

THE BAD LEAVEN;

OR,

THE CONTAGION OF SIN.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.—GAL. V. 9.

THIS epistle was written with St Paul's own hand: chap. vi. 11, 'Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.' It is for quality excellent, for quantity large. He wrote not so long an epistle to any other church with his own hand. Indeed he wrote a letter to Philemon with his own hand, ver. 19, 'I Paul have written it with mine own hand;' but it was short. He wrote longer epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, but not with his own hand, but by scribes. We have cause therefore to regard it more; as his pains were greater in writing, so let our diligence be greater in observing.

The main purpose of it is to discover, *First*, That ill conjunction of Moses and Christ, the ceremonies of the law with the sanctimony of the gospel. *Secondly*, The free grace and justification by the blood of Christ without the works of the law. In this the Galatians had received a beginning, but now had admitted a recidivation. For this cause the Apostle chides, ver. 7, 'Ye did run well: who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?' where there is a concession and an expostulation, a step and a stop. The concession or step, 'Ye did run well.' The expostulation or stop, 'Who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?'

In the former, he compares Christianity to a race: all men must first be *viatores* in this valley of tears, before they can be *assesores*, and sit with Christ in his kingdom of glory. Only as it agrees with a race in many things,—as labour, it is no idle thing to be a Christian; shortness, it is a race, the perplexity is recompensed with the brevity; continuance, the runner must hold out the last step, if he will obtain the prize,—so there are some differences. *First*, In other races many run, only one wins the goal; but in this all that run faithfully shall reign triumphantly. Though they cannot run so fast as others, nor so far as others; yet even they that came at the eleventh hour into the vineyard, received the penny, so well as they that came at the third. For the Lord regards not *quantum*, but *ex quanto*,

—not how much, but how well. Whatever hour they are called, let them spend the after-time in a zealous diligence. *Secondly*, In other races one hinders another, but in this journey one helps another. The more the merrier; no envy or grudging, either in the way or the goal. *Dispar gloria singulorum, sed communis lætitia omnium.* There may be different glory of some, yet there is a common joy of all. Every good man is a spur to his brother. Peter and John ran to Christ's sepulchre; John outran Peter unto the grave, Peter outwent John into the grave. But we run together unto Christ's throne; some come before, some after, all meet in the communion of saints. *Thirdly*, In other races the runner obtains a prize that shall perish; all the runners here get an incorruptible crown. They run for a little prize, a little praise; we for eternal glory. Run we then cheerfully; behold, a kingdom lies at the stake. God give us all eyes of faith to see it, and hearts of obedience to run to it, through the power of Jesus Christ!

In the latter, the Apostle may seem to put a superfluous question: 'Who did hinder you?' for there are many adversaries. As, first, Satan, the general of that damned crew that hinder our passage to heaven. Paul ex-cuseth himself to the Thessalonians: 'We would have come to you once and again, but Satan hindered us,' 1 Thess. ii. 18. 'Joshua the high priest stood before the angel of the Lord, and Satan stood at his right hand to resist him,' Zech. iii. 1. Where God hath his church, Satan hath his chapel. So also wicked men; such as have taken the devil's oath of allegiance. What the devil cannot do immediately by himself, he does mediately by his instruments. To err, *humanum*, is the wickedness of a man; but to seduce, *diabolicum*, is the part of a devil. It is ill to play the woman, worse to play the beast, worst of all to play the devil. But what special hinderers the Apostle means, we shall have precise occasion in some future passages to demonstrate.

Only I must not omit that the Apostle gives a direct resolution by way of negation: ver. 8, 'This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.' God is noways the author of error and sin. He that wills the death of no sinner, will not lead him into the ways of destruction. Indeed he suffers Satan to tempt all, but to a diverse purpose: the good, to try them; the reprobate, to destroy them. The temptations of the godly are for their instruction; of the wicked, for their destruction. James tells us that 'every good gift comes down from the Father of lights,' chap. i. 17. Is it evil? It cometh not from God. The Apostle telling the Ephesians of lusts, blindness, wantonness, obstinacy, concludes peremptorily, *Non sic didicistis Christum*,—'Ye have not so learned Jesus Christ,' Eph. iv. 20. Art thou perverted? Thou never learnedst this of Christ. 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God tempteth no man,' James i. 13. In him we live, move, and have our being: a Gentile poet sung it, a Christian apostle sanctified it, Acts xvii. 28, all the creatures in heaven and earth cry Amen unto it. Life is his, whether we live well or ill; motion is his, whether we lift up our hands to prayer or murder; but the pravity and corruption of these is none of his. Is any part of body or power of soul depraved? 'This cometh not from him that calleth us.' What is then the cause of sin?

I answer, properly nothing: it hath indeed a deficient cause, but no efficient cause. It is a defect, privation, or orbity of that God made; the thing itself he never made. Will you ask what is the cause of sickness? I answer, the destitution of health. If what is the cause of darkness, the absence of the sun; if of blindness, the deficiency of seeing. What is the cause of silence? No cause. There are causes of speech—organs, air, &c.; take away

these, what follows but silence? You see the light; who ever saw darkness? You hear speech; who ever heard silence? Man forsook grace; sin came in at the back-door. It is a bastard brought into God's house by stealth. Woe to them that shall root their filthiness in the Deity! If they be seduced, to cry, 'Lord, thou hast deceived us,' Jer. iv. 10. No; destruction is of thyself, O Israel; 'in me is thy help.' We have all gotten this sin from Adam: *Mulier quam tu, &c.*—'The woman which thou gavest me;' as if God had given him a woman to tempt him. *Hæc est ruina maxima, Deum putare causam ruine*,—This is the greatest destruction that can be, to charge God with the cause of our destruction. No, O Father of heaven, be thou justified, and the faces of all men ashamed! Let us look home to our own flesh; from thence it cometh that destroyeth. *Me, me, adsum qui feci*. The Lord put not only this confession in our mouths, but this feeling in our hearts, that all our evil cometh from ourselves, all our good from Jesus Christ!

'Of him that called you.' He hath called you to liberty, will you entangle yourselves in new bondage? Who pities him that, being redeemed from prison, wilfully recasts himself into it? or that, saved from the fire, will run into it again? Art thou *titio ereptus*, and yet hast a mind to be burned? He hath called you not to the ceremonies, but to their antitype; not to those legal lambs, but to that evangelical Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Will you be directed by lamps when the sun is risen? No; he hath called you to the truth and comforts of the gospel; obey that call. And then he that hath persuaded you to virtue, by calling you to grace, shall crown you with eternal glory.

Now one argument whereby the Apostle deters them from blending Judaism with Christianity is derived from the danger of corrupting the doctrine of the gospel: 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' One ceremony of the legal rites observed with an opinion of necessity soureth all that sweetness of redemption that cometh by Christ. This divine aphorism may thus logically be resolved—into a predicate, subject, and copula: the predicate, *leaven*; the subject, *lump*; the copula, *leaveneth*. Or thus: there is a thing active, 'leaven;' a thing factive, 'soureth;' a thing passive, 'the lump.'

But because the whole speech is allegorical, let us first open the metaphor with the key of proper analogy, and then take out the treasure—such observations as may be naturally deduced from it. Most properly our Apostle by leaven understands false doctrine, and by lump the truth of the gospel; so the sense is this, one heresy infects a mass of truth. Or if we restrain it to persons, by leaven he meaneth false teachers, and by lump the church of Galatia; and so a teacher of the bondage to the law sours the liberty of the gospel. 'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,' ver. 2. Or if yet we will look upon it with more general view, we may by leaven understand sin, by lump man, by leavening infection. Here are three respondences, and all worthily considerable:—

1. First, taking leaven for false doctrine, so we find in the New Testament four sorts of leavens: Matt. xvi. 6, 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees;' there be two of them, the Pharisaical and the Sadducean leavens. Mark viii. 15, 'Beware of the leaven of Herod;' there is the third. The fourth is my text, the leaven of mingling Mosaic ordinances with Christ's institutions. It will not be amiss to take a transient view of these leavens; for though former times had the originals, we have the counterparts, we have parallel leavens.

(1.) To begin with the Pharisees; to these I may well liken our Seminars: one egg is not liker another. Even a Jesuit wrote in good earnest, *Non male comparari Pharisæos Catholicis*,—Papists are fitly compared to the Pharisees. Whether he spake it ignorantly, or unwittingly, or purposely, I am sure Caiaphas never spoke truer when he meant it not. Shall we take a little pains to confer them? The Pharisees had corrupted, yea, in a manner annulled, the law of God by their traditions, and for this Christ complains against them, Matt. xv. 6. Now for the Papists, this was one of their Tridentine decrees, 'With the same reverence and devotion do we receive and respect traditions that we do the books of the Old and New Testament.' Shut thine eyes and hear both speak, and then for a wager which is the Pharisee, which the Seminary? Indeed to some traditions we give *locum*, but *locum suum*,—a place, but their own place. They must never dare to take the wall of the Scripture.

Again, the Pharisees corrupted the good text with their lewd glosses. The law was, that no leper might come into the temple; their traditional gloss was, that if he were let down through the roof this was no offence. As that drunkard that having forsworn going to a certain tavern, yet being carried thither every day on men's shoulders, thought he had not broken his oath. Their Sabbath-day's journey was a thousand cubits; their gloss understood this without the walls, and walking all day through the city no sin. The Papists are not behind them in their foul interpretations, not shaming to call that sacred writ a nose of wax, formable to any construction. Paul subscribes his two epistles to the Thessalonians thus, *Missa fuit ex Athenis*; a Papist cries out straight, 'Here is a plain text for the mass.' Ps. viii. 6, *Omnia subiecisti pedibus ejus*,—'Thou hast put all things under his feet.' This is spoken of the beasts' subjection to man; their gloss construes it of men's subjection to the Pope! So Isa. xlix. 23, 'They shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet.' Here, saith their gloss, is a plain proof for kissing the Pope's feet. Our Saviour says, Matt. xviii. 3, 'Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Hereupon St Francis commands one Masseus to tumble round on the earth like a little child, that he might enter. 'If thy foot offend thee,' saith Christ, 'cut it off.' Hereupon when the penitent confessed to St Anthony that he had kicked his mother, he urged him with that text; the man went and cut off his foot, but St Anthony, honestly to make him amends, set it on again. Were these not goodly constructions? So the new-elected Pope, in his solemn Lateran procession, must take copper money out his chamberlain's lap, and scatter it among the people, saying, 'Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give unto you,' Acts iii. 6. And is not this a probable truth, a praisable bounty? Seven years' penance is enjoined to a deadly sin, because Miriam was separated seven days for her leprosy; and God saith to Ezekiel, chap. iv. 6, 'I have given thee a day for a year.' O genuine and most neighbourly concurring of Scriptures! When God's word subjects priests to kings, their gloss subjects kings to priests, at least to popes. But as when they determined to kill the Emperor Henry the Seventh, that they might be sure to poison him, they stuck not to poison their own God in the sacrament; so, purposing to tear the honour and deface the majesty of kings, they first offer violence to the sacred word of God. In these damnable glosses it is hard to decide whether Pharisee is beyond Papist, or Papist beyond Pharisee. But *dum hæc male construunt, seipsos male destruunt*,—their evil construction of the Scriptures brings a worse destruction to themselves. They make

that serve the turn of their policy which God meant to serve the turn of his glory.

The Pharisees cleaved to the letter, but despised the spirit ; so do Papists. *Hoc est corpus* must be materially there : for this they wrangle, fight, burn the contradictors ; yet few of them care to find it spiritually there. *Dabo claves*, I will give thee the keys ; therefore none can enter heaven except the Pope open the doors. Whereas Peter's two keys, one of knowledge, the other of power, are fitted to two locks—ignorance and induration. But we know who keeps the keys, and lets in many thousands to heaven without the Pope's leave : ' These things saith he that is holy and true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth ; that shutteth, and no man openeth,' Rev. iii. 7. Some of the Rabbins affirmed that God requires two things concerning his law—custody and work ; custody in heart, work in execution. The Pharisees thought it enough to have it in their frontlets, not in their hearts. So the Romist hath his *opus operatum* ; prayers numbered on beads, fastings, pilgrimages, &c., and then cries like Saul : ' Blessed be thou of the Lord ; I have performed the commandment of the Lord,' 1 Sam. xv. 13.

The Pharisees justified themselves by their works, and would not stick to say of the law, ' All this have I kept from my youth.' Do not the Papists so ? Do they not climb to salvation by their own works, and justify themselves ? Those thought it not only easy to fulfil the law, but possible to do more than they were bound to. They thought it not worth thanks to perform what they were bidden. God's law was too little for their holiness. They plied God with unbidden oblations, gave more than they needed, than was commanded. ' I pay tithes of all,' said that Pharisee. Of all ? It was more than he needed. If God would have a Sabbath kept, they over-keep it ; let a house be on fire that day, they would not quench it. And what other is the boasting opinion of the Romanists ? It is nothing with them to content God ; they can earn him, supererogate of him. Yea, these Jewish Papists have done more than enough for themselves, many good works to spare for others : this they call the church's treasure, and they sell them for ready money. But Christ taught us all to say, ' We are unprofitable servants,' intimating, that do what we can, yet God is a loser by the best of us.

To omit the miserable penances of the Pharisees, pricking themselves with thorns, and wounding their flesh with whips, wherein it is not possible for a Papist to go beyond them. If the misusing, macerating, lacerating their own bodies be a means to come into heaven, surely the Pharisees should enter far sooner than the Papists. Yet were those kept out, and shall these enter ? ' Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' Matt. v. 20. The people were so besotted on them, that they thought if but two men should go to heaven, the one must be a scribe, the other a Pharisee. But here was strange news : neither of them both shall come there. So the Papists think that if but two men be saved, one must be a friar, the other a Jesuit. He that should say neither of them both was likely to speed so well, should have the whole multitude stare upon him for such a paradox.

The Pharisees bragged much of Moses's chair ; just so do our Papists of Peter's chair. The Pharisees justified it that there was no error in theirs ; the Papists affirm that there is no possibility of error in theirs. The Pharisees thundered against the poor people, ' This people who knoweth not the law are cursed,' John vii. 49. So the Pope thunders his curses and excommunica-

tions against us ; but (we bless God) his thunder cannot reach us. I would other places had no more cause to fear his thunder. Then would they answer him, as Gregory the Fourth was answered, when he purposed peremptorily to proceed against Louis le Debonair : the French bishops answered in flat terms, *Si excommunicaturus veniret, excommunicatus discederet*.—If he came to excommunicate, he should be sent back excommunicated.

The Pharisees compassed sea and land to make proselytes ; ‘and when they had made one, they make him twofold more the child of hell than themselves,’ Matt. xxiii. 15. Do not our Seminaries so? Yes, they are compassers too, like their grand master, Job ii.’; much like those *Circulatores* and *Circumcelliones*, a limb of the Donatists. They creep into ladies’ houses, I had almost said into their chambers ; the pursuivant in modesty hath forborne the gentlewoman’s bed, and missed him. Confession and penance are the principal wheels whereupon the engine of their policy runs. By the first, they find out men’s secret inclinations ; by the other, they heap riches to their tribe. They will not lead a novice into the main at first, to make him believe the Pope’s infallibility of judgment, authority to decrown kings, to make scripture no scripture, and no scripture scripture, &c. This meat is too tough, it will not down : therefore they court his affections with pleasing delights, smooth semblances, and moderate constructions, as near to the religion from which they would pervert him as possibly may be afforded. So by degrees they gain him, God and the truth loseth him. In their own countries, places of freedom, they vizer their hearts ; in England, they vizer their faces too.

The Pharisees made difference of oaths : ‘Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing ; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind : for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?’ Matt. xxiii. 16. That was their doctrine, this was Christ’s reproof. So the Papists have their distinctions betwixt a material and a formal oath ; one to bind the conscience, the other not. Out of such an unlucky copulation of fraud and malice was that monstrous stigmatic equivocation engendered. A damned egg, not covered by any fair bird, but hatched, as the poets feign of ospreys, with a thunder-clap. A mere bastard ; whosoever was the father, Jesuits keep the child, and bring it up as their only darling. But they have their bulls of dispensation for it ; fit they should all speed as some did once with their bulls. Two Seminaries came into England with their two bulls, but being apprehended, those two bulls called in a third bull, which was Bull the hangman, to despatch them both.

Lastly, the Pharisees used to ‘devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence to make long prayers,’ Matt. xxiii. 14. It is evil to devour a man’s house, worse to devour a widow’s house ; worst of all, when their lips seemed to pray, to be chewing that morsel. Jerusalem had never worse Pharisees than Rome ; these were mere bunglers to the Jesuits. The new Pharisees have made very proselytes and novices of the ancient. A widow’s cottage filled the paunch of an old Pharisee. Large patrimonies and fair revenues will not stop the throat of the Jesuit. They devour the land as Pharaoh’s lean kine, and yet look hunger-starved still. You shall have them first fall in with the wife, as the devil did with Eve ; but they cozen the husband of his inheritance, as the devil cozened Adam. Even other orders among them cry shame upon the Jesuits : they prowl away all with a face of sad piety and stern mortification. Forgive my unseasonable prolixity ; you see one dangerous leaven.

(2.) The next is the leaven of the Sadducees : hear their doctrine, Matt. xxii. 23, 'They say there is no resurrection ;' Acts xxiii. 8, 'The Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit.' I would we had no matches for them, but we have too many : that either deny *futurum aliquid post mortem*,—that any further thing is to be done or suffered or enjoyed after death ; or else affirm *feliciter fore universis*,—that every man shall be happy. They have studied reasons against the resurrection. The flesh turns into rottenness, rottenness to dust, &c. But St Augustine cuts them off with reason : *Qui potuit formare novum, non poterit reparare mortuum ?*—He that could make man of nothing surely can revive him of a small thing. *Facilius est restituere, quam constituere*,—It is far easier to repair than to prepare. They tell us, 'It is better to a living dog than a dead lion,' Eccles. ix. 4 ; which is true among beasts like themselves, but among men a dead beast is better than a living atheist. Like dogs they bark at heaven, but they cannot bite it ; it is out of their circumference. Though they build up reasons and treasons like Babel, yet they prove but confusion. They would pull God out of his throne, if it were possible ; but he is safe enough out of the reach of their malice, else it had gone ill with him before this. Their song is, 'Let us eat and drink,' (they think of no reckoning to pay,) 'for to-morrow we die,' 1 Cor. xv. 32. They promise to-morrow, yet kill themselves to-day. This is their song, but the Holy Ghost adds the burden : 'After death cometh the judgment,' Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto men 'once to die ;' to all men once, to atheists twice, for there is a 'second death.' Their first death makes way to their last judgment. They are in some respect worse than the devil : he knows and acknowledgeth a Deity ; these say, 'There is no God.' 'The devils believe and tremble,' James ii. 19 ; these have neither faith nor fear. The devil quakes at the day of judgment, these deride it. 'Art thou come hither to torment us before the time ?' Matt. viii. 29. There is their terror. 'Where is the promise of his coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' There is their derision. The devils say, 'Jesus we know,' Acts xix. 15 ; these are like that doubting spirit, *Si Filius Dei*,—'If thou be the Son of God,' Matt. iv. 6, as if they made question whether he was so or not. Strange ! even the father of sins cometh short of his sons ; and there be atheists upon earth whenas there are none in hell. But they profess some religion among us. It may be so ; but they fit and square it to their own humours, as that giant dealt with his guests, for all whom he had but one bed : if they were too short for it, he racked them out longer ; if too long, he cut them shorter.

But *insculptum est omnibus esse Deum*,—it is written in all hearts by the pen of nature that there is a God. It is not possible to get out these indelible characters. Say what they will, they would give much to be sure that the Scripture was not true. The discourse of reason confutes them : 'Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee : the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of God hath wrought this ?' Job xii. 7, 9. *Præsentemque referet quælibet herba Deum*,—The little pile of grass tells us there is a God that made it. Besides, they have a conscience within them, God's deputy in the soul, which will speak for the Maker and Master, and be heard too. *Qui negat esse Deum, mihi negat, et tibi, non sibi*,—He that denies there is a God, denies it to me, and to thee, but never to himself. You may sooner pull his heart out of his breast than this impression out of his heart. Thus is their leaven tossed back into their own teeth : they will not now acknowledge this ; they shall

one day feel this. *Oculos quos culpa clausit, poena aperiet*,—The eyes which atheism hath shut, damnation shall open. This is a cursed leaven.

(3.) The next leaven is that of the Herodians. Here crafty and dissembling hypocrites might be thought their fittest and most suitable parallels, because Christ calls Herod a fox: 'Go and tell that fox,' Luke xiii. 32. But the Herodians were rather noted for profane fellows; and so we must seek out other matches. Such as carry in their gestures a tepidity of religion, a looseness of life; that 'turn the grace of God into wantonness,' and make that which brings salvation to all a means of confusion to themselves. This disease is *interius*, within; and quickly becomes *interitus*, a violent destruction. Professed atheists and open heretics are through the manifestation of their malice prevented: these are bosom serpents, that sting in silence. Aristotle says, that extreme is less hurtful which is nearest to the medium, and doth communicate with it in something. Prodigality is less noxious than avarice, because it hath this common with liberality, to give; which the other hath not. Fiery zeal is dangerous: by this Paul persecuted Christ, Acts xxii. 4; by this the Jews crucified Christ, Rom. x. 2. But profane boldness is worse, because it is further from the mean, which is zeal in religion.

By these wretches' lewdness among us, the Romish adversaries take advantage to slander our religion. They say our profession is a doctrine of liberty; that we preach for faith, and against works: but 'Wisdom is justified of her children.' Thus we preach, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil; but glory and peace to every man that worketh good,' Rom. ii. 9; and, 'Every man that hath hope in Christ purifieth himself,' 1 John iii. 3; and this is 'pure religion and undefiled before God: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world,' James i. 27. Our faith is not an *oſia*, imagined in the brain; but an *ὁράσις*, seen in our life. We teach that justification and sanctification are inseparable friends. If men will not be reformed, we conceal not from them God's renunciation: 'If any man will be filthy, let him be filthy still,' Rev. xxii. 11. Our dissolute conversation cannot annihilate the truth of our doctrine. Howsoever the Samaritan, not the Jew, relieved the wounded man, yet the Jew's religion was true, and not the Samaritan's. How polluted soever we are, yet their hands are not clean enough to take up stones against us. If they rejoice and triumph in men's wickedness, they profess imitation of the devil in a cursed mirth. Good Christians have learned to mourn for abominations, Ezek. ix., not to laugh at them. To return to those dissolute wretches: they sing not with the church a *Tenebo te Domine*,—'I held him, and I would not let him go,' Cant. iii. 4; all their delight is in a *Nunc dimittis*; they are glad to be gone. It were not amiss if we were well rid of them, being thus incorrigible: 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump,' 1 Cor. v. 7. What leaven the Apostle there means, he declares, ver. 13, 'Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.' When Jonah was cast out of the ship, the sea ceased from her raging; when Zimri was slain, the plague stayed; when Baal was destroyed, Israel had peace. If these cursed leavens of superstition, atheism, and profaneness were purged, how sweet a lump would the church of England be! We cannot hope it, yet let us pray for it: *Miserere Deus!* Cleanse us from these leavens, for the merits of thy Son, our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ!

(4.) There is a fourth leaven, to which St Paul hath principal respect in this place; and that is the mixing of law with gospel: I mean ceremonial

and legal rites with the truth of Jesus Christ. This leaven might well die in forgetfulness, and have moulded away, if there had not been a late generation of Thraskites to devour it as bread. They must abstain from swine's flesh, and from blood, and that upon conscience to the ceremonial law. But he that thus abstains from blood and flesh, the flesh and blood of Christ shall do him no good. What is this but to lick up the Galatians' vomit? to swallow that hard and indigestible leaven which St Paul took so much pains about to get out of their stomachs? But let it sleep with them in the dust: it is dead and buried, let us not disquiet the grave to revive it.

2. Now to the second way of considering these words, taking leaven personally for leaveners, false teachers, indeed heretics. I will only note two things, one of doctrine, another of discipline. For doctrine, out of my text, that they sour the whole lump; for discipline, that therefore the church should restrain and correct them.

The leaven of heresy spreads far: 'Their word will eat as doth a canker,' 2 Tim. ii. 17, or a gangrene. *Αἵσις* is an option, or election, of *αἰσιναι*, to make choice. A laudable word at first among philosophers, taken for a right form of learning. In divinity it is a word of disgrace, and intends a stubborn deviation from the received truth. It is more than error: *Errare possum, hæreticus esse non possum*,*—I may err, I cannot be a heretic. *Qui sua pestifera dogmata defendere persistunt, hæretici sunt*,—They that wilfully go on to maintain their pestilent opinions are heretics. It hath the right property of a gangrene—it frets as it goes: *vires acquirit eundo*. Heresies in the soul are like *ulcera depascentia* in the body—they eat up the parts about them.

Of this God is the deficient cause, who suffers it: First, In respect of the wicked, that their just condemnation might not be hindered: 'For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie,' 2 Thess. ii. 11. Secondly, In regard of the faithful, that their temptation might assure them to be God's: 'There must be heresies,' or schisms, 'that they which are approved may be made manifest among you,' 1 Cor. xi. 19. With this premonition God prepared Israel, that when a false prophet or dreamer should come unto them, 'God doth prove you, to know whether you will love the Lord with all your heart,' Deut. xiii. 3. For this cause are heresies: *ut fides, habendo tentationem, haberet etiam probationem*,†—that faith admitting a trial, might receive an approval.

Of this Satan is the efficient cause: the father of lies never loved the Father of truth. Wicked and perverse men are the instrumental causes; they are so overwise, that the curdle of their wit procures a breaking out into faction. *Cum discipuli veritatis non erunt, magistri erroris sunt*,—Refusing to be the scholars of truth, they become the schoolmasters of error. So the precedent cause in such is self-love; the cause that grows out of the other, and nearer to the main effect, (or rather defect,) is discontent. If the church forget them in dealing her legacies of preferment, they will tear her bowels for it. If their mother pleaseth not their humours with an expected indulgence, they will be so bold as kick her sides. Pride steps in for a third cause,—unless I forget her place, for she disdains an inferior room,—and yet of all sins, as none presumes higher, so none is thrust lower; even to the bottomless pit, Isa. xiv. 15. St John doth witness thus much of Diotrephes: 'I wrote unto the church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not,' 3 Epist., ver. 9. He is called by Beda, *Hæresiarcha superbus*. Hypocrisy must needs be admitted for a fourth

* Aug.

† Tertul.

motive to heresy. Applause must be had, if not by being good, yet by seeming so. *Omnēs hæretici sūt hypocritæ*, saith Jerome,—Every heretic is a hypocrite. Like vipers, they never come to light, but with some rupture to the womb of their mother.

Thus heresy creeps in at a little hole, but infects, infests the whole house; like a plague that comes in at the windows, and then propagates itself beyond all measure. *Erroris non est finis*,*—There is no termination of error. Therefore the only way to refute heresies is to fetch them back to their original. *Hæreses ad sua principia referre, est refellere*. If you can reduce them to their first, you see their last. As if a man would dry up a stream, he cannot do it in the main, but goes first to the spring-head, stops up that: the river will fail of itself.

As in the bodily gangrene, the part affected grows tumid and cadaverous, the colour fades and becomes blackish; so in the spiritual, the mind grows tumid and swelling: 'Vainly puffed up with a fleshly mind,' Col. ii. 18; the fair colour of profession gone: 'walking as enemies to the cross of Christ,' Phil. iii. 18. We know how the heresy of Arius did spread, when *totus orbis ingemuit, factum se videns Arianum*,—the whole world groaned, feeling itself made not Christian, but Arian. There was a long disputation about two words, little differing in sound, much in sense, *ὁμοούσιος* and *ὁμοιούσιος*; the Arians holding Christ like God in substance, the orthodox Christians holding him one with God in substance. Oh the world of ink and blood that was spent about this! The Pope rose by degrees: first above bishops, then above patriarchs, then above councils, then above kings, then above Scriptures, now last of all above God himself. So the Apostle speaks of Antichrist: 'He exalteth himself above all that is called God,' 2 Thess. ii. 4. From so poor a beginning he hath risen prettily for his time. Thus Popery crept up in the dark, like a thief putting out the lights, that it might more securely rob the house. Whiles it broached opinions, that like to sweet wines pleased the palate, it led many liquorish affections to hell; not unlike the butcher, who claws the ox till he cuts his throat. Thus the leaven of heresy spreads.

But the church must take care lest it spread too far. Let them alone in quiet, (yet what quiet can they have that disturb themselves?) and then 'evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived,' 2 Tim. iii. 13. Augustine says of Arius's schism in Alexandria, *una scintilla fuit*,—that it was at first but a little spark; but because not *statim suppressa, totum orbem ejus flamma populata est*,—the flame of it singed the whole world, not being extinguished in time. The kindling fire is easily quenched: when it possesseth the town, it rageth and rageth like a tyranny, scorning the offers of suppression. Now, therefore, 'I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine that ye have learned, and avoid them,' Rom. xvi. 17. The malice of a heretic, *vel dolenda tanquam hominis, vel cavenda tanquam hostis, vel irridenda tanquam imprudentis*,†—is either to be lamented, as a man's, or avoided, as a foe's, or derided, as a fool's. When proud Marcion said to Polycarpus, *Non me agnoscis?*—Dost thou not know me? Yes, replied that good saint; *agnosco te primogenitum Satanae*,—I acknowledge thee the devil's eldest son. If it prove an incurable gangrene, *enae recidendum, ne pars sincera trahatur*,—cut it off to save the rest. *Pereat unus potius quam unitas*,—Better lose one of the whole, than the whole for one. It is Hippocrates's maxim, *Quæ ferro non curantur, ignis curet*,—Where the knife can do no good, fire must. However heretics escape fire temporal, let them beware fire

* Sen.

† Aug.

eternal. For ourselves, bless we God, that hath cleared the way of truth among us, and thrust this leaven out of our coasts. Whiles the plague rode circuit in our streets, we prayed; when it ceased, we praised God. No plague so dangerous as heresy: whiles that ranged in our church, as Sylvius said of ruined Constantinople, *O miseram urbis faciem!* so we of our church, *O miseram ecclesiae faciem!* This leprosy gone, she is now fair in the eyes of her Beloved. Christ now kisseth her lips, and for this let us kiss the feet of Jesus Christ.

3. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' Now let us resolve this allegory another way, and conceive by leaven, sin; by lump, man; by leavening, infection. In effect, a little sin makes the whole man, in body and soul, unsavoury to the Lord. For method in proceeding: first, we will view the metaphor, the similitude of sin to leaven; then examine how a little of this can sour the whole lump. The similitude holds in many respects; albeit one be here principally intended, the souring quality, yet may the rest be justly considered.

(1.) Leaven is not bread, but the corruption of that which maketh bread. Sin is not a created quality, but the corruption of a created quality. God made not sin. Who, then? The devil begot it on man's lust: 'This I have found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions,' Eccles. vii. 29. Tricks enow to make themselves miserable. That which rottenness is in the apple, sourness in the wine, corruption in the flesh, such is sin in the soul: *fetida quædam qualitas*, a thing never good since it took being, only usurps the place of good, and occupies the seat where a happy and perfect quality stood. It is like a Jehoiakim, that sits in the throne of a Josiah: as that bad son of so good a father 'gave the silver and the gold of the temple to Pharaoh-Necho,' 2 Kings xxiii. 35; so this gives the endowments of nature, of reason, of affection to the black prince of darkness. Or as the Pope pretends that he sits in the chair of Peter; yet what that blessed saint attributed to Christ,—'Why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as if we by our own power or holiness had made this man to walk?' Acts iii. 12: 'Be it known to you, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, this man now stands whole before you,' Acts iv. 10,—this the Pope attributes to relics and blocks. There is no disease but he hath appointed some puppet to cure it. *Proh pudor? quis, cui?* Such is the practice of sin: the bounty of God 'gives corn, and wine, and oil, multiplies silver and gold,' Hos. ii. 8; and even these, sin gives to Baal. It is *depravatio boni* and *deprivatio boni*,—one is active, the other passive, the latter a necessary consequent of the former. It depraves our power of obedience to God actually; it deprives us of God's good grace and blessing passively. The one is inseparable to the other; for he that forfeits *bonum unde*, shall lose *bonum inde*. They that spoil that grace whence they might do good, shall lose that glory whence they expect good. The first breach of one law took away all power to keep any, and by it we are disabled to all.

(2.) The very same substance of meal that would make bread, by addition of salt becomes leaven. The very same work that might be good and acceptable to God, by addition of our pravity becomes evil. Thus the best actions of an unjustified person are so leavened with his own corruption that God abhors them. 'Your new moons and appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them. When ye make many prayers, I will not hear you,' Isa. i. 14. What is the reason? 'Your hands are full of blood.' Even sacrifices and supplications (good services in their own

nature) are made displeasing by the leaven of sin : ' He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man ; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck,' Isa. lxvi. 3. Sacrifices God commanded, and often commended ; yet *victimæ impiorum*, the oblations of the wicked, are abominated. *Non speciosa laus in ore peccatorum*,—Praise becometh not the mouth of a sinner.

Every unregenerate man *claudicat in rectis*,—halts in the straightest path. *Omnia naturalia bona polluta, omnia supernaturalia amissa*,—His portion of natural good is defiled, but of supernatural good all share is vanished. *Peccavi*, was David's voice after his sinful arithmetic ;* the same was Judas's voice after his damned treason. *Similis sonus, non sinus*,—There was the same sound, but not the same heart. Esau wept as much after the loss of the blessing, as Peter after the denial of his Master. *Similes lacrymæ, non animæ*,—Like tears, but unlike souls. The Pharisee went to church so well as the publican ; but the publican came home 'rather justified' than the Pharisee. The Pharisee threw bounteously into the treasury ; the poor widow two mites : yet Christ commends the poorer gift for the richer charity. That work which seems the same *in identitate operis*, yet differs much *ratione agentis*, in respect of the workers. Many heathen excelled us in moral virtues, yet the ignorance of Christ did shut heaven against them. *Væ tibi, Aristoteles : laudaris ubi non es, et damnaris ubi es*,†—Woe to thee, O Aristotle, who art commended where thou art not, and condemned where thou art. Yea, even in a justified man's works, though pure from the Spirit, yet passing through his hands, there is some tang of this leaven, enough to keep them from being meritorious. Look then well both to the justification of thy person and the sanctification of thy works. Thou indeed confessest sin to be damnable, but it would grieve thee to go to hell for thy good deeds. Though a man should give all his goods to the poor, yet wanting faith and love, he may for his charity go to the devil. Pray then that thy defects may be supplied by Christ, 'who gave himself a sacrifice for us to God of a sweet-smelling savour,' Eph. v. 2, perfuming us with the pleasant odour of his merits.

(3.) By leaven soured we make relishable bread for the use of man ; so by the ungodly's most cursed sins God will advance his glory. Will Pharaoh harden his heart ? 'I will get me honour upon him,' saith God. That leaven of malice which soured the souls of those brethren against poor Joseph, the Lord made use of to his glory. From that ungracious practice he raised a pedigree of blessings. Otherwise there had been no provision in Egypt, no bread to spare for Israel, no wonders wrought by Moses, no manna from heaven, no law from Sinai, no possession of Canaan. So from the unnaturallest murder that ever the sun beheld, yea, which the sun durst not look upon, God glorified himself in saving us. The oppressor impoverisheth the righteous ; God sees and suffers, and from his villany effectuates their good, by taking away those snares to save their souls. The Lord will glorify himself in the vessels of destruction ; and the groans in hell shall honour his justice, so well as the songs in heaven honour his mercy. How much better is it to glorify God in faithfulness, that will preserve thee, than in wickedness, which will destroy thee !

(4.) A man cannot 'live by bread only,' Matt. iv. 4, much worse by leaven. No man can live for ever by his righteousness and good works, much less by his sins. Sin is no nourishment to the soul ; unless as some, Mithridates-like, have so inured their bodies to poison that *venenum nutrit*, even venom

* That is, his numbering of the people.—Ed.

† Aug.

doth batten them : so others their souls to sin, that they cannot keep life without it. And indeed we say of some things, that they nourish sickness and feed death. *Omne simile nutrit simile*: inward corruption is fed and maintained by outward action. Covetise in Judas is nourished by filching his Master's money. Murder in Joab is heartened and hardened with blood. Theft is fattened with booties ; pride with gay rags ; usury batters by extortion ; sacrilege by church-robbing. *Pascitur libido conviviis, nutritur deliciis, vino accenditur, ebrietate flammatur*,*—Banqueting is the diet of lust, wantonness her nurse, wine kindles a heat in her blood, and drunkenness is the powder that sets her on fire. Thus sin feeds upon this leaven ; but with the same success that Israel upon quails : they fattened their carcasses, but made them lean souls.

Though this leaven pass the swallow, yet it sticks in the stomach ; sin may be devoured, but lies heavy on the conscience : 'Bread of deceit is sweet to a man ; but his mouth shall be filled with gravel,' Prov. xx. 17. It may be 'sweet in his mouth, but it is gall of asps in his bowels,' Job x. 15. Putrid meat is apt to breed and feed worms, so this leaven the worm of conscience ; when they once come to feel it work, then ready to cry, 'This is my death !' unless God give them a good vomit of repentance, to put it off their souls, and the sober diet of sanctification, to amend and rectify their lives.

(5.) Lastly, sin and leaven are fitly compared for their sourness. There is a leaven sharp and sour, but sanative. 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven,' Matt. xiii. 33. But this leaven is far sourer, yet hath nothing but death in it. It is sour to God, sour to angels, sour to saints, sour to the sinner. Sin is sourer than any leaven.

[1.] Sour to God, who hates nothing but sin. He made man, and man made sin. He loves his own creature, but he hates man's creature. Sin is sourer to him than the devil ; for *non odit peccatum diaboli causa, sed diabolum peccati causa*,—he hates not sin for the devil's sake, but the devil for sin's sake. It is so sour to him, that for one sin he plagued a world of men ; how will he plague one man for a world of sin ! So sour that he could relish no man for it, till he had killed it in the sides of Jesus Christ. We are all so sour that, but for this sweetening and perfume, we could never have been endured. The Scripture, for our understanding, ascribes senses to God ; and we find every sense displeased with sin :—

First, It is offensive to his smelling: He tells the Jews that their sins did stink in his nostrils. So did the world offend him, that he washed and soused it in a deluge ; and then, after Noah's sacrifice, is said to 'smell a savour of rest,' Gen. viii. 21. For this cause they had their altar of incense ; and God commanded a perfume to be made to him : 'The Lord said to Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, with pure frankincense ; and thou shalt make it a perfume, pure and holy,' Exod. xxx. 34. Both signified that we all stunk by nature, and are only perfumed by the incense of Christ's prayers and righteousness.

Secondly, It is offensive to his tasting : 'I looked,' after all my pains and kindness, 'for good grapes, and the vine brought forth wild grapes,' Isa. v. 2. When he comes to taste the vintage of our lives they are sour grapes : 'Ye turn judgment into wormwood,' Amos v. 7. Justice is pleasant unto the Lord, but injury bitter as wormwood. So the Jews served Christ ; instead of wine, they gave him vinegar to drink. He turned their water into wine ; they turn his wine into vinegar. Good works of faith and obedience are

* Ambr.

that 'best wine' which we should give 'our Beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak,' Cant. vii. 9. But evil deeds are sour to his palate.

Thirdly, It is offensive to his feeling: so sharp that the spear, thorns, whips, and nails were blunt to it. Our iniquities were so heavy to his sense, that he complains himself to be burdened under them, 'as a cart is pressed with sheaves,' Amos ii. 13. The Lord of heaven lay grovelling on the earth, and as if he were cast into a furnace of his Father's wrath, sweating drops of blood. They are so harsh still to his feeling, that he challengeth Saul for wounding himself: 'Why strikest thou me?' Acts ix. 5. Saul strikes at Damascus, Jesus Christ suffers in heaven.

Fourthly, It is offensive to his hearing: 'The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, because their sin is very grievous,' Gen. xvi. 20. Our dissensions and quarrels are as jarring in God's ears, as if divers distracted musicians should play upon divers bad instruments so many several tunes at one time. The confusion of sins brought the confusion of languages. God's ear could not endure the distraction of their hearts; therefore their own ears shall not distinguish the dissonance of their voices. The cry of blood and oppression makes so grievous a noise to heaven, that vengeance must only quiet it. Our murmurings, our oaths, blasphemies, slanders, are like the croaking of frogs, howling of dogs, and hissing of serpents in God's hearing.

Fifthly, It is offensive to his seeing: 'Though thou wash thee with nitre, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord,' Jer. ii. 22. Our oppressions are like running ulcers, our adulteries as most sordid and filthy things. The prophet, Isa. lxiv. 6, compares it to the most feculent defilement and loathsome turpitude that can be uttered. 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity,' Hab. i. 13. Oh, let us abhor that filthiness which will turn the face of God from us! Neither are they displeasing only to his senses, but grievous to his mind: 'Is it a small thing for you to grieve men, but you will grieve God also?' Isa. vii. 13. It is dangerous to anger him that can anger all the veins of our hearts. It was the prophet Isaiah's complaint of Israel, 'They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit,' chap. lxiii. 10. Yea, they are offensive to his very soul: 'Your new moons and appointed feasts my soul hateth,' chap. i. 14. Thus he protesteth against recidivation, Heb. x. 38: 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' This is an emphatical speech, and an argument of God's hearty detestation. 'The wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth,' Ps. xi. 5. Therefore he is said to bend his soul to revenge: 'Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?' Jer. v. 9.

[2.] Sour to the angels: for if they 'rejoice at our conversion,' Luke xv., then they grieve at our perversion. How sour is that sin which brings grief unto the thresholds of joy! They blush at our falls, rejoice at our integrity. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for them who shall be the heirs of salvation?' Heb. i. 14. Let us, then, feast them with integrity, not with the leaven of iniquity.

[3.] Sour to the saints: the church is our mother, and she laments to see any child of her womb averse from goodness. Therefore as a loving mother, whose husband was slain for the safety of herself and children, if she sees any child transgress the rules, and break her husband's testament, she tells them of their father's kindness; she describes his deadly wounds and ghastly looks; and, to make their facts more odious, she sheweth some garment of his embued with blood. So the church often offers to our considerations

how Christ, her dear love and Lord, was betrayed, condemned, crucified ; tells us our sins have done this ; that they were the Judas betraying, the Herod mocking, the Pilate condemning, the Longinus wounding, the hand of Jews recrucifying Christ. Now as Dido adjured departing Æneas, *Per ego te has lacrymas, &c.* ; *per si quid unquam dulce fuit nobis, horum miserrere laborum* : so our mother entreats us, (yet entreating is too low a phrase for a mother,) *per talem cruorem, per tantum amorem*,—by so precious blood, and by so gracious love, to sin no more ; at least to abhor such precipices of sin, and forbear (as it were) to choke him with such cursed leavens.

[4.] Sour to the sinner himself : for it ever leaves behind it a sting of conscience. It may taste pleasing and palatable at first, but leaven is not sourer at last. Perhaps our judgments may be out of taste, as men in fevers ; or Satan (that crafty apothecary) hath mingled the potion cunningly : yet though *saporem amisit, venenum retinet*,—poison is poison, though it come in a golden cup. Esau's pottage went down merrily, but the loss of his birthright was a bitter farewell. Whatsoever service sin doth us, it shews us but an ill-favoured trick at the last. It brings us to the door of terror, and then bids us shift for ourselves. It is like Lysimachus's draught of cold water, that refreshes him for a moment, and captives him for ever. By Solomon's rule, vexation is entailed to vanity, Eccles. i. A hedgehog must dwell in Babylon ; a pricking conscience in a profane breast : 'Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee : this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart,' Jer. iv. 18. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,' &c. ; 'but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,' Eccles. xi. 9. The verse begins with pleasure, but ends with terror. Sin will be sour at the last.

The allegory thus opened, the special treasure or instruction remains yet to be drawn out. We perceive what the leaven signifies, and what the lump. Now we must consider the relation betwixt *modicum* and *totum* ; a little leaven, and the whole lump. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.'

A little sin infecteth a great deal of righteousness. 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and offend in one point, he is guilty of all,' James ii. 10. He hath broken *totam legem*, though not *totum legis*. I speak not here of the absolutely (dissolutely) wicked, whose life is like Eldred's reign, *prava in principio, pejor in medio, pessima in ultimo*,—bad in the beginning, worse in the midst, worst of all in the end,—but of those that have some good measure of grace, and stand in the state of adoption, yet may admit of Paul's prayer, 'to be sanctified throughout,' 1 Thess. v. 23. And upon good reason ; for there is a universal corruption, therefore should be a universal sanctification. In that young man that professed himself to have kept the commandments, and Christ began to love him, yet there was a little leaven spoiled all—covetousness. *Unum restat*, one thing was wanting : 'Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor,' Matt. xix. 22. No, he was covetive, and could not abide such a purge. In Herod, though he heard many sermons of John's preached gladly, (and it is some good thing to hear sermons with joy,) yet the leaven of Herodias marred all. 'Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth him in all his goods,' Gal. vi. 6. This was the Apostle's canon, an ordinance that will kill where it is resisted ; yet a world of arguments hath been invented to stop it up. We will give of charity ; but any thing of duty ? Yes, of duty. Well, we will give somewhat of duty ; but part of all ? Yes, part of all. Put out this *ἐν πᾶσι*, and we will compound with you ; though we take away a talent of your duties, we will return a mite of benevolence.

I will tell you a story : A seignior came with his servant to one of Our Lady's images, (no matter which, for they do not scant her of number.) He threw in an angel of gold ; the humble picture in gratitude made a courtesy to him. The servant observing, and wondering at her ladyship's plausible carriage, purposed with himself to give somewhat too, that he might have a courtesy. So he puts into the basin sixpence, and withal takes out his master's angel ; the image makes courtesy, and seems to thank him still. It is common with this city to take away the clergy's angel, and to lay down sixpence in its stead ; yet look they for courtesy too, but I think no honest man will give them thanks.

This little leaven undoes all goodness. 'You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God commands you,' Deut. v. 33. All? Put out *in omnibus*, 'in all,' and we will say something to it. But as *Deus remittit omnia peccata, aut nulla*,—God forgives all sins, or none ; so we must faithfully resolve against all sins, or we repent of none. As is God's remission, such must be our contrition. Every man is an Adam, a good conscience his paradise, lust the forbidden fruit : one lust is able to turn him out of all his comforts. Hast thou kept thy hands from injury? Yet if thy tongue have offended, thou shalt be judged of thy 'idle words.' Suppose thou hast preserved *castitatem lingue*, sobriety of speech, (yet 'if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man,' James iii. 2,) but thy thoughts have welcomed a pleasing lust, those thoughts have leavened thy soul. 'For God will' not only 'bring every work into judgment,' but 'every secret thought, whether it be good or evil,' Eccles. xii. 14. Men have brought that opinion into a proverb, 'Thought is free ;' no, thy thought is God's bond-slave. As thou canst not think a good thought but by his suggestion, so not an evil thought but by his permission. If but thy thought harbour this leaven, the whole lump is soured. Actions men see, thy thoughts only God and thyself. *Ille liber inter accusatores, quem propria non accusat conscientia*,—That man needs fear no accusers, that is freed from the condemnation of his own conscience. There are six motives that infer and enforce a caution of little sins. Little sins are dangerous, because they are, 1. *Mortalia*, they are deadly. 2. *Plurima*, they are numerous. 3. *Insensibilia*, not easily felt. 4. *Materialia maximorum*, they are the materials or seeds of gross sins. 5. *Maximas inficiunt virtutes*, they leaven the best virtues. 6. *Facilius perdunt*, they more cunningly destroy the soul.

1. *Minima mortalia* ; even the least offence is mortal in its own nature, culpable of transgression, and liable to malediction. 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 23. It was a strange gloss of Haymo upon that text : *Hoc non de omnibus peccatis intelligendum est, sed de criminalibus*,—This is not meant of all sins, but only of such as are criminal ; such, saith he, as St John speaks of : 'There is a sin unto death, I say not that thou shouldst pray for it,' 1 John v. 16. So St Paul's indefinite speech of all sins he restrains to St John's particular sense of one sin : that sin, which shall never be forgiven, against the Holy Ghost. For otherwise, if St John should intend it of all criminal sins, then it would follow that we should not pray for heretics, adulterers, homicides ; which were directly cross to the rule of charity. Certainly Paul in that general rule admitted of no exception ; it is an aphorism wherein no sober judgment can find distinction. The Apostle thought of no venial when he called all mortal. 'The wages of sin'—not of this or that sin, as sacrilege, robbery, blasphemy, &c., but of sin, any sin, every sin ; though men deem it trivial, they shall find it mortal—'is death.'

I know there is a just distinction of sins, of greater and less. Parity or

equality of all transgressions is an idle dream. It was a worse murder to kill Zachariah at the altar than Uriah in the field. To steal *sacra de sacro*, holy things out of a holy place, is worse theft than to steal *profana de profano*, common things out of a profane place. The difference of the punishments manifests a difference of the sins. As in heaven 'one star excels another star in glory;' so in hell one firebrand exceeds another in burning, though all feel the fire hot enough. Christ tells the Pharisees that they make their proselyte 'twofold more the child of hell than themselves,' Matt. xxiii. 15. *Tolerabilius erit Sodoma*,—'It shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for Capernaum,' Matt. xi. 24; and yet the Sodomites were then in hell. They that devoured widows' houses under the colour of long prayers 'shall receive greater damnation,' Luke xx. 4. As they have been more wicked, they shall be more wretched. This distinction of sins we take up and justify, yea, we dare go further, and say there are some sins mortal, and some venial, but not in their own nature. The difference is not *ratione peccatorum*, *sed peccantium*,—not in respect of the sins, but of the sinners. To the faithful and penitent all sins are venial; to the unbelievers and impenitent, all sins are mortal. It is *miseriordia remittentis*, not *natura transgressionis*,—the mercy of the forgiver, not the quality of the sin,—that maketh it venial. All transgressions are mortal in themselves, and by repentance all venial in Christ. The least sin, legally considered, is mortal; the greatest sin, evangelically considered, is pardonable.

This difference we approve; yea, we say that small sins are more easily pardoned, and great sins, when they are remitted, are more hardly remitted. For certainly offenders are more or less punished, according to the quality of the offence. An eye with an eye, but blood with blood, and life with life. Yet still say we not, that a sin is in its own nature venial. For even the least is *ἀνομία*, 'the transgression of the law,' 1 John iii. 4. It is for the doctrine of Rome to lessen sin, and to extenuate punishment; and that for two reasons: first, that they might please the people with some liberty; and next, that hereby they might build up their purgatory. For they assign mortal sins to hell, and venial to that purging fire. They offer herein a double wrong—both to their own modesty, and to God's mercy. To their own modesty, for they extenuate their faults in sinning; to God's mercy, for they disparage his goodness in forgiving. They affirm that sins of omission, weakness, forgetfulness, and ignorance, be *præter legem Dei*, but not *contra legem Dei*,—that they be besides the law of God, not against the law of God. This doctrine, like the 'lips of that strange woman, drop as a honeycomb, and are smooth as oil,' Prov. v. 3; but their 'end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword,' ver. 4. This is a dangerous delusion; for hence they come so to neglect those less sins, that *peccata minima* be at last thought *nulla*. As they have certain orders among them, friars *Minorites*, friars *Minims*, and then *Nullani*, Nullans; so sin bates and dwindles from a minorite, or less sin, to a minim, or least sin, and from a minim to a nullan, to be no sin at all. Thus *incipit esse licitum, quod solet esse publicum*. The commonness takes away the heinousness; from being generally practised, it comes to be universally allowed.

Every sin is committed against God: 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,' Ps. li. 4. Look upon the infinite majesty offended, and by that judge the quality of thy offence. There be sins of weakness, sins of ignorance, and sins of malice. Those of weakness are said to be committed against God the Father, whose special attribute is power. Those of ignor-

ance, against God the Son, whose special attribute is wisdom. Those of malice, against God the Holy Ghost, whose special attribute is love. Whether then they be of weakness, of ignorance, or of malice, they offend either the power of God, or the wisdom of God, or the love of God; therefore acknowledge *secundum magnitudinem Dei, magnitudinem peccati*,—confess the least sin great and bad that hath offended a majesty so great and good.

2. *Minima plurima*, sins less heinous, are the most numerous. Many littles make a mickle. Small drops of rain commonly cause the greatest floods. *Quo minus violentum, eo magis perpetuum*,—The less violence, the longer continuance. The drizzling sleet, that falls as it were in a mist, fills the channels, they swell the rivers, the overcharged rivers send forth their superfluous waters over the containing banks; now the meadows are polluted, the corn-fields spoiled, the cattle drowned; yea, even houses, and towns, and inhabitants are endangered, and firm continents buried under a deluge of waters. Many little sands, gathered to a heap, fail not to swallow a great vessel. *De parvis grandis acervus erit*. You have eagles, hawks, kites, and such great fowls of rapine, flying always alone; but the sparrows and pigeons, that devour the grain, by innumerable troops. There were not more grievous plagues to the Egyptians than came by the contemptiblest creatures,—as frogs, lice, flies, locusts,—by reason of the monstrous swarms, ‘covering the face of the earth, and darkening the land, and devouring the fruit of the whole country,’ Exod. x. 15; yea, even killing the people, that ‘there was no remedy found for their life,’ Wisd. xvi. 9. Thus great destruction ariseth from little causes; therefore, *non contemnenda quia parva, sed metuenda quia multa*,—let us not despise our sins because they are little, but fear them because they are many, saith Augustine. The small drops of sin, continually falling, have drowned many souls. As they have been our arms to fight against God, so God will make them his armies to confound us. *Timenda ruina multitudinis, etsi non magnitudinis*,—Let us fear them for their number, though we slight them for their nature.

A pace is but a little space of ground; yet a thousand paces make a mile, and many miles bring to hell. *Si negligis quia non pessima, caveas quia plurima*,—If they be not the worst, they are the most; and is it not all to one purpose whether one Goliath or a thousand Philistines overcome thee? The bird brings so many little straws as make up her nest: the reprobate so many little sticks as make up his own burning pile. Augustine saith there is in sin both weight and number. *Esti non timeas quando expendis, time quando numeras*. Judge them by tale, and not by weight. Put a wanton speech, a loose gesture into the balance, though Christ found it heavy, and every soul shall for whom he did not bear it, yet it is censured *vix culpa*, a little faulting, a little failing: so little, that were it less, it were nothing. But now leave thy geometry, and come to arithmetic: begin to number thy wanton works, and unchristian gestures, and carnal thoughts; now, lo, they come in by troops and herds, thicker than the frogs into Egypt, *miraris numerum*. Thou standest amazed at their number, and now criest, *Miserere mei Deus*,—Lord, have mercy on me a most wretched sinner. Yet when thy recognition hath done its best, and thy memory represented those swarms of sins to thy conscience, thy view is as far short as will be thine answer; neither can extend *ad millesimam, vel minimam partem*: thou hast not seen one of a thousand. ‘Who can understand his errors? O Lord, cleanse thou me from my secret faults,’ Ps. xix. 12.

Thus it is not *trutina*, but *scrutinium*, that will teach thee the danger of these little sins. Thou didst never steal thy neighbour’s goods by breaking

into his house, therefore pleadest not guilty to that law, 'Thou shalt not steal.' Examine, thou shalt find passed from thee so many covetous wishes as make up a robbery. Thou art no swearer; yet through the door of thy lips have escaped out so many idle words, as being put together will make up a blasphemy. Thou never madest the member of Christ a member of a harlot by uncleanness; yet thou hast given indulgence to as many lustful thoughts and desires as being summed will make up a great adultery. I fear that many who have forborne the forbidden bed have yet by their lusts, scatteringly and forgetfully admitted, framed up an adultery as great as David's. Some that have made a conscience of grand oaths and impudent blasphemies, yet have ejaculated so many loud, lewd, and false attestations, as have conflated a blasphemy no less impious than Rabshakeh's. A tradesman disdains to lie, abhors to oppress; yet hath uttered so many commodities by dissimulations, concealments, false warrantings, cunning frauds, as make up an oppression equal to Jeconiah's. A Protestant abominates sacrilege, and downright robbing the church; yet hath so long been bold to make use of his impropropriation; or if in a meaner condition, with his compositions, customs, detinies, legal alienations, leases, and fines, as make up a sacrilege not inferior to Achan's. Put my money to interest; no, saith another, I defy all usurious contracts; yet by his pawns, mortgages, forfeits, cozenages, and such tricks known best to God his Judge, the devil his enginer, his scrivener, and himself, he puts down unconverted Zaccheus for usury. Oh the incredible souls lost in the labyrinth of these unsuspected, and in their imagination justifiable, sins!

3. *Minima insensibilia*; these little sins are not so easily felt, therefore most pernicious. If a man hath dyed his hand in blood, *irrequieta conscientia*, a peaceless conscience haunts him with incessant vexation: let him hate his brother, this little murder he feels not. The devil, like a roaring lion, is soon heard: forming himself to a fox, his insinuation is not perceived. He roars in monstrous iniquities, in treason, murder, sacrilege, oppression: these be thundering sins, that will waken the soul if it be not lethargised. But creeping like a silent fox, he devours the grapes without disturbance: 'Take us the foxes, the little foxes; for they spoil the vines,' Cant. ii. 15. If Satan hew at the timber, and knock at the foundation of the house, we hear the noise and preserve the building. They are those small *teredines*, little sins, that insensibly eat it to dust, and it is ruined ere we are aware. So long as sin comes not in thunder, it never wakens men: if it do not enter into theomachy, and denounce open war against God, they make but a Tush of it. To abuse the good creature is nothing, so long as they are not drunk; to give nothing to the poor is no sin, so long as they take not from the poor; to sleep out the sermon is but a little drowsiness, all is well so long as they break not the Sabbath in absence from church. These and such like are the common thoughts; and so trivial an estimate they bear of these sins, that they think God should do them wrong to call them to any reckoning for them.

Thus they sow sins, as that enemy did tares, 'here a little, and there a little;' but grown up, the whole field was overgrown with them. A sin that cannot be committed, *sine grandi corruptione sui, gravi læsione proximi, magno contemptu Dei*,—without his own notorious depravation, his brother's grievous oppression, God's manifest contempt and provocation; this quickly amazeth a man, and he starts back from the devil's first offer. If Satan at first had come to Judas, Here is a hundred pieces, betray thy Master: none, he was not yet hardened enough in villany. Let Satan first work him to

hypocrisy, then to covetousness, and lastly he shall prevail with him for treason too. He might refuse a hundred pieces before, now he will take thirty.

When that good prophet wept upon Hazael, 2 Kings viii. 11-13, he asked, 'Why weepeth my lord?' He answered, 'Because I know the evil that thou wilt do to the children of Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, slay their young men with the sword, dash their children against the stones, and rip up their women with child;' he replied, 'What, is thy servant a dog, that I should do this great thing?' He thought it impossible that the devil should ever work him to so horrid a mischief. But he did it: ambition brought him to a kingdom, a kingdom brought him to tyranny, tyranny to insolence, insolence not only to oppression of his own, but to inustion of other countries, among which Israel felt the smart, in the burning of her cities, and massacring her inhabitants. Thus by degrees he was wrought to this self-incited mischief; as impossible as at first he judged it, at last he performed it. Doubtless there be some that would shudder at the temptation to perjury; yet *pedetentim*, by insensible steps they arrive at it: by lying they come to swearing, by swearing to forswearing. If the usurer had an oppressed man's widow and orphans lying and crying at his doors, perhaps shame, if not remorse, would seize upon him; but let him exact, enhance, oppress, excoriate the commonwealth, and not hear of it in a public clamour, he never winceeth for the matter. A fact that looks at the first blush horrid and intolerable is presently either avoided, or within some modest limits restrained; but another *dum parvum creditur, securius in usu retinetur*,—the opinion of parvity abates the opinion of pravity: that which is weakly censured is strongly retained. Our officious lies, soothing adulations, amorous wishes, wanton songs, scoffing at ministers, censuring of sermons, being reprov'd, we laugh them out. But these laughing sins will be one day found crying sins. And if we cry not to God for mercy by repentance, they shall cry to God against us for vengeance.

4. *Minima materialia maximorum*,—Little sins are the materials of great sins. The seeds of all sins are naturally in us: not so much as treason, homicide, perjury, but are in us *quoad potentiam*, yea, *quoad naturam et propensionem*,—there is in our nature a proclivity to them. Now the heart is so apt ground to produce and mature these *innata mala*, inbred seeds to actuals, that without the preventing grace of God we cannot avoid them. Thou art a Christian, and fearest not that ever thou shouldst apostate into the denial of thy Saviour; yet let me say thou hast the materials of this sin within thee—timorousness and self-love. Thou sayest, 'Sure I shall never be a drunkard, that belluine folly shall never apprehend me;' yet thou hast the materials of this within thee, and that naturally and hereditarily from thy first grandmother Eve: a sweet tooth in thy head, a liquorish appetite to delicate meats and intoxicating wines.

Thou canst not be a traitor, nor admit of conspiracy against thy sovereign, yet the material of this wickedness is within thee. That which we call gunpowder is made of the salt and fatter earth: in the ground are the materials, which when art hath concocted, chimed, prepared, charged, and discharged, it overturns towers and towns, ports and cities. We were once too near proving (by a woful experience) the violence of it; but the goodness of our Lord Jesus averted it. So in thy earth, thy heart, there is this salt and spumy matter, the mineral of treason; unless the reason of a man, and religion of a Christian, keep it from eruption. Thou art resolved never to think highly of thine own worth, yet thou hast the seed of pride within thee: thou art

naturally (as Luther said) born with a Pope in thy belly. There is the material—to be too well affected to thy own doings. It is impossible, thou thinkest, for thee to be made a usurer, now thou hast no money; yet thou hast the seed of usury within thee, and—

‘Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.’

All the sons of Adam love earth too well. Who shall ever persuade thee to bow down before an idol? Yet a dainty feast persuades thee to worship thine own belly; this is no idolatry. It was but a little cloud that Elijah’s servant saw, ‘rising out of the sea like a man’s hand,’ 1 Kings xviii. 44; yet it portended a great shower. Sin seems at first like a little cloud, but it prognosticates a deluge of ensuing wickedness. The careless gallant, by many trifles often fetched, runs so far in the mercer’s books unawares, that he cannot endure to hear of a reckoning. These little arrearages, taken up on trust, run our souls so deep into God’s debt, that if the blood of Christ do not pay it, though we sold wife and children, and all we possess, *non habemus unde*, we can never discharge it, Matt. xviii. 25.

5. *Minima peccata maximas inficiunt virtutes*,—A little sin infects a great deal of righteousness. The leprosy infected the garments, and the very walls of the house; but sin hath infected wood, and wool, and walls, earth, air, beasts, plants, and planets; and stuck a scar on the crystal brow of nature itself: ‘For we know the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now,’ Rom. viii. 22. If the great world groan for man’s sin, shall not the little world, man, groan for his own sin? Send a little temptation in at the ear or eye, it will not rest working till it runs like poison to the heart. David let in a little leaven at his eye, it quickly wrought to his heart, gangrened to adultery, to blood; hardly cured.

A little colicoquintida spoils all the broth: a spot in the face blemisheth all the beauty. Naaman the Syrian is plentifully commended: ‘He was captain of the host, a great man with his master, and honourable, because the Lord by him had given deliverance to Syria: he was also a mighty man of valour, but he was a leper,’ 2 Kings v. 1. The same *but* mars all; *but* he was a leper. So in the soul, one vice disgraceth a great deal of virtue. When he was cured and converted by Elisha, first he is charitable, offers gold and garments, but he excepts ‘bowing in the house of Rimmon;’ he is devout, and begs earth for sacrifice, but excepts Rimmon; he is religious, and promiseth to offer to none but the Lord, but he excepts Rimmon. This little leaven, this ‘*but Rimmon*,’ soured all. ‘Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour,’ Eccles. x. 1. The apothecaries’ unction is a thing praised in the Scriptures, compounded of many excellent simples, made not so much for medicine as for odour; yet the flies of death putrefy it: ‘so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.’

When one commended Alexander for his noble acts and famous achievements, another objected against him that he killed Callisthenes. He was valiant and successful in the wars; true, *but* he killed Callisthenes. He overcame the great Darius; so, *but* he killed Callisthenes. He made himself master of the world; grant it, *but* still he killed Callisthenes. His meaning was, that this one unjust fact poisoned all his valorous deeds. Beware of sin, which may thus leaven the whole lump of our soul. Indeed we must all sin, and every sin sours; but to the faithful and repentant Christian it shall not be damnable: ‘There is no damnation to them that are in Jesus Christ,’ Rom. viii. 1. There is in all corruption, to most affliction, to none

damnation, that are in Christ. Our leaven hath soured us, but we are made sweet again by the all-perfuming blood of our blessed Saviour.

6. *Minima peccata facilius destrunt*.—The least sins are the most fatal to men's destruction. *Anima est tota in toto*; so that if the toe aches, the head feels, the eye lets fall a tear, the very heart mourns. So let but the eye lust, the soul is in danger to be lost. *Mors per fenestras*, saith the prophet. 'Death comes in at the windows, then enters into the palaces, to cut off the children without, and the young men in the streets,' Jer. ix. 21. Is it but an unclean thought? *Mors in illa*; as the children of the prophets cried, *Mors in olla*.—There is death in it and for it. A dram of poison diffuseth itself to all parts, till it strangle the vital spirits, and turn out the soul from the tenement. 'How great a matter a little fire kindleth!' James iii. 5. It is all one whether a man be killed with the prick of a little thorn, or with the hewing of a broad-sword, so he be killed. We have seen a whole arm imposthumated with a little prick in the finger: if Satan can but wound our heel, (as the poets feign of Achilles,) he will make shift to kill us there; even, from the heel to send death to the heart. Therefore Christ calls hatred murder, a wanton eye adultery; besides the possibility of act, they are the same in the intention of heart. The hornet is a little fly, yet it stings deadly.

I know that heavier sins shall have a heavier weight of punishment; yet is the least heavy enough to sink the soul to the bottomless pit. Greater fury of iniquity shall have the hotter fire; but, oh, let us never feel the heat of one! A little leak sinks a great vessel. Pope Marcelline being accused for idolatry, answered for himself, 'I did but cast a few grains of incense into the fire; that was little or nothing.' Yet it was manifest offering to idols; is that nothing? Christ would not obey Satan in his *minimis*: he would not answer his desire in the smallest suit he could request, of turning 'stones into bread,' Matt. iv. 3, even while he was so hungry as forty days' fasting could make him; teaching us to deny Satan in his least motions, lest custom of having them granted make him so impudent as to take no repulse in his greatest temptations.

This is the devil's method of working; as it is in the first psalm: 'Blessed is the man that hath not walked,' &c. First, he gets a man to walk a turn or two with him in sin, as it were to confer and debate the matter. After some walking, lest he should be weary, he prevails with him to 'stand in the way of sinners;' after admission of the thought, to communion of the act. Lastly, he persuades him for his ease to 'sit down in the seat of the scornful;' falling to despise God and deride all goodness. Thus he brings him from walking to standing, from standing to sitting still; and this is *limen inferni*, the very threshold of hell. We judge of sin as of the sun; little because far off, yet indeed it is bigger than the earth. The nearer we come to the sense of iniquity, the greater it appears. Was it such a sin for Adam to eat a forbidden apple? Yes; the greatness is remonstrable in the event: it brought destruction upon himself and his posterity. Is it such a heinous offence for David to know the number of his people? Do not princes make good their muster-books by such a *quære* and numeration? The plague witnessed the greatness of it, and himself cries, *Pecavi*, 'I have done wickedly,' 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. Look on the least sin in Satan's false glass, and it seems contemptible; behold it in the true glass of God's law, and it appears abominable. The devil stands betwixt wicked men and their sins all their life; but placeth their sin betwixt heaven and themselves in death; writes them in text letters on the curtains, that their amazed souls cannot

choose but read them. Thus he that led them living by sin to presumption, now drives them dying by sin to desperation.

Satan seems modest, and will be contented with a little when he can get no more; he will play at small game before he sit out. Wilt thou not cut throats? yet quarrel and appoint fields. Not so? yet hate thine enemies. Not professed hatred? yet watch occasions to hinder his good. If thou wilt not injure his estate, yet at least scandalise his good name. He will take little rather than nothing. The Israelites in the desert had no rich and costly sacrifices to offer to Baal-peor, Num. xxv. 2. They had not such store of beasts but the oblations to God took them up. I cannot see what they should have fit for this sacrifice to Baal, except manna and water; too good for the devil, but he is content with this. Yet it is evident that they committed idolatry: 'Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them: as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play,' 1 Cor. x. 7. Rather than want their custom, Satan shall take such as they had. Will Naaman worship God? yet let him worship Rimmon too. No, he will not do so; yet let him bow to Rimmon? No, nor so much; yet let him 'bow before Rimmon,' 2 Kings v. 18. The devil is glad of this, where he can get no more. Thus Pharaoh minceth and limits with Moses concerning the dismissal of Israel, Exod. viii., x. God's charge was: 'Let my people go three days' journey in the wilderness,' to celebrate a feast to the Lord. Now mark how Pharaoh would compound it. First, 'Sacrifice to God in this land.' No, saith Moses; we must go into the wilderness. Then saith Pharaoh, If there be no remedy, go, and go to the wilderness, and sacrifice to your God; but 'go not far.' Nay; we must go three days' journey. Then Pharaoh, 'Go ye, the men, but leave your children behind you.' Nay; we must go old and young, sons and daughters. Then Pharaoh, 'Go ye, men, women, and children, so far as your feet can measure in three days; but your flocks and your herds shall be stayed.' Nay; 'we will not leave a hoof behind us.' So when the devil perceives no remedy, he falls to indenting with niggardly grants and allowances.

Somewhat hath some savour; give him at least a thought, a word, a look, as Lot's wife, and that something pleaseth him. Among the heathen they used to join together *epula* and *sacrificia*; with solemn sacrifices to their gods, solemn banquets among themselves. So the Apostle delivers the custom of the Moabites, 1 Cor. x. 7: in the midst of their idolatry 'they sat down to eat and drink.' So the Psalmist writes of that cursed commixtion of Israel with Moab, that they had idolatrous feasts: 'They joined themselves to Baal-peor, and did eat the sacrifices of the dead,' Ps. cvi. 28. One nation had a custom in these superstitious feasts to sacrifice to their idol *capita*, some noblemen's heads, according as it fell to their lots, together with their hearts and their livers. It came to the turn of the king's special favourite thus to lose his life: the king resolving both to keep the custom, yet to save his friend, objected that God was no murderer, nor delighted in the blood of men. That if he were a God, he was certainly good, and goodness stood not in the desire of his own creatures' destruction. Therefore instead of the man's head, he offered the head of an onion; and for blood, heart, and livers of men, all these of birds or beasts. The devil must be pleased with this: he saw that this little homage was some acknowledgment of his sovereignty.

Satan can hold a man's soul in by a little, as a bird that hangs in the net by a claw. Perhaps shame and fear keep some from eruption into scandalous things: the appearance is vizarded, the affection is not mortified.

Like a eunuch, he doth not beget palpable and gross turpitudes, yet hath a lust, itch, and concupiscence. This little serves the devil's turn. Satan would keep away the light of the truth from a man; well he is so seated that he will have it; by knowledge he seems to cast out Satan. Yet if he can but insinuate into his affection, this little cord will pull him in again with ease. Must he lose the scone of thy understanding? Let him hold the citadel of thy desires; this little gate will let him in at his pleasure.

I draw to conclusion; let this teach us all to make a scrutiny in our souls, and seriously to repent of this little leaven. Little in quantity, great in quality; little in estimation, powerful in operation. Little in the sight of men, judging by outward appearance; great in the sight of God, judging in truth. Lot said of the city of Zoar, 'Is it not a little one? and my soul shall live,' Gen. xix. 20; thou sayest of thy sin, Is it not a little one? and why should my soul die? A little postern opened may betray the greatest city. Jonathan tasted but 'a little honey on the top of his wand,' 1 Sam. xiv. 43, and hardly he escaped death for it. A little leaven makes the head heavy, and the heart sick. Eschew this little, if thou wouldst be great in heaven; for 'whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven,' Matt. v. 19. *Minimus*, that is indeed *nullus*; the least there, because he shall not be there at all. Let no tang of corruption come to thy least part, if thou desirest to preserve body and soul 'blameless to the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Thess. v. 23.

Repentance must be to all dead works; sanctification takes liberty in no sin. *Nullum peccatum retinendum spe remissionis*.—No evil must be reserved under the hope of forgiveness. God gave a law, but no dispensation for any breach of it; his general rules have no exceptions, unless it please the divine oracle to dispense with it. Thou shalt not worship an idol. No, not to save my life? Not to save life, as those three servants of God professed to Nebuchadnezzar: 'If the God we serve will not deliver us, yet we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image,' Dan. iii. 18. Thou sayest, *Minimum est*, It is little; but *in minimis fidelem esse, magnum est*,—to be faithful in a little is no little virtue. 'Well done, good servant: thou hast been faithful in a little, therefore I will make thee ruler over much.' He that is not careful in a little is not to be trusted for more. If any man will corrupt his conscience for a pound, what would he do for a thousand? If Judas will sell his Master for thirty pence, about some two-and-twenty shillings of our money, what would he have sold for the treasury? God never gave a *Non obstante* for sin. The Pope indeed gives bulls and indulgences, and pardons for cursed works before their perpetration; but God never allows leave to do ill. The Pope says, 'Kill an heretical king;' God says, 'Touch him not.' Woe to that soul who takes the Pope's word before the Lord's word! God chargeth a prophet that 'he should eat no bread nor drink water in Bethel,' 1 Kings xiii. 9. Another prophet came, saying, 'An angel spake to me' (blessed angels speak truth; nay, more, he spake) 'by the word of the Lord, Bring him back, that he may eat bread and drink water,' ver. 18. He did so; but mark the event: returning home, 'a lion slew him by the way,' ver. 24. Believe not a man, believe not a Pope, believe not a prophet, believe not an angel, against the word of the Lord.

Let us refuse iniquity, in what extenuation of quantity or colour of quality soever it be offered us. For sin is like a bemired dog: if it fawns on us, it fouls us. And the least sin is like a little leak in a ship, which if it be not stopped, will sink the whole vessel. The Frenchmen have a mili-

tary proverb : 'The loss of a nail, the loss of an army.' The want of a nail loseth the shoe, the loss of a shoe troubles the horse, the horse endangereth the rider, the rider breaking his rank molests the company so far as to hazard the whole army. From slender and regardless beginnings grow out these fatal and destructive effects. The doors are shut, the thief cannot enter ; a little boy is put in at the window, and he opens the door for the great thief : so the house is robbed. A charm is cast in at the window, eye or ear ; that quickly unlocks the door of the heart, till all the rooms be ransacked, not a piece of virtue or one gem of grace left.

Pompey marching to the wars, requested to lodge his army in a certain city, by whose borders he must needs pass ; the governor answered that he would not trouble his city with so numerous and dangerous a guest. Pompey then desired but entertainment and relief for his sick soldiers, who were perishing for want of succour ; the governor thought sick men could do them no mischief : this was granted, they admitted. Being there a while, they recovered their health, opened the gates to the rest ; so became strong enough to take the city. If Satan cannot get leave for his whole army of lusts, yet he begs hard for his weak ones, as sins of infirmity ; but those sickly soldiers soon get strength to surprise the soul.

The trees of the forest held a solemn parliament, wherein they consulted of the innumerable wrongs which the axe had done them ; therefore made an act that no tree should hereafter lend the axe a helve, on pain of being cut down. The axe travels up and down the forest, begs wood of the cedar, oak, ash, elm, even to the poplar ; not one would lend him a chip. At last he desired so much as would serve him to cut down the briars and bushes ; alleging that those shrubs did suck away the juice of the ground, hinder the growth, and obscure the glory of the fair and goodly trees. Hereon they were content to afford him so much ; when he had gotten his helve, he cut down themselves too. These be the subtle reaches of sin ; give it but a little advantage, on its fair promises to remove thy troubles, and it will cut down thy soul also. Therefore *obsta principis*,—trust it not in the least. Consider a sin (as indeed it is) a crucifying of Christ ; wilt thou say, I may crucify Christ a little ? I may scourge his flesh, wound his side, pierce his heart a little ? What man loves the Lord Jesus, who would either say it or do it ? Consider thy falling into sin a hurling of thyself down from some high pinnacle ; wilt thou say, I may break my neck a little ? Consider it a casting thyself into unquenchable fire ; wilt thou say, I may burn my soul and body a little ? As suffering, we think the least misery too great ; so sinning, let us think the least iniquity too great. So avoiding also little sins, we shall find great favour with Jesus Christ. Amen.