

waking evidence discovers. Prefer not your sleeping signs before your waking signs and search. 2. When you are conscious that you indulge no corruption to occasion such a dream, suppose it not to be faulty of itself, and lay not the blame of your bodily temperament, or unknown causes upon your soul, with too heavy and unjust a charge. 3. Abhor the presumptuous folly of those that use to prognosticate by their dreams, and measure their expectations by them, and cast themselves into hopes or fears by them. Saith Diogenes, "What folly is it to be careless of your waking thoughts and actions, and inquisitive about your dreams? A man's happiness or misery lieth upon what he doth when he is awake, and not upon what he suffereth in his sleep."

CHAPTER IX.

Directions for the Government of the Tongue.*

Tit. 1. The General Directions.

Direct. 1. 'UNDERSTAND in general of what moment and concernment it is, that the tongue be well governed and used.' For they that think words are inconsiderable, will use them inconsiderately. The conceit that words are of small moment (as some say of thoughts, that they are free) doth cause men to use their tongues as if they were free, saying "Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?"

1. The tongue of man is his glory: by which expressively he excelleth the brutes: and a wonderful work of God it is, that a man's tongue should be able to articulate such an exceeding number of words: and God hath not given man so admirable a faculty for vanity and sin: the nobler and more excellent it is, the more to be regarded, and the greater is the fault of them that do abuse it. Hilary compareth them to an ill barber that cuts a man's face and so deformeth him, when his work was to have made him more neat and comely. So it is the office of the tongue to be ex-

* See the Directions for Holy Conference, Part ii. c. 10.

^b Psal. xii. 4.

cellently serviceable to the good of others, and to be the glory of mankind: the shame therefore of its faults is the more inexcusable.

2. The tongue is made to be the index or expresser of the mind; therefore if the mind be regardable, the tongue is regardable. And if the mind be not regardable, the man is not regardable. For our Lord telleth us, that the tree is known by its fruit: an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruits: and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And Aristotle saith, that "such as a man is, such are his speeches, such his works, and such his life^c." Therefore by vain or sinful words you tell men the vanity and corruption of your minds.

3. Men's works have a great dependance on their words: therefore if their deeds be regardable, their words are regardable. Deeds are stirred up, or caused by words. Daily experience telleth us the power of speech. A speech hath saved a kingdom, and a speech hath lost a kingdom. Great actions depend on them, and greater consequents.

4. If the men that we speak to be regardable, words are regardable. For words are powerful instruments of their good or hurt. God useth them by his ministers for men's conversion and salvation: and satan useth them by his ministers for men's subversion and damnation. How many thousand souls are hurt every day by the words of others! Some deceived, some puffed up, some hardened, and some provoked to sinful passions! And how many thousand are every day edified by words! either instructed, admonished, quickened or comforted. Paul saith, "The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God: And Pythagoras could say, that "tongues cut deeper than swords, because they reach even to the soul:" tongue-sins and duties therefore must needs be great.

5. Our tongues are the instruments of our Creator's praise; purposely given us to "speak good of his name," and to "declare his works with rejoicing^d" It is no small part of that service which God expects from man, which is

^c *Lingua index mentis.* Aristippus being asked, *Quid differat sapiens ab insipiente?* Mitte, inquit, ambos nudos ad ignotos, et disces. Laert. in Aristip. lib. ii. sect. 73. p. 123.

^d *Paul. lxi. 2. xcvi. 2. cxxxv. 3. cxlviii. 13. xxix. 2. c.*

performed by the tongue; nor a small part of the end of our creation: the use of all our highest faculties, parts and graces, are expressively by the tongue: our wisdom and knowledge, our love and holiness, are much lost as to the honour of God, and the good of others if not expressed. The tongue is the lanthorn or casement of the soul, by which it looketh out, and shineth unto others. Therefore the sin or duty of so noble an instrument is not to be made light of, by any that regard the honour of our Maker.

6. Our words have a great reflection and operation upon our own hearts. As they come from them, so they recoil to them, as in prayer and conference we daily observe. Therefore for our own good or hurt, our words are not to be made light of.

7. God's law and judgment will best teach you what regard you should have to words. Christ telleth you, that by "your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned^d." And it is words of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which are the unpardonable sin^e. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body^f." "The tongue is a fire; a world of iniquity: so is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell^g." "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain^h." "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guileⁱ." "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment^k." The third commandment telleth us, that "God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." And "Speaking the truth in his heart, and not backbiting with the tongue," is the mark of him that shall abide in "God's tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill." And the very work of heaven is said to be the

^d Matt. xii. 37.

^e Matt. xii. 31. They who use but few words need not many laws, said Charyllus when he was asked why Lycurgus made so few laws. Plut. Apotheg. p. 423.

^f Jam. iii. 2.

^g Ver. vi.

^h Jam. i. 26.

ⁱ 1 Pet. iii. 10.

^k Matt. xii. 36.

perpetual "praising of God¹." Judge now how God judgeth of your words.

8. And some conjecture may be made by the judgment of the world. Do you not care yourselves what men speak of you and to you? Do you not care what language your children, or servants, or neighbours give you? Are not words against the king treasonable and capital, as well as deeds? The "wheel of affairs or course of nature is set on fire by words."^m I may conclude then with Prov. xviii. 21. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue:" and Prov. xxi. 23. "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from trouble."

Direct. 11. 'Understand well and remember the particular duties of the tongue.' For the mere restraint of it from evil is not enough: and they are these: 1. To glorify God by the magnifying of his name; to speak of the praises of his attributes and works. 2. To sing psalms of praise to him, and delight our souls in the sweet commemoration of his excellencies. 3. To give him thanks for the mercies already received, and declare to others what he hath done for our souls and bodies, for his church and for the world. 4. To pray to him for what we want, and for our brethren, for the church, and for the conversion of his and our enemies. 5. To appeal to him and swear by his name when we are called to it lawfully. 6. To make our necessary covenants and vows to him, and to make open profession of our belief, subjection and obedience to him, before men. 7. To preach his Word, or declare it in discourse, and to teach those that are committed to our care, and edify the ignorant and erroneous as we have opportunity. 8. To defend the Word of God by conference or disputation; and confute the false doctrine of deceivers. 9. To exhort men to their particular duties, and to reprove their particular sins; and endeavour to do them good as we are able. 10. To confess our own sins to God and man as we have occasion. 11. To crave the advice and help of others for our souls; and inquire after the will of God, and the way to salvation. 12. To praise that which is good in others, and speak good of all men, superiors, equals and inferiors, so far as there is just ground and cause. 13. To bear witness to

¹ Rev. xiv. 11.

^m Jam. iii. 6.

the truth, when we are called to it. 14. To defend the cause of the just and innocent, and vindicate them against false accusers; and excuse those causes and persons that deserve excuse. 15. To communicate and convey to others the same good impressions and affections of mind, which God hath wrought on us, and not only the bare truths themselves which we have received. 16. Lastly, to be instruments of common converse; of expressing our mutual affections and respects, and transacting all our worldly business: for learning, arts, manufactures, &c. These are the uses and duties of the tongue^a.

Direct. III. 'Understand and remember what are the sins of the tongue to be avoided.' And they are very many, and many of them very great: the most observable are these,—

1. (Not to say any more of the sins of omission; because it is easy to know them, when I have named the duties, which are done or omitted,) among the sins of commission, the first that I shall name is blasphemy, as being the greatest; which is the reproaching of God: to speak contemptuously of God, or to vilify him, or dishonour him by the denying of his perfections, and to debase him by false titles, doctrines, images, resemblances, as likening him to man in any of our imperfections; any thing that is a reproaching of God is blasphemy. Such as Rabshakeh used when he threatened Hezekiah; and such as infidels and heretics use, when they deny his omnipresence, omniscience, government, justice, particular providence or goodness: and affirm any evil of him, as that he is the author of sin, or false of his word, or that he governeth the world by mere deceit, or the like.

2. Another sin of the tongue is false doctrine, or teaching things false and dangerous as from God: if any falsely say, he had such or such a point by divine inspiration, vision, or revelation, that maketh him a false prophet. But if he only say falsely, that this or that doctrine is contained

^a Plato Rectè dicere, in quatuor scindit: 1. Quid dicere oportet. 2. Quam multum dicere. 3. Ad quos. 4. Quando sit dicendum: ea oportet dicere quæ sint utilia et decenti et auditori: nec nimis multa nec pauciora quam satis est. Si ad peccantes seniores dicendum sit, verba illi ætati congrua loquamur: sin vero ad juveniores dicendum sit, majore autoritate utamur in dicendo. Diog. Laert. in Plat.

in the Scripture, or delivered by tradition to the church, this is but to be a false teacher; which is a sin greater or less according to the aggravations hereafter mentioned.

3. Another of the sins of the tongue is an opposing of godliness indirectly, by false application of true doctrine, and an opposing of godly persons for the sake of godliness, and cavilling against particular truths and duties of religion: or indirectly opposing the truth or duty under pretence of opposing only some controverted mode or imperfection in him that speaketh or performeth it: a defending of those points and practices which would subvert or undermine religion: a secret endeavour to make all serious godliness seem a needless thing. There are many that seem orthodox, that are impious and malicious opposers of that truth in the application, which themselves do notionally hold, and positively profess.

4. Another great sin of the tongue is the profane deriding of serious godliness, and the mocking, and jesting, and scorning at godly persons as such; or scorning at some of their real or supposed imperfections, for their piety sake, to make them odious, that piety through them might be made odious. When men so speak, that the drift and tendency of their speech is to draw men to a dislike of truth or holiness; and their mocks or scorns at some particular opinion, or practice, or mode, doth tend to the contempt of religion in the serious practice of it. When they mock at a preacher of the Gospel, for some expressions or imperfections, or for truth itself, to bring him and his doctrine into contempt: or at the prayers and speeches of religious persons to the injury of religion.

5. Another great sin of the tongue is unjustly to forbid Christ's ministers to preach his Gospel, or speak in his name; or to stand up against them and contradict, resist, and hinder them in the preaching of the truth: and as Gamaliel calls it, "to fight against God^o." Yet thus they did by the apostles, "When they had called the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go^p." So Acts iv. 18, 19. "And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus: but Peter and

^o Acts v. 39.

^p Ver. 46.

John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but 'speak the things which we have seen and heard.' "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God and are contrary to all men. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost^q." As Dr. Hammond paraphraseth it, 'And this generally is the ground of their quarrel to us, that in spite of their prohibition, we preach to the Gentiles.'——

6. Another sin of the tongue is profane swearing either by God or by creatures: and also all light and unreverent use of the name and attributes of God, of which more afterwards.

7. Much more is perjury or forswearing a most heinous sin, it being an appealing to God, the author and defender of truth, to bear witness to an untruth, and to judge the offender; and so a craving a vengeance from God.

8. Lying also is a great and common sin of the tongue: of which more anon.

9. Another sin of the tongue is hypocritical dissembling, which is worse than mere lying: when men's tongues agree not with their hearts, but speak good words in prayer to God, or conference with men, to cover evil intentions or affections, and to represent themselves to the hearers as better than they are.

10. Another is ostentation or proud boasting, either of men's wit and learning, or greatness, or riches, or honour, or strength, or beauty, or parts, or piety, or any thing that men are proud of^r? As the faithful "do make their boast in God^s," and in the "cross of Christ," by which "they are crucified to the world^t." So the covetous "boast themselves in the multitude of their riches^u," and the "workers of iniquity boast themselves against the righteous, and the proud do triumph and speak hard things^v." "Even against

^q 1 Thess. ii. 15.

^r Quod facere instituis noli prædicare: nam si facere nequiveris, rideberis. Pit-taci Sent. in Diog. Laert. lib. i. sect. 78. p. 48.

^s Psal. xxxiv. 2. xlv. 8.

^u Psal. xlix. 6.

^t Gal. vi. 14.

^v Psal. xciv. 2—4.

the Lord," do they boast, in their boasting against his people'. So far as pride prevaleth with men, they are apt to "boast themselves to be somebody^a." Either openly as the more foolish do, or cunningly by the help of fair pretences, as the more ingenious proud ones do.

11. Another sin of the tongue is unseasonable speaking of common things when holy things should be preferred; as on the Lord's day, or at the time of public worship, or when the company, occasion or opportunity call for holy speeches; worldlings are talking, as Saul, of their asses, when they should talk of a kingdom^a. To speak about your callings and common affairs is lawful, so it be moderately and in season; but when you talk all of the world and vanity, and never have done, and will scarce have any other talk in your mouths, and even on God's day will "speak your own words^b," this is profane and sinful speaking.

12. Another common sin of the tongue is a tempting and persuading others to sin, enticing them to gluttony, drunkenness, wantonness, fornication, or any other crime: as men that "not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them^c." This is to be the instruments and servants of the devil, and most directly to do his work in the world. The same I may say of unjust excusing, extenuating or defending the sins of others, or commanding, alluring, affrighting, or encouraging them thereto.

13. Another is a carnal manner of handling the sacred things of God, as when it is done with lightness, or with unsuitable curiosity of words, or in a ludicrous, toyish manner, especially by the preachers of the Gospel themselves; and not with a style that is grave and serious, agreeable to the weight and majesty of the truth.

14. Another is an imprudent, rash, and slovenly handling of holy things: when they are spoken of so ignorantly, unskilfully, disorderly, or passionately, as tendeth to dishonour them, and frustrate the desired good success^d.

^a Ezek. xxxv. 13.

^b Acts v. 36.

^c 1 Sam. ix. x.

^d Isa. lviii. 13.

^e Rom. i. 32.

^f Didymus Alex. on James iii. of bridling the tongue, saith, Non putandum est de peccato prolativi sermonis, quæ solœcismos et barbarismos quidam vocant, hæc fuisse dicta.

15. Another sin of the tongue is the reviling or dishonouring of superiors: when children speak unreverently and dishonourably to or of their parents; or subjects of their governors; or servants of their masters, either to their faces, or behind their backs^e. “They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities^f.”

16. Another is the imperious contempt of inferiors, insulting over them, provoking and discouraging them. “Fathers provoke not your children to wrath^g.”

17. Another sin of the tongue is idle talk and multitude of useless words; a babbling loquacity, or unprofitableness of speech; when it is speech that tendeth to no edification, any good use for mind, or body, or affairs.

18. Another sin is foolish talk, or jesting in levity and folly, which tendeth to possess the minds of the hearers with a disposition of levity and folly, like the speakers. “Foolish talking and jesting are things not convenient^h.” Honest mirth is lawful; and that is the best which is most sanctified, as being from a holy principle, and about a holy matter, or to a holy end: “as rejoicing in the Lord alwaysⁱ.” “If any be merry let him sing psalms^k.” But such a light and frothy jesting, as is but the vent of habitual levity by idle words, is not allowable. But especially those persons do most odiously abuse their tongues and reason, who counterfeit idiots or fools, and use their wit to cover their jests with a seeming folly, to make them the more ridiculous, and make it their very profession to be the jesters of great men. They make a trade of heinous sin.

19. Another sin is “filthy speaking^l,” obscene and ribald talk; which the apostle calls “corrupt or rotten communication^m,” when wanton, filthy minds do make themselves merry with wanton, filthy speeches. This is the devil’s preparative to whoredom and all abominable uncleanness: for when the tongue is first taught to make a sport of such filthy sins, and the ear to be delighted in it, or be indifferent to it, there remaineth but a small step to actual filthiness.

20. Another sin of the tongue is cursing; when men wish some mischief causelessly or unwarrantably to others.

^e 2 Pet. ii. 10.

^f Phil. iv. 4.

^g Jude 8.

^h James v. 13.

ⁱ Ephes. vi. 4.

^j Eph. v. 4.

^k Eph. v. 4.

^l Eph. iv. 29.

If you speak but in passion or jest, and desire not to them in your hearts the hurt which you name, it is nevertheless a sin of the tongue, as it is to speak blasphemy or treason in a passion or in jest : the tongue must be ruled as well as the heart. But if really you desire the hurt which you wish them, it is so much the worse. But it is worst of all, when passionate, factious men will turn their very prayers into cursings, calling for fire from heaven, and praying for other men's destruction or hurt ; and pretending Scripture examples for it ; as if they might do it unwarrantably, which others have done in other cases in a warrantable manner.

21. Slandering is another sin of the tongue : when out of malice and ill will, men speak evil falsely of others to make them odious or do them hurt : or else through uncharitable credulity, do easily believe a false report, and so report it again to others ; or through rashness and unruliness of tongue, divulge it, before they try it, or receive either just proof, or any warrantable call to mention it.

22. Another sin is backbiting and venting ill reports behind men's backs, without any warrant. Be the matter true or false, as long as you either know it not to be true, or if you do, yet vent it to make the person less respected, or at least without a sufficient cause, it is a sin against God, and a wrong to men.

23. Another sin is rash censuring, when you speak that evil of another, which you have but an uncharitable surmise of ; and take that to be probable which is but possible, or that to be certain which is but probable against another^a.

24. Another sin is railing, reviling, or passionate, provoking words, which tend to the diminution of charity, and the breach of peace, and the stirring up of discord, and of a return of railing words from others, contrary to the love, and patience, and meekness, and gentleness which become saints.

25. Another sin is cheating, deceiving, over-reaching words : when men use their tongues to defraud their neighbours, in bargaining for their own gain.

26. Another sin of the tongue is false witness-bearing,

^a Existimant loquacitatem esse facundiam, et maledicere omnibus, bonæ conscientie signum arbitrantur. Hieron: Cont. Helvid.

and false accusing; a sin which cries to God for vengeance, who is the justifier of the innocent.

27. Another sin of the tongue is the passing an unrighteous sentence in judgment: when rulers absolve the guilty or condemn the just, and call evil good, and good evil, and say to the righteous, "Thou art wicked".

28. Another sin of the tongue is flattery; which is the more heinous by how much more hurtful. And it is most hurtful, 1. When it tendeth to delude men in the greatest things, even the state of their souls. The flattery of a preacher that deceiveth men as in the name of Christ, is of all other flattery the most pernicious: to make the unregenerate believe that they are regenerate, and the ungodly to believe that they are godly, and the unjustified to believe that they are justified, and the children of satan to believe that without conversion they may be saved; to make a worldling, a swearer, a glutton, a drunkard, a fornicator, a formal hypocrite, or a hater of holiness, believe that such as he may come to heaven without the sanctifying, renewing work of the Holy Ghost; this is the most eminent service of the devil that the tongue of any man can do him, except it be the very open opposers of religion. As the devil useth more to flatter men to hell, than to frighten them thither, so do his ministers and instruments. And all doctrines of libertinism and looseness, which warrant men to do evil and to neglect a holy life, are of the two a more dangerous way of flattery, than that which consisteth but in misapplication. Thus also carnal friends do use to flatter a sinner into presumption and false hopes, when they see him convinced of his sin and misery, and say, 'Trouble not yourself; God is merciful, and you have lived well, and been a good neighbour, and done nobody harm, and if such as you be not saved, God help a great many.' Thus when a convinced sinner is striving to get out of the devil's snares, the servants of satan rook him asleep again, by false and flattering speeches and deceit. 2. Flattering is pernicious when it tendeth to the hurt of many: as when rulers are deceived and perverted by it to the destruction of the people and themselves^p. "A

^o Prov. xxiv. 24.

^p Indignum hominem divitiarum gratiâ laudare noli. Bias in Diog. Laert. lib. i. sect. 88. p. 54.

lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruin."

29. Another sin is a jeering, mocking, deriding, or scorning at others, either for their infirmities of body or mind, or for their virtues, or through envy and malice, or pride, or a custom of deriding, scornful speech. "Scorners delight in scorning," especially when sinners scorn at the reproofs and counsels of the godly, and cast them all back into their faces with contempt: for he that "reproveth a scorner getteth himself a blot." "A scorner loveth not one that reproveth."

30. Another tongue-sin is idolatry or false worship: the praise of idols, or praying to them, or making songs, or speeches, or disputes for them: as also the false worship of the true God. These among others are the sins of the tongue to be avoided. No wonder if there be yet more, for the "tongue is 'ο κόσμος τῆς ἀδικίας,' a world of iniquity."

Direct. iv. 'When you have thus understood the duties and sins of the tongue, and the greatness of them, the next thing which you must be most careful and diligent about is, that you keep all that upon the heart which should be upon the tongue, and keep the heart clean from that which the tongue must be kept clean from.' The principal work must be about the heart. For "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." 1. The tongue will be no other way effectually governed: if the heart be upon the world, the tongue will most commonly be upon the world; you may force it a little against your hearts, but it will be to a very inconstant obedience: when you ever so little loose the reins it is gone. If the heart be proud, the tongue will speak proudly: if the heart be lustful, or vain, or malicious, the words will ordinarily be so too. 2. Or if you can force

¹ Prov. xxvi. 28. See 1 Thes. ii. 5. Eccl. xii. 24. Psal. xii. 2, 3.

² Prov. i. 21. See Psal. cxlii. 7. xlv. 13. lxxii. 4.

³ Prov. ix. 7, 8.

⁴ Prov. xv. 12.

⁵ James iii. 6.

⁶ *Loqui quæ sentias, et sentire quæ loqueris, ut Seneca.*

Nam fidum nihil lingua loqui valet,

Dum cordi duplex alitè insedit sensus.

Sent. Pittaci in Diog. Laertio. lib. i. sect. 78. p. 49. Bias percontanti homini impio, Quid esset pietas, nihil respondet; cumque ille silentii causam sciscitaretur: Taceo inquit, de rebus nihil ad te pertinentibus queris. Diog. Laert. lib. i. sect. 86. p. 54.

the tongue to go against the heart, it is but an hypocritical reformation. A vain, a proud, a worldly, a wanton, a malicious or ungodly heart will condemn you, though the tongue was forced to speak humbly, chastely, patiently, or piously. Therefore if you would overcome the vanity or worldliness or wantonness, or any other corruption of your speech, first set yourselves to overcome the same corruption in your hearts, and to revive and actuate the contrary graces. And if you would use your tongues to the honour of God, and the edification of men, wind up the spring of those holy affections which must be as water to the mill. It is the use of the tongue to express the mind : and it is the use of holy speech to be the expression of a holy mind. And do you think to express that which you have not ? Will you make a duty of a lie ? If you would speak of Christ, or heaven with seriousness, see that your hearts are seriously set upon Christ and heaven. When you go into any company where you should speak for God, and for the hearers' good, endeavour beforehand to get a deep impression on your hearts, of those attributes or truths of God which you would express ; and to revive the sense of that upon yourselves which you would make others sensible of. Stir up within you the love of God, and the love of holiness and truth, and a love of the souls of them you speak to ; and then you will be as a conduit which runs as soon as the cock is turned, because it is always full of water.

Direct. v. ' Labour for understanding in the matters on which you should discourse.' Ignorance denieth provision for discourse, or furnisheth you only with chaff and vanity, and maketh you so speak as that it were better to say nothing. Knowledge and wisdom are continual storehouses of good and profitable talk : such as the " scribe instructed to the kingdom of heaven, that bringeth out of his treasure things new and old." When a man understandeth the matter which he is to speak of, he is furnished to speak understandingly of it to others, and to defend it against gain-sayers. " The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment : the law of his God is in his heart ; none of his steps shall slide." " The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom : but the froward tongue

† Matt. xiii. 52.

‡ Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31.

shall be cut out: the lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness^a." Wise men are never unprovided for wise speech: but the mouth of fools betrayeth their folly. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness^b." "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride; but the lips of the wise shall preserve them^c." "A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul^d." But you will say, 'To tell us that we should get wisdom, is a word soon spoken, but not a thing that is easily or quickly done.' It is very true: and therefore it is as true, that the tongue is not easily well used and governed; for men cannot express the wisdom which they have not, unless it be by rote: therefore you must take Solomon's counsel, Prov. ii. 1—6. "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear to wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: for the Lord giveth wisdom, &c.——"

Direct. vi. 'In the meantime learn to be silent till you have learned to speak. Let not your tongues run before your wits; speak not of that which you do not well understand, unless as learners, to receive instruction. Rather of the two speak too little than too much^e.' Those that will needs talk of things which they understand not, do use either to speak evil of them, (as Jude 10.) when they are good; or to speak evil of them, be they good or bad. He that cannot hold his tongue well, cannot speak well. "There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak^f." "There is a time so evil, that the prudent should keep silence^g." At such a time 'Nihil æquè proderit quam quiescere, et minimum cum aliis loqui et plurimum secum,' saith Seneca: 'It is then the best way to be quiet, and to

^a Prov. x. 31, 32.^b Prov. xv. 2.^c Prov. xiv. 3.^d Prov. xviii. 6, 7.^e James i. 19. Slow to speak, slow to wrath.^f Eccles. iii. 9.^g Amos v. 13.

say little to others, and much to yourselves.' You have two ears and one tongue: hear twice and speak once: we oftener repent of speaking than of being silent. Few words are quickly answered for. To be wary and sparing of your speech doth not only avoid abundance of contention, danger, and repentance, but also procureth you a reputation of wisdom. Plutarch saith well, that '*Pauca loquentibus paucis legibus opus est*.' 'There needs but few laws for them that speak but few words.' When one said to the Cynic, when he was much silent, 'If thou art a wise man, thou dost foolishly; if thou be a fool thou dost wisely.' He answered, '*Nemo stultus tacere potest*.' 'A fool cannot hold his tongue:' and he that cannot hold his tongue cannot hold his peace. Pythagoras's counsel in this agreeth with Christ's, '*Aut sile, aut affer silentio meliora*.' 'Either be silent, or say something that is better than silence.' It was a wise answer of him that being asked 'whom covetous landlords, and whom covetous lawyers hated most;' did answer to the first, 'Those that eat little and sweat much:' (for they usually live long, and so their leases are not soon expired :) and to the second, 'Those that speak little and love much:' for such seldom make any work for lawyers. Two things are requisite in the matter of your speech; that it be somewhat needful to be spoken, and that it be a thing which you understand. Till then be silent.

Direct. vii. 'Take heed of hasty rashness in your speech; and use deliberation; especially in great or in doubtful things'. Think before you speak: it is better to try your words before you speak them than after; a preventing trial is better than a repenting trial; but if both be omitted, God will try them to your greater cost. I know, in matters that are thoroughly understood, a wise man can speak without any further premeditation, than the immediate actuating of the knowledge which he doth express; but when there is any fear of misunderstanding, or a disability to speak fitly and safely without forethoughts, there hasty speaking without deliberation (especially in weighty things) must be avoided: "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him¹." Especially take

¹ *Noli cito loqui, est enim insanie indicium. Biás in Diog. Laert. lib. ii. sect. 87. p. 54.*

¹ *Prov. xxix. 20.*

heed in speaking either to God in prayer, or in the name of God, or as from God in preaching or exhortation, or about the holy matters of God in any of thy discourse; "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil^k:" that is, watch thyself in public worship, and be more forward to learn of God and to obey him, as sensible of thy ignorance and subject to his will, than to offer him thy sacrifice (as if he stood in need of thee) while thou neglectest or rejectest his commands. "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through multitude of business, and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words^l:" that is, come to God as an obedient learner and a receiver, and not as a giver: and therefore be readier to hear what he hath to command thee, than to pour out many words before him, as if he would accept and hear thee for thy babbling. If loquacity and forwardness to talk many undigested words be a sign of folly among men, how much more when thou speakest to God that is in heaven?

Direct. VIII. 'Keep a holy government over all your passions (as aforesaid) and especially try all those words with suspicion which any passion urgeth you to vent.' For passion is so apt to blind the judgment, that even holy passions themselves must be warily managed, and feared, as you carry fire among straw or other combustible matter. As "grievous words stir up anger^m;" so anger causeth grievous words. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of foolsⁿ." To govern the tongue when you are in any passion (either love, or fear, or grief, or anger) is like the governing of a ship in storms and tempests, or the managing of a horse that is fierce and heated. "The fool rageth and is confident: he that is soon angry dealeth foolishly^o." "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious, angry woman^p." "An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth

^k Eccles. v. 1.ⁿ Eccles. vii. 9.^l ver. 2, 3.^o Prov. xiv. 16, 17.^m Prov. xv. 1.^p Prov. xxi. 19.

in transgression¹." There is no ruling the tongue if you cannot rule the passions: therefore it is good counsel, "Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his way, and get a snare to thy soul²."

Direct. ix. 'Foresee your opportunities of profitable discourse, and your temptations to evil speeches.' For we are seldom thoroughly prepared for sudden, unexpected accidents. Consider when you go forth, what company you are like to fall into, and what good you are like to be called to, or what evil you are most likely to be tempted to: especially consider the ordinary stated duties and temptations of your daily company and converse.

Direct. x. 'Accordingly (besides your aforesaid general preparations) be prepared particularly for those duties and those temptations: carry still about with you some special preservatives against those particular sins of speech which you are most in danger of; and some special provisions and helps to those duties of speech which you may be called to.' As a surgeon will carry about with him his instruments and salves which he is like to have use for, among the persons that he hath to do with. And as a traveller will carry such necessities still with him, as in his travels he cannot be without. If you are to converse with angry men, be still furnished with patience and firm resolutions to "give place to wrath³." If you are to converse with ignorant, ungodly men, go furnished with powerful, convincing reasons, to humble them and change their minds. If you are to go amongst the cavilling or scorning enemies of holiness, go furnished with well digested arguments for the defence of that which they are most likely to oppose, that you may shame and stop the mouths of such gainsayers. This must be done by "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God⁴." Therefore be well acquainted with the Scripture, and with particular plain texts for each particular use: by them the "man of God is complete, thoroughly furnished to every good work⁵."

Direct. xi. 'Continually walk as in the presence of God, and as under his government and law, and as those that are

¹ Prov. xxix. 22.

² Ephes. vi. 17.

³ Prov. xxii. 24.

⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 17.

⁵ Rom. xii. 19.

passing on to judgment².’ Ask yourselves, whatever you say: 1. Whether it be fit for God to hear? 2. Whether it be agreeable to his holy law? 3. Whether it be such speech as you would hear of at the day of judgment? If it be speech unmeet for the hearing of a grave and reverend man, will you speak it before God? Will you speak wantonly, or filthily, or foolishly, or maliciously, when God forbiddeth it, and when he is present and heareth every word, and when you must certainly give account to him of all?

Direct. xii. ‘Pray every morning to God for preservation from the sins of speech that you are liable to that day.’ Commit the custody of your tongues to him; not so as to think yourselves discharged of it, but so as to implore and trust his grace. Pray as David, “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips; incline not my heart to any evil thing: and that the words of your mouth and the meditations of your heart, may be acceptable to him.”

Direct. xiii. ‘Make it part of your continual work to watch your tongues.’ Carelessness and negligence will not serve turn in so difficult a work of government. James telleth you that to tame and rule the tongue, is harder than to tame and rule wild beasts, and birds, and serpents: and as the ruling of a horse by the bridle, and of a ship that is driven by fierce winds: and that the “tongue is an unruly evil: and that he that offendeth not in word is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” Make it therefore your study and work, and watch it continually.

Direct. xiv. ‘Call your tongues daily to account, and ask yourselves, what evil you have spoken, and what good you have omitted every day; and be humbled before God in the penitent confession of the sin which you discover, and renew your resolution for a stricter watch for the time to come.’ If your servant be every day faulty, and never hear of it, he will take it as no fault, and be little careful to amend: nay, you will remember your very ox of his fault when he goeth out of the furrow by a prick or stroke, and your horse when he is faulty by a spur or rod. And do you think if you let yourselves, even your tongues, be faulty every day and never tell them of it, or call them to account,

² Psal. cxxxix. 4.

³ Psal. cxli. 3, 4. xix. 11.

⁴ James iii.

that they are ever like to be reformed, and not grow careless and accustomed to the sin? Your first care must be for preventing the sin, and doing the duty; saying, as David, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me: I was dumb with silence, I held my peace^a." "My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long^b." "My tongue shall speak of thy word^c." "My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer^d." But your next care must be to repent of the faults which you commit, and to judge yourselves for them and reform: remembering that "there is not a word in your tongues, but is altogether known to God^e."

Direct. xv. 'Make use of a faithful monitor or reprov^r.' We are apt, through custom and partiality, to overlook the faults of our own speech. A friend is here exceeding useful. Desire your friend therefore to watch over you in this: and amend what he telleth you of: and be not so foolish as to take part with your fault against your friend.

Tit. 2. Special Directions against profane Swearing, and using God's name unreverently and in vain.

I. To swear is an affirming or denying of a thing, with an appeal to some other thing or person, as a witness of the truth or avenger of the untruth, who is not producible as witness or judge in human courts. An affirmation or negation is the matter of an oath: the peculiar appellation is the form. It is not every appeal or attestation that maketh an oath^f. To appeal to such a witness as is credible and may be produced in the court, from a partial, incredible witness, is no oath. To appeal from an incompetent judge or an inferior court, to a competent judge or higher court, is no swearing. To say, 'I take the king for my witness,' or 'I appeal to the king,' is not to swear by the king: but to say, 'I take God to witness,' or 'I appeal to God as the judge of the truth of what I say,' is to swear by God. But to appeal to God as a righteous Judge, against the injustice or cruelty of men, without relation to his attesting or judging

^a Psal. xxxix. 1—3.

^b Psal. xxxv. 28.

^c Psal. lxxi. 24. cxix. 172.

^d Psal. xlv. 1.

^e Psal. cxxxix. 4.

^f Deut. vi. 13. x. 20.

any affirmation or negation of our own, is no swearing by him; because there wanteth the matter of an oath. An oath is an appeal to some supernatural or higher and more terrible power, than that of the court or person we swear to, to make our testimony the more credible, when other evidences of certainty or credibility are wanting. So that a legal testimony or appeal are not swearing.

Swearing is either just and lawful, or sinful and abusive. To a just and lawful oath it is necessary, 1. That it be God alone ultimately that we swear by: because no witness and avenging judge above human courts can be appealed to but God: and therefore to swear by any creature properly and in the sense that God is sworn by, is to idolize it, and to ascribe to it the properties of God^s. (Of which more anon.) 2. It is necessary to a just oath, that the matter be true as it is assertory or negative, and also if it be promissory, that the matter be, 1. Honest and lawful, 2. and possible. And where any one of these is wanting, it is unlawful. 3. It is needful that there be an honest end; for the end is a principal ingredient in all moral good and evil. 4. It is needful that it be done upon a sufficient call and honest motives, and not unnecessarily or without just reason. 5. And the manner and circumstances must be lawful.

And oath is an equivocal word, taken sometimes for that which is formally so, as before described; and sometimes for that which is but the matter and expressive form without any real intent of swearing. Or, an oath is taken either for the whole human act completely, containing the words signifying and the purpose signified; or else for the outward sign or words alone. (As the word prayer signifieth sometimes the bare form of words, and sometimes the words and desire signified by them. And as the word sacrament is sometimes taken for the external signs only, and sometimes for the signs with the mutual covenanting and actions signified.) Here it may be questioned,—

Quest. 'Whether it be swearing or not, which is frequently used by ignorant, careless people, who use the words or form of an oath, in mere custom, not knowing what an oath is, nor having any thought or purpose of appealing to God, or to the creature by which they swear. The reason

^s Isa. xlviii. 1. Jer. iv. 2.

of the doubt is, because it seemeth to be but the matter or external part of an oath; and it is the form that specieth and denominateth. He that should ignorantly speak the words of an oath in Latin or Greek while he understandeth not the language and intendeth no such thing, doth not swear.'

Ans. 1. In the full and properest sense of the word, it is before God no oath if there be no intent of confirming your speech by an appeal to God, or to that which you swear by. As a ludicrous washing and using the words of baptism, is no true baptism, no more than a corpse is a man. (And thus it is true which the Papists say, that the intention of the baptizer is necessary to the being of baptism: that is, it is necessary to the being of sacramental administration to the baptizer himself, before God, that he really intend to baptize; and it is necessary to the being of baptism before God in the person baptized that he himself if at age, or those that have power to dedicate him to God if he be an infant, do really intend it: and it is necessary to the being of the external ordinance in 'foro ecclesiæ,' 'before the church,' that both the baptizer and baptized do profess or seem to intend it.) 2. But if you use such words as are the ordinary form of an oath in a language which you understand, so as the hearers may justly suppose you to understand it, it is an oath, 'coram hominibus,' 'before men,' and in the latter narrower sense of the word. And it shall be obligatory and pleadable against you in any court of justice by those you swear to: yea, and God himself, doth take you thereby to be obliged thus to men: and if it be a profane, causeless swearing, men must call it an oath; for they see not the heart; even as they must take him to be baptized that professeth to intend it: and 'in foro humano,' it is so indeed: and God himself will account you a sinner, even one that useth the external form of an oath, and that which before men, is an oath, to the wrong of his name and honour, and to the scandal of others. And it will not excuse you that you knew not that it was an oath, or that you knew not the nature of an oath, or that you rashly used it, not considering that it was an oath: for you were bound to have known and to have considered: you should have done it, and might have done it if you would. But if they

were words which you could not know to have been the form or expressions of an oath, but the hearers might perceive that you meant no such thing, but something else, then you are excusable, if you had just cause to use them.

II. As to the case of swearing by creatures, how far is it sinful; it is just like the case of worshipping images, or by images. He that worshippeth an image or any creature as God, and ultimately terminateth his worship in it, doth commit direct and full idolatry^b: which is so much the greater sin, by how much the baser the thing is which he idolizeth. But if he make the image or creature but his medium of that worship which should be immediately offered to God, in whom it is ultimately terminated, then it is not gross idolatry, but it is false and forbidden worship of the true God. But if the creature be made but the medium of that worship which God would have offered him by a medium, then it is lawful so to use or worship it (as to honour and admire God as appearing in his works; to give that worship or honour to our parents and rulers as his officers, which is ultimately terminated in God); just so it is in the case of swearing: for swearing is a part of the worship of God. He that sweareth by any creature as a God, or as the avenger of those that by falsehood elude the judgment of man, doth commit idolatry in it^c; as Julian did when he swore by the sun (which he praised by his orations and worshipped as God). But he that only sweareth so by a creature, as to intend God ultimately as the witness and avenger, but yet so as that the creature only is named, or so named as hath an appearance of idolatry, or tendeth to entice the mind from God, or scandalously to obscure his honour, or in any other forbidden way, doth swear by the true God intentionally, but in a sinful manner. But he that directly sweareth by God (upon a just call), and by the creature (or nameth the creature rather), but in a just, and clear, and inoffensive subordination to God, is excusable. So we use to lay our hands on the Bible and thus to swear 'So help me God, and the contents of this book.' Thus on great occasions many good men in their writings to clear themselves from some ca-

^b Deut. x. 23. Isa. xlv. 23. Lev. 16. Jer. iv. 2.

^c Amos. viii. 14. Hos. iv. 15. Zeph. i. 5. Jer. xli. 16. Isa. xix. 18.

dummy have said, 'I call God, and angels, and men to witness.' Many in naming creatures intend rather a curse than a swearing by the creature: as 'If it be not so, let God destroy me by this fire, or this water, &c.'

Quæst. Is it lawful to lay hands on the book and kiss it in swearing as is done in England?

Resp. To take an oath as imposed in England with laying the hand on the Bible and kissing it, is not unlawful.

Proved 1. That which is not forbidden by God is lawful (before God). But so to take an oath is not forbidden by God—Therefore, &c. The minor will be proved sufficiently by disproving all the pretences of a prohibition. The major needeth no proof.

2. If it be forbidden it is either, 1. As an act in worship not commanded, and so will worship. 2. Or as a significant ceremony in worship not commanded. 3. Or as an uncommanded significant ceremony, which hath in itself some forbidden matter or manner. But it is not forbidden in any of these respects: therefore not at all.

I. Not as an act not commanded in worship: for 'a quatenus ad omne valet consequentia:' then all acts in worship not commanded would be unlawful, which is false: for, 1. The acts used in swearing, Gen. xxiv. 2. xiv. 22. Apoc. x. 5. were not commanded and yet lawful; of which more anon. 2. God hath not commanded what tune to sing a psalm in, what division to make the Bible into chapters and verses, whether to use a written or a printed Bible, what words, what method, what particular text to choose, what translation to use, with many such like.

II. Not as a significant ceremony not commanded: for then all such should be forbidden, which is not true. For, 1. Abraham's swearing by lifting up the hand (and so the angels Apoc. x.), and Abraham's servant by putting his hand under the thigh, were significant ceremonies. And he that will say they were commanded must prove it. The contrary by us may well be supposed, 1. Because no such law is notified in Scripture, and here 'non apparere' and 'non esse' are equal, because of the perfection of God's laws. 2. Because it is mentioned, as Paræus and other commentators note, as some accustomed rite, and so dependeth not

on any particular precept to Abraham alone as a prophet.
3. Because it is not one but several sorts of swearing rites that are mentioned, lifting up the hand, and putting it under the thigh.

2. Almost all Christians take some uncommanded significant ceremony in swearing to be lawful. The ceremony mentioned by Paræus *ibid.* as used in the Palatinate is such, of lifting up three fingers, 'Hodie nos juramus, digitus tribus dextræ sublati, invocantes vindicem S. Trinitatem.' The English annotations tell you that the customs of countries are very various in this point, yet most agree in adding some outward attestation of action or gesture to words in taking of an oath to make it better remembered and more regarded, than bare words of affirmation, promise or imprecation. And Josephus (cited by Grotius) tells us it was then the custom among the Jews to swear by this ceremony of putting the hand under the thigh: (whether in token of subjection, or because it was the place of the sword, the instrument of revenge, as Grotius and others, or in expectation of the promised seed as the Fathers thought.) And the case of Joseph's adjuration shews it. *Vid. Perier.* in Gen. xiv. and xxiv.

3. An action of another part of the body is no more forbidden to express the mind by, than of the tongue. God never said, you shall no way express your minds in things sacred or civil, but by the tongue. A change of the countenance may express it: a frown or a pleasant look. ('*Index animi Vultus.*') Paul did lift up the hand, to the Jews when he would speak for himself: Christ made as if he would have gone further^k. Words are not natural signs, but invented and arbitrary in particulars, though the power of speaking words so invented and learned be natural. If it be lawful to use significant words, not commanded in worship, it is lawful to use significant actions (under due regulation). Therefore all the ancient churches without one contradictor that ever I read of, did use many such. Though Augustine *Ep.* and *Januar.* sadly complaineth that then they were grown to an oppressive number; yet he never speaketh against the thing itself. To stand up at the creed is a significant expression of consent, which not only

^k Luke xxiv.

all the churches else, but the old non-conformists never scrupled, nor do the present as far as I can learn : whether to sit, stand, or kneel, at singing psalms, is left at liberty. To put off the hat is a significant ceremony or act in worship, not commanded in itself, nor used of old for the same signification as now. And where the covering of the head doth signify reverence, it is better than to be bare. In one country custom maketh standing up, in another sitting and hanging down the head, in another kneeling, in another prostration, to be the sign of reverence, which accordingly may be used in God's service. When covenants between God and the people are renewed, consent may lawfully be expressed either by standing up or by holding up the hand (by which suffrages things sacred were used to be given), or by subscribing, or by voice. For God hath commanded us the expressing of consent, reverence, &c, but left the word, gesture, or expressing sign to liberty. He that affirmeth that God hath left no other signification of our minds in sacred things to our liberty, but tied us to words alone, must prove what he saith (which he must do against Scripture, against nature, and against all the judgment and custom of all Christ's churches and of the world).

III. If laying the hand on the book and kissing it be unlawful for any special matter or manner forbidden more than other significant acts, it is for some of the reasons named by you : which now I will answer.

Obj. It savoureth of the Romish superstition. *Ans.*

1. Not at all : prove that if you can. 2. Superstition is the feigning of things to be pleasing or displeasing to God which are not, and using or disusing them accordingly : whatever be the etymology of the word 'Superstitum cultus,' or 'supra Statutum, &c.' it is certain that the common use of it among heathens (as Plutarch at large,) and Christians was, for an erroneous, undue fear of God, thinking this or that was displeasing or pleasing to him, to be done or to be avoided which was not so, but was the conceit of a frightened, mistaking mind. Therefore to say that God is displeased with this signification of the mind, when it is not so, nor can be proved, is superstition. And this is not the solitary instance of satan's introducing superstition under pretence of avoiding superstition. 3. The sense of

the law is to be judged of by the law, and by the notorious doctrine and profession of the law-makers and of the land : which here renounceth the superstitious use of it. But I confess I was more afraid that the Papists had too much derogated from the Scripture, than given too much to it. And they profess that they swear not by a creature. Vid. Perer. ubi sup. in Gen. xxiv. 2.

Object. But Paræus, &c. in Gen. xxiv. 2. saith, "Non absque superstitione fit cum super crucifixum aut codicem Evangelii digitis impositis juratur, ut fit in Papatu." *Answ.* 1. But that same act which 'in Papatu' is superstitious because of superstitious conceits and ends, is not so in all others that have none such. 2. It is no new thing to be quick in accusing our adversaries : but Paræus addeth not a syllable of proof ; and if he had, it must have been such as touched not us, or else invalid.

Object. 'Some good men have scrupled it.' *Answ.* 1. Ten thousand to one such have not scrupled it. 2. They are not our gods nor law. 3. The Quakers and the old Anabaptists (and they say Origen) scrupled, yea, condemned all swearing, or all imposed oaths. And if we avoid all as sin which some good men have scrupled, we shall make superstition a great part of our religion : and when on the same grounds we have but practised all as duty, which some good men have taken for duty, we shall quite out-go the Papists. He that readeth Beda, Boniface, and abundance such pious writers, will soon see, that godly or fanatical religious persons, dreams, visions, strict opinions, confident assertions, and credulous believing one another, with the hope of improving such things against Pagans and Jews, for Christianity, brought in almost all the legends and superstitions of the Papists.

II. *Object.* 11. 'Our common-law commissions, that give authority to examine persons, direct it to be done 'supra sacramenta sua per sancta Dei evangelia fideliter præstanda : ' and in the form of administrations in ecclesiastical courts the words are 'Ad sancta Dei evangelia rite et legitime jurati : ' whether these forms do not infer that in their first use (at least), persons either swore by the evangelists or offended in that mode of swearing : and our common-law calls it a corporal oath, from touching the book.'

Ans. 1. To know the sense of our present law it is not necessary that we know the sense of the first users of the form. For the law is not now the king's law that first made it (he hath no law that hath no government), but the king's law that now reigneth, and beareth his sense. 2. To justify our obedience to law, it is not necessary that we prove every phrase in that law to be fitly expressed. 3. But examine it well, and try whether it be not also fit and laudable.

1. There are three things conjoined in the oaths in question: 1. A testimony assertory or a promise. 2. An oath. 3. An imprecation. The assertory testimony here is the first thing intended; and the oath and imprecation are but as a means to make that testimony or promise valid. 2. The published doctrine of England, in the thirty-nine articles, the book of ordination, &c. is, that the holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, as being God's law or rule of our faith and life. All our duty to God is there commanded: all the promises on which we hope are there contained; all the punishments which the perjured or any sinner must feel and should fear, are there threatened. Therefore 3. The laying on the hand and kissing the book, is an action directly related to the imprecation, and not to the oath, but only by consequence, as the imprecation is subservient to the oath, as the oath is to the assertion. So that this is the plain paraphrase of the whole. 'I do believe that God the Ruler of all the world, is the Judge of secrets which are above man's judgment, the Searcher of hearts, and the hater and avenger of perjury, according to this his holy Word by which he governeth us: and to this God I appeal as to the truth of this my testimony, consenting myself, to lose all the benefit of his promises to be just, and to bear all the punishment here threatened to the perjured, if I lie.'

And what could be said more fitly, 1. To own the Protestant doctrine that the Scripture is God's perfect word: that the evil to be feared, and the good to be hoped for, is all there contained, and is all the fulfilling of that word? 2. And to put the Word in its due subordination to God? And our ordinary form of swearing sheweth this, 'So help you God, and the contents of this book.' Whether you will call this 'swearing upon or by the gospel,' or call it 'a cor-

poral oath,' or a spiritual oath, is only 'de nomine,' and is nothing to the matter thus truly described. 'Sacramentum' signifieth the oath itself, and 'Ad sancta evangelia' is a fit phrase: or if 'super sacramenta' signify the two sacraments of the Gospel, it can mean no more than 'As one that by the reception of the sacrament, doth profess to believe this Gospel to be true, I do renounce the benefits of it, if I lie:' and in this sense it hath been some men's eustom to receive the sacrament when they would solemnly swear.

III. *Object.* 'Some seem to object against kissing the book, as having the greater appearance of giving too much to it, or putting some adoration on it; and because this ceremony of kissing is held to be of later date than laying on the hand.'

Ans. The ceremony signifieth that I love and approve the Gospel, and place the hope of my salvation in it. And the public doctrine of the kingdom before cited, sheweth as a full exposition what we ascribe to it. But as some scrupulous brethren in Scotland gratify the Papists by rejecting the oath of supremacy, which is the most thorny hedge against them, and this while they cry out against Popery; so others would gratify the Papists, by suggesting that we give too much to the Bible, and adore it; when the very sum of England's Protestantism, is their just ascribing to the Holy Scriptures its sufficiency as to all things necessary to salvation. Thus satan undoeth still by overdoing.

IV. *Object.* 'Laying on the hand, and kissing the book, seem of the same nature with the cross in baptism, and other significant ceremonies: and an oath is part of the worship of God: therefore not to be taken, with these ceremonies, or else will seem to justify the other.'

Ans. 1. Significant words, gestures or actions are not therefore evil, because they are significant (unless brutishness be a virtue): nor because any call them by the name of ceremonies (else that name might be put on any thing by an enemy to deprive us of our liberty). Therefore I can judge of no ceremony by that general name alone, till it be named itself in specie. 2. Of the cross in baptism, see my 'Disputations of Church Government' of Ceremonies, written long ago. There are these notorious differences in the case: 1. The cross is an image used in God's worship: though

not a permanent, yet a transient image, and used as an image of the cross of Christ, though but in water or oil. And God hath more specially forbidden images used in his worship, than he hath done a professing significant word, gesture or action, which is no image, nor used as such. 2. The cross seemeth to be a third sacrament of the covenant of grace, while it is used as a symbol of Christianity, and a dedicating sign (as the canon calleth it) by which before the church, there is made a solemn self-obligation, as sacramentally, to renounce the devil, the world and the flesh, and manfully to fight under Christ's banner, as his faithful servants and soldiers to our live's end: implying our trust and hope in Christ crucified for the benefits of his death. So that if it be not a complete third sacrament, it hath so much of that which is proper to a sacrament, (like the '*Sacramentum Militare*,' whence the name came into the church) that for my part, I dare not use it, though I presume not to censure those that do, nor to condemn all other uses of the cross, which the ancients abounded in, as sudden, particular, professing signs, much below this solemn covenanting use. And as I think the king would not take it well, when he hath made the star the badge of the knights of the garter, if any subject will presume to make another '*Symbolum Ordinis*,' though yet many a significant gesture or act may be used without offence. So I fear Christ would not take it well of me if I presume to make or use another symbol or '*tessera*' of Christianity, especially with so much of a covenanting sacramental nature. But what is this to things or gestures significant of no such kind? You see then the difference of these cases.

But if you were able to prove the cross as harmless as the swearing ceremony, I would be for the cross, and not against the laying the hand on the book, and kissing it: for 1. I am not of their mind that form their judgment of other particulars to suit with their preconceived opinions of things of the same rank or quality: nor make the interest of my former conceptions, to be the measure of my after-judging 2. Nor do I think it so great an honour to be strict in my opinions, as dishonour to be superstitious, and to add to God's law, by saying that he forbiddeth what he doth not, or to be affectedly singular in denying lawful things, with a

‘touch not,’ ‘taste not,’ ‘handle not,’ &c. Nor do I esteem him to be the wisest, best, or holiest person, who is narrowest or strictest in his opinions, but who is rightest; nor him that maketh most things to be sins, but him that committeth least sin, which is such indeed; nor him that maketh most laws to himself or others, but him that best obeyeth God’s laws.

Quest. 1. May one that scrupleth thus swearing himself, yet commissioned, give an oath thus to another that scrupleth it not?

Ans. 1. If the thing be, as is proved, lawful, his scruple will not make him innocent in neglecting the duty of his place. 2. If the substance of the oath were lawful, and only the mode or ceremony were sinful, as suspected, then (1.) If the commissioner must himself particularly command that mode, it were unlawful for him to do it. (2.) But if he only command, and give the oath as an oath, leaving the mode without his approbation or command, to the taker and the law, he may so give the oath: and thus Christians in all ages have taken it for lawful to make covenants even with Infidels and Idolaters, and to take a Turk’s oath by Mahomet, when it is only the oath that we demand, and the mode is his own, which we had rather be without, and give no approbation of. And if a king may thus demand an Infidel’s or Idolater’s oath, (as God himself doth men’s duty, when he knoweth that they will sin in doing it,) much more may one do so, in case of a doubtful ceremony, which he is neither the author nor approver of. But I think this in question, is lawful, fit and laudable.

III. As to the case of taking God’s name in vain, which for brevity I join with swearing, it is done 1. Either in the grossest and most heinous sort; 2. Or in a lower sort. (1.) The grossest sort of taking God’s name in vain, is by perjury; or calling him in for witness to a lie. For among the Jews, vanity and a lie, were words frequently taken in the same signification. (2.) But the lower sort of taking God’s name in vain, is when it is used lightly, unreverently, contemptuously, jestingly, or without just cause: and in these also there is profaneness and a very great sin, which is aggravated according to the degree of the contempt or profa-

nation¹. It is a great sin unreverently in common talk to make a by-word, of saying, 'O Lord,' or 'O God,' or 'O Jesus,' or 'God help us,' or 'Lord have mercy on us,' or 'God send this or that,' or any way to take God's name in vain: but to use it in jeers and scorns at religion, or make play-books, or stage-plays with such profane contemptuous jeers, is one of the greatest villanies that man's tongue can be guilty of against his Maker. (Of which anon.)

IV. *Direct.* 1. 'For the avoiding of all this profaneness in swearing and taking the name of God in vain, the first Direction must be this general one, to use all the Directions given in Chap. 1. for a wicked man's attaining true conversion: and withal to observe how great an evidence this sin is of a graceless, ungodly, miserable soul.' For it is supposed to be an ordinary or frequent sin, and therefore to have no effectual principle in the heart which is against it; and therefore to have the principal room in the will; and therefore to be unrepented of (as to any saving, renewing repentance): if thou hadst any true grace, it would teach thee to fear and honour God more: to make light of God is inconsistent with godliness, if it be in a predominant degree: for they are directly contrary.

Direct. 11. 'Get thy heart sensible of the intrinsic evil of thy sin.' It would never be so easily and familiarly committed by thee, if thou didst not think it small. That thou mayst know it, consider of the following aggravations^m.

1. Consider who that God is whom thou abusestⁿ. Is he not the great and terrible Majesty; that made the world, and upholdeth it, and ordereth it by his will? The governor and judge of all the earth; infinitely excelling the sun in glory? A God most holy, and in holiness to be mentioned? And wilt thou make a by-word of his dreadful name? Wilt thou profanely swear by his holy name? and use the name of thy God as thou wouldst scarce use the name of thy father or thy king? Wilt thou unreverently

¹ See Dr. Hammond's Pract. Catech. on the third Commandment.

^m Saith Fitzherbert. lib. i. c. 23. p. 17. I cannot but lament, that so great an impiety as blasphemy is, being so common, doth pass unpunished: whereas in other countries the least blasphemies are severely chastened: inasmuch that in Spain I have known a man set in the market-place the greatest part of a day gaping with a gag in his mouth for swearing only By the life of God.

ⁿ See Job v. 21, 22. xlii. 5, 6. xxxviii. 2, 3. &c.

and contemptuously toss it like a foot-ball? Dost thou know no more difference between God and man? Know God, and thou wilt sooner tremble at his name, than thus unreverently abuse it.

2. Consider who thou art that thus venturést to profane the holy name of God. Art thou not his creature and his subject, bound to honour him? Art thou not a worm, unable to resist him? Can he not tread thee into hell, or ruin thee, and be avenged on thee with a word or less? He need to say no more, but 'Thus I will have it,' to execute his vengeance on the greatest of his enemies: if he will it, it will be done. And art thou then a person fit to despise this God, and abuse his name? Is it not a wonder of condescension in him, that he will give leave to such worms as we to pray to him, and to praise and worship him, and that he will accept it at our hands? And yet canst thou venture thus to slight him and despise him? I have oft heard the same impious tongue reproach the prayers of the godly, as if they were too bold and familiar with God, and pleading against long or often praying, because man must not be so bold with God, and persuading others that God accepts it not, which yet itself was bold familiarly to swear by his name, and use it lightly and in common talk. And indeed God's servants must take heed of rude and unreverent boldness even in prayer! How much more then is the boldness of thy profaning God's holy name to be condemned? Must they take heed how they use it in prayer and praise, and darest thou abuse it by oaths, and curses, and vain speech?

3. Dost thou not sometimes pray by that name which thou profanely swearest by? If not, thou seemest utterly to renounce God, and art a miserable wretch indeed; but if thou do, what an hypocrite dost thou show thyself to be in all thy prayers, that takest on thee to reverence that name of God, which thou canst toss unreverently, and swear and curse by when thou art off thy knees. It is part of Bishop Hall's character of the hypocrite, that he boweth to the name of Jesus, and sweareth by the name of God, and prayeth to God at church, whom he forgets or sweareth by the rest of the week. Doth not thy conscience gripe thee for this hypocrisy, when in thy prayers thou thinkest of this abuse of God?

4. Think man, what use thou wilt have for that holy name in thy distress, which thou now abusest. When sickness and death come, then thou wilt cry, 'Lord, Lord!' Then the name of God will be called on more reverently. And darest thou now make a foot-ball of it? Dost thou not fear lest it should be then thy terror, to remember on thy death-bed, when thou art calling upon God, 'O this is the name that I was wont to swear by, or to take in vain?'

5. Remember that millions of glorious angels are magnifying that great and holy name, which thou art profaning and taking in vain. And dost thou not wonder that they do not some of them become the executioners of the vengeance of God against thee? and that the earth doth not open and swallow thee up? Shall a worm on earth be tossing that holy name, or swearing by it profanely, which a world of glorious angels are magnifying?

6. Consider that thou art more impious than they that profane things hallowed and consecrated to God. Was Belshazzar punished with the loss of kingdom and life, for carousing in the vessels of the sanctuary? Wouldst thou think him to be profane that should make a stable of the church, and should feed his swine with the communion cup? And dost thou not know that the name of God himself hath a higher degree of holiness, than any place or utensils of his worship have? and therefore that it is a greater profaneness to abuse his name, than to abuse any of these? Doth not thy tongue then condemn thee of hypocrisy, when thou wouldst exclaim against any that should thus profane the church, or font, or communion cup, or table, and yet thyself dost ordinarily profane the very holy name of God, and use it as a common name?

7. Consider how unworthily thou requitest God, for giving thee thy tongue and speech. He gave thee this noble faculty to honour him by: and is this thy thanks, to use it to dishonour him, by swearing and taking his name in vain?

8. Thy infectious breath corrupteth others. It tendeth to bring God into common contempt among his own creatures, when they hear his name contemptuously spoken of.

9. Thou forgettest how tender and jealous God hath shew-

ed himself to be, of the honour of his holy name; and what terrible threatenings he hath denounced against the profaners of it, and what judgments he hath executed on them^o. "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely: neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord^p." And of the priests it is said, "They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God^p." "Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I am the Lord: neither shall ye profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the Lord which hallow you^q." "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD, then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed; great plagues and of long continuance; and sore sicknesses and of long continuance^r." Worshipping God and trusting in him is called, "A walking in his name; and calling upon his name^s." The place of his public worship is called, "The place where he putteth or recordeth his name^t." "They shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel^u." "For how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory to another^v." God telleth Moses, and Moses telleth Aaron when his two sons were slain, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me, and before all the people I will be glorified^w." "A man that in striving with another blasphemed and cursed, was stoned to death^x." And in the third commandment, it is terrible enough that God saith, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

10. Dost thou not use to say the Lord's prayer, and therein, "Hallowed be thy name^y?" And wilt thou profane that name which thou prayest may be hallowed? Is

^o Psal. xxix. 2. lxxvi. 2. lxxviii. 4. xxxiv. 3. xcvi. 2. Isa. ix. 6. xii. 4. xli. 25. Jer. xxxiv. 16. Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 23. 1 Kings viii. 16. 18, 19. 29. ix. 3. 7. 2 Sam. vii. 13. Deut. xiv. 23. Psal. cxlv. 1, 2. Isa. xxvi. 8. 13. Psal. lxxvi. 9. 12. cxxiv. 13. Cant. i. 3. John xii. 28.

^p Lev. xix. 12. So xviii. 21.

^q Lev. xxi. 6. xxii. 2. 31, 32.

^r Deut. xxviii. 58, 59.

^s See Mic. iv. 5. Psal. xcix. 6.

^t Exod. xx. 24. Deut. xii. 5. 11. 21.

^u Isa. xxix. 23.

^v Isa. xlviii. 11.

^w Lev. x. 3.

^x Lev. xxiv. 10. 14.

^y Matt. vi. 9.

it hallowing it, to swear by it, and use it unreverently and vainly in thy common talk? Or will God endure such hypocrisy as this? or regard such hypocritical prayers?

11. Thy customary swearing is an uncharitable accusation of the hearers, as if they were so incredulous, that they would not believe a man without an oath, and so profane, that they delight in the profanation of the name of God; which is the grief of every honest hearer.

12. Thou accusest thyself as a person suspected of lying, and not to be believed: for among honest men a word is credible without an oath. Therefore if thou were but taken for an honest man, thy bare word would be believed. And by swearing, thou tellest all that hear thee, that thou supposest thyself to be taken for a person whose word is not to be believed. And what need hast thou to tell this so openly to others if it be so?

13. And by swearing thou declarest the suspicion to be true, and that indeed thou art not to be believed: so far art thou from making thy sayings more credible by it. For he that hath so little conscience and fear of God, as to swear profanely, can hardly be thought a person that makes any conscience of a lie. For it is the same God that is offended by the one as by the other. A swearer warranteth you to suspect him for a liar.

14. Both swearing and taking God's name in vain, are the greater sins, because you have no stronger a temptation to them. Commonly they bring no honour, but shame: they bring no sensual pleasure to the senses, as gluttony, and drunkenness, and uncleanness do: and usually they are committed without any profit to entice men to them. You get not the worth of a penny by your sin; so that it is hard to find what draweth you to it, or why you do it, unless it be to shew God that you fear him not, and unless you intend to bid defiance to him, and do that which you think will offend him, in mere despite. So that one would think a very little grace might serve to cure such a fruitless sin: and therefore it is a sign of gracelessness.

15. How terribly dost thou draw God's vengeance upon thyself? Cursing thyself is a begging for vengeance: profane swearing is a profane, contemptuous appeal to the judgment of God. And darest thou, even in thy sins, ap-

peal to the judgment of God? Dost thou fear it no more? To this judgment then thou shalt go! But thou wilt quickly have enough of it, and find what it was for stubble to appeal to the "consuming fire^b."

Direct. 111. 'Remember God's presence, and keep his fear upon thy heart, and remember his judgment to which thou art hastening, and keep a tender conscience, and a watch upon thy tongue,' and then thou wilt easily escape such a sin as this. Darest thou abuse God's name before his face?

Direct. 114. 'Write over thy doors or bed, where thou mayst often read it, the third commandment, or some of these terrible passages of Holy Scripture, "I say unto you swear not at all: neither by heaven,—nor by the earth,—nor by thy head,—but let thy communication be yea, yea, nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil^c." "Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heavens, neither by the earth, nor any other oath; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation^d;" (or hypocrisy, as Dr. Hammond thinks it should be read.) "Every one that sweareth shall be cut off^e." "Because of swearing the land mourneth^f." Think well on such texts as these.

Direct. 115. 'Love God and honour him as God,' and thou canst not thus despise and abuse his name. Thou wilt reverence and honour the name of that person that thou lovest, and reverencest, and honourest. It is atheism and want of love to God, that makes thee so profane his name.

Direct. 116. 'Punish thyself after every such crime with such a voluntary mulct or penalty as may help to quicken thy observation and remembrance.' If none execute the law upon thee, (which is twelve pence an oath,) lay more on thyself, and give it to the poor. Though you are not bound to do justice on yourselves, you may medicinally help to cure yourselves, by that which hath a rational aptitude thereto.

^b Heb. xii. 29.

^c Zech. v. 3.

^d Matt. v. 34—37.

^e Jer. xxiii. 10. Hos. iv. 2.

^f James v. 12.

Tit. 3. Special Directions against Lying and Dissembling.

That you may know what lying is, we must first know what truth is, and what is the use of speech. Truth is considerable, 1. As it is in the things known and spoken of. 2. As it is in the conception or knowledge of the mind. 3. As it is in the expressions of the tongue. 1. Truth in the things known is nothing but their reality; that indeed they are that which their names import, or the mind apprehendeth them to be: this is that which is called both physical and metaphysical truth^s. 2. Truth in the conception or knowledge of the mind, is nothing else but the agreement or conformity of the knowledge to the thing known: to conceive of it truly, is to conceive of it as it is: mistake or error is contrary to this truth. 3. Truth as it is in the expressions is indeed a twofold relation. (1.) The primary relation is of our words or writings, to the matter expressed. And so truth of speech is nothing but the agreeableness of our words to the things expressed; when we speak of them as they are. (2.) The secondary relation of our words is to the mind of the speaker: for the natural use of the tongue is to express the mind as well as the matter: and thus truth of speech is nothing but the agreeableness of our words to our thoughts or judgments. Truth as it is the agreement of thoughts or words to the matter, may be called logical truth. And this is but the common matter of moral or ethical truth, which may be found partly in a clock, or watch, or weathercock, or a seaman's chart. The agreement of our words to our minds, is the more proper or special matter of moral truth: the form of it as a moral virtue is its agreement to the law of the God of truth. And as the 'terminus' entereth the definition of relations, so our words have respect to the mind of the hearer or reader, as their proper 'terminus;' their use being to acquaint him, 1. With the matter expressed; 2. With our minds concerning it. Therefore it is necessary to the logical truth of speech, that it have an aptitude rightly to inform the hearer; and to the ethical truth, that it be intended by the speaker really to inform him, and not to deceive him. (Supposing that it is another that we speak to.)

^s Vide Aquin. de Veritat.

You see then that to a moral truth all these things are necessary: 1. That it be an agreement of the words with the matter expressed, (as far as we are obliged to know the matter.) 2. That it be an agreement of the words, with the speaker's mind or judgment. 3. That the expressions have an aptitude to inform the hearer of both the former truths. 4. That we really intend them to inform him of the truth, so far as we speak it. 5. That it be agreeable to the law of God; which is the rule of duty, and discoverer of sin.

In some speeches the truth of our words as agreeing to the matter and to the mind is all one, viz. when our own conception or judgment of a thing is all that we assert. As when we say, 'I think, or I believe, or I judge that such a thing is so.' Here it is no whit necessary to the truth of my words, that the thing be so as I think it to be: (for I affirm it not to be so,) but that indeed I think as I say I think. But that our words and minds agree, is always and inseparably necessary to all moral truth.

We are not bound to make known all that is true, (for then no man must keep a secret,) much less to every man that asketh us. Therefore we are not bound to endeavour the cure of every man's error in every matter: for we are not bound to talk at all to every man. And if I be not bound to make known the truth at all, or my mind at all, I am not bound to make known all the truth, or all that is in my mind; no, not to all those to whom I am bound to make known part of both. If I find a man in an ignorance or error which I am not bound to cure, (nay, possibly it were my sin to cure it; as to open the secrets of the king's counsels or armies to his enemies, &c.) I may and must so fit my speech to that man, even about those matters, as not to make him know what he should not know either of the matter or of my mind: I may either be silent, or speak darkly, or speak words which he understandeth not, (through his own imperfection,) or which I know his weakness will misunderstand: but I must speak no falsehood to him. Also there is a great difference between speaking so as not to cure the ignorance or error of the hearer, which I found him in; and so speaking as to lead him into some new error: I may do the former in many cases, in which I may not do the latter. And there is great difference between speaking

such words, as in the common use of men are apt to inform the hearers of the truth, though I may know, that through some weakness of their own they will misunderstand them, and be deceived by them; and the speaking of words which in the common use of men, have another signification than that which I use them to. By the former way, the hearer sometimes is the deceiver of himself, and not the speaker, when the speaker is not bound to reveal any more to him: but by the latter way the speaker is the deceiver. Also there is great difference to be made between my speaking to one to whom it is my duty to reveal the truth, and my speaking to a man to whom I am not bound to reveal it; yea, from whom my duty to God, and my king or country, bind me to conceal it. By these grounds and distinctions you may know what a lie is, and may resolve the ordinary doubts that are used to be raised about our speaking truth or falsehood. As,

Quest. I. 'Am I bound to speak the truth to every one that asketh me?' *Ans.* You are not bound to speak at all in every case to every one that asketh you: and he that is silent, speaketh not the truth.

Quest. II. 'Am I bound to speak the truth to every one that I answer to?' *Ans.* Your answer may sometimes be such as signifieth but a denying to answer, or to reveal what is demanded of you.

Quest. III. 'Am I bound to speak all the truth, whenever I speak part of it?' *Ans.* No: it is God's Word that must tell you when, and how much you must reveal to others: and if you go as far as God alloweth you, it followeth not, that therefore you must go no farther^b. A soldier taken by the enemy may tell the truth when he is asked in things that will do no harm to his king and country; but he must conceal the rest, which would advantage the enemy against them.

Quest. IV. 'Is it always a sin to speak a logical falsehood; that is, to speak disagreeably to the thing which I speak of?' *Ans.* Not always: for you may sometimes believe an untruth without sin. For you are to believe things according to their evidence and appearance. Therefore if the deceit be unavoidably caused by a false appearance or evidence, without any fault of yours, it is not then your

^b Matt. xxvi. 63. Mark xiv. 61. xv. 5. Luke xxiii. 9. John xix. 9. Jer. xxxviii. 26, 27.

fault to be mistaken. But then your expressions must signify no more certainty than you have, nor any more confidence, than the evidence will warrant. When you say, such a thing is so; the meaning must be but, I am persuaded it is so: for if you say, I am certain it is so, when you are not certain, you offend.

Quest. v. 'Is it always a sin to speak falsely or disagreeably to the matter, when I know it to be false? that is, Is it always a sin to speak contrary to my judgment or mind?'

Ans. Yes: for God hath forbidden it, and that upon great and weighty reasons, as you shall hear anon.

Quest. vi. 'Is it a sin when I speak not a known untruth, nor contrary to my opinion, nor with a purpose to deceive?' *Ans.* Yes; it is oft a sin when there is none of this. For if it be your duty to know what you say; and to deliberate before you speak, and your duty to be acquainted with the truth or falsehood which you are ignorant of, and your duty to take heed that you deceive not another negligently, and yet you neglect all these duties, and by a culpable ignorance and negligence deceive both yourselves and others, then this is a sin, as well as if you knowingly deceived them.

Quest. vii. 'But though it be a sin, it remaineth doubtful, whether it be a lie.' *Ans.* This is but '*lis de nomine*,' a controversy about the name and not the thing. As long as we are agreed that it is a sin against God, and to be avoided, whether you call it a lie, or by another name, is no great matter. But I think it is to be called a lie: though I know that most definers follow Cicero, and say that a lie is 'A falsehood spoken with a purpose to deceive;' yet I think, that where the will is culpably neglective of not deceiving, an untruth so negligently uttered deserveth the name of a lie.

Quest. viii. 'Must my words, to free them from falsehood, be always true in the proper, literal sense?' *Ans.* No. Augustine's determination in this case is clear truth, '*Quod figuratè dicitur non est mendacium, (i. e. eo nomine.)*' To speak ironically, metonymically, metaphorically, &c., is not therefore to lie. For the truth of words lying in that aptitude to express the thing and mind, which is suited to the intellect of the hearers, they are true words that thus express

them, whether properly or figuratively: but if the words be used figuratively, contrary to the hearers, and the common sense of them, with a purpose to deceive, then they are a lie, notwithstanding you pretend a figure to verify them.

Quest. ix. ‘Must my words be used by me in the common sense, or in the hearer’s sense?’ *Answ.* No doubt, but so far as you intend to inform the hearer, you are to speak to him in his own sense. If he have a peculiar sense of some word, differing from the common sense, and this be known to you, you must speak in his peculiar sense. But if it be in a case that you are bound to conceal from him, the question is much harder. Some think it an untruth and sinful to speak to him in words which you know he will use to his own deceit. Others think that you are not bound to fit yourselves to his infirmity, and speak in his dialect contrary to common sense: and that it is not your fault that he misunderstandeth you, though you foresee it, where it will not profit him to understand you, nor yourselves are obliged to make him understand you, but the contrary: the next will open this.

Quest. x. ‘Is it lawful by speech to deceive another, yea, and to intend it? Supposing it be by truth?’ *Answ.* It is not a sin in all cases, to contribute towards another man’s error or mistake¹. For, 1. There are many cases in which it is no sin in him to mistake, nor any hurt to him: therefore to contribute to that which is neither sin or hurt, is of itself no sin: yea, there are some cases in which an error (though not as such) may be a duty: as, to think charitably and well of an hypocrite, as long as he seemeth to be sincere. Here if by charitable reports I contribute to his mistake, it seemeth to be but my duty. For as he is bound to believe, so I am bound to report the best while it is probable. 2. There are many cases in which a man’s ignorance or mistake may be his very great benefit: his life or estate may lie upon it: and I may know that if he understood such or such a thing, he would make use of it to his

¹ *Licetum est aliquando salva veritate, illa verba proferre, ex quibus probabiliter novimus auditores aliquid conclusures falsi. Hoc enim non est mentiri vel falsum testari, sed tantum occasionem alteri præbere errandi non ad peccatum committendum sed potius vitandum. Ames. Cas. Consc. lib. v. c. 53. See Luke xxiv. 28. John vii. 8. 10.*

ruin. 3. There are many cases in which a man's innocent error is necessary to the safety of others, or of the commonwealth. 4. It is lawful in such cases to deceive such men by actions: as an enemy by military stratagems, or a traitor by signs which he will mistake. And words of truth which we foreknow he will mistake, not by our fault, but by his own, do seem to be less questionable than actions, which have a proper tendency to deceive. 5. God himself hath written and spoken those words which he foreknew that wicked men would mistake and deceive themselves by: and he hath done those works, and giveth those mercies, which he knoweth they will turn to a snare against themselves. And his dominion or prerogative cannot here be pleaded to excuse it, if it were unholy. And in this sense (as to permitting and occasioning) it is said; "And if the prophet be deceived, I the Lord have deceived that prophet¹." Yet must we not think with Plato, that it is lawful to lie to an enemy to deceive him. For, 1. All deceit that is against charity or justice is sinful. 2. And all deceit that is performed by a lie. As Augustine saith, 'There are some lies which are spoken for another's safety or commodity, not in malice, but in benignity, as the midwives to Pharaoh.—— These lies are not commended in themselves, but in the deceit (or charity) of them. They that thus lie will deserve (that is, be in the way) to be at last delivered from all lying. There is also a lying in jest, which deceiveth not; because he that is spoken to, knoweth it to be spoken in jest. And these two sorts are not faultless; but the fault is not great. A perfect man must not lie to save his life.—— But it is lawful to silence the truth, though not speak falsely.' In Psal. And in Enchirid. he saith, 'Mihi non absurdum, &c.' 'It seemeth not absurd to me that every lie is a sin: but it is a great matter or difference, with what mind, and in what matters a man lieth.' Some think a physician may lie to entice his patient to take a medicine to save his life: he may lawfully deceive him by hiding a medicine, and by true speeches and dark, which he thinketh will be misunderstood; but not by falsehood.

Quest. xi. 'Wherein lieth the proper vice of lying? Is it in deceiving? or in speaking falsely? or in speaking con-

¹ Ezek. xiv. 9.

trary to the thoughts?' *Ans.* It is the aggravation of a lie, that it be an injurious deceit. But the malignity of the sin doth not consist in the mere deceit of another man's intellect: for, as is said, it may be a great benefit to many men to be deceived: a patient's life may be saved by it, when his physician findeth it necessary to his taking a medicine, which without deceit he will not take. And so children and weak-headed people must be used. Now such a charitable deceit, as such, can be no sin. Therefore the common nature of a lie consisteth not, only, in the purpose of deceiving, but in the speaking falsely, contrary to the mind: else it would follow, either that all deceit is sin, or that all lying or false speaking is lawful, where the deceit of another is charitable or lawful: which are neither of them to be granted. Yet is it not every untruth that is a lie. Some schoolmen distinguish between '*mentiri*' (as being '*contra mentem ire*') and '*mendacium dicere*;' as if to tell a lie were not always to lie, because not contrary to the mind. But then by '*mendacium*' they mean no more than '*falsum*.'

I conclude then, that 'a lie is the voluntary asserting of a falsehood.' And the more it tendeth to the injury of another, the more it is aggravated; but it is one thing to be injurious, and another thing to be a lie. When I name 'a falsehood,' I mean that which is apt to deceive the hearer. So that it is necessary to the being of a lie, that it be deceitful, though the purpose of deceiving be found only in the more explicit sort of lies: for '*falsum dicitur à fallendo*;' it were not false, if it were not deceitful, or apt to deceive. For an unapt or figurative expression, which hath a right sense as used by the speaker and hearer, is no falsehood. In one language a double negative affirmeth; and in another a double negative is a more vehement kind of denial; and yet neither is to be called by the others an untruth. By 'asserting,' I mean any expression that maketh the falsehood our own, as distinct from a historical narration: for it is not lying to repeat a lie, as only telling what another said. By 'voluntary,' I mean not only that which is done knowingly, upon actual will and deliberate choice, or consent; but also that which is done '*ex culpa voluntatis*,' 'by the fault of the will,' and is to be imputed to the will^m. For it is of great

^m Tolle voluntatem, nec erit discrimen in actu.

necessity to observe this about every sin, that whereas we truly say, that all sin is voluntary, and no further sin than voluntary; yet by 'voluntary,' here, is not meant only that which is actually willed; but all that the will is guilty of. For it is true that Austin saith, '*Ream linguam non facit nisi rea mens*:' 'The tongue is not made guilty, but by a guilty mind.' But then it must be known, that the mind or will is guilty of forbidden omissions as well as actions: and so it is a lie or voluntary untruth, when the mind and will do not restrain the tongue from it when they ought. As, 1. When a man erreth or is ignorant through wilful sloth or negligence, and so speaketh falsely when he thinks it true; this is a culpable falsehood, and so a lie; because he might have avoided it and did not: and this is the case of most false teachers and heretics. So, also, if a man will through passion, custom, or carelessness, let his tongue run before his wits, and speak falsely for want of considering or heeding what he saith, this is a culpable untruth, and a lie, and it is voluntary; because the will should have prevented it and did not; though yet there was no purpose to deceive.

You see then that there are two degrees of lying. 1. The grossest is the speaking of a known falsehood, with a purpose to deceive. 2. The other is the speaking falsely through culpable ignorance, error, or inconsiderateness.

Direct. 1. 'Be well informed of the evil of the sin of lying:' for the common cause of it is, that men think that there is no great harm in it, unless some one be greatly wronged by it: but it is not forbidden by God only because it wrongeth others, but it hath all this evil in it.

1. Lying is the perverting of man's noble faculties, and turning them clean contrary to their natural use. God gave man a tongue to express his mind, and reveal the truth; and lying doth monstrously turn it to the hindering of the mind and truth, yea, to the venting of the contrary to both. And as it is the evil of drunkenness to be a voluntary madness or corruption of so noble a faculty as reason, so it is the fault of lying, to be corrupting, perverting, and deforming both of the mind and tongue; and by confusion, a destroying of God's work and creature as to its proper useⁿ.

ⁿ Verba propterea instituta sunt, non ut per ea se invicem homines fallant, sed ut eis quisque in alterius notitiam cogitationes suas proferat. Verbis ergo uti ad fallaciam, non ad quod sunt instituta, peccatum est. Aug. Enchirid.

2. 'Lying is the enemy and destroyer of truth:' and truth is a thing divine, of unspeakable excellency and use. It is God's instrument by which he maketh man wise, and good, and happy. Therefore if he should not make strict laws for the preservation of so excellent a thing as truth, he should not secure the happiness of the world. As to the securing of men's lives it is not enough to make a law that you shall not kill men without just cause (though that be all that the law intendeth to attain): for then every man being left to judge, would think there were just cause whenever his passion or interest told him so: but the law is, 'You shall not kill at all without the judgment of the magistrate.' So, if the law against lying did intend no more than the securing men from the injuries of error and deceit, yet would it not have been a sufficient means, to have said only, 'You shall not injure men by lying:' for then men would have judged of the injury by their own interests and passions: but much more is it needful to have a stricter law, when truth itself is the thing that God intendeth to secure, as well as the interest of men. In the eyes of Christians, and Heathens, and all mankind that have not unmannered themselves, there appeareth a singular beauty and excellency in truth. Aristotle could say, that the 'Nature of man is made for truth.' Cicero could say, that 'Quod verum, simplex, sincerumque est, id naturæ hominis accommodatissimum est.' Verity and virtue were ever taken as the inseparable perfections of man. Pythagoras could say, that to 'Love truth and do good, were the two things that made man likest to God, and therefore were his two most excellent gifts.' Plato could say, that 'Truth was the best rhetoric and sweetest oration.' Epictetus could say, that 'Truth is a thing immortal, eternal, of all things most precious; better than friendship as being less obnoxious to blind affections.' Jamblichus could say, that 'As light naturally and constantly accompanieth the sun, so truth accompanieth God and all that follow him.' Epaminondas is praised for that he would 'not lie, no not in jest.' Pomponius Atticus was so great a hater of a lie, that 'all his friends were desirous to trust him with their business, and use him as their counsellor.' He knoweth not what use man's understanding or his tongue were made for, that

knoweth not the excellency of truth^o. Let a Pilate only ask as a stranger "what is truth^p?" as Pharaoh asked, "who is the Lord?" "For this end Christ himself came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and every one that is of the truth will hear him^q." "He is the truth^r," and "full of grace and truth^s." "Grace and truth came by him^t." His Spirit is given to "guide his servants into the truth^u," and to "sanctify them by the truth^v," that "knowing the truth, it might make them free^w." "The fruit of the Spirit is in all truth^x." His ministers can "do nothing against the truth, but for the truth^y." "Truth" is the "girdle" that must "gird our loins^b." The "church" is the "pillar" and "ground of truth^c." The faithful are "they that believe and know the truth^d." "Speaking the truth in love," is the way of the churches' growth and edification^e. "Repentance" is given men, "to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may escape out of the power of the devil^f." The dullards are they that are "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth^g." "They are men of perverse minds that resist the truth^h." "They that receive not the truth in the love of it cannot be savedⁱ." All they "are damned that believe not the truth^k." You see what truth is in the judgment of God and all the sober world. Therefore a lie that is contrary to truth as darkness to light, must be equally odious as truth is amiable: no wonder therefore if it be absolutely forbidden of God.

3. You may the more easily perceive this by considering, that other faults of the tongue, as idle talk, swearing and such like, are forbidden, not only because they are a hurt to others, but for the intrinsical evil in the thing itself; great reason therefore that it should be so in this.

4. Lying is a vice which maketh us most unlike to God.

^o Every lie is evil and to be avoided, saith Aristot. *Ethic. lib. 4.* See *Psalm. v. 7.* *Prov. vi. 17.* *19. xii. 22.* *xix. 5. 9.* *xxi. 18.* *Rev. xxi. 27.* *xxii. 15.* *John viii. 44.* *Col. iii. 9.*

^p *John xviii. 38.*

^q *John i. 14.*

^r *John xvii. 19.*

^s *2 Cor. xiii. 8.*

^t *1 Tim. iv. 3.*

^u *2 Tim. iii. 7.*

^v *2 Thess. ii. 12, 13.*

^w *John xviii. 37.*

^x *John i. 17.*

^y *John viii. 32.*

^b *Ephes. vi. 14.*

^c *Ephes. iv. 15.*

^d *2 Tim. iii. 8.*

^e *John xiv. 6.*

^f *John xvi. 13.*

^g *Ephes. v. 9.*

^h *1 Tim. iii. 15.*

ⁱ *2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.*

^k *2 Thess. ii. 10.*

For he is called the "God of truth¹." All his "ways" are "mercy and truth^m." His "judgment is according to truthⁿ." "It is impossible for God to lie^o." His word is the "word of truth^p." And who shall "dwell in his tabernacle," but those that "speak the truth in their hearts^q." The disconformity of the soul to God then, being its greatest deformity, in things wherein it is made to be conformed to him, it may hence appear that lying is an odious sin. And this may the more easily appear, if you consider, what a case the world were in if God could lie, and were not of undoubted truth: we should then be sure of nothing; and therefore could have no sure information by his word; no sure direction and guidance by his precepts; and no sure consolation in any of his promises. Therefore that which maketh us so unlike to the true and holy God, must needs be odious.

5. Lying is the image or work of the devil, and liars are his children in a special sort: for Christ telleth us that he "abode not in the truth, for there is no truth in him: when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it^r." The proud, the malicious, and the liars, are in a special sort the children of the devil; for these three are in Scripture in a special manner made the devil's sins^s. Therefore sure there is an intrinsical evil and odiousness in a lie. It was satan that filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost^t. To change the "truth of God into a lie," and "to make God a liar, are therefore the most odious sins^u;" because it is a feigning him to be like the devil: and should we make ourselves like him then by the same vice? If you love not the devil's sin and image, love not a lie.

6. Lying destroyeth human converse, and bringeth most pernicious confusion into the affairs of mankind. If truth be excluded, men cannot buy and sell, and trade, and live together. It would be sufficient to destroy their rational

¹ Psal. xxxi. 5. Deut. xxxii. 4.

^m Rom. ii. 2.

ⁿ Psal. cxix. 43. Col. i. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 15, Jam. i. 15. 2 Cor. vi. 7.

^o Psal. xv. 2.

^p John viii. 44.

^q 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23. "I will be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets." 2 Chron. xviii. 21, 22.

^r Acts v. 3.

^s Psal. xxv. 10.

^t Heb. vi. 18. Tit. i. 2.

^u Rom. i. 25. 1 John v. 10.

converse if they had no tongues : but much more to have false tongues : silence openeth not the mind at all : lying openeth it not when it pretendeth to open it ; and falsely representeth it to be what it is not. And therefore though you say, that your lies do no such hurt ; yet seeing this is the nature and tendency of lying as such, it is just and merciful in the righteous God, to banish all lying by the strictest laws * : as the whole nature of serpents is so far at enmity with the nature of man, that we hate and kill them though they never did hurt us, because it is in their nature to hurt us : so God hath justly and mercifully condemned all lying, because its nature tendeth to the desolation and confusion of the world ; and if any indulgence were given to it, all iniquity and injustice would presently like an inundation overwhelm us all.

7. Lying tendeth directly to perjury itself. It is the same God that forbiddeth them both : and when once the heart is hardened in the one, it is but a step further to the other. Cicero could observe, that 'He that is used to lie, will easily be perjured.' A seared conscience that tolerateth one, will easily be brought to bear the other.

8. There is a partiality in the liar that condemneth himself, and the sin in another, which in himself he justifieth : for there is no man that would have another lie to him. As Austin saith, 'I have known many that would deceive, but never any that would be deceived.' If it be good, why should not all others lie to thee ? If it be bad, why wilt thou lie to others ? Is not thy tongue under the same law as theirs ? Dost thou like it in thy children and in thy servants ? If not, it should seem much worse to thee in thyself, as thou art most concerned in thy own actions.

9. Judge what lying is by thy own desire and expectation to be believed. Wouldst thou not have men believe thee, whether thou speak truth or not ? I know thou wouldst : for the liar loseth his end if he be known to lie,

* It was one of the Roman laws. tab. 12. Qui falsum testimonium dixisse convictus erit, e saxo Tarpeio dejiciatur.

† Hic autem homines fallunt et falluntur : miseriores sunt cum mentiundo fallunt, quam cum mentientibus credendo falluntur. Usque adeo tamen rationalis natura refugit falsitatem, et quantum potest devitat errorem, ut falli nollint, etiam quicunque amant fallere. August. Enchirid. c. 17.

and be not believed. And is it a reasonable desire or expectation in thee to have men believe a lie? If thou wouldst be believed, speak that which is to be believed.

10. Lying maketh thee to be always incredible, and so to be useless and dangerous to others: for he that will lie doth leave men uncertain whether ever he speak truth, unless there be better evidence of it, than his credibility. As Aristotle saith, 'A liar gets this by lying, that nobody will believe him when he speaks the truth.' How shall I know that he speaketh truth to day who lied yesterday? unless open repentance recover his credibility. Truth will defend itself, and credit him that owneth it at last: but falsehood is indefensible, and will shame its patrons. Saith Petrarch excellently, 'As truth is immortal, so a fiction and lie endureth not long: dissembled matters are quickly opened: as the hair that is combed and set with great diligence is ruffled with a little blast of wind: and the paint that is laid on the face with a deal of labour, is washed off with a little sweat: the craftiest lie cannot stand before the truth; but is transparent to him that nearly looketh into it; every thing that is covered is soon uncovered: shadows pass away; and the native colour of things remaineth: it is a great labour to keep hidden long. No man can live long under water: he must needs come forth, and shew the face which he concealed *.' At the farthest God at the day of judgment will lay open all.

Direct. 11. 'If you would avoid lying, take heed of guilt *.' Unclean bodies need a cover; and are most ashamed to be seen. Faultiness causeth lying; and lying increaseth the fault. When men have done that which they are afraid or ashamed to make known, they think there is a necessity of using their art to keep it secret. But wit and craft are no good substitute for honesty: such patches make the rent much worse. But because the corrupted heart of man will be thus working and flying to deceitful shifts, prevent the cause and occasion of your lying. Commit not the fault that needs a lie. Avoiding it is much better than hiding it, if you were sure to keep it never so close. As indeed you are not: for commonly truth will come to light. It is the

* Petrarch. l. 1. de vit. solit.

* Sæpe delinquentibus promptissimum est mentiri. Cic.

best way in the world to avoid lying, to be innocent; and do nothing which doth fear the light: truth and honesty do not blush, nor desire to be hid. Children and servants are much addicted to this crime: when their folly, or wantonness, or appetites, or slothfulness, or carelessness hath made them faulty, they presently study a lie to hide it with: which is to go to the devil to entreat him to defend or cover his own works. But wise, and obedient, and careful, and diligent, and conscionable children and servants, have need of no such miserable shifts.

Direct. 111. 'Fear God more than man, if you would not be liars^b.' The excessive fear of man, is a common cause of lying: this maketh children so apt to lie, to escape the rod; and most persons that are obnoxious to much hurt from others, are in danger of lying to avoid their displeasure. But why fear you not God more, whose displeasure is unspeakably more terrible? Your parents or master will be angry, and threaten to correct you: but God threateneth to damn you; and his wrath is a consuming fire: no man's displeasure can reach your souls, and extend to eternity: will you run into hell to escape punishment on earth? Remember, whenever you are tempted to escape any danger by a lie, that you run into a thousand fold greater danger, and that no hurt that you escape by it, can possibly be half so great as the hurt it bringeth. It is as foolish a course as to cure the tooth-ach by cutting off the head.

Direct. 1v. 'Get down your pride, and over-much regard of the thoughts of men, if you would not be liars.' Pride makes men so desirous of reputation, and so impatient of the hard opinion of others, that all the honest endeavours of the proud, are too little to procure the reputation they desire, and therefore lying must make up the rest. Shame is so intolerable a suffering to them, that they make lies the familiar cover of their nakedness. He that hath not riches, hath pride, and would be thought somebody, and therefore will set out his estate by a lie. He that hath not eminency of parentage and birth, if he have pride will make himself a gentleman by a lie. He that is a contemptible person at

^b Ille veritatis defensor esse debet, qui cum recte sentit, loqui non metuit, nec erubescit. Ambr. Liars are valiant against God, and cowards against men. Montaigni's Essay.

home, if he be proud, will make himself honourable among strangers by a lie. He that wanteth learning, degrees, or any thing that he would be proud of, will endeavour by a lie to supply his wants: even as wanton women by the actual lie of painting, would make themselves beautiful, through a proud desire to be esteemed. Especially he that committeth a shameful crime, if he be proud will rather venture on a lie than on the shame. But if your pride be cured, your temptation to lie will be as nothing: you will be so indifferent in matters of honour or reputation, as not to venture your souls on God's displeasure for it: not that any should be impudent, or utterly regardless of their reputation: but none should over-value it, nor prefer it before their souls, nor seek it by unlawful means. Avoid shame by well-doing, and spare not: (only see that you have a higher end.) Seneca saith, 'There are more that abstain from sin through shame, than through virtue or a good will:' it is well when virtue is so much in credit, and vice in discredit, that those that have not the virtue would fain have the name, and those that will not leave the vice, would escape the shame; and it is well that there are human motives to restrain them that care not for divine ones. But as human motives cause no saving virtues; so devilish and wicked means are far from preventing any pernicious hurt, being the certain means to procure it^c.

Direct. v. 'Avoid ambition and human, unnecessary dependance if you would avoid lying.' For the ambitious give up themselves to men; and therefore flattering must be their trade; and how much of lying is necessary to the composition of flattery, I need not tell you. Truth is seldom taken for the fittest instrument of flattery. It is contrarily the common road to hatred: 'Libere et sine adulati-one veritatem prædicantes, et gesta pravæ vitæ arguentes, gratiam non habent apud homines,' saith Ambrose. 'They that preach truth freely and without flattery, and reprove the deeds of a wicked life, find not favour with men.' 'Ve-

^c Avoid both the extremes, which Petrarch mentioneth: Nam ut multi qui se bonos, sic aliqui qui se malos fingerent sunt reperti; quod vel humani favoris pestilentem aurum; vel invisam bonorum temporalium sarcinam declinarent. Quod de Ambrosio lectum est. Quam similis amicitiae adulatio? non imitatur tantum illam sed vincit: eo ipso gratiosos facit quo lædit. Senec.

ritatem semper inimicitiae persequuntur^a.’ Hatred is the shadow of truth, as envy is of happiness. When Aristippus was asked why Dionysius spake so much against him, he answered, ‘for the same reason that all other men do;’ intimating that it was no wonder if the tyrant was impatient of truth and plain-dealing, when it is so with almost all mankind: they are so culpable, that all but flatterers seem to handle them too hard, and hurt their sores. And herein lieth much of the misery of great men, that few or none deal truly with them, but they are flattered into perdition: saith Seneca, ‘Divites cum omnia habent, unum illis deest; scilicet qui verum dicat: si enim in clientelam foelicis hominis potentumque perveneris, aut veritas aut amicitia perdenda est.’ ‘One thing rich men want when they have all things, that is, a man to speak the truth: for if thou become the dependant or client of prosperous or great men, thou must cast away (or lose) either the truth or their friendship.’ Hierome thought that therefore Christ had not a house to put his head in, because he would flatter nobody, and therefore nobody would entertain him in the city. And the worst of all is, that where flattery reigneth, it is taken for a duty, and the neglect of it for a vice: as Hieron. (ad Cel.) saith ‘Quodque gravissimum est, quia humilitatis ac benevolentiae loco ducitur, ita fit ut qui adulari nescit, aut invidus aut superbus reputetur,’ that is, ‘and, which is most grievous, because it goes for humility and kindness, it comes to pass that he that cannot flatter is taken to be envious or proud.’ But the time will come, that the flatterer will be hated even by him that his fallacious praises pleased. Deceit and lies do please the flattered person but a while; even till he find the bitterness of the effects, and the fruit have told him that it was but a sugared kind of enmity: and therefore he will not be long pleased with the flatterer himself. Flattery ever appeareth at last, to be but ‘perniciosa dulcedo’ as Austin calls it. Saith the same Austin (in Psal. lix.) ‘There are two sorts of persecutors; the opposer (or dispraiser) and the flatterer: but the tongue of the flatterer hurteth more

^a Hieron. in Gal. iv.

^b Cojus autem aures clausae veritati sunt, ut ab amico verum audire nequeat, hujus salus desperanda est. Cic. Amic. Vol. vii. p. 841. Nemo parasitum sanum amat. Materia quoque fingendi tempore consenscit. Athenæus. Malum hominem blandiloquentem agnosce tuum laqueum esse. Habet suum venenum blanda Oratio. Senec.

than the hand of the persecutor.' And think not that any man's greatness or favour will excuse thee or save thee harmless in thy lies; for God that avengeth them is greater than the greatest. Saith Austin (lib. de mendac.) 'Quisquis autem esse aliquod genus mendacii, quod peccatum non sit putaverit, decipiet semetipsum turpiter, cum honestum se deceptorem arbitretur aliorum,' i. e. 'whoever thinks that there is any kind of lie that is no sin, he deceiveth himself foully, whilst he thinks himself an honest deceiver of others.' "Be not the servants of men^f," if you would be true.

Direct. vi. 'Love not covetousness, if you would not be liars^g.' A lie will seem to a covetous man an easy means to procure his gain, to get a good bargain, or put off a cracked commodity for more than it is worth. 'Rupere fœdus, impius lucri furor, et ira præceps.' Sen. Hip. He that loveth money better than God and conscience, will for money displease God and conscience, by this or any other sin.

Direct. vii. 'Learn to trust God, if you would not be liars^h.' For lying is the practice of him that thinks he must provide and shift for himself. Even Abraham's and Isaac's equivocation (saying their wives were their sisters) and David's feigning himself mad, proceeded from some distrust in God: they would not have thought it necessary so to shift for their lives, if they had fully trusted God with their lives. Gehazi's covetousness and lying did both proceed from a want of confidence in God. If a man were confident of God's protection, and that he had better stand to God's choice in all things than his own, what use could he think he hath for lying, or for any sinful shift?

Direct. viii. 'Be not too credulous of bad reports, if you would not be liars.' Malice is so mad, and so unconscionable a sin, and the tongues of men are commonly so careless of what they say, that if you easily believe evil, you do but easily believe the devil, and thereby make yourselves his servants in divulging malicious lies. You think because they are spoken by many, and spoken confidently, you may lawfully believe or report what you hear! But this is but to think that the commonness of liars, and their malice and impudence will warrant you to follow them, even because they

^f 1 Cor. vii. 23.^g Read Prov. xxi. 6.^h Jer. vii. 4, 8.

are so bad. Will you bark and bite because that dogs do so? If a man be stung with an adder, you should help to cure him, and not desire yourselves to sting him: selfish, and interested, and malicious, and partial, factious persons, are so commonly liars, and impudent in their lies, that it becometh you, if you would not be liars yourselves, to take heed of reporting any thing they say. These spiders will weave a web of the air, or out of their own bowels ^a.

Direct. ix. 'Be not rash in speaking things before you have tried them.' Consider what you say, and know before you speak. Is it not a shame when you have spoken falsely, to come off with saying, 'I thought it had been true?' But why will you speak upon thought, and not stay till you better understood the case? If the matter required such haste in speaking, you should have said no more than, 'I think it is so.' "Prove all things," and then "hold that which is good," and assert that which is true. Saith Cicero ⁱ, 'Nihil est temeritate turpius, nec quicquam tam indignum sapientis gravitate aut constantiâ, quam aut falsum sentire, aut quod non satis explore perceptum sit et cognitum sine ulla dubitatione defendere.' 'Nothing is more unseemly than temerity: nor any thing so unworthy the gravity or constancy of a wise man, than either to hold a falsehood, or confidently to defend that which is not received and known upon sufficient trial ^b.'

Direct. x. 'Foresee that which is like to entrap you in a lie, that you may prevent it.' Let not the occasion and temptation surprise you unprepared. Foresight will make the temptation easy to be overcome, which unforeseen will be too strong for you.

Direct. xi. 'Get a tender conscience, and walk as in the sight and hearing of God, and as one that is passing to his judgment ¹.' A seared conscience dare venture upon lies or any thing; but the fear of God is the soul's preserva-

^b Non soleo temere affirmare de altero. Est enim periculosum, propter occultas hominum voluntates, multiplicesque naturas. Cic. ad Brut. Vol v. p. 946. Prov. xvii. 4. Hos. vii. 3. Nah. iii. 1.

ⁱ Cic. D. Nat. lib. i.

^k Insignis est temeritas, cum aut falsa aut incognita res approbatur: nec quicquam est turpius quam cognitioni assertionem approbationemque præcurrere. Cic. Acad. lib. i.

¹ Acts v. 4. Isa. lix. 13. Ezek. xiii. 9. 19.

tive. What makes men lie; but thinking they have to do with none but men? For they think by a lie to deceive a man, and hide the truth; but if they remembered that they have most to do with God, and that he is always present who cannot be deceived, and that his judgment will bring all secret things to light, and detect all their lies before all the world, they would not hire a torn and dirty cloak at so dear a rate, for so short a time. No wonder if men are liars that fear not God, and believe not the day of judgment.

Direct. xii. 'To save others from lying as well as yourselves, be sure to watch against it in your children, and wisely help them to see the evil of it. For children are very prone to it; and unwise correction frighteneth them into lies to save themselves, as indulgence and connivance do encourage them to it. Make them oft read such texts as these: "Ye shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie one to another^m."—"He that speaketh the truth from his heart, &c."ⁿ "He said, surely they are my people; children that will not lie; so he was their Saviour^o."—"The devil is a liar and the father of it^p."—"There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth—or maketh a lie—For without are dogs—and whoever loveth and maketh a lie^q."—"The mouth of him that speaketh lies shall be stopped^r."—"He that speaketh lies shall not tarry in my sight^s."—"A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape (shall perish^t)."—"If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked^u."—"I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love^v."—"A righteous man hateth lying^w."—"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another^x:" q. d. a man would not lie to deceive his own members: no more should we to deceive one another. In a word, where the love of God and man prevaieth, there truth prevaieth; but where self-love, partiality, and carnal self-interest prevail, there lying is a household servant, and thought a necessary means to these ends.

^m Lev. xix. 11.

^p John viii. 44.

^q Psal. ci. 11.

^r Prov. xxix. 12. So Psal. xxxi. 18. lii. 3.

^s Prov. xiii. 5.

^t Psal. xv. 2.

^u Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 15.

^v Prov. xix. 5. 9.

^w lii. 3.

^x Ephes. iv. 25.

^y Isa. lxlii. 8.

^z Psal. lxiii. 11.

^{aa} Psal. cxix. 16.

But because lying is so common, and so great a sin, and many cases occur about it daily, though I think what is said offereth matter enough to answer them, I shall mention some more of them distinctly, to help their satisfaction who cannot accommodate general answers to all their particular cases.

Quest. 1. 'Is frequent, known lying a certain sign of a graceless state, that is, a mortal sin, proving the sinner to be in a state of damnation?'

Ans. The difficulty of this case doth no more concern lying, than any other sin of equal malignity. Therefore I must refer you to those places where I have opened the difference between mortal, reigning sins, and infirmities. At present take this brief solution. 1. It is a thing of too great difficulty, to determine just how many acts of a great sin may consist with a present state of grace, (that is, of right by covenant to heaven.) 2. All sin which consisteth with an habitual, predominant love of God and holiness, consisteth with a state of life, and no other. 3. He that seldom or never committeth such external crimes, and yet loveth not God, and heaven, and holiness above all the pleasures and interests of the flesh, is in a state of death. 4. It is certain that this love to God and holiness is not predominant, whose carnal interest and lust hath ordinarily in the drift and tenor of his life, more power to draw him to the wilful committing of known sin, than the said love of God, and heaven, and holiness have to keep him from it. For his servants men are, whom they obey, whether it be sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness. 5. Therefore the way to know whether sin be mortified, or mortal, is, (1.) By feeling the true bent of the will, whether we love or hate it. (2.) By observing the true bent and tenor of our lives, whether God's interest in us, or the contrary be predominant when we are ourselves, and are tempted to such sins. 6. He that will sin thus as oft as will stand with saving grace, shall never have the assurance of his sincerity, or the peace or comfort of a sound believer, till he repent and lead a better life. 7. He that in his sin retaineth the spirit of adoption, or the image of God, or habitual divine love, hath also habitual and virtual repentance for that very sin, before he actually repenteth: because he hath that habitual

hatred of it, which will cause actual repentance, when he is composed to act according to his predominant habits. 8. In the meantime the state of such a sinner is, neither to be unregenerate, carnal, unholy, as he was before conversion, and so to lose all his right to life; nor yet to have so full a right as if he had not sinned: but a bar is put in against his claim, which must be removed before his right be full, and such as is ripe for present possession. 9. There are some sins which all men continue in while they live. As defect in the degrees of faith, hope, love, &c.; vain thoughts, words, disorder, passions, &c. And these sins are not totally involuntary: otherwise they were no sins. Yea, the evil is prevalent in the will against the good, so far as to commit those sins, though not so far as to vitiate the bent of heart or life. 10. There are some sins which none on earth do actually repent of, viz. Those that they know not to be sins; and those that they utterly forget; and those faults which they are guilty of just at the time of dying. 11. In these cases, virtual, or implicit, or habitual repentance doth suffice to the preventing of damnation. As also a will to have lived perfectly sufficeth in the case (of continued imperfections). 12. Things work not on the will as they are in themselves; but as they are apprehended by the understanding: and that which is apprehended to be either of doubtful evil, or but a little sin and of little danger, will be much less resisted, and oftener committed than sins that are clearly apprehended to be great. Therefore, where any sort of lie is apprehended thus, as of small or doubtful evil, it will be the oftener committed. 13. If this apprehension be wrong, and come from the predominancy of a carnal or ungodly heart, which will not suffer the understanding to do its office, nor to take that to be evil which he would not leave, then both the judgment and the lie are mortal, and not mortified, pardoned sins. 14. But if this misapprehension of the understanding do come from natural impotency, or unavoidable want of better information, or only from the fault of a vicious inclination, which yet is not predominant, but is the remnant of a vice which is mortified in the main; then neither the error nor the often lying is a mortal, but a mortified sin. As, for instance, If false teachers (as the Jesuits) should persuade a justified person, that a lie that

hurteth no man, but is officious, is but a venial or no sin, it is possible for such a person often to commit it, though he err not altogether innocently. 15. Though it is true that all good Christians should not indulge the smallest sin, and that true grace will make a man willing to forsake the least, yet certain experience telleth us, that some constant sinning (aforenamed) doth consist with grace in all that have it upon earth; and therefore that lesser sins, as thoughts, passions, are not resisted so much as greater be; and therefore that they are more indulged and favoured, or else they would not be committed. No good men rise up with so great and constant watchfulness against an idle thought or word, or a disorder in prayer, &c. as they do against a heinous sin.

He that would have this and all such cases resolved in a word, and not be put on trying the case by all these distinctions, must take another casuist, or rather a deceiver instead of a resolver: for I cannot otherwise resolve him.

Quest. 11. 'Is it not contrary to the light of nature, to suffer e. g. a parent, a king, myself, my country, rather to be destroyed, than to save them by a harmless lie?'

Ans. No. Because, 1. Particular good must give place to common. And if once a lie may pass for lawful in cases where it seemeth to be good, it will overthrow human converse, and debase man's nature and the world.

2. And if one evil may be made a means for good, it will infer that other may be so too, and so will confound good and evil, and leave vicious man to take all for good which he thinks will do good. That is not to be called a harmless lie, which is simply evil, being against the law of God, against the order of nature, the use of human faculties, and the interest and converse of the sociable world.

3. The error of the objectors chiefly consisteth in thinking that nothing is further hurtful and morally evil, than as it doth hurt to some men in corporal respects. Whereas that is evil, which is against the universal rule of rectitude, against the will of God, and against the nature and perfection of the agent; much more if it also tend to the hurt of other men's souls, by giving them an example of sinning.

4. And though there may sometimes be some human probability of such a thing, yet there is no certainty that

ever it will so fall out, that a lie shall save the life of king, parent, or yourselves. For God can open the eyes of that enemy whom you think to blind by a lie, and cause him to know all the truth, and so take away that life, which you thought thus to have saved.

5. And there are lawful means enough to save your lives when it is best for you to save them. That is, Obey God, and trust him with your lives, and he can save them without a lie, if it be best: and if it be not, it should not be desired.

6. And if men did not erroneously overvalue life, they would not think that a lie were necessary for it. When it is not necessary to live, it is not necessary to lie for life. But thus one sin brings on another: when carnal men overvalue life itself, and set more by it than by the fruition of God in the glory of heaven, they must needs then overvalue any means which seemeth necessary to preserve it*.

7. Yet as to the degree of evil in the sin, I easily grant (with Augustine Enchirid.) that '*Multum interest quo animo et de quibus quisque mentiatur: non enim ita peccat qui consulendi, quomodo ille qui nocendi voluntate mentiatur: nec tantum nocet qui viatorem mentiendo in adversum iter mittit, quantum is qui viam vitæ mendacio fallente depravat.*'

Object. 'Are not the midwives rewarded by God for saving the Israelitish children by a lie?'

Ans. I need not say with Austin, "The fact was rewarded, and the lie pardoned;" for there is no such thing as a lie found in them. Who can doubt but that God could strengthen the Israelitish women to be delivered without the midwives? And who can doubt but when the midwives had made known the king's murderous command, that the women would delay to send for the midwives, till, by the help of each other, the children were secured? Which yet is imputed to the midwives, because they confederated with them, and delayed to that end. So that here is a dissembling and concealing part of the truth, but here is no lie that can be proved.

Object. 'But Heb. xi. 31., and James ii. 25., Rahab is

* See Job xlii. 7—10. Prov. xlii. 17. Rom. vi. 15. iii. 7—9. Psal. v. 7. Hos. iv. 2. John viii. 44. Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 15. Col. iii. 9. 1 John ii. 21.

said to be justified by faith and works, when she saved the spies by a lie.'

Ans. It is uncertain whether it was a lie, or only an equivocation, and whether her words were not true of some other men that had been her guests. But suppose them a lie, (as is most like,) the Scripture no more justifieth her lie, than her having been a harlot. It is her believing in the God of Israel, whose works she mentioned, that she is commended for, together with the saving of the spies with the hazard of her own life. And it is no wonder if such a woman in Jericho had not yet learned the sinfulness of such a lie as that.

Object. 'But at least it could be no mortal sin, because Heb. xi. 31., and James ii. 25., say she was justified.'

Ans. It was no mortal sin in her, (that is, a sin which proveth one in a state of death,) because it had not those evils that make sin mortal: but a lie in one that doth it knowingly, for want of such a predominancy of the authority and love of God in the soul, as should prevail against the contrary motives habitually, is a mortal sin, of an ungodly person. It is pernicious falsehood and soul delusion in those teachers, that make poor sinners think that it is the smallness of the outward act or hurt of sin alone, that will prove it to be, as they call it, venial, or mortified, and not mortal.

Quest. III. 'Is deceit by action lawful, which seemeth a practical lie? And how shall we interpret Christ's making as if he would have gone farther^b, and David's feigning himself mad, and common stratagems in war, and doing things purposely to deceive another?'

Ans. 1. I have before proved that all deceiving another is not a sin, but some may be a duty: as a physician may deceive a patient to get down a medicine to save his life, so he do it not by a lie.

2. Christ's seeming to go farther was no other than a lawful concealment or dissimulation of his purpose, to occasion their importunity: for all dissimulation is not evil, though lying be. And the same may be said of lawful stratagems as such.

3. David's case was not sinful as it was mere dissimula-

^b Luke xxiv. 28.

tion to deceive others for his escape. But whether it was not a sinful distrust of God, and a dissimulation by too unmanly a way, I am not able to say, unless I had known more of the circumstances.

Quest. iv. ‘Is it lawful to tempt a child or servant to lie, merely to try them?’

Answ. It is not lawful to do it without sufficient cause, nor at any time to do that which inviteth them to lie, or giveth any countenance to the sin, as satan and bad men use to tempt men to sin, by commending it, or extenuating it. But to lay an occasion before them barely to try them (as to lay money, or wine, or other things in their way, to know whether they are thieves or addicted to drink, that we may the better know how to cure them: and so to try their veracity) is not unlawful. For, 1. The sin is virtually committed when there is a will to commit it, though there should be no temptation or opportunity. 2. We do nothing which is either a commendation of the sin, or a persuading to it, nor any true cause either physical or moral; but only an occasion. 3. God himself, who is more contrary to sin than any creature, doth thus by trial, administer such occasions of sin to men that are viciously disposed, as he knoweth they will take; and his common mercies are such occasions. 4. God hath no where forbidden this to us: we may not do evil that good may come by it; but we may do good when we know evil will come of it by men’s vice. 5. It may be a needful means to the cure of that sin, which we cannot know till it be thus directed.

Quest. v. ‘Is all equivocation unlawful?’

Answ. There is an equivocating which is really lying: as when we forsake the usual or just sense of a word, and use it in an alien, unusual sense, which we know will not be understood, and this to deceive such as we are bound not to deceive.

But there is a use of equivocal words which is lawful and necessary: (for human language hath few words which are not of divers significations.) As, 1. When our equivocal sense is well understood by the hearers, and is used not to deceive them, but because use hath made those words to be fit; as all metaphors are equivocal, and yet may be used. 2. When the equivocal sense is the most usual or obvious,

and if it be not understood, it is through the hearer's fault or extraordinary dulness. 3. When a robber, or usurping tyrant, or any cruel enemy, that hath no authority to do it, shall seek to ensnare my life by questions, I may lawfully answer him in such doubtful words, as purposely are intended to deceive him, or leave him ignorant of my sense, so be it they be not lies or false in the ordinary usage of those words. 4. And to such a person I may answer doubtfully, when it is apparent that it is a doubtful answer, and that I do it as professing that I will answer him no more particularly nor plainly, but will conceal the rest.

Quest. vi. 'Whether all mental reservation be unlawful?'

Ans. This needeth no other answer than the former. If the expressed words be a lie, the mental reservation will not make them justifiable as a truth. But if the expressed words of themselves be true, then the mental reservation may be lawful, when it is no more than a concealment of part of the truth, in a case where we are not bound to reveal it.

But of both these cases I must refer the reader to what I have said about vows, Part iii. Chap. v. Tit. 2. without which he will not know my meaning.

Quest. vii. 'May children, servants, or subjects, in danger, use words which tend to hide their faults?'

Ans. 1. When they are bound not to hide the fault, they may not: which is, 1. When due obedience; or, 2. The greater good which will follow, require them to open it.

2. When they are not bound to open it, they may hide it by just means, but not by lies or any evil. In what cases they may hide a fault by just means, I shall here say no more to.

Quest. viii. 'May I speak that which I think is true, but am not sure.'

Ans. If you have a just call, you may say you think it is true; but not flatly that it is so.

Quest. ix. 'May I believe and speak that of another, by way of news, discourse or character, which I hear reported by godly, credible persons, or by many?'

Ans. 1. The main doubt is when you have a call to speak it, which is answered after, Part iv. at large.

2. You may not so easily believe and report evil of another as good.

3. You must not believe ill of another any further than evidence doth constrain you: yet you may believe it according to the degree of evidence or credibility; and make use of the report for just caution or for good; but not to defame another, upon uncertainty, or without a call.

4. The sin of receiving, and spreading false reports of others upon hearsay, is now so common among those that do profess sobriety and religion, that all men should take heed of it in all company, as they would do of the plague in an infectious time. And now it is so notorious that false news and slanders of others are so common, neither good men's words, nor common fame, will allow you, (or excuse you,) to believe or report any evil of another, till you are able to prove that it is your duty: but all Christians should join in lamenting and reproving this common, uncharitable sin.

Tit. 4. Special Directions against Idle Talk, and Babbling.

Direct. 1. 'Understand well what is idle talk:' for many take that to be vain which is not, and many take not that to be vain which is. I shall therefore open this before I go any further.

The judgment of infidels and impious men here are of little regard: 1. Some of them think prayer to be but vain words, because God knoweth our wants and hearts^c, and our service is not profitable to him: as if he had bid us "seek him in vain^d." These I have elsewhere confuted. 2. Others think frequent preaching vain, and say as the infidels of Paul, "What will this babbler say?" and as Pharaoh, "Let them not regard vain words^e:" but God saith, "Set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you—for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life^f." 3. Some carnal wretches think all vain in God's service, which is spiritual, and which they understand not, or which is above the reach of a fleshly mind. 4. And some think all vain in preaching, conference, writing or

^c Job xxii. 2, 3.

^f Exod. v. 9.

^d Isa. xlv. 19.

^e Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.

^e Acts xvii. 18.

prayer, which is long. But Christ spake no vain words when he "prayed all night^b." Nor are we bid pray in vain; when we are bid "pray continually, instantly, and importunatelyⁱ." Nor did Paul speak idly when he preached till midnight^k. Godliness is not vain "which is profitable to all things^l." Indeed as to their own salvation, the wicked may make our preaching vain: but the word of God returneth not empty. The oblations of the disobedient are vain^m, and the "prayer of the wicked, abominable to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delightⁿ." Some think all preaching vain, of that which they know already, whereas they have most need to hear of that, lest they condemn themselves by sinning against their knowledge^o. 6. Some think it vain if the same things be often preached on, or repeated though yet they never received and obeyed them: or if the same words be oft repeated in prayer, though it be not from emptiness or affectation but fervency^p. 7. Unbelievers think our boasting in God is vain^q. 8. And some malicious adversaries charge it on ministers as preaching in vain, whenever the hearers are not converted^r.

On the other side many that are godly mistake in thinking, 1. That all talk is vain which is not of absolute necessity to some great use and end^s. 2. And that all mirth and pleasant discourse is vain. Whereas the Holy Ghost saith, "A merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones^t." "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken^u." King Abimelech saw Isaac sporting with Rebekah his wife^v: laughing (as the Hebrew is), or playing (as the Chaldee, and Samaritan, and Septuagint) or jesting (as the Syriac, Arabic and vulgar Latin).

Observe these qualifications, and your mirth and sporting talk will not be idle. 1. Let it be such and so much as is useful to maintain that cheerfulness of mind and alacrity of spirits, which is profitable to your health and duty: for if bodily recreations be lawful, then tongue-recreations are

^b Luke vi. 12.ⁱ 1 Thea. v. 17. Acts vi. 4. Luke xviii. 1, 2.^k Acts xx.^l 1 Tim. iv. 8.^m Isa. i. 13.ⁿ Prov. xv. 8.^o 2 Pet. i. 12, 13. Rom. xiv. 22.^p Mark xiv. 39. Psalm cxxxvi. cxix.^q 2 Kings xviii. 20. Isa. xlix. 4, 5.^r See Heb. iv. 2. Gal. v. 2. iii. 4. iv. 11. Isa. liii. 1.^s 1 Kings xviii. 27. Prov. xxix. 9,^t Prov. xvii. 22.^u Prov. xv. 13.^v Gen. xxvi. 28.

lawful when they are accomodate to their end. 2. Let your speech be savoury, seasoned with salt, and not corrupt and rotten communication : jest not with filthiness or sin. 3. Let it be harmless to others : make not yourselves merry with the sins or miseries of other men. Jest not to their wrong. 4. Let it be seasonable, and not when another frame of mind is more convenient, nor when graver or weightier discourse should take place. 5. Let it be moderate and not excessive, either wasting time in vain, or tending to habituate the mind of the speakers or hearers to levity, or to estrange them from things that should be preferred. 6. See that all your mirth and speech be sanctified by a holy end; that your intent in all be to whet your spirits and cheer up and fit yourselves for the service of God, as you do in eating and drinking, and all other things. 7. And mix (with cautelous reverence) some serious things, that the end and use be not forgotten, and your mirth may not be altogether as empty and fruitless as that of the unsanctified is. Sporting, pleasant, and recreating talk is not vain, but lawful upon these conditions. 8. Still remembering that the most holy and profitable discourse must be most pleasant to us, and we must not through a weariness of it, divert to carnal mirth, as more desirable, but only to natural honest mirth as a necessary concomitant to exhilarate the spirits¹.

Idle or vain words then, are such as are unprofitable and tend not to do good². I here forbear to speak of those idle words which are also worse than vain, as mentioned before among the sins of the tongue. Idle words are, 1. Either simply such which tend to no good at all. 2. Or comparatively such; which are about some small or inconsiderable good, when you should be speaking of greater things: the former sort are always idle and therefore always sinful: the latter sort are sometimes lawful in themselves, that is, when greater matters are not to be talked of: in its season it is lawful to speak about the saving of a penny, or a point, or a pin; but out of season, when greater matters are in hand, this is but idle, sinful talk.

Also there is a great deal of difference between now and

¹ Jam. v. 13. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.

² Otiosum verbum est quod justæ necessitatis aut intentione piam utilitatis caret. Gregor. Moral.

then an idle word, and a babbling, prating custom, by which it becometh the daily practice of some loose-tongued persons, so that the greater part of the words of all their lives are merely vain.

The particular kinds of idle talk are scarce to be numbered. Some of them are these.

1. When the tongue is like a vagrant beggar or masterless dog that is never in the way, and never out of the way, being left to talk at random about any unprofitable matter that comes before it; and such will never want matter to talk of: every thing they see or hear is the subject of their chat: and one word begetteth occasion and matter for another, without end.

2. Another sort of idle talk is the vain discourses (by word or writing) of some learned men, in which they bestow an excessive multitude of words about some small impertinent thing; not to edify, but to shew their wit: which Seneca reprehends at large.

3. Another sort of idle talk is vain and immoderate disputings, about the smaller circumstances of religion, or frequent discourses about such unedifying things while greater matters should be talked of. "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain^a." "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm^b." "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and opposition of sciences falsely so called; which some professing, have erred concerning the faith^c." "But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness^d." "There are many unruly and vain talkers," &c^e.

4. Another sort of idle talk is the using of a needless multitude of words, even about that which is good and necessary in itself, but might better be opened in a briefer

^a Tit. iii. 9.

^b 1 Tim. i. 5—7.

^c 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

^d 2 Tim. ii. 16.

^e Tit. i. 10. 11.

manner^f. Even in preaching or praying words may be vain ; which is when they are not suited to the matter and the hearers : for you must note that the same words are necessary to one sort of hearers, which are vain as to another sort. And therefore as ministers must take heed that they suit their manner of speech to their auditors, so hearers must take heed lest they censoriously and rashly call that vain which is unnecessary to them, or such as they : there may be present many ignorant persons that the preacher is better acquainted with than you : and the ignorant lose that which is concisely uttered : they must have it at large, in many words, and oft repeated, or else they understand it not, or remember not that which they understand. But yet a real excess of words even about holy things must be avoided. “ Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God : for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words be few : for a dream cometh through the multitude of business, and a fool’s voice is known by the multitude of words^g.” Two causes of idle words in prayer must be avoided : 1. Emptiness and rashness. 2. Affectation : that is, (1.) Affectation to words, as if you should be heard for saying so many words over and over, (as the Papists in their ‘ Jesus Psalter’ say over the name ‘ Jesu’ nine times together, and those nine times, fifteen times over, beside all their repetitions of it, in the petitions themselves between^h. So in the titles of the blessed Virgin, in her Litany, p. 525.) Hypocrites in all ages and religions have the same trifling way of devotion ; as Christ sheweth of the very heathen that used this way : “ But when ye pray use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking : be ye not therefore like unto themⁱ.” (2.) There is an affectation of length that causeth idle words in prayer ; when men think that it is for the honour of their parts to spend so much time, and speak so long together, or when their superstitious consciences in secret tie them to hold on

^f Job xxxv. 16. Saith Hugo, there is a time when nothing, and a time when something should be spoken ; but never a time when all should be spoken.

^g Eccl. v. 23. The Spartans banished an orator for saying, He could speak all day of any subject. Erasm.

^h See the Manual of Prayers printed at Antwerp. 1658. p. 507.

ⁱ Matt. vi. 7.

so long, and have not matter or affection answerable to fill up the time, no marvel if it be filled up with words that are too much guilty of vanity.

5. Another kind of idle talk is that which is purposely contrived to humour idle fancies, and recreate vicious minds, and pass away men's precious time: such are abundance of love-books, romances, plays and playbooks; volumes of vanity, and hours full of studied vanity (and worse): and such is much of the talk of feigned fools and jesters: vices which I can hardly express so odious as I apprehend them.

6. Another sort is a custom of inordinate jesting: this vein or disposition is so strong in some, that when they have a list to vent a jest, they cannot hold, but out it must come whatever it cost, and be it never so frivolous and vain^k.

7. Another sort is foolish talk, that hath not wit enough to make it edifying^l. And among idle talkers how much of it is foolish! How weary would it make a man to hear the talk of many babblers! How insipid is it! How sottish! Like the talk of a madman, or a drunken man, or a man in his sleep: it is far pleasanter not only to hear a bird chirp, but a swine grunt, than to hear much of their discourse^m.

Direct. 11. 'Understand also the aggravations of idle words, which of them are the greatest sins, that they may be most carefully avoided.' Though all idle words are sins, yet all are not equally sinful: the worst are such as these that follow.

1. When idle words are frequent, multiplied, and made their common talk and custom: which is the case of some men, but of abundance of loquacious women: whose natural disposition inclineth them thereto. One that hath but little wit, and much self-conceitedness, and passion, will have a torrent of words for a drop of senseⁿ. If they meet but with a person so patient and idle as to give them the hearing, they will sit a whole hour together with you, yea many hours, to tell you first how the affairs go between them and

^k Eph. v. 4.

^l Eph. v. 4.

^m See Prov. x. 14. xii. 11. xxviii. 19. 1 Pet. ii. 15. Prov. xv. 2. 14.

ⁿ Megabyzus, a great Persian lord, was told by Appelles, that while he was silent they revered him for his gold and rich attire, but when he talked of what he understood not, the boys in the shop laughed at him. Plutarch de Tranquil. Ani. p. 154.

their husbands, or children, or servants; and then talk of their cattle, house, or land; and then tell you of news, and enter into a long discourse of other men's matters, which they neither understand nor have any thing to do with: and next they talk of the weather: and then of the market, what is cheap and what is dear; and then they tell you what this body said to them, and what the other body said, and then they tell you a story of the old times, and how the world is changed, and how much better the former times were than these: then they tell you what wrong such a one did them, and what he said of them, and how bad this or that man is, and what they said or did amiss; and what the report of the country is of such and such; then they tell you what clothes such a one wears, and how fine and gallant such a one is, and who keepeth a good house, and who is niggardly and sparing: then they tell you what meat was at such and such a table or feast; and if they be at meat, they have something to say about every dish, and every sort of meat or drink; especially news takes up much of their discourse°. And it is well if in all this, the sermon of the preacher, or his prayer, or his life, be not brought in to fill up the empty places of the discourse; and it may be the King and his council, and his laws, and his doings shall be defiled by these parrots' unreverend prattlings, as well as meaner things and persons: so that as Theophrastus saith, 'He that would not fall into a fever, let him run from them with all the haste he can.' I should rather think it would cast one into the scurvy, if weariness be so great a symptom of it as they say. He that hath nothing to do in this world, nor any thing to do for the world to come; and that hath no use for his time, or wit, or tongue, or hands, but waketh as he sleepeth, and liveth as he must lie when he is dead; he that hath neither master, work nor wages, but thinks he is made to see leaves wag, or hear flies buzz, let him choose such a companion, and let him sit and hear such people chat. For my part, I can more easily endure to have them call me morose, or proud, or uncivil, or any thing; nay I had rather be digging, or ploughing, or rid-

° See Ezek. xxiii. 30. Sollius Apollinar. Sidon. in his description of K. Theodoricus saith that at his feasts, *Maximum tunc pondus in verbis est: quippe quum illic aut nulla narrantur aut seria.*

ding canals, than endure the tediousness of their discourses^p. Dionysius sent one to be put to death, for finding fault with his poetry; but called him again to try him once more: and the man rose up in the midst of his recitation, saying, 'Come, let me go to the gibbet,' as choosing to die rather than to be so wearied: I am not so impatient; but I should be glad if I could sleep well while I am tied to such company. And if I had one to send to school that were sick of the talking evil, the '*morbis loquendi*,' I would give (as Isocrates required) a double pay to the schoolmaster willingly, one part, for teaching him to hold his tongue, and the other half for teaching him to speak. I should think many such men and women half cured, if they were half as weary of speaking, as I am of hearing them. He that lets such twatling swallows build in his chimney, may look to have his pottage savour of their dung. Nay, though they may have some learning and goodness to season their discourse, their too much loquacity will make one's stomach turn against it; and the surfeit may make some queazy stomachs distaste even the more wholesome food. Pompey was so weary of Tully's talkativeness, that he wished he had been on Cæsar's side, for then he would have feared me (saith he), whereas now his familiarity wearied me.

Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat.

2. It is an aggravation of the sin of loquacity and idle talk, when it is done in a proud, self-conceitedness of your own wit, with an unmannerly contempt of others. This is the case of abundance that have not the manners or patience to stay till another man hath done his speech. They think others so long that their list will not hold till they come to the end. Yea many pretended learned men and disputants have this disease, that without any shame, or respect to order, or their own reputation, they are in such haste to answer, and talk themselves, that they cut off the speech of others in the midst, as if they should say, Hold your tongue, and let me speak that am wiser. And their excuse is, You are so long that I shall forget half before you come to the end. But if it be in disputation or about

^p *Difficile est cum iis durare qui neque otii neque negotii tempora distinguere norunt. Theophrastus.*

great matters, it is usually much more to the advantage of the truth and hearers, to speak all that necessarily must be considered together, in a continued speech: for the parts of truth have such a dependance one upon another, like the members of a body, or the wheels of a watch, that they are not understood disjunctly, half the sense of them being respective to the other parts. Therefore to deliver it (in such cases) by fragments, and chopping of words, and frequent interruptions one of another, is to chat or contend, and not to open the truth with the clearness and gravity which it requireth. These, therefore, that accuse others of speaking too long, to excuse their uncivil interruptions; may take their answer from Augustine, '*Absit ut multiloquium deputem quando necessaria dicuntur, quantalibet sermonum multitudine aut prolixitate dicantur.*' The huge volumes of Augustine, Chrysostom, Suarez, Calvin, yea Tostatus himself, are seldom accused of idle words. If you depute to each their equal share of time, a composed discourse is fitter and spareth time better, than interrupting altercations and exchange of words: and if your memory cannot hold all that is said, either take notes, or crave the help of some repetition, or answer the part which you do remember.

3. Idle talk is worst when it is about holy things, and tendeth to profane them: when men unreverently babble about the Scriptures, or controversies of religion: or when by fluent tongues men design increase of some faction, or propagating of some error, or the setting forth their parts. Saith Hierom (ad Nepot.) '*Verba volvere et apud imperitum vulgus admirationem sui facere, indoctorum hominum est: nihil tam facile quam vilem plebem et indoctam, volubilitate linguæ decipere, quæ quicquid non intelligit, plus miratur.*' Profane loquacity is the worst kind of loquacity.

4. Idle words are the greater sin when they are magnified and justified, and taken to be lawful, if not some excellent thing. As some unhappy scholars that spend whole days and months about some trivial, unnecessary studies, while Christ the wisdom of God, (or the subject of divine philosophy) is neglected: he that heareth some of their supposed critical curiosities, would say with Paul, "The

Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain¹. And if he compare their lives with their studies, perhaps he will remember, "They became vain in their imaginations: their foolish hearts were darkened, and professing themselves wise, they became fools²."

5. Idle words are an aggravated sin, when they are studied, and pompously set forth at great labour and cost, as a matter to be gloried in: as in plays and romances: worse than tobacco-houses where men sell smoke. The pleasure, the love, the labour, the cost, the time, the deceit, the temptation, the impenitency, are great aggravations of this sin.

Direct. III. 'Understand and consider the mischief of the sin of babbling, idle talk.' For the common cause of it is, that men take it to be so small a sin, that they think there is no danger in it; and therefore they fear it no more than a scratched finger.

1. (Besides the general evil mentioned Tit. 1. *Direct.* 1.) consider that much idle talk is a multitude of sins. Though one idle word were never so small a sin, yet when it cometh to hundreds and thousands, and is your daily, hourly custom, all set together cannot be small. Many thousand pence, is more than one shilling or pound. And your frequent custom of idle talk, may amount to a greater sinfulness, than Noah's once drunkenness, or David's once adultery, or Peter's once denying Christ. If a swearer should swear as oft, or a liar lie as oft, or a thief steal as oft, as many women (and men too) speak idly, what monsters should we take them for!

2. Idle talk excludeth all the good discourse, and edifying speech that should have been used all that time³. We have many greater uses for our tongues: you have your business to talk of, and your God, and your souls, and your duties, and your sins, and the life to come to talk of! O how many great and necessary things! And will you shut out all this edifying speech, by your idle chat? Will you hinder others as well as yourselves?

3. Idle talk is a sinful consumer of time: you have greater business to spend your hours in: if you saw what a

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 20.

² Rom. i. 21.

³ Col. iii. 16, 17. Ephes. iv. 29. Psal. cviii. 1.

world you are ready to go to, and saw how near you are to it, you would think yourselves that you had greater business than idle chat, to spend your time in. Do you know what you lose in losing all those hours?

4. Idle talk corrupts the hearers' minds, and tendeth to make them light, and vain, and empty, even as good discourse doth tend to make them good. Why do you talk to others, but to communicate your sense and affections to them by your words? And for all that many take it for a little sin, I am sure that it is not a little hurt that it doth. If men were not used to be entertained with so much vain discourse, they could not tell how to keep better things from their minds or mouths: nor would their thoughts be so habituated to vanity; nor would they make such returns of idle words; whereas one vain discourse begets another, and it is a multiplying and very infectious sin.

5. As your tongues are misemployed, so your wits and minds are dishonoured by vain talk. Even good words will grow contemptible when they are too cheap and common. A fiddler at the door goes but for a rogue, though music and musicians be honoured: whoever took a talkative babbler for a wise man? He that is 'logophilus' is seldom 'philologus,' much less 'philosophus'. As Demosthenes said to a prater, 'If thou knewest more, thou wouldst say less.' They seldom go for men of action and virtue that talk much: they that say much, usually do little: women, and children, and old folks, are commonly the greatest talkers (I may add, mad folks). Livy noteth, that 'soldiers that prate and brag much, seldom fight well:' and Erasmus noteth, that 'Children that quickly learn to speak are long in learning to go.' It is not the barking cur that biteth. Let it be the honour of a parrot to speak much, but of a man to speak wisely. The mobility of their tongues (an honour common to an aspen leaf), is all their honour, that can 'multis verbis pauca dicere,' 'say a little in a great many of words;' but 'multa paucis,' 'much in few words,' is the character of the wise, unless when the quality of the auditors prohibiteth it: and 'qui sunt in dicendo brevissimi,' if the auditors can bear it, shall be accounted the best

¹ Eccles. v. 3. 7. x. 12, 13. x. 14. Psal. xxxvii. 30. Prov. xvii. 27, 28. x. 20. xii. 18. x. 19. xviii. 4—6. xxi. 23.

speakers. I am not of his mind that said, 'He oft repented speaking, but never repented silence.' But, except they be ministers, few men have so much cause to repent of silence as of speech. '*Non quam multa, sed quam bene,*' must be the Christian's care. As one said of philosophy, I may much more say of religion, that 'though an orator's excellency appeareth only in speaking, yet the philosopher's (and the Christian's) appeareth as much in silence.'

6. Where there is much idle talk, there will be much sinful talk. "In the multitude of words there wants not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise." There are lies, or backbitings, or meddling with other folks' matters, or scurrilous jests, if not many such sins that go along with a course of idle talk: it is the vehicle in which the devil giveth his most poisonous draughts. Saith Lipsius, 'It is given to praters,' '*Non multa tantum sed male;*' 'to speak ill, as well as to speak much.'

7. Vain words hinder your own edification. Who knoweth if you would hold your tongues, but some one would speak more wisely, that might do you good*?

8. And you weary the hearers (unless they are strangely patient) when you intend to please them (or else you might as well talk all that by yourself). It is scarce manners for them, unless you be much their inferiors, to tell you they are weary to hear you, and to entreat you to hold your tongues: but you little know how oft they think so: I judge of others by myself: I fly from a talkative person, as from a bed that hath fleas or lice: I would shut my doors against them, as I stop my windows against the wind and cold in winter. How glad am I when they have done, and gladder when they are gone! Make not yourselves a burden to your company or friends, by the troublesome noise of an unwearied tongue.

9. Many words are the common causers of contention. Some word or other will fall that offendeth those that hear it; or else will be carried to those that are absent, and made the occasion of heart-burnings, rehearsals, brawls, or lawsuits. There is no keeping quietness, peace and love, with talkative prattlers; at least not long.

10. Are you not sensible what pride and impudency is

* Prov. x. 19.

* Prov. xxiii. 8, 9.

in it, when you think yourselves worthiest to speak? As if you should say, 'you are all children to me: hold your tongues, and hear me speak!' If you had Christian humility and modesty, you would in honour prefer others before yourselves. You would think yourselves unworthiest to speak (unless the contrary be very evident), and desire rather to hear and learn. As Heraclitus being asked, 'Why he alone was silent in the company,' answered, 'That you may talk.' So when you talk above your parts, it is as if you told the company, 'I talk that all you may be silent.'

11. It is a voluntary sin and not repented of. For you may easily forbear it if you will; and you wilfully continue in it; and therefore impenitency is your danger.

12. Lastly, consider how unprofitable a sin it is: and how little you have to hire you to commit it. What get you by it? Will you daily sin against God for nothing?

Direct. iv. 'If you would not be idle talkers, see that your hearts be taken up with something that is good: and that your tongues be acquainted with, and accustomed to their proper work and duty'. An empty head and heart are the causes of empty, frothy, vain discourse. Conscience may tell you when your tongues run upon vanity, that at that time there is no sense of sin or duty, or the presence of God upon your hearts: no holy love; no zeal for God; but you are asleep to God and all that is good; and in this sleep you moither and talk idly of any thing that cometh into your mind. Also you make not conscience of speaking of that which is good, or else it would keep out vanity and evil. Remember what abundance of greater matters you have to talk of! You have the evil of sin, the multitude and subtilty of temptations, and the way of resisting them, to talk of: you have your faults to lament, your evidences to inquire after, your mercies thankfully to open, the greatness and goodness, and all the attributes of God to praise: you have all the works of God to admire: even all the creatures in the world to contemplate, and all God's admirable providences, and government to observe: you

¹ Isa. xxxii. 4—6. Matt. xii. 34. 36. 2 Cor. iv. 13. John iii. 11. 1 John iv. 5. Prov. xvi. 23. Psal. xl. 5. Cant. vii. 9.

have the mystery of redemption, the person, and office, and life, and miracles, and sufferings, and glory, and intercession, and reign of Christ to talk of: and all the secret sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost; and all the ordinances of God, and all the means of grace, and all our duties to God and man, and all the holy Scripture; besides death and judgment, and heaven and hell, and the concernments of the church of God, and the case of the persons you speak to, who may need your instruction, exhortation, admonition, reproof or comfort: and is not here work enough to employ your tongues, and keep them from idle talk? Make conscience of those duties commanded. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, and may minister grace to the hearers, and grieve not the holy Spirit of God^a." "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ^a." "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God^b." Sinful omission of good discourse, is the cause of sinful commission of vanity. Specially when the heart itself is vain: for as a man is, so is he apt to speak. "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world^c." "For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord^d."

Direct. v. 'Walk always with God as in his presence, and in the awe of his laws and judgment, that conscience may be kept awake and tender^e.' You will be restrained from vain talk, if you perceive that God is hearing you, and if you remember that your tongue is under a law, and that "for every idle word men shall give account in the day of judgment^f;" and that by your "words you shall be justified or condemned." If the law of God were in your hearts^g, and hidden there^h, your heart would be fixedⁱ.

^a Ephes. iv. 29.^a Ephes. v. 18, 19.^b 1 Pet. iv. 11.^c 1 John iv. 5.^d Isa. xxxii. 6.^e Jer. viii. 6. Prov. vi. 22. Psal. lxxvii. 12. cv. cxiv. clxix. 11.^f Matt. xii. 36, 37.^g Psal. xl. 8.^h Psal. cxix. 11.ⁱ Psal. lvii. 7.

His word then would be the rejoicing of your heart^k, and your tongues would then be talking of judgment^l. A tender conscience will smart more with an idle word, than a seared, senseless conscience with an oath, or lie, or slander. For the "fear of God is clean^m," and by it "men depart from evilⁿ," "Be thou therefore in the fear of the Lord all the day long^o."

Direct. vi. 'Avoid idleness, if you would avoid idle talk^p.' The drones of the commonwealth, that have nothing else to do but visit, and compliment, and prate of other men's matters; and that can have while to sit whole hours together, upon no business, are they that are most guilty of idle chat. Idle gentlemen, and beggars, and idle, gossiping women, and old men that are void of the fear of God, and children that have no business to do, are they that can sit talking away their time, to as little purpose as if they had been all the time asleep. All idle persons swarm with the vermin of idle thoughts and words.

Direct. vii. 'If you would avoid idle talk, avoid idle talkative companions: or if you cannot avoid them, answer them not, but let them talk alone, unless it be to reprehend them, or turn them to more profitable talk^q.' For when you hear vanity, it will incline you to speak vanity: and these ungodly persons "speak every one vanity to his neighbour," as if their tongues were so their own, that no lord might control them^r. The philosopher could say, 'That which you would not hear, do not speak; and that which you would not speak, do not hear.' Most are like parrots that will ofttest speak the words which they ofttest hear. How hard is it to avoid idle talk amongst idle talkers? One vain word draws on another, and there is no end.

Direct. viii. 'Avoid vain works, if you would avoid vain words.' For a man that engageth himself in vain employment, doth lose all the words as vain which he useth about that employment. What a life then do they live, that have an unlawful calling? When their very business and trade is sin, the adjuncts, the words about it, must be sin, and so all their lives are a continued sin: I had rather therefore

^k Psal. cxix. 111.

^l Psal. xxxvii. 30.

^m Psal. xix. 9.

ⁿ Prov. xvi. 6.

^o Prov. xxiii. 17.

^p 1 Tim. v. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 15.

^q Garrulo non respondere convitium est.

^r Psal. xii. 1, 2, 5, 6.

be the basest drudge, than one of these men. Especially stage-players should think of this: and those that spend whole hours, yea, half days, if not nights, in gaming and vain or sinful sports, what abundance of idle words do they use about them: every cast of the dice, and every card they play, hath an idle word; so that a sober man would be weary and ashamed to hear them.

Direct. ix. 'Plunge not yourselves into excess of worldly business, as some do, that undertake more without necessity, than they can discharge:' for such necessitate a variety of thoughts and words. And all that are spent in serving them in those their vain employments, are vain; though the work for the matter of it be not vain.

Direct. x. 'Let not a vicious mind make that seem necessary or convenient which is vain.' Carnal hearts that are acquainted with no better things, think nothing vain that pleaseth their sensual inclinations, or which their carnal interest doth require. A man-pleaser thinketh civility obligeth him to observe his unnecessary visits and compliments, and to answer idle talkers, and not sit silent by them, nor contradict them: and so it must be a point of good manners to break the law of God: and as they think it uncivil not to pledge every drinker in his healths, so not to answer every twattler in his talk.

Direct. xi. 'Take heed of a proud, self-conceited mind that thinks too well of your own discourse'. Get but humility, and you will rather choose to hear, than to speak. But when all your fancies and impertinences seem some excellent matters to you, then you are with child till you are delivered of them, and then all must reverence, and silently attend your pride and folly; or be taken as neglecters of you for disregarding it.

Direct. xii. 'Avoid passion and passionate companions:' for passion is talkative, and will not be checked, but resisteth the restraint of reason, and multiplieth words which are worse than vain'.

Direct. xiii. 'Take heed of an inordinate, jesting vein': for it habituateth the mind to foolish levity, and knows no

* Prov. iii. 7. xvi. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 18.

* Prov. xiv. 17. xv. 18. Eccles. vii. 8, 9.

* Eccles. ii. 2. Eccles. vii. 6. Ephes. v. 4.

bounds, and breeds idle words, as thick as putrified flesh breeds vermin: and it is the greater sin because it is ordinary, and with a certain pleasure and pride, and glorying in vanity, and sinful levity and folly.

Direct. xiv. 'Understand particularly what service you have to do for God or men, in every company you come in, and so fit your words to the present duty and company*.' For those words are vain and inconvenient in one company, that are necessary or convenient in another. If you be to converse with the ignorant and ungodly, turn your discourse into a compassionate way of instruction or exhortation. If with men wiser and better than yourselves, inquire and learn of them, and draw that from them which may edify you.

Direct. xv. 'Affect not an unnecessary curiosity of speech, but take those for the fittest words, which are suited to the matter, and to thy heart, and to the hearers†.' Otherwise your speech will be studiously and affectedly vain: and you will glory in that as elegant, which is your shame. Hypocritical words that come not from the heart, are dead and corrupt, and are but the image of true speech, as wanting that verity and significancy of the mind which is their life. Words are like laws, that are valued by the authority, and matter, and end, more than by the curiosity and elegance: or like money, that is valued by the authority, metal, and weight, and not by the curiosity of its sculpture, imagery, or matter. All that is counterfeit, though curious, is vain.

Direct. xvi. 'Suppose you had written down the idle words of a day, (your own or any other prattlers,) and read them over all at night!' Would you not be ashamed of such a volume of vanity and confusion? O what a book it would be, that one should thus write from the mouth of idle talkers! What a shame would it be to human nature! It would tempt some to question, whether man be a reasonable creature, or whether all be so, at least? Remember then, that all is recorded by God and conscience; and all this hodge-podge of vanity must be reviewed and answered for.

The rest that is necessary for direction against idle words, you may find Chap. v. Part ii. in the Government of the

* Prov. xxii. 17. xii. 18. xiii. 20. xv. 2. 7. 31.

† You will else be but 'ingeniosi nugatores,' as one called him that wrote a great book on a little matter.

Thoughts, and in my book of "Self-denial." In a word, (for I must not commit the fault which I am reproofing,) account not a course of idle talk for a small sin. Never suffer so loose and slippery a member as your tongue to be unguarded; and never speak that of which you dare not say, as Psal. xix. 14. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be now and always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

But especially above others, these persons should watch against vain words: 1. Preachers, who are doubly, sanctified persons, and whose tongues being consecrated to God, must not be sacrilegiously alienated to vanity: which is worse than sacrilegious alienation of the places, or utensils, or revenues of the church. Hate it therefore more than these.

2. Ancient people, whose words should be grave and wise, and full of instruction to suppress the levity of youth: childhood and youth are vanity; but age should not be so*.

3. Parents and masters who should be examples of gravity and staidness to their families; and by their reproofs and chastisements should repress such faults in their inferiors.

4. Those that are better qualified than others, with knowledge and utterance, to use their tongues to edification. Vain speech is a double sin in them.

5. Those that are noted for persons of holiness and religion: for it is supposed that they pray and speak much against idle talk, and therefore must not themselves be guilty of it. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain*."

6. Those that are ignorant, and need much the edifying speech of others.

7. Those that live among wise and holy persons by whom they may be much edified.

8. Those that are among tattlers, where they know they have more need to watch their tongues, than their purses among cut-purses.

9. Those (women especially) that are naturally addicted

* 1 Tim. iv. 12. Job xii. 12. Eccles. xi. 10.

* James i. 26. See my sermon on that text.

to overmuch talk, who therefore should be the more watchful, as knowing their disease and danger.

10. Both empty and angry persons, who carry a continual temptation about them. All these should be specially watchful against idle talk.

And for the time, 1. Specially when they are among those that may receive most hurt by it. 2. And when you are going to holy duty, or newly come from it, &c.

Tit. 5. Special Directions against Filthy, Ribald, Scurrilous Talk.

Direct. i. The chief Direction against this filthy sin, is general; 'to get out of a graceless state, and get a heart that feareth God,' and then you dare not be guilty of such impudency: God is not so despised by those that fear him.

Direct. ii. 'Cease not your holy communion with God in his worship, especially in secret, and be not strange to him, and seldom with him. And then you dare not so pollute those lips, that use to speak seriously to God. What! talk of lust and filthiness with that tongue, that spake but even now to the most holy God! God's name and presence will awe you, and cleanse you, and shew you that his temple should not be so defiled, and that he hath not called you to uncleanness but to holiness; and that a filthy tongue is unsuitable to the holy praise of God: but while the rest of your life is nothing but a serving the devil and the flesh, no wonder if ribaldry seem a fit language for you.

Direct. iii. 'Cleanse your hearts of vanity and filthiness; and then your tongues will be the more clean.' It is a vain or unchaste heart that makes an unchaste tongue.

Direct. iv. 'Remember what a shame it is to open and proclaim that filthiness of thy heart which thou mightest have concealed.' Christ telleth us how to expound thy words, "that out of the abundance of thy heart, thy mouth speaketh^b." And what needest thou tell people that it is the rutting-moon with thee? and that lust and filthiness are the inhabitants of thy mind? If thou be not so far past all shame as to commit fornication in the open streets, why wilt thou there talk of it?

^b Luke vi. 45.

Direct. v. ‘Remember that filthy talk is but the approach to filthy acts.’ It is but thy breaking the shell of modesty, that thou mayst eat the kernel of the vomiting nut. This is the tendency of it, whether thou intend it or not. Canst thou be offended with him, that believeth thou dost that villany in secret, which thou talkest of openly? or that taketh thee to be preparing thyself for a whore? If the deed be bad, thy making a jest of it cannot be good.

Direct. vi. ‘Remember that thou biddest defiance to godliness and honesty.’ “Corrupt communication grieveth the Spirit of God^c.” Canst thou expect that the Holy Ghost should dwell and work in so filthy a room, and with such filthy company? Darest thou go pray or read the Scripture, or speak of any holy thing with those lips that talk of filthy ribaldry? Dost thou find thyself fit to go to prayer, after such discourse? Or rather dost thou not allow all that hear thee to think that thou renouncest God and godliness, and never usest any serious worship of God at all? And if thou do pretend to worship him with that filthy tongue, what canst thou expect in answer to thy prayers, but a vengeance worse than Nadab and Abihu’s^d? “Shall sweet water and bitter come from the same fountain^e?” Dost thou bless God and talk filthily with the same tongue, and think he will not be avenged on thy hypocrisy?

Direct. vii. ‘Consider how thou biddest defiance to common civility.’ Thou dost that which civil heathens would be ashamed of: as if thou hadst a design to reduce England to the customs of cannibals and savages in America, that go naked, and are past shame.

Direct. viii. ‘Observe what service thou dost the devil, for the corrupting of others:’ as if he had hired thee to be a tutor in his academy, or one of his preachers, to draw the minds of the hearers from modesty, and prepare them for the stews. Especially people can scarce have more dangerous wildfire cast into their fantasies, than by hearing rotten, filthy talk. And wilt thou be one of Venus’s priests?

Direct. ix. ‘Remember how little need there is of thy endeavour.’ Are not lust and filthiness so natural, and the minds of all unsanctified and uncleansed ones so prone to it, that they need no tutor, nor instigator, nor pander to

^c Ephes. iv. 29, 30. ^v 4.

^d Lev. x. 1—3.

^e James iii. 11.

their lusts? This fire is easily kindled : the bellows of thy scurrility are needless to make such gunpowder burn.

Direct. x. ‘ Presently lament before God and man the filthiness that thy tongue hath been guilty of, and wash heart and tongue in the blood of Christ; and fly from the company and converse of the obscene, as thou wouldst do from a pest-house, or any infectious, pestilential air.’ And if thou hear such rotten talk, reprove it, or be gone, and let them see that thou hatest it, and fearest God.

Object. ‘ But, saith the filthy mouth, I think no harm : may we not jest and be merry ?’

Answ. What! hast thou nothing to jest with but dung, and filth, and sin, and the defilement of souls, and the offending of God? Wouldst thou be unclean before the king, or cast dung in men’s faces, and say, ‘ I think no harm, but am in jest?’

Object. ‘ But, saith he, those that are so demure, are as bad in secret, and worse than we.’

Answ. ‘ What! is a chaste tongue a sign of an unchaste life? Then thou mayst as equally take a meek and quiet tongue to be a sign of an angry man : or a lying tongue to be a sign of a true man. Would the king take that excuse from thee, if thou talk treason openly, and say, ‘ Those that do not, are yet in secret as bad as I?’ I trow he would not take that for an excuse.

Tit. 6. Directions against Profane Deriding, Scorning, or Opposing Godliness.

To prevent the replies or excuses of the scorner, I must here tell you, 1. That by godliness I mean nothing but an entire devotedness to God and living to him : the doctrine and practice which are agreeable to the holy Scripture. I mean no fancies of mistaken men, nor the private opinions of any sect ; but the practice of Christianity itself.

2. And yet I must tell you, that it is the common practice of these scorners to fasten more upon the concrete, than the abstract, the person, than the bare doctrine, and to oppose godly persons as such, when yet they say that they oppose not godliness. The reasons of this are these : (1.) Because they dare be bolder with the person, than with the

rule and doctrine of God himself. If they scorn at the Bible, or at godliness directly, as such, they should so openly scorn at God himself, that the world would cry shame on them, and conscience would worry them: but as godliness is in such a neighbour, or such a preacher, or such a man, so they think they may reverence it less, and that what they do is against the person and not the thing.

(2.) In men they have something else to pretend, to be the matter of their scorn. Godliness in men is latent, invisible, unproveable as to the sincerity of it, and obscure as to the exercise. If he that scorneth a godly man say, 'He is not godly, but an hypocrite;' in this world there is no perfect justification to be had against such a calumny; but the probable evidence of profession and a godly life is all that can be brought. But godliness, as it is in Scripture, lieth open to the view of all, and cannot be denied there, but by denying the Scriptures themselves.

(3.) Godliness as in the rule or holy Scripture is perfect, without any blemish that may give a scorner a pretence: but godliness in men is very imperfect, and mixed with sins, with faults which the world may oft discern, and the godly themselves are most forward to confess: and therefore in them a scorner may find some plausible pretence. And when he derideth these professors of godliness as being all hypocrites, he will not instance in their virtues, but in their faults; as in Noah's drunkenness, and Lot's incest, and David's adultery and murder, and Peter's denying Christ: yet so as the dart shall be cast at piety itself; and the conclusion shall not be, to drive men from drunkenness, adultery, or any sin, but from serious godliness itself.

(4.) Godliness as in the rule, is to them a more unobserved, dormant thing, and doth not so much annoy them: for they can shut their Bibles, or make nothing of it, but as a few good words: but godliness in the godly, existent in their teachers and neighbours, is more discernible to them, and more active, and more troublesome to them, and so more hated by them. In a dead letter, or dead saint, that troubleth them not, they can commend it; but in the living they are molested by it: and the nearer it is to them, the more they are exasperated against it. The Word is the seed of godliness; which least offendeth them, till it spring

up and bring forth the fruit which condemneth their wicked lives.

3. And as opposers and scorers do usually strike at godliness through the person and his faults, so they use to strike at the particular parts of God's worship, through some modes or circumstances, or imperfections of men in the performance. It is not preaching or praying that they scorn, if you believe them, but this or that manner or imperfection in preaching and praying. But the drift of all is, not to help any man to do it better, but to make them odious that are most serious in doing it at all, and thereby to persuade men that it is a needless thing^f.

4. Note also, that it is not the image or dead part of religion that these men are most offended at and oppose; but it is the life, and zeal, and diligence of the godly. So that if they differ not from themselves in profession about any doctrine or ceremony, yet they hate and scorn them for doing seriously the same which themselves hypocritically profess.

5. Lastly, note also, that this is not a difference of one sect, or party, or church against another, upon differing opinions; but it is that which is among all parties within themselves, when there is any thing of serious religion to be found. Even among the papists there are some spiritual, serious, holy persons, who are derided and opposed by the profane that are of their own church. Yea, among the heathens, Seneca and others tell us, that strictness in moral virtue was made the scorn of the rude and sensual sort of men: but though the quarrel be but that which was taken up from the beginning between the woman's and the serpent's seed, yet in all countries where church differences cause contention, this serpentine enmity doth with serpentine subtilty creep in and make advantage of them, and take up the nick-names, or sharper weapons which differing Christians form against each other, to strike at the heart of Christianity itself^g.

^f Socrates inter loquendum sæpe, agente idorationis vehementiâ, jactare digitos^o solebat, ita ut à plerisque rideretur, et despectui haberetur: quæ tamen omnia æquo animo ferebat. Diog. Laert. in Socrat. lib. ii. sect. 21. p. 92.

^g Laertius's words are 'talitrum ferire solebat, et crines vellere.' (T. C.)

^h Si quis vero eorum mitior, et veritati aliquatenus propior, videretur, in hunc quasi Britanniæ subversorem omnium odia telaque sine respectu contorquebantur, et

Direct. 1. For the cure of those that are already infected with so heinous a sin, the chief Direction is, 'to understand the greatness of it, and the miserable consequents:' as followeth.

1. Consider what it is that thou deridest. Dost thou know against what thou openest thy mouth? 1. Thou deridest or opposest men for loving God with all their heart, and soul, and might: and dost thou not confess that this is the duty of all men living? and that he is not worthy to be called a Christian that loveth not God above all? Thou canst not deny this. And yet wilt thou oppose it? Deny it not; for this is the very thing that thou opposest: either men's loving God, or shewing their love to him. If thou didst but love him as much as they, thou wouldst seek and serve him as diligently as they. Dost thou not know this thyself, that if thou didst love him with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, thou wouldst seek, and serve, and obey him with all thy heart, and soul, and strength? If the godly do more than this, deride them and spare not. If they love God, and serve him with more than all the heart, and soul, and might, then call them righteous overmuch. If thou know any one that loveth God or serveth him more than he deserveth, blame and oppose that man and spare not. Thou knowest that what thou lovest most, thou art diligent thyself in seeking and remembering. Thou labourest for money because thou lovest it: and they labour in seeking and serving God because they love him: and is it a work for any but a devil, to oppose or scorn men for? for loving or shewing their love to God?

2. Thou deridest men for delighting in that which is most delectable: for delighting in high and heavenly knowledge, and in a holy state of soul and life; and for delighting in the law of God, and meditating in it day and night; and for delighting in holy prayer, and the praises of their Maker; and for delighting in the forethoughts and mention of eternal joys, and making their calling and election sure.

omnia quæ displicuerint, deoque placuerint, æquali saltem lance pendebantur, si non graviora fuissent displicentia. Gildas. p. 18. Josseline's Edit. Quod autem quædam de illo inbonesta et maligna jactantur, nolo mireris: cum scias hoc esse opus semper diaboli, ut servos Dei mendacio laceret, et opinionibus falsis gloriosum nomen infamet; ut qui conscientie suæ luce clarescunt, alienis rumoribus sordidentur. Cyprian. de Cornel. Epist. ad Antonian. Hæc et nos risimus aliquando. Tertul.

What is it but the exercise of these holy desires and delights which thou deridest? And wouldst thou not be as serious in religion and holiness as they, if thou hadst as much of these delights as they? Canst thou sit at thy pots, or follow thy game or sports, or talk of vanity many hours together, because thou delightest in them? and yet dost thou deride those that pray or hear God's Word opened to them many hours, because it is their delight? O poor souls! how quickly and how terribly will God acquaint thee, whether their delights or thine were the more rational and just! and whether their work or thine was more fit to be derided!

3. Thou scornest men for paying but what they owe to the God that created and redeemed them: are they not his own? and did he not give them all their parts and powers? and are not all their abilities and possessions his? What have they which they received not of him? And is this thy justice and honesty, to deride men for offering to pay their debts, and to give God his own? If thou know any one that giveth him more than he oweth him, deride that superstitious, over-righteous man, and spare not. But if men should not be derided for paying their debts to thee, deride not men for paying their debt to God, and giving him that which is his own. As we must give to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, so must we give that to God also which is God's.

4. Thou deridest servants for obeying diligently their highest master; and for doing diligently the greatest, best, and needfullest work in all the world. And is this a good example for thy own servants? Sure if a man should be mocked for serving God, he should be mocked more for serving such an one as thee. Dost thou know where we may find a better master, whom we may serve with better encouragement than God? He hath made us his stewards, and trusted us with his goods, and dost thou scorn us for being faithful in our stewardship? Thou deridest his subjects for obeying the king of all the world: and is this a good example to the king's subjects? should it be a matter of scorn to obey the king? or dost thou think that God's authority is less? or obedience to him less commendable?

5. Nay thou deridest men for doing but some part of their duty, and discharging but a little of their debt. For

the holiest man whom thou deridest for doing too much, doth less than what he ought to do. Thou knowest that the best of men do love God and serve him less than he deserveth; and that the carefullest come short of the perfect keeping of his laws: and yet wilt thou scorn men for doing so much, when they know, and thou confessest that they do too little? Could they do all, they did but their duty^b.

6. Thou scornest men because they will not set up themselves, their own wit, and will, against their Maker. God hath commanded them to "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure¹:" and to "strive to enter in at the straight gate^k:" and "day and night to meditate in his law¹:" and to love him with all their heart and might: and to "pray continually^m." And thou deridest men for obeying these commands! Why, what wouldst thou have us do man? should we tell God that we are wiser than he? and that he shall not have his will, but we will have our own? and that we know a better way than he hath appointed us? and that he is mistaken, and would deceive us by his laws? Wouldst thou have men thus to be voluntarily mad, and profess themselves open rebels against God?

7. Thou scornest men because they trust him that is truth and goodness itself. We cannot imagine that he can deceive us by his word, or that he maketh any law for us that is not good, or requireth any duty of us that shall be to our hurt, or that we shall be losers byⁿ. And therefore we resolve to obey him as carefully as we can, because we are confident that goodness itself will not abuse us, and truth itself will not deceive us: and is this a matter to be scorned for? should not children trust their father?

8. Thou deridest men for not sinning against their certain knowledge and experience. They know that a holy

^b Luke xvii. 10.¹ 2 Pet. i. 10.^k Matt. vii. 13.¹ Psal. i. 2.^m 1 Thes. v. 17.

ⁿ Malignity so blindeth the understanding that it maketh men ascribe all the evil that befalleth them, to that which is the only way to happiness: every bad success that the heathen Romans had, they imputed to the Christians: saith Paul. *Diaconus lib. 3.* when Radagusus the Goth invaded the Romans. *Pavor infinitus Roman invadit; declamatur a cunctis, se hæc ideo perpeti, quod neglecta fuerunt magnorum sacra Deorum: magnis querelis ubique agere: et continuo de repetendis sacris celebrandisque tractatur: fere in tota urbe blasphemie ad nomen Christi, tanquam Ives aliquæ, probis ingravantur, conducuntur a Romanis adversus Radagusum duo Paganæ duces, &c.*

life is best, though thou dost not: they know the reasonableness of it: they know the sweetness of it: they know the necessity of it°. And must they renounce their own understandings? must they be ignorant because thou art ignorant? and put out their eyes because thou art blind? Is it a crime for men to be wiser than thou? and that in the matters of God and their salvation? They have tried what a holy life is, and so hast not thou. They have tried what a life of faith and obedience is: and must they renounce their own experience? Must they that have tasted it say honey is bitter, because thou that never didst taste it sayest so? Alas, what unreasonable men have we to deal with!

9. Thou opposest and scornest men for loving themselves; yea, for loving their souls, and taking care of its health and welfare. For how can a man truly love himself, and not love his soul which is himself? And how can a man love his soul and not prefer it before the low concerns of his flesh? and not take the greatest care of its greatest everlasting happiness? Can a man truly love himself, and yet damn himself, or lose the little time in which he must, if ever, work out his salvation? You will not scorn him that is careful of your children, or your very cattle? You love them, and therefore are careful of them yourselves. And shall not he that loveth his soul be careful of it! To love ourselves is natural to us as men: and how shall he love his neighbour that loveth not himself?

10. Thou scornest men because they love heaven above earth, and because they are desirous to live for ever with God and all the holy hosts of heaven. For what is it that these men do so diligently, but seek to be saved? What do they but "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness?" "and labour for the meat" that perisheth not^p; and lay up their "treasure in heaven^q;" and set their "hearts there^r," "and seek the things that are above, and have their conversation in heaven^s." And if it be so

° Saith Chrysostom, As those that run or act in public games, besides the prize which they hope for, do much increase their strength and health by preparing their bodies for it: so besides the hopes of heaven, it is no small comfort and advantage here in the way, which Christians get by their holy lives.

^p John vi. 27.

^q Matt. vi. 20.

^r Matt. vi. 21.

^s Col. iii. 1—3. Phil. iii. 19, 20.

scornful a matter to seek for heaven, sure thou never thinkest of coming to heaven thyself: unless thou think to come thither by scorning at the seekers of it.

11. Thou deridest men because they are unwilling to be damned, and unwilling to do that which they know would damn them; or to neglect that without which there is no hope of escaping hell: they believe the threatenings of God, and therefore they think no pains too great to escape his wrath. They think a holy life is both a necessary and an easy way to prevent everlasting torment: but if thou think otherwise keep thy opinion till grace or hell shall make thee wiser; and mock at a man that will not play with his own damnation, and leap into hell as desperately as thyself.

12. Thou deridest men because they will not be the voluntary destroyers of themselves: were it not enough for thee to betray them unto others? or to murder any of thy neighbours thyself? but thou must wish them to do it with their own hands? and deride them if they will not? O cruel monster! that wouldst wish a man to lie in the fire of hell for evermore! and to go thither wilfully of his own accord! which is ten thousand times worse than to wish him to cut his own throat. Dost thou say, 'God forbid! I desire no such thing.' Why man, dost thou do thou knowest not what? Doth not he tempt a man to be hanged, that tempteth him to kill and steal? When the righteous God hath unchangeably determined in his law, that "without holiness none shall see God, and that Christ shall come in flaming fire to render vengeance to them that obey not his Gospel, and that all they shall be damned that obey not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness¹;" when God hath resolved that hell shall be the wages of ungodliness, dost thou not desire them to damn themselves, when thou desirest them to be ungodly? If thou believe that there is any hell at all, then tell me what it is possible for any man to do, to murder his soul and damn himself, but only to be ungodly? If this way do it not, there is no danger of any other. Tell me dost thou think the devil deserveth to be called a murderer of souls? If not, it seems thou wilt openly take the devil's part: but if he do deserve

¹ Heb. xii. 14. 2 Thess. i. 8—10 2 Thess. ii. 12.

it, then the reason of all the world be judge, whether that man deserve it not much more, that will do much more against himself, than the devil ever did or can do? The devil can but tempt, but thou wouldst have men do the thing that he tempts them to, and actually to sin, and neglect a holy life. And which is the worse: he that doth the evil; or he that only persuadeth them to it? If the devil be called, "Our adversary that like a roaring lion goeth about night and day seeking whom he may devour:" what should that man be called that doth far more against himself, than all the devils in hell do against him? Sure he is a devourer or destroyer of himself. Tell me, thou distracted scorner! Is the devil's work thinkest thou good or bad? If it be good, take thy part of it, and boast of it when thou seest the end. If it be bad (to deceive souls and entice them to sin and hell), why wouldst thou have men do worse by themselves? He that sinneth doth worse than he that tempteth. Tell me, what way doth the devil take to do men hurt, and damn their souls, but only by drawing them to sin? He hath no other way in the world to undo any man, but by tempting him to that which thou temptest men to: even to sin against God and to neglect a holy life. So that it is plain that thou scornest and opposest men because they will not be worse than devils to themselves.

13. Moreover thou opposest men for not forsaking God! What is it to forsake God, but to refuse to love, and honour, and obey him, as God? He hath told us himself that "He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." And is it not this diligent seeking him that thou deridest? It is plain then that thou wouldst scorn men away from God, and have them forsake him as thou hast done.

14. Thou scornest men for not being hypocrites: because they will be that in good earnest which thou hypocritically callest thyself, and wouldst be thought, thou callest thyself a Christian, and what is it but for being serious Christians that thou deridest them? Thou takest on thee to believe in God; and what is it but for obeying and serving God that thou deridest them? Thou takest

^a 1 Pet. v. 8.

on thee to believe the Scripture to be the Word of God. And what is it but for following the holy Scriptures that thou deridest them? Thou sayest thou believest the communion of saints; and deridest them that hold the communion of saints in practice. Thou sayest thou believest that Christ shall judge the world; and yet scornest them that are serious in preparing for his judgment. Thou prayest that God's name may be hallowed and his kingdom come, and his will be done, on earth as it is in heaven: and yet thou deridest them that hallow his name, and are subjects of his kingdom, and endeavour to do his will. O wretched hypocrite! And yet that tongue of thine pretendeth that it is their hypocrisy for which thou hatest and deridest them, when thou dost it because they be not such blind and senseless hypocrites as thyself! Can there be grosser hypocrisy in the world, than to hate and scorn the serious practice of thy own profession? and the diligent living according to that which thy own tongue professeth to believe! If thou say that it is for doing too much, and being too strict, I answer thee, if it be not the will of God that they do, though I would not deride them, I would seek to change them as well as thou! But if it be the will of God, then tell me, dost thou think they do more than those that are in heaven do? or do they live more strictly than those in heaven? If they do, then oppose them and spare not. If not, why prayest thou that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven?

15. Thou deridest men for doing that which they were made for: and that which they have their reason and will and all their faculties for: take them off this, and they are good for nothing: a beast is good to serve man, and the plants to feed him: but what is man good for, or what was he made for but to serve his Maker? And dost thou scorn him for that which he came into the world for? Thou mayst as well hate a knife because it can cut, or a scythe for mowing, or a clock for telling the hour of the day, when it was made for nothing else..

16. Thou deridest men for being saved by Christ, and for imitating his example. What came Christ for into the world but to destroy the works of the devil? and to save "his people from their sins"; and to redeem us from all

iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works *.” And hath Christ, to the astonishment of men and angels, come down into flesh, and lived among men, and given them his holy doctrine and example, and suffered death for them, and all this but to bring men to zealous purity, and darest thou make a scorn of it after this? What is this but to scorn thy Saviour, and scorn all the work of redemption, and tread under foot the Son of God, and despise his blood, his life and precepts?

17. Thou scornest men for being renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. What is the work of the Holy Ghost on us, but to sanctify us? And what is it to sanctify us; but to cleanse us from sin, and cause us entirely to devote our souls and lives to God? Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost or not? If thou do, what is that but to believe in him as the sanctifier of God’s elect? And what didst thou take sanctification to be, but this purity and holiness of heart and life: and yet darest thou deride it?

18. Thou deridest men for imitating those ancient saints, whose names thou seemest thyself to honour, and in honour of whom thou keepest holidays. Thou takest on thee to honour the names of Peter, and Paul, and Stephen, and John; of Augustine, Hierom, Chrysostom and other such saints of God: and yet wilt thou make a scorn of those that strive to imitate them? Search and see; if any of these men did, after their conversion, live in luxury, carding, dicing, profaneness, and if any of them were against a holy life, against much praying, hearing, reading the Scriptures, meditating, exact obedience to God; then let not the shame be thine, but mine. He that is most unlike them, let him have the scorn.

19. Thou deridest men for repenting of their former sin, and for accepting that mercy which Christ hath purchased, and God hath offered them, and sent his messengers to entreat them to accept. Can they repent of their former ungodliness, and not turn from it and amend? If thou knewest what they know, thou wouldst repent thyself, and not deride men for repenting: if thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst beg it, and gladly accept of it thyself, and not deride them that accept it.

* Matt. i. 21. Tit. ii. 12.

20. Thou scornest men for keeping that covenant, which thou also madest with God in thy baptism thyself. At the same time thou speakest against the Anabaptists, that will not have their children baptized, and deridest those that keep their covenant, which in baptism they made. What a monster of contradictions is an ungodly hypocrite! Didst thou not in baptism renounce the flesh, the world and the devil, and give up thyself in covenant to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? And dost thou not yet know what thou didst? but scorn them that perform it? What is it to be given up to God in baptism, but to take him for thy God, thy Saviour and Sanctifier, whom thou must love, and seek, and obey in holiness, with all thy heart, and soul, and might? He is a covenant-breaker indeed, that hates the keeping of it.

I have hitherto been showing thee what it is that thou opposest and deridest: I shall now tell thee further what thou dost, in shewing thee the aggravations of thy sin, and its importance.

2. Consider in all this, what an open enemy thou art to God, and an open soldier for the devil: what canst thou do more against God and do thy worst, than make a scorn of all his work and servants? He feareth not thy power or rage, thou canst not hurt him. How many millions of such worms as thou can he tread to hell, or destroy in a moment? It is in his servants and service that he is honoured or opposed here, and that mortals shew their love, or hatred to him. And how canst thou devise, if thou wouldst do thy worst, to serve the devil more notoriously, than by opposing and deriding the service of God? If such be not satan's servants, he hath none.

3. Consider what a terrible badge of misery, thou carriest about thee? thou bearest the mark of satan, death and hell in thy forehead as it were. If there were any doubt whether a swearer, or drunkard, or fornicator may be in a state of grace, yet it is past all doubt that a scorner of godliness is not: it were strange indeed for that man to be holy that derideth holiness: there is scarce any sort of men in the world, that are more undoubtedly in a state of damnation than thou art. It is dark to us what God will do with infidels, and heathens that never had the means of salvation:

but what he will do with all the unbelieving and ungodly that have had the means, we know past doubt: much more what he will do with those, that are not only void of holiness, but deride it. I deny not but yet if thou be converted thou mayst be saved: and O that God would "give thee repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" that thou mightest escape out of the devil's snares, who leads thee captive at his will. It is written of Basil, that by his prayers he caused the devil to give back a writing, by which a wretched man had sold his soul to him, that he might enjoy his master's daughter; and that the man repented and was delivered: if thou mayst be so recovered it will be a happy day for thee. But till then it is as sure as the Scripture is sure, that thou art a miserable creature, and an undone man if thou die in that condition that thou art in. O with what fear shouldst thou rise and lie down, if thou hadst thy wits about thee, lest thou shouldst die before thou art converted⁷.

4. To scorn at holiness is a defiance of grace, as if thou didst renounce God's mercy: thou dost thy worst to drive away all hope, and make thy case incurable and desperate. For if ever thou be saved, it must be by this grace, and holy life which thou deridest: and is scorning grace the way to get it? And is it likely that the Holy Ghost, will come and dwell in that man that scorneth his sanctifying works?

5. To scorn at godliness, is a daring of God to give over his patience, and presently to execute his vengeance on thee! Canst thou wonder if he should make thee a monument of his justice, and set thee up for all others to take warning by! Who is fitter for this, than the scornful opposers of his grace and service? Hasten not vengeance, man; it will come time enough. Will a worm defy the God of heaven?

6. How little dost thou understand of all that thou opposest? Didst thou ever try a holy life? If thou hadst, thou wouldst not speak against it; if thou hast not, art thou not ashamed, to speak evil of that which thou dost not understand? It is a thing that none can thoroughly know, without experience: try it awhile, and then speak thy mind.

⁷ Cyrillus Arrianorum Episcopus, Hunnericum Regem persuasit, non posse pacatum atque longævum obtinere regnum, nisi nomen perderet innocentium. Qui tamen Dei judicio post non multos dies turpissimæ morte præventus, scatens vermis exspiravit. Victor Utic. p. 369.

7. Didst thou ever consider how many judgments are against thee, and whom thou dost contradict and scorn? (1.) If thou scorn at serious godliness, at preaching, hearing, reading, praying, meditating, and strict avoiding sin; thou contradictest God himself; for none in all the world is so holy, or so much for holiness as he: and therefore ultimately, it is him that all thy malice is against: even God the Father, and the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier. (2.) Thou settest thyself against all the evidence of Scripture; (3.) And against all the works of God: for all conspire to call the world to holiness and strict obedience to God. (4.) And thou contradictest all the prophets and apostles, and all the ancient fathers of the church; and all the martyrs and saints of God that ever were in the world, and all the learned faithful ministers and pastors of the church that are or have been; and all the godly throughout the world; and all that ever had experience of a holy life: and what art thou, that thou shouldst scorn all these? Art thou wiser than all the ministers and godly persons in the world? than all the apostles and holy martyrs of Christ, that ever were? yea, than God himself?

8. Didst thou ever mark how unlike the speech of Christ and his apostles was to thine? Did they deride men for being too diligent, for the pleasing of God and saving of their souls? Read but these places following and judge. Matt. v. 8. 11. 20. vi. 33. 21. vii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. iv. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 11. i. 10. Heb. xi. 6. Matt. v. Rom. viii. 1. 5—9. 13. Phil. iii. 18, 19. Heb. xii. 28, 29.

9. Dost thou not thyself do as much for the world, as those that thou opposest do for heaven? Art thou offended that they preach and pray so long? Art not thou longer about thy worldly business? And are not gallants longer at a feast, or visit, or games and recreations? Art thou offended that they talk so much of heaven? And dost not thou talk more of earth? And which of these dost thou think in thy conscience, doth better deserve to be sought and talked of? Which will prove better at the last? And whose labour will be more worthy of derision?

10. What gain would it be to thee if thou hadst thy will, and praying, and preaching, and holiness were as much ban-

ished from the world, as thou wouldst have it? And if men to please thee should displease God, and cast away their souls for ever? Would it do thee good for earth to be so like to hell? It is the grief of godly men already, to think how little holiness is in the world: there is scarce a sadder thought that ever came into my heart, than to survey all the nations of the earth; and to think how ignorance and ungodliness abound, and how few there be that are truly holy; and what an inhuman creature is that who yet would have them fewer; and scorn out of the world, the little wisdom and piety that is left?—

And would it be any pleasure to thee in hell, if men should accompany thee thither to humour thee? Nay it would be thy everlasting torment, to see there so many for ever undone, by hearkening to thy wicked counsel. Say not, that thou art not so cruel, and it is not their damnation that thou desirest: no more is it thy own that thou desirest; but all is one as to the effect, if thou desire the way to it. Thou mayst as well give one man poison, and deride at another for eating and drinking, and yet say, it is not your death that I desire. But die they must, if they are ruled by thee.

11. Were he not a cruel man that would not do as much for the saving of his neighbour's soul, as that which thou deridest them for in the saving of their own? If thou wert sick, should I refuse to pray for thy life? Or if I knew that it might save another's soul, should I think any means or pains too much? If not, methinks I may be allowed to do as much for myself, as charity bids me do for another.

12. Is it a season to mock at holiness, when at the same time, there are so many millions of souls in heaven that all came thither by the way of holiness? And so many millions of souls in hell that all came thither for want of holiness? And while thou art prating against it, they are crying out in despair of the folly of their neglecting it! Would one of the souls in heaven regard thy mocks if he were to live on earth again? Or would one of the souls in hell be mocked thither, if they were but tried with another life? If thou sawest at this hour, what unholy souls in hell are suffering, and what holy souls in heaven enjoy, wouldst thou ever mock again at holiness? For shame consider what thou

dost ; and see by faith the things that mortal eyes behold not.

13. What if men should yield unto thy derisions, and forsake a holy life to please thee? Wouldst thou undertake to justify them or be answerable for them before that God, that required holiness, and will condemn all the unholily? Wouldst thou bring them off, and save them from damnation? Alas ! poor soul, how unable wilt thou be to save thyself? And wilt thou take them for wise men, if they displease the Lord, and go to hell to humour such a one as thou?

14. Thou wilt not thyself be mocked out of thy house, or land, or right, nor from thy meat, or drink, or rest : wouldst thou cast these away, if another should mock but thee for using them? I think thou wouldst not. And wouldst thou have wise men be mocked out of their salvation?

15. Thou wouldst not think it reasonable that thy children or servants be derided for loving or obeying thee? Or thy very horse dispraised for serving thee? And do they owe thee more, than we all owe God?

16. God highly honoureth them and dearly loveth them, for that very thing that thou hatest and deridest them for. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father : and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him^a." "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness : his countenance doth behold the upright^b." "The Lord loveth the righteous^c." "For ye are the temple of the living God : as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty^d." And darest thou scorn the sons and daughters of the Almighty? Even for that very thing for which he hath promised to receive them, and to be a Father to them? How contrary then art thou to God? "A book of remembrance was writ-

^a John xvi. 27. xiv. 21.

^b Psalm xi. 7.

^c Psalm cxlvi. 8.

^d 2 Cor. vi. 16—19.

ten for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name : and they shall be mine saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels : and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him *." and darest thou scorn God's jewels, and those that are thus precious to him ? " For them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed †." And wilt thou be one of his despisers, opposing that in others, for which God himself hath promised to honour them ?

17. To hate and scorn at holiness, is to hate and scorn at God's own image ; and the clearest image of God that is under heaven ; even that which Christ came down from heaven to give us the first draught of ; even that copy of the holy life of Christ, which by the Spirit of God is drawn upon the heart. And he that scorneth at this image of God, doth scorn at the Holy Ghost that made it, and scorn at Christ who gave us the first pattern, and scorn at God himself whose image it is. Saith Chrysostom, ' God is loved and hated in his servants, as a king is honoured or despised in his image.' And he that dare scorn God, and scorn Jesus Christ, and scorn the Holy Ghost, in the image of God upon his children, methinks should never have the face once to expect to be saved by the God that he doth scorn.

18. Thou art the shame of human nature ; and makest man so like a devil, that it is hard to prove that the devils can do much worse than thou ‡. Can there be a greater sin, than for a creature to scorn and deride the image and laws of his Creator ? And hate and oppose, or persecute men for obeying him, and seeking to please him, and to save their souls ? What couldst thou do worse if thou wouldst study to be as bad as thou canst ? What a shame is it to thy understanding to be so blind ? And to thy heart to be so wicked ? It were not half so great a shame to scorn the sun for shining, or the earth for bearing fruit ; for though these are God's creatures, yet they bear not the image of his holiness as his children do. When he will condemn men at last it will be upon this account. " Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you did it not (or did it) to one of the least of these (my brethren) ye did it not (or did it) unto

* Mal. iii. 16—18.

† 1 Sam. ii. 30.

‡ Quid homini inimicissimum ? Homo inquit, Martin. Dumiens. de Morib.

me^b." O wonderful, that the nature of man can ever come to this, to hate, and oppose, and scorn the image and obedience of his Maker, and make a mock of the holiness of God! It is a great question whether the very tempting men to such sins as these be not the devil's greatest sin: and to commit it is worse than to tempt thee to commit it (*cæteris paribus*). And for a man that hath a Saviour offered him, thus to scorn his Saviour's grace, and mock his servants, must needs be far worse than for the devil to do it who hath no Saviour, no pardon offered, and no hope, but is shut up under endless desperation. As it is worse for a child to curse his father, or scorn him, than for an enemy to do it. Think and tremble, how near this deriding or opposing the work of the Holy Ghost, doth come to the unpardonable blasphemy against him.

19. What villany may not be expected from thee, that canst commit such a sin as this? May not thy neighbour look for any mischief that thy carnal interest shall lead thee to do against him? Is it any wrong to thee to think that thou art a thief, a murderer, a whoremonger, a deceiver, unless it be for want of a temptation to commit them? Or that thou wouldst be a traitor against thy king and country? Or perfidious to thy truest friend, if thou wert tempted to it? When thou scornest men for obeying God himself! Can that man stick at any wickedness that he is equally tempted to, who dare scorn his Maker, the Redeemer and the Sanctifier? and spit contempt upon holiness itself, the image of his Judge? For my part if ever I trust thee or any such man as thou, with life or liberty, or with the worth of a groat, it shall be my interest and not thy honesty and conscience that I will trust; I will trust thee little further than I would trust the devil himself that governs thee.

20. Lastly, consider what thou wilt think of thyself for this at death and judgment^c. Will it comfort thee when thou art going to be judged of God, to think that thou art now going into the presence of that God whom thou wast wont to scorn? When thou seest Christ come with thousands of his holy angels to judge the world, will it comfort thee to think, 'This is he whose holy life, and precepts, and servants I mocked or persecuted on earth: now I must be

^b Matt. xxv. 40. 45.

^c Read well Jude 14, 15. Psal. i.

judged by him that I derided.' O dreadful case! for a scorner or persecutor of godliness, to go to be judged by that holy God whose ways he scorned and persecuted! If you say, 'It was not Christ but a man that you derided,' see Matt. xxv. 40. 45. Luke xix. 27. Acts ix. 4. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" If thou scorn a child for that in which he resembleth, imitateth, or obeyeth his father, thou wilt find in the day of judgment to thy woe, that it was the Father himself that was the utmost and principal object of thy scorn. Then I had rather be the vilest toad than such a man. Then wilt thou stand to what thou saidst? Wilt thou then maintain thy slanders and reproach? Wilt thou then condemn or scorn the godly, when thou seest them justified at Christ's right hand, or glorified with him in heaven? No! as Mal. iii. 18. When God makes up his jewels, "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." Then how gladly would you eat all the words of reproach and scorn, that ever you uttered against a saint; and wish that you had never spoken them! I tell you it is an unseemly thing for the same man now to scorn at godliness, who will so speedily tremble before the righteous God in the remembrance of it!

I have thought these discoveries of the horridness of this sin, to be the best Directions against it: for as it is a sin that thou gettest nothing by, so it is a sin that thou mayst easily leave if thou be willing. But for those that are yet but in the way to it, or in danger of it, I shall add these further Directions to keep them from so desperate a wickedness.

Direct. 1. 'Avoid the company of those distracted men, that dare revile the servants and ways of God.' There is that in your corrupted natures, which will incline you to imitate the most horrid blasphemies if you often hear them. We have seen it in our days, that in imitation of others, men have been drawn to sins not to be named: to drink healths to the devil, to make 'God damn me' an ordinary by-word. Be not therefore companions of them.

Direct. 11. 'Take heed of sinning yourselves into blindness of mind and hardness of heart.' Forsake not God lest you be forsaken by him. It is men forsaken of God that ordinarily come to this desperate degree of sin: insomuch

that the book of Homilies thus describing them, saith 'The third sort he calleth scorers, that is, a sort of men whose hearts are so stuffed with malice, that they are not contented to dwell in sin, and to lead their lives in all kinds of wickedness; but also they do contemn and scorn in others, all godliness, true religion, all honesty and virtue. Of the two first sorts of men, I will not say but they may take repentance, and be converted unto God: of the third sort, I think I may without danger of God's judgment pronounce, that never any yet were converted unto God by repentance, but continued still in their abominable wickedness, heaping up to themselves damnation against the day of God's inevitable judgment^k.' Though I take this to be too severe, yet it is the judgment of the church of England, and terrible to scorers that profess their assent to it.

Direct. 111. 'Take heed of scorning at the very circumstances or modes of worship which you dislike:' for such scorns come so near to the worship itself, that the minds of the hearers may easily be hence drawn to dishonour the substance for the sake of the derided mode or circumstance; and it plainly savoureth of a bold profaneness, which grave and sober Christians do abhor. In the case of idolatry, or where the very substance of the worship is impious and forbidden, I deny not but Elias may (sometimes, and with wariness) be imitated, who derided Baal's priests: but to do thus upon smaller differences in the manner or circumstances of worship, is the way to teach men to turn all religion into matter of derision and contempt. If you see about the king some circumstance of clothing, ornament, or attendance of his followers, which you dislike or judge ridiculous, if you look toward him with a scornful laughter, it will not excuse you to say, 'I laughed not at the king, but at such or such a thing about him:' for his presence should have restrained you from that which seemeth to be a deriding of him. So here, I know you will say, 'It is not at God's worship, but at such words or gestures of the minister that I scorn:' but take heed of dallying with holy things: play not so near the consuming fire: give not others occasion to deride the thing itself by your deriding the circum-

^k Hom. x. Part 2. cited before in my "Now or Never," p. 125.

stances, though they were unapt¹. Have we not seen, while factious Christians raise jests, and nicknames, and scorn against each other, how the profane and common enemies of religion do take them up, and turn them against all serious godliness, to the trouble of others and their own damnation? And we have had experience in these contentious times, that it is the sectaries and the profane that are apt to use these scoffs and scorn against the things and persons that they dislike; and that sober, peaceable, judicious men of all sides do abhor it. How unsavory and profane have all sober men thought it, when they heard some young and hot-brained persons mocking at the Common-prayer by the name of 'Pottage,' and at the surplice by the name of 'The whore of Babylon's smock.' And from hence the same spirit led them as proudly and bitterly to deride at ministers, universities, learning, temples, tithes, and all the appurtenances of worship: yea, at the Lord's day, and singing psalms, and preaching, and almost all the duties of religion: for when once men will pretend to strive for God, with the spirit and weapons of satan, and the world, and flesh, there is no stop till they come to the bottom of impiety, and do satan's work in satan's way: and so on the other side, while some have too reproachfully scorned such, as Precisians or Puritans, who differed from them about the form of church government and ceremonies, the rabble of the profane soon got advantage by it, and turned these words to so common and bitter reproaches of the godly, sober, peaceable people of the land, that Mr. Robert Bolton saith, 'I am persuaded there was never poor persecuted word, since malice against God first seized on the damned angels, and the graces of heaven dwelt in the heart of man, that passed through the mouths of all sorts of unregenerate men, with more distastefulness and gnashing of teeth, than the name of Puritan doth at this day: which, notwithstanding as it is now commonly meant, and ordinarily proceeds from the spleen and spirit of profaneness and good fellowship, is an honourable nickname, that I may so speak, of Christianity and grace².'

¹ Nicknames themselves are the great engines of the devil, and to be avoided. It was well with the church when there was no other name but Christians put by Christ's disciples on each other; though by the enemies they were scornfully called Nazarenes, and a sect, and heresy.

² Discourse of Happiness, p. 193.

See more cited out of him, and Bishop Downam, Bishop Abbot, &c., in my "Formal Hypocrite," pp. 210. 212. &c.

Direct. iv. 'Be very fearful of making the persons of the godly contemptible, though for their real faults, lest the ungodly easily step thence to the contempt of godliness itself.' For it is easy to observe how commonly the vulgar judge of the doctrine and religion by the person that professeth it. If a Papist or a Sectary live a holy life, take heed of making a scorn of their persons, notwithstanding thou takest the rise of thy derision from their mistakes: for even a mistaking saint is dearly beloved and honoured of God: and wherever holiness is, it is the greatest, most resplendent, and predominant thing in him that hath it^a: and therefore puts a greater honour on him, than any mistake or infirmity can dishonour him: as the person of a king must not be dishonoured by a reproachful mention of his infirmities, lest it reflect upon his office; so neither must the person of a holy man, lest it reflect on his religion. Not that any man's person should credit or secure his faults, nor that we should judge of the faults or manners by the men, instead of judging of the men by their manners: but you must judge of them by that which is predominant; and so blame their faults, as to preserve the honour of their virtues and religion, and of their persons for their virtues' sake. So blame the falls of Noah, and Lot, and David, and Peter, as may make the sin more odious, but not so as may make their persons contemptible, lest it make their religion next to be contemned. Mark here the difference between the mentioning of good men's falls, by the godly and by the ungodly. The godly mention them to make sin appear a thing more to be feared and watched against, and holiness to appear more excellent and necessary; but the ungodly mention them (and read them in Scripture) to make themselves believe that sin is not so bad and dangerous a thing as preachers tell them; and that holiness doth but little differ from a fleshly life.

Direct. v. 'Judge not of God's servants barely by report,

^a Flinys saith, that as pearls though they lie in the bottom of the sea, are yet much nearer kin to heaven, as their splendor and excellency sheweth; so a godly and generous soul hath more dependance on heaven whence it comes, than on earth where it abideth. A good saying for a heathen.

without some considerable acquaintance with them.' I cannot remember one of a multitude of the enemies, scorers, and persecutors of godliness, great or small, high or low, but such as never had the happiness to be well acquainted with them, by any familiarity; or observation of the secret passages of their lives: but usually they are such as know them but by report, or by sight, or small acquaintance. And if they did but live with them in the same houses, or were of their familiarity, it were the likeliest way to change their minds and speeches: unless their acquaintance were only with some of the more ignorant, passionate, or distempered sort of Christians.

Direct. vi. 'Take heed of uncharitableness and malice against any; but especially the servants of Christ.' For this blinds the judgment, and mads men with a venomous kind of passion, and will make them scorn and rage against the most holy servants of the Lord. The least true love to a Christian, as a Christian, would do much to the cure of all this sin.

Direct. vii. 'Take heed of being engaged in a sect or faction, and take heed of the carnal zeal of schism, and of the spirit of faction, which ordinarily makes men think it lawful, if not necessary, to scorn the persons that seem against them, that so they may disable them from hindering the interest of their cause or party.' Thus Papists, and thus——the factious ones of every party, think that their revilings are but the necessary disarming of the enemies of God (for such all must seem that differ from them:) and a stripping them of that honour by which they might do hurt. Thus good is pretended for the most odious evil, and God is set up against that love which is the fulfilling of his law; and made the patron of the scorers of his children: but surely he scorneth the scorers^o.

Direct. viii. 'Take heed of error and infidelity:' for if the understanding be once deluded, and take religion itself to be but a deceit or fancy, and godliness to be but conceit and hypocrisy, no wonder if it be made a scorn by such. And such scorers will justify themselves in it, and think they do no harm: so great a plague is a blinded mind.

I have said less against this devilish sin than the nature

^o Prov. iii. 34.

of it requireth, because I have already said so much, especially in three treatises, viz. "The vain Religion of the Formal Hypocrite:" that called "Now or Never:" and "A Saint or a Brute."

I conclude with these earnest requests to the godly: 1. Give men no occasion of scorn by your imprudence, scandal, selfishness, or passion, as you tender the honour of God and men's salvation. As Chrysostom saith, "As he that beareth the king's standard in fight had need to be well guarded, so he that carrieth the name and profession of God and godliness^p." 2. Be not discouraged by scorers: these are but easy in comparison of what Christ suffered for you, and what the scorers themselves must suffer.

CHAPTER X.

Directions for the Government of the Body.

PART I.

Directions about our Labour and Callings.

Tit. 1. Directions for the Right Choice of our Calling and ordinary Labour.

I HAVE already spoken of Christian works, and the duty of our callings, Chap. iii. Grand Direct. 10. ; and am now only to subjoin these few Directions, for the right choosing of your callings: for of the using of them I must speak more anon.

Direct. 1. 'Understand how necessary a life of labour is, and the reasons of the necessity.'

Quest. 1. 'Is labour necessary to all? Or to whom if not to all?' *Answ.* It is necessary (as a duty) to all that are able to perform it: but to the unable it is not necessary: as to infants, and sick persons, or distracted persons that cannot do it, or to prisoners, or any that are restrained or

^p Socrates cum fuisset à quodam calce percussus, admirantibus illius tolerantiam dixit; quid enim si me asinus calce impetisset, num illi diem dixissem? Diog. Laert. lib. ii. sect. 22. p. 92.