the Gospel) 2. The particular form or difference (whereby Christ, etc.) The former shows wherein true justifying faith agrees with other kinds of faith: the latter wherein it differs from them.

1 It is a belief) This it has in common with all kinds of faith; where there is no belief, no credence, no assent given, there is no

faith at all.

2 Of the Gospel) Though the whole word of God be the general object of justifying faith, yet the Gospel is the special object thereof: by it is the heart of a believer especially moved and affected; and this is it which justifying faith has in common with that kind of faith that comes nearest unto it and is hardly distinguished from it, namely, temporary faith. What the Gospel is we have shown before. The sum of it is plainly and fully laid down by Christ himself, in these words, "God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

3 Whereby Christ and all his benefits offered therein.) Christ Jesus is the subject matter and very substance of the Gospel, and so the proper and peculiar object of justifying faith. Christ I say, not barely and nakedly considered in himself (for then he were no Saviour) but accompanied with all those benefits which as our Mediator and Redeemer he wrought and purchased for us. The Apostle sets down four of those benefits, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption: under which the others may be comprised. These are said to be offered in the Gospel.

1. Because of the necessary relation between receiving and offering: for receiving presupposes an offering.

2. To show the ground of our receiving, which is God's free offer.

3. To show that all they who receive not Christ, plainly reject him: and so are justly condemned for rejecting him.

4. (Are received) In the act of receiving, the nature of justifying faith especially consists, for thereby is Christ made a man's own: in this the best temporary faith that may be comes short of justifying faith: for all that joy which temporary believers conceive, arises not from any true possession of Christ, but only from some apprehension of those great and excellent things which in the Gospel are promised. Justifying faith is as it were the hand of the soul, a spiritual instrument framed in our hearts by the Spirit of God, whereby we lay hold on Christ, and apply or take unto ourselves, and receive those things which God in the Gospel offers unto us. This word of receiving fitly answers that metaphor of eating and drinking, so often used in the Scripture to set forth the nature of faith. Ye know that all the benefit we receive by food, comes from our eating and drinking it: though there be set before a man great plenty of dainty and wholesome cheer, yet if it be not eaten, where is the benefit of it? So in vain is Christ with all his benefits offered, if he be not received.

Fitly also does it answer another excellent metaphor (namely of marriage) which is often used in the holy Scripture to set forth

that near union which is between Christ and the faithful. God makes an offer of his Son in marriage to mankind: Christ came down from heaven to be a suitor, and to be espoused: Ministers his friends, entreat us in Christ's stead, to accept him; when in our hearts we accept this offer, and receive this Son of God to be our husband, then in truth and indeed we believe, and not before.

Thus have I opened this definition of faith in the several parts thereof: out of it two especial points are to be noted.

1. That every faithful soul, every true believer gives a full assent in his mind to the truth of the Gospel, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life": so as here is excluded, a wavering opinion (for belief is a strong persuasion;) and also a presumptuous conceit, (for the Gospel is the Word of Truth, which cannot deceive.)

2. That with the assent of the mind, there goes a consent of the will: so what the believer conceives in his understanding to be true, he embraces in his will to be good, and so in his heart joyfully receives that favour which God freely offers unto him, namely, Christ Jesus, and in, and with him all things needful to salvation.

Thus by God's offer of his Son in the Gospel, and our receiving of him by faith, we come to be espoused to Christ, as a Bride to her Bridegroom: to be engrafted into him, as scions into a stock: to be of one body with him, he the head, we the members, and so he and we to make one Christ. By the faith here spoken of, Christ dwells in our hearts, he is ours, and we are his. This, and nothing but this is it wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

### §. 15. Of the resemblance betwixt Faith and a Shield.

Now, further mark how fitly this faith is compared to a Shield.

A Shield is a general fence for the whole body, especially for the principal parts, the head and heart. There are sundry kinds of shields, bucklers, and targets used in war: some round and small, some square, some like a half moon, some after one fashion, some after another, and accordingly they have diverse names. The Greek word which here the Apostle uses, is taken from a door or gate: so as it signifies, a long, broad, large shield, wherewith the whole body was covered. The use of it is both to avoid handy blows, strokes, foins, pushes and the like, made with Sword, Halberd, Spear, and such like weapons; and also to keep off Darts, Arrows, Bullets, Stones, and such annoyances as were shot, and flung afar off: so as it is a common defence against all sorts of weapons, all kinds of assaults.

Of this use is faith, able to defend the whole man from all sorts of temptations cast against him by any of his spiritual enemies, the flesh, world, or devil. By faith the believer holds out Christ himself, and the power and efficacy of his obedience and suffering, against all spiritual assaults: if this defend him not from all, what can? This will keep us safe from temptations, taken from the corruption of our nature, imperfection of our obedience, innumerable number, and infinite weight of our sins, from prosperity, adversity, or the like, if at least it is well used. Of the well-using of it, we shall afterwards hear.

### §. 16. Of the meaning of the word Take.

The next point to be handled, is the Action whereunto we are exhorted in this word Take, which is the very same that he used before, verse 13. It is here used in as large a sense, both to take up, or to take unto one, and also to take again and recover a thing. Soldiers do not let their Shield lie on the ground, but take it up in their hands, hold it out against their enemies, moving it up and down every way where the enemy strikes at them; if the enemy continues to fight, or renew the fight, they still hold it out again and again: yes, if by their own weakness, or through the violence of any blow, they let it fall, or slip, they presently seek to recover it, and take it up again.

Thus must we take up and hold forth this spiritual Shield of Faith against all the temptations of Satan: and if through our

own infirmity, or our enemies' fierceness, we suffer it to fail and fall away, then recover it again, and continue to defend ourselves with it, so long as we shall have enemies to assault us.

This point of taking the Shield of Faith, respects diverse sorts of people:

1. Those who have it not; they must labour to get it.
2. Those who doubt whether they have it, or not: they must prove it.
3. Those who fear they may lose it; they must seek to preserve it.
4. Those who are established therein; they must well use it.

I will therefore in order show how faith may be

1. Gotten.
2. Proved.
3. Preserved.
4. Well used.

## §. 17. Of the Author of Faith.

For the first, note first the Author of Faith. Secondly, the means whereby it is wrought.

1. The Author of Faith is He from whom every good giving and every perfect gift cometh. Faith is the gift of God. This is the

work of God that ye believe &c. Now because this is one of those works of God, which are said to be without towards the creature, it is in Scripture attributed to all the three persons, and to every of them. To the first, where Christ saith, No man can come unto me (i) believe) except the Father draw him. To the second, where the Apostle calleth Jesus the Author and finisher of our Faith. To the third, where the Apostle reckoneth Faith among the fruits of the Spirit.

### §. 18. Of the motive and end why God worketh Faith.

In declaring why God worketh Faith, observe,

1. What moveth him thereto.
2. What he aimeth at therein. Nothing out of God can move God to work this precious gift in man: It is his mere good will that moveth him, as Christ expressly declareth in his thanksgiving to God, saying, "It is so, O Father, because thy good pleasure is such."

The end which God aimeth at in working this grace is principally in respect of himself, the setting forth of his own glory, as we shown before: but secondarily the salvation of mankind. Therefore Saint Peter termeth salvation the end of our Faith.

[Use] These points I thought good thus briefly to note,

1. To commend unto you this precious gift of Faith. For how much the more excellent the Author of anything is, and the end which he aimeth at therein, so much more excellent is the thing itself.

2. To take away all matter of boasting from them who have this gift: though it be a most precious grace, yet it affords no matter of glorying to us in ourselves, because we have it not of ourselves.

3. To stir us up to give all the praise and glory thereof to God: upon this very ground doth the Apostle give glory to God, because of him, and through him, and for him are all things.

4. To show that it is not in man's power to have it when he will; that so ye may be the more careful in using the means which God affords and appoints for the attaining thereto. Is it not a point of egregious folly to be careless in using, or negligently to put off those means of obtaining any excellent thing, which he who only can work and bestow that thing, hath appointed for the obtaining thereof?

### §. 19. Of the means of working Faith.

In laying down the means which our wise God hath appointed to work Faith,

I will show,

1. What God himself doth.
2. What he requireth man to do. In considering what means God useth, let us all note what order he observeth in making the means effectual.

The means are,

Outward. Inward. The outward means are either such as both work and strengthen Faith, as the word of God: or only strengthen it, as the Sacraments. Hereof I shall speak hereafter.

Concerning the Word, the Apostle saith, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" and thereupon thus concludeth, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," (Rom. 10. 14, 17.) Of God's word there be two parts, the Law, and the Gospel. Both these have an especial work for the working of Faith. The law to prepare a man's heart for Faith, in which respect it is called our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by Faith. The Gospel to work further upon the heart so prepared, and to accomplish this work of Faith: whereupon he termeth the Gospel by a propriety, The Gospel of Faith: and saith of the Ephesians, that they believed after that they heard the Gospel.

Quest. Whether is the Word preached only, or the Word read also a means of working Faith?

Answ. It may not be denied but that the holy Scriptures themselves, and good Commentaries on them, and printed Sermons, or other books, laying forth the true doctrine of the Scripture, being read and understood, may be the blessing of God work Faith: but the especial ordinary means, and most powerful usual means, is the word preached: this is it which the Scripture layeth down "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? how shall they hear without a Preacher? It pleased God by preaching to save, &c. Ye received the Spirit by the hearing of Faith."

Thus we see that preaching is God's ordinance, whereunto especially without question he will give his blessing. Besides, it is an especial means to make people to embrace the promises of the Gospel, when God's Ministers to whom is committed the word of reconciliation, and who stand in Christ's stead, as though God did beseech us, shall pray us to be reconciled to God, and make offer and tender unto us of all the promises of God.

The inward means (or rather cause) is the sanctifying Spirit of God, who softeneth, quickeneth, openeth our hearts, and maketh them as good ground, so as the good seed of God's word being cast into them, taketh deep rooting, & bringeth forth the blessed fruit of Faith. The Apostle saith, that his preaching was in demonstration of the spirit, that their Faith might be in the power of God. It is noted that the Lord (namely by his Spirit)

opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things which Paul spake. In respect hereof the Apostle termeth the preaching of the Gospel, a ministration of the spirit: yea, he useth this phrase, the spirit of Faith, because Faith is wrought inwardly by the Spirit.

### §. 20. Of the Laws work towards Faith.

The order which God useth is this, First, he worketh on the understanding, and then on the will.

The understanding he enlighteneth by his Word, as in all fundamental necessary points of Christian Religion, so in two especially: First, in the misery of a natural man, Secondly, in the remedy thereof. That the Law discovereth. This the Gospel revealeth.

Touching man's misery, God's Spirit by the Law informeth a man's judgment both of his wretchedness through sin, and of his cursedness through the punishment of sin. The Law discovereth such an infinite multitude of sins, as otherwise man could not possibly find out. It discovereth not only notorious sins of commission, but many other transgressions which natural men count no sins; many sins of omission, many sins of thought and heart, yea, the very seed of all sin, the contagion and corruption of our nature. Saint Paul expressly saith; I knew not sin but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, thou shalt not lust. The Law also maketh known the heinousness, and

grievousness of sin, how it is out of measure, yea, infinitely sinful, because it is committed against an infinite Majesty, and that also against his express will revealed in the Law; so as sin being directly contrary to the pure, holy, and blessed will of God, cannot but make us more odious and abominable before God than any venomous Toad, Adder, or any other poisonous creature is in our sight.

Further the Law manifesteth the punishment of sin, which is God's infinite wrath for the least breach of any one branch of the commandments: for it saith, Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of the Law. Now the fruits of God's wrath are all plagues and judgments in this world, both outward in our estates, and on our bodies; and inward in our conscience and soul; in the end death, which is exceedingly terrible to a natural man: and after all, the torment of hell fire, which is intolerable and everlasting: neither doth it reveal unto us any remedy of help, but rather showeth that we are utterly unable to help ourselves, and that no creature in heaven or earth, is able to afford us help or succour; but vile woeful wretches as we are, so shall we continually remain.

Thus the Law showeth us to be such creatures, as it had been better for us never to have been born, or if born, then to have been any other than such as we are, wretched cursed men.

## §. 21. Of the Gospels work in Faith.

But yet by the preaching of the Gospel, the Spirit further enlighteneth our understanding in a remedy which God in the riches of his mercy hath afforded unto us, and in the benefit thereof. For the Gospel revealeth Christ Jesus, who being the true eternal Son of God, even very God, and so able to bear the infinite wrath of his Father, and procure his favour, took upon him, into the unity of his person man's nature, wherein he subjected himself to the Law and both fulfilled the righteousness, and also underwent the curse thereof.

This is the remedy. The benefit hereof is, that God is reconciled to the world, his wrath being pacified, his favour procured: that remission of sins, and deliverance from the punishment thereof, both in this world and in the world to come, are obtained: that all needful blessings for this temporal life, all needful graces for a spiritual life, and eternal life and happiness in the world to come, are purchased.

Without knowledge of these points concerning the forenamed misery, and remedy, it is impossible for any man to have Faith: and yet may men have, and many have this knowledge who never attain unto Faith: so as this is not sufficient: Wherefore the Spirit proceedeth further to work upon the will of man.

### §. 22. Of Grief going before faith.

Two especial works are wrought upon the will: one in regard of man's misery, the other in regard of the remedy.

The first is to be pricked in heart, grieved in soul, wounded in conscience, and brought, in regard of any hope in ourselves, or any other creature, even to despair: yea, and to tremble again within and without, in soul and body for our sins, and the punishment due to them. Thus were the Jews pricked in their hearts, and the Jailer so terrified with God's judgments that he trembled again, and thereby their hearts were prepared unto Faith.

For the measure of grief it is not alike in all, in some it is greater, in some smaller: yet in all there must be, as a sight of sin, and of the misery thereof, so a particular sense of that wretchedness wherein we lie by reason of it, an utter despair in ourselves, true grief of soul, and compunction of heart for it.

### §. 23. Of Desire going before Faith.

The second work is to desire above all things in the world, one drop of the infinite mercy of God, and to be willing to give all that a man has for Christ, accounting him more worth than all things beside in heaven and earth, as the Merchant in the Gospel esteemed the pearl which he found.

This earnest desire is in Scripture set forth by hungering, thirsting, panting, longing, etc. All which imply a very vehement and insatiable desire; so as they which have this desire wrought in them, will give no rest to their souls, till they have some sweet feeling of God's love to them in Christ, and some assurance that

Christ is theirs: whereupon God who has offered to satisfy the hungry and thirsty, and to satisfy the desire of such as pant and long after him, by his Spirit works in such as are so prepared, such an inward assent of mind, and credence unto the promises of the Gospel, that particularly they apply them unto themselves, and gladly accept the free offer of God, and so receive Christ with all his benefits. This is that only ordinary means, and the order thereof, which God for his part has set down to work faith in man.

### §. 24. Of man's endeavor to get Faith.

The means required on man's part, are next to be declared. Here I will show what man must do that he may believe: and what motives there are to stir him up to believe.

Two things are to be done of man: one that to his utmost power he use and well employ that ability, whatsoever it be, that he has by nature or special gift.

Because God in wisdom has appointed the preaching of his word, to be the means of working Faith, man must diligently use that means, and constantly attend thereupon, not giving over till he find the blessed work of Faith wrought in him. A natural man may go to Church, and with his outward ear hearken to the Word, and wait upon it. And because prayer is a means to move God to give his Spirit, and thereby to open man's heart to receive the Word into it, and to make his word powerful and effectual,

he must also as well as he can, pray to God for his Spirit, and for his blessing on his Word. For a natural man may pray, though not in Faith; and God doth often hear the desire of such, as he hears the young Ravens when they cry for want of their meat.

The other, that we resist not any motion of God's Spirit, like the rebellious Jews, nor put off from us the promises of the Gospel, as if they belonged not unto us, and think ourselves unworthy of eternal life.

### §. 25. Of God's offering Christ.

For motives to make a man bold to apply unto himself the promises of the Gospel, there are none at all in himself; he must cleanly go out of himself, and duly weigh these three points,

1 The author of the promises of the Gospel. 2 The cause of the promises of the Gospel. 3 The extent of the promises of the Gospel. For the first: It is God that made the promises: he it is that makes an offer of Christ Jesus, and in him of all things belonging to life and happiness. GOD so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, etc. With what face may the creature refuse to receive that which his Creator offers? Now that we may not doubt, but be assured that he will make his word good, we are especially to consider two properties of God. 1. His Power, 2. His Truth.

The one shows that he is able to do what he has promised.

The other, that he will not fail to do it.

### §. 26. Of God's Power to make his offer good.

No question can justly be made of God's almighty Power: for the Scripture expressly says; With God shall nothing be impossible. (Luke 1:37.) All things are possible to him. (Mark 10:27.) Which is to be noted against our deadness, dullness, and untowardness to believe, in regard whereof we may think that a man naturally dead, may as easily eat and drink as we believe: but when we consider the Power of God's might, how he is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham; we may well think that he is able to take away our stony heart, and give us a heart of flesh. Abraham looked to God's power, and thereby was moved to believe that God would perform his promise, though Isaac in whom the promise was made, were to be sacrificed; He did not doubt of the promise, being fully assured that he who had promised, was also able to do it.

This motive taken from God's almighty Power, is in Scripture often used to stir up men and women to believe the promises of God. It was used to Sarah, to the Virgin Mary, to Jeremiah, and to the Disciples of Christ. And it is the rather to be thought of, because we are very prone by nature to make doubt thereof: for albeit in our judgments we are well persuaded of God's Omnipotency, and with our mouths can profess as much; yet when we are in great straits, brought to a pinch, and see no

ordinary means for the effecting the thing which we desire, then we think that God himself is not able to do it: like the incredulous Prince; and not he only, but the unbelieving Israelites also, though they had been long nurtured under God's special government, and seen many of his marvelous works; yea, Moses himself was subject hereunto.

### §. 27. Of God's truth in making good his offer.

No more question can be made of God's truth, than of his power: for he is the Lord God of truth, with him is no variableness, nor shadow of turning: He cannot lie, it is impossible that he should: for faithful is he which promiseth; the Gospel in which his promises are made, is the word of truth: his Son who declares them, is a faithful and true witness: His Spirit which seals them up, is a Spirit of Truth.

This truth of God is to be meditated on, in regard of the greatness of God's promises: for when man hears of Christ, and all his benefits offered in the Gospel, he will be ready to think and say; Oh here are sweet and excellent promises, but they are too good to be true, I fear they are too great to be performed. But if that man remember how faithful and true God is that made them, it will make him think again, and say; though they were much greater, yet God who is able, assuredly will not fail to perform what he has promised.

### §. 28. Of God's free offer.

For the cause whereby God is moved to offer Christ and all his benefits, it was his own goodness, and nothing else. Now there are two things which do highly commend God's goodness. First, the freeness of his grace. Secondly, the riches of his mercy.

God's grace is every way so free, that the goodness which he shows to his creature is altogether of himself and from himself. God so loved the world, that he gave, etc. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God. When there was none to mediate for us, God offered grace, and gave his Son to be a Mediator.

This is to be noted against man's unworthiness, for he is ready to look down upon himself, and say; Ah, I am too unworthy to partake of Christ: what can there be in me to move God to bestow his Son on me? and thus keep himself from believing. But if we consider that God respects his own goodness, and not ours in giving us his Son; and that his grace is every way free, that conceit of our unworthiness can be no just impediment to Faith.

### §. 29. Of the Riches of God's Mercy.

As for the Riches of God's Mercy, they are unutterable, inconceivable: I may well cry out, and say; Oh, the deepness of them! how unsearchable are they, and past finding out? According to God's greatness, so is his mercy, it is infinite, and

reaches above the Heavens: so as God may well be said to be rich in mercy, and abundant in goodness.

This is to be noted against the multitude, and heinousness of our sins; which because they are innumerable and infinite, keep many men from believing the pardon of them. But the consideration of the infiniteness of God's mercy, which is as an Ocean, sufficient to swallow them all up, though they were more, and greater than they are, will uphold us against that temptation: for no sin can be greater than God's mercy: The sin against the Holy Ghost, is not therefore unpardonable, because it is greater than God's mercy; Greater than can be pardoned, as Cain desperately thought of his sin; but because the heart of him who commits it, is incapable of mercy: as if a ventless vessel be cast into the Sea, it cannot take in one drop of water, not because there is not water enough in the Sea to fill it, but because it has never a vent to receive water.

### §. 30. Of the extent of God's offer of Christ.

For the extent of the offer of Christ, it is so large, so general, as no person can have any just cause to think himself exempted. The Angel that brought this glad tidings from Heaven, said; That it was for all people. The man that was sent from God for a witness, bore witness of the light, that all men through him might believe. When Christ sent his Apostles forth to preach the Gospel, he bid them Go, and teach all Nations: And to show that

no particular man in any Nation was excepted, but every mothers child included, Saint Mark setting down the same commission, expresses every creature; meaning every reasonable creature.

I will not here stand to discuss this question, whether the sound of the Gospel has been heard in every corner of the world, or no: it is sufficient for our present purpose to know, that wheresoever the sound thereof comes, there by the ministry of it, tender and offer is made to every soul, of Christ and all his benefits, even as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, a remedy was afforded to all that looked upon it. Christ resembles this brazen serpent to himself, and makes this very application thereof. God herein deals with the world, as a King (against whom his whole kingdom, even all his subjects have risen up, and rebelled) who causes a general pardon to be proclaimed to all, and everyone that will lay down their weapons, and accept pardon.

This universal offer of Christ, is an especial means to draw a poor sinner to receive Christ: and it is to be noted against the last bar, wherewith men use to keep their hearts close shut from entertaining Christ: for when they be brought to acknowledge that God is able to perform all his promises; that he is faithful, and will perform them: that it is not man's unworthiness that keeps him from showing favour unto man, but that his own goodness moves him thereunto, yea that the number and weight

of many sins cannot dam up, and keep back the ever-flowing streams of his mercy, they will object and say,

We know not whether we are any of those persons to whom the promises of the Gospel are intended, and for whom Christ indeed died. But for answer hereunto,

1 I exhort such to learn of God by hearing him, and using his means how to know

### §. 31. That the offer of Christ is a sufficient ground to receive Christ.

Of such I would demand what further ground they would have to receive Christ, than this, that God offers Christ unto them? Would you (whosoever you are that dispute against God, and against your own soul) would you climb up into Heaven, and enter into God's secret closet, where his records are, to ascertain whether your name is written in the book of life or not and then if it be, believe? What a preposterous conceit is this, directly thwarting the unsearchable wisdom of God? God has reserved his eternal counsel concerning the election of men as a secret unto himself; yet he has ordained and revealed means unto the sons of men, by the right using whereof, they may come to make their election sure: God has also said, that Secret things belong unto himself, revealed things to us. Now mark the preposterous course of these men; curious they are, and over-curious in that which is secret, but over-careless in that which is revealed. If

this is not to oppose man's shallow brain to the bottomless depth of God's wisdom, I know not what is. Had it not been notorious folly for any of the Israelites to have lain burning with the venom of the fiery serpents till they had died, refusing to look on the brazen serpent, and said, when I know that the serpent was lifted up for me, I will look upon it? Did not the very lifting up of the serpent show that it was God's will they should look on it, and looking be cured so God causing Christ to be lifted up by preaching of the Gospel before thee, shows that he would thou should believe, and believing have life everlasting.

## §. 32. That a man's unworthiness ought not to keep him from believing.

Say not therefore, I can see nothing in myself why Christ should belong to me.

I told you before, that you must clean go out of yourself, and look upon God.

But for your further satisfaction herein, let me demand two things of you.

First, whether any man before he believed, saw anything in himself why Christ should rather belong to him than to any other. The Scripture says, There is no difference, for all have sinned, and are deprived of the glory of God. What then? Would you be singular, and have a ground of Faith proper and peculiar

to yourself? Is not this a spice of vain-glory? Would you not have something to boast in?

Secondly, whether you see anything in yourself why you should not believe? The offer of Christ is universal to all. Who separates you? Object not your unworthiness: for who is worthy? Nor the multitude and grievousness of your sins: for he that has fewest and least, has burden enough to press him down to the lowest pit of hell, if God be not merciful unto him. But tell me, is the number and weight of your sins a heavy burden unto you? Do they grieve and vex your soul? Are you pressed down with them? Lo, here is a motive to make you believe. This is evidence that you are one of those to whom Christ is given: for Christ after a peculiar manner invites such to come unto him, saying, Come unto me all you that are laden and weary, and I will ease you. For he came to call sinners and thereupon the Apostle with a vehement asseveration asserts this point, This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

### §. 33. Of long waiting.

Object. But many with heavy hearts have long waited upon the means, and diligently attended to the Word, and yet find no faith wrought in them.

Answer. We may not prescribe any time to God: as he works on whom he will, so he works when he will: Though he tarry, wait:

for yet a very little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. God never failed any that continued to wait on him, At length he satisfied their longing. Remember the history of that poor diseased man that lay so long at the pool of Bethesda: at length his desire was effected, he was cured.

Let me therefore (in the name of Christ Jesus) provoke everyone before whom Christ is lift up in the Ministry of the Word, and administration of the Sacraments, to look upon him, and to persuade themselves that he belongs unto them, and so receive him into their hearts, and believe.

Neither let them say, that if Christ should not belong to them, they sin in believing: for boldly I say again if any upon the forenamed grounds believe, they sin not: no man can sin in believing (in presuming, he may sin, but there is a great difference betwixt Faith and presumption, as we shall hereafter show) He that believes shall not be condemned, He has the witness in himself: So that in believing he sins not. But whoever believes not, refuses and rejects Christ, even as they who were invited to the marriage of the Kings son and did not come.

### §. 34. Of man's sin in not believing.

Object. Faith is not in man's power. How then can a man sin in not believing?

Answer. 1 God gave ability to man (when he created him after his own image) to lay hold on any promise that at any time God should make unto him: so as God gave him power to believe. But man through his own default disabled himself. May not God justly exact what he gave?

2 No unbeliever does what lies in him to believe: but fails in something that he might do. To omit those among whom the sound of the Gospel came not, (because now we have not to do with them:) Some persecute or scoff at the Ministry of the Gospel: some speak against the means itself, counting it foolishness: some are careless in coming to it, pretending many vain excuses: some come for company, or other by-respects: some attend not though they come: some soon let slip what they hear: some let the things of this world choke that which they hear: in something or other all they which believe not come short of that which they might have done, for attaining unto this precious gift of Faith. And that is it for which another day they shall be condemned.

3 Unbelief is in a man's power: who distrust and gainsay the promises of the Gospel, do it of their free will: they wittingly and willfully refuse and reject the gracious offer of Christ Jesus. Mark what Christ says of Jerusalem, How oft would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not?

## §. 35. Of the heinousness of Incredulity.

Thus we see that no unbelievers can have just excuse for themselves: their Incredulity is truly and properly a sin; yea, it is a most grievous sin: heinous against God, and dangerous unto man.

As Faith of all graces does most honour God, so this of all vices does most dishonour him. It impeaches the forenamed properties of God, namely his power, as if God were not able to make good his promise: his truth, as if God were unfaithful, yea, a plain liar, as the Apostle speaks: his mercy, as if it were dried up with the heat of men's sins, and his presence in every place, as if he were not ever by us. It makes a man fly from God as Adam did, and contemn his gracious offer of pardon, as desperate rebels and debtors: it makes Christ to have died in vain: yea it is accompanied with a kind of obstinacy, as in Thomas who said, I will not believe it.

In regard of men, no sin so deadly and dangerous; it stops the current of God's mercy, it bars up heaven gates against men, and opens the mouth of hell for them, and makes them Satan's vassals. Whereas Faith brings an absolution for all sins, this lays all our sins open to the wrath of God. The truth is, He that believes not is condemned already: and why? because he believes not in the Son of God. God has made offer of his Son, but he will not receive him. Is not this to reject Christ, and to judge oneself unworthy of eternal life? Wherefore to conclude this point, seeing there is so good ground to believe, & that not

to believe is so heinous a sin, let none dare to distrust, or to put off from him the promises of the Gospel: we may have a godly jealousy over ourselves, and use a conscientious care in trying the truth of our Faith, (as after I will show;) but to reject the offer which God makes of Christ, we may not dare: if we feel not Faith wrought in us, we must wait till we feel it.

### §. 36. Of proving Faith.

Thus we see how Faith may be gotten: the next point is to show how it may be proved. We have heard how precious a thing Faith is: it does therefore greatly behove us thoroughly to try our Faith, whether it be sound or no. If a man go to buy a gold chain, he will not be deceived with a fair glittering show, but he will have it touched with the touchstone again and again: but Faith is much more precious than gold that perishes.

### §. 37. Whether Faith may be known or no.

Before I show how Faith may be proved, it will be needful by way of preparation and prevention, to declare whether a Christian can know if he has sound true Faith or not: for, many conceive that it is sufficient to have a good hope (as they speak,) imagining that no man can say certainly he has true Faith. If this were so, in vain it were to seek how it may be proved, who will labour to prove that which cannot be found out? But against that conceit I avouch, that The true believer may know that he has true and found Faith. For the Saints have professed as much: I

believed says David. We believe and know, say the disciples: and S. Paul says, I know whom I have believed.

§. 38. Whether ordinary persons may know they have Faith.

Object. Those were extraordinary persons, and had this knowledge of their Faith, by extraordinary revelation.

Answer. The Eunuch, and the blind man knew as much, and yet were no extraordinary persons. But to show that this knowledge came not of any extraordinary revelation, proper to extraordinary persons, the Apostle speaking of that spirit which David had, says, We have the same spirit of Faith, &c. Paul had the same spirit that David had, and other Christians the same that he, whereby they might discern their Faith, and therefore he uses the plural number, We have the same spirit, &c. yet more expressly he says, We have received the spirit that is of God, that we may know the things which are given us of God. Is not Faith one of those things? yes, it is one of the most principal of them? Upon this ground the Apostle exhorts us, to prove ourselves whether we are in the Faith, &c. In vain were this exhortation, if Faith could not be discerned and proved.

§. 39. Of the difference betwixt those who seem to have Faith, and those who indeed have it.

1 Object. The heart of man is deceitful above all things, who can know it? how then can the truth of any grace be discerned?

Answer. In natural and wicked men, there is a double heart, whereby it comes to be deceitful: but the faithful have a single, simple, honest, upright, perfect heart.

2 Object. Many presume of what they have not: yes, very hypocrites go so far, as they can hardly, if at all be discerned. Many of them do more resemble the faithful, than counterfeit coin does current money: for herein the Devil helps man's wit. Judas was not discerned by the Disciples, till Christ discovered him.

Answer. If that which is counterfeit coin be thoroughly tried, if it be brought to the touch-stone, if clipped thorough, if melted, it will be discerned: so hypocritical Faith. But suppose some be so (I know not what to say) cunning or simple, that they deceive others and themselves; yet thereupon it follows not, that he who indeed has faith, should be deceived, because he who has it not, is: A man who dreams that he eats and drinks, may for the time strongly be conceited that he does so, and yet be deceived: Cannot therefore he who is awake, and in deed eats and drinks, know that he does so? He that wants a thing, grounds his conceit upon mere shows and shadows: but he that has that which he is persuaded he has, grounds his persuasion on sure, sound, real evidences.

Object. 3. Many who indeed have faith, make a great doubt and question of it, yes, they think and say, They have no faith at all.

How then can Faith be known?

Answer. That is through men's own weakness, or through the violence of some temptation. When they are strengthened, and the temptation removed, that doubting will be dispelled. But it follows not, because at sometimes, some persons are so exceedingly weak, and so violently assaulted, that therefore they should never know that they have faith; or that other which are not so weak, nor so assaulted, should not be able to know their own faith. In natural matters there may be some, who through long sickness, or some wound, blow, or bruise on their head, know not what they do: Cannot therefore healthy, sound men know? After David had given many evidences of his assurance of faith, through some temptations he doubted.

§. 40. Whether Faith and doubting may stand together.

Question. Can then true Faith stand with doubting?

Answer. Yes, it can: for what the Apostle says of knowledge, may we apply to other Christian graces, even to the mother of them all, Faith; we believe in part: The man that said, Lord I believe, yet doubted: for he added, help my unbelief. This doubting is not of the nature of Faith, but rather contrary unto it, arising from the flesh which remains in us, so long as we remain in the World: therefore the more strength Faith gets, the more is doubting driven away. Yet as the Spirit in truth may be where the flesh is, so in truth may Faith be where doubting is: but as

we must strive to subdue the flesh, so also must we strive to dispel doubting.

§. 41. Of trying Faith both by the causes, and by the effects:

Now come we to the main point, How Faith may be proved and known.

For the true trial of Faith, we must consider both the causes, and also the effects of Faith: how it was wrought, and how it works; and compare these together. Most do send men only to the effects of Faith, by them to make trial of the truth of them: but there is a hypocritical Faith, which brings forth many fruits so like true Faith; and true Faith is oft so covered with the clouds of temptations, that if respect be had only to the effects, counterfeit Faith may be taken for true Faith; and true Faith may be counted no Faith. The birth therefore and the growth of Faith must be considered jointly together, and one compared with another, that they may both of them give mutual evidence one to another, and so both of them give a joint and sure evidence to a man's soul and conscience that he is not deceived.

§. 42. Of that illumination which causes Faith.

We are first to begin with the birth of Faith: of the means and order of working Faith, I have spoken before: for the proof of Faith in this respect, we must apply the several points before delivered to our own Faith, & examine whether it were

accordingly wrought: namely, whether it were grounded on a true illumination of the mind, in regard of man's misery, and the remedy appointed by God: and of a right disposition of the heart, both in regard of true grief for sin, and true desire after Christ.

For Illumination, it is not sufficient that we have a general knowledge of the fore-named misery and remedy, that such and such are all men by nature, that this is the remedy afforded unto them; but we must have an experimental knowledge of our own woeful estate, as Saint Paul had, when he set forth his own person as a pattern of a miserable man, and in particular reckoned up his own particular grievous sins: this is it which will drive a man to Christ: if at least we also understand that the remedy is such an one as may bring redemption unto ourselves.

It is more clear than needs be proved, that whatever Faith ignorant men, men that live in neglect, and contempt of God's Word, make show of, has not so much as a show of sound Faith, but is palpably counterfeit: therefore this first point may not be left out in the trial of Faith.

### §. 43: That Grief goes before Faith.

For the disposition of the heart, unless first it has been touched with a sense of man's wretchedness and grieved thereat, it is to be feared that the pretence of Faith which is made is but a mere pretence: for God heals none but such as are first wounded. The

whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick. Christ was anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, etc.

Object. Many have believed that never grieved for their misery, as Lydia, Rahab, the thief on the cross, and others, of whom no grief is recorded.

Answer. Who can tell that these grieved not? It follows not that they had no grief because none is recorded: All particular actions and circumstances of actions are not recorded; it is enough that the grief of some, as of the Jews, of the Jailor, of the woman that washed Christ's feet with her tears, and of others is recorded.

But the grief of the thief is implied both by reproving his fellow, and also by acknowledging his own guiltiness, Rahab says, That their hearts melted.

Object. That which is said of Rahab is said of others also, who believed not.

Answer. Though the same affection be jointly attributed to all, yet it was very different in the kind, manner, and end thereof. The heart of others melted for fear of a temporal destruction: it was a worldly sorrow; but hers a godly sorrow because she was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and out of the

Church of God, and therefore so earnestly desired to be one of them.

Lydia might be prepared before she heard Paul, for she accompanied them which went out to pray, and she worshipped God: or else her heart might be then touched when she heard Paul preach. The like may be said of those which heard Peter when he preached to Cornelius, and of others. Certain it is that a man must both see and feel his wretchedness, and be wounded in soul for it, before Faith can be wrought in him. Yet I deny not but there may be a great difference in the manner & measure of grieving. Some draw water and pour it out before the Lord: Their heart pours out abundance of tears. Others tremble and quake again with horror. Others long continue in their grief. Others are so deeply wounded within that they cannot express it by outward tears, but are even astonished, as with a wound that bleeds inwardly. Others see in what a wretched and cursed estate they lie, and are grieved, and even confounded that they can grieve no more: yet it pleases God after he has shown to some their woeful estate through sin, and touched their heart therewith (bringing them thereby to loathe their own natural estate, to despair in themselves, and to condemn themselves, utterly renouncing all confidence in themselves) presently to stir up their hearts to desire and embrace the sweet promises and consolations of the Gospel.

Faith therefore is not to be judged by the measure, but by the truth of grief, which may be known by the causes and fruits thereof.

### §. 44. How Grief which works Faith is wrought.

For the causes, true grief which works Faith, arises,

1. From the word of God, whereby sin and God's wrath for the same is discovered.

Object. The Jailor was humbled with an extraordinary judgment.

Answer. No doubt but he had heard the word of God before: for Paul had been sometime in that City, so that judgment was but as a hammer to drive into his heart the nails of God's word: for it is the proper use of God's judgments to beat down the hard and stout heart of man, and so to make him sensibly apprehend God's wrath denounced in his Word against sinners. So was Manasseh brought to apply the threatenings of God's word to himself by a great judgment.

2 From despair of all help in ourselves, or any other creature: This made the Jews and Jailor say; What shall we do? So long as man retains any conceit of help in himself, all his misery, and grief for it, will never bring him to Christ.

3. From our wretchedness and vileness by reason of sin, whereby God is offended, and his wrath provoked; as well as from our cursedness by reason of the punishment and fearful issue of sin: Thus was the prodigal child grieved because he had sinned against his Father.

## §. 45. Of the effects which that Grief that causes Faith, brings forth.

Grief thus wrought brings forth these and such like effects.

1 Shame for the evil which has been done.

2 A true and thorough resolution to enter into a new course: Surely they who came to John and said, "What shall we do?" were thus minded.

3 A renewing of grief, so often as occasion is offered. True spiritual grief which works Faith is never completely dried up, because sin, the cause of it, is never entirely taken away: Thus the grief which breeds Faith continues after Faith is wrought, though not in the same manner and measure: for before Faith it cannot be mixed with any true joy and sound comfort, as it may be after Faith is wrought.

Many who have no better than a temporary Faith are at first much grieved and wounded in conscience; but after they receive some comfort by the promises of the Gospel, they are so joyous

and joyful that they grow secure again and never after let grief seize upon them; no, though they fall into such grievous sins as might justly renew their grief: they put off all with this, That once they grieved. David, Paul, and many other faithful Saints of God were otherwise affected, as is evident by those many grievous groans, sighs, and exclamations which are recorded of them.

### §. 46. Of that Desire which causes Faith.

The second thing to be examined in the disposition of a man's heart for the proof of Faith is the Desire of it after Christ: grief at our misery without desire of the remedy is so far from being Faith that it causes desperation.

That true desire which works Faith may be known, 1. By the Cause, 2. By the Order, 3. By the Quality, 4. By the Fruits, 5. By the Continuance of it.

1. It is the Gospel, and nothing but it, that can work in man's heart a true desire after Christ: because by it alone is Christ revealed and offered.

2. It follows upon the forenamed grief for sin and despair of succor in ourselves or others. The Apostle uses this as a motive to stir up men to believe in Christ, that there is not salvation in any other.

3. It is both a hearty and true desire, and also a vehement and earnest desire. For the first of these, it is not only an outward desire of the tongue, but an inward desire of the soul: "My soul panteth, my soul thirsteth for God," says David. This inward hearty desire is best known to a man's own self: for what man knows the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him?

For the second, it is a greater desire than the desire of any other thing can be. No man so desires any earthly thing as the poor sinner desires Christ, if it is a true desire: therefore the Scripture uses such metaphors to set it forth, as imply greatest ardency, as hungering, thirsting, etc. whereof we have heard before, Balaam's slight wish could be no cause or sign of Faith.

4. It makes a man careful and conscientious in using the means which God has appointed to breed faith, yea, and earnest in calling upon God to bless those means, and to be merciful unto him, as the poor Publican did.

5. It still raises up and preserves an appetite after Christ, even after we have tasted him. Desire after Christ before we believe arises from that sense we have of the want of Christ: but after we believe, partly from the sweet taste we have felt of him, and partly from the want we still feel of him, so as we can never be satisfied. Hereby is the covetous man's true desire of money manifested, because he can never be filled, but the more he has,

the more he desires. An insatiable desire of Christ is a good covetousness. The Apostle exhorts to desire the sincere milk of the Word, to grow thereby: not once only to taste of it. If ever a man be satisfied with Christ and begins to loathe him, he never truly believed in him. For first, Christ is not like corporal meats, which with abundance may cloy the stomach: the more he is tasted, the better and greater will our appetite be. Secondly; no man in this world can receive such a measure as to be filled thereby. If therefore a man desires Faith and falls away, that seeming desire which he had never bred Faith in him.

## §. 47. Of joining the effects with the causes of Faith, in the trial thereof.

If upon that forenamed illumination of the mind, and disposition of the heart, the Spirit of God has drawn us to accept of Christ Jesus tendered in the Gospel, then has Faith been kindly wrought, and by this manner of breeding Faith, a man may have good evidence of the truth of it, especially if he also finds that his Faith does kindly work and bring forth the proper fruits thereof. For Faith is operative, even as fire. Where fire is, there will be heat; the more fire, the greater heat: if but a little heat, there is a small fire; if no heat at all, surely no fire. I deny not but fire may be so covered over with ashes that the heat will not sensibly appear, but yet heat there is within, so as if the ashes be removed, the heat will soon be felt: so surely, where true and sound Faith is, there will be some holy heat, some

blessed fruits thereof: it may for a time, through the violence of some temptation, be so smothered and suppressed, as it cannot be discerned, but when the temptation is over, it will soon show itself: if not, I dare boldly say, there is no true, living, justifying Faith, but a mere dead Faith. I have my warrant from a holy Apostle, so to say, (James 2:20, 26.) It is a working Faith, which is the true justifying Faith; and this is the constant doctrine of our Church, taught in our Universities, preached in pulpits, published in print by all that treat of Faith. That which our adversaries object against the orthodoxal and comfortable doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, (that we make justifying Faith to be a naked dead Faith, without all good works) is a mere cavil and a most malicious slander: for though we teach that in the very act of justification, Faith only has its work without works: yet we teach not that this Faith is destitute of all works, but that it is a Faith which purifieth the heart and worketh by love. Thus in regard to the office of Faith, we teach as we are taught by Saint Paul, that a man is justified by Faith without works: and in regard to the quality of Faith we teach, as we are taught by Saint James, that of works a man is justified (that is, declared so to be) and not of Faith only. Wherefore for the sound proof of Faith, we must have also recourse to the fruits of it.

### §. 48. Of the fruits of Faith.

It were an infinite task to reckon up all the fruits of Faith. For all the several and distinct branches of piety and charity, if they are

rightly performed, are fruits of Faith. Faith is the mother of all sanctifying graces: for by it we are engrafted into Christ, and so live the life of God. Every sanctifying grace therefore is an evident sign of Faith. But that I may keep myself within compass, I will draw the principal effects of Faith, whereby it may be best proved, unto two heads. First, a quiet conscience. Secondly, a clear conscience. This has respect to that benefit which we receive by Faith: That to the author thereof.

### §. 49. Of a quiet conscience proceeding from Faith.

A Quiet conscience is that which excuses a man before God: so far it is from accusing, that it excuses; whence arises an admirable tranquility of mind, which the Apostle calls, "The peace of God which surpasses all understanding." It is evident that Faith breeds this: for being justified by Faith, we have peace toward God. So soon as a sinner truly believes, he has some peace of conscience: the more his Faith increases, and the stronger it grows, the more peace he has in his soul. From Faith then arises this peace, and from nothing else. For it cannot possibly come from any perfection in man. Indeed Adam's conscience in his integrity did excuse him before God, because there was nothing in him blameworthy: but so could no man's since his fall: for besides those palpable evil deeds whereunto every man's conscience is privy, whose conscience can excuse him in the best works that ever he did? Is not all our righteousness as filthy rags? this David well knew, when he thus

prayed, "Enter not into judgment," etc. but Faith (assuring the conscience, that "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, that he is the propitiation for our sins, purging our souls with his own most precious blood") pacifies it: so that where this peace of conscience is, there must be a true justifying Faith.

### §. 50. Of the difference betwixt a quiet conscience and a not-troubling conscience.

Object. The conscience of many wicked men lies quiet and troubles them not.

Answ. Their conscience is improperly said to be quiet: it is either a slumbering conscience, which though for a time it seems to lie quiet, yet when it is awakened and roused up, it will rage and rave like a fierce, cruel, wild beast, as Judas' conscience did: or else (which is worse) a seared and dead conscience, which will drown men in perdition and destruction before they are aware of it. Such a seared conscience had the ancient Heretics. Now these two main differences there are between these not-troubling consciences, and that quiet conscience. First, they only accuse not: this also excuses. Secondly, they lie still only for a time, at the uttermost for the time of this life: this is quiet forever, even at the bar of Christ's judgment Seat.

### §. 51. Of the difference betwixt conscience excusing and not-accusing.

Object. Many wicked men in doing evil have thought they ought to do so: yea that they did God good service therein: their conscience therefore must needs excuse them.

Answ. Nothing so: for, because they had no sure warrant out of God's Word for that which they did, their conscience could not excuse them: only it accused them not, and that by reason of the blindness of their judgment. It remaineth therefore to be a proper work of Faith, grounded on the Gospel, the word of Truth, to cause a quiet conscience.

### §. 52. Of Security arising from a quiet conscience.

From this quiet conscience proceed two blessed fruits, which are likewise effects of Faith, and sure tokens thereof. First, a holy security of mind. Secondly, a spiritual joy of heart.

For the first; a believer having in his conscience, peace with God, rests secure for salvation, and for all things that make thereunto, so as with David he may say, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep," etc. This security is in regard of the issue, not of the means. For herein lies the difference betwixt the godly and worldly security: to be secure and careless in using the means of salvation, which God in wisdom hath appointed, is a carnal, sinful security: but to rest on God for a blessing on the means, and to be secure for the event, is an admirable work of Faith. This is that casting of our care and burden on God, and resting upon him, which the Holy Ghost oft urges: they only who by

Faith have received Christ, and have their consciences quieted through his blood, can thus securely cast themselves upon God: well and fitly therefore said Jehoshaphat, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established."

### §. 53. Of joy arising from a quiet conscience.

For the second, that spiritual joy is an effect of Faith following upon peace of conscience, the Apostle shows: for he joins them together, and says, "Being justified by Faith, we have peace toward God," etc. and rejoice. It is noted of the Eunuch, that after he believed, and in testimony thereof was baptized, he went away rejoicing: and of the Gaoler that he rejoiced, that he with all his household believed in God: and of the faithful Jews, that they believed and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and glorious. This joy arises from Faith, in regard of that benefit which Faith brings with it, which is no less than Christ himself, and in, and with him, all things needful unto full and complete happiness: so that we may well conclude, where true spiritual joy is, there is true justifying Faith.

### §. 54. Of the difference betwixt the joy of the upright and hypocrite.

Object. Many that have no better than a temporary Faith have great joy wrought thereby in their hearts.

Answ. Their joy is no true, sound, solid joy, but a mere shadow and show thereof, which is evident both by the birth, and also by the death of it. The birth is too sudden to be sound: that which suddenly sprouts up can have no deep rooting: Christ fitly compares such joy to corn sown in stony ground.

The death of it is irreconcilable, it cleanly dries up, and utterly vanishes away, which, if it had substance, it would never do: therefore the Scripture makes it a property of an hypocrite's joy to be but for a moment: as dew vanishes away by the Sun, so may their joy by persecution.

True spiritual joy which arises from Faith is wrought by degrees: for it follows after a continual affection, namely sorrow; they that mourn shall be comforted, (Matt. 5. 4.) As sorrow is lessened by Faith, so is joy increased: but yet always there remains a mixture of grief and joy, because there still remains in man cause of mourning and rejoicing, namely, the flesh and the spirit.

Yet this joy is so fast rooted on a sure ground, which is Christ apprehended by a true and lively Faith, that it continues forever, and never utterly vanishes away. It may be obscured by temptation, as the shining of the Sun by a cloud: but as light can never be taken from the Sun, so joy never utterly severed from Faith: he that can and will perform it, has said it, "Your joy shall no man take away from you." Such is the power of Faith which

breeds this joy, that the heat of afflictions cannot dry it up, but oftentimes it causes it to grow and increase: for we rejoice in tribulations. The Apostles rejoiced because they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for Christ's Name. The Hebrews suffered with joy the spoiling of their goods. This has in all ages been verified in many Martyrs.

### §. 55. Of Faith when the fruits of it appear not.

Quest. What if a man cannot find in him these effects of Faith, as peace of conscience, security of mind, joy of heart, has he then no true Faith at all?

Answ. I dare not so pronounce: for true believers may be much troubled in their minds, fearful of their estate, full of grief and mourning, and seem to be far from those forenamed signs, both in the beginning, while Faith is as it were in the bud, and also in the time of temptation, as it were in winter time. But yet there may be observed in such persons, an inward panting and breathing (which are signs of life) namely, a groaning and grieving that they want those fruits of Faith, and an earnest desire of them.

Such weak ones are to have recourse to the causes of their Faith, and thereby to support themselves till the winter season be passed over, and till it pleases the Lord to vouchsafe unto them a pleasant spring, wherein their Faith may send forth the forenamed fruits: yet in the meanwhile let them observe such

fruits of Faith as usually are in the weakest, namely, love of God, and God's children, desire and endeavour to please God, and fear to offend him, with the like, which are branches of a clear conscience.

§. 56. Of a clear conscience proceeding from Faith.

By a clear conscience, I mean a faithful endeavour to approve ourselves unto God: and that on the one side by doing that which is pleasing and acceptable unto him: and on the other by avoiding that which is offensive to his excellent Majesty, & grieveth his good Spirit.

This proceeds from Faith, and that in a double respect.

1 Because Faith is the instrument whereby we draw all that virtue and grace from Christ our head, which enables us to keep a good conscience: I live (says the Apostle, meaning a spiritual life) By the Faith of the Son of God.

2 Because it assures us of God's love and kindness to us, and thereby persuades and even provokes us in all good conscience to serve him: the Apostle therefore who said, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, adds, who loved me, &c. whereby he implies that the love of Christ made known to him, moved him to live that spiritual life: for when a sinner once believes that God has indeed so loved him, as to give his only begotten Son for him, his heart is so affected, as David's was, thinking what to render unto

God; but finding nothing to give, he seeks what may please God, and sets himself in way of thankfulness to do that, (as faithful Enoch who had this testimony that he pleased God, ) being very fearful to offend him, (as faithful Joseph, who being tempted to do evil, said, How shall I do this and sin against God? ) This clear conscience being a proper work and fruit of Faith, must needs be a sure note and evidence thereof: which the Apostle implies by joining them together. They who indeed have a good conscience, have a sweet, sensible and powerful proof of the truth of their Faith. I will therefore a little longer insist upon this point, and distinctly show,

1 What is the ground or fountain of a clear conscience.

2 What the inseparable properties thereof are.

3 What the extent of it is.

These points I will the rather note out, because they are further evidences and proofs of Faith.

### §. 57. Of love arising from Faith.

The groundwork of a clear conscience is love: for Faith gives assurance of God's love: a sense of God's love works love to God: as fire causes heat, so love causes love, We love God, because he loved us first. And this love stirs us up to endeavour to have a clear conscience before God. I may not unfitly resemble Faith,

love, and a clear conscience, to the sap, bud, and fruit of a tree: the tree is Christ, the several branches are particular Christians: the sap which runs through all the several branches, and is the very life of them, is the Spirit: that which receives and conveys the sap into every branch is Faith: the bud which first sprouts out, is Love: the fruit which comes out of that bud, and manifests all the rest, is that clear conscience which now we speak of: both fruit and bud spring out of the sap; yet the fruit comes immediately out of the bud: so both love and a clear conscience come from Faith, but a clear conscience immediately from love. Our love to God is it which makes us careful to please him, fearful to offend him. Wherefore first make trial of Faith by love: for mark what Christ said of the poor penitent sinner, Many sins are forgiven her, for she loved much. What? was her love the cause of the forgiveness of her sins? No: it was a fruit, a sign, a proof thereof: her sins being forgiven, and the pardon of them revealed to her heart & conscience, she loved Christ, and in testimony of her love washed, wiped and kissed his feet. We love God because we are first loved: yea because the love of God is first shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, whereby we have a sense of God's love to us. Now because God who cannot be seen, has left us a visible image of himself, even our brother, whom he has set in his own stead, therefore our love to God moves us also to love our brother, and so endeavour to keep a clear conscience before God and men. Saint John does much press the love of our brother, as an evident fruit and sign of our love to God. Among other notes of true Faith, this especially is to

be observed, as a trial of the weakest Faith: when other notes fail, this may stand a poor Christian in great stead. The Faith of many is so weak, that it does not pacify their conscience, nor breed any joy in them, yet it works love: for ask one who is a weak, yet a true Christian, and finds not in himself a quiet conscience, spiritual joy, and such like evident testimonies (whereof I have before spoken, which argues a strong Faith,) ask him if he love God, he will not deny it, but say, "Oh, I love God with all my heart." If he do deny it, further ask, if he be not grieved for displeasing God, if his desire and endeavour be not to please him: or yet further ask if he love not such as he is persuaded love God. Few that are indeed true Christians, and not overwhelmed with some violent temptations, will deny these. Now these argue a love to God in them, which must needs prove that they have God's love in some measure revealed to them, and that they believe God loves them, though sensibly they discern it not.

### §. 58. Of a pure heart arising from Faith.

The next thing which argues a clear conscience to be a fruit of Faith, is an inseparable property thereof, namely a pure heart. These two doth the Apostle join, and that together with Faith and love: yea, he places the testimony of a good conscience in simplicity and godly pureness. Now from Faith comes purity of heart: for Faith has immediate respect to God alone, who sees not as man sees, but searches the heart, and tries the reins, & in

that respect causes a man to walk before him in truth, and with a perfect heart: therefore is true Faith called unfeigned faith: so as he that in truth dares say, Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity, has a good evidence of Faith.

### §. 59. Of keeping a good conscience in all things

The last point is concerning the Extent of a clear conscience, which is without restraint, and that in a double respect,

1 Of the matter, in all things.

2 Of the continuance, always.

The generality of the matter has reference to the rule of a good conscience, which is his revealed will, to whom I desire to approve myself, & that is God's word. Because I desire to please God, therefore whatsoever I know to be his will, I endeavour to do. Thus did David, Joseph, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Paul, and many others testify their good conscience to God's word, and thereby gave proof of their true Faith.

This extent of a good conscience respects rather the integrity of the heart, than the perfection of the work: for perfection of the work is a full and perfect fulfilling of all the commandments of God, whereunto none can attain in this world.

Integrity of heart is a true and equal endeavour to perform them all, and that though they seem never so contrary to our corrupt

humour: for herein lies a main difference betwixt Faith unfeigned and hypocritical. The lusts of an hypocrite rule him, & prevail over his Faith: in such things as cross not his lusts, he can be content to obey, but no further: loath he is to try himself: he endures not that any other should try him.

But unfeigned Faith controls all natural conceits and worldly desires: it makes both reason and will to yield to God's word and will: and so makes a man ready to do whatsoever he knows to be God's will: yea, it breeds a holy jealousy of himself (as Job had of his children,) so as he is very careful in examining his heart and ways, and willing that others should try him, yea, desirous that God would sift him, and discover such hidden sins and corruptions as himself cannot find out. Hence it follows, that

1 For sins past, which by his own, or other men's, or the Lord's means are found out and discovered, he is truly humbled, and gives no rest to his soul till he have some assurance of pardon, as David.

2 For the time present, because he finds the flesh still remaining in him, he maintains a strife & fight against sin, as Paul.

3 For future times he is watchful, that he be not overtaken as in former times; as David.

To this integrity of heart, a faithful man may attain. It is that which we daily pray for in the third Petition: it is all that God

exacts: where it is found, it is a good evidence of Faith. And it is the rather to be noted, because it is both an encouragement for a Christian to endeavour to do what he can, knowing that his honest will shall be accepted: and also a comfort against his manifold infirmities and imperfections, keeping a man from despair.

### §. 60. Of the Continuance of a good Conscience.

For the Continuance, a clear Conscience which proceedeth from a sound Faith, never decayeth, nor yet standeth at a stay: but rather groweth and increaseth: as Christ said to the Church at Thyatira, I know thy love, service, faith, patience, and works, that they are more at the last than at the first. The Apostle saith of himself, That he endeavoured to that which was before, and followed hard toward the mark: and thereupon exhorts others to be so minded. This must needs be a good evidence of Faith, because Faith is that which receiveth, and conveys in and from Christ such supply of grace, as maketh the believer grow up thereby, He that believeth in me (saith Christ) out of his belly shall flow rivers of water of life. By their continuance are many which had only a temporary and hypocritical Faith discovered, who otherwise before they fell away, would hardly, if at all, have been discerned.

That conscience which is thus grounded on Love, accompanied with sincerity, and extendeth itself to all things which are

pleasing to God always, is that good and clear conscience which is so much commended in the holy Scripture: he that is assured thereof (as the Apostle was, Heb. 13. 18.) hath a sensible evidence of true Faith.

Thus we have heard how Faith may be gotten, and proved.

### §. 61: Of the issue of over-much boldness.

The third point is how it may be preserved: which point is the rather to be delivered to prevent two extremes, whereinto many are ready to fall. The one is over-secure boldness: the other, over-childish fearfulness. For when men have gotten and proved their Faith, some through the pride of flesh are prone to be insolent, and too much to boast of it: others through their weakness (which also ariseth of the flesh) to fear the decay and loss of it.

The ground of the former extreme is, that Faith is an immortal seed, which shall never clean utterly decay, and clean fall away. This they know, and are able to prove by testimony of Scripture, and evidence of reason.

But though this ground be very sound and orthodoxal, yet the collection which is made from thence is unsound, and impious: for it crosseth God's wisdom, who hath ordained and revealed means for the preserving and cherishing of that which he hath appointed to continue to the end: wherefore we are exhorted to

work out our salvation (though it be in Heaven reserved for us) with fear and trembling. But, to prevent that illusion, let it be noted, that a man if he make not the better proof of his Faith, may be deceived, and take counterfeit for current; a temporary Faith for justifying Faith: which if he do, then his ground faileth: for a temporary Faith may clean dry away, as the Corn sown in stony ground: witness Simon Magus, Demas, and many that believed in Christ. It is likely that they which are overbold, never thoroughly tried the truth of their Faith: for one note of true Faith is an holy jealousy, lest Faith should decay.

### §. 62. Of losing Faith.

Though true Faith cannot totally and finally fall away, yet it may, to their feeling, be so far gone as to make them with heavy hearts repent their proud boldness and careless security. For,

1 It may be so covered over and smothered that it cannot be discerned: they can, for the time, have no assurance of it.

2 All the joy and comfort of it (wherewith they were formerly upheld) may be completely taken away, and they even faint for want of it.

3 No fruits thereof may appear, but they be as trees in winter: little conscience of any duty, dull in hearing God's word, cold in prayer, nothing remaining but a formal profession, if that.

4 Their consciences may prove a very rack, a grievous torture and torment unto them.

5 It is not likely to be recovered with a wet finger, with a light sigh, and a groan: but they may call, cry, and roar again and again, before they be heard.

6 When they recover it, it may be they shall never attain to that measure which once they had: if to that measure of the thing itself, yet not of the joy and comfort of it: they may carry the grief of this their folly to their graves.

### §. 63. Of the grounds of Scripture against secure boldness.

For preventing these fearful effects, they who are tempted to this extreme must be very watchful over themselves, and seriously meditate on those premonitions which tend to this purpose, as "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "Thou standest by Faith, be not high-minded, but fear." "Take heed that no man fall away from the grace of God." "Take heed lest at any time there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." "Let us fear lest at any time by forsaking the promise, any of you should seem to be deprived." "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." "If any withdraw himself, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Not without just cause are these and such-like premonitions much urged and pressed by the Holy Ghost: for well he knoweth how prone we are to fall away from grace. Lead, iron, stone, or any

other earthly heavy thing, is not more prone to fall downward, if it be not continually drawn and held up by some means or other; nor water more subject to wax cold if fire be not kept under it, than we are to decay in grace if we be not watchful over ourselves, and careful to use all good means for nourishing and increasing thereof. Besides, we are subject to many temptations, which are as water to fire; they will soon quench the Spirit if we be not the more watchful and careful to stir it up. Yea, if once we wax secure, self-conceited, and over-bold, we provoke God to give us over to Satan and our own lusts, as for a time he gave David over.

### §. 64. Of the assurance of Faith.

The ground of the latter extreme is that they feel the flesh in them, they are very weak and prone to fall away; and many in all times have fallen away.

Answer. These that are thus tempted must know that the cause of our assurance is not in ourselves, but in Christ our head; as we lay hold of him, so he fast holdeth us: for there is a double bond whereby we are knit unto Christ, one on Christ's part, the other on ours. That is the Spirit of Christ: "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." This is our Faith: for "Christ dwelleth in our hearts by Faith." Now though our Faith should let go her hold, yet Christ's Spirit would not let go his hold. This ground of assurance the

Scripture expressly declareth: for saith Christ, "I know my sheep, I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish": now mark the reason, "There shall not any pluck them out of my hand." "My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to take them out of my Father's hand." Wherefore the Devil and all his adherents can do no more, to put out the light of Faith and pluck us from Christ, than all creatures on Earth can to extinguish the light of the Sun. For why? The Sun from whence this light cometh, is far above all, they cannot come at it: So Christ on whom our Faith is founded, is far above all our enemies. Christ must be plucked out of Heaven if true Faith utterly fall away.

2 Let the fore-named weak ones consider that as the flesh is in them to make them weak, so also the power of Christ's Spirit is in them to make them strong. Though the spirit suffer the flesh sometimes to prevail, it is not because the flesh is stronger than the spirit, or the spirit weaker than the flesh; but because the Spirit in wisdom will have us see our weakness, see in what need we stand of the power of God, fly to God, depend upon him: and at length the Spirit will prevail, and get full conquest.

3 As for the falls of others, we know not what they were in truth.

### §. 65. Of the grounds of Scripture for perseverance.

To be freed from this last temptation, those subject to it must seriously ponder those scriptures which set forth the certainty

and perseverance of Faith, such as these: "He that believeth hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life." "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith." "He that believeth on Christ shall not be confounded." "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." The grounds of this stability of Faith are noted in the Scripture to be these:

1. The constancy of God's love, mercy, truth, covenant, calling, gifts, and the like; which is set forth by these and similar promises: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." "My mercy shall not depart away from him." "The Lord hath sworn in truth, he will not turn from it." "I will make an everlasting covenant with them." "The calling and gifts of God are without repentance."

2. The perpetual efficacy of Christ's intercession, manifested in one particular example, which is to be applied to all his elect: for what he said to Peter, "I have prayed that they Faith fail not" he performs for all.

3. The continual assistance of the Holy Ghost: in which respect it is said, "That he shall abide with us forever," and that "he which hath begun a good work, will finish it." If well we weigh and

apply these and similar testimonies of Scripture, though we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, yet shall we not be fearful and doubtful of the issue.

### §. 66. Of preserving and increasing Faith.

As a preservative against those two poisonous potions, and as a means to keep us in the right way from falling into any of the two extremes, diligent care must be used to preserve and increase this precious gift of Faith: for if Faith be kept alive, so as it may bear sway in us, it will keep us both from boasting and doubting.

Two especial points there be which make to this purpose.

1. A conscientious and constant use of the means which God to this end hath appointed.

2. Faithful and hearty prayer for God's blessing on those means.

The means are two. First, the ministry of God's Word. Secondly, the administration of the Sacraments.

### §. 67. Of using the word for increase of Faith.

We have heard before how Faith was bred by the word; now the word is like to a kind natural mother, which giveth suck to the child which she hath brought forth: whereupon saith the

Apostle, "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." He had said before, "That we were born anew by the word of God": Here he showeth that the Word hath a further use; namely, to make us grow. For by the Word the promises of God (which at first were made known unto us, and whereby Faith was bred) are again and again brought to our remembrance, the tender and offer of them oft renewed; so as thereby our Faith (which otherwise might languish away through our own weakness, and Satan's temptations) is not only preserved, but exceedingly quickened, strengthened, and increased.

Our care therefore must be diligently to frequent the public ministry of the Word; for by it Christ is lifted up in the Church, as the brazen Serpent was in the Wilderness. Yea, also to read and search the Scriptures in Families, and with ourselves alone. We heard before that we must attend on the Word, till we find Faith wrought in us.

Here we further learn never to give over, but so long as our Faith hath need to be confirmed and increased (which will be so long as we live in this world,) to use the Word. We may not therefore think it sufficient that we have had this benefit of the Word to believe: we must labour for a further benefit, to be established and confirmed thereby more and more in our most holy Faith.

### §. 68. Of using the Sacraments for increase of Faith.

The Sacraments are purposely added for this end, to strengthen our Faith, which they do two ways. First, they are God's seals added unto his word, that by two immutable things (God's promise, and God's seal) wherein it is impossible that God should lie) we might have strong confidence. Secondly, they do as it were visibly set before our eyes the sacrifice of Christ (which is the groundwork of our Faith) so as in, and by them Jesus Christ is even crucified among us. The Apostle noteth that Abram after he believed, received the sign of circumcision: & withal rendereth the reason because it was a seal of the righteousness of the Faith which he had: therefore it served to the confirmation and preservation of his Faith. To this end Philip baptized the Eunuch after he believed.

[Use] God in wisdom having ordained these means to cherish our Faith, we ought to be conscientious in a frequent use of them, otherwise shall we show ourselves rebellious against God, and injurious to our own souls.

### §. 69. Of prayer for increase of Faith.

Prayer is that means which God hath appointed to obtain all grace, all strength of grace, yea and a blessing upon all his ordinances (as I will after show) so that it must needs in that respect be a notable preservative of Faith. Besides, by prayer we make ourselves after a holy manner familiar with God, and so have more and more evidence of God's love and favor to us,

whereby our Faith must needs be much strengthened. When Satan desired to winnow the Apostles, what means did Christ use to preserve Peter's Faith: "I have prayed" (saith he to Peter) "for thee that thy Faith fail not." Thereby Christ also teacheth us what we must do to preserve our Faith. After that once Faith is bred in us, in Faith we may pray that it fail not, but we cannot so pray to get Faith. A man that heareth the sweet promises of the Gospel, and withal heareth that Faith is that means whereby the benefit of them is received, may earnestly wish for Faith, and desire God to give it him: but in Faith (which yet he hath not) he cannot pray for Faith, as after he hath it, he may for the preservation of it: therefore faithful prayer is a proper means to cherish, keep, strengthen and increase Faith.

### §. 70. Of well using Faith.

The last point observed out of this exhortation is, How Faith may be well used.

The Apostle doth not simply say, Take Faith, but addeth this resemblance shield, saying, "Take the shield of faith": teaching us thereby that we must use Faith as soldiers use their shield. I shown before how soldiers use to hold out their shields against all the assaults and weapons of their enemies: to keep themselves safe, they use to lie under their shields, and so cover and defend their bodies: thus must we shelter our souls by Faith, holding it out against all spiritual assaults, and (as I may so

speak) lie even under it. This in general is done by resting on God's promises, which are the groundwork and rock of our Faith. For by true Faith we do not only give credence to the truth of God's promises, but also trust to them, and build upon them, assuring ourselves that they shall be effected to our good, and so remain secure whatsoever falls out.

This use is to be made of Faith, both in prosperity, and in adversity.

### §. 71. Of the use of Faith in prosperity.

In prosperity Faith hath a double use.

1 It maketh us acknowledge that it is the Lord which hath so disposed our estate, as Solomon did, saying, "The Lord hath made good his word," &c.

For Faith having an eye to the promises of God, and exercising itself about them, when any good thing falleth out, it attributeth and applieth it to such and such a promise, and so acknowledgeth it to be brought to pass by the word and providence of God.

2 Faith maketh us rest upon God for the time to come, that all shall go well with us, as David did. For it maketh a man thus to reason: God hath made many faithful promises never to fail or forsake them that trust in him. He hath hitherto made good his

word to me. He still remaineth the same God, true and faithful. I will therefore trouble myself with undue fears. I fear no evil; but believe that it shall ever go well with me. Hereupon also faithful parents exhort their children to trust in God: yea quietly they commend their own souls into God's hands, and commend their children to God's providence, and that upon this ground, exhorting them also to depend on God, as David did (1 Chronicles 22. 11, and 28. 9.) For faith hath eyes whereby it doth after a manner see that to be true, which yet it seeth not.

### §. 72. Of the use of Faith in adversity.

In adversity it hath also a double use.

1. It upholdeth us in the present distress when else we know not what to do: instance David (1 Sam. 30. 6.) and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 20. 12.)

2. It moveth us patiently to wait for deliverance: for God having promised to give a good issue, Faith resteth upon it, even as if it were now accomplished.

Thus in general we see how Faith hath its use always in all estates.

### §. 73. Of oft calling to mind God's promises.

I Will furthermore particularly show how we come to shelter our souls under Faith. For this, two especial things are requisite.

1. A faithful remembrance of God's promises.

2. A wise and right application of them.

For the first, David hid God's promises in his heart: thus it came to pass that those promises upheld him in his trouble, and he received admirable comfort by them. Assuredly if the believer do call to mind God's promise of succour and redress in his distress, it will quiet him for the time, and make him rest in hope till he enjoy the accomplishment of that promise. While a believer well remembers and duly considers what great and excellent promises are made, how mighty, faithful and merciful he is that made them, he thinks that the world may be as soon overthrown as his Faith. But the letting of God's promises slip out of his memory is that which makes him faint. The Apostle having secretly intimated unto the Hebrews their fainting, declares the cause thereof, by telling them they forgot the consolation: for that which is not remembered is as not known. Now God's promises being the ground and very life of Faith, what use of Faith can there be, if God's promises be unknown, or (which for the time is all one,) not remembered? As a lamp will soon be out, if oil be not continually supplied: so Faith, if it be not nourished with continual meditation of God's promises, will soon fail.

[Use] By way of exhortation let us be stirred up to search God's word, where his promises are treasured up: and note what

promises are there made for our comfort and encouragement: yea let us use the help of others, especially of those to whom God hath given the tongue of the learned: yea (among and above all others) of them whom God hath placed in his stead, to whom he hath committed the word of reconciliation: let us use their help for the finding out of God's promises, and having knowledge of them, oft meditate and think on them, that so they may be the more firmly imprinted in our memories, as in a good treasury and storehouse, and the more ready to be brought forth for our use; like that good householder who bringeth forth out of his treasure, things both new and old. As we use our memories, so shall we find them ready to help us in time of need: God therefore prescribed unto his people diverse helps for their memories.

### §. 74. Of well applying God's promises.

IN the second particular help (which is wise and right application of God's promises) consisteth the greatest use of Faith, for which we have need of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

The promises of the Word are declarations of God's favour towards man, and of his providence over him for his good: for it pleased God not only to take care of man, and to provide for him all things needful, but also beforehand to make faithful promises

to him thereof, to uphold him till the time of the accomplishment of them.

Now for the better application of them, we are to consider both the promises themselves, and the persons to whom they are made.

In the promises three things are to be observed. First, the matter contained in them. Secondly, the kind or quality of them. Thirdly, the manner of propounding them.

The matter of God's promises is either general, concerning the supply of all good things, and deliverance from all evil: or particular, concerning the several particular estates and needs of men.

### §. 75. Of applying general promises.

That first promise which God made to man after his fall ("He shall break thine head") was a general promise: for by it is promise made of Christ Jesus, and of that full redemption which Christ should make of man. So that promise which God made to Abram ("In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed") Here is all happiness in Christ promised to all the faithful. And that which the Apostle setteth down, "All things shall work together for the good of them that love God," &c. And again, "All things are yours": that is, all things tend to your good, and help forward your happiness and salvation. Many other like

general promises there be in the Scripture, which are the rather to be remembered because they extend themselves to all estates, to all conditions, and to all kinds of distresses whatsoever; so that if we cannot call to mind particular promises, fit for our present estate, we may uphold ourselves with these general promises. For example, when the devil or any of that serpentine brood shall assault us, remember we that all that they can do is but to nibble at our heels, he shall never be able to crush our head, to destroy our soul: yet his head shall be crushed, he utterly vanquished. If we be in any misery, remember we that blessedness is promised unto us, and blessed shall we be. If anything seems to make against us, this is promised to be the issue, that all shall turn to our good.

### §. 76. Of applying particular promises.

Particular promises fit for our particular estates and needs are added to the general, because we are weak and subject to slip, and cannot well apply, and rest upon, the general promises. These are very many, I will endeavour to draw them to some distinct heads.

They concern this life or the life to come. Those for this life are of temporal or spiritual blessings. For the life to come, heavenly and glorious things are promised.

Promises of temporal things are to supply things needful and remove things hurtful.

For supply of things needful, it is said, "Nothing shall be wanting. All things shall be ministered. God shall fulfil all your necessity," &c. Besides, there are other particular promises fitted to our several necessities: to such as want meat, drink or apparel, Christ hath said, "Be not careful for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on," &c. your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. They which desire to have yet more particulars, let them read Lev. 26. 4, 5, &c. and Deut. 28. 3, 4, &c.

In the Scripture are further to be found particular promises for Orphans, Widows, Captives, &c. likewise for time of war, famine, sickness, &c.

If now we want any needful thing, the use of Faith is to make us rest upon these and such like promises: for if they be rightly believed, they will make us cast our care on God that careth for us, and moderate our immeasurable carking after them; moving us patiently to wait for the accomplishment of our desire, or contentedly to want what God denieth.

For removing things hurtful, and delivering us out of troubles, God hath expressly said, "I will deliver thee. There shall none evil come unto thee: The Angels have charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways, lest thou dash thy foot," &c.

Here then the use of Faith is this, that if we be in any trouble, these and such like promises make us rest quiet, patiently expecting the issue that God will give, and that without prefixing any time (for "He that believeth makes not haste") or prescribing any means to Him (as faithful Moses when he said, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," &c.)

For spiritual matters, we have many most comfortable promises, as that God will be our God, we shall be his people, we shall all know him: he will forgive our iniquities: he will write his Law in our heart: he will give the Holy Ghost to them that desire him, &c. So there are many particular promises for particular graces, as for Faith, Hope, Love, &c. And for growth and increase in these.

The use of Faith here is to uphold us against our manifold defects, infirmities, and imperfections. For first it giveth evidence to our souls, that the graces we have are the gifts of God, because God promiseth them. Secondly, it maketh us rest on God for perfecting of that good work which he hath so graciously begun; "I know whom I have believed" (saith Saint Paul) "and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him," &c.

For promises of heavenly things, the Scripture is everywhere plentiful: that the soul shall at the dissolution of the body go immediately to Heaven, that the body shall rise again, and be

made like to the glorious body of Christ: and we enjoy everlasting happiness, with the like.

The use of Faith in regard of these, is to uphold us with the expectation of that heavenly happiness which is promised, yea, though we be here destitute of worldly things, and in many troubles and tribulations.

### §. 77. Of applying absolute promises.

For the kinds of God's promises, some are absolute which God hath simply and absolutely determined to accomplish even as they are propounded: as before Christ was manifested in the flesh, the promise of the Messiah, and of calling the Gentiles: since that time the promise of calling the Jews, and of Christ's second coming in glory. All saving, sanctifying graces, being absolutely necessary to salvation, are thus promised to all God's children: and the continuance and perseverance of them unto the end; and also the end and issue of all, eternal life.

The use of Faith in these, is to uphold us against all fear and doubt, even when we have not a sensible feeling of them: for God (who is able to perform whatsoever he hath promised; and true and faithful in all his promises) having absolutely promised such & such things, though all things in Heaven and Earth should seem to make against them, yet would Faith believe them.

## §. 78. Of applying conditional promises.

Other promises are conditional, which are no further promised than God in wisdom seeth to be most meet for his own glory, and his children's good. Thus are promised,

1. All temporal blessings, which Lazarus, a holy Saint, wanted.

2. Freedom from all crosses and troubles. What Saint hath not had his part in some of them? Who hath been freed from all?

3. Freedom from all temptations. As our head was tempted, so have his members from time to time.

4. Less principal graces, which are called restraining graces, being given rather for the good of others, than of them who have them. These the Spirit distributeth severally, not all to everyone, but some to one, some to another.

5. The measure of sanctifying graces: for though every Saint hath every saving grace in him, yet hath he not a like measure: some have a greater, and some a lesser.

Admirable is the use of Faith in these conditional promises: for it maketh us so to trust to God's power, as we subject ourselves unto his will; as the Leper, who said; "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean"; and those three constant servants of God, who

said; "Our God is able to deliver us from the hot fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand O King. But if not, be it known to thee O King, that we will not serve thy gods," &c. For Faith persuadeth us that God is wiser than ourselves, and that he better knoweth what is good for us than we ourselves do, and so moveth us to resign ourselves wholly to God's good pleasure.

This is the general use of Faith in respect of these conditional promises, it hath also other particular uses, as

1 For temporal things, so to rest on God's promise, as we believe God will either supply our wants, or enable us to bear them: as God had taught Paul how to want.

2 For crosses, so to bear them, as being assured that God will either free us from them, as he delivered Job: or assist us and enable us to bear them, and turn them to our good.

3 For temptations that God will stand by us, and give a good issue.

4 For restraining and common graces so to content ourselves, as we doubt not but also to have such sanctifying as shall be needful to our salvation; which also is to be applied to the measure of sanctifying graces, according to that answer of God to Saint Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

## §. 79. Of applying implicit promises.

For the manner of propounding God's promises, they are either expressly declared, or else by consequence implied. Express promises are either generally propounded to all: of these we have heard before; or else particularly applied to some particular persons. Some of these are such as are not proper to him alone to whom in particular they are directed; but for the good of others also. If we find such needful for us, it is the use of Faith to apply them to ourselves with as strong confidence as if they had been directed to us. This the Apostle teacheth us to do: for where God made a promise to Joshua, ("I will not fail thee, &c."), the Apostle applieth it to all Christians. The ground of this application is taken from God's unchangeable and impartial manner of dealing: the same God that he is to one faithful man, the same he is to all. If therefore he would not fail Joshua, neither will he fail any.

By consequence promises are implied, either in the examples, or prayers of faithful Saints.

In their examples, by those blessings which they have enjoyed. For that which God bestoweth on one, he is ready to bestow on everyone to whom it is needful: God's giving it to one, is a promising of it to all. So as we may with as strong confidence depend upon God for such needful things, as if God had expressly promised them. Thus doth Saint James urge that end

which God gave to Job's troubles, as a ground of our Faith, to make us wait for a like deliverance in our troubles.

In their prayers, by those things which they have prayed for in Faith and obtained. Their faithful calling upon God, and God's gracious hearing of them, are as much as a promise, that God in such and such things will hear us calling upon him: thus did David make this a ground of his faith. Psal. 22. 5.

The use of Faith in these implicit promises is to persuade our hearts that God will deal with us as he hath in former times dealt with his faithful children.

### §. 80. Of the true Heirs of God's promises.

The last point to be noted for the right application of God's promises, is the persons to whom they belong. Here note two points.

1. Who are the righteous heirs and children of God's promises.

2. How these heirs are qualified.

For the first, Christ Jesus the true natural Son of God, as he was Immanuel, God with us, our Head and our Redeemer, is properly the heir of all God's promises, In him they are, yea, and Amen. That is to say; In him they are propounded, ratified, and accomplished. This is evident by those general promises which

are the foundation of all the rest. He, (that is, Christ) shall break thine head. In thy seed (that is, Christ) shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed. Now how is Christ the heir of God's promises? as a private person? only in himself? No verily: but as a public person, as the head of a body: for Jesus together with all the Saints, which were given him of his Father, make but one mystical body, which is Christ: so as all the faithful together with Christ are heirs of the promises; they, and they alone have a right unto them: so as what the Apostle saith of godliness. I may fitly apply to Faith, which is the Mother of all Godlines, Faith is profitable unto all things, which hath the promise of the life present, and of that which is to come. Both general and particular promises, promises of earthly, spiritual, and heavenly things; conditional, and absolute promises: all promises belong to the faithful.

§. 81. Of applying God's promises to the right persons.

For the second, the several conditions and qualities of the persons to whom several promises are made are exceedingly many. Sometimes they are made to Faith, sometimes to obedience, sometimes to uprightness, to cheerfulness, to constancy, to love, to fear; to such as mourn, hunger, are heavy laden; to such as pray, hear God's Word, keep his Commandments; to the fatherless, widows, captives, poor, sick, etc. It is not possible, neither yet is it needful that I should

reckon up all: they are here and there to be found throughout the Scripture.

The uses of Faith in respect of the persons to whom the promises are made are these:

1. To assure us that we are they to whom they appertain.

2. To make us apply them to those several qualities which we find in ourselves, as if we hunger, to believe we shall be satisfied; if we mourn, that we shall be comforted, and so in the rest.

3. To make us expect the accomplishment of them, according to our several needs: as when we are in any trouble, to expect deliverance; when tempted, assistance; when in want, relief, etc.

Thus (as distinctly as I can) have I shown how the shield of Faith may be used.

Hitherto of the manner of the Apostle's exhortation.

### §. 82. Of the meaning of the Metaphor.

The motive whereby he enforces his exhortation follows: wherein is contained the eighth general point to be delivered in this Treatise of Faith, which is the benefit and power of Faith, in these words:

"Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the Devil."

The Apostle here uses another Metaphor. His manner of phrase may at first sight seem to be improper, That a man should take a shield to quench fire: A shield is rather to keep off a blow. But if we well note the drift of the Apostle, and also the manner of framing his speech, we may find that it is not so improper as it is taken to be. For first, he saith not, "By the shield ye quench," but "by it ye shall be able to quench." Again, he saith not simply, "whereby ye shall be able to quench darts," that had been improper, but he addeth "fiery." Thus because Satan's temptations are as darts, and as fiery darts, he uses the metaphor of a shield, in opposition to the one, and the metaphor of quenching in opposition to the other. Thus we see that the Apostle's speech is proper enough, answering two metaphors in their several kinds: A shield in relation to darts: quenching in relation to fiery.

Besides, hereby he declares a double benefit of Faith: one to protect us from Satan's temptations, that they annoy us not: the other, (if they do pierce and wound our souls,) to cure the hurt which they have done.

To amplify this benefit of Faith, the Apostle describes our enemy by his malicious and mischievous nature ("the wicked") (or, as the original with an emphasis setteth it down, "that wicked one")

and his temptations, by the kind of them under this metaphor Darts.

Of the nature of this wicked one, I have spoken before on verse 12.

For the metaphor, a Dart is a kind of weapon that is flung, slung, or shot at a man far off, which if it hit him, will deeply pierce him, and sorely gall him. I have shown before how we were oft forced to wrestle with Satan, and to grapple with him hand to hand. Here is shown that he hath also Darts to shoot at us afar off, so as he can pierce and wound us when we see him not: he can send at us, though he come not to us. As when the Dragon could not come at the Woman, he cast waters after her. This Woman is the Church; the red Dragon, Satan; Waters, his manifold temptations or darts.

Thus we see that

The Devil can every way annoy us, both at hand and afar off: when he is suffered to come to us, and when he is restrained and kept from us.

[Use] How can we now at any time be secure? Doth it not stand us in hand to watch always, always to be well armed, and have this shield of Faith?

That the benefit and power of Faith may be the better discerned, I will show more distinctly,

1. What these Darts are.
2. How they are kept off.
3. Why they are called fiery.
4. How they are quenched.

### §. 83. Of Satan's Darts here meant.

Some take afflictions to be meant by Darts.

Answer: There is another proper piece of armour to defend us from the hurt of them, namely, The preparation of the Gospel of Peace.

Others take all sins and all provocations to sin to be here meant.

Answer: This must needs be too general: for thus should the several pieces of armour, and their distinct uses be confounded. The Breastplate of Righteousness is the proper fence against such temptations.

I take the Darts here spoken of to be those several and sundry temptations which the Devil uses to draw us to doubt of that help we have in GOD, and to despair: for often he casts sundry thoughts of despair into us, that he might shut out all hope in God, and so draw into perdition. Thus afflictions, so far forth as

the Devil uses them as means to disquiet and vex the soul, may be here understood: and likewise all sins and provocations to sin, as they tend hereunto. These temptations, whether light or fasten, pierce deep. Satan let store of these fly against Job, they fell on him as thick as hailstones: despair was it which Satan sought to bring Job unto by depriving him of his cattle, goods, children, & all that he had: by striking his body all over with sore botches & boils. The contradicting speeches of Job's wife and friends (the instruments of Satan herein) tended to this. These darts also he let fly at David, as appears by the many complaints of David: yea, he flung some of these at Christ in the wilderness, in the garden, and on the cross. No darts so wound the body, as these wound the soul where they fasten.

### §. 84. Of the virtue of Faith against Satan's Darts.

These darts are only kept off by Faith: for Faith alone gives us assurance of God's love: by it we so rest and repose ourselves on the favour of God in Christ, as nothing can make us doubt of it, or separate us from it. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," saith Job. Read Psalms 3 & 91, and Romans 8:38-39. The stronger our Faith is, the better are we fenced against these temptations: the weaker our Faith is, the deeper do they pierce: yea if they prevail against us, it is because we want this shield, or at least have let it fall, and so for the time want the use of it. Therefore Saint Peter exhorts to be steadfast in the Faith, while

we resist the devil; as if he had said, Look to your shield, keep it safe, hold it out manfully against all the darts of the devil.

## §. 85. Of Satan's fiery darts.

They who by these Darts understand afflictions, say they are called fiery, because afflictions are grievous to the flesh; they who understand sins, because as fire they kindle one another and so increase.

Answer: But there is a higher matter here meant; for the metaphor is taken from malicious mischievous enemies who poison the heads of darts, and arrows, & bullets which they shoot at men: these poisoned things being of a fiery nature, if they pierce into a man's flesh, lie burning, and tormenting the body, and continue to inflame it more and more, till they have soaked out the very life of a man, if in time they be not cured. Thus the forenamed temptations of Satan, tending to doubt and despair, (if they fasten) vex, grieve and torment the soul, burning and festering therein, till they bring a man to utter destruction, if the fire and heat of them be not slaked and taken away. It must needs be great burning, great anguish and vexation that made David cry out and say, "O Lord rebuke me not in thy wrath," etc. "My bones are vexed: my soul is also sore vexed," etc. "I fainted in my mourning," etc. "I am in trouble, mine eye, my soul and my belly are consumed with grief," etc. "I roared all the day." Much more bitter exclamations did Job send

forth, and yet what men were these? what excellent Worthies of the Lord? If the fiery venom, and burning poison of Satan's darts so tormented such men, men of admirable Faith, how do they torment men of weak Faith, yea men of no Faith? Judas was so tormented thereby, that his life was an unsupportable burden unto him, he could not endure it, but made away with himself, as many others have done in all ages.

### §. 86. Of the virtue of Faith against Satan's fiery Darts.

The only means to cool this scorching heat, & to assuage this burning, is the blood of Christ: and Faith only is the means to apply the efficacy of Christ's blood to our souls: by Faith therefore, and by nothing else, may these fiery Darts be quenched. As balsam, & such other medicinal oils which Surgeons have for that purpose, being applied to that part of man's body which is inflamed with the forenamed poisonous weapons, assuage the heat, drive out the poison, and cure the flesh: so Faith, which applies the virtue of Christ's Sacrifice to a perplexed and troubled soul, dispels the inward anguish thereof, pacifies and quiets it, and so cures the wounds thereof. The Faith of David did thus cheer up and refresh his soul after it had been perplexed; in which respect he says unto his soul, "Why art thou cast down and unquiet? Wait on God," etc. Thus again, and again he cheers up his soul: this also drew the fiery poison out of Job's soul, as that speech implies, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

## §. 87. Of stirring against despair.

Are temptations to despair, piercing Darts? fiery Darts? Keep them off as much as possibly may be. As we fear to drink poison, let us fear to despair. It will be a fiery burning poison in our soul, that will yield us no rest; as we see in such as are overcome thereby. Let us not dare to yield unto it; but though God should seem to be so angry with us as to kill us, yet with Job, to trust in him. For this end we must suffer Faith to have the upper place in us, even above sense and reason too. And for this end look unto God, and duly weigh both what he promises, and why he makes such gracious promises to us: and look not to ourselves and our own deservings, but rather know that God's mercy is as an ocean in comparison of the drops of our sins: they that despair, little consider how much greater God's goodness is, than their sin.

## §. 88. Of the need and benefit of Faith.

In how wretched a condition do they live, who are destitute of Faith! they lie open to all the fiery, burning, tormenting temptations of the devil; they have no means to prevent them, none to quench them when they are wounded in conscience. This fire must needs either stupefy all their spiritual senses, dry up all the life of the soul, and take away all feeling: or else torment them intolerably without all hope of redress, as Cain, Saul, Judas, and such like were tormented. It were much better for a man not to be, than not to believe.

What an admirable virtue is Faith? What virtue has it in itself? What benefit does it bring unto us? What Christian soldier (that is wise, and fears these fiery darts,) dares enter into the battle without this balsam? The main and principal end, for which the Apostle here sets down these benefits of Faith, that which especially he aims at, is, to commend unto us this precious gift, so as it may be a strong motive to urge all the forenamed points concerning Faith, whereof we have spoken before, and to stir us up diligently to labour and use all the means we can, First to know what true Faith is, Secondly, to get it, Thirdly, to prove it, Fourthly, to preserve and increase it, Fifthly, well and wisely to use it.

## §. 89. Of spiritual recovery.

Behold here a sure ground of much comfort and great encouragement, even to such as are weak, and by reason of their weakness, or else through the violence of some temptation, have let fall their shield, so as Satan's fiery Darts have touched their conscience, and pierced their soul. Let them not thereupon utterly despair, and yield themselves over to Satan's power, but know that yet their Faith may stand them in stead, that yet there is a further use of it, not only as a shield to keep off, but as balsam to draw out the fire, to quench it, and cure the wound. The word which the Apostle here uses, implies (as we have shown) a recovering, resuming, and taking up again our shield. Let not therefore our faintings, failings, and spiritual wounds

put us out of all hope, as if death and destruction, without all remedy and recovery, must needs follow thereupon: But rather let us with all speed have recourse to God's promises, and to Christ Jesus the true heir of them, and so renew our Faith, as Peter renewed his, when he looked upon Christ.

### §. 90. Of Satan's assaulting our Faith.

The last point yet remains, which is, to discover the manifold wiles which the Devil uses against this heavenly gift, and to show how they may be avoided. We have heard before how he labours to spoil us of the Girdle of Truth, Breastplate of Righteousness, and Shoes of Patience; but his best wit and greatest force are bent against the Shield of Faith. The first assault made against Eve was in regard to her Faith, "Hath God indeed said, etc.;" so against Christ, ("If thou be the Son of God, etc.") Herein did he often tempt the Israelites, yea and Moses also in the wilderness. This was it for which he desired to winnow Peter; and for which Paul feared lest he had tempted the Thessalonians. Lamentable experience shows how mightily he prevails by this temptation: in time of persecution he brings men thereby to renounce their profession: and hereby at all times he brings many to the very pit of despair.

That which has been before delivered concerning the excellency, necessity, use, and benefit of Faith, declares the reason why the Devil so assaults it: for he, being our Adversary walking about,

and seeking whom to devour, spies that Faith is it which especially preserves us safe from being devoured; that this is the victory which overcomes both himself and his chief agent and instrument, the world; and therefore with all might and main endeavours to spoil us of this shield. It is therefore needful we should know what are his wiles, and how they may be avoided.

His sundry kinds of wiles may be drawn to two heads, namely those whereby he labours either to keep men from Faith, or else to wrest Faith from them. I will in order discover some of the principal in both kinds, which are these.

### §. 91. Answer to Satan's Suggestion, that it is presumption to believe.

1. Suggest. First, it is altogether impossible to attain unto any such gift as Faith is. Secondly, can any man be assured that Christ is his? Thirdly, whoever has any such conceit, presumes. Fourthly, to enforce this temptation further, he also suggests that the ground of Faith (God's word) is uncertain. And fifthly, though that Scripture were the certain Word of God, yet the Ministry of it by man is too weak a means to work so great a work as Faith is thought to be. This Suggestion has prevailed much with Papists.

Ans. First, that which has been before delivered concerning the getting of Faith, shows that this is a lying Suggestion. Secondly, it has been expressly proved that a man may know he has Faith.

Thirdly, the differences between Faith and presumption show that assurance of Faith is no presumption.

1. Faith drives a man out of himself: because the believer can find no ground of confidence in himself, therefore he casts himself wholly upon CHRIST.

Presumption finds something in the man himself to make him boast.

2. Faith rests on a sure ground, which is God's Word, that both commands us to believe, and promises to perform that which we do believe.

Presumption relies only on a man's surmise and mere conjecture.

3. Faith is joined with the use of the means: both of those means whereby it was first bred, and also of those which God has appointed for the nourishing of it.

Presumption not only carelessly neglects but arrogantly contemns all means.

4. Faith is wrought by degrees: first by knowledge, then by grief, after by desire, as we heard before.

Presumption is a sudden apprehension of the mind.

5. Faith makes a man work out his salvation with a holy jealousy, yea with fear and trembling: often calling upon God, and depending on him.

Presumption is over-bold.

6. Faith makes a man depart from all iniquity, and keep a clear conscience.

Presumption is accompanied with much pollution, at least inward.

7. Faith is most sure in time of trial, then is the strength of it most manifested.

Presumption, like a Bragadocha, then makes the greatest flourish when there is least danger.

8. Faith continues unto the end, and never falls away.

Presumption is subject to decay totally and finally.

4. Of the certainty of God's word, we shall afterward speak:

5. For man's Ministry it is God's ordinance; & thence it has that mighty power to work Faith: for God who at first brought light out of darkness, can by weak means work great matters: Besides, We have this treasure in earthly

vessels, that the excellency of that power might be of God, and not of us.

## §. 92. Answer to Satan's suggestion of the difficulty of getting Faith.

2. Suggest. IF it be not impossible to get Faith, yet it is so difficult and hard a matter that not one of a thousand who seek it obtains it. Herein Satan prevails with idle, slothful persons, who in all things which they should undertake, pretend more dangers and difficulties than necessary, purposely to find a pretext for their idleness.

Answer. Though it be hard to the carnal careless man, yet (as Solomon says of knowledge, Proverbs 14:6) Faith is easy to him that will believe; not that it is simply in man's power, but that God's Spirit so opens his understanding in the mysteries of godliness, so works on his hard and stony heart, making the one capable and the other pliable, as thereby the man is brought like softened wax easily to receive the impression of God's seal. Though man in himself be dead in sin, yet God's word is as powerful to quicken him as Christ's was to raise Lazarus. Indeed, many seek and find not, ask and have not: but why? Saint James gives one reason, "They ask and seek amiss." They seek Faith in themselves, and from themselves; they seek it by carnal and fleshly devices; they seek it by their own wit and reason. Saint Paul renders another reason, "The god of this

world hath blinded their minds, that the glorious light of the Gospel should not shine unto them." Because they oppose against God's truth so far as it is made known unto them, or wittingly wink at it, or turn from it, God gives them over in just judgment to the power of Satan, who blinds their minds. But if we repair to the Author who gives Faith, and to the spring whence it flows; if we rightly use the right means of attaining it, and wait at the door of Wisdom till she opens unto us, undoubtedly we shall find Faith and not miss of it.

## §. 93. Answer to Satan's suggestion of the small need and use of Faith.

3. Suggest. FAith is a needless thing. This conceit the Devil puts into the mind of two sorts of people: first of proud Pharisaical Iusticiaries, who trust to their own righteousness: these think that the breastplate of righteousness is armour enough: Secondly, of secure, carnal Gospellers, who imagine that a good hope (as they call it) is sufficient, there needs not assurance of Faith.

Answer. God makes and ordains nothing in vain: as for the proud Iusticiary, let him first know that righteousness severed from Faith is no righteousness: though righteousness joined with Faith be of good use, yet severed from Faith, it is of no use at all. Secondly, that the Breastplate of righteousness, which the best men ever in this World had, was full of cracks and holes,

full of many defects and imperfections, through which Satan would soon have wounded them even to death, if they had not had this shield.

As for the secure Protestant, if ever he feels the fire of Satan's darts, he will find that all the assurance which possibly he can attain unto is little enough. That poor man who said, "I believe, Lord help my unbelief," and the Disciples who said, "Lord, increase our faith," saw that a good hope was not enough.

As a preservative against this poisonous temptation, we must labour for all the assurance of Faith that we can.

## §. 94. Answer to Satan's suggestion of the damage arising from Faith.

4. Suggest. FAith is hurtful to a man's credit, honour, profit, pleasure, etc. Herein Satan prevails with worldlings, whose hearts are only on things here below.

Answer. First, the price of Faith, yea of one grain of Faith, is of more worth than all the treasure in the world: this that good Merchant well knew, who sold all to buy it.

Secondly, they who are wounded with Satan's fiery darts would willingly forgo all credit, wealth, and pleasure that the World possibly can give for a dram of Faith.

Thirdly, there can be no true credit, honour, etc., without Faith: all are sanctified by Faith; otherwise, they are mere shadows and shows.

§. 95. Answer to Satan's suggestion of Man's unworthiness.

5. Suggest. FAith is too good and precious a thing for poor wretched sinners to have: herein he prevails with distressed, fearful Christians.

Answer. For removing this, we must remember what was previously delivered of God's free grace and rich bounty, which is not restrained by our unworthiness.

If the Devil, by these or similar means, cannot keep us from getting faith, he has other wiles to wrest it from us, which follow.

§. 96. Answer to Satan's suggestion of man's imperfection.

6. Suggest. THy Faith is not sound, but counterfeit: for it is mixed with many imperfections, transgressions, weaknesses, doubtings; there is no growth or increase of it: many weak Christians are brought hereby to stagger.

Answer. Oft prove thy Faith, especially by the causes, and by thy love, and true desire to live honestly: Know that everything here is imperfect, yet truth and imperfection may stand together: strive against these imperfections and use the means for an increase of Faith.

§. 97. Answer to Satan's suggestion of trusting to means.

7. Suggest. THere are meet helps afforded for all distresses: why may not men trust to them? Is it not good to seek to the Physician in sickness? to trust unto number and prowess of men in war? and to friends in time of need? Thus he makes many cast away the shield of Faith, their confidence in God, and trust unto outward means, as Asa.

Answer. All means are subordinate to God's Providence, and guided thereby: therefore in the use of them, we must look unto God, and depend on him, and call upon him for a blessing: neither supply of meet means nor want of them must any whit lessen our trust in God, but to God must all the glory be given, whatsoever the means be.

§. 98. Answer to Satan's suggestion of apostasy.

8. Suggest. THou canst never hold out: thy Faith will not only be in vain, but thy latter end is likely to be worse than the beginning: How many have fallen away in all ages, and daily do fall away?

Answer. There are means to preserve and increase Faith, as well as to get it: let them be well used, and thy Faith shall never fail: Remember Christ's prayer for Peter's Faith: as for others, we cannot so well know the soundness of their Faith as of our own.

§. 99. Direction against Satan's storms.

IF he prevail not by any of these, or such like subtle suggestions, he will try by all the storms and troubles he can, to shake and overthrow our Faith.

We must therefore be like sound Oak Trees, which the more they are shaken, the deeper root they get in the earth; and know for our comfort, the Devil can raise no greater storms than God in wisdom permits him. God in the end will turn all to our good, as he dealt with Job, (Job 42:10, etc.) so that if we believe, we shall surely be established. Faith makes men secure in perils.

# The Seventh Part.

The Helmet of Hope.

And take the Helmet of Salvation. - Ephesians 6:17.

§. 1. Of the difficulty of a Christian Soldier's Estate.

Excellent means of defense are those of which we have heard, especially the last of them: yet the Apostle thinks them not

sufficient, but proceeds to set forth other pieces of armor, saying, "And take, etc." Whence we may well gather that

It is no easy matter to be a Christian Soldier and steadfastly to stand unto the end against all assaults. Many graces are needful to be added one to another for that purpose. One might have thought that when he had named the shield of Faith, he need have added no more: but God, who knows both our weakness and proneness to faint, and also the power and subtlety of our adversaries better than ourselves, sees it needful that a helmet be used as well as a shield: our care therefore must be to use this also.

### §. 2. Of the Spiritual Grace here meant.

This fifth piece of Spiritual Armor (though it be not plainly expressed) is necessarily implied to be Hope; for in another place where he uses this metaphor, he expresses Hope, "Put on," says he, "for an Helmet the hope of Salvation." What could be more plainly spoken? and what better interpreter of the Apostle's mind could we have than the Apostle himself?

Salvation is thus applied to Hope because

1. Salvation is the main end of our Hope, that which above all other things we wait for: when we come to the possession of it, then has Hope her end and period.

2. It is an especial means of attaining unto Salvation, ("We are saved by Hope.") This is that cord whereby we hold fast to God's promises till they be all accomplished, which will not be until we enjoy salvation.

3. Herein lies a main difference betwixt the hope of worldlings and Saints: their hope reaches no further than to the things of this life; therefore when they die their hope perishes, but these hope for an inheritance immortal, etc. Therefore they have hope in their death: for if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable.

Thus having shown what this Helmet of Salvation is, I will distinctly show, 1. What Hope is. 2. How it differs from Faith. 3. How fitly it is compared to a Helmet. 4. How necessary it is. 5. How it is gotten, preserved, and used. 6. What are Satan's wiles against it.

## §. 3. Of the definition of Hope.

Hope is an expectation of such good things to come as God has promised, and Faith believed.

1. In expectation especially consists the very nature of Hope; "If we hope, etc., we wait." David joins hoping and waiting together, implying one and the same thing; "Wait upon the Lord, and hope in him."

2. Good things are the proper object of Hope: herein it differs from Fear: "We fear things evil and hurtful." "I looked," that is, hoped for good (says Job:) "The thing (namely) that evil thing which I feared, is come upon me" (Job 3:25; 30:26).

3. These good things are to come: not past, nor present, which either are or have been seen: "Hope which is seen, is no hope: for how can a man hope for that which he seeth?"

4. They are also such as God has promised. For the ground of our Hope is the promise of God, who is faithful and true: we may well wait for that which he has promised, whatsoever it be. In this respect, this true Hope is termed The Hope of the Gospel: that is, a Hope which waits for those things which in the Gospel are promised. This was the ground of Simeon's Hope. These promises are of all needful things in this world, both Spiritual and Temporal; of assistance under all crosses, and of deliverance from them: and at length of eternal glory and happiness in heaven, which (because it is furthest off, and includes in it an accomplishment of all other promises) is the most proper object of Hope. In which respect the Scripture thus entitles it, Hope of Salvation, Hope of eternal life, Hope of glory, etc.

5. The things we hope for are also such as Faith believed. For there is such a relation between Faith and Hope, as is between a mother and a daughter: Faith is the mother that

brings forth Hope; and Hope is a blessed daughter which nourishes Faith. Faith is the ground of things hoped for. Till a thing be believed, a man will never hope for it: "By Faith we wait:" that is, Faith causes us to wait. Again, except a man hope, and wait for that which he believes, his Faith will soon decay.

### §. 4. Of assurance and patience of Hope.

Thus in general we see what Hope is. There are two especial properties which the Scripture often annexes to Hope,

1. Assurance.
2. Patience.

For Assurance, the Apostle expressly says, "Show diligence to the full Assurance of Hope." In regard to this property, it is said, "Hope maketh not ashamed," that is, disappoints not him that hopes, of the thing which he waits for, so he need not be ashamed of his Hope. Fitly therefore is it termed, "An Anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." According to the quality and quantity of Faith, is the quality and quantity of Hope. What a man believes, that he hopes for: as he believes, so he hopes for it: but true Faith does assuredly believe the truth of God's promises: therefore true Hope does certainly expect them, for there are the same props to uphold our Hope, as are for our Faith, to wit, the goodness, power, truth, and other like

attributes of God: Hope arises not from man's promises, nor is nourished by man's merits.

Our adversaries make uncertainty a property of Hope and ground it upon conjectures and probabilities: whereby they take away one main difference between the hope of sound Christians and carnal Libertines: and clean overthrow the nature of saving Hope: for though, by reason of the flesh, the best may sometimes waver in their Hope, as well as in their Faith: yet is not this wavering of the nature of Hope, but the more Hope increases, the more is doubting dispelled.

For Patience, that also is expressly attributed to Hope: "If we hope for that we see not, we do with patience wait for it:" How needful it is that our Hope be accompanied with patience, we shall see hereafter.

### §. 5. Of the agreement between Faith and Hope.

Hope agrees with Faith in many things: for example, in these.

[1] In the Author and worker of them both, which is God's Holy Spirit, as Faith is a fruit of the Spirit, so we abound in Hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

[2] In the common matter, for both are saving and sanctifying graces, as we are saved by Faith, so also by Hope: and as by Faith the heart is purified, so he that has Hope purges himself.

[3] In the Ground of them, both of them are grounded on God's promises as we have heard.

[4] In the fore-named properties Assurance and Patience. The same Apostle that made mention of Assurance of Hope, mentions also Assurance of Faith, and as he that hopes waits with patience, so he who believes makes not haste.

[5] In continuance, which is only until they have brought us to the possession of the inheritance promised: in which respect Love, which continues even in Heaven, is preferred both to Faith and Hope.

[6] In many excellent effects: such as a clear and quiet conscience: an utter denial of a man's self: a casting of himself wholly on God's grace: a patient bearing of all crosses, perseverance unto the end, etc.

### §. 6. Of the difference between Faith and Hope.

They differ in these things especially.

1. In their order: Faith is first, for it brings forth Hope: Faith is the ground of things hoped for.

2. In the kind of Object: Faith is also of things past and present: hope only of things to come.

Object. Faith is also of things to come: for we believe eternal life.

Answer. Faith gives a subsistence and present being to such things as are to come; by it we believe those good things which are promised to be ours, though the possession of them is to come.

3. In their nature: Faith believes the very truth of God's promises and seals that God is true: Hope waits until God manifests and accomplishes his truth.

Thus, we see that Hope is a different and distinct grace from Faith: yes, so, as it may be of use when faith fails: and it serves to cherish and uphold Faith: needful it is therefore that unto Faith it be added.

### §. 7. Of the resemblance between Hope and a Helmet.

Fitly, hope is resembled to a helmet, which, according to the notation of the Greek word, covers the head all over, so as under it may be comprised the visor, and whatsoever covers the face. The use of this helmet is to keep and fence the head safe from arrows, darts, bullets, swords and other weapons, whereby it might otherwise be sorely wounded, and the man be killed outright.

He who has his head and face well and safely covered will be bold and courageous without fear, lifting up his head, and looking his enemy in the face, and so boldly go forward, not fearing arrows, darts, or any such things that shall be shot or

thrown at him. Even so, he whose soul is established with hope, waiting for salvation in the end, will with a holy resolution go on in his course to God, not fearing the manifold assaults of his spiritual enemies, being assured that they shall not pierce his soul, but that at length he shall remain a victor when the devil and his instruments have shot all their arrows against him. Hope of salvation makes a man rouse up his soul and spirit in the midst of temptations: thus much the notation of that word, whereby the Apostle sets forth the hope and earnest expectation of the creature, implies. David alludes hereto, saying, "Unto thee, O Lord, lift I up my soul." And again, "I will lift up mine eyes to the mountain, from whence my help comes."

Out of all that has been said, it may easily be gathered what is the use of hope, and how needful and profitable a piece of armor it is.

### §. 8. Of the use of Hope.

The use of it is to keep us from fainting, that we be not confounded through any assaults of our enemies: for hope makes not ashamed but makes bold and confident: David implies that he had fainted but for his hope, and thereupon exhorts others to hope in the Lord. In this respect, the Apostle uses another metaphor, and resembles hope to an anchor. When mariners have a good, sound anchor fast tied to the ship with a strong cable, and fast fixed on firm ground, they dare sleep

quietly therein, though storms and tempests arise: for the anchor will keep the ship safe and sure, so that it cannot be carried away by winds, nor beaten against rocks, nor swallowed by gulfs. Thus does hope, after a holy manner, make us secure, even though afflictions and temptations like storms be raised against us. "Though I should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil," says David; whereby he manifests his holy security, which also he does by many other like speeches in his Psalms.

### §. 9. Of the need of Hope, in regard to the uncertain and long date of God's promises.

This being the use of hope, it is very needful, yea necessary, and that in four respects.

1. In regard to the time which God has set down for the accomplishment of his promises, which time is often both unknown and long-dated, though the time be of God certainly determined, so that it cannot be prevented (John. 7. 30.) nor shall be overpassed (Hab. 2. 3.), yet it is not always made known unto us. It is therefore needful that we wait for the time of the accomplishment of them. Such a collection does Christ himself infer upon such a ground: "Take heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." And excellently does he exemplify it by the parable of

the servants that waited while their master returned from the wedding.

In wisdom also, it pleases God many times to set a long date to the accomplishment of his promises. When Abraham came out of Haran, then God promised seed unto him, and a blessing upon his seed, yet was Abraham a hundred years old before he had a child of Sarah: so there passed at least twenty-five years between the making and performing of this promise (compare Gen. 12. 4. & 21: 5.), yet above hope, under hope, did he wait for it. The promise which was made to Simeon was not accomplished till he was an old man, ready to die; yet he continued to wait. There passed almost four thousand years between that time wherein the blessed seed of the woman was first promised, and wherein he was exhibited. There have passed above five thousand years since the time that the glorious coming of Christ unto judgment was promised, and yet it is not accomplished, and God knows when it shall be. The date of many promises is much longer than the saints thought of: and they are kept longer in suspense than they looked for. In this respect, there is great need of hope, yea of patient hope. Note the answer given to the souls under the altar, which was, That they should rest till their fellow servants, and their brethren that should be killed even as they were, were fulfilled.

The office of hope is to make us wait, and still to wait, and that with patience, though God tarry never so long, "Though it tarry,

wait" (Hab. 2. 3.) David waited though his soul fainted. (Psal. 119. 81.)

§. 10. Of the need of Hope in regard to troubles.

In regard to those many troubles and perplexities which do occur between the making and accomplishing of God's promises, we have a great need of Hope. After God had promised Canaan to Israel, Israel was in miserable bondage before they possessed Canaan: yes, after God had sent Moses to tell them that the promised time of their deliverance had come, they were more cruelly oppressed before they could get out; and when they got out, what and how many straits were they brought to at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness before they entered into Canaan? Even such and so many, as of all the men who came out of Egypt, only two (who patiently waited to the end) entered into it. David was promised to have the Kingdom of Israel: but how was he persecuted and made to flee the country before he was crowned? How often were the people of God made prey to their enemies and scorned among the nations before the promised Messiah was exhibited? What desolations has the Church been brought to (it has been like the Moon in the deepest wane) and yet Christ not come?

Thus does the Lord in wisdom dispose of his Church while it is here warfaring on earth; as for many other just and weighty reasons, so to try if we can wait, patiently wait, and that under

Hope, though it be above Hope. In regard to these troubles, therefore, Hope is very needful, as the Apostle implies, who earnestly exhorts the Hebrews, even in this respect, to wait. It is the office of Hope to make us wait and abide until God removes the cross.

§. 11. Of the need of Hope in regard to the scoffs of the wicked.

Hope is necessary in regard to the scoffs and reproaches of the wicked: for if God's promises are not speedily accomplished, they are ready to upbraid God's children and say, "Where are his promises? If afflictions befall them, Where is their God? If afflictions are grievous, There is no help for him in God." Is not then Hope necessary to uphold us against these? David upheld himself hereby: for when the wicked said, "Where is their God," he said to his soul, "Wait on God."

It is the office of Hope to make us look so much the more steadfastly upon God and the faster to cleave unto him, by how much the more wicked men seek to draw us from the Lord.

§. 12. Of the need of Hope in regard to our own weakness.

We have need of Hope in regard to our own weakness, for we are very prone by nature to think that God forgets us and does not remember his promises made to us, if at least it is a long time before he accomplishes them; or if he brings us to any straits and seems to hide his face from us. David was sorely tempted by

this, it made him cry out and say, "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, forever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" But what upheld him? Himself shows that it was his hope. For in the same Psalm, he says, "I trust in thy mercy."

It is the office of Hope in this respect to make us hope above hope, as Abraham; and against sense, as Job.

Thus we see that hope is so needful, as there is no living in this world without it: herein is the proverb verified, "If it were not for hope the heart would break."

### §. 13. Of getting and preserving Hope.

Let us, therefore, in the next place, observe how it may be: first, gotten; secondly, preserved; thirdly, well used.

1. It is gotten by the same means that faith is: for it is the daughter of Faith. The means which beget faith immediately upon beget hope.

2. It is preserved by two means especially.

3. By a due consideration and full persuasion of God's properties; which make us patiently abide for the accomplishment of his promises.

4. By a faithful remembrance of God's former dealings.

Four special properties of God are for this purpose to be observed. 1. His free grace. 2. His infinite power. 3. His infallible truth. 4. His unsearchable wisdom.

For being in our hearts persuaded by faith. First, That the same grace which moved God to make any gracious promise will further move him to accomplish it. And secondly, That he is able to do it. And thirdly, So faithful, that not a word which he has said shall fall to the ground: Yea, and fourthly, That he is most wise in appointing the fittest times and seasons for all things, so as may most make to his own glory, and his children's good; we are thus brought to wait, and to continue waiting on God (without prescribing any time to him) until he has actually performed what he faithfully promised.

### §. 14. Of Experience nourishing Hope.

God's former dealings both with others and also with ourselves being faithfully remembered, work such an experience as cannot but bring forth Hope: For this experience evidently demonstrates what God is willing and able to do. Hereby was David's Hope much cherished and strengthened. This means does St. James use to strengthen the hope of Christian Jews, bringing to their memories God's dealing with Job.

For this end, we must acquaint ourselves with the Histories of former times, especially such as are recorded in the Holy Scriptures: for "Whatsoever things are written aforetime"

(namely in those Scriptures) "are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope." It is also good to be acquainted with other Ecclesiastical Histories: but especially to observe God's dealings in our own times.

The experience which most of all brings forth Hope is that which we have of God's dealing with ourselves, whereof we have two notable examples, one of Jacob, (Gen. 32. 10.) The other of David, (1 Sam. 17. 37.)

For this end, we are well to observe and remember all those gracious favours which God from time to time vouchsafes to us, and not carelessly let them slip at the time present, nor negligently forget them in the time past. The Israelites in the wilderness failed in both these: They understood not God's wonders while God was doing them; neither afterwards did they remember the multitude of God's mercies. This was the cause that they could not wait until the time appointed for their entering into Canaan was come: but fainted, and fell in the Wilderness.

### §. 15. Of meditating on the end of Hope.

To these may be added as a further means to uphold and cherish Hope, a serious and frequent meditation of the end of our Hope, namely, that rich and glorious inheritance which Christ has purchased for his Saints, and God has promised unto them.

Much might be said to amplify this point, but I will refer it to the private meditation of the Reader: and let it the rather be meditated of, because we see the hopes of worldly men to be sustained with matters which are no way comparable hereunto. Observe what their hope is in earthly things, which are very uncertain: The husbandman waits for the fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receives the former and the latter rain. As the Husbandman, so the Soldier, the Mariner, the Merchant, who not? Their hopes make them venture much, and send themselves forth to great dangers, and yet oft they fail of their hopes. Shall Christians of all others cast away their Hope, the end whereof is more excellent than all things in Sea and Land, which also they are sure to receive, if they faint not? Cast not away your confidence, which has great recompense of reward.

### §. 16. Of the resemblance betwixt Hope and an Anchor.

The use of hope may fitly be set forth by that other metaphor whereunto Hope is resembled, namely, an Anchor. (Heb. 6. 19.)

1. It must be cast upon a sure ground. If an anchor be cast into a bottomless sea, where is no ground, or on quick sands, which are no sure ground, it is of no use, the ship may be tossed up and down, and suffer wreck for all that. The only sure ground of hope is God's promise revealed in his Word. That this is a most firm ground cannot be doubted of,

unless the goodness, power and faithfulness of God be called into question. For as God himself is, so is his Word, faithful and true, sure and certain: nothing more firm and stable: Till heaven and earth perish, one jot or tittle of God's word shall not escape, till all things be fulfilled. David cast the anchor of his hope upon this ground. We are therefore to acquaint ourselves with God's manifold promises.

2. It must be fast fixed on that sure ground. If an anchor only lies upon the ground, and is not fixed on it, as good be without ground.

Then is hope fast fixed on God's promise when his promise is steadfastly believed: Faith makes a way and entrance for hope. Abraham first believed God's promise, and then waited for it.

First therefore labour for true and sound faith in God's promises, then will thy hope be sure and steadfast.

3. It must often be settled and fixed anew. If an Anchor loose and slacken after it has once been fastened, a storm may carry the ship away: where then is the benefit of the former fastening? Our hope in regard of our own weakness, and the violence of Satan's manifold storms, is much subject to loosening, to wavering. It must therefore often be renewed: They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. These words may be taken both as a promise of God, showing

what he will do; and as a duty on our part, showing what we ought to do.

For this end, again and again meditate on those promises which we have once known and believed, and often call to mind God's former benefits and performance of his promises: (these were David's usual practices.) For these being means to raise up Hope in us at first, the recalling of them to our minds again, must needs be means to renew our hope.

### §. 17. Answer to Satan's suggestion against a sure ground of Hope.

In the last place, Satan has many ways to spoil us of this piece of Armor also, and that either by labouring to keep it from us, that we never have it, or to wrest it from us after we have it.

Because there is a mutual relation betwixt Faith and Hope, so as without Faith there can be no Hope, he bends what forces he can against Faith to keep us from it, or deprive us of it. To avoid this, the former Treatise of Faith is to be observed.

His Suggestions more proper against this grace, are such as these.

Suggestion 1: There needs no such ado to find out a sure ground; if thou hope well, it is well enough. Thus he prevails with the greater sort of our people, especially with the more ignorant and

ruder sort, who do not only in their hearts conceive, but with their tongues also are ready to utter such conceits as these, "I hope well, yea, I hope to be saved as well as the best." Here is their anchor cast out. But ask them, what is the ground of their Hope, all the answer they can give, is, "They Hope well." Many that know not the fundamental points of Christian Religion, nor the first grounds of Salvation, (being much worse than the Hebrews, of whom the Apostle complains that they had need be taught which are the first principles of the Oracles of God) will yet say, "I hope well."

Answer: To avoid this, all ignorant persons, though they be grown in years, must be willing to be instructed and even catechised. Theophilus a Nobleman was so instructed. Ministers must use to catechise and teach fundamental grounds. Ignorance of people is a shame and dishonour to the Gospel; it makes them a prey to Satan, and brings them to the very pit and gulf of destruction.

§. 18. Answer to Satan's suggestion of false grounds of Hope.

Suggestion 2: The best grounds of Hope are, 1. A man's own merits. 2. The meritorious works of others, even their works of supererogation, 3. A man's own honest dealing and good meaning: 4. A man's prosperous estate. Thus he deceives men with false grounds. In the first of these, he prevails with the prouder sort of Papists, who trust to their own merits. In the

second, with the more silly and foolish sort, who trust to the merits of others: In the third, with many among counted civil, honest men, men of their words, just in their dealings, etc. but savour of little piety towards God: as also in many of the poorer sort, who think and say, "They do no man any wrong." In the fourth, with sottish worldlings; who make Earth their Heaven.

Answer: All these are like quicksands, which bring more danger than safety to a ship.

For the first, see the answer to the first suggestion against righteousness. §. 7.

For the second, see the 3rd use of the 2nd Doctrine, on verse 10. §. 5.

For the third, remember:

1. That all the honest dealing in the World, without Faith, is nothing acceptable to God, (Heb. 11. 6.)

2. That good meanings and intentions may stand with most abominable impieties and iniquities. For proof whereof, read John 16. 2. and Acts 26. 9.

3. That it more becomes fools than wise men to build all their hopes upon conjectures.

For the fourth, know that outward prosperity, wealth, health, honour, credit, favour of friends, and the like, are but common gifts which God indifferently bestows on all sorts of people: they often prove the Devil's baits to allure men unto him, and his hooks to hold them fast, and drown them in perdition.

### §. 19. Answer to Satan's suggestion of licentious trusting on Mercy.

Suggestion 3: Still trust to God's Mercy, and Hope therein; and in confidence thereof, take liberty to thyself to do what seemeth good in thine own eyes. Thus he makes carnal Gospellers, Libertines, hypocrites, and the like, (Who turn the grace of God into wantonness) to let their anchor of Hope lie loose upon the mere ground of God's mercy.

Answer: When God's mercy is wilfully and wittingly abused, his justice is provoked to take vengeance: God's grace gives liberty to no sin. The grace of God which brings salvation unto all men, teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, godly, etc. This is the end of grace, and this also will be the power and efficacy thereof in all to whom it belongs: for they who partake of the merit of Christ's sacrifice to have their sins pardoned, partake also of the efficacy thereof, to have the power of sin subdued.

### §. 20. Of Satan's seeking to deprive us of the use of Hope.

If thus the Devil cannot keep us from attaining true Hope, then will he labour to quail our Hope, and so spoil us of it, and that by these and suchlike means.

1. By making us too careless and too secure, wherein he somewhat prevailed with Lot, David, Peter, and such others.

To avoid this, we must duly consider our own weakness and the many fierce temptations whereunto we are subject, and thereby be stirred up to watch and pray, as Christ upon this ground exhorted his disciples.

2. By moving us to despair, by reason of our unworthiness: and here he will object what we are by nature, what by the multitude and grievousness of our actual transgressions, and in these respects how unworthy of the salvation which we wait for.

To avoid this, we must remove our eyes from off ourselves, and cast them upon the free grace and rich mercy of God, and upon the all-sufficient merit of Christ, and remember that the salvation which God has promised, he will give for his own Name's sake.

3. By calling into question the truth of God's promises, especially when he seemeth long to delay the accomplishment of them, or when troubles arise.

To avoid this, we must be persuaded that God is wisest, and best knows the fittest times and means for accomplishing his promises.

# The Eighth Part

The Sword of the Spirit.

> And the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. - Ephes. 6. 17.

§. 1. Of adding a Sword to other pieces of Armor.

The sixth and last piece of armour is not only defensive as all the former, but offensive also, like a sword. Note this copulative particle "AND," and the Sword; that is, take the Sword also as well as other pieces of armour. Hence observe that:

It is not enough to keep off our enemies' assaults from annoying us, but our care and endeavour must be to drive them away and destroy them. "Resist the Devil" (saith the Apostle), "and he shall flee." "Resist" is a word not only of defence but also of offence. This phrase, "he shall flee," shows that our endeavour must be to drive him away and put him to flight. It implies both a promise and a duty. To this purpose tend those phrases in Scripture of killing our members on earth, mortifying the deeds of the body, crucifying the flesh and the world, destroying the

body of sin, beating down the body, and keeping it in subjection. We have a notable example hereof in our Head and General Christ, who put the Devil to flight; likewise in one of his Captains, S. Paul, who brought his body into subjection, and to whom the world was crucified.

If we stand only upon defence, we embolden and hearten our enemies, who will never leave assaulting us till they have prevailed against us, except they be destroyed; as Saul never left persecuting David till he himself was destroyed.

[Use 1] Here is a good direction for Magistrates that have a charge over people committed unto them, that they content not themselves with defending such as are under their government from idolaters, heretics, atheists, worldlings, and the like enemies, but that they cut off and destroy those dangerous and mischievous enemies. For this purpose the sword of God is committed into their hands: and They are the Ministers of God, to take vengeance on such as do evil. Thus did that good King Josiah and other good Kings.

Object. This is done by the temporal sword, but what is that to the Sword of the Spirit here meant?

Answ. 1 It may fitly be applied by way of allusion.

2 It followeth by just and necessary consequence: for everyone must do his best to profligate spiritual enemies: and seeing God

hath afforded to Magistrates not only the spiritual Sword which is common to all Christians, but also a temporal Sword which is proper to them, they must use both.

3 The use of the temporal Sword is a great help to the spiritual, and much good may be done thereby: for howsoever Satan himself, being a Spirit, is no whit daunted with the temporal Sword, yet idolaters, heretics, profane men, and other like instruments of the devil, in, and by whom the devil much annoys the Church of God, are daunted, and may be destroyed thereby, and so Satan put to flight. It is the overthrow and ruin of many Churches, that the civil Governors suffer the enemies thereof to get head, and assault the church and people of God.

[Use 2] Here is a direction also for Ministers. They must not only teach the truth, instruct in good manners, encourage the upright, but also refute errors, cut down sin, and endeavour to destroy whatsoever makes against the glorious Gospel of Christ. Note what the Apostle says in this case, "The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to cast down strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, etc., and having vengeance ready against all disobedience." That we may not think that this was proper to his Apostolic function, he says in general of a Bishop, that as he must be able to exhort with wholesome doctrine, so to improve them that say against it. There is a two-edged sword put into the mouths of ministers; they must accordingly use it, to

defend by teaching sound doctrine and instructing in good manners, to offend by confuting errors and reproving sins. Many errors in judgment and much corruption in life creep into the Church for want hereof.

[Use 3] As for private persons, everyone has a charge over his own soul; for their own soul's safety, they must resist Satan, oppose the world, subdue their flesh, strike and fight: it is a foolish pity to spare the enemy and destroy oneself. If Satan tempts, with holy indignation, bid him avoid; if the world allures, defy it; if the flesh lusts, subdue it.

Thus much for the connection of this Weapon with the former pieces of Armour. I will now distinctly handle it and show:

1. What this Weapon is.

2. How fittingly it is resembled to a Sword, and why called the Sword of the Spirit.

3. How it may be taken and used.

4. What is the benefit of well using it.

5. What are the sleights of Satan to deprive us of it.

## §. 2. Of the true Word of God.

The weapon here prescribed is expressly termed the Word of God, which is that part of God's will which in the holy Scripture he caused to be recorded. It is called Word because by it God's will is manifested and made known, even as a man makes known his mind and will by his words.

It is also said to be the Word of God in regard to:

1. The author, which is God himself.
2. The matter, which is God's will.
3. The end, which is God's glory.
4. The efficacy, which is God's power.

This word is properly and truly the right sense and meaning of the Scripture: for unless that be found out, in many words there may seem to be matter of falsehood (as that the Son knows not the day of judgment), of heresy (as that the Father is greater than the Son), and contradiction, as between that which Christ said ("My Father is greater than I") and that which the Apostle said ("that Christ Jesus thought it no robbery to be equal with God").

The letter of Scripture may be alleged, and yet the word of God missed, as by all heretics. And a man may swerve from the letter, and yet allege the true word of God, as the Evangelists and Apostles did many times.

Compare:

Mic. 5. 2 Psal. 40. 6. with Mat. 2. 6. Heb. 10. 5.

So may diverse translators differ in some words and phrases, and Preachers in alleging testimonies of the Scripture may miss of the just letters, and yet all retain the true word of God, which is the true sense rightly conceived, and rightly applied.

This, therefore, is what we must labour after, and that with care and diligence, as Christ implies when he commands to search the Scriptures. The word which he uses is metaphorical, taken from such as use to search in mines for silver and gold: they will dig deep, they will break the several clots of earth all to pieces, to find out the golden ore. Thus must we deal with the Scriptures, as we are exhorted by Christ (John. 5. 39.) and by Solomon (Pro. 2. 4.) and so much the rather because every sentence, syllable, letter and tittle in holy Scripture is of moment. Otherwise, if we do not thus search the Scriptures, instead of God's word, we may allege our own conceits.

§. 3. Of the means to find out the true sense of the Scripture.

For our help in finding out the true sense of Scripture, there are diverse profitable means, such as:

1. Understanding of the original tongues: diverse errors and heresies have been drawn from translations. It is likely that the first thing that moved Papists to make marriage a Sacrament was the word Sacramentum which the vulgar

translation uses in Ephesians 5:32, and which the Romanists translate as a Sacrament. But the original signifies a mystery or secret.

Besides, every language has proper kinds of speeches, which, when translated word for word into other languages, would seem absurd: so, for the true understanding of the propriety of many Scripture phrases, knowledge of the original tongues is needful.

2. Skill in the arts, whereby proper and figurative phrases may be discerned and distinguished, and whereby the true construction of words and just consequence of arguments may be observed.

These especially are for the learned, wherein the unlearned must seek the help of the learned.

3. Knowledge of the Analogy of Faith, that is, of the fundamental points of our Christian religion, so that no sense be made contrary to any of them. The literal acceptation of these words, "This is my body," and the heresy of Transubstantiation grounded thereon, is contrary to the sixth article of our Creed, "He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God," etc.

4. Observation of the scope of that place which is interpreted, and of the circumstances going before and following after.

Thus, the true meaning of that parable concerning the Samaritan, who showed mercy to the man wounded and half-dead, can be easily found out.

5. Comparing one place with another. Thus, the meaning of many types and prophecies in the Old Testament may be understood by the application of them in the New. By comparing obscure places with perspicuous places, the obscure will be made perspicuous.

6. Prayer. For thereby the Spirit of revelation, of which the Apostle speaks (Ephesians 1:17), is obtained. Therefore, David prays unto God to open his eyes that he may see the wonders of God's Law (Psalms 119:18).

7. Faith and obedience to God's word, so far as it is made known: God gives over such to believe lies, who receive not, or love not the truth.

§. 4. Of the resemblance betwixt the Word of God and a Sword.

A sword, to which the word is compared, has a double use: one to defend a person from the assaults of their enemies (those who can wield a sword proficiently find great utility in this regard). The other is to assail, repel, and vanquish one's adversaries. Eleazar, one of David's worthies, exemplified this dual use of his sword (which he wielded so long that it cleaved to his hand again): he defended himself and the Israelites and routed the Philistines therewith.

Thus, the word of God is of significant use both to shield us from the assaults of our spiritual adversaries and to repulse, confound, and defeat them. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, instruction, and correction (2 Timothy 3:16).

This is evident from Christ's use of the Word in His encounter with Satan: by it, He defended Himself against the first and second assaults, and by it, in the third, He drove the devil away. He employed it similarly in His confrontations with scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and others. Whenever anything was raised against Christ, He typically defended Himself with the Scriptures and confounded His opponents with them. Similarly, Stephen, Apollos, and all the Apostles followed suit.

By the Word, all carnal and fleshly lusts can be subdued and cut down, just as flesh can be lacerated by a sword.

Therefore, just as gentlemen, soldiers, and travellers always have their swords by their sides or in their hands ready to defend themselves and assail their enemies, so ought we always to have this sword at the ready. Let us exhibit the same wisdom and care for the safety of our souls as natural individuals do for their bodies.

### §. 5. Why the Word is called a Sword of the Spirit.

[Use] This Word of God is called the Sword of the Spirit, both in regard to its Author, who is the Holy Spirit, and its nature and

kind: for it is spiritual, contrasting with a material sword made of metal, which may be termed the sword of flesh. In this context, the Apostle says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," (not carnal essentially means spiritual). Hence, it is described as living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. If it were not spiritual, it could not pierce so profoundly or discern the thoughts of the heart; nor could it harm the Devil, who is not flesh and blood but a spirit.

Behold God's goodness and wisdom in equipping us with such a weapon that even our greatest adversaries, those who are not flesh and blood, dread. And this not without reason, for it has the power to confound them. Therefore, if we are wise, skilled, and diligent in its use, we need not fear their fear or be troubled; rather, we shall inspire dread and terror in them.

### §. 6. Of the means of well using the Word.

For the well using of this spiritual sword, four especial graces are needful: first, knowledge; secondly, wisdom; thirdly, faith; fourthly, obedience.

1. For knowledge, in all things that we do, we must, by the Word, understand and know what God says, what is His good will, pleasing and acceptable to Him. For this, we have both the practice of the Psalmist (Psalm 85:8) and the

precept of the Apostle (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:17). By the Holy Scriptures alone, we may attain to the knowledge of the whole will of God. Without knowledge of God's truth, we shall always be wavering and never established in any truth, whether it concerns judgment or practice, nor with courage resist any contrary corruption.

§. 7. Of the means to attain knowledge by the Word.

For this, observe these directions.

[Use] 1. Read the Word diligently and frequently. Give attendance thereto, not only with others but also alone, that you may better observe it. Have set times for this end and be constant in observing them. If urgent occasions cause omission at one time, double it another time.

2. Meditate on what you have read. Meditation is an especial means to help both understanding and memory. A thing, at first reading, is not so well conceived as when it is seriously pondered; this serious pondering makes a deep impression of it in our memories.

3. Attend to the preaching of God's Word and bring to it a mind willing to learn. This is God's ordinance, in the use of which we may well wait and depend upon God for His blessing, to enlighten our understanding, work upon our affections, and teach us how to apply it.

## §. 8. Of Wisdom in applying the Word.

2. For wisdom, it teaches us rightly to apply the Word, both in the true sense and meaning of that particular place which we allege and according to the present matter for which it is alleged.

If we miss the meaning of the place, it is not the Word of God but a conceit of our own brain; we pervert the Scripture to our own destruction. If it is not pertinent to the matter, it is like a plaster or medicine wrongly applied, which heals when it should draw, or draws when it should heal, causing inward festering or making the wound much worse. Likewise, if the terrors of the Law are urged to a wounded conscience, they may drive a person into utter despair. If the sweet promises of the Gospel are applied to profane Libertines and carnal Gospellers, they may make them highly and intolerably presumptuous. Nothing can be more pernicious than the Word wrongly applied. It is like Saul's sword, which never returned empty from the blood of the slain: when held against the enemies, it destroyed them; when Saul fell upon it, it ran into his own bowels, killing him. So the Word, well used against our spiritual enemies, destroys them; if we fall on it ourselves, it may be the death of our souls, for it is either the savor of death or the savor of life. It is needful then that wisdom be added to knowledge, that we may rightly apply it.

For this end, we must observe not only the true meaning of the place itself but also the occasion, matter, and end for which it is alleged, so that fit and pertinent places may be cited. Thus did Christ use the Word: He cited a most fitting text against distrust, against presumption, and against idolatry.

### §. 9. Of Faith in God's Word.

For faith, the power of God's Word is restrained thereunto: for it is the power of God to everyone that believeth. All knowledge and wisdom without it is in vain. The Word which the Jews heard profited them not because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. Eve understood God's Word well enough, and she had enough wisdom to apply it, but because she did not steadfastly believe in it and was brought to doubt it, she lost the use of this sword; her enemy came in upon her and killed her.

For this end, the authority of the Scriptures is well to be noted: they are of divine authority (2 Timothy 3:16). God's oracles are recorded in them: not one jot or tittle of them shall escape till all be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18). This known and believed will bring us to give full assent to the truth of them.

### §. 10. Of yielding obedience to the Word.

For obedience, in religion, a man knows no more than he practises. In this respect, it is true that if a man thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know; so without

obedience, all knowledge is nothing, as Saint James declares by a fitting comparison taken from one who beholds his face in a glass and forgets what manner of one he was. This, therefore, must be added to all the rest, and herein we must be careful that we turn neither to the right hand nor to the left: neither carelessly neglecting that which is commanded nor preposterously doing that which is forbidden. Thus blessed are they who know, if they do the things which they know. In this experimental knowledge consists the very power of this spiritual sword: by it, lust is subdued, the world is crucified unto us, and the Devil is driven away.

### §. 11. Of the manifold use of God's Word.

[Point 4] The benefit of well using this sword is admirable: for there is no error in judgment but may be refuted, no corruption in life but may be redressed hereby. Neither is there any true sound doctrine but may be proved and maintained against all gainsayers, or any virtue and duty but may be warranted by it, and we thereby directed also in the performance thereof. The Apostle expressly saith of the Word that it is profitable to all these: David, upon his own experience, affirms that by God's Word he was made wiser than the ancient, than his teachers, than his enemies. Ancient men who have much experience of many times and of many things done in those times commonly get much wisdom by their long experience, so as among the ancient is wisdom, and in the length of days is understanding.

Yet God's Word taught David to understand more than experience could teach the ancient. Yes, though teachers commonly know more than scholars or learners (their lips should preserve knowledge), yet David by God's Word exceeded all his teachers in knowledge. And though enemies through their continual searching after sundry points of policy and inventing many stratagems and cunning wiles, as also by prying into the attempts of the adverse parties, grow very subtle and crafty, yet by this Word of God did David learn more wisdom than all they. For God's Word is of a far larger extent than man's wit, wisdom, learning, and experience can attain unto. Though the book wherein God's Word is contained be not comparable in the multitude of letters, syllables, and words to the massy volumes of many men's works, yet for substance of sound matter and variety of several and sundry directions, all the books in the world are not comparable to it. Every good thing whatsoever may be justified thereby; every evil thing whatsoever may be disproved thereby, so as by this sword every good thing which is opposed against may be maintained, and every evil thing whereunto we are tempted be repelled. There is no cross under which any man lies, no distress whereunto any is brought, but may be eased and helped by God's Word: from it may sound comfort be fetched, by it may a man be supported. This was David's comfort in his trouble. Art thou afflicted in body or troubled in conscience? Are thy children, kinsfolk, or any other which thou accountest near and dear unto thee a vexation unto thee? Is thy estate decayed? Art thou troubled with evil men or

any other way distressed? Search the Scriptures: therein shalt thou find comfort enough, if rightly thou canst apply them.

In a word, this Word of God is to the blind a light, to them that wander a guide, to them that are in distress a comfort, to them that doubt a counsellor, to the unlearned a teacher. And what is it not? It is all things to all men.

[Use 1] Oh excellent instrument! How much bound unto God are we for it? What account ought we to make of it? How expert ought we to be in it? Whosoever carelessly neglects it or lightly esteems it is most ungrateful to God, who in wisdom and goodness has provided it for him; and most injurious to himself, in losing the use and benefit of such a weapon.

### §. 12. Of the wrong which Papists do in detaining the Word.

[Use 2] What enemies to the safety and salvation of people are Papists, who (like the Philistines, 1 Sam. 13. 19. 22.) deprive them of this weapon? Herein they plainly declare themselves to be servants of Antichrist and enemies of Christ. They do even conspire with Satan himself: and so also do all they which openly or covertly speak against private reading and public preaching of the Word; who scoff at that knowledge which lay men and women have in God's Word.

### §. 13. Of neglecting God's Word.

[Use 3] As for those who themselves neglect, reject, or abuse God's Word, what enemies are they to their own souls, making way to their own destruction? Too many so do, as

1. They who care not to read it, or hear it at all: of all books, they least respect the Bible. Many will have statute books, chronicles, yea, playbooks, and suchlike toyish pamphlets, but not a Bible in their house or hands. Yea, (which is very lamentable) some scholars who intend to be divines have and read store of postils, legends, and suchlike trash, and yet are strangers to the holy Scriptures. Some use to carry other books with them to church, even then to draw away their minds from hearing God's Word when it is read and preached by others. Some go yet further and will not suffer their wives, children, or other of their household to read the Word. And some scoff at such as carry the Scriptures with them to church, terming them in reproach, Biblecarriers. All these, and all others like these, have no sword at all.

2. They who have Bibles, and it may be fairly bound up: but why? Only to lie in their house or to carry with them to church: they read it (if at all) as seldom as may be; their worldly affairs will afford them no time to read the Scripture. How many be there that never in their lives read through all the Scriptures, if ever they read through any one book? These have a sword, but to hang by the walls.

3. They who read much but only read, never search the Scriptures, to find out the true sense and meaning of it: much like unto superstitious Papists, who content themselves with mumbling over at set times a certain number of prayers stinted by their bead, not regarding what they pray. These have their sword always in the scabbard.

4. They who as they read, so seek for the true sense, but to what end? Only to understand the truth of the history, to reconcile seeming differences, to maintain discourse, or it may be also to justify the truth of doctrine against gainsayers: but not to be edified in faith and to have sin mortified thereby. These draw forth this sword only to flourish with it.

5. They who in searching out the sense of Scripture trust to their own skill, wit, and understanding, and neglect the ministry of the Word, whereby this sword is (as it were) whetted and made sharp, and they taught well to use it. These foolish and overbold soldiers care not how unskillful themselves be, or how blunt their weapon be.

6. They who do all they can to be expert in God's word but with a traitorous mind to fight against the truth contained therein (as heretics;) yea and it may be to overthrow the authority of the word itself (as many atheists). These fight

with Christ's weapon under Satan's colours against Christ himself.

## §. 14. Answer to Satan's suggestion, that the Scripture is not God's word.

The chiefest sleights which Satan hath to deprive us of this weapon are these.

Sug. 1. There is no such word of God at all: that Scripture which is called God's word was not inspired of God but so said to be, only to make men to give greater credence thereto. Thus before God's word was written, Satan brought men to doubt of that revelation of God's will which it pleased God to give to man, as our first parents, and the old world. Now it is written, he makes men think it is but as other writings of man's invention: herewith are not only plain atheists, but also many poor distressed wavering souls deceived.

Answ. For avoiding this, we must first labour to have our judgments well informed by what arguments we can, of the divine authority of the Scripture: many arguments might be alleged to this purpose: but because learned men have taken good pains herein, and published that which they have collected concerning this point in print, I will refer the reader to such books: for they are everywhere almost to be had.

Among other arguments this may be one, that not only all sorts of men (as well wicked and profane, as godly and religious) have an inward fear and dread of the Scripture, and bear a great reverence thereunto, but even they who gainsay the divine authority of Scripture have in their consciences a secret sting which oft pricketh them, and checketh them for it, though they labour never so much to suppress it.

2. We must pray for the Spirit of revelation, or inspiration, which may inwardly testify unto our spirits and persuade them that God is the author of the holy Scriptures. For however many arguments may be brought to evict a man's judgment thereof, so as in his judgment he cannot gainsay it, yet it is only the inward testimony of the Spirit, which is able to persuade man's heart thereof, and so make it willingly embrace and entertain the Scripture as God's word.

3. We must give no place to doubting about this point, but hold it as a principle undeniable. In human arts, the professors thereof teach that there are some principles which without all contradiction and question must be taken for granted, so as if any deny them, he is to be answered with a cudgel, rather than an argument: for example, if any deny that the fire is hot, it were fitter to thrust his hand or foot into the flame while he felt the heat of it, then by reasons to convince him that it is hot. If any human art have

such undeniable principles, much more the art of arts, divinity: and in divinity, of all principles, this is one which least of all ought to be brought in question, because it is the very groundwork of all. Wherefore if any such suggestion be cast into our hearts by Satan, let us with a holy indignation (as Christ did when he was tempted to worship the devil,) bid Satan avoid.

## §. 15. Answer to Satan's Suggestion of the Imperfection of God's Word.

2 Sugg. It is but a leaden sword, as a nose of wax it may be turned every way. Heretics, Idolaters, Schismatics, profane persons, worldlings, yea and the devil himself turn it to their own turns. Besides, it is so blunt, as it can neither cut off errors in judgment, nor root out corruptions in life: for notwithstanding the best application that may be made of God's word, heretics remain as perverse in judgment, and wicked men as obstinate in life, as if this sword had never been used against them. In these hath Satan much prevailed with Papists.

Answ. It is most false that God's word is either so flexible or so blunt. It is a most true, right, certain, infallible, undeniable word, always constant, ever one and the same forever: so absolutely perfect, as nothing can be added to it, or may be taken from it. Whosoever teacheth any otherwise then it teacheth, is accursed. Saint Peter termeth it, A more sure word

then that divine voice which was heard from heaven at Christ's transfiguration: which he doth not any whit to extenuate the authority of That, but the more to commend This unto the Church; so as if a difference could be made, this written Word of God should have preeminence; and so doth Christ also seem to prefer it unto the witness of John the Baptist, of his own works, and of the Father himself.

### §. 16. Of Heretics Falsifying the Word.

That which Heretics, or other wicked men allege to justify any error in doctrine, or corruption in life, is only the bare letter of the Word, not the true sense thereof, and so not the word of God, but conceits of their own brain: for if all the Scriptures which they allege, be well sifted and thoroughly examined, we shall find them either mangled, or mingled, perverted or misapplied.

First mangled by leaving out something of moment; as in the text which Satan allegeth to Christ, he left out this clause, in all thy waves, which had taken away all the force of his temptation: for it was not Christ's way to fling himself headlong from a pinnacle, there being other ways and means whereby he might come down: so in the description of a natural man's condition, this word only is left out in the Vulgar Latin translation, whereby they would avoid the text alleged against their semi-Pelagian opinion of man's being only half dead in sin. So also in

Rom. 11. 6. this clause is left out, But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no work. Which words are a most evident testimony against merit of works.

2 Mingled, by adding something which may make for them, as the old Latin copies in Rom. 4. 2. added this word (Legis) of the Law, and thence they infer that all works are not excluded from justifying a man. And in all the Latin copies this word (full) in the Angels' salutation to Mary is added, whence they likewise gather an argument to deify the Virgin Mary.

3 Perverted, and that two ways, First, by taking that literally which is meant figuratively, as that phrase of Christ in the institution of his last Supper, This is my body, 2 By taking that allegorically, which was spoken properly, as that speech of Peter to Christ, Here are two swords, whereby they would prove that there belongeth to the Pope two Swords: the spiritual Sword of a Pastor: and the temporal Sword of a King.

4 Misapplied, by turning the places which they allege, to another thing than was intended by the Holy Ghost. As in that speech of Christ to Peter Upon this Rock, &c. they apply that to Peter, and to the Pope, which Christ meant of himself. Herein do Separatists and Schismatiques much offend. These Texts I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed: Depart, depart ye, come out from thence, &c. Go out from her my people, with the

like, they allege to draw men from all the assemblies of God's Saints whither any wicked men do resort.

## §. 17. Of the Sharpness of God's Word.

Whereas he suggests that the Word is a blunt Sword, expressly he crosseth the testimony of the holy Apostle, who saith that it is a very sharp and keen Sword, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, etc. That Heretics and other wicked men are no whit moved thereby, it is because their hearts are hardened as Pharaoh's was, and their eyes blinded as Balaam's: they are past feeling. If ever they come to have any life, and light, and sense, this Sword will so pierce their souls, as it will utterly confound them, so as they shall not have what to oppose. In the meantime, so sharp is this Sword, that I doubt not but it makes a wound even in the conscience of the hardest heart. But what if at all it pierces not such obstinate persons? Yet it defends us from being hurt by their obstinacy, so as this Sword is not altogether without use.

## §. 18. Answer to Satan's Suggestion of the Difficulty of God's Word.

3 Sugg. This Sword is so fast in the scabbard, that it can hardly, if at all, be pulled out. To speak plainly, it is so hard and difficult, that the true meaning cannot be found out. Herein also are Papists besotted, who allege to this purpose the words of Peter,

that among those points which Saint Paul delivered in his Epistles, some are hard to be understood.

Answ. If God deserves more credence than Satan, this Suggestion is directly false. God says that his Word is a light unto our feet, and a lantern unto our paths: that it gives light to the eyes: that it gives to the simple sharpness of wit, and to the child knowledge and discretion: that if it be hid, it is hid to them who are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds. All these and suchlike Divine testimonies argue a perspicuity in the Scripture, so as all may and ought to have free access unto it, but very few can dive into the depth of it: for it cannot be denied but that in sundry respects the Scriptures may be said to be hard.

### §. 19. Of the Respects Wherein the Scripture is Difficult.

First, in regard to the matter: Many profound and deep mysteries are contained in them, which David calls wondrous things: thus many things in Paul's Epistles are hard: yet these profound mysteries are so plainly and distinctly laid down in the Scripture, that they who are not over-curious, (presuming to understand above that which is meet to understand, but will understand according to sobriety) may conceive. For example, the Trinity of persons in the unity of the Deity, the hypostatical Union of the two natures of Christ in one person, with the like, are inconceivable mysteries: yet so plainly opened in the

Scripture, as we may well discern these things to be so, though we cannot fully conceive how they should be so.

Secondly, in regard to the manner of writing: many abstruse phrases are therein, as diverse Hebraisms, which it may be were familiar to the Jews, but are obscure to us, and sundry Metaphors, allegories, and other tropes and figures. Yet these by diligent study of the Scriptures, and careful use of the means beforenamed, may also be found out.

Thirdly, in regard to the persons who read or hear the Scriptures. Natural men are not capable of the things of the Spirit of GOD, they cannot know them: and the God of this world doth blind the eyes of wicked men: yet He that is spiritual, discerneth all things: for God giveth unto him the Spirit of revelation, whereby the eyes of his understanding are opened. Many despise the Scripture because of the plainness of it: what marvel then that God hide from them the great and divine mysteries of his Word? how should he conceive that which is hard, who despiseth that which is easy?

Fourthly, in regard to the manner of searching: for if men cursorily and carelessly read the Scripture, no marvel if they understand little or nothing; for the promise of finding is made to those who seek as for gold, and search as for treasures.

## §. 20. Of the Reasons Why the Scripture is in Some Respects Difficult.

In these and such like respects the Scriptures are indeed hard, which the Lord hath so ordered for just and weighty reasons, as:

First, to declare unto man his natural blindness, and to suppress all self-conceit. By the mysteries of the Word, the wisdom of man is found to be foolishness.

Secondly, to keep holy things from Hogs, and Dogs, and so to make a difference betwixt the children of the kingdom, and the wicked.

Thirdly, to maintain the divine ordinance of preaching, and expounding the Scriptures.

Fourthly, to raise up in us an appetite after the Word, and a high esteem of it, and to keep us from loathing it. Deep and profound matters are much desired and respected; easy things are soon loathed. Wherefore the Holy Spirit of God hath so tempered the holy Scripture, as by the perspicuity of it we are kept from starving, and by the difficulty of it from loathing it.

Fifthly, to stir us up diligently to study and search the Scriptures, and carefully to use the means whereby we may find out the hidden Treasure in it.

Sixthly, to make us call upon him who is the Author of the Scripture, to give unto us the Spirit of revelation, and not to read or hear the Word without faithful and earnest prayer.

## §. 21. Of the Perspicuity of the Scripture.

But to return to the point. Though the word in the forenamed respects, and for the forenamed reasons, be difficult and obscure, yet is it for the most part so perspicuous, as with great profit, and to good edification, it may be read and heard of the simple and unlearned. And as for all the fundamental points of Christian Religion, necessary to salvation, they are clearly and plainly set down, so as the humble and obedient heart may distinctly, without wavering and gainsaying, conceive and believe them. Thus not unfitly is the Scripture compared, in regard of the perspicuity of it, to a ford, over which a Lamb may wade; and in regard of the difficulty of it, to a Sea, in which an Elephant may swim.

## §. 22. Answer to Satan's Suggestion of the Danger of Allowing All Sorts to Read the Scriptures.

4. Sugg. It is indeed a two-edged Sword: but too sharp and keen for children. It is not fit that Laymen, Women, and such as have not skill in Tongues and Arts, should read it: they oft pierce and wound their own souls & consciences with this Sword, as children hurt themselves with knives. With this also are the Papists exceedingly beguiled.

Answ. As the Word is sharp in itself, so hath it an inward power to give sharpness of wit, & that unto the simple: and to the child, knowledge and discretion, so as by the word they may learn well

to use the Word. How can that be thought to be unfit for laymen & women to use, which God hath expressly commanded them to use, except question be made of his wisdom? As the forenamed girdle, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, were prescribed to all of all sorts, so this sword: and Christ, without exception of any, saith to all, Search the Scriptures. God expressly commandeth, That the Law be read to all, even men, women, children, strangers, Deut. 31. 11. 12. And great reason there is for it: for as everyone eateth for himself, so he liveth by his own faith: but the Word is the ground of faith. By it therefore must they know what they believe. As for those wounds in conscience which many receive by the Word, they are good wounds, whereby, such corruption as festered in them being let out, the conscience is more soundly healed up; the wounds which it maketh turn not to festering sores.

### §. 23. Answer to Satan's Suggestion of the Hurt of Much Knowledge.

5. Suggest. Too much knowledge is not good, it puffeth up, it maketh people contemn their brethren, neglect Ministers, loathe preaching. But ignorance is the mother of devotion. These things hath Satan taught, not only Papists, but also many others, which pretend an hatred of Popery, to object against the Word.

Answ. Knowledge in itself is a very good thing, a duty expressly commanded: Join with virtue, knowledge, saith Saint Peter: yea Saint Paul goeth further, and implieth that it is our duty to be filled with knowledge, and to abound therein: and on the other side the Prophet complaineth, that God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. It is not knowledge, but the abuse thereof which puffeth up, and so much doth the Apostle imply. Now if the abuse of a good thing should make us avoid it, what good thing should not be avoided? The cause that Ministers, or any other are contemned, is not knowledge, but that corruption which is in man; even as by the venom in a Spider, the sweet juice of a flower is turned into poison.

But the truth is, that nothing maketh the preaching of God's word to be more highly accounted of, then knowledge: for

1. They who know something of the great mysteries of godliness, if they know it aright, find such good thereby, that earnestly they desire to know more.

2. They desire also to have their affections wrought upon, and that which they know, to be oft brought unto their minds: for which end also the preaching of the Word is ordained. This moved S. Peter to write.

3. They who know that to be true which is preached, do in that respect the better attend unto it, with greater assurance believe it, and more highly esteem the Preachers of it:

because they know it to be the truth of God. Thus the Thessalonians received the Word preached In much assurance, because they received it Not as the word of men, but of God. There can be no greater enemy to preaching and Preachers then ignorance: instance the rude villages of the Country.

### §. 24. Of Ignorance: How Heinous a Sin It Is.

The devotion which is pretended to come from ignorance is mere superstition, or, which is worse, idolatry. So much the Apostle affirms, "When ye knew not God, ye did service to them which by nature are not God's." For ignorance of God's word is the cause of all error, as Christ implies, saying, "You err, not knowing the Scriptures" (Matthew 21:29). Yes, the Scriptures being they which testify of Christ (John 5:39), upon ignorance of the Scriptures must needs follow ignorance of Christ. Now, ignorance being in itself a most odious vice, against which Christ will come in flaming fire to render vengeance, and a mother sin, which bringeth forth many other notorious sins, how can any good thing come from it? Certainly, this cavil which is raised against knowledge for ignorance, hath sprung, either from envy, whereby men grieve at the knowledge and good parts which are in others, or from ambition, whereby they seek to be eminent above all others, or from policy, seeking thereby a cover for their own ignorance. Moses (who desired that all the Lord's people

were Prophets) and Paul (who wished that all that heard him were altogether as he himself was) were otherwise minded.

## §. 25. Answer to Satan's Suggestion of the Non-proficiency of Many Hearers.

5. Sug. Many who read and hear much are not any whit the more freed from assaults: the flesh, world, and Devil, bear as great a sway in them as in any other.

Answ. It is certain that many are most wrongfully blamed. A mote in their eyes who love the Word is made a beam: a molehill, a mountain. If indeed there be any such, as there are too many, the fault is not in the Word, but in themselves. Though the Sun shine never so hot and oft on a stone, it softens it nothing at all. If it shines on clay, it hardens it. Stony hearts are no whit bettered; muddy, clayey, polluted hearts are made worse.

# The Third Treatise.

Of the Means to Use Spiritual Armour Aright.

## The First Part.

Of Prayer in General.

> Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me; &c." - Ephesians 6:19

§. 1. Of the Joining of Prayer with the Whole Armour of God.

After that the Apostle, like a good Captain, had sufficiently furnished the Christian Soldier from top to toe with all needful spiritual Armour, both defensive and offensive, he proceedeth to instruct him how he may get and well use this Armour.

The best general means that he could prescribe is prayer: for that Armour being spiritual and heavenly, we, fleshly and earthly, are as unfit to use it as a Child to use a Giant's Armour.

In setting down this heavenly exercise of prayer, he so setteth it down in the last place after all, as it hath a reference to all, and such a reference as implieth a joint use of it with all the rest: for he useth the participle praying, as if he had said, put on the whole armour of God praying, take Girdle, Breastplate, Shoes, Shield, Helmet and Sword, praying.

Hence I observe that to all other means which are used for defence or offence, Prayer must be added. It must, I say, be added: neither they nor this omitted, but both joined together. Excellently was this of old set forth by the Israelites manner of going to battle. As the people were to go armed and to fight, so the Priests were to go with silver Trumpets and to sound: this sounding with silver Trumpets implied hearty and earnest prayer. Note the benefit hereof. 2 Chronicles 13:14, &c. Thus while Joshua and the people were fighting with the Amalekites, Moses stood lifting up his hand, and Aaron and Hur stayed his hand: This was an outward figure of their inward powerful prayer. When Moses let fall his hand, and he left to pray, Amalek prevailed. So while Israel fought against the Philistines, Samuel prayed: and while Joab fought against Aram, David prayed. The like I might instance in Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and other Saints. If in fighting against flesh and blood, Saints were thus careful in adding prayer to other means, how much more ought we so to do in our spiritual combats against spirits? Christ in his agony prayed: and Paul when he was buffeted of the messenger of Satan, prayed.

God who hath appointed means of safety will not cross his own ordinance: without the use of them he will not protect any. But of himself no man is able to use the Armour aright: it is God who enableth him. Wherefore because God will do nothing without us, we must arm ourselves and fight, and because we can do nothing without God, we must pray.

§. 2. Of the Mean Betwixt Presuming and Tempting God.

[Use] Be careful in keeping the golden mean betwixt two enormous extremes: one of tempting God in neglect of the means which he hath appointed for our safety: the other, of presuming against God, in trusting so much to the means, as we seek not to him for help and succour. Into both these extremes fell the Israelites: one while they would not venture to fight, and so tempted the Lord: another while they would needs fight of their own head, without seeking help of the Lord, and so presumed obstinately. Rebellious are they who reject the means: they clean cast themselves out of the protection of God. Presumptuous are they who trust to the means, and call not upon God; they provoke God either to strip them of such things as they glory in, or else to turn them to their own destruction, as he did the strength of Goliath, and wisdom of Achitophel. The middle way betwixt the rock of rebellion, and gulf of presumption, is, so to show our obedience in using all the means which the Lord prescribeth, as we manifest our confidence in him, by seeking strength of him. Those things which God hath

joined together let no man put asunder. To all the forenamed graces add prayer: pray for Armour, pray for strength, wisdom, and ability well to use Armour, pray for a blessing on the well using it: be upright and pray, righteous and pray, patient, faithful, steadfast in hope, expert in God's word, and pray: pray before the fight, fight and pray; without prayer no good success can be expected: through prayer we may be assured to be assisted.

### §. 3. Of Dividing the Word Aright.

In laying down this doctrine of Prayer, the Apostle doth so skillfully couch together many several and distinct points, as every word almost affordeth a separate doctrine: he contenteth not himself in general to exhort unto the duty of prayer, but also declareth diverse circumstances appertaining thereto. Whence observe that

It is a warrantable course of teaching to set forth Principles of Religion in their several and particular branches. This is one kind of dividing the Word aright.

Thus will the understanding of hearers be much informed with a distinct knowledge of the mysteries of godliness, and thus shall they much better discern the great depth of those mysteries, and the rich treasure that is contained in them. Yea thus also shall their memory be much helped in retaining them: for several

branches distinctly and in order set down, are a great means to strengthen memory.

[Use] This justifieth that manner of teaching, which is (as we speak) Common-place-wise: by particular defining, dividing, subdividing, and distinct handling of particular branches of the Principles of Religion.

Object. The Apostles use to comprise many distinct points compendiously in few words: but many Preachers spend many words in laying forth one point.

Answ. They laid a foundation only, and therefore were the briefer: these make up the building, and therefore may and ought to be the more copious. Yet this giveth no warrant to such as spend much time in mere discoursing, without any distinction of order or matter: or to such as are over-curious in multiplying their divisions, or over-tedious in amplifying them. Neither doth this tie all Preachers, at all times to use one and the same method. Diverse Preachers have diverse gifts: and diverse places of Scripture require a diverse manner of handling: Let every man, as he hath received the gift, minister the same.

### §. 4. Of the Points to be Handled in Prayer.

In these words of the Apostle concerning prayer, note,

1. His exhortation unto the duty itself.

2. His direction for the better performing of it. In his direction observe,

1. The kinds of prayer, all prayer and supplication.

2. The time thereof, always.

3. The ground of it, in the spirit.

4. An help thereunto, watchfulness.

5. The means of prevailing thereby, perseverance.

6. The person for whom.

1 In general, for all Saints.

2 In particular for himself, verse 19. 20.

That he might the better urge this particular unto them, he declareth.

1. What he would have them pray for in his behalf, verse 19.

2. Why he would have them pray for him, verse 20.

The first point to be handled, being the duty itself, I will therein distinctly show. First what Prayer is. Secondly, why we ought to pray.

## §. 5. Of the Definition of Prayer.

True Christian prayer is a right opening of the desire of the heart to God.

Here note these three points. First, that the heart's desire is to be opened. Secondly, that it is to be opened to God. Thirdly, that it be rightly done.

The very form and essence of prayer consisteth in the opening and making known of a man's inward desire, which the Scripture setteth forth by a metaphor of Pouring out the soul. Pouring out the heart: Pouring out a man's meditation, or complaint.

I call it a desire of the heart. First, because all desires arise from the heart, that is, the fountain of them. Secondly, to distinguish true prayer from every slight wish, and from lip labour.

These desires are made known by outward and inward means. The outward means are words or signs. Words do most lively and plainly set forth the intent of the heart: yet signs also, such as lifting up the hands, casting down the eyes, stretching abroad the arms, bowing the knees, prostrating the body and the like, do both manifest a man's inward desire, and also stir up his affection. The inward means are sighs and groans: by these God discerneth a man's desire, as well as by words and signs. For God is as man, he understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.

## §. 6. Of the Object of Prayer, God Only.

Thus is the desire to be opened, and that to God: which David well knew, and therefore saith, Lord, all my desire is before thee: yea to God alone: for prayer is a principal part of divine service: But God only shalt thou serve. Oft are we in holy Scripture called upon, to call upon God, but never by precept, promise, or any other way warranted to call on any other. The true Saints, whose prayers have been approved, have ever prayed unto God, never unto any other. And that upon just and weighty reasons.

First, God only knoweth whether our desire come from the heart within, or from teeth outward, and so can distinguish whether it be true prayer (even a pouring out of the soul) or no.

Secondly, God only is everywhere present, in all places, to hear the suites of all persons.

Thirdly, God only is Almighty, able to grant us whatsoever suit soever we shall make.

Object. One creature may be helpful to another, why therefore may not prayer be made of one to another?

Answ. First, no creature can of itself be helpful to any other, further than God suffereth and enableth it.

2. It is not a sufficient ground to move us to call upon a creature, because it may be helpful (for then many unreasonable creatures might be prayed unto, which is a most unreasonable thing for any reasonable man to do) we must know that he to whom we pray, heareth us, and is both willing and able to succour us. But this can we know of no invisible creature, whether Angel or Saint departed: we neither know where they are, nor what they can do. In vain therefore it is to call on them.

3. Difference must be made betwixt civil and divine prayer. This is made with assurance of faith, and persuasion of divine attributes in him to whom we make it, together with religious adoration, which is proper to the divine Majesty, and to be performed to no creature, neither Angel, nor man. And this is it whereof here we speak, and whereof all the question is betwixt us and our adversaries.

Civil Prayer is that which is made only in civil respects; and that in such particular things wherein we are persuaded they to whom it is made, can help us: as to pray Ministers to teach and instruct us in the way to eternal life; to pray Magistrates to relieve us against the wrongs of unjust men; to pray Physicians in sickness to help us; and to pray others the like wherein they are able. Yet so to seek help of these, as of God's instruments, whom God hath provided to help, and in that respect to call upon God, and depend upon him for his blessing on that help

which man affordeth unto us. Thus we deny not but that civil prayer may be made to men living and conversing with us, to whom we may make known our desire by outward means. But religious prayer is to be made to God alone.

## §. 7. Of the Reasons Why Our Desire Is to Be Made Known to God.

Quest. What need is there that any prayer should be made to God at all? God knoweth the secrets of our heart, and understandeth our thought a far off.

Ans. Prayer is made not simply to make known the desire and thoughts of our hearts to God, so as otherwise God might be ignorant of them, but to testify man's obedience to that order which God hath set down. For it hath pleased God in his unsearchable wisdom, to appoint prayer a means to obtain all needful blessings at his hands. Were there no other reason to show the equity hereof, but God's ordinance and commandment, it were sufficient: but this hath God appointed very wisely for many good reasons: as,

1. That it might appear we understand our own desires, and have a sense of the thing we want.

2. That we may not only know, but acknowledge God the Author and fountain of all blessings.

3. That we may manifest our faith in his gracious promises, and good guiding providence.

4. That when we receive the good thing we have asked, we might ascribe the praise thereof to God. For the making known of our wants to God, and craving supply of them at his hands, is a means to make us acknowledge that, that supply which we have is made by him, and that the praise thereof is due to him.

## §. 8. Of the Things Which Are Requisite to the Right Manner of Prayer.

The third thing in the definition of Prayer (in this word right) is not lightly to be passed over: many points are comprised under it: they may all be drawn to these two heads, 1. The Matter 2. The Manner of Prayer.

The Matter in general must be things lawful and good.

The Manner respecteth, 1. The Persons both to whom the prayer is made, and also who maketh it. 2. The thing which is prayed for.

The Person to whom we pray being God (as we heard) two especial properties of him must be regarded in prayer, 1. His Greatness. 2. His Goodness.

These two are implied in the Preface of the Lord's Prayer. The word heaven, where he is said to be, showeth his greatness: the title Father, his goodness. The Throne of God before which we appear in prayer, is a throne of glory, and of grace: God's glory and grace therefore must be duly weighed.

A due consideration of the former will move us,

1. To seek out a fit Mediator.

2. With all reverence to cast ourselves before God.

### §. 9. Of Praying in the Mediation of Christ.

If the greatness and glory of God be duly weighed, we shall find it to be so infinite, as no creature, much less weak sinful man, can endure the brightness thereof. It is noted of the Angels, that when they stand before the presence of God, they cover their faces with their wings. If the glorious Angels cannot endure the great and glorious Majesty of God, how should vile sinners, to whom God in himself is a consuming fire? Which being so, there is an absolute necessity of a fit Mediator. This was prefigured under the Law by the High Priest, who did bear the names of the children of Israel before the Lord. This Mediator is only one, even the man Jesus Christ. No other in heaven or earth was fit for that office, but only he who was both God and Man, a true, proper, natural Son of both, and so fit to bring man into God's

presence. This, and this alone, makes us with boldness appear before the Majesty of God.

They who pray to God without a mediator, as Pagans, or in the name of any other mediator but Christ, as Papists, pray not aright in this respect, neither can they stand with comfort before God, when he shall manifest his Majesty and jealousy.

But they who by the only begotten Son of God, are brought into the presence of God, do further in regard of God's excellency, carry themselves with all reverence and due respect unto him.

This reverence must first be grounded in the heart, and then manifested by our words and gesture in prayer.

### §. 10. Of Inward Reverence in Prayer.

That in our hearts we may fear God, and think of him reverently, we must both before prayer meditate of his glory and excellency (for so shall we come with hearts raised up from the dunghill of this earth to the glorious Throne of heaven, as the Prophet saith, "Let us lift up our hearts," etc.) and also while we are in prayer, hold our hearts close with God, that they be not carried away with vain thoughts, and wandering imaginations: for our prayers are then but lip-labour, nothing acceptable to God.

### §. 11. Of Words Befitting Prayer.

Words whereby this inward reverence is to be manifested, must be suiting our matter, and neither over-curious, nor over-careless and loose. Curiosity of style hindereth devotion, and argueth affectation: it shows that men in praying seek their own praise, rather than God's. A loose style (to say the least) argues too light esteem, and too great neglect of him to whom we make our prayer.

### §. 12. Of Gesture in Prayer.

Our gesture must be reverent and humble. Kneeling is the fittest gesture to express both these, and most proper to prayer. Saint Paul sets forth the very act of prayer by this gesture, and uses it himself. If conveniently we cannot kneel, then stand. This gesture Christ warrants. The poor humble Publican stood when he prayed. To pray sitting, leaning, lying, with hat on head, etc. when no necessity requires, argues little reverence and humility.

### §. 13. Of Faith in Prayer.

The other property of God to be especially regarded of us in prayer is his goodness, in respect whereof, we must come in assurance of faith to be heard and accepted. For faith is that means whereby a blessing is obtained. Let not therefore the incredulous person think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. For strengthening our faith in prayer, we must seriously meditate on the promises concerning such things as we pray for, and of God's truth in performing them, as David did.

## §. 14. Of Lowliness of Mind in Him That Prayeth.

For the person that prays, two things are requisite in regard of himself.

1. Lowliness of mind.

2. Holiness of life.

Lowliness of mind causes an utter denial of ourselves when in truth we know and acknowledge that in us is no ground of confidence, but altogether matter of despair. Of this mind was David (when he said "Enter not into judgment with thy servant," etc.), Daniel, and all the best of God's children: for the better men are, the more lowly they think of themselves.

For attaining to this grace, we must impartially weigh our own baseness, as Abraham, who said, "I am but dust and ashes," and our vileness through sin, as Job, who said, "I am vile;" or rather David, who lays his sins in order before God. He who duly ponders with himself how his sins, for number, are innumerable, and for weight, infinite, and how all his righteousness is as filthy rags, defiled with that sink of corruption which is in him, cannot but utterly deny himself, and so be of a lowly mind, not puffed up with any conceit of himself.

## §. 15. Of Holiness in Him That Prayeth.

Holiness of life is also very needful: for true is that which the blind man said, "God heareth not sinners." "Though ye make many prayers, I will not hear," saith the Lord to the wicked. Wherefore the Apostle exhorts to lift up pure hands, which David professes to do.

Think of this, all impious and profane persons, unclean and cruel persons, all impenitent sinners whatsoever. God will not have his holy name polluted in your polluted mouths. But the prayer of a righteous man avails much.

### §. 16. Of Praying with Understanding.

Concerning the things prayed for, it is requisite that we have:

1. A true understanding and sense of them.

2. A true and earnest desire of them.

Understanding and sense respect both good things and evil. If we pray for good things, we must both know they are worth having and also sensibly feel the want of them. Such are those poor in spirit, whom Christ pronounces blessed.

If we pray against evil, we must both know that they are in themselves heavy burdens and also feel that they lie upon us, as David did: otherwise, we shall never pray heartily for the one or against the other.

## §. 17. Of Our Desire in Prayer.

Our desire in prayer must be both sincere and fervent, even a hungering, thirsting, longing desire. Under these metaphors, the desires of the faithful are often set forth. Now hungry and thirsty persons, and women that long, do both in truth, and also with great earnestness desire that which they desire. If in prayer our desire be such, it will pierce the heavens and move God to yield unto it: if it be not a true and sincere desire, but complemental and hypocritical, it is no prayer of the heart, but mere lip labour, and so not acceptable to him who searcheth the heart. If it be not fervent, but a cold desire, it cannot pierce so high as heaven. For as a bullet flies no further than the heat and force of powder driveth it: so prayer no further than the fervour of spirit carries it. Be therefore fervent in spirit. We heard that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, but with this proviso, if it be fervent.

Thus in general, we see what prayer is, whereby we may be directed how to pray. Now let us see what motives there are to stir us up thereto.

## §. 18. Of the First Motive to Prayer: God's Command.

I might here urge God's express charge and commandment thereunto, which is oft inculcated throughout the Scripture: a motive sufficient though there were no other. For God's precepts, being wilfully contemned or carelessly neglected,

procure no less penalty than eternal destruction of body and soul. It should seem that this motive prevailed much with David (for as soon as the Lord said, "Seek ye my face," his heart answered, "O Lord, I will seek thy face;") and much will it prevail with all such as desire to approve themselves to God. But because it is a general motive unto all Christians whatsoever, I will no longer insist upon it. Particular motives have respect either to God, unto whom we pray, or unto ourselves who pray.

### §. 19. Of the Second Motive to Prayer: God's Worship.

For God, first prayer is a part, the most principal, especial, and proper part of God's worship. David joins them together, saying, "Let us worship and fall down, etc." That is, by falling down, and calling upon God, let us worship him.

Among other parts of God's worship, the most reverend gesture is applied, and even appropriated to this.

The place of God's worship was by an excellency termed "The House of Prayer."

Prayer is made an essential note of difference betwixt such as worship God, and such as worship him not. They are said to call upon God; these, not to call upon God.

### §. 20. Of the Third Motive: God's Honor.

It is the best and chiefest means of honouring God that can be: by it, we acknowledge God:

1. To be everywhere present, and in every place to hear his children, and on this ground everywhere we call on him.

2. To be the fountain of all blessing, and therefore when ourselves or others want any blessing, temporal or spiritual, by prayer we ask it of God: yea, when we receive any, we give the praise of it to God.

3. To be a God full of pity and compassion, which makes us lay open our griefs and distresses to him.

4. To be an Almighty God, able to give whatsoever we desire.

5. To be a bountiful God, who gives to all liberally, and upbraideth not.

6. To be a God true to his promises, and therefore we crave the accomplishment of them.

These and other like properties of God does faithful prayer set forth; and so bring great honour to God, in which respect God himself says, "Call upon me, and thou shalt glorify me."

### §. 21. Of the Fourth Motive: The Necessity of Prayer.

For ourselves, four points there are which commend this holy exercise:

1. The necessity of prayer.
2. The utility of prayer.
3. The efficacy of prayer.
4. The dignity of prayer.

If any good thing be necessary to a Christian, prayer must needs be necessary, because it is the means which God has appointed to obtain every good thing. "Ask, and it shall be given you," saith the Lord, who gives all. "Ye get nothing, because ye ask not," says his Apostle. We have no good thing in ourselves or of ourselves; all is hidden in God. He is the fountain of all blessing, but he is a deep well; we must have something to draw up water: the only means is prayer. Is it not necessary that a poor man who has not of his own a crumb of bread or drop of water should make his want known to those who can and will relieve him? How much more necessary is it that Christians should make their wants known to God, seeing otherwise there is no hope of receiving relief from him?

## §. 22. Of the Things Which Men Receive Without Calling Upon God.

Object: Many profane and wicked men who never call upon God receive many blessings from God. He makes his sun to rise on the evil and sends rain on the unjust.

Answer:

1. The things which such receive are even as nothing, not to be spoken of, because they do not truly and properly tend to their good: all that they receive are either temporal things or only restraining graces, which tend rather to the good of others than of those who receive them.

2. Such persons would be much better off without all those things than to have them, for because they do not call on God, God gives them no grace to use them well, so they abuse them to their own destruction: Ahithophel's wit, Goliath's strength, Herod's eloquence were the cause of their downfall in this world; and though all do not have similar ends in this world, yet all heap up wrath unto themselves against the day of wrath. Read Romans 2:4, 5.

3. That spirit which comes accompanied with all needful saving and sanctifying graces is not obtained without prayer. God gives the Holy Ghost to those who desire him.

### §. 23. Of the Fifth Motive: The Profit of Prayer.

The utility or profit of prayer is great in every manner of way. It is profitable:

1. To obtain every good thing, as is evident by the promise of Christ (John 16:23), "Verily, verily, I say unto you,

whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Note the certainty of this promise in Christ's vehement assertion; note the generality of it, "Whatsoever." The heathen among whom the Christians lived after the Apostles' days, observing so much, said, "There was nothing which Christians could not obtain of God by prayer." I might here particularly exemplify this by several instances of all kinds of blessings, spiritual and temporal, public and private, for ourselves and others, concerning this life and a better, and show how God's children have by prayer obtained them; and also declare several promises made by God for all these. But I have in part declared these before, and I shall have a fitter occasion to handle them when I speak of the matter of prayer.

2. To prevent judgments threatened and remove judgments inflicted. Note for this purpose the prayer of Solomon (1 Kings 8:33, &c.).

3. To preserve, nourish, and strengthen in us all spiritual graces. By Christ's prayer was Peter's faith kept from failing; whereby Christ shows that prayer is an especial means to be used to that end. So the Apostle prayed on behalf of the Colossians, that they might be filled with knowledge, etc., increasing therein and strengthened, etc.

4. To obtain remission of sins; for this is the sum of the fifth petition; and for this end Peter says to Simon Magus, "Pray

God, that if it be possible the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee," thereby implying that if remission of sins may be obtained by any means, prayer is that means.

5. To subdue in us the power of sin, which David well knew, praying that sin might not have dominion over him. I dare boldly avouch (and I doubt not but every Christian soul acquainted with this holy exercise of prayer can, by experience, justify the truth of what I shall avouch) that the more constant and powerful a man is in prayer, the less power sin has over him. The more sin prevails, the weaker is the spirit of prayer. When God's children fall into temptation and yield unto sin, their souls are entangled thereby, as a bird whose feathers are besmeared with birdlime, or whose feet are caught in a snare: they cannot fly up to heaven. If by prayer they keep their hearts aloft, they are the more free from being entangled by Satan. Faithful prayer and purpose to sin cannot stand together. In this respect, I may not unfitly compare the spirit of prayer to that spirit and breath which come from the lungs of a man, whereby that over-great heat, which otherwise would dry up all his radical and natural moisture, is cooled and allayed. For it is prayer which cools and allays in man the immoderate heat of lust, anger, malice, envy, etc.

6. To sanctify all God's creatures unto our use; for as God's word gives a warrant for the using of the creatures which are needful, and a direction whereby we are taught how to

use them, so prayer to God obtains a right unto them and a blessing upon them. Therefore the Apostle joins both these together, and says that the creature is sanctified by the Word and prayer. For this end, Christ usually prayed before he used the creature; and all, even those who have abundance, must pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," that they may have a right unto and a blessing upon the creatures which they use. The same may be said of the callings wherein we are placed, of the actions which we do, and of all things which we have or use; all are sanctified by prayer: those who without prayer do or use anything are usurpers and can expect no blessing.

To conclude, prayer is profitable unto all things.

### §. 24. Of the Respects Wherein One's Prayer is Not Heard.

Object. Against all that is said of the profit of prayer, some object that the prayers of many are fruitless: they obtain not the things desired; yea, that God swears he would not hear Moses, Samuel, Noah, Daniel, Job.

Answer. 1. Many pray amiss, and so receive not; wherefore that our prayers may be profitable, we must learn to pray aright, as we have been directed before.

2. Though God always grants not his servants' request instantly, yet afterwards when there is a more seasonable

time he does; for God is the Lord of times and seasons, and best knows which is the fittest season, both for his own glory and his children's good to grant their request. For this end did not Christ at first grant his mother's request when she desired supply of wine; nor the request of the Canaanite which she made for her daughter. Note his answer to his disciples: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

3. Though he hear them not in that particular, yet in as good, or in a better thing will he hear them. As when Paul prayed against a temptation, God gave him grace sufficient to resist it; and when Christ prayed to have his bitter cup removed, God enabled him to drink it; whereupon it is said that he was heard in that which he feared. David prayed for his child that died, yet was not his prayer in vain; for firstly, his prayer was a sacrifice acceptable to God. Secondly, God had mercy on the soul of his child. Thirdly, God gave him another son of the same mother, a Solomon, a Jedidiah, a Prince of peace, beloved of the Lord, whom God made King after David. God better knows what is good for us than we do ourselves: accordingly, though he hear us not always to our own will and grant what we suppose to be good, yet always he hears us to his own will and grants what he knows to be good for us.

4. The saints well know what God has absolutely promised (as all needful saving graces, and salvation itself; those

absolutely they pray for and obtain), and what conditionally, as all temporal things, and suchlike as may sometimes be to their advantage, and sometimes to their damage. These they pray for with a subjection of their own wills to God's, as Christ unto his Father, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt"; and the leper to Christ, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"; and David to God, "Behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good in his eyes."

That which was objected of Moses, Samuel, Noah, Daniel, Job, is but a mere supposition, not a thing done: besides, it is said; they should deliver their own souls, so that their prayers should not be without profit.

### §. 25. Of the Sixth Motive: The Efficacy of Prayer.

Such is the efficacy of prayer; as nothing can be more powerful: for it prevails over all creatures, whether reasonable or unreasonable; and of reasonable, both visible as man, and invisible as angels, whether evil or good: yea, it prevails with the Creator himself.

1. Daniel by prayer stopped the mouths of lions among whom he was cast.

2. By David's prayer was Ahithophel's wisdom turned into foolishness. By Jacob's prayer was Esau's wrath allayed. By Mordechai's and Esther's prayer was Haman's malice like

Saul's sword, turned into his own bowels. By Hezekiah's prayer was the whole host of Sennacherib overthrown. One faithful man's prayer is more forcible than the power of a whole army: witness the example of Moses, who lifted up his hand while Israel fought against Amalek.

3. By prayer, the devil when he has gotten fastest hold, and surest possession, is cast out. It is here in this text laid down as a means to subdue the forenamed principalities and powers.

4. If Christ would have prayed, he might have had more than twelve legions of good angels to guard him. At Elisha's prayer, a mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about it.

Object. If prayer be thus powerful with angels, it is good to pray unto them.

Answer. The angels are pressed only to God's service, and always behold his face: when he sends they go, and not when we call them: Now our prayer moves God to send them: and thus at our prayer they come to guide us. Unreasonable creatures by prayer are restrained from hurting us and made serviceable: is it therefore reasonable that we should pray unto them?

5. By prayer Jacob had power over the angel (which was the Angel of the covenant Christ Jesus, true God), who therefore was called Israel, because he prevailed with God.

Prayer so far prevails with God that it even forces a blessing from him, whereupon we are said to strive or wrestle in prayer to God, and stays, and holds him back when he is going out in wrath, and causes him to repent and reverse his sentence pronounced.

## §. 26. In What Respects Men Are Said to Prevail with God by Prayer.

Object. This may seem to impeach the immutability and omnipotence of God. If man prevails with him, how is he almighty? If he repents, how is he unchangeable?

Answer. Those phrases of prevailing with God, of holding him, of his repenting, and the like, are spoken figuratively, after the manner of men, for our better understanding. Voluntarily, God yields to all that he seems to be forced unto: yea, he has beforehand determined so to do; but as he appoints the thing to be done, so the means whereby it is done: without the means nothing shall be done; upon a right use of the means all things shall be effected: now prayer being the means appointed by God of procuring blessing and avoiding judgment, prayer may fitly be said (in regard to that order which God has voluntarily set down) to be of power with God.

## §. 27. Of Extraordinary Effects of Prayer.

Many admirable and extraordinary are the things which the prayers of God's faithful children have in all ages effected. At Moses' prayer, the Red Sea was divided asunder. At Joshua's prayer, the sun stayed its course. At Hezekiah's prayer, it turned backward. At Elijah's prayer, rain was stayed three years and a half together; infinite it were to reckon up all particulars. I will bring to your remembrance only one which, among and above the rest, is most remarkable, which is concerning Christ's prayer at his baptism, by the power whereof first the heavens were cloven. Secondly, the Holy Ghost descended down upon him. Thirdly, the Father gave an evident and audible testimony that Christ was his beloved Son: whereby is declared that the prayers of God's children pierce the heavens, make the Holy Ghost to come into them, and cause God to witness that they are his children, though not so visibly and audibly, yet as truly and effectually.

## §. 28. Of the Use Which We May Make of Efficacy of Extraordinary Prayers.

Object. These are extraordinary examples of extraordinary persons, who had an extraordinary spirit: so as ordinary persons can look for no such matters: As for Christ, he was the true natural Son of God.

Answer. 1. These things are recorded to show the power and efficacy of prayer. To which purpose Saint James alleges that

extraordinary example of the prayer of Elijah. And the argument will well follow from the greater to the less. For if God heard his servants in extraordinary matters, will he not much more hear us in such ordinary matters as we stand in need of, and he has promised to give us?

2. Though Christ were the only begotten Son of God, and the proper object of his love, yet in and through Christ, God has adopted us to be his children: and with that love he bears unto Christ, he loves us: so as if we call upon him in Christ's name, he will hearken unto us as unto his children, and accept our prayers, as if Christ had made them: for he offers them up unto his Father.

Thus we see that the prayer of a righteous man avails much.

### §. 29. Of the Seventh Motive, the Honour of Praying.

4 There is no one thing wherein and whereby God does more honour his servants than by vouchsafing unto them this high privilege and favour to pray unto him. By prayer, the saints have free access to the glorious throne of God's grace: yea, they have a familiar acquaintance with him. It is a great prerogative that God in his Word vouchsafes to speak to man; but not comparable to this, that man should talk with God. God, by his Word, speaks to all, even to the wicked and rebellious, but none but saints, by prayer, speak to him: (the prayer of the wicked is no prayer, but mere lip-labour.) We know that it implies much

more familiarity for an inferior freely to speak to his superior than a superior to his inferior. Esther, though a queen, accounted it a great favour that she was lovingly and kindly accepted when she approached into the presence of a mortal monarch. Now consider how infinitely far greater the divine Majesty is than any human can be, and this will show how high a dignity it is to have free access unto his glorious presence; especially if withal we consider how full of grace and goodness he is to all that come before him. The glorious angels do admire the saints in regard of this honour vouchsafed unto them.

## §. 30. A Collection of the Motives to Prayer.

Thus we see what strong motives there be to urge this duty. If either God's honour or our own honour, if to please God or to supply our own needs and necessities, if our own profit and benefit be any motives hereunto, motives are not wanting. What exercise on earth so heavenly? And yet what, whereunto we are more dull? O that so rare and excellent a duty should so rarely and slightly be performed, as commonly it is! Does not this argue as the great corruption of our nature, so the subtle malice of the devil? For well he knows the vantage that man gains and the damage which comes to him by prayer. Let us be grieved and humbled for our dullness and carelessness herein. Let us rouse up our spirits and pray, that we may pray.

# The Second Part:

The Kinds of Prayer.

With all prayer and supplication.

## §. 31. Of the General Heads Whereunto the Particular Kinds of Prayer are Referred.

Hitherto of the duty itself whereunto we are exhorted: we are now to handle the particular circumstances or branches of the Apostle's direction.

The first is concerning the kinds of prayer, which are first intimated under that general particle "All," and then exemplified by two particular instances: 1. Prayer, 2. Supplication.

That we may distinctly handle the several kinds of prayer, which are here in this text comprised under this word "All," and in other places of Scripture more expressly set down, I will draw them into some order.

Prayer may first be distinguished according to the matter and manner thereof.

In regard to the matter, the Apostle makes four separate heads:

1. Supplications, or deprecations, which are for the removal of evil.

2. Prayers, which are for the obtaining of good.
3. Intercessions, which are on behalf of others.
4. Thanksgiving, which is for benefits received.

These four he refers to two heads in another place:

1. Requests.
2. Thanksgiving.

Under requests, he comprehends supplication and prayer, under which also may be comprised intercession.

Again, in another place, he mentions only two heads:

1. Prayer.
2. Thanksgiving.

By prayer, he means petition. For when this word "prayer" is set alone, it comprises all the kinds under it; when it is joined with thanksgiving alone, it comprises all kinds belonging to request. When it is joined with deprecation or intercession, it is restrained to a desire of good things for ourselves.

The most general and usual distinction is grounded on 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, which is:

Petition. Thanksgiving.

Petition may be distributed according to the things or persons in respect whereof it is made.

The things which it respects are either good, to obtain them, which is most properly prayer; or evil, to remove them, which is supplication, so called in English because when we are oppressed with any evil, it makes us cast down ourselves as poor suppliants, craving help and redress.

The persons are ourselves or others. The forenamed kinds respect ourselves. That which respects others is intercession, and that is either for them or against them.

According to this distribution, we shall handle under prayer, put for petition:

1. Petition for good things.
2. Deprecation to remove evil things.
3. Intercession for others.
4. Expostulation against others.

## §. 32. Of the Things to Be Asked in Prayer.

1. For petition, I need not stand to prove the general, that it is lawful to crave good things: for this of all others is the most principal kind of prayer. And this general title prayer is most commonly attributed to it. I will rather more particularly show,

2. What things we are to crave.

3. After what manner we are to crave them.

The things which may be asked must be lawful and good: for so much implies Christ when he says that God will give good things to them that ask him. Now those things are lawful and good which are agreeable to the good will of God: for God's will is not only the rule and square of goodness, but the very ground of goodness. A thing is not first good, and then willed of God; but therefore good because it is willed of God: so as God's will gives the very essence and being unto goodness. Whereupon the Apostle, having prayed for the Hebrews, that God would make them perfect in all good works, adds by way of explanation, to do his will. This general point of framing our petitions according to God's will, Saint John expressly lays down, saying, "If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." Would we then know what are those good and lawful things which may be asked? Search the Scriptures, for in them is God's will revealed. If we have our warrant from there for the good things we ask, then may we boldly ask and look to receive them.

## §. 33. Of the Sum of the Lord's Prayer.

But because this is a large field and a wide sea, Christ has made an epitome, a brief collection of all such things as are good and lawful to be asked, and comprised them in those few petitions of

the Lord's Prayer. Where we may observe two several heads of them.

1. God's glory, in the three first petitions, wherein praying to God, we say, "Thy Name, Thy Kingdom, Thy will."
2. Our own good, in the three last: wherein speaking of ourselves, we say, "Our bread, Our trespasses, Lead us not, But deliver us."

God's glory is first of all, and most of all to be desired: nothing is to be craned but that which may make thereto. If God's glory and our salvation could come in opposition, that were to be preferred to this, as Moses shows by his own example. Therefore, that has the first place in the Lord's Prayer. As we are to desire it, so to desire the means whereby it may be effected, and the manifestation of it.

In regard to our own good, we may ask all needful things, whether they be temporal, concerning these frail bodies of ours while here we live, or spiritual, and that either respecting our justification, the principal part whereof is a discharge of that debt wherein through sin we are bound unto God, or our sanctification, in keeping us from the pollution of sin and preserving us safe from all evil unto salvation. The Scripture affords particular instances of all these things asked of God by the prayers of the Saints. But this warrant of the Lord's Prayer being so sufficient, I need no longer to insist upon it.

## §. 34. Of the Diverse Manner of Asking Things Absolutely and Conditionally Promised.

Having seen what we must ask, let us see how we must ask.

We have heard before of many graces needful for a right manner of prayer, which I will not here repeat, but only show how all things must be asked with subjection of our will unto God's will. For this end respect must be had to God's promises. For every acceptable prayer is made in faith: Faith has an eye to God's promises, and rests thereon: as God has promised anything, so the faithful ask it in prayer. Things absolutely promised, they crave absolutely, as Moses, who would not let God alone until he had spared his people, but desired to be erased out of God's Book, rather than his people should be destroyed: and why? Because God had made an absolute promise to bring them into Canaan, which promise Moses pleads unto God in his prayer.

Things not absolutely promised they pray for with subjection unto God's will and wisdom. For there are many things which are good in their kind, yet so far make more or less to God's glory and man's good, as it pleases God by his wise providence to dispose them. For example, God has made an absolute promise of the perpetual continuance of the Church, but not of a continual outward flourishing estate thereof; for he can turn the persecution of his Church to the increase thereof, and so gain honour to himself, and bring good unto his people thereby. Thus

for the time of accomplishing God's promises, sometimes a long date, sometimes a short date, may most make to his glory: and for the means, sometimes one kind of means, sometimes another, with other like circumstances.

In all these, we must in our prayers either express, or reserve in our minds some secret limitations; as these, If God sees it to be good; if his good pleasure be such; if it may stand with his glory, etc.

### §. 35. Of the Evils to Be Prayed Against.

For deprecation, or supplication, we have express warrant in the fifth and sixth Petitions of the Lord's Prayer: and also in the example of Christ (who offered up supplications with strong crying and tears, and was also heard in that which he feared), of Solomon (who expresses many particular branches hereof in the prayer which he made at the dedication of the Temple) and of other Saints in all ages: yea likewise in the answer which God gave to Solomon's prayer, and in the many promises which God has made to deliver us from evil.

Here also we are to consider the matter and manner, What we are to pray against, and how. Evil to be prayed against is either of fault, or of punishment.

### §. 36. Of Praying Against Sin.

Evil of fault is sin. This is the first evil that ever was in the world: the greatest of all evils (a greater evil than the torment of hell) and the cause of all evil of punishment (for sin when it is finished brings forth death).

In regard to this evil, three things are to be prayed against, 1. The guilt of sin, 2. The power of it, 3. Temptations thereunto.

Against the first we pray in the fifth Petition: against the second and third in the sixth Petition. In regard to the first David thus prays, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." In regard to the second, thus; "Let not presumptuous sins have dominion over me." In regard to the third, Christ says to his Disciples, "Pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

The guilt of sin makes us odious and abominable in God's sight, whose favour causes our happiness. The power of sin makes us more and more to provoke his wrath, which is unsupportable.

Temptations unto sin simply in themselves work neither of those two mischiefs. For Christ (who was always most amiable in God's sight, the Son of God's love, in whom his soul delighted, and who never provoked God's wrath; for God was always well pleased in him) was often tempted to sin, as by Satan himself in the Wilderness, by Scribes, Pharisees, and other such enemies, yea, by Peter when he told him of his suffering: but all his temptations could never make him sin. As a firebrand thrust

into the Sea is presently quenched, so were all temptations cast against Christ. Yet notwithstanding temptations to us are very dangerous, because of our proneness & readiness to yield unto them. We are by nature to temptations, as tinder; or rather as gunpowder is to fire. As the least spark of fire does not only soon kindle, but also suddenly in flame gunpowder, and sets it all on fire: so every little temptation soon fastens on us, and inflames us suddenly with the fire of sin. Instance David, who at the sight of Bathsheba was inflamed with lust; and Peter, who at the word of a silly maid was soon brought to deny and forswear his master. If these in whom God's renewing Spirit abode, were by reason of the flesh so prone to be overtaken by temptations, how can such stand against them, in whom the flesh reigns, and where is nothing to restrain them?

## §. 37. Of the Manner of Praying Against the Guilt and Power of Sin, and Temptations Thereto.

Against the guilt and power of sin, we must simply, absolutely, instantly pray, and never cease until God hears us.

That we may with greater indignation pray against them, we must first narrowly and thoroughly examine ourselves, and search what sins we have committed; and among our many sins, observe which are the most odious, which the most dangerous, what sins we are most addicted to, and what bear the greatest sway in us. Thus when we see what grievous sins we are slaves

to, we shall with great vehemence, as David, and with tears as Peter, pray against them. The reason why most so seldom, so coldly and faintly pray against their sins, is because they never examine themselves: they see not how vile and wretched they are, by reason of them.

Against temptations we are to pray especially, that we be not given over to them, and overcome by them: but that the Lord would either deliver us from the temptation, or so assist us therein, that it turns not to our destruction, but rather to our good.

### §. 38. Of Praying Against Punishments of Sin.

Evil of punishment is threefold,

1. Temporal.
2. Spiritual.
3. Eternal.

Temporal punishments are all outward judgments, miseries, and plagues in this world: these are in themselves effects of sin: from sin they came first: had man never transgressed, none of these would ever have been inflicted upon him. "In the day thou eatest of the forbidden tree, thou shalt die the death," says God to man:

All temporal judgments are forerunners of death, and appurtenances thereof, and so comprised under it.

These may be sanctified, and made medicinal: and so they are, in and through Christ's suffering, to God's children: all outward afflictions are God's physic to the faithful. Absolutely therefore they are not to be prayed against, but we are to pray either to have them removed, or else sanctified unto us.

Spiritual punishments are slavery under Satan, the world, and the flesh, a seared and a dead conscience, hardness of heart, blindness of mind, carnal security, impenitence, infidelity, and such like. These are fearful evils, and to be prayed against, as hell itself.

The eternal punishment of sin is such as cannot be expressed: it is set forth by the most intolerable torments that be, as the gnawing of a worm that never dies, A lake of fire; yea, fire and brimstone, etc.

This evil causes an irrecoverable and perpetual separation from God: and makes men blaspheme the God of heaven for their pains: in which respect it is absolutely to be prayed against: for as sin makes men most wretched, so this punishment of sin makes men most accursed.

## §. 39. Of Praying for Others, For All Saints

Respect must be had to others in our prayers, as well as to ourselves: for in the Lord's Prayer, such petitions as respect the good of man are set down in the plural number, "Give us, Forgive us, Deliver us." Expressly the Apostle commands to pray one for another.

This is to be done in regard to

1. God, to whom prayer is made.
2. Ourselves, who make it.
3. Those for whom it is made.

In that we call upon God for others as well as for ourselves, we acknowledge him to be not only our own Father, but also the common Father of others; in which respect Christ has taught us to say, "Our Father": yes, thus we acknowledge God to be that only fountain from whence both ourselves and others also receive all needful blessings. So, this makes much to the honour of God.

Hereby we perform a duty of love, one of the most principal duties that be. This Christ plainly shows, where he makes it a branch of love: for having said, "Love your enemies," he adds, "Pray for them." Now love is a due debt which we owe to our brother: by performing this great duty of love, we pay a great part of our debt. Thus we see that it is a matter both of charity and of justice: they who neglect it, sin.

There is no one thing wherein and whereby we can be more beneficial and do more good to any, than in and by prayer. We heard that prayer is profitable unto all things, it extends to the good both of body and soul, of the temporal and eternal estate of others as well as of ourselves.

## §. 40. Of Those Who Pray Not for Others

Use 1. Most worthy of much blame are they who are never moved to pray but in their own needs and distresses: of these,

1. Some will take no notice of others' necessities. The Church of the Jews in her captivity complained of such, saying, "Have ye no regard all ye that pass by this way?" If themselves are well in their own conceits, they think all others should be well.

2. Some, though they take notice, yet are not moved to any compassion: as the Priest and Levite who came and looked on the man that lay wounded and half dead in the highway, but having no compassion, passed by on the other side. Such were those of whom the Prophet complained, saying, "No man is sorry for the affliction of Joseph."

3. Some, though they are moved, yet perform not this duty because they think it to be an idle frivolous thing, nothing available or profitable: such were they whom Job brings in

thus speaking, "What profit should we have, if we should pray unto the Almighty?"

The first sort of these betray too much self-love.

The second sort discover too great senselessness, and plain inhumanity.

The third manifest too much distrust in God, and plain atheism.

All of them, as they violate that excellent Christian duty of love, which seeks not her own things only, but desires and seeks the good of others also, so they straiten and impair the rich treasure and large ocean of God's goodness and mercy, which extends itself to all of all sorts.

Use 2. For our parts, if faith in God and love to our brethren abound in us, they will make us diligent in observing the needs of others, they will work in us a fellow-feeling, and move even the bowels of compassion in us, and so provoke us to commend our brethren's distresses to him whom we know to be able to succour them. What made the friends of the palsied man so diligent in bringing him to Christ? Or what made the woman of Canaan and the father of the lunatic child such importunate suitors to Christ for their children? Was it not their faith in Christ, and their love to those parties? Where this duty is neglected, there is a want both of faith and of love.

## §. 41. Of the Persons for Whom We Must Pray

Thus, we have heard that prayer is to be made for others. We will further show more distinctly. First, who those others are who are to be prayed for. Secondly, in what order others are to be prayed for. Thirdly, what things are to be asked for in prayer for others.

The first point I will first handle negatively, and declare who are not to be prayed for. And then affirmatively, and declare who are to be prayed for.

In general, they are not to be prayed for, whom we know our prayers cannot help. These are

1. All such as are dead.
2. They who sin against the Holy Ghost.
3. They concerning whom God has given an express charge to the contrary.

## §. 42. Of Praying for the Dead

Concerning the dead, note what David says, "Why should I now fast?" That which was said to Jairus, who sought help of Christ for his child, ("Thy daughter is dead, why diseasest thou the master any further?") had been to purpose if Christ had not extraordinarily and miraculously raised her from the dead. But such miracles cannot now be expected; therefore, the dead are to

be let alone: for throughout the whole Scripture, there is not one title which savours of any such matter, but rather against it. We read in the Law of many sacrifices appointed for all sorts of people in all kinds of distresses, but of none for the dead. So also of many prayers prescribed for the living both in the Old and New Testament, but of none in either for the dead. The Apostle (where purposely he sets himself to direct Christians how to carry themselves toward the dead, and how to comfort themselves in regard to their deceased friends) has not a word of prayer for them.

Though these be negative arguments, yet are they not lightly to be rejected: for they plainly show that prayer for the dead is a new-found doctrine, an article invented since the Prophets and Apostles times, without warrant of the Word. Now the spirit warns that none teach other doctrine, avouching that if any do, he is proud and mad, and therefore bids avoid such; yea, he denounces a fearful curse against them which preach otherwise than the Apostles had done. Besides, this being without warrant of the Word, how can it be performed in faith? If not in faith, how can it be acceptable to God? To say the least against prayers for the dead, they must needs be vain and fruitless: for God's determinate judgment passes on everyone so soon as they die: If they die in the Lord, blessed are they: if they die in their sins, they are irrecoverably cursed, as is implied in the parable of Dives being in hell, to whom Abraham being in heaven, thus says, "They which would go from hence to you, cannot; neither

can they come from thence to us." Herein is the proverb verified, "Where the tree falleth, there it lieth": for as life leaves us, so judgment finds us. Prayer therefore for the souls of the deceased is as physic for the bodies of the dead.

## §. 43. Of Purgatory

As for Purgatory (which Papists make to be a middle place between heaven and hell, where they say all such are as die not in mortal, but in venial sin, and from whence by the prayers of the living they may be released), it is a mere fiction invented of man's idle brain and maintained to increase Antichrist's earthly treasures: it is against the current of the Scripture, which acknowledges but two sorts of people, Children of the kingdom, and children of the wicked, faithful and unfaithful; and accordingly only two places after this life, heaven and hell. The distinction likewise of mortal and venial sin, as they use it, making some sins in their own nature, by reason of the smallness of them, venial, is against the Word, which says indefinitely of sin (excepting no sin at all), "The wages of sin is death." Woe to them that after this life enter into any fire: the Scripture nowhere mentions any temporary fire after this life, but everlasting and unquenchable.

Object. 1 The second petition comprises the dead under it.

Answ. That petition has not any particular respect to any particular person departed, so as it cannot justify any particular

prayers for a particular person deceased, which is the question in controversy. Indeed, that petition respects the whole body of Christ, some of the members whereof are the Saints now dead: but it follows not thereupon that it is a prayer for the dead: for principally it respects the living, and the dead only by consequence. Besides, it implies no altering of the estate of the souls of the dead, which is another point in question.

Object. 2. Many prayed for their children and friends who were dead, and had them restored to life.

Answ. 1 This is nothing to the alteration of the estate of the souls, which is the point in controversy.

2 Those were extraordinary examples done by extraordinary spirits, and are no more exemplary than the Israelites passing through the red Sea, or Moses, Elijah's, and Christ's fasting forty days.

[Use] This point is to be noted as against the erroneous doctrine of Papists, who maintain prayers for the dead: and against their superstitious practices, who use upon Church walls, Church windows, grave-stones, and the like to set this phrase, "Pray for the soul of A. B.," and if any have been bountiful to their Church, they use to offer up Masses, and to say dirige, and to sing requiem for their souls from time to time. All which (to say the least) are toyish and childish.

## §. 44. Of Vain Wishes for the Dead

Not much unlike is the practice of many ignorant and superstitious persons among us, who, if mention be made of any of their friends departed, use presently to say, "God be with him," "the Lord be with his soul," or "God have mercy on his soul," with the like. Mark the persons that most commonly use these vain wishes, and you shall observe them to be such ignorant and irreligious persons as never pray for their friends while they are alive: for if they knew how to pray aright for their friends, they would not make such unprofitable wishes for them. Wherein note their preposterous course: when true prayer is warrantable, acceptable, honourable to God, and may be profitable to him for whom it is made, being commanded of God, and agreeable to his will, they impiously neglect it: but when there is no warrant to make it, no hope of doing any good by it, they superstitiously use it.

Object. Mark their apology, and you shall find it as foolish as the thing itself is toyish. For if any reprove them for it, presently they say, "What hurt is it?"

Answ. It is hurt enough that there is no good in it: that it is vain and idle. Of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account at the day of judgment. Too many idle words pass from them, who are most circumspect and watchful over their words. Is it not enough for men to let slip unawares idle words, but that

they must also justify idle prayers? All things must be done in faith, all to God's glory, all in love. Much more prayer which is the most excellent and heavenly action that can be performed. But these wishes cannot be in faith, because they have no warrant: nor to God's glory, because they are not agreeable to his will: nor in love, because they can bring no profit.

Object. 2. Were we not better say, "the Lord be with them," than "the Devil take them"?

Answ. Is there not a mean betwixt extremes? Must you needs be superstitious, or impious? Seeing God's determinate judgment is passed upon them, and they are come to the place of their everlasting abode, why not leave them to their own Master, and pray for the living, who may reap good by your prayers.

### §. 45. Of Not Praying for Those Who Sin Against the Holy Ghost

Concerning those who sin against the Holy Ghost, we have an express inhibition, not to pray for them; and the reason rendered, because it is a sin unto death: that is, (as Christ more plainly sets it down,) it shall not be forgiven unto men, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Their judgment is as certain as if they were dead, yea and by their sin manifested to be certain.

This sin is very hard to discern: there is need of more than any ordinary spirit to discover it. The ground of this sin is set and

obstinate malice against Christ and his truth made known unto them by the spirit of revelation. The effect of it is a universal apostasy, an utter renouncing of that truth, and that with plain blasphemy. Now seeing no man can know what is the spirit and heart of another by an ordinary spirit, who shall judge a man to have committed that sin? The Prophets and Apostles could discern them, as Paul discerned Alexander. Since their times we read only of one who by the Church hath been adjudged to have committed that sin, which was Julian called the Apostate.

### §. 46. Of Not Praying for Those Who Are Apparently Rejected

For those of whom God hath given an express charge to the contrary, and who are expressly and apparently rejected of God, if any pray, do they not thwart and gainsay the revealed will of God? We read not that Samuel prayed for Saul, after the Lord expressly forbade him. Had Jeremiah prayed for the people, after the Lord said to him, "Thou shalt not pray for this people, neither lift up cry or prayer for them, neither entreat me, for I will not hear thee;" he had transgressed.

### §. 47. Of Judging the Sin Against the Holy Ghost

Though these two last restraints be expressly mentioned in the Scripture, yet we must take heed how we judge any, either to have committed that sin unto death, or to be rejected of God: for the one there is need of an extraordinary spirit, for the other of extraordinary revelation from God.

Question: What if any shall profess themselves to be such?

Answer: That is no good ground for us to judge them to be such, and to cease to pray for them. For many weak ones in temptation will judge themselves to have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and to be rejected of God, and thereupon neither pray for themselves, nor suffer others to pray for them.

These persons commonly have in them great grief of heart, for that wretched estate wherein they conceive themselves to be, or if their heart be hardened, they are grieved for that hardness, they have a longing desire to be out of that estate, yea they have a secret love of God, and zeal of his glory, though they feel it not, for they cannot endure to hear any blaspheme God's holy Name and truth: Now these are evident signs that they never fell into that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.

The best advice which is first to be given unto such persons, is to persuade them that they are more unfit to judge of their spiritual estate, than a man deeply possessed with melancholy, of his bodily health: and that the judgment of so weighty and intricate a matter, as the sin against the Holy Ghost is to be referred to the judgment and censure of the Church, and not of any one particular man, except he had an extraordinary spirit. But howsoever they, like senseless patients, seek their own ruin: yet let us, like good physicians and faithful friends, be the more

tender over them, and afford them the best help we can, both by wise counsel and fervent Prayer.

Thus much touching the negative, who are not to be prayed for.

## §. 48. Of the Persons Who Are to Be Prayed For

The affirmative, (who are to be prayed for,) is very general. For (except those before excepted,) all of all sorts are to be prayed for. Indeed the Apostle in this Text nameth none but Saints, yet simply he excludes not all others, but rather more forcibly urges this duty for the Saints: as if he had said, whomsoever ye forget, forget not any of the Saints: let them especially above all be remembered. In effect so much is here implied, as is expressed. Gal. 6. 10. Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of Faith.

If this place excluded all but Saints, and implied that none but they should be prayed for, it would thwart and contradict many other places of Scripture which shall be declared when we prove that such as are not of the Church may be prayed for. Wherefore because the two later sorts who sin against the Holy Ghost, and who are rejected of God, are not by ordinary spirits discerned, I may for an ordinary direction say,

All men living on earth are to be prayed for. So much the Apostle himself expressly avoucheth. For in direct terms he exhorts that Prayers be made for all men. All I say, whether they be in the

Church or out of it, called or not called, friends or foes, public or private persons, rich or poor, young or old, male or female, bond or free, of what estate or condition soever.

I will give particular proofs of these particulars when I declare in what order they are to be prayed for. In the meantime note these general grounds and reasons.

1. All are made after the same image of God that we are, all are of the same mould, all our own flesh, all our neighbours, and therefore as other duties of love, so this which is the most common and general duty of all is to be performed for all.

2. Besides, for ought we know all may belong to the election of God, and so have a right to the privileges of God's elect.

Object. Sure it is that everyone is not elected, there always have been, still are, and ever shall be a mixture of reprobates with the elect: for this world is God's field, wherein are tares as well as wheat, a sea wherein are bad things as well as good. Yea sure it is that the greater sort are reprobates, for few are chosen: narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it, but broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

Answer. Though this be most true, yet can we not say of any particular man, that he belongs not to God's election. If he be

not now called, he may hereafter. Though he be now a wolf, he may become a lamb, as Paul did. Wherefore to resolve this point distinctly, all men jointly together may not be prayed for, because all belong not to God's election. Yet all men severally (except before excepted) may and must be prayed for. So as there is not any one excepted. There is not any Country, any sort or condition of people, any one man of whom we can say, he is not to be prayed for.

Object. The Pope of Rome is Antichrist, and Antichrist is branded to be that man of sin, which is, a son of perdition.

Answer. We may not conceive any particular man to be Antichrist, but rather that seat and State where the Pope sitteth, or that Hierarchy, the head whereof the Pope is, or the succession of Popes one after another.

The ground of prayer is the judgment of charity, and not of certainty. Now charity hopeth all things. It hopeth that they which are out of Christ's fold, may in time be called into it, that very persecutors of the Gospel may prove professors of the same.

I doubt not but upon this ground, and in the forenamed respect, that clause in our public Liturgy (That it may please thee to have mercy on all men) is used.

## §. 49. Of the Order of Praying for Others

For the order of praying for others, prayer being one of the most proper and principal effects of love, follows the order of love. Now the proper object of true love is God, who by propriety and excellency is called Love: the more similar any are to God, and the closer they come to him, the more dearly ought they to be loved, and in love to be preferred before others. Accordingly, in our prayers, they ought to be preferred, as

## §. 50. Of Praying for Saints

1 Saints, who are here in this Text by name expressed, to show that they must most of all be remembered. Thus did Christ pray especially for them who were given to him out of the World. And the Apostles remember the Saints by name in their benedictions.

Reason 1. Of all people, these are nearest and dearest to God; they most resemble him in divine qualities and are best beloved by him.

2. God is especially good unto such; for he is a Saviour of all men, especially of such as believe.

3. They are knit unto us by the nearest and firmest bond that can be, which is the Spirit of Christ: for by one spirit are we all baptised into one body. In this respect, we are said to have all one Father, to be one Body, one Spirit, yea, to be Christ.

4. The promises which are the ground of our prayers, especially belong to them: so with strongest confidence, we may pray for them.

Use. Here see the privilege of Saints, they especially and above all have the benefit of the prayers of all their fellow Saints. For this being commanded to all, all the Saints will have care to perform it: yea, the Saints alone partake of the benefit of others' prayers: for though many wicked ones be prayed for, yet the benefit returns into their bosom who make the prayer, as Christ said to his Disciples (Mat. 10. 13.) If ye salute a house, and if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

## §. 51. Of Praying for Magistrates

2 Public persons, as Ministers of the Word, (of whom we shall more particularly speak in verse 19) and Magistrates, as Kings, with all those in authority, whom by name the Apostle mentions when he exhorts to pray for others: and David by name prays for them, saying; Give thy judgments to the King, O God, and thy righteousness to the King's Son. Under these may be comprised all those who have any public charge over others.

1 By reason of their office, they stand in God's room and bear God's image; and in that respect are called, God's Sons, yea, God's.

2 They are of greatest use and in a place to do most good; and in that respect are (as David's servants said of him) worth ten thousand others. This reason is alleged by Saint Paul to urge this duty, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty: whereby he implies that under God they may be an especial means for us to lead such a life.

## §. 52. Of Praying for Friends

3. Such as God has linked to us by any outward natural and civil bonds, such as Kindred, Alliance, Neighbourhood, Friendship, Office, or the like. Now the nearer these bonds are, the more especially must we pray for each other. The nearest outward bond is Matrimony, therefore husbands and wives must most especially pray for each other, as Isaac for Rebecca: then parents and children, as Abram for Ishmael: next brothers and sisters, as Joseph for Benjamin: and masters and servants, as Abram's servant prayed for his Master. The blessing which God bestowed on Potiphar for Joseph's sake shows that Joseph prayed for his Master: likewise such kindred as are out of the family one for another, and neighbour for neighbour, friend for friend, countryman for countryman, etc.

God has knit persons together by those outward bonds for the mutual good of one another, that they might be more helpful to one another. In which respect the Apostle calls these bonds, joints of furniture, or bonds of ministration, that is, bonds

whereby the several parties that are knit together furnish one another, by receiving help from one another, and conveying help to one another. Now prayer is the best means wherein and whereby we may be helpful to one another.

## §. 53. Of Praying for Strangers

4. Strangers, even those with whom we have no acquaintance, and to whom we are bound by no other bond than that common bond which passes between man and man, whereby all Adam's sons are knit together. These are comprised under that general particle all men. In various Psalms are Prayers for the Gentiles, Abram prayed for the Sodomites.

Love extends itself so far. For the Law expressly commands to love the stranger, and to be helpful unto them. And Christ excellently sets it forth in the example of the Samaritan, that succoured the wounded man whom he found on the way.

## §. 54. Of Praying for Enemies

5. Enemies, even those who hate, curse, hurt and persecute us. This Christ expressly commanded and himself also practised, for when his enemies had spat out the venom of their malice against him, and done what hurt they could to him, he prayed for them, and said, "Father forgive them." So did his Apostle, both command it, and practise it: For to others he said, "Bless them that persecute you." Of himself he said, "We are evil spoken of,

and we pray." While the enemies of Stephen were throwing stones at him as thick as hailstones, he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Thus indeed shall we manifest true Christian love to be in our hearts: for Christianity teaches us to overcome evil with goodness. The Scribes and Pharisees who followed the principles of nature, taught to hate enemies. So did the heathen in their best moral Philosophy. Christians only, and those true and sound Christians, can attain to this extent of love: it is impossible for a natural man to love his enemy truly and entirely: none ever did, or can do it, but those who have the spirit of Christ in them.

### §. 55. Of Men's Failing in Praying for Others

If in these points of praying for others we observe how far most go, we shall find how exceedingly most fail therein, and come short of their duty.

1. Not only atheists, but even few of those who bear the title of calling upon God, come to this extent of love to pray for their enemies. Many can pray for their friends, but who for their enemies? I doubt not but many, finding this point so clearly and evidently laid down in the Scriptures, are persuaded that it is a duty, and thereupon sometimes when their blood is cold, and the wrongs of their enemies somewhat out of their minds, can say, "God forgive them," or for form and custom's sake, when

they hear the Minister utter this clause of the Litany, "That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts," can answer, "We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord": but to pray for them from the heart, even when they wrong us, or while their injuries are fresh in our memories (as Christ and Stephen did) is a rare matter, so rare as few attain unto it: witness that proneness which is in the best (if not openly to curse, and use fearful imprecations as the worse sort do, yet) inwardly to wish, and imagine many evils against them. This desire of revenge being one of the lusts of the flesh, we must labour to maintain a contrary lust of the spirit, which is to love our enemies, and pray for them: for "The spirit lusteth against the flesh." If we be led by the spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

2. If it be a breach of love not to pray for our enemies, how great a fault is it to refuse, or forget to pray for those who never hurt us, because they are strangers, unknown, and (as men think) they are no whit beholden unto them? Is this for God's sake, Christ's sake, conscience sake, and love's sake, without respect of persons to perform this duty? If such knew the benefit of Prayer, they would be glad to partake of the benefit of their prayers who never knew them. Is it not then good reason that strangers whom they never knew should also partake of the benefit of their Prayers?

3. If to forget strangers be such a fault, how monstrous, inhumane, and unnatural a thing is it, to neglect this main duty of love, wherein we may do so much good, and not perform it for those to whom we are bound by particular and peculiar bonds? Not only some kinsfolk afar off, countrymen, fellow-citizens, townsmen, parishioners, neighbours, friends, and such like, but many who are very near of blood, of one and the same family, bedfellows, and the like, never pray for one another. Not husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and the like: many parents, otherwise provident for their children, fail in this main point, whereby it comes to pass that their providence fails of the issue desired and expected. The Apostle says, "If there be any that provideth not for his own, he denieth the faith and is worse than an infidel." What is he then that prayeth not for his own? Shall not Dives rise up in judgment against such, who being in hell prayed that Lazarus might go to his father's house, and to his brethren to testify unto them, lest they also should come into that place of torment?

4. The very heathen could say that a man's country is to be preferred before his family, public persons before private, yet many who profess themselves Christians, are very unmindful of the Church and Commonwealth where they live, never calling upon God for Ministers and Magistrates. May we not well think that this is one cause why there are so few good, why such corruptions in both? Assuredly if God were faithfully, earnestly, instantly called upon, we should have more store of better.

5. In the last place, what may we think of those who pray not for the Saints, all of whom above all others ought to be prayed for? Can the love of God be in such? But then what of such, as are so far from praying for any of them as they curse them, and wish all evil against them, in this respect, because they are Saints and upright in heart? There be husbands that curse such wives: parents, such children: masters, such servants: Magistrates, such subjects: Ministers, such people: and so on the other side, wives such husbands, children such parents, etc. So also brothers such brothers, kinsmen such kinsmen, neighbours such neighbours, etc. Well may we think that they who thus hate whom God loveth, and curse whom God blesseth, are neither loved of God, nor shall receive blessing from him, unless they thoroughly repent. The Apostle saith, pray for all Saints, among Saints excluding none at all: they curse all Saints, even those that are by outward bonds nearest knit unto them. This their bitter spite against Saints, whom otherwise they could love, if they were not Saints, argueth that they have no part or fellowship in the body of Christ, nor in other privileges of the Saints.

## §. 56 Of the Things Which We Are to Pray for in Behalf of Others

For the things which we are to ask in prayer for others, in general, they are whatsoever we may ask for ourselves: for proof whereof, observe the form of the Lord's prayer: in every petition, where we ask anything for ourselves, we include others: we ask

bread for others, "give us our daily bread"; so likewise forgiveness of sins, freedom from temptation, and deliverance from evil. Here, therefore, I might run over again all those particular points which were before delivered concerning good things, whether temporal, spiritual, or eternal, to be prayed for, and evil things whether evil of fault, or evil of punishment to be prayed against, and apply them to prayers made for others: but that heeds not; only here observe this general rule, that according to the needs of others, prayers are to be made for them.

1. If they are not called, pray that they may be converted: no doubt but Christ's prayer on the cross was the cause that so many Jews after his death were converted. The like may be said of Stephen's prayer.

2. If they are called, pray that they may be established, and grow in grace, as Saint Paul did.

3. If they have sinned, pray that their sins may be forgiven.

4. If they are sick, pray that they may be raised.

5. If they are wrongfully imprisoned, that they may be delivered, and so according to other needs.

### §. 57. This God's Will Not Known, is No Sufficient Cause to Hinder Prayer for Others.

Object. Thus may we cross God's determined purpose, by praying for those things which God does not purpose to grant: as to pray for a man's life when his time of departure is come.

Answer. 1. The same might be objected against prayer for ourselves: and then what prayer should be made?

2 God's revealed will is the rule and ground of our prayers: we are not to search into his secret counsel: but whatsoever we find warranted in the word, to pray for.

3 In all prayers for others, we must pray with limitation, and subjection to God's will: there is nothing for which we can pray so absolutely in the behalf of others, as in our own behalf: for we cannot know the estate of others, so well as of ourselves.

## §. 58. Of Imprecations Against Oneself

The fourth and last branch of Prayer is Expostulation, or Imprecation against others, which is a kind of prayer whereby judgment and vengeance are desired.

In handling this point, I will show:

1. What the persons are against whom imprecations may be made.

2. In what respect they may be made.

For the persons, no man may pray against himself: we have no warrant in all the Scripture for it, and therefore it must needs be a matter of impiety: besides, it is against very nature itself, for no man ever yet hated himself, and therefore it must needs be a matter of iniquity and injury.

Object. Many of the Saints have made imprecations against themselves, as David, Solomon, and others, who in their oaths used these and such like words, "God do so to me, and more also."

Answer. 1. When an oath is taken in truth, not falsely, in judgment, not rashly, in righteousness, not wrongfully, the imprecation expressed or implied therein is not simply made, as if he that took the oath desired any such thing to fall upon himself, but used only for a more vehement testification of the truth to move the hearer the rather to give credence thereunto; or else to bind him that sweareth the more steadfastly to perform his oath.

2 If any of the Saints have used imprecations in an oath falsely, as Peter, or rashly, as the Princes in Joshua's time, or wrongfully, as David, their examples are no good warrant.

Object. 2. A wife suspected by her husband was bound by the Law to make imprecations against herself.

Answer. She was not bound to do so. For if she were free of the crime laid to her charge, that imprecation was no imprecation: but if she were guilty, then she ought to acknowledge her fault, and not curse herself. If being guilty, she assented to that imprecation, it was her own fault and not the bond of the Law.

[Use] Use. How impious are they against God, how injurious against their own souls, who upon every light occasion, yea and that many times falsely (for common rash swearers are oftentimes false swearers,) do imprecate direful vengeance against themselves, as, "I would I might never stir, I would I might never eat bread more, I would I might die presently, I would I might be swallowed up quick, I would I might be damned." Oh fearful! the Jews of ancient time were so fearful of uttering imprecations, that when in their oaths they had occasion to use them, they would either express them in general terms, thus, "God do so to me, and more also," or else leave them clean out, and make the sentence imperfect, as, "if I do this or if I do not that," or "if this be so," and there stay. Thus David, "If I enter into the Tabernacle of mine house: If I go up into my bed; If I give sleep to mine eyes." And thus Zedekiah unto the Prophet Jeremiah: "As the Lord liveth which made us this soul: if I put thee to death, If I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life." Yea, thus God himself, "I have sworn, if I lie unto David." And again, "I swear in my wrath if they shall enter into my rest." To show that this is the right translation of that form of speech, the Apostle, alleging that form of God's oath, so

translateth it. What doth this teach us, but that we should be very fearful to utter any imprecation against ourselves, especially to do it falsely or rashly? the Jews, which caused Christ to be crucified, and their posterity to this day have felt the woe and curse of that imprecation which they made against themselves when they said to Pilate of Christ, "His blood be upon us and our children." So hath God caused the vengeance of many others imprecations to fall upon their own necks, and that in just judgment.

## §. 59. Of Imprecations Against Others

Wherefore, lawful and warrantable imprecations are to be made against others, and those others to be enemies (enemies I say, not our own private enemies in particular causes, betwixt us and them: for these must be prayed for, as we heard before, but public)—such as are enemies to God, his Church and Gospel, yea also obstinate, desperate, reprobate enemies, who neither will nor can be reclaimed: as were Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, against whom Moses prayed. Such were those against whom David so earnestly prayed, Psalms 109: 67, etc., and whom S. Paul wished to be cut off. Such an one was Alexander concerning whom S. Paul thus prayed, "The Lord reward him according to his works," meaning his evil works.

1. Question: How can such be discerned?

Answer: By an ordinary spirit they cannot be discerned, but only by an extraordinary spirit, even such a spirit as the Prophets and Apostles had, to whom God by his spirit revealed what such and such persons were against whom they prayed. Wherefore when the Disciples would have caused fire to come down from heaven and consume the Samaritans, Christ said unto them, "Ye know not of what spirit ye are."

2. Question: How then may ordinary persons make imprecations against any?

Answer: No ordinary man can lawfully make any imprecation against the persons of any particular distinct men: Only in these three respects may imprecations be made.

1. Indefinitely, against all such public desperate enemies as were noted before, without any application of the imprecation to any particular persons, no not so much as in thought: and thus was that general imprecation used when the Ark went forward, "Rise up Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered." And thus David uses many general imprecations, as "Let them be confounded which transgress without cause. Let them all be confounded that hate Zion," etc.

2. Conditionally, as when we observe any to persist obstinately in persecuting the Saints, and suppressing the Gospel, to desire, that if they belong to God, it would please God to

turn their heart, or else if they belong not to him, to confound them: thus may imprecations be directed against particular men.

3. Without any respect at all unto their persons, leaving them unto God, against their malicious plots and wicked deeds: thus David prayed against the wicked policy of Achitophel, saying, "O Lord I pray thee turn the counsel of Achitophel into foolishness."

## §. 60. Of the Unlawfulness of Usual Imprecations

As for those usual imprecations, direful and hateful imprecations, such as my heart abhorreth to think of, and my tongue is ashamed to name, which profane and wicked men make against their neighbours, upon every petty wrong and slight occasion, they can neither stand with any true fear of God, nor love to man. For to call upon God who is a God of long-suffering, and great forbearance, full of compassion and slow to anger, to be a revenger of every little injury, argueth little respect of his greatness and goodness. To wish God's heavy vengeance to fall upon the body, soul, goods, or any other things which belong unto our neighbour, discovereth much malice, no love. Such were those of whom David thus speaketh. "Their throat is an open sepulchre, The poison of Asps is under their lips, Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." Many men's tongues are so poisonous and fiery (being set on fire of hell) that like mad dogs they spare none, but curse and ban the most

innocent and harmless that be: yea, (which is horrible to hear) some curse their wives, children, servants, friends, the nearest and dearest unto them that be, not for any wrong or evil, but because they are, as they term them, Puritans; but in truth honest and upright-hearted, fearful to commit the least evil, conscionable in doing all duty (so near as they can) to God and man.

### §. 61. Of the Pope's Manner of Cursing

Among and above all others, he who takes upon himself to be the Vicar of Christ and successor of Peter exceeds in hellish imprecations and devilish execrations: for he uses, not suddenly and rashly, but deliberately and advisedly, in and at his solemn serving of God, to curse with bell, book, and candle, and that to the very pit of hell, no meaner personages than the Lord's Anointed, Kings and Queens, together with their Subjects and whole Kingdoms, and that for maintaining the true, ancient, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith.

Of him and all others who unjustly and unchristianly use such fearful imprecations, if in time they repent not, I may use the words of David. "As he loved cursing, so shall it come unto him: as he clothed himself with cursing like a raiment, so shall it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones."

Hitherto of those several kinds of prayer which are comprised under request. The next kind is thanksgiving.

## §. 62. Of Thanksgiving

Our Apostle gives an excellent direction for thanksgiving in the twentieth verse of the fifth Chapter of this Epistle, which because it is so fit for our present purpose, I will here handle. His words are these:

Ephesians 5:20. "Give thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In this direction are laid down five particular points.

1. The duty itself: give thanks.
2. The person to whom it is to be performed: to God, even the Father.
3. The Mediator, in whose name it is to be performed: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. The matter of thanksgiving: all things.
5. The continuance thereof: always.

For the duty or thing itself, thanksgiving is a grateful acknowledgement of a kindness received.

A kindness done is the object of thanksgiving, yet unless the kindness done be accepted, and withal acknowledged to be a

kindness, the heart of him to whom the kindness is done will not be affected to give him that did it thanks for it.

David did a great kindness for Nabal, as Nabal's servants could testify: yet Nabal acknowledged it to be no kindness, and that made him to be so churlish and ungrateful to David.

### §. 63. Of the Person to Whom All Thanks is Due

The person to whom thanks is due is God the Father. "Father" has reference especially to the only begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus, as is more plainly expressed in these words, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." So, this clause denotes the first person in the Trinity, yet it does not exclude the other two persons, for thanksgiving belongs to the whole Trinity. Saint Paul expressly gives thanks to Jesus Christ, yet does not exclude the Father or the Holy Ghost, for whatever honour or worship is rightly performed to either of the persons is also performed to every one of them. But here and in many other places, this title "Father" (which is proper to the first person) is added to show how our praises become acceptable to God, namely, as God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him, our gracious and loving Father.

Saint James renders a weighty reason to prove that all thanks are to be given to God, and to God alone, for he says, "Every good giving and every perfect gift comes from the Father." Good

things come from God; God is the author and giver of them; therefore, God is to be praised for them.

Every good thing comes from God; therefore, all praise is due to Him.

### §. 64. Of the Difference of Thanks Given to God and Men

Question: Are not Creatures to be thanked for any kindness done by them?

Answer: Not in that manner as God is to be thanked. God is simply, in and for Himself, to be praised.

Simply, that is without any restraint, with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might, and that for all His works whatsoever.

In and for Himself, that is, in respect of no other whatsoever: For God is the very fountain, the first and only Author, the principal giver of the good things we enjoy. The things which we receive by the ministry of any creature, originally we receive from God. Creatures are but the Stewards, Messengers, Ministers, and as it were Carriers of God: they bring God's blessings one to another. Wherefore they are not simply in and for themselves to be thanked for anything. The thanks which is given to them (if it be rightly given) is given them in the Lord, under Him, only for their pains and care in bringing God's

blessings unto us. When a personage of great state and place sends a present by his servant, will he to whom that present is sent, thank the servant that brought it, or the Master that sent it? Surely I suppose he will both desire the servant to thank his Master, and also when he has the opportunity himself, thank him: if he thanks the bearer, it is only for his pains in bringing the gift, not for the gift itself: yea, though he reward the messenger for his pains, yet he gives the thanks to him that sent the gift. Thus is thanks properly due to the original author of a kindness: all thanks therefore is properly due to God, from whom every good thing comes.

### §. 65. Of the Mediator, in Whose Name Thanks is to Be Given

The Mediator, in whose name thanks are to be given to God, is entitled by the Apostle, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first title, Lord, implies the power and regimen which the Father has given him (as he is the Mediator God-man) over all creatures. This regimen he exercises for the good of us who are of his Church, and therefore, by a kind of propriety, he is called Our Lord.

The second title, Jesus, which signifies a Saviour, sets forth that all-sufficient, full, and perfect redemption and salvation which he wrought for mankind. The reason for this name and title is rendered by an Angel to Joseph, in these words: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

The third title, Christ (which signifies Anointed), implies the three Offices of Christ, to which he was anointed and set apart by his Father: his Princely Office to govern and protect his Church; his Priestly Office, to offer himself a sacrifice, and to make continual intercession for his Church; his Prophetical Office to instruct and direct his Church in the way of salvation.

In the name of this Our Lord Jesus Christ, must all the calves of our lips, all our praises, be offered up unto God. "Let us by him," says the Apostle, speaking of Christ Jesus, "offer the sacrifice of praise." This point was handled before in the general doctrine of Prayer.

## §. 66. Of the Matter of Thanksgiving

The matter of thanksgiving is very ample and large, limited with no restraint but extended to all things. So that whatever the Lord does, affords matter of praise to the Saints. Often this general particle "all" is used in this point; "In all things give thanks," says the Apostle in another place. "Forget not all his benefits," says David.

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. If all things work to our good, is it not just and meet that thanks should be given for all things?

That we may somewhat more distinctly discern the matter of thanksgiving, I will set down in order some particular branches

of this general point.

The matter of Thanksgiving may be distinguished in sundry ways.

1. In regard to the nature or kind of benefits,

They are:

- Good things bestowed.
- Evil things removed.

2. In regard to the quality of them, They are:

- Spiritual.
- Temporal.

3. In regard to the manner of bestowing them. They are:

- Already given.
- Promised to be given.

4. In regard to the persons upon whom they are bestowed,

which are:

- Ourselves.
- Others.

Under these general heads, there are many particular branches, which I will declare in order.

§. 67. Of the Spiritual Blessings, for Which Thanks is to Be Given

Spiritual blessings are:

- Bestowed here on Earth.
- Reserved in Heaven.

In the rank of the former kind of spiritual blessings, the following particulars must be accounted for:

1. The ground of them, which is Election. Together with which we are to reckon the cause thereof: God's free grace and rich mercy, and also the fruit thereof: certainty of salvation.

2. The meritorious cause of them; namely, our Redemption, under which we must comprise the price of our redemption, Christ's blood, and the special fruits thereof, such as Reconciliation, Adoption, Remission of sins, imputation of righteousness, etc.

3. The means of applying the benefits of our election and redemption, namely, the effectual operation of God's Spirit: under this head are comprised effectual vocation, regeneration, sanctification, and all those particular sanctifying graces, which we find and feel to be wrought in

us, such as Knowledge, Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, Patience, new Obedience, etc., together with the blessed fruits of them, such as peace of conscience, joy in the spirit, holy security, and the like.

Finally, the means which the Spirit uses to work and increase all these graces are to be remembered, which are the Ministry of the Word, Administration of the Sacraments, and other holy Ordinances of God, together with the liberty of the Sabbaths, of good and faithful Ministers, of public Assemblies, and the like.

Those eternal blessings which are in Heaven reserved for us are such as "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." We cannot in particular reckon them up; yet in general, we must have our hearts filled with a holy admiration of them and our mouths with praise for them.

## §. 68. Of the Temporal Blessings, for Which Thanks is to Be Given

Temporal blessings for which thanks are to be given are such as concern:

1. Mankind in general, such as the creation and preservation of Man: God's providence over him, and all the fruits and benefits of these.

2. The whole Church throughout the World: the increase, peace, and prosperity of it: particularly the Churches in that Land where we live.

3. Commonwealths: and in particular that Commonwealth whereof we ourselves are members: and therein, in good Magistrates, good Laws, peace, plenty, etc.

4. Families: especially our own: and therein, good Governors, good servants, good parents, good children, a competency of goods to maintain the state of it. If God gives not only sufficiency but also abundance, more thanks are to be given.

5. Our own persons; and in regard to them, soundness of mind, health of body, ability to perform the work of our calling, God's blessing on our labor and calling, and the like.

### §. 69. Of Giving Thanks for Removing Evils

Evils removed, for which thanks are to be given, are:

- Public.
- Private.

Both these can be:

- Spiritual.
- Temporal.

Temporal public evils arise from the enemies of the:

- Church,
- Commonwealth.

Thanks, therefore, are to be given when those enemies are either overthrown or converted, or when their conspiracies are discovered, and we are preserved from their mischievous practices, whether by wars, invasions, treasons, rebellions, or privy and secret plots, and the like. To this head may be referred deliverance from plagues, famines, fires, inundations, etc.

Spiritual public evils are common public sins, maintained by law or common practice. Public sins, which are maintained by law in diverse countries, include Idolatry, Superstition, Heresies, Usury, Play-houses, Brothel-houses, etc. Public sins maintained in many places by common practice are Swearing, Profaneness, Drunkenness, Uncleanness, Pride and bravery in apparel, etc. When and where the Lord affords any means of reforming and restraining these public sins, then and there is matter of thanksgiving.

Spiritual private evils are either such particular sins to which ourselves are most given, or the causes of such sins (such as the temptations of Satan, or evil lusts, and the vain allurements of others), or else a spiritual punishment of them (such as trouble of mind, hardness of heart, a tormenting conscience, a seared

and senseless conscience, etc.). Those who are delivered out of any of these snares must be thankful for that deliverance.

Private temporal evils are such outward judgments as God in anger inflicts on men as punishments of sin. Such are penury, ignominy, pain, grief, sickness, loss of goods, loss of friends, and other like crosses. The removing of these is a matter of thanksgiving.

### §. 70. Of Giving Thanks for Crosses

Yet, outward temporal judgments, whether public or private, are not always to be simply accounted evils but many times to be reckoned and accounted in the number of God's blessings. For God often inflicts them on his children, and that in love, for their good. They are indeed grievous and irksome to the flesh, but many times profitable to the soul. They are a heavy burden, but they bring forth good and precious fruit. Therefore, in regard to them, we must wholly refer ourselves to God's will, as Christ did in his bitter agony. If God is pleased to preserve us from them, or if, being fallen upon us, He removes them, we are to account this preservation and deliverance a blessing and favour of the Lord and to be thankful unto God for it. However, if it pleases the Lord to lay any cross upon us or when it lies on us, still to continue it, we are also to take this as a token of love and to be thankful. The reason is evident. For God, being very wise and knowing what is best for us (even much better than we

ourselves) and withal being a loving and tender father, exceeding careful of our good, He disposes our estate so as may most make to our good. When He sees it to be needful, He lays affliction upon us; when it has lain long enough upon us, then He removes it. In this kind, He deals with His children as skilful and tender Physicians or Surgeons do with their patients, whose cure they seek. Therefore, upon this ground, we are to think every estate whereunto the Lord brings us to be the best for us: health to be the best when we are in health, and sickness to be the best when we are sick; abundance to be best while we have it, and want to be best when we are in want, and so of other estates. Therefore, when the Lord lays upon us any outward afflictions, we must put them on the score of God's favours, especially the good fruits of afflictions, such as true humiliation, sound repentance, Christian watchfulness, righteousness, etc. Afflictions, being tokens of God's love, tending to the good of the Saints, are comprised under this general clause ALL THINGS and are matter of thanksgiving.

## §. 71. Of the Proofs of Scripture Applied to Particular Occasions of Thanksgiving

I shall not need to enter into any further enumeration of other particulars; I will therefore allege some proofs of these from God's Word.

1. For all manner of spiritual blessings, note that general form of thanksgiving used by the Apostle in Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be God which hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings." Read the verses following, and you shall see how he reckons up many of those spiritual blessings in particular, such as Election, Redemption, Adoption, Vocation, etc.

2. For temporal blessings, we have sundry approved patterns of thanksgiving in diverse kinds: Christ gave thanks for food; Anna for a child; Jacob for riches; Abraham's servant for prospering his journey.

3. For blessings on others, note the example of the Queen of Sheba, who blessed God for His blessings on Israel, and of the Christian Jews who glorified God for the Gospel revealed to the Gentiles.

4. For public blessings concerning the Church, the Apostle gives thanks that the Gospel came into all the world. And the Christians praise God for the increase and peace of the Church, and for the liberty of the Apostles.

5. For the commonwealth, the Jews rejoiced (which was a public testimony of their thanksgiving to God) for settling the state and establishing the crown on Solomon. So again, for continuing the peace and prosperity of the land.

6. For general blessings on mankind, David praised God.

7. For God's blessings on His family, Jacob is thankful, and in testimony thereof, he built an altar to God.

8. For private blessings, Leah praised God who had given her a son, and Hezekiah for the recovery of his health.

9. For evils removed, Moses and the Israelites blessed God who overthrew their enemies, and David praised God for preserving his people from their enemies, and the Christians glorify God for the conversion of Saul, a mortal enemy of the Church.

10. For public spiritual evils removed, praise is sung unto the Lord in Hezekiah's time when the land was purged from idolatry.

11. For private spiritual evils prevented, David blessed God who kept him from avenging himself and shedding innocent blood.

12. For adversity, Job blessed God, and the Apostles rejoiced for suffering persecution.

13. Finally, for good things promised and not enjoyed, it is noted that the Patriarchs received not the promises, but saw them afar off, and believed them, and received them thankfully.

## §. 72. Of the Abundant Matter of Thanksgiving

Here we see what abundant matter of thanksgiving is offered unto us. If we should spend our whole time (as the triumphant Church in heaven does) in lauding and praising God, we could not want matter, considering that ALL THINGS are matter of thanksgiving.

If I should say we have more matter of thanksgiving than of petition, I should not speak amiss: for the blessings which any of God's children, any of those who truly believe in Christ, have received already, are much more, and far greater than the things which they want. God has long since elected and chosen them to be vessels of mercy and glory: when he created man, as he made man most happy, according to the image of God, so before he made man he created all things needful for him, that so he might be destitute of no good thing: for he made heaven and the whole host thereof, earth and all the fruits of it, yes, the air and water and all creatures in them; in a word, God made all things that were made for the good of man. The price of man's redemption is already paid: All true believers are reconciled to God, adopted to be his children, made actual members of Christ's body, effectually called, and taken into the kingdom of grace, being perfectly justified even in God's sight by the righteousness of Christ Jesus. What are the spiritual blessings which we want, that may be comparable to these which we have received?

Object. 1. We have not received freedom from, and full victory over all sin.

Ans. Sin has received a deadly wound: though it assail us, yet shall it not get conquest over us. Besides the guilt and punishment of those very sins, which yet we are subject unto, shall not be laid upon us: they are clean remitted, and in that respect we fully acquitted.

Object. 2. We want many good and comfortable graces, and fail in the measure of those we have: our sanctification is not perfect.

Ans. All the faithful have all such graces as are absolutely necessary unto salvation, actually wrought in them. As a child born of a woman hath all the parts of soul and body, so he that is born again of God hath all the parts of a new man. No Saint wants any grace that may hinder his salvation, though he should instantly die. As for that measure which some want, it is not so great as can justly impeach the truth of grace: that grace which they have is true, though it may be weak: and their sanctification is sound, though imperfect. The perfecting of sanctification is not so great and powerful a work as the first beginning of it. The most effectual and powerful work of God's Spirit in the faithful is their very new birth, the first act of their conversion. For when a sinner is first converted, he is a new created: of nothing (I speak in regard to our spiritual being) he is made something: of a man

dead in sin, he is quickened, and hath spiritual life put into him. Now the growth in sanctification is but a proceeding from one degree to another in the same kind: yea, the very perfection of sanctification is but an attaining to the highest step and degree of that which was begun before. It is therefore a more powerful work to beget a sinner to God, and to work his first conversion, than after he is regenerate and converted to perfect that good work which is begun. Whence it follows that faithful Saints have more matter of rejoicing for the grace they have received, than of mourning for the grace they want.

Object. We want the possession of our heavenly inheritance.

Ans. 1. The purchase of it is made: for Christ by his blood has purchased it.

2. We have received the first fruits of it, as peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, free entrance unto the throne of grace and glory, with confidence in Christ and the like.

3. We are actually entered into the kingdom of grace, which is a part of the kingdom of glory, the first step thereinto, and the portal (as I may so say) thereof: no entering into the kingdom of glory, but through the kingdom of grace.

4. We have the earnest of the spirit, as a pledge and pawn till we come to the full possession of the purchased inheritance.

5. Christ our head has full and actual possession thereof: whereupon we, being members of his body, are in him exalted, and set in heavenly places.

In these fine forenamed respects, we may truly say that the faithful in Christ have more cause to glorify God for that assurance they have of enjoying their heavenly inheritance, than to murmur or mourn that for a time they want the full possession of it. Thus we see that in regard to spiritual blessings, we have more matter of praise for what we have, than of petition for what we want. I might here further rank among these spiritual blessings the liberty of the Lord's Sabbaths, of the Ministry of his word, and administration of his Sacraments, of the public assemblies of Saints to worship God, with the like, which we among others plentifully enjoy: I might also further declare how God has already caused his whole will to be revealed and recorded in his word, so far forth as is needful for our salvation, and expedient for us to know: all which do much amplify the forenamed point: But I hasten to set forth a view also of some of those temporal blessings whereof we have been, and are made partakers. They are exceeding many, as our Being, Life, Nourishment, Education, Health, Strength, Food, Apparel, Goods, Friends, etc. God's blessing on all these, and on the Church and state wherein we live. Wherever we turn ourselves or cast our eyes, either upwards to the heavens and the whole host of them, or downward on the earth and all the fruits thereof, or up and down on all the creatures in the air, on the

earth, and in the waters, on the right hand or on the left, before or behind, everywhere the blessings of God present themselves to our view and consideration. By this which has thus generally been spoken, I doubt not but any of mean capacity may observe that none of the Saints do want so many good things as they have received.

Object. Many of the Saints do want even necessaries to preserve this temporal life, as Lazarus.

Ans. 1. God sees it to be good for them to want such necessaries.

2. Instead of these outward necessaries, they have inward graces which are much more valuable and profitable as instead of outward refreshing of the body, they have inward comfort of the soul: instead of outward ornaments of the body, inward graces of the spirit: wanting outward ease, they have sweet peace of conscience: wanting plenty, they have contentment: In a word, God deprives his children of no outward thing, but he supplies the want of it with some spiritual recompense: their want therefore causes matter of thanksgiving.

As all the Saints have received more good things than they want, so also undoubtedly are they freed from more evils than justly they can fear to fall upon them. For believing in Christ, they are freed from the fear of hell, from the curse of the Law, from the wrath of God, from the sting of death, from the victory of the

grave, from the power of him that hath the power of death, the devil; from the guilt and punishment of sin, from the rule and dominion of sin, and from infinitely more, both spiritual and bodily evils.

Object. Many Saints are subject both to many spiritual evils, (as trouble of mind, doubt of God's favour, snares of the Devil, fallings into sin, with the like,) and also to many temporal distresses, as pain, sickness, captivity, imprisonment, ignominy, penury, etc.

Ans. Those spiritual evils are as desperate physic for the cure of some spiritual desperate disease, as spiritual security, pride, presumption, etc. Now who will deny but that it is good in a desperate case to use a desperate remedy? If the remedy causes recovery, he that uses it shall be commended, and rewarded? But whenever God suffers any of his children to fall into any of the forenamed, or other like spiritual evils, he works thereby a recovery from some more dangerous and desperate evil: therefore the issue and effect even of those evils afford matter of thanksgiving.

As for temporal distresses, I have shown before how they may be put on the score of God's blessings. To that which was before delivered, let me add this, that God always so disposes of the estate of the Saints, that he makes the decaying of the outward man to be a renewing of the inner man. In these respects, it is a

virtue proper to Christians, to give thanks to God for such things as seem evil.

Besides, God has faithfully promised to supply in due time whatever his Saints want, and to perfect everything that fails in perfection, and withal to deliver them from all evil. Now then add these promises (which are also matter of thanksgiving) to the abundance of good things which already we have received, and to the manifold deliverances which we have had from evils, and it will appear as clear as the light, that of all duties belonging to faithful Christians this of praise and thanksgiving is most befitting them, and least of all to be neglected: It is the least that God deserves, the most that he requires, and the best that we can give unto him: the best sacrifice in the kind thereof which we can offer unto God, and that which God does best accept: for note what God says hereof, "He that offereth praise, glorifieth me." I might much further amplify and enlarge these points. But as Painters, when they have many millions, and armies of men to set down in a small map, use only to draw out some number of heads of men and set them together, leaving the whole number of heads, and all the other parts and lineaments to the meditation of the beholder: even so am I constrained through abundance of matter to propound only some general heads of this point of thanksgiving and to leave the amplification of them to your private meditation.

§. 73 Of their blindness who can see no matter of thanksgiving.

[Use 2] Here behold how palpably blind they are who can find no matter of thanksgiving: much more blind are these in their understanding than they in their bodily sight, who at noonday in the midst of summer when the sun shineth most brightly, can see no light at all. Yet either thus blind are many, or else (which is worse) they see, and will not see: they know there is abundant matter of thanksgiving, & yet will take no notice of any at all. Are not almost all much more ready to crave and ask, than to give thanks? I speak not thus of the profane men of the world, or of carnal and careless professors, who regard no duty due unto God: but of those who make a greater and truer profession, yea who make conscience of their duty to God. Mark and observe if their requests to God be not more frequent and fervent than their thanksgiving. If trouble of mind or body, if any inward or outward distress cease upon men, if they fear any spiritual or temporal danger hanging over their heads, how instant and constant will they be in entreating the Lord to remove his heavy hand? Or if they stand in need of any temporal or spiritual good thing, they are ready to do the like: yea in these and such like cases, they will beseech others to help them with their prayers. Are they as thankful for good things bestowed on them, and for the removing of evils from them? I would they were: if any be, they are very rare: But I hope hereafter more will be.

To leave men's private practice whereof we cannot so well judge: observe that which is in more open view. What public prayer books so plentiful in thanksgiving as in request? What Ministers

almost so careful in performing that, as this? I blame not all without exception: many there be who are conscientious in this point: but I tax the greater sort. For many of them who use solemn and ample forms of Petition, commonly include all their thanksgiving in this (or such like) short clause, "Through Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory forever, Amen."

### §. 74. Of Men's failing in the extent of Thanksgiving.

But to let pass those also that offend in the general neglect of this duty: there are others who being somewhat careful of the duty in general, fail exceedingly in the extent of it: they give not thanks for ALL THINGS. Some can be thankful for temporal blessings, as for peace, plenty, seasonable weather, deliverance from invasions, rebellions, treasons, from fire, plagues, famine, sickness, etc. But it seemeth they take no notice of spiritual blessings: their mouths are very seldom or never opened to bless God for them. They show themselves to be too earthly-minded.

Others can be thankful for private blessings bestowed on themselves, or on their families and friends; but regard not public blessings bestowed on Church or commonwealth: they account general blessings no blessings. These discover too much self-love, too little sense of the common good.

Others (who it may be) will be thankful for such public blessings as are bestowed on that Church and Commonwealth, whereof

they themselves are members, never hearken after, nor care to hear of such as are bestowed on the Churches of God in other countries or if they do hear of them, very little (if at all) are they affected therewith. Much less are they affected with any blessings bestowed on private Christians, who are not of their kindred, alliance, acquaintance, with the like. This also showeth that they have no fellow-feeling of the good of the mystical body of Christ, or of the several members thereof; which might make them fear that they themselves are scarce sound members of that body: if they were, there would assuredly be some sympathy betwixt themselves and other members, some mutual compassion, and fellow-feeling: they would rejoice with them that rejoice. Nay further, these show (which is worse) what little zeal they have of God's glory: for to take notice of God's mercies on others, as well as on ourselves, to talk of them, to be thankful for them, doth much amplify the glory of God's works: it maketh them to be more famous. How many more the persons be that praise God for any blessings, so much greater glory redoundeth to God's name: therefore David oft stirs up others besides himself to praise God for favours bestowed on himself.

Further, many may be thankful for prosperity, but very few will be so for adversity. To be thankful for pain, sickness, penury, ignominy, imprisonment, loss of goods, loss of friends, with the like, is a rare matter. These things cause rather in most men murmuring, and repining against God. For few consider the blessed fruit that cometh from those things, neither think that

they can be any blessings. These show how they walk by sense, and not by faith.

Finally, among those who are thankful for such blessings as they enjoy, how few lift up the eyes of their faith further than the eyes of their body can reach? how few consider those good things which God hath promised for the time to come? how few can praise God for any good thing, whereof they have not the present fruition? Most think it enough to praise God for such things as they have; they little consider that the matter of thanksgiving extendeth not only to benefits received, but also to benefits promised. These manifest little credence to the truth of God's word: if they were fully resolved thereof, they would account God's words to be very deeds.

Thus we see how faulty most are in the performance of this duty, and how short they come of this general extent of Thanksgiving, which is without restraint; for ALL THINGS. Let us examine our own souls in this point, and be conscientious even in this extent.

Because this fourth branch concerning the matter of Thanksgiving, is on the one side a point worthy to be observed: and on the other side, a point too much neglected, I have been bold to insist the longer upon it.

### §. 75. Of the time of giving Thanks.

The last branch concerning this point of Thanksgiving, respecteth the time, which is expressed under as large an extent as the former branch, concerning the matter, That was for ALL THINGS, This is, ALWAYS. Of this branch I shall not need now in particular to speak, because it is afterwards to be handled in the general doctrine of Prayer.

## §. 76. Directions for Thanksgiving.

Before I conclude this point of Thanksgiving, I will add some few directions, which being well observed, will be very helpful unto us in the performance of this duty.

The first is, that we lift up our eyes unto the Author of all blessings, and be persuaded that they come from God and are brought unto us by God's good guiding providence; and not (as the vulgar and ignorant sort of people think and speak) by chance, luck, fortune, and the like. It was Israel's fault that she did not know that God gave her corn and wine, etc., which made her so ungrateful and rebellious against God. The like reason is given of Judah's ingratitude, in which respect she is made worse than the most brutish beasts that be, namely, the Ox and the Ass: for the Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's crib, but my people (saith God) hath not understood: what understood they not? namely who bestowed on them the good things which they enjoyed. The truth is, that most men are like swine, which eat the fruit that falleth from the tree, but look not

up to the tree from whence it falleth. Many who daily taste of the sweetness of God's blessings, never lift up their hearts to the Author of them. They think it is good fortune, a good hap or chance that they have what they have. This is a heathenish conceit, very unbeseeming Christians, yea, an impious and sacrilegious conceit, derogatory to the honour of God. What a shame is it then for Christians to nourish it in their hearts, and profess it with their mouths. For our parts let us duly consider that all good things are by God's providence bestowed on us, that so our hearts may be raised up to him, and we moved to be the more thankful.

The second is, that we take distinct notice of God's blessings, and in particular acknowledge them, and accordingly give thanks for them unto the Lord. (Read for this purpose, Psalms 103, & 105, & 106.) Particular notice of distinct blessings makes us the better prize them, and so enlarges our hearts the more to praise God for them. A general Thanksgiving is for the most part a cold thanksgiving. What life is there in this form, God be thanked for all, when nothing at all is acknowledged: yet is this general form of Thanksgiving all the thanksgiving which many yield unto the Lord.

The third is, that we accept God's blessings as tokens of his love and favour, and accordingly rejoice in them. David observed the kindness of the Lord in the blessings which God bestowed on him, and thereupon saith unto God; I will praise thy name,

because of thy kindness. Where no sweetness of God's blessings is tasted, there can no sound thanks be rendered. Now unless we be persuaded that God in Love bestoweth his blessings on us, what sweet relish can they give unto us? If we feared that God's blessings were like hot coals heaped on our heads, given in wrath (as a King was given to Israel ) little devotion could we have to thank God for them: nothing more stirreth up gratefulness than a persuasion of kindness.

The fourth is, that we observe what God hath bestowed on us above others, and what others want that we have: Thus did David amplify God's mercies shown to Israel, saying; He hath not dealt so with every nation, neither have they knowledge of his judgments. Thus do God's children in their forms of thanksgiving use also to amplify God's blessings, saying unto him; Such and such favours hast thou bestowed on us, which many more worthy than we have wanted. Wherefore let us not so much consider what others have more than we, (for that will but make us murmur and repine against God, and envy our brethren) as what we have more than other: this will make us truly thankful.

The fifth is, that we duly weigh how unworthy we are of the very least of God's favours, even of the least crumb of bread which we eat, and of the least drop of drink which we take. Thus did Jacob, saying to God; I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies,

etc. Who will give thanks for that which he thinketh of due belongeth unto?

## §. 77. Of Mental Prayer.

Hitherto have we heard of the distinct kinds of prayer in respect of the matter. There are other distinctions in regard of the manner, as

1. Mental, Vocal.
2. Sudden, Composed.
3. Conceived, Prescribed.
4. Public, Private.
5. Ordinary, Extraordinary.
6. Mental prayer is an inward opening of the desire of a man's heart to God, without any outward manifestation of the same by word. Such a prayer was that which Nehemiah made to the God of heaven, even when he was talking with the King: and Moses when he was encouraging the people: and Anna who is said to speak in her heart.

This may be as fervent as if it were uttered. For in regard of the ardency of Moses' mental prayer, God saith, "Why criest thou unto me?" And Anna saith, "She poured out her soul before the

Lord." This oftentimes causeth the eyes and hands to be lifted up, or cast down, and forceth such outward signs.

This is used because God is a searcher of the hearts, and knoweth the secrets thereof, and needeth not words to have a man's thoughts made known to him, as we showed before.

By this we see that nothing can hinder prayer: but that in company, in the midst of businesses, when we are overwhelmed with temptations, we may pray unto God: here learn to do it.

## §. 78. Of Vocal Prayer.

2. Vocal prayer is that which is uttered with words, as that prayer which Solomon made at the dedication of the Temple.

Question. Seeing God knoweth the secrets of the heart, what need words to express the meaning thereof?

Answer. First, because of God's ordinance, as was shown before.

Secondly, that men might know the desires of one another's heart, and so partake of the mutual prayers one of another: as in public assemblies, in private families, and when friends meet together for that end. For words do most lively and plainly set forth the desire of a man's heart, and men can best and most distinctly understand them.

3. Because words do not only declare, but also stir up and increase the affection of the heart. For as fire heateth a chimney, and the reflection of heat which cometh from the chimney maketh the fire hotter, so the ardency of the heart provoketh words, and words make the heart more ardent and earnest.

4. Words are an especial means to keep the mind in prayer from wandering, and to hold it close to the matter. A man that prayeth alone, and that only in his inward meditation, will oft have his meditations interrupted with other thoughts, and so his prayer stand at a stay, till after some time his former meditations come to his mind again. Now the uttering of words will be a good means to prevent that interruption.

5. The tongue wherewith words are uttered, is of all other parts of a man's body the most proper and excellent instrument of God's glory. Therewith especially bless we God, and therefore by an excellency it is called glory. As David speaking of his tongue saith, "My glory rejoiceth." And again, "Awake my glory." And again, "I will sing and give praise with my glory." In regard of these three last reasons, it is meet to use words even in private prayers when we are alone: Provided that it be not for ostentation to be known to pray, for that is a note of hypocrisy condemned by our Lord in the Scribes and Pharisees.

## §. 79. Of Sudden Prayer.

Sudden prayer is when upon some present occasion the heart is instantly lifted up unto God, whether it be only by some sighs of the heart, or by some few words uttered. It is likely that Nehemiah's prayer was some sudden desire of the heart. For the King offering speech unto him, gave him occasion to make a suit unto the King, which that he might obtain, he presently lifted up his heart to God.

These sudden prayers are called ejaculations of the heart, which are to be used as salt with meat: with every bit of meat we commonly take a little salt to season it. So when we do anything, when we confer of anything, when we go anywhere, upon all occasions we must lift up our hearts to God.

This argues a holy familiarity with God, yea it manifests a heavenly mind, even as those things which are ready upon all occasions to fly upward appear to be of a light aerial or fiery nature, not earthly, heavy, & weighty.

This kind of prayer must be used so, as it be added to solemn and set prayers, and not make them to be neglected. No man makes a meal of salt alone, and refuses other solid meat, because salt is now and then to be eaten. Much less must these sudden prayers hinder solemn or composed prayers.

## §. 80. Of Composed Prayer.

Composed prayer is when a Christian sets himself to make some solemn prayer unto God, whether it be in Church, family, closet, field, or any other place; whether it be uttered with words, or only conceived in the heart: as the morning and evening prayer which Christians use to make, or the prayer at solemn assemblies, with the like. Such were the prayers that Daniel used to make three times a day.

God to whom we make our prayer is a great God, of excellent Majesty, not lightly, but with all due reverence to be regarded, and therefore most meet that we should compose ourselves in a solemn manner to appear before his glorious presence.

### §. 81. Of Preparation Before Prayer.

That this kind of prayer may be the better performed, preparation is very needful, which the Preacher implies, saying, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God."

In preparation unto prayer, two things are to be performed. First, we must empty our souls of all such things as may hinder prayer. Secondly, fill them with such things as may be helpful thereunto.

The things that hinder are either wicked or worldly.

Wicked things are against God, or against man.

Against God are all sins and transgressions of his Law. These we must search out, and having found them out, set ourselves with a full and honest purpose of heart utterly to forsake them. If we regard wickedness, God will not hear our prayer. Whereupon saith David, "I will wash mine hands in innocency, O Lord, and compass thine altar."

Against man are wrath, anger, malice, and such like revengeful affections, in regard whereof the Apostle exhorts to lift up pure hands without wrath. And Christ commanded to be reconciled before the gift be offered. In a word then, that we may empty our souls of all such wicked things both against God and man, which would hinder our prayers, these two things are needful. First, repentance towards God: secondly, reconciliation with man.

Worldly things are such cares as concern the things of this life: our temporal estate, and earthly affairs, which though at other times they may be warrantable, commendable, and needful, yet may be an encumbrance and hindrance unto prayer. This was prefigured under the Law by that rite of plucking off shoes when men appeared before the Lord. Shoes are lawful to be worn, yea very needful, yet in approaching before the Lord they must be put off. So moderate care concerning the business and affairs of this world are lawful and needful, yet when we go to prayer, they must be laid aside, and our souls emptied of them. For they are as heavy burdens and clogs which will hold down our hearts,

and keep them from flying up into heaven. Now note the counsel of the Apostle, "Cast away everything that presseth down."

If our souls be only emptied of these things, they are like that empty house which the unclean spirit finding, entereth into with seven other spirits. Wherefore that we may be prepared to prayer, we must be filled with such spiritual matters as fit prayer: which are concerning God and ourselves. God's greatness is to be meditated on, to strike our hearts with reverence: and his goodness to breed faith in us. Yea also his blessings bestowed to fill our mouths with praise. Our wretchedness is duly to be weighed, that we may be truly humbled: and our wants are to be observed, that we may know what to ask. Thus are we to come prepared to composed prayer.

### § 82. Of Conceived Prayer.

Conceived prayer is that which he who utters the prayer invents and conceives himself, as are most of the prayers recorded in the Scripture. This kind of prayer the Saints in all ages have used. It is very commendable, expedient, and needful. For,

1. It manifesteth the gift and power of the Spirit, who can give both matter and manner, words and affections: who can suggest what to pray, and how to pray.

2. Every day we have new wants, new assaults, new sins: Is it not needful then that our prayers be conceived and framed

accordingly, that our petitions be made according to our present wants, our supplications according to our particular assaults, our confession according to our several sins?

3. As God daily continueth and reneweth old blessings, so also he addeth new to them. Is it not most meet that notice be taken of those new blessings, and accordingly thanks be given in particular for them?

Object. This present inventing and conceiving of prayer makes prayer to be confused, and either very defective, or very tedious.

Answer. In them that have not ability to pray, or suddenly and rashly come unto prayer, it may be so. But if a man have any competent ability, if he premeditate beforehand what to pray, if he set unto himself any good method and order, such defect, tediousness, and confusion (as is supposed) will be easily avoided.

## §. 83. Of Prescribed Prayer.

Prescribed prayer is when a set, constant form is laid down beforehand, and either conned by heart, or read out of a book or paper by him that utters it, whether he be alone or in company.

Question: Is a set and prescribed form of prayer lawful?

Answer: Yes, verily, and for these reasons:

1. God prescribed a set form of blessing for the Priests constantly to use. Psalm 92, which is a Psalm of praise, was prescribed as a song for the Sabbath day, and Psalm 102 prescribes a prayer for the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the Lord. Psalm 136 was sung after David's time. Hezekiah the King and the Princes commanded the Levites to praise the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the Seer. If a prescribed form of praise may be used, then also of prayer, for there is the same reason for both.

Besides, Christ himself prescribed an excellent form of prayer which has been used in all ages of the Church since His time and is by an excellency called the Lord's Prayer. Saint Paul observes a set form of blessing in the beginning and end of his Epistles. Thus, we see prescribed prayer warranted by God's word.

2. Many weak ones who have good affections but lack invention, utterance, and such-like parts, are much helped by prescribed forms. For when they read or hear words fitting their wants and occasions, their hearts can well go with their words, yet they cannot invent fit words.

3. Prescribed forms of prayer in public worship are a good means to maintain uniformity in several Churches.

Objection: The spirit is stinted hereby; neither can a man utter that which the spirit moveth him unto when he has a set form prescribed.

Answer: The spirit in him who prays by a set form is no more stinted than the spirit in those who hear another pray, for to them who hear others, words are prescribed. To the hearers, it is all one whether he that prays uses a prescribed form or conceives and invents his prayer, for they go along in their hearts with his words.

Those who simply and altogether condemn prescribed prayer think too childishly of God and deal too injuriously with God's little ones. They conceive God to be affected with variety and make the power of prayer consist in a copy of words and novelty of matter, which is many times a hindrance to true devotion. For while the mind is too much occupied in invention, the heart cannot be so free to devotion as otherwise it might be. Prayer is not like a nosegay, which is no longer sweet than the flowers are new and fresh. For the sweet savor of prayer consists in the sincerity of heart and ardency of affection, whereby also the power of the spirit is manifested.

The injury done to God's little ones is this: they seek to deprive them of a special help, whereby their weakness might be supported, yea, to hinder them from the benefit of prayer. For many are not able to conceive a prayer of themselves, yet if they

find a form answerable to their occasions, they can pray heartily and earnestly.

Thus, we see that prescribed prayer is not only lawful but also needful. So far forth as we find it a help to devotion, we may use it, but yet we may not always tie ourselves unto it. To say the least, they are very weak Christians that cannot pray without a prescribed form.

Now it is a shame for any Christian to be a weak one all the days of his life. It is required at our hands to grow in knowledge, judgment, discretion, faith, and other like graces.

### §. 84. Direction to Conceive a Prayer.

If the weakest Christians do but carefully observe the order that others use, and withal take notice of their own sins in particular, of their particular wants, and of the particular blessings which God bestows on them, they may with use and practice come to conceive a good Prayer. And when once in any competent measure they can pray for themselves, by degrees they come to pray for others also. But many are too idle and sluggish in making trial: they will not offer to make experience of the gift of God's Spirit: but rather utterly quench it; as a man may do, and too many so do, by tying themselves too much to set forms.

Though public liturgies for uniformity's sake are to be constantly used in set forms (provided that there are several prayers fit for

diverse, yea, for all public occasions so near as may be) yet it is not so meet for particular persons always to tie themselves to one set form. For what can that argue but that they little observe God's different manner of dealing with them at several times.

§. 85. Of Public Prayer, and of the Minister's Function Therein.

Public Prayer is when an assembly of Saints publicly with one joint consent call upon God.

In public prayer, three things are requisite.

1. Meet persons.
2. A fit place.
3. A right manner.
4. The Persons must be a public Minister of the Word and People. I showed before that Prayer was a principal part of God's public worship. Now in all public worship there is required a Minister for one party, and People for the other. A Minister has a double function; one to stand in God's room, and in God's name to declare God's mind and will unto his people. Another to stand in the People's room, and in their name to declare their mind and desire to God.

The former he does in preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments. For God (saith the Apostle) Hath committed to

us the word of reconciliation: now then are we Ambassadors for Christ, &c. Expressly it is said, that Ministers are Christ's Ambassadors, which is in regard to the Word that also they are such in regard to the Sacraments, is implied in that commission given to the Apostles, Go teach all Nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, &c.

The latter he does in making Petitions and giving thanks to God: When the Prophet had exhorted the people to assemble together publicly to pray: he saith; Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord say, spare thy people O Lord, and give not thine heritage into reproach, &c. Ministers therefore in public Assemblies are to utter the petitions of people: so it is noted that when the people were assembled to give thanks to God, Ezra the Priest praised the Lord. The incense which under the Law was offered by the Priest to God, did prefigure thus much.

Thus as in preaching a Minister is God's mouth to the people, so in praying, the people's mouth to God. Wherefore also there must be people to join with him: for if a Minister be alone, his Prayer is but a private Prayer.

### §. 86. Of the People's Consent in Public Prayer.

That which is required of people in public prayer is to testify their consent to that which the Minister utters: for the prayer of the Minister is their prayer: though for order sake to avoid confusion there be but one voice uttered, yet the hearts of all

present must go along with that voice and give an inward assent, and not so only, but also it is very expedient to testify the same, so as the Minister may hear their consent, as well as they hear his prayer.

The ordinary way, and the best way for people to manifest their consent, is with a distinct and audible voice to say Amen. Thus the people were commanded to say Amen. Deut. 27. 15. &c. And accordingly was it practised. Neh. 8. 6. It is a sound well beseeming God's public worship, to make the place ring again (as we speak) with a joint Amen of the people. The Jews uttered this word with great ardency, and therefore used to double it, saying, Amen, Amen. Neh. 8. 6.

### §. 87. Of the Place of Public Prayer.

The place must be public: such a place as all that ought to meet may know, and have liberty to come unto: at first this was in some Family, yea, afterwards when all the world almost forsook God, God chose out of the world some peculiar families, who with their household worshipped God in their houses; as Noah in his time, so Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, in their times. But when God's people increased in the wilderness, he caused a Tabernacle to be built; that then was their place of public worship, afterwards a Temple was built, which because it was the place of public worship, was by a propriety called, The house of Prayer. To this place if the people could not come, they would

at least pray towards it: for which they had their warrant from Solomon's prayer.

After that Christ came, by whom the partition wall betwixt Jews and Gentiles was broken down, and both made one people to God, all places were sanctified for Prayer: in which respect Christ said; The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem worship the Father. So as under the Gospel no one place is more holy then another. Yet it being God's will to be worshipped publicly, needful it is that there should be places fit for that purpose. Thus the Corinthians had one place to worship God in.

In Kingdoms and Nations where God's worship is maintained, are Churches, and Chapels built for that purpose. These being set apart for God's public worship, Ministers and people are to resort unto them.

Yet I deny not but in times of persecution, secret and unknown places (secret I say, and unknown to haters and persecutors of Religion, but known to true professors) may be used for public prayer: as certain Inhabitants of Philippi went out to a Rivers side to pray on the Sabbath day. Separatists which live in this Land, and other like places, where are public places for prayer appointed, whereunto all have liberty to resort, commit a double fault: one in abstaining from such public places, whereby they show themselves contemners of public Prayer: the other, that

they seek private places, as houses, woods, and boats, for public prayer: whereby (to say the least) they turn God's public worship into a private worship. Too near to these do many Schismatics come, who though they frequent our Churches to hear the Word preached, yet will they not be present in time of public prayer, whereby they deprive God of one part, and that the most principal part of his public worship.

### §. 88. Of Unanimity in Public Prayer.

For the manner of public prayer, two things are requisite:

Unanimity. Uniformity.

Unanimity respects the heart and affections, that all who assemble together may continue in the Church (as is noted of the Christians in the Primitive Church) with one accord. For this end in public worship a voice is necessary: for how can there be a consent of heart, unless one know another's mind? how can that be known but by the voice? it is the principal end of speech, to make known a man's mind. A voice used in public prayer must be:

Audible. Intelligible.

### §. 89. Of Uttering Public Prayer with an Audible Voice.

1 It must be so loud as all that are present (if it be possible) may hear it. For a voice not heard is as no voice to them which hear it

not: they can give no assent, and so pray not: it is noted that Solomon Blessed all the congregation with a loud voice.

It is a fault for a Minister in the Church to pray so softly, as all the people cannot hear him: some that are able to utter a loud voice, & that preach loud enough, in prayer cannot be heard: is there not as much reason that people should hear their Minister pray, as preach? other that are loud enough, in the middle & ending of their prayer, cannot be heard in the beginning: but every word ought so to be uttered, as it may be heard. It is a fault also in people so to say Amen, as they cannot be heard: why should not the Minister as well hear the assent of his people, as they hear his prayer? it cannot but slacken the ardour of a Minister's affection, when he cannot perceive any consent in people to that which he prays: but a cheerful and evident assent does quicken and cheer up his spirit.

## §. 90. Of Praying in a Known Tongue.

2 It must be such a kind of voice, and so uttered, as all that hear it may understand it: for so saith the Apostle, speaking of public prayer, I will pray with understanding, that is, so as others may understand me. Otherwise a loud voice is no benefit at all. If a trumpet should be sounded, and the sound not discerned, who shall prepare himself to battle thereby? That a man's voice may be intelligible, his language wherein he speaketh must be known, and his speech distinct.

## §. 91. Of the Aberrations Contrary to Praying with Understanding.

It is utterly unlawful to pray in a strange tongue: a thing against which the Apostle purposely and copiously disputeth. To omit many other arguments, which might be alleged against prayer in an unknown tongue, let this one be noted, that an unknown tongue depriveth a man of the sense of God's favour in hearing his prayer. For how can he, who knoweth not what he hath asked, know when his petition is granted. Prayer in a known tongue hath respect both to the party that uttereth the prayer (he must understand what he uttereth, or else his prayer is but a lip-labour, even mere babbling, which Christ condemneth) and also to them who hear it, their hearing if they understand not, is no hearing, they cannot be edified thereby.

Papists offend in both these:

1. They teach children, women, lay-men, such as understand not one word of Latin, to make all their prayers in Latin.

2. They prescribe their public prayers, whereof all the people partake, to be made in Latin.

To affect in prayer such uncouth words, and curious phrases as exceed the capacity of the unlearned, is little better than to pray

in a strange tongue. The Apostle showeth that prayers must be so uttered, as the unlearned may say Amen.

Contrary to distinct praying, it is for a Minister to mumble and tumble over his words too fast: it argueth want of reverence, it hindereth devotion and affection of heart (for when a prayer is too fast posted over, what time can there be for the heart to work) it also hindereth attention, and understanding in the hearer.

### §. 92. Of Uniformity in Public Prayer.

Uniformity respecteth the outward carriage and gesture in prayer. Of reverend and humble gesture I spoke before. The point now to be noted is that all who assemble together in one place to pray, do use one and the same seemly gesture, which is noted of the people in Ezra's time: when he opened the book to read, all stood up, and when he praised the Lord, they all bowed themselves, etc. This outward uniformity preventeth a preposterous censuring of one another, and may be a means of stirring up one another's affections: for when one sees others humbly kneel down, his heart may be so struck as he will be moved with reverence to humble his own soul: but diversity of gestures may cause distractions and hinder devotions: uniformity in that which is lawful and warrantable is an especial part of good order: diversity of gestures causeth a kind of confusion. Now God is not the author of confusion: wherefore all

things are to be done decently and in good order. The best general rule that we can observe to keep order is to yield to such commendable and warrantable gestures as the Church wherein we live prescribeth and practiseth.

### §. 93. Of Motives to Public Prayer.

Thus having given some directions for public prayer, I will lay down some motives to stir us with conscience to perform it.

1. The more public prayer is, the more honourable and acceptable it is to God. If it be an honour to God for one to pray, the more who join together therein, the more honourable it must needs be: it is the more acceptable because God delights in the joint consent of his Saints worshipping him: whereupon God promised, "Where two or three were gathered together in his name, to be in the midst of them."

2. It is also the more powerful: the cries of many joined together make a loud cry in God's ears and move him the sooner to open his ears. Hereupon when there was a judgment in the Land, the Prophet calleth all the people to assemble together to pray: and so did the King of Nineveh, when the ruin thereof was threatened.

3. It is an outward sign whereby we manifest ourselves to be of the chosen and called flock of Christ.

4. It is an especial means of mutual edification: for thereby we mutually stir up the zeal and inflame the affection of one another.

5. The neglect of it is a note of profaneness, from which blame Separatists and Schismatics, though they would seem very religious, cannot well acquit themselves.

These and such other like reasons made David rejoice when he said, "We will go into the house of the Lord," and mourn when he could not come into the house of Prayer.

## §. 94. Of Private Prayer.

Private prayer is that which is made by some few together, or by one alone: by few, as when two or three friends go together into some secret place (as when Elisha and his servant were alone in a chamber praying for the Shunamite's child, and Christ took Peter, and John, and James, and went into a mountain to pray) or a whole household pray together in the family, as when Cornelius prayed in his house. This charge especially belongeth to the master of the family. For as he is in his family a Lord to govern and a Prophet to teach, so also a Priest to offer up the sacrifice of prayer: as a Minister in the Church, so he in the house must utter the prayer (or at least provide one to perform that duty) and withal, cause his whole household to be present thereat.

## §. 95. Of Prayer in a Family.

1. The family has need of peculiar blessings, which by prayer are to be sought, besides the public and common blessings prayed for in the Church; it also receives many blessings, for which peculiar thanks are to be given in the house.

2. A Christian's house is made God's Church if God's worship (a principal part of which is prayer) is there from time to time performed, which is a great honour unto a family. Therefore, for honour's sake, Saint Paul mentions the Church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, and of Philemon.

3. By prayer, a Christian brings God's blessing into his house (which is a matter of great profit); for where God is called upon, there is he present to bestow his blessing, as he blessed Obed-edom and all his household while the Ark was in his house. Prayer then brings both honour and profit to a family.

Unworthy are they to be governors of a family who omit this duty therein. They cause God's curse to lie upon their house and deprive themselves of a just right unto all the goods which are therein. For by prayer, they are all sanctified: he who uses anything without prayer is an usurper and a robber; and shall another day dearly answer for it. Those who frequent public

prayer at Church and neglect private prayer at home are either superstitious or hypocritical persons.

## §. 96. Of Secret Prayer.

The prayer made by one alone, none being present but God and he who prays, I may call Secret prayer. This may be in a closed chamber, or closet, or on a desolate mountain, or in a secluded field, or on any house top, or in any other place.

It is very needful that secret prayer be added both to public prayer at Church and private prayer in the Family, for these reasons.

1. Hereby we may more freely pour out our whole hearts unto God: it is not meet that any other person should know many things which are known to God and cannot be concealed from him. Everyone is guilty of such particular sins as are to be acknowledged alone before God, and everyone has particular wants to be prayed for by himself. Hereby also we may by name mention in our prayers to God our dearest friends, which is not so meet to do in company. I think Saint Paul meant such secret prayers when he said, "I make mention of you always in my prayers."

2. This kind of prayer affords the truest trial of the uprightness of a man's heart: for a man may long continue to pray in the Church and in a family, and his prayer be

mere formal, even for company's sake: but he who alone in secret, when and where no other man knows, calls upon God, surely makes conscience of prayer and has an honest heart (though he may have much weakness and many imperfections) or else he would soon omit his course of praying in secret. For what by-respect is there that should move him to continue it, unless he be Popish, and think that the saying of a few prayers in secret is a meritorious work?

3. This argues a great familiarity with God; when a subject uses to go alone to his Sovereign, it argues much more familiarity than when he comes with a petition in the company of others.

4. It brings the greatest comfort to a man's heart: for such is the corruption of our nature that we cannot perform any holy exercise as we ought (When we would do good, evil is present with us) whereby it comes to pass that the comfort of such holy exercises, which we perform in Church or house, is taken away. This makes Christians run to God in secret, to humble themselves for the imperfections of their public prayers. Christians would much doubt, and even faint oftentimes, if it were not for their secret prayers. Those who content themselves with Church and family prayers have just cause to suspect themselves.

5. Such wives, children, servants, and other inferiors, who live in any house under profane governors that will not have prayers in their families, may by this kind of prayer make supply thereof unto their own souls: none can hinder secret prayer.

Object. We can have neither time nor place to pray secretly.

Answ. Do you not find many times and places to commit sin so secretly as none can see you? If you had as great delight in prayer as in sin, you would find time and place.

This kind of prayer (so near as may be) is to be performed so secretly that no other may know it, lest the knowledge which others have of it may minister occasion of inward pride. "Shut the door," saith Christ. It is not meet to utter secret prayer so loud that any other should hear it.

## §. 97. Of Extraordinary Prayer.

The last distinction of prayer is ordinary and extraordinary. All the forenamed kinds are ordinary; therefore, I shall not need to speak of it.

Extraordinary prayer is that which, after an extraordinary manner, even above our usual custom, is poured out before God. This consists partly in ardency of affection and partly in continuance of time. The King of Nineveh required an

extraordinary ardency when he commanded his people to cry mightily unto God. We have a memorable example hereof in Moses, who was so earnest in his prayer that rather than not have his petition granted, he desired to be erased out of God's Book. Christ's ardency yet exceeded this; it is noted that he prayed earnestly, with strong crying and tears. Yea, his ardency made his sweat be as great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

This ardency is in Scripture set forth by diverse metaphors, as rending the heart, crying, striving, wrestling with God, etc.

Though this ardency be an inward work, yet it can hardly contain itself within a man: but as thunder, which is a heat conceived within a cloud, because of the ardency of that inward heat, bursts forth and causes lightning, rumbling, and rain; so a vehement and earnest desire of the heart will somehow or other manifest and declare itself. Many ways are noted in the Scripture whereby it has been manifested.

### §. 98. Of the Signs of Extraordinary Ardency.

1. Extraordinary Distemper of the Body. Christ's earnestness in prayer struck him into an agony and caused his sweat to be turned into blood. Nehemiah's ardency so changed his countenance as the King observed it.

2. Unusual Motion of the Parts of a Man's Body. Anna so moved her lips that Eli thought she had been drunken. Solomon spread his arms abroad. The Publican beat his breast. Christ fell upon the ground.

3. Deep Sighs and Groans. "My sighing is not hid from thee," saith David to God. The sighs of the spirit are such as cannot be expressed.

4. Loud Crying. David roared all the day. Christ cried with a loud voice.

5. Often Repeating and Inculcating the Same Petition. Christ did once, twice, thrice, return to God in prayer, saying the same words. Paul prayed thrice, that is, oft, against a temptation. Note how Daniel doubleth and redoubleth his words, "O my God, incline thine ears and hear, open thine eyes and behold," etc. "O Lord hear; O Lord forgive, O Lord consider, and do it. Defer not," etc. Abram prayed six several times together for one thing, namely, for mercy on Sodom.

6. Tears. These Christ poured forth. So did the sinful woman and the Israelites in such abundant measure that she washed Christ's feet with her tears; they are said to draw water and pour it out before the Lord; Peter is said to weep bitterly.

## §. 99. Of Tears in Prayer.

Tears are the most usual signs of earnest and ardent prayer, in which respect they are powerful with God. Jacob had power over the Angel and prevailed; for why? He wept and prayed. Christ was heard in that which he feared. For why? He also offered up prayers with tears. Hezekiah wept sore and was heard. Peter's tears, the sinful woman's tears, Anna's tears, the tears of God's children at all times have been regarded and accepted. Yea, it is noted that God hath a bottle wherein he putteth the tears of his Saints: and with great Emphasis saith David, "Are they not in thy Book?" there recorded to be remembered?

Object. Esau's tears were no whit regarded, nor the tears of the Israelites when they went to fight against Benjamin, no nor David's tears when he prayed, fasted, and wept for his child.

Answ. 1 Tears simply in themselves are no whit acceptable unto God, but as they are signs of true prayer. Esau's tears were not such, they rose from grief of a worldly loss and from anger, malice, and indignation against his brother.

2. If any continue in sin and repent not, their tears are not regarded. The Israelites had not repented of their own sins, and yet would take vengeance on their brother's sin: they wept because they prevailed not, but they wept not because they repented not of their own sins. Afterwards when in token of their repentance, they fasted and offered burnt

offerings and peace offerings unto the Lord, and so wept, the Lord heard them, and they prevailed against Benjamin.

3. Though God grant not that particular which by tears is craved, yet may the tears be acceptable to the Lord, as David's were:

Then are tears most powerful and effectual when they arise from compunction of heart for sin committed against God, as the tears of the sinful woman, and of Peter. Nothing more moves the true Christian heart to melt and eyes to flow forth with tears, than a due consideration of God's tender and merciful dealing with man, and his ungrateful, and ungracious carriage towards God. The fear of God's wrath, and judgments, and horror of hell, may strike the heart with astonishment and amazement, and make it as Nabal's heart, like a stone. But grief for displeasing a merciful Father, and sorrow for loss of God's favor, is it which especially maketh the heart send forth, and the eyes shed tears.

### §. 100. Of Extraordinary Continuance in Prayer.

Extraordinary Prayer further consisteth in long continuance, when prayer is held out longer than at usual and accustomed times. Jacob continued a whole night in prayer: so did David, and Christ. Moses spent a day therein: so did Joshua and the Elders of Israel. David called upon God night and day. No doubt but Jonah spent the three days and three nights that he was in the Whale's belly in prayer. It may be gathered that Daniel

continued one and twenty days in prayer. (Not that without any intermission he so long prayed, but that every day in that time he returned to extraordinary prayer:) for so long he was in heaviness and ate no pleasant bread. (Now fasting and sorrow in the Saints are companions of prayer,) besides the Angel of God came to him at the end of those three weeks (when his extraordinary prayers are to be supposed to end) and said to him; "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard." Here he showeth that with Daniel's humiliation prayer was joined, else how could his words be heard? Secondly, that there were diverse days spent therein, else he would not say from the first day, etc. Now that first day being the beginning of the three weeks, and the Angel coming at the end of the three weeks, it is like he continued his extraordinary prayers so long. David indefinitely saith, that he cried till he was weary, till his throat was dry, till his eyes failed.

For extraordinary continuance, he who prayeth must consider his own strength and ability, and not endeavour to go beyond that, for this is to prefer sacrifice before mercy, which is against God's will.

Never must this branch of extraordinary prayer be severed from the other, I mean continuance in time from fervency in heart. For though prayer may be extraordinarily fervent, when it is not long continued, as Christ's prayer, yet ought not prayer long to

continue, except it be hearty and fervent; for then will it be no better than that much babbling, and those long prayers which Christ reproveth.

Thus having in general shown what is extraordinary prayer; for our better direction therein, and stirring up thereto, I will further declare: First, the occasions thereof. Secondly, helps. Thirdly, motives thereunto.

### §. 101. Of the Occasions of Extraordinary Prayer.

The occasions must be extraordinary, and they may be drawn to two heads:

Blessings.

Judgments.

For blessings, if they be withheld, extraordinary prayer must be used to obtain them (thus Anna obtained a son) if they be withdrawn and taken away, to recover them again (thus had David the joy of his salvation restored to him). In these two examples, we see both temporal and spiritual blessings to be occasions of extraordinary prayer. Besides, when we enterprise anything that requireth an extraordinary blessing, extraordinary prayer is to be used. As when we prepare ourselves to sanctify the Sabbath, to partake of the Holy Communion, or to have our child baptized: Likewise when we marry, enter into any weighty

calling, or office, especially when Ministers are ordained or first set over us. Christ prayed extraordinarily when he chose his Apostles (Luke 6. 12. 13.) so did the Church when it sent forth Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13. 3.) And when they ordained Elders (Acts 14. 2.)

Judgments are either sins or punishments of sins. In regard to sins, extraordinary prayer is to be made, either to free us from temptations thereunto (as Paul prayed with great ardency, saying, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death"; and again, he prayed thrice against a temptation; yea Christ expressly commandeth his Disciples to watch and pray that they enter not into temptation) or to pardon such sins as have been committed and lie heavy upon our conscience because they are in their kind notorious, or we have long continued in them (this moved David very earnestly to pray, as also Peter, and Manasseh).

Punishments of sin are either threatened or inflicted. They may by extraordinary prayer be prevented (as the destruction of Nineveh, threatened by Jonah, was). These may be removed (as Manasseh's captivity was).

As ordinary prayer is to be made for others as well as for ourselves, so likewise extraordinary prayer is to be made for others as just occasion is offered. Moses's extraordinary prayer

was for the sin of the Israelites, and for God's judgment threatened against them; so was Ezra's prayer.

### §. 102. Of the Sundry Kinds of Fasts.

The helps afforded to extraordinary prayer are especially two:

Fasting. Vowing. To fast according to the notation of the Greek words signifieth to abstain from food. In this general and large acceptation, a fast is diversely taken. For there is a physical, political, enforced moral, spiritual, extraordinary, hypocritical, superstitious, heretical, and religious fast.

1. A physical fast is when, for health's sake, a person forbears food. In many cases, physicians give direction to their patients to abstain from eating and drinking for a time.

2. A political fast is when measures of abstaining from food are enjoined for the preservation of plenty and the prevention of penury.

3. An enforced and necessary fast is when people do not have sufficient for ordinary meals: as in a city besieged or in a ship at sea far from land, provision being very scarce, people are forced to take only one meal a day or to make every other day a fasting day. Thus, many poor folk are forced to fast often times because they have nothing to eat.

4. A moral fast is when individuals eat and drink sparingly, not as much as their appetite desires, but only enough to preserve nature and maintain health and strength so that their wanton and lustful flesh may not be pampered but rather kept under: to which purpose tends this exhortation of Christ; "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness." This is not properly a fast because something is taken, but only respectively because something is forborne.

5. A spiritual fast is when individuals abstain from vice, which is as food to their corrupt nature. Hereof the Lord speaks where he says; "Is not this the fast which I have chosen to loose the bonds of wickedness?" This is called a fast only by way of resemblance.

6. A miraculous fast is when individuals, extraordinarily assisted by the power of God, abstain from all manner of food longer than the nature of man is able to endure: such were the fasts of Moses, Elijah, and Christ, who fasted forty days together.

7. An hypocritical fast is when individuals, without respect to any occasion of fasting, appoint set times weekly, monthly, or quarterly to fast. Thus the Pharisees (whom Christ taxes of hypocrisy) fasted twice in a week; and blamed Christ

because his disciples fasted not, not regarding the occasion, as Christ notes in his answer to them.

8. A superstitious fast is when individuals place religion and holiness in the abstaining from meat, making the very outward act of fasting to be a part of God's worship: contrary to that which the Apostle says both of it, and other like outward exercises; "Bodily exercise profiteth little."

9. An heretical fast is when individuals, making difference betwixt meats for conscience sake, abstain from one kind, and glut themselves with another kind, and yet count this a fast. So did the Manichees of old, and so do the Papists at this day. This the Apostle reckons up among the Doctrine of Devils.

10. A religious fast is when individuals seasonably abstain from refreshing their bodies to make them fitter for religious duties.

## §. 103. Of the Difference Betwixt a Religious Fast and Other Fasts.

This religious fast is the fast which is to be used as a help to extraordinary prayer. I will therefore more fully unfold the description of it, and declare first how far we must abstain from refreshing the body.

What is the seasonable abstinence here meant.

What are the religious duties whereunto we are made more fit by fasting.

A religious fast is, in these three points, distinguished from all the other forenamed fasts.

By the first from a moral, spiritual, and heretical fast. For a moral fast, though it keeps a person from pampering and glutting the body, yet it does not hinder a comfortable nourishing and refreshing of it, as a religious fast does for the time of the fast. A spiritual fast is no whit hindered by the body's sustenance, if it is moderate. As for the heretical fast, therein it is permitted even to glut the body with fish, sweetmeats, and such like delicacies, so flesh be abstained from.

By the second, from a miraculous fast, which is not according to the course of nature seasonable; and from a hypocritical fast, which for the occasion of it is not seasonable; whereas the religious fast is both for time and occasion (as we shall afterward hear) seasonable.

By the third, from a physical, political, forced, and superstitious fast: all which have other ends than a religious fast.

Observe those things which more largely and fully shall be delivered in explication of the three forenamed points concerning a religious fast, and compare them with the

descriptions of other fasts, and the said differences betwixt a religious fast and other fasts will be easily discerned.

§. 104. Of Forbearing to Eat and Drink in the Time of a Fast.

Under this phrase of cherishing the body, eating and drinking are especially meant: for thereby the body is more than by any other thing nourished and refreshed; nothing is so absolutely necessary thereto as food. Besides, the general nature and matter of a fast consisteth therein especially: and therefore the Scripture most usually expresses abstinence from food when it mentions a fast. "Fast," saith Esther, "and neither eat nor drink." "Let neither man nor beast," saith the King of Nineveh, when he proclaimed a fast, "taste anything: let them not feed, nor drink water." Of David it is also noted that in the day of his fast, he would not eat meat.

Question: May not then in the time of a religious fast any nourishment be taken?

Answer: To resolve this doubt, respect must be had both to the continuance of a fast, and also to the persons that fast.

1. There may be occasions to continue a fast longer than the strength of man is able to endure; and then so much food as may preserve nature and maintain health and strength may, and must be taken: yet with these two provisoes:

2. That the food which in such a case is taken be not delicate, but rather coarse; so it be agreeable to his nature that takes it.

3. That it be not taken unto fullness, but rather so sparingly, as the person who fasts may feel the want of food; so as no more than needs must for the preservation of health and strength is to be taken.

Such a fast as this was that which Daniel kept for three weeks; and with the forenamed provisoes was it observed.

2. Among the persons that keep a fast, some may be of a good and strong constitution, and able without weakening their bodies to abstain from all sustenance a day or two: these ought altogether to abstain, though they feel some want of food. Others are so weak, as if their stomachs be clean empty of all food, they are unfit for any good duty: yea, if long they continue empty, they may be so weakened as hardly they will recover their strength again. Many women when they are breeding and with child cannot leave reaching (as we speak) after they rise in a morning, till they have eaten something. Twenty-four hours fasting may make many aged and sickly persons so weak, as they cannot be able with comfort to perform any religious duty. Such persons therefore may so far forth refresh themselves as their need and weakness require. Though we have no

example of this case propounded in Scripture, yet we have a sufficient ground for it, namely, that rule which both in the old and also in the New Testament is laid down in these words: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." To fast is not more than sacrifice, to succour the body according to the need thereof, is mercy.

§. 105. Of Forbearing Other Things Beside Food in a Fast.

1. As food is most especially to be forborne in a religious fast, being principally intended under this phrase of refreshing bodies, so are sundry other things also tending thereto implied, as these which follow:

2. Sleep, which is intimated in the direction that the Prophet gives in these words, "Lie all night in sack-cloth," whereby is intended that either they should all night forbear sleep, or else that by wearing sackcloth, they should be kept from overmuch sleep (wherein they that lie in fine linen and soft beds are prone to exceed). Thus David, to keep himself from sleep in the time of his fast, would not come into a bed but lay all night upon the earth. Though those particular rites of wearing sackcloth, lying on the earth, sitting up all night, with the like, be not overstrictly to be urged, or used, yet the equity of them is still to be observed; which is, that in the day of a fast we sleep less, and rise sooner than at other times, that so the body may be somewhat the more afflicted

thereby, and that more time may be gained for religious duties. If some sleep be not forborne, the want of food will not be so much felt, nor the body so humbled and afflicted as it should be.

3. Soft and brave apparel: The Lord expressly commanded his people to put off their costly raiment; and so they did in the day of their humiliation. It is recorded and commended that the King of Nineveh in the day of a fast laid his robe from him. When the time of David's fast was ended, then he changed his apparel: whereby is intimated that in his fast he did not wear such apparel as at other times he did. If kings thus laid aside their royal apparel, much more must others lay aside brave and costly apparel. The rite of putting on sackcloth which the Jews used, shows that brave apparel may not be worn; not such as at other times is lawful. Our gentry upon mere fashion retain some shadow hereof, in that for the time of Lent they lay aside all light colours and go in black.

4. Matrimonial benevolence. The exception which the Apostle makes of fasting and prayer when he dissuades man and wife from defrauding one another shows that this in the time of a fast must be forborne: which also Joel implies by bidding the bridegroom and bride go out of their chamber.

5. Ordinary works of our calling: for they are expressly forbidden in the Law; and in that it says, that the day of a

fast shall be a Sabbath of rest; it implies that as a Sabbath it must be sanctified, and no manner of work done therein.

6. All pleasant and delightsome things. The Jews who at other times were wont to use sweet-smelling oil, wherewith they anointed their head and other parts of their body, did in the time of their fast forbear to use it; as is noted in the examples of David and Daniel: even so ought such delightful things as are in use among us be laid aside.

7. All manner of sports, pastimes, and recreations: for the recreation of the body by sports is contrary to humiliation. If food, sleep, costly apparel, matrimonial benevolence, works of our calling, sweet perfumes, with the like, must be forborne, much more recreations, which are not so necessary as the other and yet more delightful.

To conclude, such forbearance of refreshing the body is required in the time of a fast, as may be felt, and by the sense thereof the body somewhat afflicted: so did the Jews, as may be gathered out of this their expostulation, "Wherefore have we fasted, and afflicted our soul?" which though it were the expostulation of hypocrites, yet of such as in outward religious exercises imitated the saints. But more directly is this proved by a like phrase which Ezra, that good and learned scribe, used, saying; "I proclaimed a fast, that we might afflict ourselves before God."

Object. This is such a superstitious practice, as the Apostle reproves under this phrase of not sparing the body.

Answer. Not so; for then should he condemn his own practice in keeping under his body, and bringing it into subjection. There is a great difference between not sparing the body and keeping the body under. By not sparing the body (to omit the superstitious conceit, which they whom the Apostle reproves, had of pleasing God thereby) he means such an excess as weakens nature: but by keeping under his body, he means such a moderate forbearance of the things wherein the body delighted, as the corrupt flesh, even the old man, might be subdued, and not pampered. In the former place a man's outward body is weakened, and the corrupt flesh not subdued: in the latter place, the corrupt flesh is tamed, and yet the strength of a man's outward body not impaired. What contradiction then is there between these two places?

## §. 106. Of the Occasions of a Fast.

This word, "seasonable," in the description of a religious fast, has respect to the time of a fast: under which circumstance both the occasion, and also the continuance of a fast is comprised. For that is seasonably and in due time done, which on just occasion is done, and which is so far done as may stand with a person's ability to endure, without destroying or impairing nature. Here therefore we will consider:

1. The occasions of a fast.

2. The continuance thereof.

The occasions of fasting must be (as we heard before of extraordinary prayer) extraordinary, as when any extraordinary blessing is withheld, or taken away from us: or any judgment is threatened, or inflicted: or else when any grievous sin is committed, for which there is cause to fear God's heavy vengeance, with the like: and that either in our own behalf, or in the behalf of others.

The blessing for which Anna fasted as well as prayed (for the text says, she did not eat), though it were but a private and temporary blessing, was extraordinary. So also that deliverance for obtaining whereof, Jehoshaphat with the Jews in his time, and Esther and Mordecai with the Jews in their time fasted, was extraordinary.

The spiritual blessing for which the Church fasted when they sent forth Apostles and ordained Elders, was extraordinary.

The judgment which was denounced against Nineveh (for preventing whereof they fasted) and which was inflicted on Israel in Joel's time (for removing whereof they also fasted) were extraordinary.

The sin, for committing whereof, the Israelites fasted in Samuel's time, was extraordinary.

The occasions which moved Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther to fast in the behalf of others, were extraordinary.

Read all the fasts recorded and approved in the Scripture, and you shall find the occasions of them to be extraordinary.

## §. 107. Of Set Times of Fast.

This is to be noted against the superstitious weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly set fasts of Papists, who having no respect at all to the occasion, enjoin people for conscience sake to fast every Friday, the eves before most of their holy-days, every ember week and the time of Lent: at which times may fall out occasions of rejoicing. So common a practice of fasting without due respect had to the occasion, makes it lose the due respect thereof.

Object. The Jews in the time of the captivity had many set fasts in the year, as in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months.

Answer. They had special and extraordinary occasions both to fast in those months, and also to continue every year to fast in them so long as they did fast. The occasions were these: In the tenth month Jerusalem began to be besieged, which was the first sign of that horrible vengeance, that God by his Prophets had

often threatened to take of the rebellious Jews. In the fourth month, the City was broken up, whereby God openly showed that now he had forsaken that City. In the fifth month were not only the King's house and all the houses of Jerusalem, but also the house of God, that famous Temple which Solomon built, burnt down to the ground, whereby the Lord declared that now his presence, and protection was completely taken away from them. In the seventh month Gedaliah was slain. This Gedaliah was appointed a Governor over that remnant of people which were left in Judea, after the greater sort of them were carried away captives: now when he was slain, even all that remnant also was scattered, none remained; which was a further declaration of the extent of God's wrath against them. Thus God many ways manifesting his indignation against the Jews, they had just cause even with fasting to humble themselves all those times: and because they felt the smart of every one of those strokes all the time of the captivity, they continued (as there was just cause) their times of humiliation by fasting, till the captivity was ended: but after that God's favourable countenance was turned to them again, they left off those days of fast. Now the Papists can show no such cause of their forenamed set fasts: so as the example of the Jews can be no warrant to them.

2. Object. The same days are observed in our Church for fasting days.

Answer. They are retained by us only as political and civil fasts, for the better preservation of flesh, but maintained by them as religious fasts.

### §. 108. Of the Continuance of a Fast.

To know the right and due continuance of a fast, it is needful to put a difference between a fast in whole, and in part. A fast in whole is such a fast as we have described, wherein there is an utter abstinence (except in case of necessity) from refreshing the body with any food at all. A fast in part is when a person takes some nourishment in the days of their fast: and this is when there is occasion for fasting longer than a person is able to forbear all manner of sustenance: for example, a person of great use, whose death is a very great loss, is stricken with a dangerous sickness, and lies between hope and fear for some week or more: their issue being unknown, their friends earnestly desire their life, continue to fast and pray every day, until they see what issue the Lord will give: now because of the long continuance of such a fast, every day they take one meal to preserve the strength of their body. The like fast may be used when a city is besieged, and the inhabitants enclosed by their enemies on every side. Now because such a fast may be long endured, and the occasion thereof may be longer or shorter, no set time can be given for the continuance of it, but only that it be ordered according to the occasion that God gives.

As for the other more true and proper fast, a fast in whole, which was described before, and of which we now especially speak; a whole natural day is a fit time for the continuance of it. Our natural day consists of twenty-four hours: Of less continuance, a religious fast (as I take it) may not be. In the Law, the day of a fast is called a Sabbath: the time of a Sabbath must therefore be allotted unto it: now a Sabbath contains the seventh part of a week, which is twenty-four hours. Where Esther enjoins a fast of three days, she mentions the night as well as the days, showing thereby that the night must be reckoned as a part of that day wherein a fast is observed.

In the space of twenty-four hours only one ordinary meal is forborne (the fast beginning at the end of one meal, and when the fast is ended, another meal being taken): but less than one meal in a fast cannot be forborne. This therefore is the shortest time, which yet will appear to be long enough, if a fast be rightly and duly observed. For the last meal which is taken before a fast, ought to be a very moderate and spare meal; so moderate, that as soon as it is taken, we may without heaviness, drowsiness, and dullness, set ourselves to examination, meditation, conference, reading, prayer, and such like religious exercises in private, as a preparation unto the more solemn exercises to be performed in a fast. Most meet it is that this preparation be in the evening, and the fast then to begin. From even to even (saith the Law) shall ye celebrate your Sabbath: meaning a fast. So as immediately after a spare supper, all servile works of our calling

laid aside, the forenamed preparation is to begin, and continue so long as conveniently we can sit up, even longer and later than on other days we use to go to bed. Then after some sleep is taken, in the next morning rising sooner than ordinarily we use to do, after some renewing of our preparation, the rest of the time even till the twenty-four hours from the beginning of our evening preparation, be ended, is to be spent in the solemn exercises of Religion appertaining to a fast. If a fast be continued, as hath been before set down, two whole days, it is as much as our weak nature can well endure, without impairing the health and strength of our body.

Object. Paul, and they who were in the ship with him, fasted fourteen days, and took nothing.

Answer. They are said to fast because being all that time in danger of their lives, much perplexed, and busied in saving the ship, they had no leisure to take one ordinary meal: so as that was not a proper fast, but yet an extraordinary abstinence, no more taken than was necessary to preserve life: and therefore Paul, fearing lest some of them might faint, exhorted them to take some meat, adding this reason, "This is for your health"; as for this phrase ("They took nothing"), it is but an hyperbolical speech.

2. Object. Esther, and the Jews in her time fasted three days and three nights together.

Answer. The Jews lived under a hotter climate than we do, and in that respect could endure to fast longer than we who live in the Northern and colder part of the world.

## §. 109. Of Supplication, the Most Principal End of a Religious Fast.

The last point noted in the description of a Religious Fast concerns those duties of Religion which are the end of a Fast, and for our better fitting whereunto a Fast is undertaken. The most principal duty of all is supplication: whereunto as subordinate to prayer, may be added Examination, humiliation, mortification, etc. Because extraordinary prayer is the most especial end of fasting, I have annexed fasting as an help thereunto: for which I have good warrant by the usual tenor of the Scripture, which joins Fasting and Prayer together. When the Prophets saw cause to use extraordinary Prayer, they were wont to call upon the people to fast. Sanctify a Fast (saith Joel) when upon an extraordinary occasion he prescribed a form of prayer for them to use. In like manner says Ezra; I proclaimed a Fast, that we might seek of God a right way, etc. And accordingly they observed his direction, and joined fasting and prayer together: for says he, We fasted, and besought our God, etc. So says Nehemiah of himself, I fasted and prayed. And of the Church in the New Testament, it is said, when they sent forth Paul and Barnabas, they fasted and prayed: and when they ordained Elders, they Prayed and fasted.

Great reason there is to add Fasting to extraordinary Prayer: for when there is an extraordinary occasion of Prayer, extraordinary ardency and continuance in prayer must be used, as was before shown. Now fasting quickens our spirits, and rouses up our dull hearts, and so both sharpens our prayers, adding life and efficacy unto them, and also makes us able to hold out, and continue the longer in Prayer. For as fullness makes a person drowsy in body, and heavy in spirit, (so as they can neither pray ardently, nor continue long in prayer) so fasting makes them fresh and cheerful both in body and spirit. Note the most ardent and long-continued supplications in Scripture, and you shall find them supported by fasting. Besides, as fasting is a help to prayer, so it is a testimony of our vehement and earnest desire of obtaining that which we pray for: for by our voluntary abstaining from ordinary food, and other delights of our body, we show that we prefer the thing which we pray for, before them.

The other duties which were reckoned up among the ends of a Religious Fast, as Examination, humiliation, and mortification, (as was before noted) subordinate unto Prayer, and helpful thereunto: In that fasting therefore is used for the better performance of them, in the use of them it proves to be a further help for prayer; which will the better appear, if distinctly we consider how fasting makes us more fit to perform these duties.

### §. 110. Of Examination, Another End of Fasting.

Concerning Examination of ourselves, we cannot be ignorant, but that when any needful extraordinary blessing is to be obtained, or any judgment to be prevented or removed, it is very requisite to search whether there be not any sin in us which may make our prayers to be rejected and not regarded. That which the Lord said of the Army of Israel in Joshua's time, may be applied to particular persons, namely, that if they did not search, and find out, and take away the execrable, and excommunicate among them, the Lord would not be with them anymore: wherefore the Prophet exhorts first to search, and try our ways, and turn to the Lord; and then to lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the Heavens.

Now by fasting, we both gain more time for examination, (even that time which otherwise would be spent in sleeping, eating, drinking, and other like things, which in the day of a Fast are forborne) and also make ourselves more fit thereto, in that our spirits are cheered, and our hearts roused up thereby, as was noted before. This the Saints well knew, and therefore were wont in the days of their Fast to enter into a serious and solemn examination of their own, and of others' sins. Read the Prayer that Ezra made in the day of his Fast, and in it you may observe how he searches out the sins of the Jews in his time, which had provoked the wrath of God, and sets them in order before God. So did the Levites in that Fast which was kept in Nehemiah's time.

## §. 111. Of Humiliation, a Third End of Fasting.

Concerning Humiliation, it is well known that those who look to prevail by Prayer with God must come before him with a humbled heart. "To him" (saith the Lord) "will I look that is poor, and of a contrite spirit." Now by fasting we manifest our unworthiness of the least of God's blessings, and so testify great humiliation; yea, the very rites of a Fast are a means to humble the soul somewhat more. By laying aside our best apparel, by our voluntary abstinence from God's creatures, by forbearing some of our ordinary sleep, and by refusing in other respects to refresh our bodies, we show that we think ourselves unworthy of any outward delights, yea of the least crumb of bread, and drop of water. In olden times, they were wont to wear sack-cloth in the time of a Fast, to show that the worst clothing was good enough: and to lay dust upon their heads, to show that they thought themselves more worthy to be under the ground, than to tread upon it. Again, when we fast, because God is displeased for our sin, and as a token of his displeasure, inflicts some judgment upon us, we do not only manifest our great grief for displeasing God, but also after a holy manner take vengeance of ourselves, which is an especial point of humiliation, commended in the Corinthians.

## §. 112. Of Mortification, a Fourth End of Fasting.

Concerning Mortification, it has been before shown that the lusts of the flesh, and the wanton affections thereof, are a great hindrance to fervent prayer: being as birdlime to the feathers of a fowl, which keep it from mounting high. Yea, it is clearer than needs be proved, that they continually fight against the spirit, and are a means to quench it; so as the spirit is kept from making requests for us, so long as lust boils and domineers in us. Necessary it is therefore, that in this respect the body be beaten down, and brought into subjection. But fasting is an especial means to subdue our wanton flesh, and corrupt lusts: for as pampering our bodies adds strength to the old man, so fasting mortifies it, and keeps it down. The Apostle, where he implies, that while man and wife give themselves to fasting and prayer, they may the better abstain, intimates that by fasting and prayer lust is subdued.

### §. 113. Of Fasting Now Under the New Testament.

By that which has hitherto been delivered in explanation of a religious Fast, we may well conclude that it is a warrantable, commendable, and needful exercise: Warrantable, because commended: Commendable, because the practice thereof is commended: Needful, because of the ends before Propounded. It is therefore an exercise carefully and conscientiously to be observed by us.

Object. It is nowhere commanded in the New Testament.

Answ. 1. The Apostles and Churches' practice thereof in the time of the Gospel shows that the Commandments of the Old Testament concerning fasting were not as other ceremonial ordinances, of force only for the time of the law, but of perpetual use so long as a Church should remain on earth.

2. The answer which Christ gave to the Pharisees in defense of his Disciples not fasting, in these words, "The days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast," has the force of a precept.

3. The same occasions, and the same ends of fasting which were under the Law, still remain under the Gospel (what these occasions and ends are, has been shown before) wherefore, as we make conscience of other duties, so let us make conscience of this also. As God does manifest his just indignation against us, by threatening or inflicting any judgment, or by withholding, or taking away any blessing, so let us manifest our true humiliation by fasting. Fasting added to prayer, makes it extraordinarily powerful, as appears by these three evidences.

4. By the great and wonderful things which the Saints have obtained thereby. Anna, though the Lord had made her barren, obtained a child. The Jews in Jehoshaphat's time obtained an extraordinary victory. And in Esther's time a

memorable preservation. Many like examples are noted in the Scripture.

5. By that respect which God has had to the fasting of Hypocrites: as is noted in the example of Ahab. If God were moved to stay a temporal judgment threatened against a wicked man upon his temporary humiliation by fasting, what will he not do upon the true humiliation of his faithful children by fasting?

6. By that instance which Christ gives of casting out such a kind of Devil by fasting and prayer, as by no other means can be cast out. If an extraordinary Devil may be cast out by fasting and prayer, when he hath gotten possession in a man, how much more may diabolical passions and corruptions be cast out of a man by this means? No marvel that the Devil so much prevails everywhere, seeing this sovereign means of weakening his power is so much neglected. We in this Land have done ourselves much wrong by neglect of this duty:

That which afterwards shall be spoken of motives to extraordinary prayer, and of our negligence therein, may in particular be applied to this help of prayer.

## §. 114. Of Vows.

The other help to extraordinary prayer is making of Vows, which is both expressly commanded (Psalm 76. 11.) and also has been

much practiced by God's children. Jacob vowed a vow to God as he was going to his uncle Laban (Gen. 28. 20-21.) So did Anna (1 Sam. 1. 11) David (Psal. 132. 2.) and many other Saints.

Vowing is so proper to praying that the Greek word which in the New Testament most usually signifies prayer, seems to be drawn from a vow.

1. To vow in praying greatly sharpens our prayers and makes us more eagerly call upon God.

2. It manifests a very earnest desire of obtaining the thing we desire: it shows that we are willing to do anything, or part with anything to obtain it.

3. It sets a tutor over us, to call upon us to perform our duty, to check us when we are slack therein, and to keep us within that compass that we have set unto ourselves.

Object. This was a thing belonging rather to the pedagogy of the Jews, than to the ripe age of Christians under the Gospel.

Answ. Indeed, because the Church before Christ's time was but in her non-age, in comparison of that manage whereunto since Christ's time it has grown, vows were then more usual, than they are now. Yea at that time their voluntary vows were parts of God's worship, as other rites and ceremonies which were enjoined them of God were, whereunto we are not now so

strictly bound. So as there is some difference between the time of the Law and of the Gospel in this respect. Yet notwithstanding are not all vows, and the use of them, utterly abolished: they still remain lawful and helpful unto us.

For though we have attained to a riper age than that of the Jews, yet are we not come to a perfect age▪ we are but children in regard to that measure of the age of the fullness of Christ, whereunto the spirits of just and perfect men in Heaven attain. So as still we have need of helps: and among other helps, this of vows is needful, and may be profitable unto us.

## §. 115. Of the Things which Concur to the Making of a Lawful Vow.

Wherefore for our direction in using this help, we must observe what things concur to the making of a good and lawful vow: even those four things whereby everything is made good, the four causes, which are, 1. The maker of the vow. 2. The matter of it. 3. The manner thereof. 4. The end.

1. The person who makes a vow, must be both of understanding, and also of power to make it. In vowing we have to do with God, who must not be dallied with, nor mocked. They who deal with him must well conceive what they do; (wherefore Idiots, children, frenzy persons, and such like, are not fit to vow) they must also have an ability to perform what they vow (wherefore such as are under the

authority and command of others may not vow, in such cases wherein their Governors may cross their vow.)

2. The thing vowed, must be both lawful and possible. To vow to commit a sin (as the Jews vowed to kill Paul) is a double iniquity. To vow that which we are not able to do (as many who vow perpetual continency) is a plain mockery.

3. In regard to the manner, a vow must be made freely and maturely. A vow is a kind of spiritual offering, it must therefore be a free will offering, or else can it not be acceptable to God. It is not meet for Parents to force their children, or any man to force another to make a vow.

A vow is also a matter of weight, it must be made in judgment upon due consideration and deliberation, not rashly or unadvisedly. Herein did Jephthah (though otherwise a good man) offend. Rash vows cause either much mischief, or much repentance.

4. There are two main ends of a vow. One to prevent or redress some sin (as for a man who is of a flexible disposition, and much drawn away by vain company to vow against such and such company: or for a man that has a light brain, and is soon made drunken with strong beer and wine, to vow against these.) The other to hold a man close to some duty; as to vow every day to read so much, or so much of the

Scripture, morning and evening to pray, to sanctify the Sabbath, &c.

Object. We are bound to perform all these things, though they are not vowed.

Answ. We vow those things which we are otherwise bound to do, in regard to our own dullness and backwardness, that so we may by a double bond (one of God's law, the other of our vow) be the more provoked to do them. Jacob's vow made to God in these words: ("The Lord shall be my God: ") was a duty commanded. Gen. 28. 21.

A vow being thus made, we are bound in conscience to perform it: "Pay therefore that which thou hast vowed. It is better that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay it."

## §. 116. Of Public and Private Fasts and Vows.

As the occasions of fasting and vowing are public or private, so must they be done publicly or privately. Because there was a public judgment on the land, Joel the Prophet called the people to a public fast. So likewise Ezra caused a public vow to be made of all the people. Anna's occasion was private and particular; accordingly, was her fast and vow.

A public fast or vow must be appointed by public authority (as were all the public fasts and vows recorded and commended in the Scripture) and performed by all that are under their authority, and in their dominion who command it. When Jehoshaphat proclaimed a public fast, it is noted that they came out of all the Cities of Judah: and when Josiah made a public vow and Covenant with the Lord: He caused all that were found in Judah, and Benjamin to stand to it.

The Ministers of the word ought to put the Magistrates in mind of these extraordinary exercises when there is occasion (as Joel did). The Magistrate ought to appoint them, and Magistrates, Ministers, People, and all observe them; and for the better observing thereof, assemble together in public places and use the public Ministry of the word: for which we have a notable pattern of the Jews in the time of Nehemiah: for when the people were all assembled together, with fasting to make a solemn vow: the Levites read in the book of the Law of the Lord their God, one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part of the day they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God. These two fourth parts were all the time that passed betwixt the morning and evening Sacrifice, namely from nine to three.

As for private fasts and vows, if they are performed in a family, the Master thereof who is a King, Priest, and Prophet in his own house, has the ordering thereof. But every particular Christian has liberty in secret by himself, to use these extraordinary

exercises as he sees just cause; if at least he is not under the power and command of another, to whom his time and service are due. When Magistrates are negligent in appointing those public exercises in their seasons, private Christians may for their parts make some supply thereof in their families, or at least in secret by themselves.

### §. 117. Of Motives to Extraordinary Prayer.

Weighty motives there are to stir us up to extraordinary Prayer.

1. It shows that we go along with God's good guiding providence: that we observe God's judgments, and are moved with them, and take notice of his blessings, and are accordingly affected: that as the judgments of God are greater, so our supplication and humiliation more extraordinary: as his blessings more needful and scanty, so our petitions more earnest and fervent: and as they are more excellent and plentiful, so our thanksgiving more solemn. They who content themselves with their ordinary manner of praying (like mill-horses going round in their usual track) and never take any occasion of extraordinary prayer, but think all is well, because they are not Atheists, which never call upon God, plainly discover how little they regard God's dealing with them. If they did, as God dealt extraordinarily with them, so would they extraordinarily carry themselves towards God.

2. Extraordinary prayer is extraordinarily powerful and effectual, either for preventing and removing great judgments, or for obtaining and recovering singular blessings, as we have before shown.

3. It is an extraordinary honour done unto God: the more we stoop under his judgments, and the more highly we account his blessings and favours, the more we glorify God.

### §. 118. Of the Neglect of Extraordinary Prayer.

If we well observe God's dealing with us, and the several occasions of extraordinary prayer from time to time afforded unto us, we cannot but condemn ourselves for neglect of this duty, and extraordinarily humble ourselves, even because we have not extraordinarily prayed, as just occasion has oftentimes been given unto us. How many judgments has God laid upon us year after year? Strange sicknesses, extraordinary fires, frosts, inundations of waters, droughts when rain was needful, tempestuous and rainy weather, when calm and fair weather would have been very acceptable, with the like. Among other public judgments, I cannot let pass that sore, heavy, grievous stroke, whereby the life of that worthy admirable Prince was taken away, upon the sixth of November 1612. Had extraordinary prayer in time been used, no doubt but many of these judgments might have been prevented. Would there be so many insufficient, idle, careless, corrupt Ministers, as are in

many places? Or would the diligence and pains of many learned and faithful Ministers be so fruitless as they are, if extraordinary prayer were more used? What may be the reason that many marriages, offices, callings, and the like matters of moment are so unprosperous? That many Christians long lie under sore and grievous temptations and crosses, that other judgments are inflicted upon their families, their children, yea, and their own persons, and many needful blessings denied? Surely this duty is not used as it ought to be. Let it therefore be more frequently and conscientiously used.

Hitherto of the Several Kinds of Prayer.

# THE THIRD PART.

## The Time of Prayer.

### §. 119. Of Praying Always.

The next branch is concerning the time, which by the Apostle is limited with no distinct time, but indefinitely set down under this general particle Always.

If this circumstance be simply taken without any limitation, it implies not only a great inconvenience, but also a plain impossibility. For is it not inconvenient that we should attend wholly and only on prayer, and so neglect the Word, Sacraments, and other duties of piety? Yes, also all duties of justice, and charity to our neighbours? Is it possible that always we should pray, and not eat, drink, sleep, and do such other things as nature necessarily requires?

Answer: If the true meaning of the Apostle's phrase be observed, no such incongruity or impossibility will follow upon it. In the original it is thus set down word for word, "In every season."

The Greeks make a difference between Time, and season: and in the Scripture they are also distinguished. Time is more general, Season implies that part of time which is fit for doing a thing. This phrase then being translated "in every season," implies that as any just occasion is offered, we must pray.

Object: The Evangelist uses the word which properly signifies Always, and so does the Apostle in laying down the point of thanksgiving, and another phrase of the like extent, saying, "Pray without ceasing."

Answer: 1. General phrases must be expounded by particular and distinct phrases.

2. Those Generals do sometimes signify no more than very often: so are Solomon's servants said to stand ever, or continually before him. So we say of a Student that is much in his study, he is always or continually there: so of a woman that tarries much at home, she is ever in her house. But more distinctly to show the meaning of this circumstance,

3. It is to be taken inclusively, including every part of time, and excluding none, neither day nor night, whether we are alone or in company, in the midst of business, or free from business, at what time soever occasion is given, we must pray.

4. It signifies a daily and constant performing of this holy exercise: thus this sacrifice which under the Law was constantly offered up every day, morning and evening, is said to be offered up continually, and called a continual burnt offering.

5. It implies that besides our ordinary and set times of prayer, we must take extraordinary occasions to call upon God.

6. It intimates a continual preparation of the heart always, even every moment ready to be lifted up to God in prayer. As the air with the least blast of wind is moved, and a feather with the least motion of air is lifted up, so must our hearts in petition and thanksgiving.

Thus this phrase being rightly taken, affords no just ground to those heretics called Euchitae, who would seem to spend so much time in prayer, as they neglected all other duties: like to whom were the Heretics called Messalians. But it affords unto us many good instructions for prayer.

## §. 120. Of Praying Every Day.

1. Christians ought to have set times of prayer every day. This is implied in the fourth Petition, where "this day" is expressed, to show that the next day we must pray again, and every day say, "this day." This is also prefigured by that continual burnt offering, of which I spoke before. David exhorts hereunto saying, "Sing unto the Lord, praise his name from day to day," and promises to perform as much himself, saying, "I will bless thee daily, and praise thy name forever and ever."

2. We daily stand in need of God's blessings, both of the continuance of his old blessings, and also of bestowing new blessings. Needful it is therefore, that every day we should pray for them.

3. The graces of God in us are subject every day to decay: now prayer is as food, whereby those graces are preserved, revived and increased. Daily we take bodily food? Daily also let us use this spiritual food.

4. Every day we are subject to assaults of our spiritual enemies, who are never wearied: and unto many dangers of soul and body. But prayer is the most principal means to keep us safe from all.

There are also like reasons for thanksgiving always, day after day. For God ladeth us daily with his blessings: every day, yea every hour, both God's former blessings are continued and renewed, and also new blessings bestowed. Is thy life, health, liberty, or any other blessing, matter of thanksgiving this day? Then if the same be renewed the next day, it is also matter of thanksgiving the next day, and so day after day. Continual matter of thanksgiving, requireth continual thanksgiving.

### §. 121. Of the Fittest Times for Daily Prayer.

Quest. How often a day is it meet we should pray, and at what times?

Answ. Not to speak of sudden ejaculations, which we shall touch by and by, it is meet that solemn prayers be made at least twice a day. The fittest time for which is the morning and the evening. In the morning to praise God for our rest the night before, and to crave his protection over us, and his blessing upon us the day following. In the evening to praise him for the blessings received that day, and to crave his protection in the night when we sleep. Thus shall this spiritual sacrifice of the Calves of our lips be answerable to that daily outward sacrifice of lambs, under the

Law, whereof one was to be offered in the morning, the other in the evening. This time David prescribes saying to God, "It is a good thing to declare thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy truth at night." Yea David went further, and says, "Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray." Which times it is likely that Daniel observed, for he prayed three times a day. David yet further says, "Seven times a day do I praise thee." But that I take to be meant of some extraordinary occasions, because his ordinary course was set down before: or else as set number for an uncertain, seven times, that is, oftentimes, and so meant of sudden prayers.

Against this do they offend, who never pray but at Church upon Sabbath days, or some other solemn days, or if ever at home, only then when some extraordinary occasion is offered, as if they, or some of theirs be sick, if they fear some judgment, or want some great blessing. What hope can such have to be heard in their great needs, who otherwise would not call upon God?

### §. 122. Of Constant Keeping Our Set Times of Prayer.

2. Such set times as are appointed for daily prayer should be constantly kept. Else we do not, in every season, always without intermission, pray. The Lord says of the forenamed daily sacrifice under the Law, "Ye shall observe to offer unto me in their due season mine offering," implying thereby that they should not fail nor miss their due season and

accustomed time. Fear of death could not turn Daniel from his course: he prayed (notwithstanding the King's contrary decree) three times a day, as he did aforetime. This phrase, "as aforetime," implies a constant course.

Great reason there is that we should be constant, for

1. There is in us a natural proneness to wax cold and faint in prayer. Water is not more prone to be cold, nor a heavy weight to fall downward, than we to wax dull in this heavenly exercise. Wherefore, as fire must constantly be put under water to keep it hot, and a weight must constantly be wound up to keep it from the ground, so must we by constant prayer quicken up our souls and keep them aloft.

2. The Devil will take great advantage by once omitting it, and move us to omit it again and again; and so by degrees bring us to an utter disuse of it. Assuredly, they who once omit their course of praying shall find the next time they come to pray a more than usual dullness thereto: which is partly through God's just judgment, who thus punishes our neglect of this duty, partly through our natural indisposition thereto, and partly through the subtlety and malice of the Devil, who thus seeks to divert us clean from our course.

## §. 123. Of Canonical Hours.

Quest. What difference is there between this constant observing set times, and Popish canonical hours of prayers?

Answ. 1. Their canonical hours are grounded on superstition, as the reasons which they themselves allege do show: for they appoint seven hours of prayer for every day. The first before day, because Christ was then taken. The second at the first hour, because then he was led to Pilate. The third at the third hour, because then he was mocked. The fourth at the sixth hour: because then he was crucified. The fifth at the ninth hour, because then he gave up the Ghost. The sixth in the evening, because then he was taken from the Cross. The seventh in the compline, because then he was buried. These reasons are superstitious, no good grounds. In other hours we may find other things done to Christ, as his bringing to Annas, to Caiaphas, to Herod, his accusations, scourging, etc., and so make every hour a canonical hour for prayer. We have better reasons, as I shown before.

2. They place Religion in the very observing of set times. We do not so: for we set not the same continuance for all; some may hold out an hour, some half, some but a quarter, some longer, some shorter. Neither do we tie all to the same hour. A strong able person that uses to rise betimes may pray at three or four or five of the clock in the morning, as soon as he rises. Another that is weak, and not able to rise so soon, may when he can rise.

3. They content themselves with saying over so many prayers as may be in such a set time, though their hearts go not with one word: for their prayers being in Latin, many cannot understand what they pray. We account such prayers mere lip-labour. Neither do we measure our prayers by a set time, but we measure our time by our devotion and affection in prayer.

4. They appropriate their canonical hours to ecclesiastical persons only, as Priests, Monks, Nuns, etc. We make our daily times of prayer common to all Christians: because prayer is a duty belonging to all.

5. Some of their hours, namely, at midnight, are very unseasonable to be ordinarily and daily performed: they are neither meet for the health of man (that being the most seasonable time to rest in) nor for the worship of God, which must needs at that time be drowsily performed. Our times are the most seasonable that may be.

6. Their hours are so many, that other necessary businesses must needs be omitted: they afford not time enough for Ministers to study, and perform other ministerial functions belonging to their place. Our times are such as may well be afforded to prayer, by those that have the most and greatest employments.

7. They are so superstitious on the one side in keeping their number and stinted hours, and on the other side so careless in the due time, that they give tolerations to observe all the seven hours in one part of the day, and none in the other part. We afford no such tolerations. Evening prayer would not be performed in the morning, though a double task of the Word may be read at once.

## §. 124 Of Neglecting Times of Prayer.

Let us be careful and conscientious in setting unto ourselves fit times of prayer, so also in keeping of them. Many suffer every small occasion, the least business, a matter of little gain, yea, a matter of pleasure and sport to interrupt their course: they are far from Daniel's mind. If they could truly feel and discern the sweetness and comfort of prayer, they would be otherwise minded than they are. For our parts, let us prefer it to all things, and let all things whatsoever give place to it. Thus shall we manifest our reverend and high account of God, of his worship, and of his blessing. If in the morning necessary business is to be performed, let us rise so much the sooner to pray, rather lose of our sleep than omit that exercise: so at night, if extraordinary business holds thee up late, sit up a little longer for prayer's sake. They who conscientiously and constantly use it, think not themselves safe in the morning, till they have commended themselves by prayer to God: they are much disquieted if by any occasion it be omitted: some dare not eat, nor drink in the

morning till they have prayed, nor at even go to bed till they have prayed again. A good religious mind.

## § 125. Of Praying in All Affairs.

Whatsoever we go about, or wherever we are, we must pray. If we go about any religious exercise, any work of our calling, any duty of love, any honest and lawful recreation, we must pray: when we go to eat, to sleep, to walk abroad, to ride a journey pray, at home, in the field, in our Inn, in prison, on the sea, in a foreign country, in time of prosperity, in time of adversity, in season, at our times appointed, out of season, at other times, night and day pray. So much implies the Apostle when he wills men to pray in every place, and these phrases, always, at all times, continually, without ceasing, imply as much.

Prayer sanctifies everything, every place, as we showed in the fifth branch of the necessity of prayer.

We cannot expect a blessing in anything, except by prayer we crave it. It is in vain to rise early, and to lie down late without prayer. Therefore Moses prays that God would establish the works of their hands.

No marvel we prosper so little in the holy and civil things we take in hand, and that everywhere in everything we meet with many crosses and vexations. The means of making things prosper, and of preventing crosses is rarely used. No marvel also

that God often withholds many good things from us; due praise is not given for such good things as he gives.

### §. 126. Of Continual Ejaculations.

Our hearts ought every moment to be ready and prepared to be lifted up to God: even when we have not opportunity of time and place to utter any prayer with our mouths, in heart we must pray, as Moses and Nehemiah. This is that mental and sudden prayer of which I spoke before. Concerning this kind, if any shall ask (as Peter in another case did) how often shall I pray in a day; seven times, as David did? I answer (as Christ did to Peter) I say not to thee unto seven times, but unto seventy times seven times: even every moment, as the least occasion is offered, and so often as the Spirit of God moves. If we observe ourselves or others to stand in need of any blessing, instantly let our hearts be lifted up to God: when any of God's blessings come to our mind by the relation of others, by our own cogitation, by any present fruition, or by any other means, presently (in heart at least) bless God: learn of the little birds, which lift up their bills to heaven, so often as they take a little water into them.

### §. 127. Of Giving Thanks Always.

We have an excellent pattern hereof in that man who was a man after God's own heart, that sweet Singer of Israel: as he was very frequent upon all occasions in making petition to God, so also in thanksgiving: many Psalms he begins and ends with praise: yes,

every verse of some Psalms begins with an exhortation hereto: and every verse of other Psalms ends with a thankful acknowledgment of God's mercy: Diverse verses in many Psalms both begin and end with praising God. There is nothing which that book of Psalms more tumbles up and down (repeating it very often again and again) than this clause, "Praise ye the Lord": yes, his Psalms of humiliation, which he begins with sobs and tears, he ends with praise. A worthy pattern to follow: the more frequent we are in thanksgiving; the more do we resemble the triumphant Church in heaven, which cease not day nor night, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty." In the book of Revelation, it is often noted that the heavenly Spirits, so soon as any occasion was offered, presently fell on their faces and gave glory to God. They do after a holy manner rebound up and down this word, "Hallelujah," one from another. Thus do they always give thanks. It well beseems them: how can it then but well beseem us? We must endeavour to be like them: only here lies a difference betwixt them and us, that all tears are wiped away from their eyes, so as they have not such matter of supplication as we have: we must mix petition and thanksgiving together: so give thanks always, as we make supplication always: for to both these parts of prayer is this extent to be applied: one must not exclude another: neither must either of them exclude any other duty.

# THE FOURTH PART.

The Ground of Prayer.

## §. 128. Of the Meaning of This Phrase in the Spirit.

The third general branch concerning prayer is the ground from whence it arises, and that is the Spirit. "Pray in the Spirit," saith the Apostle. Some here understand the spirit of man, which is the soul and heart of a man: and so is this phrase used, where the Apostle saith, "I will pray with the Spirit," or "in the Spirit." Others understand the Spirit of God, which is the Holy Ghost: and so is this phrase used, where the Apostle Jude saith, "Pray in the Holy Ghost," and where Saint Paul saith, "The Spirit maketh request for us." I take it that they which exclude either of these come short of the Apostle's meaning: for I doubt not but he here intendeth both the Spirit of God and also the spirit of man, sure I am that both may stand together, yea that both do always concur together and cannot be severed: for without the Holy Spirit of God, man cannot pray in his spirit and heart: and whenever the Spirit of God helpeth us to pray, he stirreth up our spirits and hearts to pray. The spirit of man is that especial place where the Spirit of God hath his residence.

This clause then affordeth unto us these two instructions.

1. True prayer is a work of the Holy Spirit of God, and cometh from his motion.

2. Prayer framed by the Spirit of God floweth out of the very spirit and heart of a man.

### §. 129. Of the Work of the Spirit in Prayer.

For the first, note what the Prophet saith in God's name to Jerusalem, "I will pour upon them the spirit of supplications." He calleth the gifts of prayer the spirit of supplications because it is God's Spirit which worketh in us this gift, and enableth us to call upon God: in a like respect, Saint Paul useth this phrase, "The Spirit of faith." More plainly is this point proved by that phrase which Saint Jude useth, "Praying in the Holy Ghost": but most evidently by Saint Paul, who layeth it down, first affirmatively, saying, "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us": then negatively, saying, "We know not what to pray," etc. What may the Apostle mean by this phrase, "The Spirit itself maketh intercession"? Doth the Holy Ghost truly and properly pray for us, as Christ our High Priest and Mediator, or as one of us for another? No, verily: for then should the Holy Ghost be our Mediator (which was one of Arius's heresies), an office which is never attributed to him, but appropriated to Christ: "For there is one God, and one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Besides, then also should God make request to God; for the Holy Ghost is God, but

not man also, as Christ was. The meaning then of the Apostle must needs be this, that the Spirit of God stirreth us up to pray, quickening, and putting life into our dead and dull spirits, yea inwardly, as it were, suggesteth unto us, and infuseth into us such desires, such sighs & groans, yea and such words, as are acceptable to God, which for the truth and sincerity of them, for the vehemency and ardency of them, for the power and efficacy of them are unutterable: they pierce through the very heavens, and enter unto the glorious Throne of God's grace, and there make a loud cry in the ears of the Almighty. Therefore in the next verse the Apostle addeth, "he that searcheth the hearts" (that is, God the searcher of all hearts) "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit" (that is, what desires, what sighs and groans, what prayers proceed from the work of his Spirit, being stirred up thereby in our spirits) for God's Spirit informeth, and instructeth our spirits to make prayers to God, according to the will of God, which otherwise were most impossible for us to do: we neither could tell what to ask, nor how to ask. Thus plainly and clearly we see, that true prayer cometh from the motion and work of God's Spirit: which may yet further be confirmed by comparing, Gal. 4. 6. with Rom. 8. 15. in that it is said, the Spirit in our hearts crieth Abba Father: in this, by the Spirit we cry Abba Father.

The reasons why thus the Spirit prayeth, yea why it is needful that the Spirit should pray, and so we pray in the Spirit, are these.

1. In regard of our natural estate, we have no ability at all to pray: a dead man can as well crave help of another man, as a natural man in faith crave succor of God. We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves. Can we then be sufficient of ourselves to pray aright?

2. In our regenerate estate, we are no longer able to do any good thing, then the Spirit helpeth and assisteth us. Though once we be enabled by the Spirit to pray aright, yet if the Spirit leave us and continue not in us his powerful work, all our ability is gone (as a wheel which is turned about with a hand, if the hand be taken away, the wheel will soon stand still) it is needful that unto the first grace, following grace be added: for man after he is regenerate, still needeth the present, effectual, continual work of God's Holy Spirit. It is therefore said, "He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

3. Though we knew how to pray, yet would not our prayer be acceptable to God, except it came from his Spirit: it is attributed as a proper work to the Spirit, that he maketh intercession according to the will of God (that is, so as is pleasing and acceptable to God) for as God knoweth the meaning of the Spirit, so the Spirit knoweth the will of God.

4. Here note how the whole Trinity hath a work in this holy exercise of prayer. The Holy Ghost frameth our requests.

The Son offereth them up unto his Father. The Father accepteth them thus framed, and offered up.

5. Note the reason why the prayers of the Saints are so acceptable, and available, why they pierce through the clouds, and have access to God's throne: they are the groans of God's Spirit: not that the Spirit groaneth, but that our spirits are made to groan by God's Spirit.

6. Note what an admirable gift the gift of prayer is, a singular gift, peculiar and proper to the Saints, who have the Spirit of God: if no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, surely no man can call upon God, as his Father, but by the Spirit of God. We have therefore received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father.

7. Note how we may know whether God's Spirit be in us, and whether we be God's sons or no: even by the Spirit of prayer: I mean not an outward formal uttering of words, but true prayer coming from the heart.

### §. 130. Of the Means to Pray Aright in the Spirit.

They who desire to pray aright, so that their prayer should be acceptable to God, must:

1. Labour for God's sanctifying Spirit, which is obtained by the ministry of the word, as was set forth by those extraordinary gifts which God bestowed on Christians while they were

hearing the word preached: and as Saint Paul with great emphasis affirms, saying, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by hearing of faith?" That is, assuredly by hearing the Gospel (which is the word of faith) preached, ye received the Spirit: in which respect the preaching of the Gospel is called the ministration of the Spirit.

2. Having the Spirit, we must go along with Him and follow His good motions: pouring forth those desires which He suggests unto us: the fire which God would continually have to burn upon His altar came out from the Lord. If sacrifices were offered up with any other fire, that fire was considered strange, and the sacrifices not at all acceptable, but abominable to the Lord: the heavenly fire whereby our spiritual sacrifices of prayer must be offered up is that Holy Spirit which comes out from God: He carries the very image of God: we must therefore give unto God that which is God's.

3. We must take heed that we do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God: which is done by quenching the good motions thereof through our carelessness, or by resisting the Spirit through our rebellion: hence it is that many of the Saints are so dull and untoward to this exercise: by their security and carnality, they have grieved God's Spirit, and He has withdrawn His help and assistance.

Many, hearing that the Spirit makes requests for us, will be ready wholly to give over this duty unto the work of the Spirit, and so never rouse up themselves, but say, "When the Spirit pleases, it will make request for me." These grieve the Spirit because they stir not up the gift thereof.

### §. 131. Of Prayer Coming from the Spirit of a Man.

For the second doctrine, that prayer framed by the Spirit of God floweth out of the very spirit and heart of a man; it is also clear by the forenamed place, "The Spirit maketh intercession with groans," etc. Now, groans proceed from the heart and spirit, not from the tongue and lips: but more expressly the Apostle saith, that the spirit which crieth "Abba Father," is sent into our hearts. Hence it is that they who pray in the spirit are said to pour out their soul and their heart to God. The Virgin Mary (who without all question praised God in the spirit) saith, "My soul magnifieth the Lord, my spirit rejoiceth in God."

1. The heart of man is, as it were, God's chair of state, whereunto no creature can come: it is proper to God alone; it is His palace wherein He most delighteth: wherefore God's Spirit makes His abode there and stirreth that up to pray.

2. The heart is a fountain whence cometh everything, good or evil: wherefore the Spirit doth especially purify and sanctify it. Yea, the heart is as a queen, she hath command of all the

powers of the soul and parts of the body; and therefore the Spirit gives this gift of prayer to her.

### §. 132. Of Discerning When We Pray in the Spirit.

[Use 1] Hereby may we judge whether the Spirit of God be in us and moves us to pray or not. If our prayer comes but from the teeth, though it be never so well framed in regard to the form of words, and though our gesture be never so seemly, savouring of much reverence and humility, yet all is nothing: the Spirit of God has no part in this work if your spirit does not pray. Herein lies a main difference between the manner of persuading God and man. Man may be moved with fair speeches, enticing words, eloquent phrases (as the people of Tyre and Sidon with Herod's eloquent oration), but all the eloquence in the world is no more to God than the lowing of an ox or the howling of a dog if it does not come from the spirit. Hearty and upright prayer is the best rhetoric to move God with.

[Use 2] What matter of humiliation is ministered unto most, even of those who are accounted the best? How often do such, as hear others pray, fall down on their knees and seem to pray, yet know not what has been prayed? Their thoughts have been upon other matters. Some manifest as much in that when the prayer is ended, they testify no assent thereto by saying, "Amen." Yea, how often do they who utter the prayer (ministers in the church, other persons in other places) tumble over words with their

mouths when their hearts are wandering, so little assent of spirit, if any at all, has been given to their own words? Can such sacrifices be acceptable to God? Let us be humbled for what is past and be more watchful over our hearts for the time to come.

# THE FIFTH PART.

The Help of Prayer.

## §. 133. Of Watching unto Prayer.

The fourth general branch concerns the help of Prayer, which is watchfulness, noted in this clause,

"Watch thereunto."

The original word, according to its proper notation, signifies to awake and abstain from sleep: it is properly attributed to the body, metaphorically and by way of resemblance unto the soul. Sleep of the body is such a binding of outward senses that they cannot exercise their several functions: as the eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear, and so on: Watchfulness is contrary hereto, a keeping of the senses free and loose, so that they are readily able to perform their functions. Thus, by way of resemblance, when the soul is so possessed and overcome with security and spiritual senselessness that it cannot perform the duties of holiness and righteousness, it is said to be asleep: when it rouses itself up and casts away security, it is said to watch; in this sense

says the Apostle, "Let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch."

Most restrain this watching unto prayer, to the inward spiritual watchfulness of the soul, which I will not deny to be here especially meant. But yet I cannot think that the watchfulness of the body is excluded: for if the body be drowsy, the mind cannot be watchful. The Apostle, by this clause, would rouse up both body and soul unto prayer. The watchfulness of the body alone is nothing: it is the spirit, the uprightness, ardency, and cheerfulness of it, which makes prayer acceptable to God, as we heard before.

### §. 134. Of Popish Night Vigils.

Right watching unto Prayer is to be noted against the Night Vigils of Papists, who place an extraordinary great point of religion and devotion in observing them. Usually, they make three vigils: one at the closing up of the day and the beginning of the night; another at midnight; the third at the closing up of the night and the beginning of the day. In some places, they have more vigils, as some are more superstitious than others. These vigils they ground on this and other like places where we are commanded to watch unto prayer, as if they who woke to mumble over and over a few set prayers while others slept observed this precept. For in the outward babbling of a few prayers stands the greatest part of their religion. I know well

those night prayers are often performed so drowsily and sleepily that it would be better if they were fast asleep in their beds than between sleeping and waking, thus mocking God.

Objection: David says that at midnight he would rise to give thanks unto God.

Answer: He did not make it a law to rise every midnight, but on occasion being offered, he would even then rise. And so ought every Christian to do: for this is comprised under that particle "always" or "in every season." Thus Paul and Silas, being in prison, prayed at midnight, and Paul afterward preached until midnight: yet they did not ordinarily use this, nor appoint it a law unto themselves or others. Extraordinary actions are not to be enjoined as ordinary things: then should we spend every day in fasting.

I might further show many differences between David, Paul, Silas, their praying at midnight, and Papists' prayers, but of this, I spoke before in the point of Canonical hours.

### §. 135. Of Superstitious Watching for Christ's Coming.

Right watching unto prayer is to be noted against a superstitious practice of many, whom I have known to use to sit up all night at certain times of the year, keeping themselves awake with talking one with another, playing on instruments, singing and the like, upon a conceit that Christ will come in judgment on some of

those nights of the year, and they would not then be found asleep, but awake, because Christ said, "Watch for you know not what hour your Master will come."

These err in many ways.

1. In that they prescribe certain set times for Christ's coming, whereas no man knows it.

2. In that they conceive he shall come in the night, which is uncertain, for he may come as well in the daytime for aught any man knows. Indeed, Christ speaking of his coming to judgment, says, "in that night," but this word "night" is taken synecdochically for day or night, a part for the whole: a little before he calls it the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed, and implies that when he comes, men shall be eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, which are works of the daytime. Yet I will not deny but that he may come in the nighttime.

3. In that they imagine that they who are asleep when Christ comes cannot be well prepared to meet him. Whereas, in truth, a man who has repented of his sins and with faithful prayer commends himself to God, and so goes to sleep, is as fit in his sleep to be awakened and taken up to judgment as if he were in the act of prayer.

4. In that they interpret that precept of Christ, "wake," of bodily waking: and watching here in this text of bodily watching. But waking and watching in these and such like places imply not only a keeping of the eyes, but of the heart also awake and attentive to that which is done.

### §. 136. Of Watching both in Body and in Spirit.

To let all these and other like erroneous conceits pass, and to return to our matter. As outward watchfulness of the body is nothing acceptable to God unless the soul also be watchful, so the soul cannot possibly be watchful unless it has the help of the body's watchfulness: for the parts of the body are those instruments whereby the powers of the soul are exercised. Wherefore both must be joined together, as may easily be gathered out of Christ's charge to his Disciples, "Watch and pray." That he speaks of bodily watchfulness is clear, for he found them asleep, and therefore said, "Watch." As clear also it is that he speaks of spiritual watchfulness because he infers this clause, "that ye enter not into temptation": it is not bodily watchfulness alone that can keep us from temptation. Yet further this metaphor of watching has a large extent: for it is a military word, and the Apostle still holds on like a wise Captain to instruct Christian soldiers what to do. In time of war there are certain appointed continually to watch in some sconce, watch-tower, or other like eminent place, where they must rouse up themselves thoroughly that they sleep not, and not only remain

awake but pry and view up and down everywhere and descry what may be hurtful or helpful to the army. So as watching unto prayer implies a diligent observing of all such things as may help us or hinder us therein. In this sense, the Apostle says of Ministers, that they watch for the souls of their people, that is, carefully observe what may make for the good or what tends to the hurt of their souls.

I might out of the full meaning of this metaphor collect many particular duties and distinctly handle them all, but for brevity's sake, I will draw all to one doctrine, which is this:

For the better performance of prayer, both the body and spirit of him who prays are to be roused up and kept from inward and outward drowsiness, and due observance is to be made of all things helpful or hurtful thereto. To this purpose tend those many exhortations which by Christ and his Disciples are made to watch. When Christ warned his Disciples of his last coming, and when he was in his agony he bid them watch. So Paul, so Peter. To this purpose also tends that pathetical speech of David, "Awake my glory, awake Viol and Harp, I will awake early."

### §. 137. Of the Causes of Drowsiness.

Both body and spirit are carefully to be roused up because of our natural proneness to drowsiness and heaviness in body and spirit. Two causes there are which cause bodily slumbering. First, debility and weakness of senses, whence it is that young

children and old folks are more prone to slumbering than lusty strong persons. Secondly, an abundance of vapors which stupefy the senses: for fullness of meat and drink, whence those vapors arise, make men sluggish and sleepy. Answerable there are two causes which procure spiritual sleepiness and slumbering.

1. Weakness of the flesh (as Christ implies when he checks his Disciples for their sluggishness, saying, "The flesh is weak") whereby it comes to pass that by nature we are exceedingly drowsy and dull, as to all good and godly exercises, so especially to Prayer, which is the best of all. I need not further prove this than by appealing to the conscience of everyone who uses this holy exercise. Many are loath to go about it: many when they are at it, fall fast asleep, as Eutychus. I have heard this direction prescribed when one cannot sleep: Say thy prayers, and thou shalt sleep. It is commonly the direction of profane persons, spoken of sluggish prayers (for if a man prays in the spirit with that earnestness which he ought, it will rather keep him the longer from sleep), but yet it shows that men are commonly dull and drowsy in Prayer. Our spiritual sluggishness makes our hearts heavy, and our eyes sleepy. Again, our bodily sluggishness makes our spirits more dull.

2. Abundance of bygone, wandering, vain, earthly, wicked thoughts, cares, lusts, and such other things, which like vapors arise in our souls, and which the Devil also is very

busy to cast into our hearts in time of prayer. These add much to our natural dullness and drowsiness; so as in these two respects, there is great need of watchfulness.

### §. 138. Of Going Drowsily to Prayer.

Little do they consider the need thereof, who going to prayer, are so far from rousing up their spirits and bodies, that they do, as it may seem, purposely set themselves to sleep: some compose themselves to such gestures as make them sleep; they hang down their heads and lean them upon their arms or hands: they sit upon seats or upon the ground; they close their eyes, etc. Some never pray till they go to bed, and so sleep prevents them: some again come immediately from their pots and platters or from their worldly affairs and businesses and presently go to prayers, without any premeditation or cogitation of what business they have in hand. With what devotion can such prayers be performed? Is this to watch unto prayer? The truth is that such do but mock God.

### §. 139. Directions for Watchfulness.

For avoiding this and such like aberrations, and for a better performance of this duty of watchfulness, observe these few directions following.

In regard to the body, first choose such times as are freest from drowsiness; these are mornings: for our bodies having rested all

the night, and by rest being refreshed, are the more free, ready, and cheerful to prayer. Scholars find it the fittest times for their studies: and so may Christians, if they observe a difference of times, find it fittest for their prayer. If for prayer sake we rise the sooner, we watch unto Prayer.

2. Considering that it is so needful that we pray at evening, which is a drowsy time, rouse up thyself before prayer; go not to it half sleeping, half waking. Learn of the watchful Bird, the Cock, who when he is about to crow, especially in the nighttime, flappeth his wings, and so beateth his body, and rouses up himself to crow. Do thou something to drive away drowsiness stir thy body, walk, meditate, sing a Psalm before prayer at evening. Use such gestures as will keep thee from drowsiness, kneel upright, or to help thy weakness, stand. Hasten to prayer, go not to it too late. Who does these things for prayer's sake, Watch unto Prayer.

3. Moderate thine appetite, and use a temperate diet, if after meat thou art to pray: sobriety is often joined to watchfulness, as an especial help thereof. Christ having given a warning to take heed of surfeiting, drunkenness, and cares of this World, inferreth this exhortation, Watch and pray: otherwise we cannot well watch and pray. Wherefore saith Saint Paul; Let us watch and be sober. And Saint Peter, Be sober and watching in prayer. Who eat for

prayer's sake somewhat the more sparingly, do watch unto prayer.

In regard to the soul:

1. Take heed it is not too much distracted with worldly thoughts. Cares of this world choke the Word; much more will they choke the spirit of Prayer. He who, remembering the time of prayer, disburdens his soul hereof, watches unto prayer.

2. Most especially, be watchful against sin, which (as has been shown before) like birdlime will so cling to the feathers of the soul that it cannot fly up to Heaven. Nothing dulls the heart of man more than sin. He who yields thereto can hardly recover himself and revive his spirit again in a long time. It was three-quarters of a year before David was thoroughly recovered after his great fall; for his child was born before, and an extraordinary means was used to recover him: the Prophet Nathan was sent unto him.

It was an admirable and extraordinary thing that Peter was so soon recovered. Sins grieve the spirit and quench his good gift in us: the Spirit, being grieved and provoked to withdraw his presence, will not return again with a wet finger. Especially be watchful against such sins as by nature you are most prone unto: for in them especially will Satan most attempt you when you are

going to prayer. If you are given to lust, make a covenant with your eye not to cast it upon a strange woman: avoid wanton company, garish attire, fullness of bread, and whatever may provoke lust; so in anger, voluptuousness, covetousness, etc. This is an excellent point of wisdom and argues great watchfulness unto prayer, if for prayer's sake it be done.

3. Take notice of God's mercies and judgments, of his blessings bestowed on you, and of your wants, of the estate of others, and of other points concerning the matter of prayer. Read also some part of God's Word before prayer: Thus, you shall come furnished to prayer. This is also to watch unto prayer.

Many complain of their untoward performance of this heavenly duty but observe not the reason thereof, which is this: They watch not unto Prayer.

# THE SIXTH PART.

The means of prevailing by Prayer.

## §. 140. Of Perseverance.

In the last place, an especial means of obtaining our desire by Prayer is added, which is Perseverance. Pray (says the Apostle), watching thereunto with all perseverance.

Perseverance is holding out to do a thing until it is accomplished. The universal particle "All" adds emphasis thereto and shows that it must be patient, constant, unwearied, continued holding out. The original word is attributed by the learned of that tongue to hunting dogs, which will not cease following the game until they have got it. A fitting resemblance, if the rule of a similitude is observed, which is to hold close to the point in hand. To persevere then in prayer is, with long patience, to continue constantly in calling upon God, and not grow weary or give over until he hears us. This is manifested in two ways,

1. By often praying for one and the same thing. As Paul prayed thrice against a temptation, that is, often.

2. By holding out for a long time at one time, as Jacob wrestled a whole night with the Angel and would not let him go until he had blessed him.

## §. 141. Of the things which we are to ask with all perseverance.

Quest. 1. How often or how long must we persevere in prayer before we give over?

Answ. No certain and stinted time can be limited. Some things are continually to be prayed for as long as we live, namely those things which we stand in need of all the days of our life, whether they respect soul or body, and those things which shall not be accomplished so long as we live; as a joyful resurrection and eternal salvation. These are to be prayed for in our ordinary prayers continually. Other things for which especially perseverance in prayer is needful, require a more particular and present answer of God, such as a temptation, sickness, or any distress which hangs over our heads or lies upon us, or such blessings as we stand in present need of: these are to be prayed for until we obtain our desire, as Jacob would not let the Angel go until he had blessed him: or until we have some better thing in lieu thereof, as Paul prayed against the temptation until he had sufficient grace given to him against it, or until there is no hope of obtaining our desire; that is, until God evidently declares that it is his will not to grant it, as David continued to pray for his child while it lived, but when it was departed, he ceased to pray for him, saying, "The child being now dead, wherefore should I now fast? Can I bring him again any more?"

## §. 142. Of the difference between praying always and with all perseverance.

Quest. 2. Was not this much implied under the forenamed circumstance of time, always, or in every season?

Answ. Seeing the Apostle sets down the Doctrine of Prayer so distinctly and succinctly here, we may not imagine that he would twice set down in one and the same verse, one and the same thing, and that in two differing phrases. There is certainly a difference between these two branches, which I take to be especially in these two respects.

1. That is more general, having respect to the whole course of a Christian's life, that he has his set times: constantly observes them, and is ever ready on all occasions to pray.

This is more particular, having respect to some especial occasions, that in craving them we should be instant and urgent.

2. That respects the duty and work of prayer, that we be constant in performing it.

This the issue and event of prayer, or the blessing which flows from it: for it is the effect and issue of our prayer that makes us more or less importunate: longer or shorter to continue in prayer. If it is long before we receive what we desire, the longer we persevere and continue in prayer.

§. 143. Of the difference between persevering and much babbling in prayer.

Quest. 3. What difference is there between these many, and long prayers implied under perseverance, and those vain repetitions, much babbling, and long prayers condemned by Christ in the Scribes and Pharisees?

Answ. Very much and great: even as great as between white and black, light and darkness, sincerity and hypocrisy.

1. These many and long prayers here intimated are proportioned according to God's particular dealing with us: if it is long before he grants our request, we go the oftener unto him, and we hold out the longer in prayer.

Those vain repetitions and babblings are stinted by set and certain periods of time appointed beforehand, without any respect of God's dealing.

2. These come from the vehemency of desire and ardency of affection.

Those only from the tongue and lips.

The Papists are like the Pharisees in both these. For first, they measure the number and continuance of their prayers by their set times: for which purpose they have both set forms of prayer, and also chains of Beads to put them in mind when their stint is ended; yea they set down so great a number of repetitions, as cannot be freed from vain repetitions.

This name Jesus is above five hundred times set down to be repeated at one time in their Jesus Psalter. Again, their prayers being in Latin (as I have shown before) which tongue all that say their prayers understand not, they cannot come from the heart, but only from the tongue.

### §. 144. Of holding out in prayer.

Thus having clarified the meaning of this clause, observe the instruction hence arising, which is this,

Those who desire to reap the fruit of their prayer must both often renew their prayer, and also hold on without fainting until it is heard. In the word used here, this duty is often urged: but most elegantly and emphatically does the Prophet set it forth in his own example, saying, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my tongue, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof breaks forth as the light," etc. Again, he says of other Watchmen, "All the day and all the night continually they shall not cease." Further, by way of exhortation, he adds, "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establishes, and till he makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Christ also excellently sets it forth by two parables, one of a Friend, the other of a poor Widow. The Friend was so importunate, as he was impudent again: for so much the notation of the original word implies. The Widow, by her importunity, so troubled the Judge, as he feared

he should be weary with her often coming. Mark how impudent beggars will be, they will receive no nay: nor many who petition the King, Council, Lord Chancellor, Judges, and the like, and by their impudence often obtain their suits. Impudence, taken in the best sense, as Christ uses the word, is such a holy, constant importunity, as will take no denial. This we may use to God, and if we use it, we shall assuredly prevail: for note what Christ says, "Shall not God avenge his own elect who cry day and night unto him, though he bears long with them?" Particular examples of often praying for one thing, and long holding out in prayer, were laid down in the point of extraordinary prayer.

### §. 145. Of the reasons of Perseverance.

The ground of this Perseverance is God's wise disposing providence, who often sets a long date to the accomplishment of his promises, until which time comes, he seems not to hear us, and yet expects that we should solicit and ply him with our prayers, not because he needs solicitors and remembrancers, but for just and weighty reasons,

1. The sacrifice of prayer is a sweet and delightful sacrifice to God. The Apostle, speaking of the calves or fruits of our lips, which are prayers and praises, says, "with such sacrifices God is pleased." In this respect, prayer is called Incense: God is delighted with the prayers of his Saints, as men with the savour of sweet incense. He loves to hear them often

praying, and long to continue, provided that the prayer comes from an honest heart and true desire.

2. God thus tries the faith and patience of his Saints, whether they can and will continue to depend upon him. Who cease to pray, cease to wait: they withdraw themselves from God, and God's soul will have no pleasure in them. (Heb. 10 38.)

3. By Perseverance, prayers wax more earnest and fervent. Christ often praying, prayed the more fervently. Prayer is like fire, which if it finds fit matter, the longer it burns, the hotter it burns. But God loves not lukewarm prayers: they are as irksome to him as lukewarm water to a man's stomach. God will spew them out.

4. God thus moves his children to search their hearts, to see if they can find any cause in them why God hears them not. This was a means whereby Achan's sin came to be found out: yea by God's denying once and twice to hear the Israelites, they were brought to repentance.

5. God does thus commend his blessings so much the more unto us. For good things much desired, often craved, long expected, are more welcome when they are obtained, and we are moved to be more thankful for them. Things soon obtained are little regarded.

## §. 146. Of the damage of not persevering, and advantage of persevering.

What a vain conceit it is to think that it is in vain to call upon God long or often if he does not hear at first. Such was the conceit of him who said, "Behold, this evil comes from the Lord: should I attend on the Lord any longer?" This conceit cannot be free from pride and arrogance; yea, it is a disdainful and presumptuous conceit. Yet by nature, we are all too prone to it: for we are ready to prescribe a time to God, and to say, "So long will I continue to depend upon him, and pray unto him; if by that time he does not hear, he will never hear." This is the cause that often we fail of the fruits of our prayers, and fall into many temptations, giving our spiritual enemies great advantage against us.

For our parts, let us learn how to carry ourselves when God seems to reject our prayers, even as the woman of Canaan, when Christ at first would not seem to hear, and after told her plainly he was not sent to her, and the third time compared her to a whelp, yet she continued praying: and what was the issue? Her faith was commended, her request was granted. Never did anyone who persevered lose their labour.

As for those who have lain long under a cross, let them not think their prayers are not regarded, or themselves not respected, because at first they were not heard: we see here that God expects perseverance.

# THE SEVENTH PART.

The Persons for Whom Prayer Is to Be Made.

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel: For which I am an Ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak." - Ephes. 6. 19. 20.

§. 147. Of desiring the help of others' prayers.

From his direction unto prayer, the Apostle proceeds to an especial request, that they whom he had instructed, and incited to pray for others, would in particular pray for him: whence observe, that as Christians ought to pray for others, so to desire the mutual prayers of others for themselves. Seldom did Saint Paul write to anyone, of whom he requested not their prayers, whether they were whole Churches, as in this and many other Epistles, or particular persons; as Philemon. This has been the ancient practice of God's children: Hezekiah desired the prayers of Isaiah, Esther of the Jews, Daniel of his three companions: God intimated thus much to Abimelech, that it would be good for him to crave the prayers of Abram, and to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, that it would be good for them to seek the prayers

of Job. Did not Saint James exhort hereunto when he said, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray for him."

§. 148. Of motives to desire others' prayers.

The motives which were alleged to enforce the duty of prayer in general might fitly be here again applied, for prayer being a duty whereby God is much honoured, and a thing very powerful with God, and profitable to those for whom it is made, we ought to take all occasions to stir up others thereunto. But there are many more particular reasons to urge this doctrine: for by desiring the prayers of others,

1. We testify our great desire of God's blessing, and thereupon we think it not enough to pray for it ourselves but also seek the help of others' prayers to obtain it.

2. We show that we acknowledge a communion of Saints, which perform mutual duties one to another.

3. We manifest a sense of our own weakness, for the supporting whereof we crave the help of others, yea, we manifest much humility.

4. We maintain mutual love, which consists not only in offering and doing kindnesses but also craving and accepting the like: if a man does not sometimes desire and

receive good turns at his friends' hands, he will make his friend unwilling and ashamed to seek and receive any at his hands, and so will intercourse of love be soon broken off.

## §. 149. Of the difference between desiring other men's prayers and making them mediators.

Object Thus are many mediators made.

Answer Nothing so, for our desire is not that other men should present our persons and our prayers to God, and so make them acceptable, which is the office of a mediator, but only we use them as companions and fellow-members in this office.

## §. 150. Of those who use or refuse to ask the help of others' prayers.

[Use 1] This justifies the commendable and usual practice of the Saints at this day, who when they depart from one another, or write to one another, or being in any distress, are visited by one another, desire the prayers of one another. The thing is good and warrantable: ye that have used it, be not ashamed of it, neither cease to use it still; only as the thing is in itself good, so use it well: not complimentally for custom's sake, but from the heart, and that in regard to the forenamed reasons.

[Use 2] As for those who are ashamed to desire the prayers of others, unworthy they are to partake of the benefit of others'

prayers.

And for those who mock and scoff at it in others, what do they but strike the Prophets and Apostles through their loins, whom they scoff at? The time may come when they would be glad of their prayers, whom in their prosperity they mocked, even as Pharaoh was glad of the prayers of Moses and Aaron, Saul of the prayers of Samuel, and Simon Magus of Simon Peter's.

### §. 151. That none are too good to seek the help of another's prayer.

But for the better clearing of this point, I will more distinctly declare the persons both who are to desire this duty, and also of whom it is to be desired.

For the first, all of all sorts, none excepted, must desire the prayers of others, not only the younger, meaner, inferior sort, as children, scholars, auditors and the like: but even the best and greatest, and that of such as are much inferior unto them. Note the forenamed examples, which show that Kings, Queens, Prophets, Apostles, desired this kindness: what persons more eminent for place, or more excellent for grace? if it beseemed them, whom may it not beseem?

On the one side, the greatest and best, while here they live are subject to many infirmities, many temptations: and though they may have some excellent gifts above others, yet they want many

others, which meaner than they have: besides, they are prone to decay in the graces which they have. On the other side, the prayers of the least and meanest Saint are of force with God: God is no accepter of persons: it is the heart, the honesty, sincerity and ardency of it, which he most respects, and not the greatness and dignity of the person who prays. In this regard therefore, as the foot may be helpful to the head, and as a little mouse may be helpful to a Lion caught and entangled with cords, by gnawing a cord asunder, so may the least Christian be helpful to the greatest by praying for them.

[Use] Let none therefore think themselves so complete and well-furnished, as they need not the help of others' prayers: or so great, that it should not beseem them to seek this help. God in wisdom has so ordered the body of Christ, that the members thereof should need one another's prayers: and that, both to maintain mutual love among them (for mutual prayers do even knit the souls of the Saints together) and also to suppress arrogance, that one should not scorn and disdain another. If any be otherwise minded, it is to be feared that ambition has blinded their minds.

If the greater are to desire the prayers of the meaner, much more the meaner of greater, as children of parents, people of the Ministers, etc.

### §. 152. Of praying to the living only.

For the second, the benefit and kindness of prayer are to be desired from those whom we know may know our desire. These are only the living, who converse among us upon the face of the earth: to these, whether present or absent, we may make known our desire: if present, by words or outward signs: if absent, by letter or message.

To desire the prayers of those who have departed from this world is both in vain and also without warrant.

1. In vain, because we can neither make sign, speak, write, nor send to them: nor can they, without some such means, know the desire of our heart. It is God's property to search the heart.

2. Without warrant, because the whole Scripture affords neither precept, promise nor good example tending to that purpose; had it been needful, unquestionably Christ would have included it in his perfect form of prayer.

### §. 153. Of the Papists' arguments for praying to the dead.

Our adversaries make a show of sundry places, but such as make nothing to the purpose, but are wrested clean contrary to the scope of the Holy Ghost. Their great champion, who uses to gather together what has been or may be alleged for the defense of their superstition, idolatry, and heresy, quotes only these distinct places out of the Old Testament: The first is where Jacob

says to Joseph, "The Angel which delivered me from all evil, bless the children, etc."

Answer: The Angel there meant is the same with whom Jacob wrestled, which was Christ Jesus, the Angel of the Covenant.

The second is that speech of Eliphaz, "to which of the Saints wilt thou turn."

Answer: 1. Question may be made whether every speech of Eliphaz recorded in that Book be of sufficient authority to justify a point in controversy: The author who alleges this argument does not deny but doubt may be made thereof. 2. The place is meant of Saints living on earth: neither does it imply any prayer to them but speaks of a due consideration of their estate, whether any were like to Job.

The third is the prayer of Moses, "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Answer: Moses means not any intercession which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made unto God for their posterity; but the covenant which God made with them on behalf of their posterity.

Further, he heaps up sundry places both out of the old and out of the New Testament, wherein prayers of the Saints living are desired; and infers that if it be meet and lawful to call upon the

Saints while they are upon earth, it must needs be lawful to call upon the same Saints when they reign with Christ.

Answer: 1. There is a difference between desiring Saints to pray for us (which this text, and other like places, warrant) and calling upon Saints (which no place of Scripture warrants), whether they be dead or living.

2. The argument from the living to the dead does not follow: because we have warrant for the one, not for the other; and because we can make known our desires to them, not to these.

Let us go along with God, and use such means of obtaining the blessings he has appointed, and then in faith may we depend upon him and expect his blessing.

Thus much for this general point of requesting the prayers of others.

### §. 154. Of praying for Ministers.

Of the persons in general for whom prayer is to be made, we have spoken before. Now we will more distinctly consider the particular person mentioned in this place, for whom prayers are most especially to be made: this is set down under the Apostle's person: "For me," saith he. Saint Paul was, by virtue of his calling, a Minister of the Gospel, even a public Minister unto the

whole world, by reason of his Apostleship: yet more particularly in those places where he planted Churches, and where his Ministry was powerful and effectual, he was a peculiar Minister, as himself saith to the Corinthians, "If I be not an Apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you: for ye are the seal of mine Apostleship in the Lord." Among other Churches, that at Ephesus, to whom he wrote this Epistle, was planted by him: he was the spiritual father of that people, and a special Minister unto them. As a Minister of the Gospel (yea and as their Minister) he requests this duty, to pray for him: and so much is clear by that which he would have them pray for in his behalf, namely, utterance, and liberty to preach the Gospel.

From this particular, I may raise this general doctrine.

People are especially to be mindful of their Ministers in their prayers to God. As Paul and other Ministers have desired this of their people: so we read that when Peter was in prison, earnest prayer was made of the Church for him: and when Paul and Silas went forth to preach, they were commended of the brethren to the grace of God; namely, by prayer. This did Christ give in charge, saying, "Pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

### §. 155. Of motives to pray for Ministers.

Weighty motives there be to press this duty for Ministers especially.

1. Of all callings, the Minister's is the most excellent, necessary, and profitable: for it respects the soul (for which Ministers watch), yea, the spiritual, heavenly, and eternal good of body and soul.

2. It is of all the most difficult: whereupon the Apostle with great emphasis saith; "Who is sufficient for these things?" Difficult it is in two respects.

    1. Of the work itself.

    2. Of the persons who are deputed to that work.

The function of a Minister is to quicken such as are dead in sin: to raise up and restore such as have fallen back again; to comfort those that are troubled in conscience; to strengthen the weak; to encourage the faint-hearted; to confound the obstinate; to stand against all adverse power; together with many other like things, all which are above human strain, more than flesh and blood can do: yet the persons to whose ministry these great works are deputed, are flesh and blood, sons of men; Men subject to the like common passions that all other men are, in consideration whereof, many being called to this function, have sought to decline it, as Moses, Jeremiah, Jonah, and others; and Elisha, when he was to succeed Elijah, desired that the spirit of Elijah might be doubled upon him.

3. Of all sorts of men, faithful Ministers are most opposed by Satan and his instruments: so soon as Christ was publicly set apart to perform his ministerial function, Satan set upon him in the wilderness; and ever after the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and other limbs of the Devil, persecuted him from time to time. When Joshua stood before the Angel of the Lord to receive his commission, Satan stood at his right hand to resist him. When the Apostles were to be sent forth to preach, then Satan desired to winnow them as wheat. The history of the Acts of the Apostles, showeth what storms have continually been raised against the Apostles, while they were diligently occupied in their ministerial function: one trouble came upon the neck of another, as wave upon wave. Other histories testify as much of other Ministers: our times are not without too evident demonstrations of this point. As Christ while he lived a private life, so others live quietly in comparison of the following times, but when they begin faithfully to exercise their ministry, then arise the storms: for Satan well knoweth that if the shepherd be smitten, the sheep will soon be scattered; therefore he useth the King of Aram's policy: he bendeth all his forces against the Captains of the Lord's army.

4. Their failing in their duty is most dangerous. If they perish, many perish with them. For they are like the Admiral ship which carrieth the lantern, whereby the whole fleet is

guided: if in a stormy and dark night that sink, whither will the rest of the navy? When Peter stepped out of the way, many Jews, and Barnabas also went astray with them. That very Apostle prophesying of false teachers that should bring in damnable heresy, saith, "Many shall follow their damnable ways." How did Arius in his time seduce the greatest part of Christendom? Never were there any Ministers corrupt in life, or doctrine, but many were drawn into perdition with them.

Are not now prayers, hearty and earnest prayers to be made for Ministers especially. Oh, pray that the Lord would send forth faithful Labourers: and pray for a blessing on them which are sent forth. Do this in public, do it in private; let us your Ministers never be forgotten. We well know the power of faithful prayer, and the need we have thereof. You know the benefit of faithful preaching, and the need you have thereof. We to our poor power are mindful of you. Our mouth is opened unto you; our heart is enlarged: Now for recompense in the same, be ye also enlarged. You reap the fruit and benefit of that blessing which God bestoweth on our labours.

Hitherto of the person who is to be prayed for.

### §. 156. Of the things which are to be prayed for in behalf of Ministers.

It remains to show both what is to be prayed for in behalf of Ministers, and why.

That which is to be prayed for is, in one word, Utterance: which is amplified, first by the manner; secondly, by the end.

The manner is declared in two branches. First, Opening the mouth: Secondly, Liberty of speech.

The end is to make known the mystery of the Gospel.

The reasons why the Apostle would have those things prayed for in his behalf are two: One taken from his Office: he was an Ambassador for the Gospel. The other from his present condition: he was in bonds. Hereupon he repeats again the thing to be prayed for (in these words, "That therein I may speak boldly") and the manner (in these) as I ought to speak.

### §. 157. Of Ministers' inability in themselves.

All the things which are here set down, the Apostle desires to be given unto him, because he well knew he had them not of himself: Here then, first note,

Ministers have no ability to perform their Ministerial function, except it be given them. For we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves. Our sufficiency is of God, who has made us able Ministers. Note what Christ says to his Apostles; "Without me ye can do nothing." Great were the pains

which Saint Paul took in the execution of his Ministry: He laboured more abundantly than all the rest: whereby is manifested that he had a great ability thereunto, yet he says; "It is not I, but the grace of God which is with me." In this respect he says more indefinitely of all Ministers, "That neither he which planteth is anything, nor he which watereth."

I showed before that the work of the Ministry is a divine work, and that Ministers are but men. Now what is man to that which is divine?

Is not this a strong motive to incite all to pray for their Ministers? Without God's assistance and blessing, they are nothing. Yet through God, they are mighty.

[Use 2] Let not such as have some ability hereunto be insolent therein; no, though they have gifts eminent above others: For who makes thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? Let such as are insolent take heed that God take not away their ability from them. God has so dealt with many.

### §. 158. Of praying for ability in Ministers.

All the particulars here set down for which the Apostle would have the Ephesians pray in his behalf may be drawn to these two

heads: Ability and liberty to exercise his ministry. Hence arises a double instruction: one for Ministers, the other for People.

That which Ministers ought most of all to seek for is that they may well perform the work of their Ministry.

This also is what people ought to beg of God for their Ministers.

Observe the several places wherein the Apostles desire people to pray for them, and you shall find this to be the matter of their requests. When the Apostles were assembled to pray together, thus they prayed, "O Lord grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy Word."

For Ministers, their Ministerial function is that particular work which God hath appointed to them, their proper Talent whereof they are to give a particular account unto the great shepherd of the sheep: and the means whereby they may best manifest their love to Christ.

For People, the Office of Ministers was appointed to gather them together, till they all meet in the unity of faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. In a word, Ministers by well performing their ministerial function do most good both to themselves and their people. Mark what Saint Paul saith to Timothy, "In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

How contrary are the desires of many Ministers to Paul's? [Use 1] If God should appear to them as he did to Solomon, and say, "Ask what I shall give thee," I am afraid that too few would desire ability to do their work, but rather some great livings; others, places of dignity: others, applause and praise of people, with the like. For these are the things which men hunt after.

But are people otherwise minded? do they desire that their Ministers should be able, faithful, and painful? Surely very few in comparison of the multitude, who rather desire such as are quiet men, content with anything, friendly, and familiar with them, not inquisitive into them, nor examining what knowledge, faith, repentance, and such like graces they have: not busy in prying into their faults, but rather winking at them; suffering everyone to follow their own delights, with the like, which are profitable neither to people nor Minister For by such remissness and negligence, People die in their iniquity, and their blood shall be required at the Ministers hand.

[Use 2] Let such as respect God's glory, the edification of his Church, or salvation of their own souls, here learn what to pray for in their Ministers behalf: and if they have Ministers endowed with such gifts, bless God for them. For what we are to pray for, we must also be thankful for, when it is bestowed; as the Apostle implies, saying, "Labor by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us for many, thanks may be given by many persons for us." Yea, let them most esteem, and account of such

Ministers, "Having them in singular love for their works sake." Not like the common sort, who best esteem good fellows and boon companions (as they speak;) such were those Israelites of whom the Prophet thus speaks; "If a man prophesy of wine, and strong drink, he shall even be the Prophet of this people."

§. 159. Of Utterance, what is here meant thereby.

Now we come more distinctly to handle the particular points here laid down.

The first is, utterance.

The word translated utterance usually signifies speech. It is taken either passively for that which is spoken and uttered, or actively for the very uttering of that which is conceived. In the former respect, speech and utterance are given when God ministers unto his servants matter to speak: according to that which Christ says to his Disciples, "It shall be given you what you shall speak." In the latter respect, it has reference both to the speaker's inability (and so implies an ability and faculty to utter that which he is to speak) and also to the opposition which by others is made against him (and so it signifies leave and liberty to speak). I take the middlemost of these significations to be especially meant, which is an ability and faculty to utter that which is to be spoken, yet so as the other two may not simply be excluded: for fit matter to be uttered, and a good faculty to utter it may not be severed; abundance of good matter without ability

to utter it is without profit, it cannot edify another. Ability to speak well without good and sound matter is mere vanity: it can but tickle the ear. Again, if a Minister has both these and wants liberty, his knowledge and gift of utterance are but as candles put under bushels.

§. 160. Of a Minister's ability to utter what he conceives.

Here then I collect that,

It is needful for a Minister to have matter worthy to be uttered, so also a faculty well to utter it. He must be apt to teach. It should seem that Moses felt the want of this when he said, "I am not eloquent, but slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." And Jeremiah when he said, "I cannot speak." Therefore the Lord gave them utterance.

The matter which a Minister conceives is only profitable to himself, the utterance of it is that which profits others: for faith comes by hearing.

Little regard have they for the good of God's Church, who spend all their days in the University, or in some such like place of learning, to gather more and more knowledge and understanding of divinity, but never exercise themselves in utterance: never pray, nor use any means to attain thereto: no, though they be admitted Ministers, inducted into livings, and

have taken upon them the cure of souls. Though they may know much, yet their people are not edified thereby.

But what may we say of such as want both knowledge and speech? Such as the Prophet complains of, saying, "Their watchmen are blind, they are dumb dogs, they cannot bark; they lie and sleep, etc." These are the very bane of our Church, and the dishonour thereof; they take up the places of better than themselves: they take the fleece of the flock, but feed it not; they drive away many from our Churches, and offend more that tarry in it: good they do to none, but much hurt, and heavy is that account which another day they are to make unto the Lord of the Harvest; it had been better both for the Church, and also for themselves that they had been made carters, than Ministers of the Word.

### §. 161. Of Paul's Gift of Utterance.

To return to our Apostle, did he not have the gift of utterance? If he did, why did he make this request? Do men pray for what they already possess?

Answer: No doubt he had an excellent and admirable utterance: for when they preached at Lystra, the Gentiles called him Mercurius, whom they accounted the God of eloquence. The many Sermons of his and Orations, and apologies, which are recorded in the Acts, are evident demonstrations of his elegant

and powerful utterance, as also of his boldness and freedom of speech.

Object: He himself confesses that he was rude in speech.

Answer: That was said not simply, but partly by way of supposition (as if he had said, many may, and do take me to be rude in speech; well, grant it to be so, yet none can imagine that I am so in knowledge) and partly by way of comparison, in regard of the foolish, vain, rhetorical flourish, and show of eloquence, which other false Teachers, and many heathen Orators made (as if he had said; In regard of that curious verbal eloquence which many use, I deny not but I am rude in speech). In this respect he plainly says, That he came not with excellency of speech: and that his preaching was not with enticing words. But for good and true utterance, none went beyond him. Did he lack utterance when he made Felix and Drusilla tremble as he reasoned of righteousness and temperance, and of the judgment to come? Or when he caused King Agrippa to break out in the midst of his speech, and say, "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian."

## §. 162. Of Praying for Gifts Bestowed.

Yet he desired that utterance should be prayed for in his behalf, not without good reason: for well he knew, that

1. That which he had was not so perfect, but it might be bettered.

2. God could take it away whenever it pleased him.

3. He could no longer use it, than God continued to enable him.

4. No blessing could be expected by it, unless God made it powerful.

From the practice of the Apostle, and from these weighty reasons thereof I gather,

Such gifts as God has once bestowed are still to be prayed for. Compare the eighth and seventeenth verses of the first Chapter of this Epistle together, and you shall find how the Apostle says, that God has been abundant toward them in all wisdom, and yet prays God to give them the Spirit of wisdom. Compare the 3rd and 9th verses of Colossians 1, and you may gather as much.

[Use 1] Have not those who are best furnished need to pray themselves, and have the help of others' prayers? Suppose they should be destitute of no needful gift, yet we see prayer is needful for the gifts we have.

[Use 2] They are too insolent who, having received some gifts, trust to themselves, and look not to God who gave them. Thus

many venturing to swim alone, are drowned. Many that have good gifts, perish themselves, and are a cause that others perish with them. For some fall into gross heresies, some into a vain kind of affectation, some forget that which once they had; some grow very sots and dolts. By these, and many other ways, does God justly punish the pride of Ministers.

## §. 163. Of Opening the Mouth.

The next point concerns the manner of utterance: the first branch whereof is opening the mouth; the second boldness, which according to the original may thus be set down; Pray for me that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to publish, etc. Or thus, With opening my mouth in boldness. This opening of the mouth is not to be taken as a mere pleonasm or redundancy of speech (as when we say, I saw with mine eyes opened, or heard with mine ears), but as a special emphasis, implying a plain, distinct, audible delivery, and that according to the literal meaning of the phrase. This phrase is sometimes taken figuratively for a free and bold delivery of a man's mind, but is more plainly expressed in the next, again for freedom and liberty to speak, but that is set down in the next verse. Wherefore I take it in the literal sense, opposed to an evil unbeseeming shamefastness, which makes men speak whisperingly between the teeth and lips, as if they were loath to be heard.

## §. 164. Of Delivering the Word Distinctly and Audibly.

From the meaning of this phrase I gather that,

Ministers ought to utter the Word distinctly and audibly, so it may be heard and understood. The Prophets were commanded to cry, yea to cry aloud, and lift up their voice: to cry in the ears of the people. Thus did Wisdom, She cried without, and uttered her voice in the streets.

This manifests a holy zeal in Ministers, and shows that they are not ashamed of their function, but desirous of the good of the people. In this respect does the Apostle use this phrase, where he says, "O Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you." Besides, by this manner of delivering the Word, the ear is more pierced, and the heart more affected.

[Use] Here then may such parents justly be censured, as having children whose speech is so weak, it cannot be heard of many, or so stuttering, it cannot be understood, yet train them up to be Preachers. Under which censure come they also, who having such speech, do notwithstanding thrust themselves into the Ministry; and not so only, but also affect and seek to preach in spacious and populous places: it cannot be, but that many who come to hear, must needs be deprived of the benefit of their preaching. The voice is an especial thing to be respected, in such as are set apart unto the Ministry. If one that cannot be heard, or understood, should come upon a stage, he would be hissed off

again: why then should such come into a Pulpit? Is it not more requisite that a Preacher's voice should be heard, and understood, than a stage-player's voice?

As for those to whom God has given ability to open their mouths, who can speak audibly and distinctly, so all that are present might hear and understand them, yet through a misconceived shamefastness, or (I know not what) fear of straining their voices, and spending their tongues, speak so softly and whisperingly as few can hear them (to say the least) they show little desire of edifying God's people, preferring their own ease to others good: yea they make themselves guilty of the loss of that benefit, which they that cannot hear them might otherwise have received. I will not deny but that men may, and many do fall into another extreme of needless clamourousness, and without cause spend themselves by opening their mouths wider, and lifting up their voices higher, than either the number of people present, or the necessity of the matter delivered, requires: for they will utter in small assemblies every sentence and word, yea even the quotation of places with the highest strain of their voice that they can. As in other things, so in this also, a good mean and moderation, guided with judgment and discretion, is to be used.

Then especially is the mouth to be opened, when matters of more than usual note and need are delivered. Most of all when open, notorious, scandalous sins wherein men live and lie, and

whereof they are loath to hear, are reproved. "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions," saith God. But the practice hereof I leave to the discretion of each wise dispenser of God's secrets, according as their several abilities and occasions shall require.

### §. 165. Of a Minister's Boldness in Preaching.

The second branch concerning the manner of utterance is boldness, opposed to an evil unbeseeming fearfulness. This implies a holy courage and liberty which a Minister takes unto himself, having respect to his Master that sent him, and the office deputed unto him, and not to the persons of men, with whose contradictions and oppositions he is not daunted.

The notation of the original word implies as much: and it shows that the boldness here meant is a gift whereby a man dares freely open his whole mind and utter anything.

Boldness, courage, and freedom of speech are needful for a Minister in the execution of his Ministry. Often did God stir up his Prophets hereto, as when he said to Jeremiah, "Arise, speak unto them all that I command thee: be not afraid of their faces," and to Ezekiel, "Thou son of man fear them not, neither be afraid of their words," etc. Christ manifested great boldness in his Ministry, for he taught as one having authority, so as his hearers were astonished: this boldness made him so freely rebuke the Scribes and Pharisees and discover both the errors of

their doctrine and the corruptions of their life: yea, and thunder out many woes against them. Such was the boldness of his forerunner John the Baptist, as he was said to come in the spirit and power of Elijah. Great boldness did Peter and John show forth, and the rest of the Apostles.

Many people are impudent, stiff-necked, fierce, and violent, and will soon quail a Minister if he be not of a bold spirit. This reason God himself renders to his Prophets, to make them the bolder. We see by common experience how everyone will trample on him that is timorous and faint-hearted. Soon will people perceive whether their Ministers be timorous or not: if they be, they will surely tread on them. But if Ministers be bold, men of courage, and freely declare their message, they will daunt the stoutest hearts. For God's word has a powerful work in it, if it be delivered with power and courage. The Prophets and Apostles dismayed their proudest enemies.

### §. 166. Of the Things Wherein Boldness is to be Shown.

For the better application of this point, observe how and wherein this boldness is to be manifested.

1. By an equal and impartial preaching of the Word, without respect of persons: Christ spared none: not Rulers, Priests, Lawyers, nor any other sort: but told all of them their duty.

2. By a declaration of the whole truth of God, as occasion requires, concealing no part thereof for any by respects of favour, fear, reward, danger, or the like. Herein did the Apostle show his boldness, for he says to the Elders of Ephesus, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the council of God."

3. By a grave, plain, free delivery of God's word, without affectation of popular applause: seeking more to approve oneself to him of whom he is sent, than to please them to whom he is sent. With great emphasis does the Apostle set forth his boldness in this respect, saying, "Do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men?" That is, I am far from seeking to please men.

4. By reproving sin, and that with authority, so as transgressors may be brought to shame (if it be possible) and made to tremble. Thus did the Baptist reprove Herod, and Christ the Pharisees.

5. By despising all shame, fear, reproach, and disgrace, which by profane and wicked persons shall be brought upon us, for performing our calling as we ought: it is expressly said of Christ, "He despised the shame:" and the Apostle says of himself, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," and exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord: God commands his Prophets not to fear.

## §. 167. Of Joining Courage and Wisdom Together.

In these, and such respects, this gift (a most needful gift) is to be prayed for, and Ministers must labour in these respects to show their holy boldness. Let us therefore rouse up our dull spirits and cast off the cloaks of fear and shame; that in truth we may say, as the Apostle did of himself and his fellow-labourers: "We use great boldness of speech," provided that it be guided with wisdom: wisdom and courage must be joined to each other.

Wisdom, that unnecessarily, without the limits of our calling, as busy-bodies, we thrust not ourselves into such dangers, as we can have no comfort in bearing: in which respect says Saint Peter, "Let none suffer as a busy-body in other men's matters."

Courage, that we shrink not from that duty whereunto God has called us, to avoid imminent danger: lest by seeking to prevent man's rage, we pull upon our heads God's wrath. God is able to deliver us from the rage of all men: but all the world cannot shelter us from the wrath of God.

## §. 168. Of Ministers Seeking to Edify the Church.

The end why the Apostle desires the forenamed gifts is in the last words of this verse, "To make known the mystery of the Gospel." Every word almost affords a forcible reason to urge them to pray for those gifts in his behalf.

1. To make known (so as they shall thereby attain to knowledge.)
2. The mystery (a thing that is not easily known)
3. Of the Gospel (the best thing that can be learned.)

In general, we may note that the end which the Apostle aimed at, in desiring utterance, was for the edification of others: for to make a thing known is to instruct and edify others. Here observe,

That which Ministers aim at in fitting themselves to the Ministry, must be the edification of the Church: they may and must desire and seek the best gifts: yea, they may seek to excel, but to the edifying of the Church: expressly the Apostle charges, that all things be done to edifying.

For this end Christ ordained Ministers, even for the edifying of the body of Christ.

[Use] Let them consider this, whose end is only their maintenance: who study hard, and read much, and preach often, and all for their own profit and preferment, as is evident by their manner of preaching, which is as plausible as they can frame it to the liking of those whom they seek to please, and by whom they hope to attain unto their ends: whereunto when they have once attained, they can bid adieu to all pains; and say, it belongs to them which follow them, to take the pains which they have done. But let those, who seek to approve themselves to the

highest Master, follow this Apostle, Who sought not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved. Herein he followed Christ, who pleased not himself.

### §. 169. Of Making Known What We Know.

More particularly in this end, we may note:

1. The action (to make known.)
2. The object (the Gospel.)
3. A quality thereof (the mystery.)

The first shows that it is the duty of a Minister to make known what he himself knows. In the fourth verse of the third Chapter of this Epistle, the Apostle implies that he had great understanding in the mystery of Christ (which is the mystery of the Gospel here spoken of.) Here we see that his desire is to make it known. Thus much he affirms of himself, saying, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, immediately I went to Arabia, namely, to preach Christ." And Christ of himself, saying, "All things that I have heard of my Father, have I made known to you." As Christ put this in practice himself, so also he commanded it to his Disciples, saying, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." And Saint Paul to Timothy, saying, "What things thou hast heard of me, the same deliver to faithful men, which shall be able to teach others also."

All the understanding of the Gospel, which God gives to his Ministers, is a talent given them to occupy and employ: by making known what they know, they improve their talent, they approve themselves to their Master, they profit their brethren.

[Use] Take heed, O Ministers, that ye be not like covetous worldlings, who are ever gathering, but never spend: though ye have never so much learning, if ye make it not known, it is but as the talent hidden in the ground: now remember the censure that was given of him, who hid his talent (he was counted an unprofitable servant) and the sentence which passed against him, which was this, "Cast him into utter darkness," etc. Let us not through negligence conceal our knowledge, like that servant; nor through envy think much others should partake thereof, like Joshua; but rather be of Moses and Paul's mind, who were willing all should know as much as themselves.

## §. 170. Of Preaching the Gospel.

The second point shows that the Gospel is the proper object of preaching.

What the Gospel is, I showed before: for further proof of the Doctrine, note the commission which Christ gave to his Apostles when he sent them out to preach, "Go and preach the Gospel": in this respect are the feet of Preachers said to be beautiful, because they preach the Gospel.

The end of preaching is the salvation of men's souls: for it pleased God by preaching to save those that believe. But the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation: if the Gospel then be not the object of preaching, preaching must needs fail of the main and principal end.

Object. The Law also is to be preached.

Answ. It is so, but as a preparative unto the Gospel; in which respect, very fitly says the Apostle of the Law, that it was our School-master to bring us unto Christ: thus is the Law preached for the Gospel's sake; so as it remains firm, that the Gospel is the proper and principal object of preaching.

[Use] Let our studies and meditations be exercised in it, so as ourselves may first learn it, know it, believe it, obey it: thus shall we better instruct others therein, and make it known unto them. That which was before delivered of the excellency and benefit of the Gospel makes much to the urging and pressing of this point.

## §. 171. Of the Mystery of the Gospel.

The third point evidently declares that the Gospel is a mystery: very often is this title and attribute used: in other places, it is called The mystery of God: the mystery of Christ: the mystery of the will of God: the mystery of the Kingdom of God: the mystery of faith: the mystery of godliness.

For God is the Author, Christ the matter of it: it declares the will of God, and directs man unto the kingdom of God. Faith believes it: and godliness issues from it: so as all these mysteries are but one and the same: even the Gospel here spoken: which is fitly called a mystery: for a mystery is a divine secret.

Now the Gospel is a secret: for none of the Princes of this world knew it: it contains the things which the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither came into man's heart.

It is also a Divine secret: for first, it could not be known, but by divine revelation: the Apostle expressly says that God by revelation showed this mystery unto him, and that it was opened unto the sons of men by the Spirit, and thus came it to be made known by the Church unto principalities and powers in heavenly places: so as it was above the conceit, not of men only, but also of Angels.

2. Being opened, it seemed incredible unto all, whose hearts the Spirit of revelation did not persuade of the truth thereof: therefore, the Apostle prays for the Ephesians that God would give them the Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of their understanding might be lightened, etc.

In a word, of all other things, it is the most abstruse: no human invention is like it: none of the Liberal Arts and Sciences comparable to it in profundity. The Law is not such a mystery as

the Gospel, for the Law was ingrained in man's heart: and man still by nature retains some glimpse and sparkles thereof: for the Apostle says that the Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the Law, and show the work of the Law written in their hearts. But the Gospel was never written in man's nature: it was extraordinarily revealed, and is above nature: wherefore the Apostle does not content himself to call it a mystery but also terms it a great mystery: intimating thereby, that it is a mystery both of great weight and moment (the knowledge of nothing else can be more excellent, necessary, and profitable) and also of other things most abstruse, admirable and incredible: so as it is without controversy a great mystery: a most certain, sure, infallible, undeniable truth.

### §. 172. Of Searching into the Depth of the Gospel.

The Gospel being a mystery, such a mystery as we have heard, it is not lightly, and slightly to be passed over: it requires our best study and meditation, and it is worth the best pains that we can take: men naturally are desirous to have knowledge of deep and profound matters: this makes some scholars spend much time, and take great pains in reading the School-men, because they account them profound Authors, in regard to the many deep questions which they discuss: others in studying Astrology, Astronomy, Geometry, and other parts of Mathematics, because they are accounted deep Sciences, above the common conceit and capacity of ordinary men: there is no mystery in any Science

which men hear of, but they are very inquisitive into it, and desirous to know it. Lo here is a mystery of mysteries, wherein our happiness consists: so as the knowledge thereof cannot but be most needful and behoveful. Use we therefore all the means that possibly we can to understand it, and to all other means add faithful and earnest prayer to God, to give us the spirit of illumination, that so we may the better conceive it. In studying it, let us not measure it by the last of our own capacity: for it is a mystery above our capacity: they who know it best, know it but in part: when it is opened as clearly as can be by man's tongue, it still remains to be a mystery. Faith therefore in this respect, must be placed above our reason, and we must believe more than we can conceive: herein has faith a pre-eminence above reason, that it is of an infinite capacity: for whatever God reveals, faith believes, though reason cannot fathom the depth of it.

If in the mystery of the Gospel we should believe no more than by our reason we can discern the reason of, we should believe little or nothing. Let us therefore have recourse to God's word, where this mystery is revealed, and pray to God by his Spirit to reveal it unto us.

§. 173. Of the means of understanding the mystery of the Gospel.

They who have attained to the greatest understanding of this mystery that can be, ought not to be arrogant, and boast thereof;

as if they were of a greater capacity, deeper understanding, sharper wit than others. For nothing in man is available to find out this mystery. They ought rather to be thankful unto God, who hath vouchsafed such knowledge unto them, and everyone, say as Christ did unto God, "I give thee thanks, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast opened these things unto babes." For that which Christ said to Peter, may be applied to all that have any sound knowledge of the mystery of the Gospel, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it, but our Father which is in heaven."

### §. 174. Of the cause of errors about the Gospel.

Let not any be offended that so many in all ages have grossly erred, and broached diverse heresies about the Gospel, as Arians, Aetians, Ennomians, Eutichians, Mercionites, Manichees, Nestorians, Papists, Anabaptists, Familists, and many others. For the Gospel being a mystery, it is no marvel that many who have searched into it by their own wit, have erred therein. Their errors have not risen from any uncertainty and variableness in the Gospel, but from the shallowness of their own conceit. God in just judgment hath not vouchsafed to open the eyes of their understanding, but rather (as Christ said) "Hath hid these things from the wise and men of understanding" and also suffered the God of this world to blind their eyes, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should not shine unto them.

§. 175. Of man's preferring other mysteries before the Gospel.

Very preposterous is the conceit which many have of God's word, wherein this mystery is revealed. They account it a plain easy book, wherein no great depth of learning is contained. And thereupon prefer other books as more profound, to it. The Jews had their Talmuds, and Cabalistic, in which they thought much more deep matter was contained, than in the holy Scripture. The Turks have their Alcharon, in comparison whereof, they lightly and basely esteem the Scriptures. In like account do Papists hold many of their unwritten traditions, Decrees of Councils, Edicts of Popes, all which they equal, if not prefer unto the Scriptures. Anabaptists also, Familists, and such like Enthusiasts, say that the Scripture is but as milk for young novices, but the revelations which they receive (as they pretend) from God, are strong meat. I would this mean and base esteem of holy Scripture remained only among such Infidels and Heretics, as are Jews, Turks, Papists, Familists, etc. But too true it is that it hath too great place in the opinions of many both scholars and others. Some who prefer the study and learning of Postillers and quaint writers, before the wisdom of God contained in his written word. Thus great mysteries are of many accounted slight matters, and mere toys are accounted mysteries. "The things of the spirit of God are foolishness to man." Let us take notice of this egregious point of folly ("For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God") and know that no learning can be like the learning contained in the holy Scripture, which declareth the

wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

> "For which I am an Ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." - Eph. 6:20.

§. 176. Of well discharging a man's office.

The reasons which the Apostle uses to enforce his request now follow. The first is taken from his office; he was an Ambassador of the Gospel, or for the Gospel, namely to declare and make known the Gospel. This his office shows that he was, after an especial manner, deputed and appointed by God to preach the Gospel. This charge being laid upon him, it was very needful that he should have utterance with open mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel: and because it was so needful, he craves the help of their prayers to obtain as much. From the force of this first reason, I collect.

That charge which God is pleased to commit to anyone's charge ought to make him careful in seeking and using all good means whereby he may be enabled well to discharge it. Thus God, having made Solomon a King, he was moved thereby above all other things to desire an understanding heart to judge God's people. To which purpose tends that prayer of David, "Give thy judgments to the King, O God, and thy righteousness to the King's son." But more particularly to this purpose tends that practice of the Church, in fasting, praying, and laying hands on

Paul and Barnabas, when God had commanded that they should be separate for the work whereunto he had called them. For why did they then fast and pray, but that those Apostles might be enabled to do that work whereunto God had set them apart? To this end, the Apostle exhorts the Elders at Ephesus to take heed of all the flock. Why? Because the Holy Ghost had made them overseers thereof: and Archippus to take heed to the Ministry which he had received in the Lord: and Timothy to keep that which was committed to him.

God will require a particular account of that particular function which he appoints to any man: of a King, he will require an account of his kingly office; of a Prophet, the discharge of a Prophet's office, and so of the rest: witness that particular reckoning which was made with them that received several talents.

Wherefore let us everyone have an eye to that office and function whereunto we are deputed: and withal observe what is most appertaining thereto, what whereby we may be best fitted thereunto, and best enabled to perform it acceptably to God, and profitably to others: those things let us labour after, and pray for: and in those things let us exercise ourselves. In particular for Ministers, let our calling be always in our minds, remembering that we are God's Stewards, Dispensers of the mysteries of God, Ministers of Christ, God's labourers, Planters, Waterers, Builders, Bishops, Pastors, Watchmen, etc. That the

consideration hereof may make us well note what belongeth to the discharge of those functions, what knowledge, what pains, what study, what utterance, what boldness, and the like gifts are needful thereunto, that accordingly we may seek by our own and others' prayers, and by all other good means how to be enabled well to perform our functions. Which that we may the better do, let us distinctly consider the nature of a Minister's function, set forth under the title of an Ambassador.

### §. 177. Of Ambassadors of the Word.

An Ambassador is a special messenger sent after an honourable manner from some great personage: for mean men do not use to send Ambassadors. If it be demanded who he was that sent S. Paul on his Ambassage, himself makes answer in another place saying, "We are Ambassadors for Christ." Christ, the great Lord and king of heaven and earth, was his Master, and sent him: in which respect he often styles himself the Apostle of Jesus Christ.

Quest. Was S. Paul the only Ambassador of Christ?

Answ. No, verily: for expressly he says in the plural number, "we are Ambassadors," which phrase he does not use as earthly Kings or others in great place do, for dignity's sake, saying, "we Leo," or "we Gregory command this or that": for when he speaks of himself alone and expresses his own proper name, he uses the singular number, as "I Paul say," "I Paul the prisoner," "I Paul have written," etc.

But when he uses the plural number, he speaks of others also, whom he ranks in one and the same order with himself, and makes equal to himself.

Quest. Who were those others? Any besides the Apostles?

Answ. The Apostles were especially, after a peculiar manner, the Ambassadors of Christ: for they had their commission immediately from Christ, by Christ's own voice and word were they sent forth: and in this respect, the title of Apostle (which in effect signifies the same thing that Ambassador does, namely, Sent) was appropriated to them: yet we may not think that they were the only Ambassadors of Christ, for then after their departure Christ should have had no Ambassadors on earth, none who in his name and stead should offer reconciliation unto the world, and preach the glad tidings of salvation: certainly Christ still continued to love his Church as well as ever he did, and is still as careful to provide all things needful for it as ever he was: he cannot cast off the care of it. What therefore he did immediately after his ascension by Apostles, doubtless he continued to do by other Ministers: for when he ascended up on high, he gave not only Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, who were extraordinary Ministers to continue but a while till his Gospel was spread all abroad among the Gentiles, but also Pastors and Teachers, who were by succession one after another to continue till his glorious coming unto judgment: and these also are his Ambassadors: so as this title appertains to all

Ministers of the Word, and all are comprised under that speech of the Apostle, "we are Ambassadors for Christ," which is further evident by this title Angel (which signifies a messenger) given to ordinary Ministers.

### §. 178. Of the dignity of the Ministry.

This metaphor and title, Ambassador, being applied to the Ministerial function, set forth these three things.

1. The dignity of the Ministry.

2. The duties of Ministers.

3. The mercy of God in ordaining them to their function.

The dignity of a Minister's function, in a spiritual respect, is so great that no calling in the world can be comparable to it.

The dignity of an Ambassador's place is greater or less according to the excellency of his Master who sends him. An Emperor's Ambassador is preferred before a King's, a King's before a Duke's, and so on.

Now, Ministers being appointed by Christ, sent by him, declaring his will in his name and stead, those who know the excellency of Christ may well understand the excellency of a Minister's calling. Many other titles in Scripture are attributed to Ministers to set forth the dignity of their function, such as

Elders, Rulers, Overseers, Fathers, Planters, Builders, Angels, Lights, etc. Many excellent things are spoken of you, O Ministers of the Lord.

### §. 179. Of the respect due to Ministers.

Let people hereby learn how to respect Ministers: we see how Ambassadors of earthly Kings are esteemed and entertained, namely, with all the respect and kindness that may be, even as their Master should be. Thus should Christ's Ministers be accounted of. I would not be understood (so much to speak of outward respect) for our master is heavenly, our calling spiritual, our message spiritual and heavenly: accordingly must the respect be which is given unto us: which is diligently to attend unto our message, willingly to follow our directions, to account our coming welcome, our feet beautiful, in heart to esteem us as God's Angels, yea as Christ himself. For this end men must look not on our persons (for so we are not better than others) but on our Ministry and message (for therein we excel all others) The honour and good which in this respect is done unto us, Christ accounts as done unto himself.

### §. 180. Of despising Ministers.

As for those who reproach or disgrace our calling or abuse our persons for our office's sake, they reproach and abuse our Master: for so says our Master, "He that despises you despises me." In this respect God says of the Israelites, they have cast me

away because they rejected his Prophets: and again, they have spoiled me because they deprived his Priests of their Tithes. Can such despisers of God's Ministers think they shall escape just vengeance? Kings will not pass by any disgraces and wrongs done unto their Ambassadors unrevenged, if at least they can take revenge. But Christ is able to execute vengeance on all who shall despise him and his, and assuredly he will do so: for he has threatened as much: his Ministers are especially in the rank of those concerning whom he has said, "Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm." Remember the woeful desolation of Jerusalem, and note the cause thereof: She killed the Prophets, and stoned them who were sent unto her.

This Land, and the greater sort of people therein, have in these days highly provoked the Lord by disgracing and abusing his Ambassadors: For we are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things.

### §. 181. Of the encouragement of Ministers against their despisers.

But let the world judge as it pleases, according to the corrupt censure thereof; let our eyes be fixed on our Master that sent us, and on our office deputed unto us: let the excellency of the one, and the dignity of the other swallow up all the ignominy which the world can lay upon us, and injury which it can do unto us: therewith we may comfort ourselves against that base esteem

which the world hath of us, even for our calling's sake, and against the wrong which in regard of our Ministry it doth unto us. If the dignity of our calling were duly weighed, so many would not shun it, as do; but more would desire it, and labour to fit themselves for it.

### §. 182. Of Ministers walking worthy their place.

The duties which are required of Ministers by virtue of their ambassage, committed unto them, are two: one general, the other particular: that respecteth their conversation; this their ministration. The general is, to carry themselves worthy of the dignity and excellency of their place: we see that Ambassadors of earthly kings are very circumspect over their carriage, behaving themselves gravely, soberly, honourably, showing themselves to be men of wisdom, able to discharge so weighty a function, and that in a double respect, namely in regard of their own credit, and of their Master's honour. So ought Ministers of the word to behave themselves as becometh the Ambassadors of the great Lord of Heaven: all Christians are commanded to walk worthy of the Lord, who hath called them, worthy of the Gospel, whereby they are called, worthy of the vocation whereunto they are called: if all Christians, how much more Ministers whose particular calling hath an eminency above all. To this purpose tendeth that exhortation of Saint Paul to Timothy, "Be thou an example of believers in word, in conversation, etc." Otherwise as they disgrace themselves, and make themselves to be thought

unworthy of their place, yea to be despised, so also they dishonour their Master, as Hophni and Phinias did; whereupon God said, they that despise me shall be despised.

### §. 183. Of Ministers' faithfulness.

The particular is to be faithful in delivering their message. Solomon implieth that an Ambassador ought to be faithful, where he saith, "a faithful Ambassador is health," that is, procured and preserved safely to his master, himself, and those to whom he is sent. Thus was the greatest Ambassador that God ever did, or could send forth, the Apostle and high Priest of our profession Christ Jesus, faithful to him that appointed him: and this testimony God himself gave of his servant Moses, "he is faithful in all mine house": so have all good Ambassadors been: but not to insist on particulars, note what Saint Paul saith of the duty of all Ambassadors whom he termed Stewards, "It is required in Stewards that every one be found faithful."

### §. 184. Of holding close to God's message.

This faithfulness consisteth in three especial points.

1. In delivering nothing but what he hath received of his Master, and is agreeable to his will: in this respect Christ said of that which he delivered, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me;" and further proveth that he spake not of himself: So the Apostle, "I have received of the Lord that

which I delivered unto you." The Prophets to manifest as much to those unto whom they spake, used to prefix before their messages these and such like prefaces; "The word of the Lord," "The burden of the word of the Lord," "Thus saith the Lord," etc. And that it may appear that this is a duty, God giveth this express charge to his Prophet, "Hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me:" and Christ this unto his Apostle, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The Scripture noteth it as a property of false Prophets, to speak the vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. "I have not spoken unto them, saith the Lord, and yet they prophesied."

### §. 185. Of declaring God's whole will.

2. In delivering his whole message, even all that the Lord delivereth unto him. Thus much God commanded to his Prophet, "Speak unto them all that I command thee," and Christ to his Apostles, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Nothing must be concealed for fear or favour. Of this mind was Michaiah, who being desired to speak good to the King, as the other Prophets had done, answered, "Whatsoever the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak," and Jeremiah; "Whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare unto you: I will keep nothing back."

§. 186. Of the manner of delivering God's Word.

3. In delivering his message as the Word of God. This direction in general is laid down by Saint Peter, who said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God."

That God's Word may thus be delivered, there is required in the dispenser thereof:

1. Gravity opposed to lightness, and vain affectation. A wise Ambassador will not deliver his message like a stage-player; the respect of him from whom he is sent, the presence of them to whom he is sent, will keep him from lightness and childishness. Can lightness then beseem God's Ambassadors? God's word is in itself full of gravity, no lightness, no vanity in it. Saint Paul expressly requires gravity in Titus, and not without good reason; for this will breed reverence and due respect to their message in the hearts of their hearers.

2. Authority opposed to fearfulness, and shamefacedness. God's word hath in it a divine power and an admirable majesty, and therefore must accordingly be delivered. This is it whereunto the Apostle exhorted Titus, saying, "Speak with all authority." We have an excellent pattern hereof in Christ Jesus, who taught with such authority as made his hearers astonished. That thus we may deliver God's Word, we must in the name of our Master, and by that authority

which he hath committed unto us, urge and press that which we deliver: this will smite the consciences of our hearers, and make them receive the Word, not as the word of men, but as the Word of God: and thus will it work obedience in them that hear it.

3. Sincerity, opposed to falsifying and adulterating the Word of God, which is to mix it with our own or others' conceits, or to fashion it to man's humour, so as it may most please man. This was the fault which the Apostle discovered in false Teachers, and whereof he cleared himself and his fellow Apostles, showing withal that they were careful to use all sincerity: for thus he saith, "We are not as many which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." The word translated "corrupt or deal deceitfully with" is a metaphorical word, taken from deceitful Vintners, who for gain mix water with wine: whereby is shown that God's Word ought not to be delivered so deceitfully, but purely, and sincerely; this is that incorruptness and sincerity which the Apostle requires (Tit. 2. 7). For the word is in itself pure and sincere without any mixture: whereupon Saint Peter termeth it, "Sincere milk": if accordingly it be delivered, it will nourish; if it be mixed, it may poison.

## §. 187. Of the end of a Minister's high calling.

[Use] Thus then we see that this excellent and high calling is not committed to Ministers for their own sakes only, for their honour and renown, to exalt them, to puff them up, and make them insolent, but to provoke them to do their duty. Whereupon the Apostle saith, "If a man desire the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work." A work it is, and requires pains and diligence: for which end they are called Workmen, Labourers, Watchmen, Shepherds, Servants, Ministers, Stewards, etc. They who neglect the duties of an Ambassador can receive small comfort in the dignity of their ambassage: and yet many there be who seek to be Ministers, only as men seek to be civil Officers, for profit and promotion's sake, as is too evident by their carriage in their Ministry: they neither care to frame their lives worthy of their place, nor are faithful in performing the work of their Ministry, whereby they cause this honourable calling to be vilely and basely esteemed.

## §. 188. How Man's Weakness is Succoured by the Ministry of Man.

But however some abuse this excellent calling, yet God hath manifested his great mercy to his Church, in appointing men to be his Ambassadors upon earth: for this hath God done both to succour our weakness, and to support our faith. In regard of our weakness, we are not able to endure the glorious presence of God's glorious Majesty. The very Angels are not able to endure it: whereupon they are said to have wings to cover their faces

when they appear before God: how then should mortal man endure it? Note the behaviour of the Israelites when they heard God deliver his Law, They fled, and stood afar off: They said; If we hear the voice of God anymore, we shall die. Hereupon they made this suit unto Moses, Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God saith, and do thou declare all that the Lord our God saith unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. This motion God well liked, and accordingly appointed sons of men to be his Ambassadors, and to declare his will unto his people. Thus in regard of man's weakness, are men (like to all others, subject to the same passions that others are) ordained Ministers of God's Word.

### §. 189. How Faith is Supported by the Ministry of Man.

And that greater credence might be given to their message, they are after a solemn and peculiar manner (set in Christ's stead, in his name, even as if he himself did it) to preach peace, and to offer reconciliation: the Gospel is the message of God's Ambassadors: for the Apostle having relation to the Gospel, saith; Whereof (or for which) I am an Ambassador. So that in respect of this function and place appointed to Ministers, God's people may with as strong confidence embrace and receive the glad tidings of salvation thus brought unto them, as if God himself with his own voice did make offer of it. Herein lieth a main difference betwixt a Minister and a private man. A private man may have great knowledge of the mystery of the Gospel,

and be able to open and declare the sense and meaning of it: but a Minister by virtue of his office hath this prerogative and pre-eminence above others, that in God's stead he declares reconciliation: so that when a Minister preacheth and applies the promises of the Gospel, he doth not only declare and make known God's mercy and goodness to poor sinners, but also is an especial means to move sinners to believe those promises, and to embrace reconciliation with God. Is not this a strong prop unto our faith? doth it not bring great comfort and peace to distressed souls?

### §. 190. Of Receiving God's Message by the Ministry of Man.

Reject not the offer of peace made unto you by God's Ambassadors, because they are sons of men; yield not to Satan's suggestions, whereby he laboreth to persuade men that whatsoever Ministers say of peace and reconciliation, God meaneth no such thing: but rather, seeing God hath sent them forth, and set them in his stead, Receive them as God's Angels, yea, as Christ Jesus: and receive the Word preached by them, as it is indeed the Word of God, which also worketh in you that believe: Believe God's Prophets, so shall you prosper. Whosoever lightly esteem their Ministry, and believe not their message, they put from them the very Word of God, and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.

### §. 191. Of the Manner of Paul's Being Chained.

The second reason, whereby the Apostle enforces his request for the help of their prayer, is taken from his present condition. He was in bonds, or word for word, in a chain. This phrase implies that he had not free liberty, but was restrained: restrained, I say, so he could not go from country to country, and from church to church, as he had done before times; yet not so as those who are closely held within the walls of a dungeon, or a close prison: for then could he not have performed his ambassage, as here he expressly says he did, (I do my ambassage in a chain) then would he rather have desired the help of their prayers for his deliverance out of prison.

It is likely that he has reference to that time (of which Saint Luke makes mention) when he dwelt by himself with a soldier that kept him, and preached the Kingdom of God.

Object. But there is no mention made of manacling, fettering, or binding with chains, which seems here to be implied.

Answ. At Rome (where Paul was a prisoner) such prisoners as were not closed up in prisons, but had liberty to go abroad, had a long chain, one end of which was fastened to their right hand, and the other end was tied to a soldier's left hand, so the prisoner could go nowhere without that soldier, who was as a keeper to him. And thus it is likely that Saint Paul was chained: for he mentions here but one chain in the singular number: and it is said that Paul was with a soldier that kept him.

Here note these distinct points.

1. The Apostle's condition; he was in a chain.
2. The declaration of it. He himself makes it known.
3. The cause of his condition, for the Gospel.
4. The connection of his office and condition together.
5. The reason why here he makes mention of it.

## §. 192. Of the Hard Usage of Ministers.

1. For the first: Notorious malefactors were wont to be chained: Here then note how

An holy Apostle is used as a thief. In which respect he says, I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds. Thus was Peter dealt withal, He was put in prison, and delivered to four quaternions of soldiers, he was bound with two chains, and lay between two soldiers, and the keepers before the door kept the prison. Yea thus was Christ himself dealt withal: for a great multitude came as against a thief with swords and staves to take him. The like might be exemplified in many other Prophets, Apostles, Ministers, and faithful servants of Christ: for it has been the common condition of all, in times of persecution especially.

What might be the reason hereof? any notorious crimes which they committed, or any unjust offence that they gave to their persecutors? No verily. No Christian can imagine any such thing of Christ, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Saint Paul was ready to do what good he could to all: for he held himself debtor to all, namely, in love: but hurt he did to none. The like may be said of others, who have been so handled. They have been as sheep very profitable and harmless: for the Spirit which comes from above was in them, which is, first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, etc. It is therefore an evil jealous suspicion which the World has of them, together with an inward inveterate envy and malice which it has against them, which makes it so handle them, and that because they are not of the World. Read John 15. 19.

[Use] Let us not censure men according to the World's dealing with them. Let us not judge such (as we have just cause to account Christ's faithful servants) malefactors, because by persecutors they are handled as malefactors: so might we condemn those worthy Martyrs who suffered in Queen Mary's days, and many that are most vilely used by the Spanish inquisition, and other persecuting Papists in other places.

## §. 193. Of Paul's Holy Glorying in His Chain.

2. For the second, the Apostle himself declares and makes known this condition wherein he was at Rome, and that under his hand by a public letter sent to a whole Church, which was also to remain unto all Churches, to be read of all: so that it appears he was not ashamed of his chain.

Persecution simply in itself is no matter of shame. Expressly the Apostle says that he was not ashamed of his suffering: And he exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of him, because he was Christ's prisoner: If any suffer as a Christian (says Saint Peter), Let him not be ashamed, but glorify God in this behalf.

Nothing ought to make us ashamed but only sin, which makes us odious before God, because it is a voluntary evil proceeding from ourselves. Now to suffer, in itself, is no such matter.

[Use] If for the sins of this Land God should (which God forbid) deprive us of the light of his Gospel, and of our Christian Magistrates, and give us over to the power of such adversaries, as should chain, imprison, or in any other way deal hardly and ignominiously with us; let us not thereupon think ourselves, our brethren, or the Gospel disgraced, and thereupon be ashamed of our profession: The Apostle here rather boasts and glories in it, as some do in a chain of gold: and the Scripture makes persecution a matter of gladness, rejoicing, and honour. If we should be ashamed, it would make us start back from our

profession, it would discourage our brethren, and very much hearten our enemies.

## §. 194. Of the Cause That Makes Persecution a Matter of Rejoicing.

Quest. How can persecution be a matter of honour and joy? can any such thing be in suffering? Why then should malefactors be ashamed?

Answ. As suffering in itself is no matter of shame, so neither of honour: it is the cause for which one suffers, which alters the case this way or that way.

The thieves between whom Christ was crucified, suffered one and the same kind of punishment, yet could one of them say; We receive things worthy of that we have done, but this man hath done nothing amiss.

3. The third thing therefore to be considered, is the cause of S. Paul's suffering, implied under this clause; For which, namely, for the Gospel. For both the function, and also the condition of the Apostle hath reference thereto, as he was an Ambassador for the Gospel, so for the Gospel he was in a chain.

It is the cause which makes persecution a matter of honour and rejoicing. Note the Scriptures wherein persecution is

commended, and ye shall find the cause either expressed, or necessarily implied: Note Mat. 5. 11. Phil. 1. 29. 1 Pet. 3. 14. & 4. 16.

Persecution in itself separated from a good cause, is a punishment, and a curse: a thing grievous to the flesh, and to be grieved for.

§. 195. Of the Things for Which Men May Suffer with Comfort.

Quest. What may be the cause of that persecution which causes blessedness?

Answ. In general, Righteousness; and that either in abstaining from evil or in performing our bounden duty. Joseph suffered imprisonment for refusing to commit folly with his mistress: Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sins. On the other side, Daniel was cast into the lion's den for praying unto God. And Christ was persecuted for doing works of mercy.

More particularly, the Gospel which is here set down. The Apostles were persecuted for preaching the Gospel: Others for believing the Gospel. Now because the Gospel is the Doctrine of Christ, they who suffer for preaching or professing it are said to suffer for Christ's sake, and for the name of Christ: they who renounce it are said to deny Christ Jesus.

[Use 1] They who look to have true comfort in their suffering must especially look unto the cause, and thoroughly examine it, whether it be indeed of that kind that by God's Word we may warrantably, yea, and ought necessarily to suffer for. Saint Peter implies that there be many causes for which many do suffer, wherein he would not have Christians to suffer, Let none of you (saith he) suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Note how he makes not only open notorious sins, but also meddling with other bodies' matters, to be an unwarrantable and unjust ground of suffering. This therefore is to be observed, not only against traitors, murderers, thieves, adulterers, idolaters, and such like: but also against Separatists, Schismatics, and all such contentious spirits, as by raising troubles in the Church, bring trouble upon their own pates.

[Use 2] If the cause be just and good, with courage stand unto it; let not reviling and disgraceful speeches, let not loss of goods, loss of friends, imprisonment, banishment, rack, strapado, sword, halter, fire, or anything else, make thee start from thy Saviour, to deny him. But for thy comfort and encouragement look to the end, If we suffer, we shall also reign with Christ.

### §. 196. Of the World's Vile Handling of Christ's Ambassadors.

The fourth point noted is the connection of the Apostle's function and condition together; though he were an

Ambassador, yet was he chained; and though he were chained, yet performed he his function: for he saith; I do my Ambassage in a chain.

Hence arise two points to be noted. The first, that

The Ambassadors of the King of Heaven are more hardly dealt withal than the Ambassadors of mortal Kings. We see by experience that all sorts of Ambassadors are kindly used. The most savage and barbarous people that be will not wrong an Ambassador. It is against the law of Nations to imprison an Ambassador. Though Ambassadors be free in delivering their message, and though their message be distasteful, yet at least they are let go free, if not rewarded. But Christ's Ambassadors have in all ages been very hardly dealt withal. This was it whereof Christ complained against Jerusalem, saying; O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee. And whereof Saint Stephen also complained, saying; Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted, &c.

Object. They are not in all places, and at all times so dealt withal.

Answ. When and where it pleases God to raise up Christian Magistrates who love the Gospel, and defend the Gospel, then, and there the Ambassadors thereof are kept from public persecution: but yet the greater sort of people will privately scorn them, and wrong them. And though there be always some,

who knowing and believing the excellency, necessity, and benefit of their function, highly account of them, even as of the Angels of God; yet those some are but few in comparison of the many which oppose against them. All that are of the world will do what they can against them: And that in regard of their message, and of their Master.

## §. 197. Of the Causes Why Christ's Ambassadors Are Hardly Used.

1 Their message is as contrary to the disposition of the world as can be: This is darkness, That is light. Darkness cannot endure light: nothing can be so much against the hair (as we speak) against the heart of a carnal man, as the Gospel: it pierces to the quick, and so makes him to fret & fume, rage and rave against it, and the messenger thereof. For the world has a peace of its own, wherein it is fast lulled asleep: when it is roused up by any messengers of the Gospel, like a Bear or a Lion it bestirs itself against him that disturbs it, and forgets all modesty and humanity. If it were a Father that brought this light of the Gospel to a carnal son, the son would hate and persecute the father for it: so the father the son, and one friend another: hence it is that Christ Jesus the Author of this Gospel, is said to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, &c. which is not said, to note out the proper end of Christ's coming, but to show what follows upon the sending of

the light of the Gospel to carnal men, by reason of their wicked and obdurate hearts.

2 Their Master is indeed a great King, but his kingdom is not of this world, if it were, his servants would surely fight. Now because he causes none to rise up in arms to execute speedy revenge, but suffers the wicked till the great day of reckoning, the world fears him not, nor cares to abuse his Ambassadors.

[Use 1] How great is the blindness, wilfulness, wretchedness, maliciousness, ungratefulness of the world?

[Use 2] How are Ministers to prepare themselves against all the hard dealing that may be? Let them not look for such respect at the world's hands, as earthly Ambassadors find: if they find such, they have cause to suspect themselves. It is to be feared, that they seek too much to please the world. If they have not the resolution which this Apostle had, they may be as loath to deliver their ambassage, as Jonah was.

## §. 198. Of Ministers Using Their Liberty.

The other point is, that

Ministers must take and use what liberty they can have. Saint Paul went as far as his chain would let him: In his chain he preached. So likewise in prison he preached. Thus did Christ and

his Apostles, though they were persecuted, continue to preach: when they could not in one place, they went to another.

There is a necessity laid upon the Ambassadors of God: and woe to them if they preach not the Gospel, when they may. But if notwithstanding some restraint, they do what lawfully they may, and possibly they can, as they manifest thereby a great zeal of God's glory, in preferring it before their own ease, so great shall that reward be, which their Master will give them.

### §. 199. Of Ministers Forbearing to Preach, Being Inhibited.

Quest. What if Ministers be inhibited by Magistrates to preach: may they notwithstanding that inhibition preach?

Ans. Difference must be made betwixt times of persecution (when infidel or idolatrous, or any such Magistrates as are open enemies to Christ bear rule, who seek utterly to suppress the truth of the Gospel, and root out the professors thereof) and times of peace (when Christian Magistrates, who defend the Gospel, & seek the progress thereof, govern the Church) The inhibition of infidels, and idolaters made simply against preaching of the Gospel, because they would have it utterly suppressed, is in this case no sufficient inhibition to bind the conscience: it is directly and apparently contrary to God's word. But when Christian Magistrates inhibit Ministers to preach, it is because they think them unfit and unmeet, either for some notorious crimes, or for some erroneous opinions, to exercise

their ministerial functions. In these cases, such as are so inhibited, so far forth as they are inhibited, ought not to preach. Neither are particular and private men to judge of the cause of the inhibition, whether it be just or unjust: but as they who are appointed by the present government to ordain Ministers, are to judge of their fitness thereunto, so likewise of their unfitness.

Again, difference must be made betwixt the kinds of Ministers which are inhibited to preach. Some were ordained immediately by Christ Jesus, & particularly commanded by him to preach: all the world could not silence such: though they were inhibited, yet ought they not to be silent, if at least they were not forcibly restrained. Wherefore, we read that the Apostles notwithstanding they were commanded by the Priests and Rulers of the Jews to preach no more, yet continued to preach: the like may be said of the Prophets, who were extraordinarily appointed by God. Others are ordained by the hands of men, even of the Governors of the Church. Now as they have power to ordain Ministers, when they judge them fit for that place, so they have power to deprive Ministers, when they judge them unfit for that place, and therefore obedience must be yielded to their inhibition.

### §. 200. Of Ministers Needless Forbearing to Preach.

But to return to the point, Persecution is no sufficient cause to make a Minister cease preaching; rather than not preach, he

ought, as Paul did, preach in a chain, if he may have such liberty as Paul had.

How will they answer it unto their Master, who upon mere surmises and needless fears abstain from preaching: not much unlike to a slothful man, that being to go about his business, saith, A Lion is without, I shall be slain in the street? Such ought to be a Minister's forwardness in performing his ambassage, that he do his uttermost endeavour, till he be directly and necessarily hindered.

[Use 2] Heavy is that reckoning which they must make, who have all the liberty, favour and encouragement that they can desire, and yet preach not.

### §. 201. Of Praying for Ministers Restrained.

5 For the last point, the reason why the Apostle here mentions his chain, is the rather to stir them up to help him with their prayers, that he might both be assisted by God, in doing what he did, and also, if it pleased the Lord, have greater liberty to do more good. The word in the former verse, and in this verse also translated bold speaking, signifies also liberty to speak.

From the force of this reason, I observe,

The more Ministers are restrained, the rather ought prayer to be made for them.

It should seem that the Apostle, when he wrote to the Hebrews, was somehow or other hindered, so as he could not then come to them, whereupon having desired them to pray for him, again he desires them somewhat the more earnestly to do so, that he might be restored to them more quickly: but most clear is this by the practice of the Church, when Saint Peter was clapped up close into prison, earnest prayer was made of the Church unto God for him.

Prayer is the best means that can be used in this case: the most powerful with God, the least offensive to men. Note the issue of the Church's prayer for Peter.

There is also the greatest need of the best means in this case, and that in regard to the loss which the Church sustains by the restraint of faithful Ministers.

[Use] The use which we are to make of this point, is, that we put it in daily practice.

## §. 202. Of the Need of Boldness.

The Apostle, having used those two forcible reasons to move them to pray for him, returns again to the matter and repeats the thing which he would have them pray for in his behalf, namely, that he may speak boldly, which he amplifies by the manner, as he ought to speak.

The word which the Apostle uses in this latter place somewhat differs from the former; that is a Noun, this a Verb; yet in effect, they imply one and the same thing. This repetition of this point shows that

Boldness and freedom of speech are very needful for a Minister: The Holy Ghost repeats not things in vain; wherefore that which has been delivered concerning this point is the rather to be regarded. That which the Scripture again and again urges, we must not lightly pass over, but give the more diligent heed thereunto.

### §. 203. Of Paul's Jealousy over Himself.

In that upon the mention of his chain Saint Paul renews his desire of this point, namely, that he may speak boldly, as if he had thus said; Because I am chained, I do the rather desire boldness of speech: I note four commendable virtues in him.

1. An holy jealousy which he had of his own weakness.

2. An earnest desire of well performing his function.

3. An invincible resolution to hold out to the end.

4. A strong affiance in the power of God.

1. For the first, he was not ignorant that an iron chain, a keeper continually by one, restraint of liberty, and fear of

greater danger, were grievous to the flesh ( For no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ) that they might be means to daunt the freest spirit and to make the most courageous fearful, that he himself was flesh and blood, that there needed more than flesh, even God's Spirit, to uphold a man, to make him bold to perform his duty in a chain: wherefore though yet he were not daunted, yet he desired God's help in regard to his present affliction to support his spirit and keep him from fainting.

### §. 204. Of Paul's Desire to Perform His Function Well.

2. For the second, such was his desire of courage and boldness to perform his function as he ought, that being in a chain, he desires rather still in his chain so to do, than to be freed from his chain. For one would have thought that being afflicted, he should most of all have desired the removal of the affliction: but he preferred that before this: as is more clear and evident by that which he said to the Elders of Ephesus, when he took his farewell of them; I count not my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

### §. 205. Of Paul's Constant Resolution.

3. For the third, though he had suffered much, yet as yet he had not resisted unto blood: though his liberty was restrained, yet his blood and life were preserved; therefore he still continues to fight the Lord's battle and to maintain his quarrel: In a chain he preached, and still desires boldly to preach, yea, though it were in a chain. Does he not herein manifest a brave spirit, an undaunted mind, an invincible courage?

### §. 206. Of Paul's Steadfast Faith.

4. For the fourth, assuredly he believed that God was able to give him courage and boldness, notwithstanding his chain, and despite the fury and rage of all his enemies, or else he would not have desired boldness, now that he was in the power of his adversaries: but well he knew that they who chained him, were chained by his Master Christ Jesus, who led captivity captive: so as they could no further restrain him than his Master permitted them; and he was not ignorant (for he himself said it) that though he himself suffered unto bonds, yet the Word of God was not bound: they chained his body, but they could not chain God's Word.

### §. 207. Of the Excellency of the Four Forenamed Virtues.

Behold here a rare example: rare for the excellency, and rare for the scarcity of it. Admirable virtues were these, worthy our

imitation.

1. They who maintain in them such a holy jealousy, fearing lest through the weakness of the flesh they may be daunted with affliction, will be the more watchful over themselves, more earnest with the Lord in prayer to assist and uphold them, and more desirous of the help of others' prayers, as Saint Paul here was: such have been found to stand out to the last cast steadfastly when proud crackers have been quailed.

2. To desire while a man is under the cross, rather to preach boldly, than to have the cross removed, argues a great zeal of God's glory and a true desire for the progress of the Gospel and edification of the Church: for thus he prefers these before his own ease, liberty, yea, and life too.

3. Constancy is that which sets the crown upon a man's head. They who, after they have endured some trials, shrink in their heads and give over the fight before their life be ended, lose the glory of their former valour.

4. But to be persuaded that God is able to enable his servants in all distresses and difficulties to do that work whereunto he sends them, notwithstanding their own weakness and their adversaries' power, will make men not fear what can be done against them, but still hold on unto the end.

§. 208. How Most Men's Disposition is Contrary to Paul's.

Thus we see what rare and excellent virtues these are. But alas, they are too rare and scarce among men: as is evident from their contrary disposition: For

1. Many, after they have endured some small trials, grow so insolent thereupon, that they think they can never be moved, and so forget God, and care not to seek help and assurance from him.

2. If they call upon him, it is rather for deliverance from that present cross, in regard to their own ease, than for any ability to honour God or do good unto his Church: when men are afflicted in any way, they account deliverance from it a great happiness, and therefore above all desire it: "Oh that I were at liberty," says the prisoner: "Oh that I were in my country," says the captive: "Oh that I had health," says the sick man: and "I wealth," says the poor man.

3. So far are they from resisting unto blood and enduring till death, that as soon as persecution arises for the Gospel, they are immediately so offended and frightened that they forsake their profession.

4. They dread their adversaries' power and doubt God's almighty power and good providence so much that they think it in vain to call upon God.

The want of the forenamed graces in most men makes them all the more admirable in those who have them; and it ought to move us to seek them more carefully.

### §. 209. Of the Necessity of Preaching Boldly.

The last clause is this, "as I ought to speak," which some take to be set down by the Apostle as a further motive to stir them up to pray for utterance and boldness of speech in this behalf, because it was his bounden duty, necessity was laid upon him, he ought so to speak: whence may be observed that,

It is not a matter arbitrary for a Minister to preach the Gospel, and that boldly, but a necessary thing. "Necessity is laid upon me," says the Apostle, "and woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel." As much may be said of all Ministers: Their offices require as much, the charge is committed unto them. They who do it not, omit their bounden duty: wherefore every slight occasion should not be a hindrance to them.

### §. 210. Of Preaching after a Right Manner.

But I take this clause rather to declare the manner of preaching than a motive to preach: and to have reference both to his function, and also to his condition: that he may so speak as becometh an Ambassador, and so also as becometh one who was in bonds. Hence first note that,

It is not sufficient for a Minister to preach unless it be done after a right manner: What is required unto the manner of preaching I shown before: the point in general is again urged by this Apostle, Col. 4. 4. And by Saint Peter saying, "If any speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Thus in other functions does the Apostle require a right manner of performing them, Rom. 12. 8.

The same Lord who requires the duty itself has prescribed the right manner of performing it, so our obedience and faithfulness are declared by the one as well as by the other.

In the duties which we perform, let us carefully observe how they ought to be performed, if at least in the performance of them we desire to be accepted. Little is this regarded by many: for to insist on the point in hand, how loosely, how coldly, how crudely do many preach the Word? as if it were enough only to preach. Again, others fall into another extreme: they preach the Word too cursorily, too conceitedly, too vainly, with too great affectation and ostentation. Little does God regard such pains: little comfort can Ministers reap thereby.

## §. 211. Of a Minister's Carrying Himself According to His Present Estate.

Again, the Apostle implies that,

A Minister in bonds must have respect to his present condition, accordingly to carry himself: as he may not by his timorousness betray God's truth: so neither by his indiscrete and over-great boldness endanger the same. This Christ implies under that general precept, "Be wise as serpents, and innocent as doves." Dove-like innocence will keep us from all fraudulent dealing, so we shall not deceive our Master and abuse that trust which he puts in us. Serpent-like wisdom will make us prevent many mischiefs, which otherwise through rashness we might fall into. Such wisdom used the Counsel at Jerusalem, when they did forbear to be too violent against all the rites of Moses' Law, because of the multitude of Jews who believed, and permitted abstinence from blood and from that which was strangled: yea it may be probably collected that Saint Paul while he continued, by the space of two years disputing in the school of Tyrannus which was at Ephesus, preached not particularly against Diana, though in general he persuaded the people that "They are no gods which are made with hands," and also persuaded the things which concern the kingdom of God. For certainly there would have been many tumults raised against him, and the Church (as through the malice of Demetrius a silversmith there was afterwards) if by name he had inveighed against Diana.

That thus we may, when we are in our enemies' power, speak as we ought to speak, we are to pray for the spirit of wisdom, that we may discern things that differ, and that we may rightly judge of all circumstances (such as Time, Place, and Persons, with the

like) and accordingly behave ourselves. That promise which Christ made to his Disciples (saying "When they deliver you up, it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak: for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you") and that which more generally he made to all that call upon him aright (namely, that God will give the Holy Ghost to them which desire him) These and such like promises may assure God's faithful Ambassadors that the Lord their Master will give them understanding how to deliver their message, if at least they seek to understand according to sobriety, and be not too preposterous, following the apprehension of their own conceit, rather than the direction of God's word. O Lord grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy Word, that so thy name may be the more glorified, and thy Church edified. Amen.

## An Analysis or Resolution of a Declaration Which Christ Made of the Sin Against the Holy Ghost:

Recorded, Matthew 12:31-32 and Mark 3:28-29.

In the declaration, is noted:

1. The Preface, wherein is intimated:

    1. The certainty of the point ("Verily").
    2. The authority of him that delivered it ("I say unto you").

2. The Point itself, wherein is noted:

    1. God's Mercy:
        1. Declared by forgiving sin.
        2. Amplified by:
            - The sins forgiven.
            - Set forth by the extent of them:
                - All sins wherewith soever.

            - The Kinds of them noted:
                - Generally: All matter of sins.
                - Particularly: Blasphemy.

        3. The Persons:
            1. By whom sin is committed, Men: Sons of me.
                - Amplified by their generality ("whosoever").

            2. Against whom sin is committed, The Son of Men.

2. God's Justice:
    1. Declared by affording no pardon to the sin against the Holy Ghost.
    2. Amplified by setting forth:
        1. The nature of the sin, and that by:
            - The quality of it, in speaking against: Blaspheming.
            - The object against which it is directed, The Holy Ghost.

        2. The issue of it noted:
            1. Negatively, and that:
                - Simply by an indefinite particle, "NOT."
                - Comparatively, by a distinction of times: Nor in this world, nor in the world to come.

            2. Affirmatively, in these words: Is in danger of eternal damnation.

# A Treatise of the Sin Against the Holy Ghost.

## §. 1. Of the Occasion that Christ Took to Declare the Sin Against the Holy Ghost.

The sin against the Holy Ghost is most plainly and fully laid down by Christ in his Recrimination and just censure of the Scribes and Pharisees, who maliciously slandered and blasphemed the clear evidence which he gave of his Divine power in dispossessing a devil that made the party whom he possessed both blind and dumb.

Their blasphemous slander was that Christ cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

This slander does Christ first remove by showing that it was neither probable nor possible that Satan should be cast out by Satan.

Not probable either in the thing itself or in their opinion who said it.

Not in the thing itself because then Satan would be divided against himself, which is in no way likely, for so he would procure his own ruin, as is proved by an induction of three particulars, one of a kingdom, another of a city, the third of a house, neither of which, if divided against itself, can stand, so nor Satan.

Now what probability is there that Satan, an old, politic, experienced prince, as desirous as any other to maintain his own power and dominion, should wittingly seek his own ruin and overthrow?

Nor in their own opinion was that which they said of Christ probable because they otherwise thought of other men that cast out devils. Their own children (men bred and brought up among themselves) that cast out devils, as Christ did, were not by them thought to cast out devils by the power of Satan but by the finger of God. Is it then likely that in their consciences they thought that which they uttered with their tongues, that Christ cast out devils by the Prince of Devils?

That it was not possible that by Satan Satan should be cast out, Christ proves by that superior power which he casts one out, must have over him that is cast out: he must be able first to bind him, and then to spoil his house. But Satan has not a superior power over himself: It is impossible that Satan should be stronger than Satan.

Thus our Lord Christ, having cleanly quenched the fire of that blasphemous slander (for a slander cast on him that is innocent is as a firebrand put into water) and by his just apology stopped their black mouths so that they had not to oppose against what he said, he sets forth the high pitch of their impiety, which proceeded to plain blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and from

thence takes occasion to declare the vile nature and fearful issue of that sin.

Two Evangelists record the Sum of that which Christ delivered concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost, I will therefore set down the text out of them both.

> "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." - Matthew 12:31-32.

> "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies, wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." - Mark 3:28-29.

## §.2. Of the Inference of Christ's Censure Upon Their Slander.

The aforementioned Recrimination and censure which Christ gave of the Scribes and Pharisees are in these words; very sharp indeed it is, but most just. The reason thereof is intimated by Saint Matthew, in the particle of inference set down in the first

place ("Wherefore") and expressed by Saint Mark, in the reason which he layeth down in the last place ("because they said he had an unclean spirit"). Very brazen-faced and impudent they were, that durst openly utter such a vile slander against all probability and possibility, yea against their own judgment and opinion, and therefore Christ thought it not meet to spare them any whit at all. Whence learn that

As sinners wax bold and impudent in sin, so is the heinousness and fearful issue of their sin to be discovered. Cry aloud (saith the Lord to his Prophet), spare not: show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Rebuke them sharply, saith also Saint Paul to Titus. They who are acquainted with the histories of the Prophets, of Christ, and of his Apostles, cannot be ignorant of their holy zeal in laying open the fearful estate of notorious sinners, even to their very faces.

Thus, if they be not past all recovery, they may be brought to some compunction and remorse, as the Jews were upon Peter's laying forth the heinousness of their sin in crucifying the Lord Jesus. This reason doth Saint Paul allege, where he advises Titus to reprove the Cretans sharply; for he addeth this clause, that they may be sound in the faith.

If those sinners themselves, whose estate is so laid forth, be obstinate and will not thereby be any whit moved nor brought to remorse, but rather wax more impudent (as these Scribes and

Pharisees, like the Jews their forefathers, who said to Jeremiah, "As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee," and of whom the Lord said to Ezekiel, "The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted"), yet may others be kept from going on in their course and from growing to their degree of impudency, as is noted of some in Malachi's time, who, observing the stoutness of their fellows against the Lord, feared the Lord.

If none at all be wrought upon by the knowledge of their sin, then are they made the more inexcusable, and God's severe proceeding against them is the more justified. Thus much Daniel declares in his confession unto God, where first he saith, "We have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly," &c., then he addeth, "neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the Prophets," whereby he implies that the Prophets declared their sins and denounced God's judgments against them, and thereupon he inferreth, "O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces."

[Use] Upon these and other like proofs and reasons, Ministers must learn, as they see just occasion, to put in practice the aforementioned Doctrine and by their holy zeal in laying forth sin and the issue thereof, to show their desire of reclaiming

sinners, of staying the infection and contagion of sin, and of justifying God's proceeding against sinners.

### §. 3. Of the Resolution and Several Heads of the Text.

To pass from the Occasion and Inference of Christ's censure, note further the

Manner Matter thereof.

Christ's manner of setting it forth is with great ardour and authority, noted in the Preface prefixed before his censure ("Verily I say unto you"). The particle of asseveration ("Verily") declares his ardour; his averring of it in his own name ("I say") showeth his authority.

The matter of Christ's censure is

1 Generally propounded. 2 Particularly applied.

In the general proposition is noted

1 The Nature. 2 The Issue. of the sin censured.

The Nature thereof is declared by the person against whom it is specifically directed, namely, against the Holy Ghost.

The Issue of it is that it shall never be forgiven.

Both these are amplified by comparing them with the Nature and Issue of other sins.

Other sins are committed against the Son of Man. This against the Holy Ghost.

Other sins shall be forgiven.

This shall never be forgiven.

In this comparison is set forth a lively representation of God's Mercy and Justice.

Of His Mercy in forgiving every sin committed against the Son of Man.

Of His Justice in vouchsafing no pardon to the sin against the Holy Ghost.

### §. 4. Of the Truth and Weight of the Points Here Delivered.

The first point to be noted is Christ's Preface: whereby he shows that what he delivers concerning this point is both a certain and infallible truth, and also a point of weight and moment. Christ avers it upon his authority and credit. "I say" (saith he), "I that am a faithful and true witness, I who cannot lie, I who am the very truth, I say." So, the authority of our Lord, the eternal Son of God, is the same as what he has delivered here, namely, true, certain, infallible, unchangeable. Heaven and earth shall pass

away, but his word shall not pass away. With this authority, Christ often ratifies and confirms the exposition he gave of the Moral Law and opposes it to the light credit of the ancient Doctors of the Jews, saying, "You have heard it said of old," etc. "But I say unto you," etc. So, his authority surpasses any others, for Christ is the only true Doctor of the Church, as he testifies of himself, saying, "One is your Doctor, even Christ." He has power in his own name, by his own authority to deliver anything to his Church, which power is intimated under this imperial phrase ("I say"). And herein his manner of teaching is different from all others. For the usual phrases of the Prophets were, "Thus saith the Lord," "The word of the Lord," "The burden of the word of the Lord," with the like. To doubt anything which Christ says is to call his authority into question. If therefore the word spoken by the Prophets was steadfast, how much more steadfast is the Word spoken by the Lord himself, Christ Jesus?

The particle set by Saint Mark before the clause of Christ's authority is in the Greek "Amen," and in the Hebrew signifies Truth, and so not unfitly translated "Verily." It is a note of an earnest and vehement asseveration. Hereby then, we are given to understand that the truth here delivered is a weighty truth, not lightly to be regarded and slightly passed over. For he who gave this commandment ("Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay") would never have added this vehement asseveration if there had not been need thereof.

The reason why Christ first used this Preface was to move those who heard it to give greater credence and more diligent heed to that which he delivered, lest at any time they should let it slip. And it is thus recorded by the Evangelists so that we who read it or hear should know that the points here delivered are worthy of our due and serious meditation: points needful to be taught and learned.

### §. 5. Of God's Mercy in Forgiving Sin.

Christ, having raised up the attention of his hearers by the forenamed Preface, in the next place, he mollifies the severity of God's justice against the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost by declaring the riches of his mercy in respect of all other sins, in these words, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they blaspheme. And whosoever speaketh against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him."

The mercy of God here propounded consists in the forgiveness of sin: the greatest evidence of mercy that could be given.

It is further amplified:

1. By the kinds of sin set down both generally (all sins, all manner of sin) and particularly (Blasphemy).

2. By the persons that commit sin (sons of men) and among them (whosoever).

3. By the person against whom the sin is committed (the Son of Man).

The first and general point here to be noted is that sin may be forgiven. A point well known to all that know the end of Christ's coming (which was to save sinners) and the true scope and intent of the Gospel, which was to mitigate the rigour of the Law, that says, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them." All the Sacrifices under the Law prefigured the truth of this Doctrine: and the many promises of the Word both in the old and New Testament, together with the manifold performances thereof to poor sinners, do abundantly confirm the same.

The true proper reasons hereof are the mercy of God (who desires not the death of sinners) and the Sacrifice of Christ, whereby the Justice of God is satisfied: in which respect Christ is said to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. So, there is nothing in the sinner to move God to pass by his sins, but only the sweet concurrence of mercy and justice in God.

Admirable is the comfort which hence arises to poor sinners. Sin makes the creature to be most wretched and cursed. By reason thereof, he is odious in the pure eyes of God: yea, he is liable to the infinite wrath of God, and to all the fearful fruits thereof,

which are all the judgments and plagues which can be inflicted on body or soul in this world, and a cursed death at the departure out of this world, and eternal torment and torture in the world to come. Now then, what comfort can be ministered to such a creature so long as he lies under sin? The very thought of the nature and issue of sin is like that handwriting which appeared to Belshazzar and changed his countenance and troubled him, so as the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. But what comfort and joy will it bring to the conscience of such a sinner to hear the voice of Christ say unto him (as to the poor palsy man who was brought before him), "Son be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee?" Lo, Christ hath here indefinitely, without respect to any particular person, said, that Sin shall be forgiven.

Let our care therefore be to seek for pardon: and not despair and sink down under the burden of sin. The pardon is purchased and granted; let not us reject it or neglect it. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Behold here a sure ground of repentance, and a strong motive to stir us up to forsake our sins. If there were no hope of pardon, what encouragement could the sinner have to turn from his sins? For his heart would thus reason, "Indeed, I am a woeful wretch through sin: but what will it now boot me to leave my sin? my judgment is past: there is no recalling of it: there

remains no pardon." But assurance of pardon makes him alter the case and thus to reason, "Though I have heretofore been so wretched, as by sin to plunge myself into endless misery, yet I hear that there is pardon for sinners: surely I will no more continue in this woeful estate. I will seek pardon for sin past, and be watchful against sin for the time to come." Were there no hope of pardon of sin, man would no more care to turn from sin, than the Devil doth. This point therefore of the remission of sin must be urged as a means and motive to draw men from their sins, and to work in them true and sound repentance. That repentance which arises from faith in the pardon of sin, and is performed in way of gratefulness unto God for his great mercy in pardoning our sins, is the most kindly wrought, and will prove the truest and best repentance.

### §. 6. Of the Extent of God's Mercy in Pardoning All Sins.

So far reaches the goodness of God in forgiving sin, as there is no sin (except that only which is here excepted, the sin against the Holy Ghost) but comes within the Compass thereof. All sins (as Saint Mark has recorded Christ's speech) "All manner of sin," (as S. Matthew has recorded it) shall be forgiven: not as if in the issue and event, every sin should indeed be pardoned (for then few men should be condemned, which is contrary to the current of the Scripture, that says, "Few shall be saved") but because every sin is pardonable. The point then here to be noted, is that (except before excepted) No sin in the nature

thereof is irremissible: original corruption, and actual transgressions: whether few or many: light or heinous: new bred, or old and inveterate: only once, or oft committed; in ignorance or against knowledge: voluntarily or by force: of infirmity or presumption: against God or man; without a man's body, or against his own body: in secret or openly: by omitting or slightly performing that which is good: all may be pardoned. For a particular proof hereof, take the example of Manasseh, who (I think) went the furthest in sin that ever any did since Adam's time, and received pardon. Of his original corruption no question can be made: that his actual transgressions were many, and those most heinous bloody, crying sins, committed not in ignorance only, but against knowledge, voluntarily, presumptuously, against God and man, the history recorded of him apparently showeth: and yet were they all pardoned.

The reason hereof may not be sought in the party that sinneth, or in the nature of sin (for every sin is mortal, and deserves eternal condemnation). In either of those, no reason at all can be found out: But only in the extent of God's mercy, and in the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. For the mercy of God is greater, not only than any one, but than all sins whatsoever: and the sacrifice of Christ is a sufficient price of redemption for all: His blood cleanseth from all sin. As God's mercy and Christ's sacrifice are the cause of pardoning any one sin: so the riches of God's mercy, and the infinite value of Christ's Sacrifice, are the cause of pardoning all sins.

Object. Why then is not the sin against the Holy Ghost pardonable?

Answ. Not because it is greater than God's mercy, or above the price of Christ's oblation, but because of God's revealed determination against it, as we shall hereafter more distinctly hear.

[Use 1] From this extent of God's mercy we may well infer, that man's destruction is of himself: either because he maliciously despises the Spirit of Grace, or wilfully rejects the offer of pardon. In the order of redemption God has made man's sin pardonable, but man by his impenitence makes it not to be pardoned.

[Use 2] From the forenamed Doctrine we may take courage to fly to the Throne of grace for pardon, how many soever, or how great soever our sins have been. Note the gracious invitation of the Lord by his Prophet, saying, "Come now and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Whensoever the Devil seeks to bring us to despair, either by the multitude or by the heinousness of our sins, let us in faith plead this before God, "All sins shall be forgiven:" and thereupon apply to our souls the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin: and be moved thereby to turn from all.

## §. 7. Of Blasphemy, How Heinous a Sin It Is.

The particular sin, whereby the forenamed mercy of God in forgiving sin, is exemplified, is Blasphemy. For in Saint Matthew, Blasphemy is expressly added to all manner of sin that shall be forgiven: and in Saint Mark it is said, that All blasphemies wherewithsoever men shall blaspheme, shall be forgiven. Whence are offered two Doctrines to our consideration.

1. Blasphemy is a most heinous sin.

2. Blasphemy may be forgiven.

The former Doctrine is implied by the particular mention of it in this place. For in that Christ gives this as an instance and evidence of God's rich mercy, in forgiving all manner of sin, because he forgives Blasphemy, he gives us thereby to understand, that Blasphemy is one of the most notorious sins, a sin which is most hardly forgiven, which yet notwithstanding being forgiven, we may well hope that other sins may be forgiven.

The truth of this Doctrine will yet more clearly appear if we consider the nature of Blasphemy.

Blasphemy (according to the notation of the Greek word) signifies to hurt one's fame, or credit: yea in Hebrew also a blasphemer of God is said to strike through the name of Jehovah.

In former ancient times this word, Blasphemy, has been used to set forth the dishonour and disgrace that is done to man's name and credit, in which sense it is also sometimes used in the New Testament: as where Saint Paul says of himself, and other Ministers of the Gospel, Being defamed, (or (word for word to translate it) being blasphemed ) we pray: and where Saint Jude says of the wicked in his time, They speak evil of (or they blaspheme ) dignities: Yet now long use in God's Church has appropriated the word Blasphemy to a high dishonour done to the great name of God: and that both in regard to the Matter, and also of the Manner, whereby God's name is dishonoured.

In regard to the matter of Blasphemy, God is blasphemed two ways: either Privatively, by taking away from God that which is due unto him, and wherein his honour consists: or Positively, by attributing that unto him, which is unbeseeming his Majesty, and dishonourable to his great name.

The honour due to God is taken from him two ways.

1. Simply, when that which properly belongs unto him is denied him. Thus because the King of Assyria denied that God was able to save Jerusalem, and to deliver it out of his hands, he is said to blaspheme the Lord God of Israel.

2. By consequence, when that which is proper to the Creator, is attributed to the creature: thus the Scribes and Pharisees imagining Christ to be a mere creature, and not thinking

> that he was God, because he took upon him to forgive sins (which is a power proper only unto God) accused him of Blasphemy: and again, the Jews went about to stone him for Blasphemy, because (as they allege) he being a man, made himself God. Though their censure of Christ was most false and slanderous, yet thereby they plainly show what was accounted blasphemy. But to make this point more clear, the Holy Ghost expressly says of the Israelites in the wilderness, that they committed great blasphemies, because they said of the molten Calf which they set up, This is thy God which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt, whereby they attribute to the Calf, a creature of their own making, that which God the Creator of all things did.

The other kind of blasphemy, in attributing such things to God which are unbeseeming his Excellence, is noted in those Israelites that caused their sons to pass through the fire, making God thereby like unto the Devil, to delight in man's blood: a thing most dishonourable to the Divine Majesty. The Lord having relation to that Heathenish and barbarous fact of the Israelites, says to their children, In this have your Fathers blasphemed me. Thus it is noted of those on whom the Vial of God's wrath was poured out, that they blasphemed the God of heaven for their pains: their blasphemy, without question, was that they impeached God of injustice, unmercifulness, cruelty and such like things, much unbeseeming his glorious name.

In regard to the manner of blasphemy, when anything is spoken of God, or to God ignominiously, reproachfully, disgracefully, contemptuously, or the like, God's name is blasphemed thereby: as when Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should hear his voice, etc." And when Jehoram, King of Israel said, "Behold this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?" And when Nebuchadnezzar said, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" And when the wicked in Job's time said, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"

By the several ways wherein men blaspheme God, we may observe that this sin of blasphemy is directly derogatory to the honour of God's name, which ought not to be taken in vain, but rather had in all high account, and therefore a most heinous sin. Which doth further appear by that fear which the Jews had of naming it. Blasphemy seemed so horrible a thing to them, that when a man was to be openly accused thereof, they did not say in their public accusation, such an one blasphemed, but ironically such an one blessed God; under the name of that virtue comprising the contrary vice. In imitation hereof, Jezebel, when she would have Naboth put to death, thus framed the indictment against him, "Thou diddest bless God": and accordingly the witnesses gave this evidence, "Naboth did bless God." Both she and they meant that he blasphemed God: and so was their meaning taken: for thereupon they put Naboth to death.

The capital punishment which by God's Law was to be inflicted on blasphemers, doth also declare the heinousness of the sin: (the words of the Law are express, "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall be put to death"). But much more that heinous censure which the Apostle denounces against blasphemers, saying, "I have delivered them unto Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme." To this purpose saith the Canon, "A blasphemer according to the Law is to be beheaded, according to the Canon to be accursed."

Lastly, the practice of the Devils and other damned in hell, which is, To blaspheme the great God who cast them in thither: directly contrary to the practice of the glorious Angels and blessed Saints in heaven, which is continually to sing Hallelujah, praise and glory to God, showeth that blasphemers remaining blasphemers without repentance, are far from having a part in the heavenly society of Saints and Angels, and can expect nothing but to have a part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

Thus by the very nature of blasphemy, as also by the temporal, spiritual, and eternal punishment of it (all expressly noted in the Scripture) we see that it is a most heinous sin: so as Christ might well bring this as a pregnant proof of the riches of God's mercy in pardoning all manner of sin. For if blasphemy be pardoned, what sin may not be pardoned?

By the heinousness of this sin, learn to judge of that supposed Vicar of Christ, or rather plain Antichrist, the Pope of Rome, and his parasites. If ever the name of Blasphemy might be written on the forehead of any, it may be written on the forehead of that Seven-headed scarlet-coloured Beast, which hath opened her black mouth to blaspheme the God of heaven, and the Saviour of the world, more than ever any Pagan. What a blasphemous speech was that of Julius the third, to say, "If God were angry with Adam for eating an apple, might not he be angry with his Cook for eating his Peacock?" And at another time, when his Physician kept away from him a dish which he liked well, but was hurtful to his health, he said, "Bring me my dish in despite of God." The blasphemy of Leo the tenth was more odious, because it seemeth to be more serious, for when Bembo his Cardinal was speaking of the glad tidings of the Gospel, he answered, "What profit doth that fable of Christ bring us?" O intolerable blasphemy! But not to insist on particular speeches of particular men, many of the Decrees made of their Popes are very blasphemous, whereof take for a taste these particulars.

"The Pope of Rome is a God." "Let no man dare say to the Pope What dost thou." "The Pope may dispense against an Apostle." "The Pope may change the nature of things." "The Pope may make something of nothing." "The Pope may dispense above Law." "The Pope of injustice may make justice."

Yea, many of their public Prayers are also in the highest kind blasphemous against Christ, as where they pray to Christ to bring them to his Father through the intercession and merits of Peter, Paul, Thomas, Nicholas, Gregory, and others whom they account Saints: and where they pray to the Virgin Mary to use her motherly authority over her Son, and to command him to do this, and that.

The power of Absolution which they give not only to the Pope, but also to every Priest, is blasphemous: for by the Council of Trent it is decreed, not to be a ministerial declaration, but a judicial act of forgiving. The conceit of offering up Christ's glorified body by the hands of a Priest, is also blasphemous: and so is the new Jesuitical invention of mixing the milk of the Virgin Mary with the blood of Christ. These and such like blasphemies cannot proceed but from the Imps of Antichrist.

Blasphemy being so heinous a sin, Magistrates, who are gods on earth, ought to use all the means they can to suppress it: and therefore they ought both to make severe laws against it, & also strictly to look to the due execution of those laws: otherwise the unjust Judges in Ahab's time, who condemned innocent Naboth to death, for a mere pretence, and unjust accusation of blasphemy; and the Jews who supposing that Christ blasphemed, were ready to stone him, shall rise up in judgment against them: much more shall that Heathen King condemn them who made a decree, that whosoever should speak any

blasphemy against God, should be drawn in pieces, &c. Yea their practice in censuring and punishing those who speak evil of Dignities, and that severely (wherein they do that which is just and equal) shall condemn their remissness in suffering blasphemies against the great and glorious name of God to go unpunished.

And let every particular Christian take heed, that the Devil never prevail so far over him, as to use his tongue as an instrument to blaspheme God. For avoiding whereof, let us retain a reverend and high account of the great name of God in our hearts: and be afraid to conceive an evil thought, which may tend to the dishonour thereof: much more fearful let us be of taking his name in our mouths vainly, and of rash swearing by his name. Common swearing by the name of God, will soon bring us to plain blasphemy.

Yea, seeing blasphemy is such an high pitch of iniquity, let us give no occasion unto others to blaspheme God's name. They who call upon the true God, and yet depart not from iniquity, who profess the truth of the Gospel, and yet turn the grace of God into wantonness, who make show of Religion, and yet deny the power thereof, who severely judge others, and yet themselves do the same things, cause the name of God to be blasphemed among the enemies of piety and sincerity. Read for this purpose, Rom. 2. 17, 18. &c. whosoever give occasion to the enemies of the Gospel to blaspheme God, the Author of the

Gospel, for their unworthy walking therein, make themselves accessory to this great and grievous sin of blasphemy: and accordingly shall be judged with the judgment of blasphemers.

## §. 8. Of God's Mercy in Forgiving Blasphemy.

Though blasphemy be so heinous a sin as has been declared, yet Christ here expressly says that blasphemy shall be forgiven; so as from hence we may gather that

Blasphemers are not utterly excluded from all hope of pardon. Instance Saint Paul, who thus says of himself; "I was a blasphemer, but I obtained mercy."

Thus the Lord shows that the salvation of man is as dear and tender unto him as his own name: the piercing and striking thorough of his own name does not provoke him to cast the blasphemer into hell, but his pity rather moves him to offer pardon, that so the blasphemer, beholding God's goodness striving with his wretchedness, may be ashamed of the foulness of sin and brought to repentance for it.

Have we not just cause in this respect to wonder and say; "O the depth of the riches of the mercy of God!"

Hearken to this, O ye blasphemers of the name of God, though the great flying Book of God's curse be gone forth against you, yet may it be called in again. Note for this purpose what Saint

Paul says of God's mercy to him, who had been in former times a blasphemer: "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe in him to life everlasting." Cease therefore to blaspheme anymore. Lay hold of this Gospel, this glad tidings of reconciliation, and be moved thereby to seek how you may best honour his name, whom in former times you have blasphemed.

And let all of us herein show ourselves children of our Heavenly Father, in bearing with such as have sought our disgrace. This is a hard lesson to learn: for man accounts his name more dear than his life, and had rather his head or heart should be stricken thorough, than his name and honour. Hence it is that the least reproach and disgrace causes the greatest revenge that can be thought of. But this humour arises from corrupt nature. Christ commands to bless them that curse us: which precept the Apostles put in practice; for of himself, and of others says Saint Paul, "Being defamed, we entreat."

### §. 9. Of the Principal Object of God's Mercy, Man.

As the riches of God's mercy are in general commended by forgiving all manner of sin, even blasphemy; so in particular it is commended unto Man by making him the peculiar object of this mercy of God: for to man does Christ in special appropriate it, saying, "All manner of sin shall be forgiven unto MEN," (as Saint

Matthew records it) "To the SONS OF MEN" (as Saint Mark sets it down.) From whence we may gather that

MAN is the most principal object of God's mercy. This instance of forgiving sin goes beyond all others that can be given to commend the mercy of God; especially if we consider what was done to effect this.

To discharge man of that debt whereunto he stood bound through sin unto the justice of God; the Son of God must come down from Heaven and become a son of man, and in man's room and stead he made sin, offering himself up as a sacrifice to satisfy God's justice for man's sin. And that man might be made partaker of that which Christ did in this kind, Sons of men must be united to the Sonne of God, by the Spirit of God; that as by the former union God and man became one person, so by this latter union, the sons of men, and the Son of God, might make one body, which is, Christ.

No creature but Man does partake of God's mercy in this kind: insensible and unreasonable creatures are not subject to sin, nor yet to the eternal punishment of sin, because they have no immortal souls. The good Angels never sinned, and in that respect had no need to taste of this kind of mercy: whereupon when an Angel brought the news of Christ's birth, he says in the second person, "To you, is borne a Saviour:" but when the Prophet a son of man foretold thereof, he says in the first

person, "To us a child is borne, To us a Son is given." The evil Angels, that had as much need thereof as sons of men, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. This mercy is not vouchsafed unto them, in regard whereof it is said, that Christ took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. In this respect we may with holy admiration cry out, and say; "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

The reason why God should thus respect man above all other creatures cannot be fetched out of man. Man has his being from God as well as other creatures; in his nature there is no such excellency as for it he should be preferred before all others: for he was made of the dust, and in his substance much inferior to the Angels; neither can there be any merit or desert in his actions: for in his best estate he could do no more than what of duty he was bound unto. But when God afforded him this great mercy, whereof we now speak, he was dead in sin, a slave of Satan, an enemy of God. It was therefore God's good pleasure that made him thus to make choice of man, to make him the most principal object of his mercy; and in this respect the Apostle uses a word, which signifies a proper, and peculiar love to man.

How does this check the sons of men for their ingratitude against God? whereas this proper and peculiar love of God to

man, should provoke him to exceed all other creatures in setting forth the honour and glory of God, who hath so respected him: Man for the most part dishonours God more than all other creatures, except the infernal spirits, who wholly and only set themselves to dishonour and blaspheme the name of that great God, who reserves them in everlasting chains. For if we look into the highest Heavens, there we shall see the heavenly Spirits stand before the Throne of God, ready to receive and execute any charge that he shall give them: yea, there we shall hear them singing continually praise unto the Lord, and rejoicing when God is any way glorified in Heaven or in earth. Do any of the sons of men so far exceed the Angels in glorifying God, as God's mercy hath more abounded to us than to them? What we shall do in Heaven I know not, but how far short the best of us on earth do come of them, none can be ignorant. Descend we therefore a little lower into the next heavens, where we may behold the Sun, Moon, Stars, and whole host of those heavens keep constantly that fixed order and course which at first their Maker appointed them: yea, the Moon in her changes, and the very wandering Stars in their wandering, observe the decree of the Creator, and start not from that order which he hath set unto them; and yet the sons of men daily transgress the Ordinances which the Lord their God hath given them. The very earth which was cursed for man's sake, with little tillage bringeth forth all manner of needful and pleasant fruits for man: yet all the spiritual culture which God uses on the sons of men, cannot make many of them bring forth good fruit. Read God's

complaint to this purpose, in the long which was made to the Vineyard of the Lord. The Prophet Isaiah notes that the Ox and the Ass (two of the most brutish creatures that be) take better notice of the kindness of their Masters, than the Sons of Men do of the mercies of the Lord to them.

Oh beloved, let this perverseness of our nature humble us, and let us endeavour to answer with gratefulness God's goodness to us. As he in mercy hath abounded towards us above all other creatures, so let us strive to excel all in honouring him. Though notwithstanding our utmost endeavour we come much short, yet let our true desire mount aloft, and let us still endeavour to go as far as possibly we can, and even moan again, because we cannot attain to the perfection of the most perfect. This is that which is intended in the third petition of the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven."

## §. 10. Of God's Impartiality in Offering Mercy Without Respect of Persons.

God's mercy to Man is further amplified by the generality of the Object, which is first intimated by these indefinite words, Men, and Sons of Men: and then more expressly noted by Saint Matthew under this general particle ("Whosoever") whereby we are taught that

God excludes none from the participation of his mercy.

1. This doctrine is to be understood of God's outward dispensation and manifestation of his mercy by the ministry of the Word, wherein no difference is made between persons, nor exemption of any; so as it does not call into question the secret counsel and eternal decree of God.

2. It is to be referred to the several degrees, sorts, and conditions of men, between which God makes no difference, as honourable, mean, rich, poor, learned, unlearned, old, young, free, bond, male, female, magistrate, subject, with the like.

3. It is to be applied to the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, which is available to take away the sins of the most notorious sinners that can be (as we heard before) as well as of any other sinners.

Thus this doctrine rightly taken is abundantly confirmed throughout the whole Scripture. Solomon brings in Wisdom in the open streets, proclaiming mercy to all: and Christ commands his Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature: meaning every reasonable creature capable thereof. But more particularly and expressly says the Apostle; "He that is Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him." And again, "God wills that all men shall be saved: and Christ gave himself a ransom for all men."

For with God there is no respect of persons; he has not carnal eyes, nor sees as man sees: the souls of the meanest are as dear

and precious to him as the souls of the greatest: "All souls are mine," says the Lord.

[Use 1] This further confirms that which was noted before, that man's destruction is of himself. No man can justly blame God, who offers mercy and pardon to everyone.

Let everyone of what rank or condition soever he be, be encouraged to apply to himself this glad tidings of pardon: and seeing God excludes none, let not any of us exclude ourselves.

### §. 11. Of the Title SON OF MAN Given to Christ.

The last branch whereby God's mercy in forgiving sin is amplified respects the person against whom the sin is committed in this phrase (Son of Man).

This title in Scripture is used sometimes indefinitely, and sometimes determinately.

Indefinitely, in a double respect.

1. To set forth all mankind in general, and so it comprises under it every son of Adam, every mother's child (as we speak). In which sense Bildad uses it, where comparing mankind with the celestial bodies, he says, "How much less MAN a worm, even the SON OF MAN, a worm?"

2. To designate corrupt and wicked men, in which sense it is opposed to sons of God: as where Moses says, that the sons of God saw the DAUGHTERS OF MEN: and David in his complaint, "I lie among them that are set on fire, even the SONS OF MEN."

Determinately and particularly it is attributed to the Prophets of God, and to Christ the Son of God.

In the Old Testament, it is most usually attributed to the Prophets, especially when it is expressed in the singular number. Among other Prophets, Ezekiel is most frequently styled with this title, SON OF MAN: he is in his Prophecy so called almost a hundred times. The reason for this I take to be this, he had visions both more in number, and more rare in kind, revealed unto him, than any other Prophet had: now lest he should be exalted out of measure through the abundance of revelations, the Lord often reminds him of his estate by nature, that he was but a son of man, a mortal man, even a worm.

In the New Testament, it is most usually attributed to Christ, and that most frequently in the history of the Evangelists, and when Christ speaks of himself. Once Saint Stephen terms Christ the Son of Man.

This title has relation especially to the human nature of Christ, in regard whereof he was born of a woman, and so a true Son of Man: yet it is not to be restrained only to his Manhood; for it

comprises under it the person of Christ, God and Man: else how could Christ while his human nature was on earth say, "The Son of Man is in heaven."

The reason why this title is given to Christ is not, (as some too nicely infer, from the singular number) because Christ was born of a Virgin, and had but one Parent, and so was a son of MAN, not of MEN, that is, only of a mother, and not of father and mother both, as others are: For by the same reason it might be inferred that Ezekiel had but one parent because he is called A son of MAN: besides, by this reason Christ should be called A son of woman, not a son of man. But other better reasons may be given of this title, as to show

1. That Christ was true man.

2. That he came of the stock of man, and brought not his human nature from heaven.

3. That he descended very low for our sakes, being the Son of God, to become a Son of Man. If any shall reply against this and say, "The title MAN might have implied as much," I answer, that there is a far greater emphasis in this title Son of Man: as, according to the Hebrew phrase it is more emphatical to say, a son of disobedience, a son of perdition, than a disobedient and forlorn man.

To apply that which has been said of this title, it is without all exception clear, that by the Son of Man, is here meant Christ Jesus. For Christ never attributes this title to anyone but himself. Besides, sin and blasphemy (which is here said to be committed against the Son of Man) is not properly committed against a mere man.

In Christ's manner of setting forth himself under this title, Son of Man, note his modesty and his humility.

He does here set himself forth as God, that has power to forgive sins (a great and excellent dignity) and therefore speaks of himself in the third Person, as of another. Behold his modesty.

There were many most excellent titles due and proper to him, which others attributed to him, as Son of God, King, Lord, Jesus, Rabbi, and the like, but he himself makes choice of that which of all others was the meanest, and ministered least matter of ostentation. Behold his humility.

As these graces are to be admired in Christ, so are they to be imitated by us.

## §. 12. Of the Particular Respect Wherein the Title (Son of Man) is Here Used.

Having spoken of this title, Son of Man, in general, let us now more distinctly and particularly consider in what respect it is

here used.

Many take it here by way of extenuation, as if Christ more largely had thus said, "Considering that the Son of God was pleased to take upon him man's nature, and in that nature to appear unto men, and in such a shape to appear, as he could not be discerned to be any other than a man, they who speak against him, and blaspheme him, may seem to have some pretext and excuse, because they knew him not to be the Son of God: and in that respect, their sin may be forgiven them." They who take this title used here in this sense, illustrate their meaning with the similitude of a King's son and heir, appareled with a beggar's tagged rags: if any of the subjects meeting him, but not knowing him, should revile him, and otherwise abuse him, that subject should not be condemned of high treason: his ignorance of the person would extenuate his fact.

Answer: Though that similitude does fitly illustrate the pretended sense and meaning of the words: yet this sense is not pertinent to the present place and purpose of Christ.

The main scope of Christ in this place is to aggravate the sin against the Holy Ghost. But to compare it with a small light sin is no aggravation. Wherefore, I rather take this title (Son of Man) in a contrary sense, not in a way of extenuation, but of aggravation: whereunto it tends, if this title be taken as setting forth on the one side the low degree of humiliation, whereunto

Christ descended for our sakes, together with the unspeakable love of God, in giving his only begotten Son to be a Son of Man; and on the other side man's light account, or rather plain contempt of Christ's abasement, and of God's kindness: as if more largely and distinctly it had been thus said, "Though men, not in thought only, but by word and deed also, dishonour and blaspheme him, who is not only the Almighty Creator of all things, but also the merciful Redeemer of mankind, who being the eternal Son of God, for man's sake became a Son of Man, and from the highest heavens descended into the lowest parts of the earth, to deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, yet may this sin and this blasphemy be forgiven." To illustrate this with the forenamed similitude; Suppose a King's subject be a gally-slave, and to redeem him, the King sends his only son, and this son becomes a poor slave to deliver that subject, and yet that subject speaks against, reviles, and evilly entreats this Prince, is not this more than monstrous ingratitude? And is it not admirable goodness in the King and Prince to forgive that ingratitude? This is that goodness of God which is intimated under this phrase, "Whosoever shall speak a word against the SON OF MAN, it shall be forgiven him."

§. 13. Of God's Goodness Overcoming Man's Ungratefulness.

The Doctrine arising from the forenamed clause is this:

Man's ungratefulness does not dry up the spring of God's goodness.

Note how David sets forth God's goodness in this respect: for after he had set forth the ingratitude of the Israelites in many respects, concerning God he says, "Yet he being full of compassion forgave their iniquity." And again, after he had shown how they forgot God their Saviour, etc. He adds, that God turned away his wrath, and remembered for them his Covenant. "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers" (a great point of ingratitude) "yet turn again to me," saith the Lord to rebellious Israel. But most evidently is this proved by that mercy which was shown to many thousands of those Jews, who evilly entreated the Son of Man, a man approved of God among them by miracles, wonders, and signs: And denied the Holy one and Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them: And killed the Prince of life.

The Reason is evident. God's goodness arises from himself: and it is answerable to his greatness. As man's unworthiness hinders not God to show mercy to man at first, when he is dead in sin: so man's ungratefulness stops not the current of his mercy when it has begun to flow forth: but like a flood of water it overflows all the dams that are made against it by man's ingratitude: what God does, he does for his own sake.

[Use] As before we had evidences of God's rich mercy, so here behold longsuffering mixed with mercy. Nothing commends one's patience more than abuse of kindness: By God's overcoming man's evil with his goodness, he shows himself to be slow to anger, and that he delights not in the death of sinners.

[Use 2] Hereby men that have formerly despised the bounty and goodness of God may be emboldened notwithstanding to return unto the Lord, according to that which the Prophet said unto the ungrateful Israelites, in the name of the Lord, "Thou disobedient Israel return, and I will not let my wrath fall upon you, for I am merciful."

[Use 3] Hereby also, all that profess themselves to be the children of God our heavenly Father, may learn to be like him in longsuffering, and not to suffer themselves to be overcome with evil, but to overcome evil with goodness.

# THE SECOND PART.

Of God's Justice.

A general use of all that has been said of the mercy of God in forgiving sins, even all manner of sins, not blasphemies

excepted, committed by any person, yea though the blasphemy be uttered against the Son of Man, is to justify God's severity against the sin and blasphemy of the Holy Ghost. For which purpose, without question, Christ has here so magnified the mercy of God, as the like place is not to be found throughout the whole Scripture. Wherefore, having spoken of God's mercy in pardoning every sin but one, let us consider his justice in affording to pardon to that one sin: which is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

## §. 14. Of Abusing God's Mercy.

In that Christ inferreth the severity of God's justice upon the riches of his mercy, and after he had delivered what he could of the mercy of God, addeth a BUT ("Every sin shall be forgiven, BUT the sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven"). He giveth us to understand, that

God's mercy and longsuffering may be so far abused, as nothing but extremity of justice can be looked for. Thus much implies the Apostle, where he saith, "It is impossible that such and such should be renewed." And again, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment." The phrases of God's walking stubbornly against them that walk stubbornly against him, and showing himself froward with the froward, and swearing that the iniquity of men shall not be

purged with sacrifice, nor offering forever, with the like, do also prove as much.

God's mercy would be notoriously abused if at sometimes, and in some cases, the very extremity of justice should not be executed. It standeth much with the honour of God to show himself sometimes a God of vengeance, and a consuming fire.

[Use] Take we heed therefore how we go too far in abusing God's lenity and patience, lest we deprive ourselves of all the fruit and benefit thereof: and instead of being the principal object of God's mercy, we make ourselves the principal object of his mercy. A man may so far proceed in sinning against the Son of Man, as by degrees fall into the sin against the Holy Ghost. The fearfulness of which estate follows now to be declared.

### §. 15. Of the Object of the Unpardonable Sin: The Holy Ghost.

In handling the sin against the Holy Ghost, we are to consider:

1. The Nature
2. The Issue thereof. The nature of the sin is set forth under the names given to it. It is by Saint Matthew termed the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, and a speaking against the Holy Ghost. By Saint Mark, blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. In all these phrases, both the Object and the Quality of that sin are noted forth.

The Object against which this sin is directed and committed, in particular, is the Holy Ghost. In this respect, Saint Matthew calls it the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost: not because it is in the Holy Ghost, which is blasphemy to think, but because (as the other phrases expressly declare) it is against the Holy Ghost. This kind of phrase is often used in this sense: for instance, when it is said that Christ gave his Disciples power against unclean spirits, it is well translated according to the meaning of the phrase, but word for word it is in the original "Power of unclean spirits." I have noted this to soften the phrase of some who, when speaking, preaching, and writing of this sin, style it "The sin of the Holy Ghost": which speech, being well taken (the Holy Ghost being conceived to be not the subject, but the Object thereof), may safely be used.

Now, the Holy Ghost is made the Object of this sin not in regard to his Essence or Person, but in regard to his Office and Operation.

In regard to his Essence, the Holy Ghost is one with the Father and the Son: all three Persons are one in nature and essence, one God. Hence, a sin committed against any one is committed against every one of the three Persons.

In regard to his Person, the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, proceeding from them both, and in no way greater than the Father or the Son; they are all in dignity

coequal. Therefore, in this respect, a sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be greater than against the Father and the Son.

But there is an office and operation peculiarly attributed to each Person in Scripture. The peculiar office and operation attributed to the Spirit are:

1. To enlighten men's minds with the knowledge of the Gospel and to reveal unto them the goodwill of God and the way to happiness, in which respect he is called "The Spirit of revelation."

2. To persuade their hearts of the truth of those things which he has revealed to their understanding, by virtue of which men are said to taste of the good Word of God, after they are made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

3. To move them to acknowledge and profess the Gospel to be the Word of God, which is implied by the Apostle under the phrase "receiving the knowledge of the truth."

There are also many other works of the Spirit, but these are the most pertinent to our purpose and will shed light on all the rest.

The sin noted here to be committed against the Holy Ghost is committed against him in regard to the aforementioned operations of the Spirit. It is against that truth of God which the Spirit has revealed to a man and convicted and persuaded his

heart of the certainty thereof, so that in his heart he cannot but acknowledge it as an evident and undeniable truth and is often moved with his mouth to profess as much.

### §. 16. Of the Quality of the Sin against the Holy Ghost.

The quality (or effect of this sin, for the sin itself is seated principally in the heart) is speaking against and blasphemy. This latter word explains the former. It is not every kind of speaking against, but an ignominious, opprobrious, spiteful speaking against: which is blasphemy. For blasphemy is here taken in the utmost extent thereof, both in regard to the matter, which is to deny the evidence of the Spirit, and also in regard to the manner, which is to do it with disgraceful and spiteful speeches, to the open dishonour of God, his Gospel, and the Spirit, which has given undoubted evidence of the power of God: as the Scribes and Pharisees, who not only denied that Christ cast out devils by the finger and power of God but also most reproachfully and slanderously said, "This fellow does not cast out devils but by Beel-zebub the Prince of devils." And again, "He has an unclean spirit."

### §. 17. Of the Definition of the Sin against the Holy Ghost.

The words and phrases by which Christ sets forth the nature of this sin, being explained, we may gather from them this definition.

The sin against the Holy Ghost is a spiteful rejecting of the Gospel after the Spirit has supernaturally persuaded a man's heart of the truth and benefit thereof.

The general matter of this definition is a rejecting of the Gospel.

The particular form, whereby this sin is distinguished from other sins, is in the other words.

For the matter.

The Gospel is it against which this sin in particular is directed, and not every part of God's word. By the Gospel, I mean that part of God's word which God has revealed for man's salvation, even after his fall: and in that respect commonly called the glad tidings of salvation. So the very object matter, whereabout this sin is occupied, partly reveals its heinousness and declares a reason why it is not pardoned.

To oppose any part of God's truth is a monstrous and heinous sin: for a special part of God's honour consists in his truth, which is as dear and precious to him as anything can be: to gainsay it is to deny him to be God, for he is styled "The Lord God of truth." But to gainsay the Gospel, that part of God's truth wherein Jesus, who was sent to save his people from their sins, wherein the riches of God's mercy, and wherein the peculiar love of God to man is revealed, and that for man's good, even for his eternal salvation, is more than monstrous. For this is not only a

denying of God's truth but of his mercy also: yea, (if we consider the extent of the Gospel) of the wisdom, power, justice, and all other properties of God. It adds to other sins (to make up the heap of them) ingratitude. It takes away the means of pardon and life: for in the Gospel, only in the Gospel is pardon offered, and life to be found; without it, there is nothing but death and damnation. When the Gospel is not received, what hope can there be of pardon? This is what brings God (who by a solemn oath has protested that he desires not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live) to complain and say, "What could I have done more than I have done?" If not to receive the Gospel be a deadly and damnable sin, what is to reject it? To reject a thing is more than not to receive it: it is to put it away, as the Jews, who in that respect are said to judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life. It is as if traitors and rebels, being risen up against their Sovereign, and he offering pardon unto them, if they would lay down their weapons and turn to be loyal subjects, they should reject his gracious offer and say they will have none of his favour, they care not for pardon: they had rather be hanged, drawn, and quartered than be beholden to him for favour and pardon. Does not this rejecting of favour much aggravate the crime? Yea, is not this a more heinous crime than the treason and rebellion itself?

Herein all that commit the sin against the Holy Ghost fall: but yet all that fall thereinto do not commit that sin. For as none

that perish in their sin receive the Gospel, so all incredulous persons who live under the Gospel, and ministry thereof, whereby pardon is proclaimed and offered unto them, do refuse and reject it: so this part of the general matter of this sin is common to all that, at least living under the ministry of the Gospel, believe not.

In the definition of this sin, we further added this word, "Despiteful," which also appertains to the general matter thereof.

To reject the Gospel despitefully makes the matter much more desperate: for it implies an inbred hatred against the Gospel itself, the Word of salvation: whence proceed open blasphemies against God and His Word, and fierce and cruel persecuting of the Preachers and professors of the Gospel.

This despitefulness added to the rejecting of the Gospel brings a man into a most fearful and desperate estate: yet all that ascend to this high pitch of impiety do not simply therein sin against the Holy Ghost: for all this may be done in ignorance. Take Paul's example: he was so zealous of the traditions which the Jews received from their Elders, as he hated the Gospel, which he deemed to be contrary thereto: in which respect, he thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus: and so he did: for out of his inward hatred he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord: he

did much evil to the Saints: he destroyed them that called on the name of Jesus: he compelled many to blaspheme, and waxed mad against the Saints: yea, he himself was a blasphemer. But all these he did ignorantly: for a man may hate and blaspheme that which he knows not. Great was that despite which many of the Jews showed against Christ, and against Stephen: They were cut to the heart, and gnashed at Stephen with their teeth: yet both Christ and Stephen prayed for them: which they would not have done, if they had sinned the sin unto death, because it is forbidden so to do.

Thus much of the general matter of the sin against the Holy Ghost: wherein other sins may agree with it.

The particular form whereby it is distinguished from all other sins is in these words (After that the Spirit has supernaturally persuaded a man's heart of the truth and benefit thereof.) Out of which I gather these conclusions concerning the persons that commit this sin.

1. They must have knowledge of the Gospel: their judgment must be convinced of that truth which they oppose: whereby they come to sin against their own knowledge and judgment.

2. This knowledge must not only swim in the brain but also work upon their will, and dive into their heart: so as their will gives consent, and their heart assent to what their

judgment conceives to be true. There must be a persuasion as well as knowledge; whereby they come to sin against conscience, that judge which God has placed in men's souls to accuse or excuse them.

3. This knowledge and persuasion must be wrought not only by evidence of undeniable arguments (for so a Heathen man may be convinced and persuaded) but also by a supernatural and inward work of God's Spirit, whereby they are in their very souls persuaded that they gainsay the undoubted word of God, and so sin against the work of the Spirit in them.

4. This inward supernatural persuasion must be of the benefit of the Word, as well as of the truth thereof: that the Word which they despitefully gainsay is the Word of salvation (which, whosoever believes, shall not perish but have life everlasting) and the only means of salvation (whosoever rejects it shall be damned.) Thus in sinning against the forenamed work of the Spirit, they sin against their own souls and bring swift damnation upon themselves.

Briefly to sum up all that has been delivered of the sin against the Holy Ghost: It consists of these degrees.

1. A rejecting of the Gospel: which the Apostle in his description of this sin evidently notes: for first he makes an opposition between despisers of the Law, and despisers of

that against which they sin, that fall into this unpardonable sin: now what can that which is opposed to the Law be but the Gospel? Again, his description of that which is despised can agree to nothing so well as to the Gospel.

2. A despiteful rejecting thereof, which the same Apostle notes under these phrases, a treading under foot: counting an unholy thing; despising.

Under this clause are comprised malice and hatred of heart, blasphemy of the tongue, and persecution, in all of which the Scribes and Pharisees manifested great despite against Christ: so have all others that ever committed this sin. In this respect the Apostle calls them adversaries.

3. A despiteful rejecting of the Gospel against knowledge: which the Apostle expressly notes in this phrase, after we have received the knowledge of the truth.

4. A despiteful rejecting of the Gospel against conscience: which the Apostle implies under this word "Wilfully."

5. A willful gainsaying and opposing against the inward operation and supernatural revelation of the Holy Ghost: which is noted by the Apostle under this phrase, "Hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

6. A despising of the Spirit in such things as he reveals to them for their own good, even the salvation of their souls: this is

comprised under those phrases of tasting the heavenly gift, the good word of God, and powers of the world to come, which they do, as it were, spit out again.

## §. 18. Of the difference between the sin against the Holy Ghost and other sins.

By the forenamed definition, may the sin against the Holy Ghost be distinguished from many other sins which come near unto it, as,

1. From many sins against knowledge: yea and against conscience also: for they may be without malice of heart, which this cannot be. The elect may fall into them: but not into this. David and Peter sinned both against knowledge and also against conscience.

2. From many sins committed on malice against Christ and his Gospel: which may be done in ignorance.

3. From blasphemy and persecution: which may be done also in ignorance, or in passion.

4. From denial of Christ, which may be done in fear (instance Peter's example) or other like temptations. It is an ancient heresy of the Novatians to deny repentance and pardon to such as have once denied Christ.

5. From Apostasy from the faith and profession of religion, which also may be done not in malice, but through the violence of some temptation. It is noted of Solomon that he continued not to follow the Lord, but turned after other gods, through the persuasion of his wives. When a Kingdom changes Religion, as England in Queen Mary's days, many prove Apostates and fall away from the profession of the Gospel and profess idolatry for fear of persecution, or for too much love of this world, to hold their places and offices, their honours and dignities, their houses and lands, or else on an infirm and weak persuasion that they can keep their hearts pure and their faith sound, though with their bodies they outwardly subject themselves to idolatry. The Levites which in the captivity fell away, though they were barred from meddling with the holy things, yet they were admitted to do other services in the Temple, whereby it is manifest that they fell not into this unpardonable sin.

6. From Presumption and sinning with a high hand, as Manasseh did.

7. From Hardness of heart, from impudency, and committing sin with greediness. For so did the Gentiles which had not the Gospel supernaturally revealed unto them.

8. From Infidelity and impenitence, yea from final infidelity and impenitence, wherein all the reprobate fall. If final

impenitence should be the sin against the Holy Ghost (as some do take it) then should everyone that is damned sin against the Holy Ghost: yea then could not this sin be committed till death: and then in vain should the caveat of Saint John be, concerning not praying for them.

## §. 19. Of the persons that may fall into the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Having seen what the sin against the Holy Ghost is, for application of the point to the parties with whom Christ had to do, we will in the next place discuss whether the Scribes and Pharisees that slandered Christ committed this sin or not.

Many say they did not commit this sin: and to prove their assertion, they use these two arguments.

1. They never professed Christ.

2. Christ prayed for them.

To the first, I answer that two sorts of people may fall into this sin: namely, they who profess Christ and his Gospel, and they who never professed it.

Professors that sin against the Holy Ghost are called Apostates, that is, departers away, namely, from the faith or from the profession of the Gospel (for the Greek word, which according to

the notation of it, signifies Apostasy, is translated a departing and a falling away) not that all who depart away, and in that general sense are called Apostates, do commit this sin, as was noted before: but because they that fall into this sin are most notorious Apostates: denying the truth, not in tongue only, but in heart also: not through fear, but in malice, utterly renouncing, and bidding defiance to the faith: not contenting themselves to deny it, but showing themselves deadly enemies against it, and persecuting all that are friends unto it: having in that respect a very diabolical property, not enduring that any should reap benefit by that which they have rejected: such an Apostate was Alexander the Copper-smith, and Julian.

They who never professed the truth of the Gospel may also sin against the Holy Ghost, as they do to whom the Spirit hath so clearly and supernaturally revealed the truth of the Gospel, as their heart and conscience doth inwardly tell them that they ought to make a profession thereof, yet their malice against it, not only keeps them from professing it, but also makes them revile it, and persecute the professors of it. The Apostle saith of such an one; that he is condemned of himself. Such were the Scribes and Pharisees which blasphemed Christ: and such are many of the learned Papists.

The difference between these two sorts is that the former hath gone a step further in show of goodness, but thereby have made their fall the more offensive, and their sin the greater, in that to

the sin against the Holy Ghost, they have added Apostasy, as some add oppression, murder, and the like.

To the second argument, to prove that the forenamed Scribes and Pharisees sinned not against the Holy Ghost, taken from Christ's prayer, I answer that Christ prayed not in particular for these, but for such as were indeed in the outward act associates, but not of so evil a disposition as they. As among Papists blind zeal moveth many to do that, which deadly malice moveth others to do.

I doubt not but we may, according to the truth of the matter, conclude that the forenamed Scribes and Pharisees sinned against the Holy Ghost: for

1. The Gospel was preached to them by John the Baptist, Christ, and his Disciples, yet they received it not, but refused and rejected it.

2. They did it despitefully, as their carriage showeth.

3. They blasphemed Christ, as we have heard before, and they persecuted him and his Disciples.

4. They did all this against knowledge and against conscience: as the instance which Christ giveth, of their justifying that in their children, which they condemned in Christ: yea they could say of Christ, This is the heir.

5. They did all, also, after the Spirit had supernaturally revealed Christ unto them: for it is noted that Jesus knew their thoughts, and thereupon he accused them of blaspheming the Holy Ghost: he knew their thoughts, that is, he knew how far the Spirit had wrought in them, and how they strived against, and resisted the Spirit, and in that respect accuses them of this blasphemy.

Lastly, to put the matter out of all doubt, after that Christ had set out this sin, Saint Mark addeth this clause, Because they said he had an unclean spirit. Implying by that inference, that, that blasphemy was in them an evidence of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

## §. 20. Of the meaning of these words, SHALL NOT, and SHALL NEVER be forgiven.

The second general point noted by Christ about the sin against the Holy Ghost is the Issue thereof:

which is set down Negatively: Affirmatively.

Negatively, both by Saint Mark in these words (hath never forgiveness) and also by S. Matthew in these words (shall not be forgiven unto men) which is further amplified by a distinction of times, in these words (neither in this world, nor in the world to come).

Affirmatively, only by Saint Mark, in these words (is in danger of eternal damnation).

The sentence and doom which Christ in all these words and phrases hath given of this sin is very perspicuous and clear, but that Papists have brought a cloud of obscurity upon them by the vapours of their false glosses and heresies: which we will first remove, and then declare the fearful issue of this sin.

First, the Papists clean overthrow the main point here intended by interpreting the indefinite negative particle (not) and the general negative (never) as if a difficulty only, and not an impossibility were intended, as if Christ had said, the sin against the holy Ghost shall not easily, but very hardly be forgiven: or, ordinarily and for the most part, it shall not be forgiven. But the words are clearer than to be obscured thus. For, Not, Never, Nor in this world, nor in the world to come: are much more than not ordinarily, not easily, hardly, and for the most part. Besides, if there were not an impossibility of the pardon of it, prayer might be made for the party that committeth it, which may not be done. But as this text is clear enough to such as have not contentious and captious spirits, so there are other texts which put the point more out of all doubt and question: as where the Apostle saith, It is impossible to renew them again: And again, There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation.

## §. 21. Of the errors which Papists gather from this phrase, nor in the World to come.

Again, Papists rove far beyond the scope of Christ in this place, by inferring from this clause (nor in the World to come) that some sins which are not forgiven in this World may be forgiven in the World to come: whence they further infer, that there is a Purgatory after this life; and render these reasons of this latter inference: First, that into Heaven can enter no unclean thing. Secondly, that out of hell there can be no redemption: therefore (say they) there must needs be a Purgatory, by which they which die in their sins must be purged, and out of which they whose sins are forgiven after this life must be delivered.

Answ. The two positions which are laid down for reasons are sound and true: for neither can any unclean thing enter into Heaven, nor can any that are once cast into hell be ever delivered out of it; for the Scripture termeth their pain everlasting: and yet the Papists are not constant in those assertions, but deliver many points contrary to them both: as that many who for treasons, rebellions, and such like damnable sins are executed, and die without repentance for them, die Martyrs, and are immediately carried to glory: is not this to thrust unclean birds into Heaven. And again, that many who died in mortal sins, and so by their own positions went to hell, were delivered from thence. Some of the instances which their own writers have given hereof are these: The soul of Falconilla a

Pagan, was freed from hell by the prayers of Saint Thecla, and the soul of Traiane a Pagan Emperor, by the prayers of Pope Gregory, and a certain lewd man carried by the Devils into hell, was delivered by Saint Sereus.

But to pass by these lying fables, the consequences which from the forenamed sound positions they gather are most unsound and absurd; namely, that there is a purgatory, (of which fiction I have spoken before) and that sins may be forgiven after this life: a point which (as was said before) they gather from this phrase (nor in the World to come.) The falsehood whereof is easily discovered by a due consideration of the true meaning of the words.

### §. 22. Of the true meaning of this phrase, nor in this world, nor in the world to come.

The Greek word, and the Latin also, which we translate World, signifies rather time than place. By this World is meant the time of a man's life here upon earth: by the World to come, all the time from his death proceeding on without end to eternity. Two Worlds are in Scripture given to every man to be in, one from the time of his conception or birth to his death; the other from thence forever: for after death there is no alteration of a man's estate. But because the manifestation of that perpetual and eternal estate is at the great day of judgment, when all shall stand before their Judge and receive their doom, the beginning

of that age or world to come is commonly reckoned from the day of judgment: in which respect Christ joins that world and the resurrection from the dead together. Which being so, it is as evident as may be that no sin can be forgiven in the World to come.

§. 23. Of the many answers which may be given against the Papists collection concerning forgiveness of sins in the World to come.

But fully to discover the erroneous collection of Papists touching forgiveness of sins after death, out of this phrase (nor in the World to come). Let it be noted that:

1. Saint Mark, the best interpreter of Saint Matthew, expounds that phrase by this general particle, NEVER, or in no age.

2. They cannot show that the world to come is anywhere taken for the time that passes betwixt this life ended and the day of judgment, which is the time appointed by them for remission of sins in Purgatory: for they hold that at the day of judgment that fire shall be put out; and that it is a manifest error to extend the time of Purgatory beyond the day of the resurrection.

3. If it were granted that by the World to come is meant the time betwixt death and judgment, yet may it be applied to

the very end or passing away of the former World, and beginning or entrance into the other World; namely, for the very moment of death, as if he had said, this sin shall not be forgiven, either in the time of this life, or at the point of death, when a man is entering into another World. Thus the evening of the Sabbath is called the first day of the week.

4. The remission here spoken of in the World to come may be taken for the manifestation and ratification of that which was granted before: as if he had thus said, As in this World he shall receive no remission, so in the World to come when all shall stand upon their trial to be acquitted or condemned, no remission shall be pronounced to him, but he shall receive the sentence of condemnation.

5. This phrase (shall not be forgiven) may figuratively be put for the effect that follows upon sin not forgiven, namely, just vengeance, and so the meaning may be this; Just vengeance shall be executed upon him both in this world and in the world to come; as ever has been executed on all such as sinned against the Holy Ghost.

6. It is no good consequence from a negative to infer the contrary affirmative. What if Christ had said that Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, neither on earth nor in hell; would it from thence follow that some sins may be forgiven in hell?

7. Christ comparing this sin which shall not be forgiven in this world or in the world to come, with blasphemy against the Son of Man, by the consequence which they infer, it would follow that blasphemy against the Son may be forgiven in the world to come; which is directly against their own principles: for all blasphemy is a mortal sin; but they say that Purgatory is only for them who die in venial sins.

8. If any sins might be forgiven in the world to come, by the order of the words in this phrase (nor in this world, nor in the world to come) it would follow that the more heinous sins should be forgiven in the world to come: else Christ would have said, Nor in the world to come, nor in this world.

9. Christ here speaks of remitting the Fault: but by their doctrine only the punishment is remitted after this life: for they acknowledge that the very faults themselves are purged by the blood of Christ, and that they who in this life have not the fault remitted, can have no hope of eternal life. This place therefore speaking of forgiving the fault, how can they apply it to the punishment?

## §. 24. Of the reasons why this phrase (nor in this world, nor in the world to come) is used.

Quest. If no sin can be forgiven in the world to come, why is this clause (nor in the World to come) added?

Ans. Though no reason could be given, yet we may not from thence infer a paradox, and an error contrary to other places of Scripture. But among other reasons two especially may be noted to make the phrase the more perspicuous.

1. To aggravate the terror of the judgment here denounced against such as sin against the Holy Ghost: for the very consideration of this, that both in this world and in the world to come, they lie under the fiery wrath and heavy vengeance of God, cannot be but very fearful and terrible.

2. To show the misery of these sinners above others: for,

3. There be some who keeping sin under, and giving reins thereto, but walking by faith uprightly before the Lord, are neither punished in this world nor in the world to come. Such an one was Enoch.

4. There be others that are not so watchful over themselves, but through security suffer sin to get some head over them, for which they are punished in this world, but truly repenting, are not condemned in the world to come. Such an one was the incestuous person, both excommunicated, and also restored by the Apostle. Such also were many of those who discerned not the Lord's body when they came to the holy Communion.

5. There be others also, who though they be impenitent sinners, yet through God's indulgence are suffered to enjoy outward peace and prosperity in this world, and feel the smart of their sin only in the world to come. Such were they whom Job noted to die in all ease and prosperity: and such an one was Dives.

6. But they that sin against the Holy Ghost, are made a spectacle of God's vengeance, both in this world and in the world to come: as Judas, Julian, and such others.

### §. 25. Of seeking pardon for sin in this life.

Thus we have seen what small reason Papists have to gather from this text, that sin may be forgiven after death.

For our parts let us give no rest to our souls, till we have assurance of the pardon of all our sins, applying to ourselves the sacrifice of Christ for all our sins whatsoever, and let us unfeignedly turn from them all while here we live; fearing him who after he hath killed the body, hath power to cast both body and soul into hell. And let us not fondly dream of mercy (like the five foolish Virgins) when it is too late. The time that the Gospel is preached, and thereby remission of sins offered, is the accepted time, the day of salvation: and the time of this life, the only time of repentance. If the Lord be not then found, he will never be found. Wherefore seek the Lord while he may be found; and today, while it is called today, harden not your hearts.

## §. 26. Of the sense wherein it is said that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be pardoned.

But to return to our matter. Notwithstanding the false glosses of Papists on this Text, it is most evident and clear, both by the words of Christ, and also by other Texts of Scripture, noted before, that the sin against the Holy Ghost neither shall, nor can ever be pardoned. This sin is not only in the issue and event unpardoned, but in the nature and kind of it unpardonable. And herein standeth the difference which Christ here maketh between this sin and all other sins. In regard to the issue, many other sins are no more pardoned than this: for if in the event all other sins but this should be pardoned, many millions which are now in hell should be saved. But the difference is that other sins are of that kind and condition, as through the means which God hath afforded to man, they may be forgiven: but this cannot by any means.

## §. 27. Of the reasons why the sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable.

The reason why the sin against the Holy Ghost neither shall, nor can be forgiven, is not simply in regard of the greatness and heinousness of it, as if it were greater than the mercy of God and sacrifice of Christ; so as if that sin were put into one balance, and God's mercy with Christ's sacrifice into another, that would weigh down this: but rather in regard of that order which God

hath set down, and that fixed decree and doom (more immutable than the decrees and statutes which the things of the Medes and Persians confirmed) which he hath both established and revealed: I say revealed, because his secret decree is established against every impenitent sinner, but the order is published, and the decree revealed only against such as sin against the Holy Ghost.

If further we would know reasons of this revealed decree, I answer, that God is not bound to render man a reason for his orders and decrees: But yet it hath pleased him to make known some reasons thereof in his word, for the better satisfaction of men's minds, and justification of his own proceedings: as

1. Because it is impossible that they who sin against the Holy Ghost should be renewed again unto repentance. As no sin, whereof the man that commits it, repenteth not, is in the issue and event pardoned; so this sin, because the committer thereof cannot repent, cannot be pardoned.

2. Because they utterly renounce, and clean reject the only means of pardon; which is, Christ Jesus offered in the Gospel: so as, if they be pardoned, either Christ must be offered up again, and crucified anew; or else there must be some other sacrifice for remission of sins. But both those are impossible: impossible it is therefore, that the sin against the Holy Ghost should be pardoned. It falleth out

with those that commit this sin, as with a man that is desperately and mortally sick of a disease, which cannot possibly be cured but by one means, and the patient utterly refuseth that means, and will not have it used; would we not say on that ground, that he is irrecoverably sick, that it is impossible he should be cured?

3. Because they have wittingly so wholly cast themselves into Satan's power, and utterly renounced to have to do with God, as it cannot stand with equity, and with the honour of God to receive them again to mercy; they are in a manner in such a case and estate as the damned in hell, concerning whom it is said, that betwixt them and the Saints in Heaven there is a great gulf fixed, so as there can be no passage from one to another. Besides, it is probable, that as they who truly believe, and are ingrafted into Christ, have an inward testimony that they are God's, and that they shall forever abide in Christ, and be saved: so they who sin against the Holy Ghost, having as it were subscribed to be Satan's, and ever to be with him, and on his side, have an inward certificate in their hearts that they are utterly forsaken of God, and shall be damned: and thereupon (as the damned in hell) they blaspheme God whom they have renounced; yea, with all the spite they can they oppose the Gospel through an inward hatred of God the Author, of Christ the matter, of the Holy Ghost the Revealor thereof; whom because they cannot reach and come at, they persecute the professors of the Gospel: like the old red

> Dragon, who, because he could not touch the woman that was clothed with the Sun, the Moon being under her feet, he went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the Commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

## §. 28. Of the certainty of his damnation who sinneth against the Holy Ghost.

Hitherto of the fearful issue of such as sin against the Holy Ghost, set down negatively, in that this sin shall never be forgiven.

To aggravate the terror hereof, Christ further setteth forth the issue of the same affirmatively, as Saint Mark hath recorded his words thus,

Is in danger of eternal damnation.

The word translated in danger, or (as others) culpable, doth not so much imply a likelihood that he may be damned, as a certainty that he shall be damned: for it properly signifieth to be held fast, as a bird when she is taken in a snare, or a Malefactor when he is arrested by a Sergeant, or a condemned man when he is manacled, and fetteted against the day of execution. It implies that there is no means, no hope of escaping damnation: so as the main point here intended, is this; He that sinneth against the Holy Ghost, shall most certainly be damned. This the Apostle

also implies, where he saith, that to such an one there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation.

The reasons before all alledged to prove that this sin shall not be forgiven, do also prove the certainty of his damnation who committeth it.

### §. 29. Of the eternity of Damnation.

Yet further to aggravate the fearful estate of him that sinneth against the Holy Ghost, it is added, that his damnation is ETERNAL. This everlasting continuance is common to all that are cast into hell, in which respect their torments are set forth by such like phrases as these, The worm that dieth not, Fire that shall never be quenched, Everlasting chains, Eternal fire, Everlasting perdition But the certainty of this everlasting damnation, is that which is proper to them that sin against the Holy Ghost. The doom is irrevocably passed against them; while here they live, they know they shall be cast into endless, easeless, merciless, and remediless torment.

This aggravation of damnation by the everlasting continuance of it, doth evidently refute the heretical position of Chiliasts, or Millinaries, or (to use our English word) Thousandaries, who held that the Devils and all the damned in hell should after a thousand years be delivered. Eternal and everlasting continuance properly taken, as it is in the forenamed places,

admits no date or end of time: which the forenamed heretics observing, grant that indeed the fire of hell burneth eternally; but they further say that it burneth after the damned are delivered out of it: but this evasion will not help them. It is certain that God maketh nothing in vain. If there be fire burning eternally, it is for some end and purpose. But what other end or purpose can be imagined, then the just punishing and tormenting of the damned in hell? Shall there be a hell, and no creature in it? Besides, Christ expressly saith, they shall go into eternal punishment. Now the fire of hell is no longer a punishment, then the damned be tormented therein: eternally therefore they are tormented therein, and can never be freed from it.

As for their objections taken from God's mercy and justice, they may easily be answered, if God's former dealing with the damned, and the nature of sin for which they are condemned, be duly weighed.

## §. 30. Of the answers to the Chiliasts objection taken from God's mercy.

Concerning God's mercy, they say, that it is over all his works, and thereupon they conclude, that the damned must partake thereof: which (say they) they cannot do if eternally they lie tormented in hell.

Answer: Surely they have tasted of God's mercy: for the Devils were made at first glorious Angels, Angels of light. The damned were also at first created in a most happy estate, even after God's image: and many of them had a long time, and fair means of repentance offered unto them; besides, the many outward temporal blessings which in this world they have enjoyed. They all have abused and rejected God's mercy.

As for their present estate, I might say that it is some mercy that they are not more tormented: for God could make them feel more than they do.

But we are to know that God's mercy and justice must go together. Where justice is not satisfied, no place is left for mercy: but God's justice is not satisfied for the Devils and damned: how then should mercy be expected?

## §. 31. Of the answers to the Chiliasts objection, taken from God's justice.

Concerning God's Justice, they say that it cannot stand with Justice to punish a temporary sin, a sin which was committing in time, with an everlasting punishment.

But sin though in continuance it were not everlasting, yet is it in nature infinite: for the greatness of a sin is measured according to the greatness of the person against whom it is committed. We see in the counts of men that one and the same wrong

committed against a mean man, and a Monarch, is accounted less or greater. That which being done against a mean man, will scarcely bear an action in Law (as we speak) committed against a King may prove a capital matter, a matter of high treason, and bring a man to the gallows. Now every sin is a transgression of God's Law, and committed directly against the infinite Majesty; and in that respect it is infinite in nature, and deserves an infinite punishment. But the creature is finite, and cannot in time bear an infinite weight of vengeance, and therefore it lieth eternally under it. There is then a proportion betwixt the sin of the damned, and their punishment: both are infinite. Sin in quantity and greatness, the punishment in time and continuance: what sin wanteth in continuance, it hath in greatness; and what the punishment wanteth in weight, it hath in continuance. Thus the sin and the punishment are correspondent each to other, and God is just in inflicting an eternal punishment on an infinite sin.

Besides, though the damned be restrained, or cut off by the hand of God from an everlasting continuance to commit sin, yet their will and desire is never to cease sinning. For herein lieth a main difference betwixt such sinners as have their sins forgiven, and so are saved, and such as are never forgiven, but are damned. Those men's minds and wills are altered, and they truly repent of their sins past, and desire and endeavour to sin no more. But these men's minds and wills unto their very death are set on sin: and if they could always live on earth, they would always sin on

earth. Now it is the mind, will, and disposition of a man, whereunto God hath especially respect.

Again, the damned continue to sin everlastingly in hell. As the glorious Angels and blessed Saints in Heaven ever continue to praise the God of Heaven, so the devils and damned in hell continue to blaspheme the same God. Their punishment therefore endureth no longer then their sin.

Lastly, they wittingly and wilfully pull upon themselves that eternal weight of God's wrath, and therefore justly lie under it eternally. God hath declared beforehand that eternal damnation shall be the reward of impenitent sinners; and yet they impenitently continue in sin. Suppose a mill-stone hanging by a cord, a man should wilfully stand under that mill-stone, and cut the cord, and withal refuse to have any means to keep the mill-stone from falling down: did not he by cutting that cord pull death on himself? This is the case of the damned. God's wrath is an infinite burden, by God's law it is held up over men's heads: sin is a sword, whereby the cord of God's law is cut: by faith and repentance God's wrath is stayed from falling on man. The unbelieving and impenitent sinner refuseth the means of withholding and staying God's wrath. Is it not now just that this eternal weight of God's wrath should lie on him?

Thus we see that it is neither against God's mercy, nor against his justice to inflict eternal damnation.

## §. 32. Of the necessity of being pardoned, or damned.

From the connection of this affirmative part of the judgment (shall be in danger of eternal damnation) with the negative (shall never be forgiven) I collect that, The sinner who has not his pardon cannot escape eternal damnation: or pardon must be obtained, or the punishment must be undergone. The servant whose debt the Lord recalled, and would not forgive, because of his unmercifulness, was delivered to the tormenters.

Otherwise, men would not care for God's favour in pardoning sin, nor anything esteem Christ's sacrifice, whereby pardon is purchased.

[Use] O let us give no rest to our souls, till we have assurance of the pardon of our sins. A man attainted, and evicted of treason, though his life may be prolonged, and sentence of death not executed, yet is not quiet till he has his pardon, upon fear that advantage may sometime or other be taken against him for his crime: and yet the utmost peril is but death of body. The peril of sin is eternal damnation. It shall assuredly be executed, if pardon be not gotten. How then can the sinner, who has no assurance of pardon, sleep quietly? Surely this doctrine is either not known, or not believed, or not regarded by such as having no evidence of pardon, pass their time over in mirth and jollity. Well did David know this point, which made him with holy admiration say, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,

whose sin is covered: Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. On the contrary side, we may say, Cursed is he whose sins are not forgiven. If eternal damnation does make a man cursed, he is cursed.

### §. 33. Of preventing the sin against the Holy Ghost.

To return to the point in hand, we have heard what the sin against the Holy Ghost is, and what the issue thereof is, namely, Impossibility of pardon, certainty of eternal damnation. Whose heart does not tremble to think of their estate? The very devils do tremble to think of their own doom and judgment. Dives is thought to be in a most miserable plight. That which ministers any comfort to sinners in this world is that they hope the due vengeance of their sins shall not be executed upon them. This hope can none have that sin against the Holy Ghost. Though all sins (as before we have heard) shall be pardoned, yet a man may so grow on in impudency and obstinacy as to sin against the Holy Ghost, and make his sin irremissible, and himself certain of eternal damnation.

Let us therefore take heed of making any way to this sin, and of provoking God to cast us clean over into Satan's power, or rather to suffer us to give up ourselves wholly unto Satan. For the preventing hereof, let the directions here following be carefully observed.

1. Be watchful against every sin, yea against the very beginnings of sin. Give no place to the devil. Take heed lest there be at any time in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Especially let us take heed of sinning against our own judgment and knowledge, against the persuasion of our heart and conscience, and against the revelation and motion of God's Spirit in us. Sin is deceitful, and Satan is subtle. They allure men step by step to descend, till by degrees they bring us into this irrecoverable downfall of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

2. Have the Gospel, the Word of salvation, in high account. As we have knowledge thereof, so let us set our heart and love upon it. Love of the Gospel will make men cleave close unto it, and will keep them from renouncing it. If men receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, and be damned. Through light esteem of the Gospel, men often come to reject it: and to prove Apostates.

3. Duly weigh the difference between Christ and the world; how Christ can uphold thee, and preserve, and protect and prosper thee against the world: but all the world cannot shelter thee from his wrath. True knowledge of Christ, of the benefits we reap by him, of the privileges we have in him, of the comfort and peace we receive through him, will make us account all the things of this world, in comparison

of Christ, but as dung: and it will make us also stand the more resolutely against all the assaults of the world, and not suffer ourselves thereby to be drawn from Christ. Let us often call to mind that which Christ hath said to this purpose, What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?

4. If at any time through his own weakness, or the violence of any temptation, a man be so far overtaken, as to deny the Gospel, and to forsake Christ, let him not persist therein; but rather (as Peter did) upon the first occasion offered to discover his folly, let him thoroughly humble himself, and speedily repent. The longer sin continueth, the stronger it groweth: and the greater advantage will Satan take thereby. Deadly poison being speedily purged out, may be kept from infecting the vital parts.

5. After once thou art recalled, having before time denied Christ, be the more watchful over thyself, that thou deny him not again, and again. If the devil being once cast out, return again, He will come with seven other spirits more wicked than himself. If after men have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

6. While thine heart is pliable pray; earnestly, instantly pray, as against all sins, so especially against presumptuous sins (as David did) and in particular, against this unpardonable sin. Nothing more powerful against sin and Satan than faithful prayer: without this all other means are fruitless. This means is to be used as for ourselves, so also for others (as we have before shown). There is nothing against which we ought more earnestly to pray, than against this sin: for no estate more desperate than theirs who fall into this sin.

## §. 34. Of the persons who cannot fall into the sin against the Holy Ghost.

As this Treatise was begun with the declaration of God's Mercy, in forgiving all manner of sins, so it shall be concluded with the application of comfort to the elect, and that in regard to the nature and issue of the sin against the Holy Ghost. That which makes this sin seem like a hot fiery thunderbolt, even that which makes it most terrible and dreadful, that, I say, ministers matter of comfort to the elect, namely, that it is impossible it should be pardoned, and that the committers thereof are sure to be eternally damned.

The comfort is this, that the elect are absolutely freed from it, so as they cannot fall into it.

The reasons are evident.

1. When they come to be enlightened, together with their illumination, regeneration is wrought in them. Now they who are born again cannot so wholly give up themselves to sin and Satan, as to sin against the Holy Ghost. The Apostle (in a more inferior degree and kind of sinning, than in this kind against the Holy Ghost) says, Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin: for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin because he is born again.

2. All the sins of the elect in the issue and event are Venial, such as shall be pardoned. For though in the nature and kind of sin, every one of their sins is (as the sins of all others) mortal (For the wages (and due deserts) of sin (not any one sin excepted) is death) yet has Christ by his death satisfied for all their sins. All therefore shall be pardoned to them.

3. All that are elected are elected to eternal life: and being elected thereto, they shall assuredly be made partakers thereof. God's purpose and decree remain firm and stable and cannot be made frustrate. They are not therefore in danger of eternal damnation: and so cannot fall into that sin.

Yet let no man be presumptuous or secure in this regard: for first, he may be mistaken in his election, and think he is chosen when indeed he is not. If he be deceived and mistake the marks

of his election, then is he not exempted from this sin, and the fearful issue thereof.

Again, though he be elected, yet if he be not watchful over himself, he may fall into so great a gulf of sin, and be so near the pit of eternal damnation, as he will have cause again and again to repent his folly, as we have * before shown. Let us therefore work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Unto which salvation that we may be kept blameless, The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost be with us all. Amen.

FINIS.

The Mind of the Front

This constant, complete soldier opposes
The failing world, the infecting flesh, the devil
In Jesuit-ed. Angel-shape: three foes
Deadly, still tempting men to evil.
Christ comforts with his own name-inscribed ensign;
And crowns his own victory in the end.
Backsliding Julian is at peace with hell;

Conflicts with heaven; the known truth does despite;
Whom Christ's victorious banner does compel
To yield the glorious conqueror his right.
Snares, swords, fire, brimstone, are his fearful lot;
He now feels him, whom before he feared not.

Self-strangling Judas, and self-stabbing Saul,
Stand as everlasting pillars of despair,
To warn future generations of their dreadful fall,
Never to be repaired by faithful prayer:
Yet heaven's three years and six months congealed frost
Elijah's fervent prayer thawed at last.

---

**MONERGISM BOOKS**

The Whole Armor of God by William Gouge, Copyright © 2024

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By downloading this eBook, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any

information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of Monergism Books.

ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions April 2024. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn Or 97068