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**DIRECTIONS**  
**FOR**  
**WEAK CHRISTIANS;**  
**AND THE CHARACTER OF A**  
**CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN.**

**BY**  
**RICHARD BAXTER.**

---

**IN TWO PARTS.**

---

**WITH A PREFACE**  
**BY THE REV. H. J. SPERLING, A.M.**  
**RECTOR OF PAPWORTH ST. AGNES, CAMBRIDGESHIRE,**  
**AND CHAPLAIN TO THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS OF CHOLMONDELEY.**

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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A work of Baxter's needs no other introduction to the public, than the name of its author. Few, if any, of our religious writers, have been more generally and deservedly popular. But the very circumstance of Baxter's popularity as an author, and the consequent multiplicity of his writings, has caused some of his works, which were valuable enough to have given celebrity to other names, to remain partially overlooked. This has been the case, to a certain extent, with the *Treatise* which is here presented to the public. No new edition of it has appeared for many years ; and in consequence of the scarcity of copies, it has not been sufficiently known to be properly appreciated. It is one of a series of works which, as Baxter informs us, he was recommended to undertake by Archbishop Usher, the first of them being the " *Call to the Unconverted*," and the others relating to the practical exercise of religion in the heart and life. The ministerial usefulness of Baxter, and his great experience as a shepherd of Christ's flock, qualified him beyond any man of his day to do justice to these subjects. Accordingly he wrote as " one that had authority," or as one standing on an eminence, from whence he could discern all the inequalities, the windings, the deceptions, and false appearances, of the human heart.

This work was dedicated to Baxter's flock at Kidderminster, amongst whom he had preached the word of life with the zeal of an apostle, both publicly and from house to house, during sixteen years. The substance of it had been delivered to them from the pulpit. After eight years of involuntary absence, he thus renews his religious instructions, and presses upon their notice the important truths which he had formerly taught amongst them being present, that now much more "in his absence they might work out their salvation with fear and trembling." He mournfully, but affectionately, recalls to their remembrance the years which he had spent in their society; speaks of the comfort he had enjoyed in ministering to them; and declares his sorrow \* at not being permitted to continue his labours amongst them at a time when his greater experience would have rendered him more useful. Then he entreats them to receive the word of exhortation, that they might grow in grace, and be preserved unto the kingdom of their blessed Master.

The directions, though dedicated to Baxter's former flock, are not less applicable to Christians in general. The work is full of deep thought, wisdom, and experience. He unfolds the secret workings of the heart, as one who had long and accurately observed what had passed within himself, and describes all the forms and indications of spiritual disease, as a physician who has often and successfully prescribed for them. He speaks

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\* So attached was he to his flock at Kidderminster, that he made every exertion to continue amongst them. Whilst he refused a bishopric, he entreated to be permitted to retain this cure; and when this was denied him, he offered to be the curate of the vicar, with or without any pecuniary allowance for his services, or to serve there on any terms.

as one who understood the important duties of a minister of Christ, and had been long accustomed to feed the flock committed to his charge. He had for himself fully and irrevocably chosen the service of God, as his duty, his portion, and his pleasure. His soul was possessed by a solemn and overwhelming feeling of the importance of eternal things; and, therefore, when he speaks of them, it is the voice of one who has tasted the grace of God, and is so filled with its sweetness as to feel a holy indignation and surprise at the folly of those who reject it. He reasons with you, he exhorts, encourages, charges you to live as those who have received mercy, and who look to be companions of angels, and to dwell with God in glory. Himself rejoicing in the service of God, he invites you to join in the work of prayer and praise. As one who has himself entered into the sanctuary of God, he anxiously exhorts his fellow-Christians not to remain without, or to loiter near the entrance, but to come in and partake of the rich mercies, the overflowing refreshments, prepared for those who, casting away every wish of returning to the world, desire to "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The period at which this treatise was published, gives additional interest to the objects which the author had in view. He saw and deplored the low ebb of religion amongst the great body of professing Christians, and anxiously desired to do what he could to fan the expiring embers, and rekindle the "love of many which had waxed cold." In his early life the flood-gates of iniquity had been opened, and the bands which hold society together had been severed; and wicked men, acting under the garb of piety in the pursuit of their selfish and ambitious projects, had inflicted a deadly wound upon that religion which they dishonoured by

professing. In his later life it had become the purpose and system of a depraved government (as if such wickedness could be the means of its future security) to corrupt, persecute, and banish those vital principles of religion to which it falsely attributed the overthrow of the British monarchy. Thus in the midst of bad examples, a powerful corrupting influence, and that re-action of popular feeling which had become impatient of every thing of religion but its outer forms, it is not surprising if many halted in their christian course, and many more walked not uprightly according to the truth of God. A melancholy picture of the state of religion in those times is presented to us by the excellent Howe. He observed the growing deadness to religion in the generation which had risen up, and as one after another of his fellow-labourers, like the elders who outlived Joshua and restrained the wickedness of Israel, was called away, he mourned over the sinking cause of truth, and almost prophetically declared that the Spirit of God was retiring, and a "deadly darkness was drawing on."\* In such times as these did Baxter put forth all his energies to stir up the faith of his fainting brethren, and to exhort those who were growing cold to "remember their first love." He saw the standard of christian practice daily lowered, and therefore redoubled his efforts to rally round him those who were still faithful to their Lord and Saviour. He endeavoured to make them ashamed of that coldness, and carelessness, and love of the world, which was grieving the Spirit of God, and injuring the cause of truth. With this as his object, he enters upon the practical examination of the duties of religion, directs Christians how to proceed in

\* Howe's Funeral Sermon for Dr. Bates—near the conclusion.

the various circumstances of life, happily for themselves, and to the benefit of others; and then urges them, by every possible argument, to walk as it becomes their high and heavenly calling. He exhorts his weaker brethren to greater diligence in religion, and shows them the misery of that wavering and doubtfulness which shuts out the glorious light of God's countenance, and makes the very liberty of the children of God a state of bondage. He would by no means suffer them to linger on the borders of Christianity, but bids them enter this fair land of promise, "go up and down in the length and breadth thereof," taste of its abundance, and rejoice in its excellency.

The arrangement of the work is not such as would have been adopted by a writer of the present day; it is sometimes overcharged with the machinery of divisions and distinctions. But this is a trivial fault, for which large amends are made by the accuracy of detail with which the author treats his subject.

The plain and expressive title of the work is not such as would have been selected by an author of the present day. Whether it be refinement or fastidiousness which in our times withholds men from speaking the truth in plain words, another generation will be the competent judge. In the mean while we have no right to find fault with Baxter for the faithfulness and simplicity with which he addresses his advice to those who most stand in need of it. There are few, indeed, who are willing to be considered weak and childish in spiritual matters, or who feel the diseases of their souls so painful and burdensome as to compel them to apply to a physician, and faithfully make use of his remedies. This unwillingness to come and be healed of our sicknesses, is what keeps us in a weak and fainting state;

this fear of being thought children, that which makes us continue in all the imbecility of childhood. If we would learn any thing from the holy man whose name is prefixed to these pages, we must not shrink from being considered weakly or childish, and insufficient, whilst he lays open the causes of our weakness, of our frequent fallures in duty, of our want of stedfastness and holy affection ; whilst he tells us why we find so little pleasure in the ways of God, and shows us how we may attain to a more confirmed and happier state of mind.

The first part is an address to weak Christians, showing them the ill effects of resting satisfied with their low attainments, and urging them to growth in grace ; and this is concluded by specific directions for the regulation of their conduct. The second part is the portraiture of the true confirmed Christian. It is drawn in contrast with that of the weak Christian, and the hypocrite, or seeming Christian. It embraces a great many particulars, in which the comparison is instituted. Thus whilst he exhibits the character of the real Christian in every circumstance of life, and shows what manner of person he is in his conduct and principles before God and man, he tears away the mask from all false pretenders to religion, and proves to them the emptiness of their vain professions. At the same time he manifests a deep concern for the weakest Christian who holds the truth in sincerity, lest he should "bruise the broken reed, or quench the smoking flax."

With regard to this new edition, one observation must be made. It has been deemed advisable to make substitution for a few obsolete words, where either they were such as would not be understood by the majority of readers, or had acquired a different meaning from that in which they were used by the author. Scarcely, however, has

one genuine English word been erased ; Baxter, it may be observed, knew well the force of his native tongue, and although at times somewhat slovenly in style, availed himself of its resources. Besides, a few sentences have been omitted for various reasons, stated where the omission occurs. But these are so few as scarcely to deserve mention, unless it be that an omission has been made at the very beginning of the work, because the line of illustration which runs through it is ill adapted to the taste and manners of the present day.

Baxter appears to have been apprehensive, lest he should be accused of exposing to the world the faults and weaknesses of Christians. To speak of them was necessary to his plan. Nor does he ever make mention of them in any other temper, than that of one who deeply deplored their existence. He mourns as a father over the weaknesses of his children, and labours hard to persuade them to apply the proper remedies. He is actuated by the same spirit as the apostle, who, when speaking of certain opposers of the truth, thus expressed his deep feeling for them : " Of whom I tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." It was an essential part of his plan to point out the evils which affect the church of God, through the failings of weakly and unstable, though sincere Christians, as well as through the wickedness of false professors, who had been the means (alas ! too fatally in those days) of bringing odium upon the cause of religion itself. To attribute these faults and failings of professing Christians, which arise only from their imperfect reception, or absolute rejection of the vital principles of the faith of Christ, to that faith itself, is a perversion of reason. Never let them be charged upon religion, until some of its precepts can be proved to

countenance them. As well may you lay to the door of learning the ignorance of the ill-instructed, or blame the sun because it shows the motes that are dancing in its rays. Our holy religion condemns these faults, declares their proper character as hateful in the sight of God, and whilst it speaks of pardon to the penitent sinner, it hides not the guilt of his offences, or extenuates their aggravated character. It is no part of the object of the word of God to spare the pride of human nature, or to hide any of its delinquencies. The Holy Spirit shrinks from thus, as it were, making himself a participator in human transgression, by covering up or excusing the sins of even the best of men. No: let them be known, let them be eternally recorded, but let not the holiness of God be dishonoured. Rather, as says our author, "a Noah, an Abraham, a Lot, a David, a Solomon, a Peter, shall be dishonoured by God in holy record to all ages, that God may not be more dishonoured by them." God has no need of concealments and palliations in order to recommend his service amongst mankind. His law stands directly opposed to all sin; nay, the very essence of sin is in the transgression of his law; and, therefore, he at once disowns and protests against the wicked actions even of his most faithful servants and children, lest any should imagine that he was not of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Nor is it for them to murmur because his holy nature so condemns their sins. If you have the sincerity of the apostle, who having sinned "went out and wept bitterly," you will be content with him to confess your transgression, and make what reparation you can for the wrong you have inflicted upon the cause of God. It is a bad sign for us when we are more susceptible of the honour which cometh from man, than the honour which cometh



from God, and had rather that an imputation should be fastened upon religion than upon ourselves. Let there be a marked line of distinction ; let it ever be declared, that the faults, the failings, the weaknesses, the evil tempers of Christians, have no connexion with the holy religion which they profess. That they are not freer from these corruptions is truly lamentable, when we consider the heart-stirring motives by which they are influenced. But whenever these flaws in the character of Christians can be discerned, let them be only charged (where the fault lies) upon poor human nature, which is so slow in choosing the things of God, and so irresolute in pursuing them even after it has experienced their excellency. The practical rule is very simple, that, following the example given in Scripture, we attempt not to defend the failings of Christians, and still less our own ; and that, instead of being solicitous to diminish their flagrancy, we be ready to confess it, and declare how opposed they are to God, his truth, and his laws. We must, in fact, love the honour of God and religion, better than our own honour, or that of those who are dearest to us. Let Baxter be judged on this principle ; it is that upon which he has acted in the composition of this treatise.

So much with reference to the nature of this work : may its re-publication be useful. Not a few of the lessons it teaches are peculiarly applicable to the present day. Christians are still exposed to the same temptations, and subject to the same weaknesses ; and there is a remarkable similarity between the besetting sins of this our age, and that of Baxter. It is lamentable that one generation should not be wiser from the failures of that which went before. But such is the fact ; in every page of the history of human nature, we find that expe-

rience is discarded ; and that the poor creature which is blind to the future, is scarcely less blind from its inconsideration to that which has gone by. Otherwise, the saying of the wise man, or rather of the Spirit of God, would not be fulfilled, " that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been."

But with respect to the service of God it ought not to be so. The failures of to-day ought not to be the failures of to-morrow ; our weakness and irresolution ought not to be perpetual. Our zeal for God's glory should be increasing, burning with a steadier light ; our love to him more constraining ; our charity more diffusive ; our faith more powerful and pervading in its influence. We should remember, that since our privileges as Christians are great and honourable, since we regard ourselves as the children of God, and as in that relationship " crowned with glory and honour," sin in us has more of a disgraceful and aggravated character. In proportion as we are brought near the holy presence of God should sin be put away from us ; and whilst we rejoice in hope of seeing the glory of God, and of being promoted to a higher order of being, we are bound to live in accordance with our future expectations.

It seems a mysterious circumstance respecting Baxter, and many of his contemporaries, men who, both within and without the pale of the Church of England, formed, so to speak, the Augustan age of English divinity ; that, distinguished as they were by talents and piety, they should in their day and generation have spent their strength almost in vain, and laboured to little purpose. But though their labours seem to have been blighted for a season, whilst the withering blast of infidelity passed over them, and intolerance and party spirit swept away the kindly influences of christian charity ; yet now,

at length, has the Lord of the harvest prospered the work of their hands, and made the seed, which was so slow in vegetating, productive of abundant increase. Many are the instances in which the works of these holy men have been blessed to the conversion of sinners; and many are the Christians whom they have been the means of instructing and building up in their most holy faith. So may it be with the work which is now re-issued from the press; may the Divine blessing prosper it, to the edification of many. Thus will the object of him who ventures to commend it to the reconsideration of the public, and introduce it to a new generation, be fully accomplished.

LATENBURY HILL,  
*March 3, 1835.*



## RICHARD BAXTER'S PREFACE.

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READERS,

THAT you may neither misunderstand this book nor me, I owe you this pre-advertisement, that it was preached in a lecture at Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, about seven or eight years ago (1658): that the sad experience of the distempers of weak well meaning people, though not in that place, yet in those times (especially of those who ran after the most gross deceivers, distracted the churches, reviled, afflicted, and busily attempted to pull down the pastors, and actually pulled down the higher powers, whom God forbad them to resist,) was the chief occasion of the preaching of these sermons: and that the special reasons for my publishing them now, are these that follow. 1. Because I perceive not that yet people are sufficiently humbled for those miscarriages, or have yet well found out their sins, which by many and sore judgments have found them out. 2. Because I perceive that it is too ordinary to speak to weak Christians only by way of comfort, and too rare to show them the evil of their distempers; and that the very terms are used as if they imported nothing, but what is to be loved or tenderly gainsayed: and most that hear themselves called "weak Christians" do take it for a word of honouring pity, and feel in it no humbling matter of reproof; as if the comfort of being a living man did nullify the trouble and pain of

infancy, of a lethargy, a leprosy, a fever, gout, or stone. The scandals which have dishonoured religion in this age, do tell us that it is not all a preacher's work to convince and convert the infidels and profane ones, but that much of it lieth in detecting hypocrisies, and humbling the weak, and healing their distempers, and saving and raising them from their falls. The thoughts of the case of such Christians as these did tempt Augustine once to doubt whether there were not a purgatory; it seemed so hard to him to believe, either that men who in the rest of their lives were godly and honest, should go to hell, or that men so guilty of particular crimes and scandals (of which their ignorance and error kept them from repenting) could go straight to heaven: and no doubt but it was the heinous sins and great distempers of men professing godliness, which caused human reason to invent and entertain this doctrine of purging-pains; but when God hath cast men into many purgatories, and yet they repent not, I fear it threateneth worse than purgatory. 3. Moreover I remembered the request of that learned, pious, peaceable Abp. Usher, which I mentioned in the Preface to my Call to the Unconverted; according to which I had before published, 1. That Call. 2. Directions against miscarrying in the work of Conversion. 3. And this I intended for the third part when I began it, but was hindered from bringing it to the purposed perfection, (the fourth part, being Directions for Peace of Conscience, being extant long before.) 4. But that which since urged me to this publication was, that the last sermon which I preached publicly was at Blackfriars, on this text, Col. ii. 6, 7; and presently after, there came forth a book called Farewell Sermons, among which this of mine was one. Who did it, or to what end I know

not, nor doth it concern me to inquire ; but I took it as an injury, both as it was done without my knowledge and against my will, and to the offence of my superiors ; and because it was taken by the notary so imperfectly, that much of it was nonsense ; especially when some foreigners that lived in Poland, Hungary, and Helvetia, were earnest to buy this with the rest of my writings, I perceived how far the injury was like to go, both against me and many others of my brethren. Therefore finding since, among the relics of my scattered papers, this imperfect piece which I had before written on that text, I was desirous to publish it, as for the benefit of weak Christians, so to right myself, and to cashier that farewell sermon.

If the reader will but peruse these directions impartially, and read them as he doth the prescripts of his physicians, which are not written merely to be read, but must be daily practised, whatever it cost him, as he loveth his life ; then I make no doubt, notwithstanding the weakness of the composure, but it may further the cure of his spiritual weaknesses and distempers, and of the consequent troubles and losses of others and himself. I hope I shall not meet with many, besides malignant hypocrites, who will be so impenitent and peevish, as to fly in the face of the reprover and director, and say that I open the nakedness of many servants of Christ, to the reproach and dishonour of religion. I have told you from the word of God, that it is God's way, and must be ours, to lay the just dishonour upon the sinner, that it may not fall upon religion and on God : and that the defending or excusing odious sins, in tenderness of the persons who committed them, is the surest and worst way to bring dishonour (first or last) both upon religion and on them. A Noah, a Lot, a David, a

Solomon, a Peter, &c., shall be dishonoured by God in holy record to all ages, that God may not be more dishonoured by them; and the truly penitent are willing that it should be so, and account their honour a very cheap sacrifice to offer up to the honour of religion, which they have wronged. And till you come to this, you come short of true repentance. He that defendeth his open sin (unless he could deny the fact) doth as bad as say "God liketh it; Christ bid me do it; the Scripture is for it, or not against it; religion taught it me, or doth not forbid it me; the godly allow it, and will do the like." And what can be said more blasphemously against God, or more injuriously against religion, the Scriptures, and the saints? But he that confesseth his sin, doth as good as say, "Lay all the blame on me who do deserve it; and not on God, on Christ, on Scripture, on religion, or on the servants of God: for I learned it not from any of them, nor was encouraged to it by them—none are greater enemies to it than they; if I had hearkened to them, I had done otherwise." It is one of the chief reasons why repentance is so necessary, because it justifieth God and godliness.

And, alas! it is too late to talk of concealing those weaknesses and crimes of Christians, which are so visible before all the world; which have had such public effects upon churches, kingdoms, and states; which have kept almost all the christian churches in a torn and bleeding woful state, for so many hundred years, to this present day; which have separated the churches of the east and west, and defiled both, and have drawn so much blood in christian countries, and keep us yet like distracted persons, gazing strangely at our nearest friends, and running away, by peevish separation, from our brethren, with whom we must live in



heaven ; and mistakingly using those as enemies, with whom (if we are Christians, as we profess) we are united in the same Head, and by the same Spirit, which is a Spirit of love. In a word, when our faults are so conspicuous as to harden the infidels, heathens, and ungodly, and to hinder the conversion of the world ; and when they sound so loud in the mouths of our common reproaching enemies ; and when they have contracted so much malignity as to refuse a cure, by such wars, divisions, church desolations, plagues, and flames as we have seen ; it is then too late to say to the preachers of repentance, “ Be silent, lest you open the nakedness of Christians, and disgrace religion and the church.” We must not be silent, lest we disgrace religion and the church to save the credit of the sinners.

Whoever readeth the holy Scriptures, and ever understood the christian faith, must needs know that nothing in all the world is so much against every one of our errors and misdoings. It is only for want of more religion, that any professors of religion do miscarry : nothing but the doctrine of Christianity and godliness did at first destroy the reign of their sin ; and nothing else can subdue the rest, and finish the cure. It is no disgrace to life that so many men's lives are burdensome with sickness, which the dead are not troubled with ; nor is it any disgrace to learning, that scholars (for want of more learning) have troubled the world with their contentious disputes ; nor is it any disgrace to reason, that men's different reasons (for want of more reason) doth set the world together by the ears. We can never magnify you enough as you are Christians and godly, unless we should ascribe more to you than your bounteous Lord hath given you, who hath made you little lower than angels, and crowned you with

glory and honour, (Psal. viii. 5, 6.) But your sins are so much the more odious, as they are brought so near the holy presence, and as they are aggravated by greater mercies and professions : and God is so far from being reconciled, or reconcilable, to any one of them, that though he see not such iniquity in Jacob, as is in heathens and the ungodly, (because it is not in them to be seen,) yet he seeth more aggravated iniquity in such sins as you do commit, in many respects, than in the heathens. And that which is our common trouble is, that you hurt not yourselves alone by your iniquities ; families are hurt by them ; neighbours are hurt by them ; churches are distracted by them ; kingdoms are afflicted by them ; and thousands of blind sinners are hardened and everlastingly undone by them. The ignorant husband saith, " I will never follow sermons nor Scriptures, nor be so religious, while I see my wife that maketh so much ado with religion, to be as peevish, and discontented, and foul-tongued, and unkind, and contemptuous, and disobedient, as those that have no religion." The master that is profane saith, " I like not your religion, when that servant which most professeth religion in my house, is as lazy and negligent, and as surly and saucy, and as ready to dishonour me and answer again, and as proud of his little knowledge, as those that have no religion at all." The like I might say of all other relations. All the dishonour that this casteth upon grace is, that you have too little of it ; and it is so weak in you, that its victory over your flesh and passions is lamentably imperfect. A servant hearing a high commendation of a gentleman, (that he was of extraordinary wisdom, and godliness, and bounty, and patience, and affability, and what not,) did think with himself, how happy a man were I, if I could but dwell

in this man's house, which at last he procured, but ere long went away. His friend meeting him, asked him how he came so quickly to forsake his happiness? Did not his master prove as was reported? He answered, "Yes, and better than report could make him, or I could ever have believed; but though my master was so good, my mistress was so unreasonable, and clamorous, and cruel, that she would beat us, and pull us by the hair, and throw scalding water upon us, and there was no living with her." So faith, I hope, is the master in your hearts; and that is as good as can be well believed: but the flesh is mistress, which should be but a servant; and that maketh such troublesome work with some of you, that some quiet natured infidels are less vexatious companions than you. Nay, and I wonder if you can be very confident of your own sincerity, as long as such fleshly vices and headstrong passions do keep up the power of a mistress in you. I wonder if you do not fear, lest (as a woman said, I will call my husband lord with Sarah, if I may have my will fulfilled, so) grace and faith should have no more than the regent titles, while your flesh hath so much of its will fulfilled. I know too many cheat themselves into comfort with the false opinion, that because they have a party in them that striveth against their sins, it is a certain sign that they have the Spirit and are sanctified, though the flesh even in the main doth get the victory; and I know that many have sincerity indeed, who yet have many a foil by boisterous passions and fleshly inclinations; but I am sure till you know which party is predominant, and truly beareth the governing sway, you can never know whether you are sincere. As once a servant, when his master and mistress were fighting, answered one at the door, who desired to speak with the

master of the house, "You must stay till I see who gets the better before I can tell you who is master of the house;" so truly I fear the conflict is so hard with many Christians, between the Spirit and the flesh, and holdeth so long in a doubtful state, and sense and passion, and unbelief and pride, and worldliness and selfishness, prevail so much, that they may stay themselves a great while before they can be well resolved which is master. For (to prosecute my similitude) in innocent man, spiritual reason was absolutely master, and fleshly sense was an obsequious servant, (though yet it had an appetite which needed government and restraint). In wicked men, the fleshly sense and appetite is master, and reason is a servant; though reason and the motions of the Spirit may make some resistance. In strong Christians, spiritual reason is master, and the fleshly sense and appetite is a servant, but a boisterous and rebellious servant, tamed according to the degrees of grace and spiritual victory; like a horse that is broken and well ridden, but oft needeth the spur, and oft the reins; so that a Paul may cry out, "O wretched man," &c. In a weak Christian the Spirit is master, but the flesh is mistress, and is not kept in the servitude which it was made for, as it ought; and therefore his life is blemished with scandals, and his soul with many foul corruptions; he is a trouble to himself and others. The good which he doth is done with much reluctancy and weakness; and the evil which he forbeareth is oftentimes very hardly forborne. His flesh hath so much power left, that he is usually uncertain of his own sincerity, and yet too patient both with his sin and his uncertainty; and he is many times a greater troubler of the church than many moderate unbelievers. The hypocrite, or almost Christian, hath the flesh for his master, as other

wicked men ; but reason, and the commoner grace of the Spirit, may be as mistress with him, and may have so much power and respect above a state of utter servitude, as may delude him into a confident conceit that grace hath the victory, and that he is truly spiritual, when yet the supremacy is exercised by the flesh. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life." "He shall not be hurt of the second death." "He shall eat of the hidden manna." "He shall have power over the nations. I will give him the morning star." "I will confess him before my Father and the angels." "He shall be a pillar in the temple of God, and go out no more: I will grant to him to sit with me in my throne."—Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26, 28; and iii. 5, 12, 21.



## TO THE READER.

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READERS,

It is a matter of greater moment than I can express, what idea or image of the nature of godliness and Christianity is imprinted upon men's minds. The description which is expressed in the sacred Scriptures is true and full; the thing described is rational, pure, perfect, unblamable and amiable: that which is expressed in the lives of the most is nothing so, but is purblind, defiled, maimed, imperfect, culpable, and mixed with so much of the contrary quality, that to them who cannot distinguish the chaff from the wheat, the sickness from the life, it seemeth an unreasonable, fanciful, loathsome, and vexatious thing; and so far from being worthy to be preferred before all the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, it seemeth worthy to be kept under as a troubler of kingdoms, societies, and souls. And doubtless this monstrous expression of it in men's lives, is because the perfect expression of it in God's word, hath not made a true impression upon the mind, and consequently upon the heart: for as it is sound doctrine which must make sound Christians, so doctrine worketh on the will and affections, not as it is in itself and as delivered, but as it is understood, believed, remembered, considered; even as it is imprinted on the mind, and used by it. And as interposed matter, or defective application, may cause the image on the wax to be imperfect, though made by the

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most perfect seal, so is it in this case : when one man doth defectively understand the scripture description of of a godly man, or Christian ; and another by misunderstanding, mixeth false conceptions of his own ; and another by a corrupt depraved will doth hinder the understanding from believing, or remembering, or considering and using what it partly apprehendeth ; what wonder if the godliness and Christianity in their hearts be unlike the godliness and Christianity in the Scriptures ? When the law of God in nature and Scripture is pure and uncorrupt, and the law of God written imperfectly on the heart is there mixed with the carnal law in their members, no marvel if it be expressed accordingly in their lives.

I have therefore much endeavoured, in all my writings, and especially in this, to draw out the full portraiture of a christian or godly man indeed, and to describe God's image on the soul of man, in such a manner as tendeth to the just information of the reader's mind, and the filling up of the wants, and rectifying the errors which may be found in his former conceptions of it ; and I do purposely inculcate the same things oft, in several writings, (as when I preached I did in all my sermons,) that the reader may find that I bring him not undigested, needless novelties, and that the frequent repetition of them may help to make the deeper and fuller impression ; for my work is to subserve the Holy Ghost, in putting God's law into men's hearts, and writing it out truly, clearly, and fully, upon their inward parts, that they may be made such themselves, by understanding thoroughly what they must be, and what a solid Christian is, and that thus they may be born again by the incorruptible, immortal seed, the word of God which will live and abide for ever ; and may purify their souls in



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obeying the truth through the Spirit. He is the best lawyer, physician, soldier, &c. who hath his doctrine in his brain, and not only in his books, and hath digested his reading into an intellectual system and habit of knowledge. If ministers had an hundred times over repeated the integral portraiture or character of a sound Christian, till it had been as familiar to the minds and memories of their hearers as is the description of a magistrate, a physician, a schoolmaster, a husbandman, a shepherd, and such things as they are well acquainted with, it would have been a powerful means to make sound Christians ; but when men's minds conceive of a Christian, as a man that differeth from heathens and infidels in nothing, but holding the christian opinions, and using different words and ceremonies of worship, and such like, no wonder if such be but opinionative lifeless Christians ; and if their religion make them no better than a Seneca or Plutarch, I shall never believe that they are any surer to be saved than they. And such a sort of men there are that suppose Christianity to consist but of these three parts : 1. The christian doctrine acknowledged, which they call faith ; 2. The orders and ordinances of the christian church and worship, submitted to, and decently urged, which they call godliness ; and, 3. The heart and life of a Cato, Cicero, or Socrates adjoined. But all that goeth beyond this, which is the life of Christianity and godliness, a lively faith, and hope, and love, a heavenly and holy mind and life, from the renewing indwelling Spirit of God, which is described in this treatise, they are strangers to it, and take it to be but fancy and hypocrisy. These non-Christians do much to reduce the church to infidelity, that there may be indeed no Christians in the world ; for my part I must confess, if there were no better

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Christians in the world than these, I think I should be no Christian myself; and if Christ made men no better than the religion of Socrates, Cato, or Seneca, and did no more to the reparation and perfecting of men's hearts and lives, I should think no better of the christian religion than of theirs; for the means is to be estimated by the end and use, and that's the best physician that hath the remedies which are fittest to work the cure. If God had not acquainted me with a sort of men that have really more holiness, mortification, spirituality, love to God, and to one another, and even to enemies, and more heavenly desires, expectations, and delights, than these men before described have, it would have been a very great hinderance to my faith.

**DIRECTIONS**  
**FOR**  
**WEAK CHRISTIANS.**

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***The First Part.***



DIRECTIONS  
TO  
THE CONVERTED,  
FOR THEIR  
ESTABLISHMENT, GROWTH, AND PERSEVERANCE.

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*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.—Col. ii. 6, 7.*

THE Apostle Paul spoke with a father's affection of those, 'amongst whom he went preaching the kingdom of God.' He anxiously watched over them as his children, desiring to build them up in the faith of Christ. Sometimes he rejoiced with them in their steadfastness; sometimes he mourned over their divisions. He abounded towards them in reproof, exhortation, and encouragement, as towards his 'dear children.' He warned them to take heed, lest he should have 'laboured for them

## 2 DIRECTIONS FOR WEAK CHRISTIANS.

in vain,' and they should have 'run in vain;' lest they should be 'fallen from grace, and Christ should profit them nothing.' We find him, as one that is yet between hope and fear of them, directing and exhorting them to spiritual steadfastness, and growth, and perseverance to the end; and this is the work which we here find him upon with the Colossians in this text, which containeth, 1. A supposition of a work (the great work) already done, viz. that 'they have received Christ Jesus the Lord.' 2. An inference of further duty, and exhortation thereto, which, in sum, is their confirmation and progress. The parts of this duty are expressed in several metaphors. The first is taken from a tree or other plant, and is called our 'rooting in Christ.' After the receiving of Christ, there is a further rootedness in him to be sought. The second is taken from a building, and is called a 'being built up in him,' as a house is upon the foundation. All the work is not done when the chief corner-stone and foundation is laid. The third part is taken from those pillars and stronger parts of the building which are firm upon the foundation, and is called a being 'stablished or confirmed in the faith.' And having made mention of faith, lest they should hearken to innovations and the conceits of men under the pretence of faith, he addeth, 'as ye have been taught,' to shew them what faith or religion it is that they must be established in, even that which by the apostles they had been taught. And lastly, he expresseth the measure that they should aim at, and one special

way in which their faith should be exercised, 'abounding therein in thanksgiving.' It is of little importance whether we take the relative to refer to Christ, and read it with the Vulgate, 'abounding in him with thanksgiving;' or, as the Ethiopic, 'abound with thanksgiving to him;' or whether we take it as relating to thanksgiving itself, as the Arabic translator, and some Greek copies have it, 'abounding in thanksgiving,' or 'abounding in such thanksgiving;' or, as the ordinary Greek copies and the Syriac translator, referring it to faith, 'abounding in it, (that is, in that faith,) with thanksgiving.' For in the upshot it comes to the same, 'to abound in Christ,' and 'to abound in faith in Christ,' and 'to abound in a believing thanksgiving to Christ.' And all this is comprehended in one foregoing general of 'walking in Christ,' the whole life of a Christian being divided into these two parts,—receiving Christ, and walking in him.

Here are these several terms, therefore, briefly to be opened. 1. What is meant by 'receiving Christ Jesus the Lord.' 2. What is meant by walking in him. 3. What by being rooted in him. 4. What by being built up in him. 5. What by being confirmed or stablished in the faith. 6. What by this directive limitation, 'as ye have been taught.' 7. What by abounding therein with thanksgiving. And, for the first, you must observe the act and the object: the act is, 'receiving;' the object is, 'Christ Jesus the Lord.' To receive Christ, is not only (as some annotators mistake it) to receive his

doctrine,—though it is certain that his doctrine must be received, and that the rest is implied in this,—but when the understanding receiveth the gospel by assent, the will also accepteth or receiveth Christ as he is offered, by consent: and both these together are the receiving of Christ; that is, the true justifying faith of God's elect. It is not, therefore, a physical passive reception, as wood receiveth the fire, and as our souls receive the graces of the Spirit; but it is a moral reception, or reputative, which is active or metaphorical. This will be better understood when the object is considered, which is, 'Christ Jesus the Lord.' To receive Christ as Christ, or the anointed Messias, and as the Saviour and our Lord, is to believe that he is such, and to consent that he be such to us, and to trust in him, and resign ourselves to him as such. The relation we do indeed receive by a proper passive reception; I mean, our relation of being the redeemed members, subjects, disciples of this Christ. But the person of Christ we only receive by such an active, moral, reputative reception, as a servant by consent receives a master, a patient by consent receives a physician. So that it is the same thing that is called 'receiving Jesus the Lord,' and 'believing in him,' as it is expounded, John i. 12.

There are three great observable acts of faith essential to it:—the first is, assent to the truth of the gospel; the second is, consent or acceptance of Christ and life as the offered good; the third is, affiance in Christ for the accomplishing of the ends

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of his office. Now the word faith doth most properly express the first act and the last; and the word 'receiving' doth most properly express the middlemost: but whichever term is used, when justifying faith is spoken of, all these are intended or included. By what hath been said you may discern whether you have received Christ or not; for your faith may be known by these acts, which are its parts: 1. If you sincerely believe the gospel to be true; which must be with a belief so strong at least as that you are resolved to venture your happiness upon this belief, and let go all for the hope that is set before you. 2. If an offered Christ, in his relation, as a full and perfect Saviour, be heartily welcome to you. If you consent to the gospel offer, and are but truly willing to be his, and that he be yours in that relation. Faith is not only called a receiving of Christ, but is often expressed by this term of 'willing' him. And therefore the promise is to 'whosoever will;' and the wicked are denied a part in Christ, because they 'will not have him reign over them;' and 'will not come to him that they may have life,' even because they 'would none of him,' which is because they are not true believers or disciples of Christ. 3. If you thus by consent take Christ for your Saviour, teacher, and Lord, it must needs follow, that you fiducially rely upon him, or trust him to accomplish the ends of his relations: that you trust to him for deliverance from the guilt, and power, and punishment of sin, and for quickening, strengthening and preserving grace, and for everlasting life;

that you resign yourselves up to him as his disciples, to learn of him with a confidence or trust that he will infallibly teach you the way to happiness; and that you also give up yourselves to him as his subjects, with a trust that he will govern you in truth and righteousness, in order to your salvation, and will defend you from destroying enemies. This much is of the very being of faith, or 'the receiving Christ Jesus the Lord.' And these parts are inseparable; he that hath one in truth hath all. Whenever we find in Scripture, the promise of justification or salvation made to us, if we believe, it is this believing, and none but this, that is intended. It is not only believing in Christ as a sacrifice or priest, that is the faith which justifieth, and believing in him as a teacher, or Lord, that sanctifieth; the effects are not thus parcelled out to several essential parts of this same faith, but it is this one entire faith in all these essential parts that is the undivided condition of all these benefits; and in that way of a condition of the free promise it doth procure them. So much for the meaning of the first words, 'receiving Christ Jesus the Lord.' I will be briefer about the next.

The second is 'walking in him,' which is the living as Christians, when once we are become Christians; and using that Christ to the ends which we received him for, when once we have received him. Two things are necessary to such as we that have lost our way: the first is to get into the right way (and that is, to get into Christ, who is the way); the other is to travel on, when we are in it; for

it is not enough to bring us to our journey's end, that we have found out the right way.

The next word to be explained is 'rooted,' which doth not intimate that any are really planted into Christ, without any rooting in him at all; but by 'rooted' is meant 'deeply rooted: for the roots increase under ground as well as the tree above ground. Rooting hath two uses, and both are here implied. The first is for the firmness of the tree, that blustering winds may not overturn it; the second is for nutriment, that it may receive that nourishment from the earth which may cause its preservation, growth, and fruitfulness. This is the rootedness of Christians in Christ, that they may be confirmed in him against all assaults, and may draw from him that nutriment which is necessary to their growth and fruit.

The next term is 'built up in him.' No house consisteth of a bare foundation. Five things are expressly contained in our being 'built up in him.' The first is, that we are united, or conjoined to him, as the building is on the foundation. The second is, that we rest wholly on him as our support, as the building doth on the foundation. The third is, that we are also conjoined one unto another, and are become one spiritual building in the Lord. The fourth is, that the fabric doth increase in bigness, as the house doth, by being built up; so that it importeth our increase in grace, and the increase of the church by us. The fifth is, the fitness of the building to its intended ends and use. Till it be built up, it is not fit for habitation;

and till Christians are built up, God hath not that use of them for which he doth intend them.

The next term is, 'stablished or confirmed in the faith,' which signifieth but that strengthening and fixing of us that may prevent our fall or shaking; and it compriseth these two things: first, that we be soundly bottomed on Christ, who is our foundation; and, secondly, that we be cemented and firmly joined to each other. And this comprehendeth their stability in the doctrine of faith; and therefore he addeth, 'as ye have been taught,' to fortify them against heresies, which, indeed, are all but novelties; that so they may know how to try the doctrines that afterward should be offered them, and stick fast to that which the apostles taught.

He next requireth them to 'abound therein,' to let them know, that as it is no small blessing which they expect by Christ, so they should not rest in small degrees of grace or duty; but especially the duty of 'thanksgiving,' which is an evangelical and celestial duty, and so admirably beseems a people that have partaken of such admirable salvation, and is so suitable to our mercies and our condition, and God's just expectation. As it is love and grace whose eternal praise is designed by the gospel, and are magnified in the church by the Redeemer's great and blessed work; so it is returns of love, and praise, and joy, that should be the most abounding or overflowing part of all our christian affections and performances. After

this explication, you may see that the sense of the text lieth plain in this proposition.

*Doct.* ' Those that have savingly received Christ Jesus the Lord, must be so far from resting here, as if all were done, that they must spend the rest of their days in walking in him, being rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith as the apostles taught it, and abounding in it, especially with joyful praises to our Redeemer.'

And because that my design is only to direct young Christians how they may come to be established and confirmed in Christ, I shall therefore pass over all other things that the full handling of this text requireth, and shall only give you, 1. A short intimation here what this confirmation and stability is (which shall be more fully opened to you in the directions). 2. And shew you the need of seeking it. And, 3. How you may attain it.

1. This confirmation is the habitual strength of grace; distinct from present actual confirmation by the influence of grace from God: for though God may in an instant confirm a weak person against some particular temptation, by his free assistance, yet that is not it which we have here to speak of, but habitual confirmation in a state of grace: and, ordinarily, we may expect that God's cooperating assisting grace should bear some proportion with our habitual grace; even as in nature he concurrerh with the strongest men to do greater works than he causeth the weak to do; and with the wisest men to understand more than the foolish do: I say but that ordinarily it is thus.

A confirmed Christian, as contrary to a weak one, 1. Is not to be judged of by his freedom from all scruples, doubts, or fears. 2. Nor by his eminency in men's esteem or observation. 3. Nor by his strength of memory. 4. Or freedom of utterance in praying, preaching, or discourse. 5. Or by his seemly deportment and courtesy towards others. 6. Nor by his sedate, calm, and lovely temper, and freedom from haste and heats, which other tempers are more prone to. 7. Nor by a man-pleasing or dissembling faculty, to bridle the tongue when it would open the corruption of the mind, and to suppress all words which would make others know how bad the heart is. There are many endowments, laudable and desirable, which will not shew so much as sincerity in grace; and much less a state of confirmation and stability.

But confirmation lieth in the great degree of all those graces which constitute a Christian. And the great degree appeareth in the operations of them. As, 1. When holiness is as a new nature in us, and giveth us a promptitude to holy actions, and maketh us free and ready to them, and maketh them easy and familiar to us: whereas the weak go heavily, and can scarce drive on and force their minds. 2. When there is a constancy or frequency of holy actions, which sheweth the strength and stability of holy inclinations. 3. When they are powerful to bear down oppositions and temptations, and can get over the greatest impediments in the way, and make an advantage of all resistance, and despise the most splendid baits of sin. 4. When

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it is still getting ground, and drawing the soul upward and nearer to God, its rest and end. And when the heart groweth more heavenly and divine, and stranger to earth and earthly things. 5. And when holy and heavenly things are more sweet and delectable to the soul, and are sought and used with more love and pleasure. All these do shew that the operations of grace are vigorous and strong; and, consequently, that the habits are so also.

And this confirmation should be found, 1. In the understanding. 2. In the will. 3. In the affections. 4. In the life.

1. When the mind of man hath a larger comprehension of the truths of God, and the order and method and usefulness of every truth; and a deeper apprehension of the certainty of them, and of the goodness of the matter expressed in them; when knowledge and faith come nearest unto sight or intention, and we have the fullest, the truest, and the firmest, and most certain apprehension of things revealed and unseen; when the nature, and the reasons, and the ends and benefits of the Christian religion, are all most clearly, orderly, constantly, and powerfully printed on the mind,—then is that mind in a confirmed state.

2. When the will is guided by such a confirmed understanding, and is not brutishly resolved, he knoweth not for what or why;—when light hath fixed it in such resolutions as are past all notable doubtings, deliberations, waverings, or unwilling backwardness; and a man is, in seeking God and

his salvation, and avoiding known sin, as a natural man is about the questions, whether he should preserve his life, and make provision for it; and whether he should poison, or famish, or torment himself;—when the inclination of the will to God, and heaven, and holiness, are likest to its natural inclination to good as good, and to its own felicity; and its action is so free as to have least indetermination, and to be likest to natural necessary acts, as those are of blessed spirits in heaven;—when the least intimation from God prevaieth, and the will doth answer him with readiness and delight; and when it taketh pleasure to trample upon all opposition; and when all that can be offered to corrupt the heart, and draw it to sin, and loosen it from God, prevaieth but as so much filth and dung would do, (Phil. iii. 7—9,)—this is a confirmed state of will.

3. When the affections do proceed from such a will, and are ready to assist, excite, and serve it, and to carry us on in necessary duties;—when the lower affections of fear and sorrow do cleanse, and restrain, and prepare the way; and the higher affections of love and delight adhere to God, and desire and hope do make out after him, and set the soul on just endeavours;—when fear and grief have less to do, and are delivering up the heart still more and more to the possession of holy delight and love;—and when those affections, which are rather profound than very sensible, immediately towards God himself, are sensible towards his word, his servants, his graces and his ways, and against all



sin;—then are the affections, and so the man, in a confirmed state.

4. When ourselves, our time, and all that we have, are taken to be God's, and not our own, and are entirely and unreservedly resigned to him, and used for him;—when we study our duty, and trust him for our reward;—when we live as those that have much more to do for heaven than for earth; and with God, than with man or any creature;—when our consciences are absolutely subjected to the authority and laws of God, and bow not to competitors;—when we are habitually disposed, as his servants, to be constantly employed in his works, and make it our calling and business in the world; as judging that we have nothing to do on earth, but with God, or for God;—when we keep not up any secret desires and hopes of a worldly felicity; nor purvey for the pleasure of the flesh, under the cloak of faith and piety, but subdue the flesh as our most dangerous enemy, and can easily deny its appetite and concupiscence;—when we guard all our senses, and keep our passions, thoughts, and tongues, in obedience to the holy law;—when we do not inordinately set up ourselves in our esteem or desire, above or against our neighbour and his welfare, but love him as ourselves, and seek his good, and resist his hurt as heartily as our own; and love the godly with a love of complacency, and the ungodly with a love of benevolence, though they be our enemies;—when we are faithful in all our relations, and have judgment to discern our duty, that we run not into extremes;

and skill, and readiness, and pleasure in performing it, and patience under all our sufferings,—this is the life of a confirmed Christian (in various degrees, as their strength is various).

And now I shall proceed to persuade such to value and seek this confirmation, lest with dull unprepared minds my following directions should be lost; and then I shall give you the directions themselves, which are the part that is principally intended. And first for the motives.

1. Consider that your first entrance into Christianity is an engagement to proceed: your receiving Christ obligeth you to walk and grow up in him. A fourfold obligation your very Christianity layeth upon you, to grow stronger, and to persevere.

(1.) The first is, from the very nature of it; even from the office of Christ, and the use and ends to which we do receive him. You receive Christ as a physician of your diseased souls; and doth not this engage you to go on to use his medicines till you are cured? What do men choose a physician for, but to heal them? It were but a foolish patient that would say, ‘Though my disease be deadly, yet now I have chosen the best physician, I have no more to do; I doubt not of recovery.’ You took Christ for a Saviour, which engageth you to use his saving means, and submit to his saving works. You took him for your teacher and master, and gave up yourselves to be his disciples: and what sense was in all this, if you did not mean to proceed in learning of him? It is a silly conceit

for any man to think that he is a good scholar, merely because he hath chosen a good master or tutor, without any further learning of him. When Christ sent out his apostles, it was for these two works:—first to disciple nations and baptize them; and then to go on in teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commandeth them. Christ is the way to the Father; but to what purpose did you come into this way, if you meant not to travel on in it?

(2.) Moreover, when you became Christians, you entered into a solemn covenant with Christ, and bound yourselves, by a vow, to be faithful to him to the death; and this vow is upon you. It is better not to vow, than to vow and not perform. In taking him to be the Captain of your salvation, and listing yourselves under him, and taking this oath of fidelity to him, you did engage yourselves to fight as faithful soldiers, under his conduct and command, to your lives' end. And as it is a foolish soldier that thinks that he hath no more to do but list himself and take colours, and need not fight; so it is a foolish and ungodly covenanter that thinks he hath nothing to do but to promise, and may be excused from performance, because that promising was enough; when the promise was purposely to bind him to perform.

(3.) Moreover, when you became Christians, you put yourselves under the laws of Christ: and these laws require you to go further, till you are confirmed; so that you must go on, or renounce your obedience to Christ.

(4.) Lastly, when you became Christians, you received such exceeding mercies, as do oblige you to go much higher in your affections, and much further in your obedience to God. A man that is newly snatched as from the jaws of hell, and hath received the free forgiveness of his sins, and is put into such a state of blessedness as we are, must needs feel abundance of obligations upon him to proceed to stronger resolutions and affections, and not to stop in those low beginnings. So that if you lay these four things together, you will perceive that the very purpose of your receiving Christ was that you might walk in him, and be confirmed and built up.

2. Besides, your conversion is not sound, if you are not heartily desirous to increase. Grace is not true, if there be not a desire after more; yea, if you desire not perfection itself. An infant is not born to continue an infant, for that were to be a monster; but to grow up unto manhood. As the kingdom of Christ in the word is likened by him to a little leaven, and to a grain of mustard-seed in the beginning, which afterward makes a wonderful increase; so his kingdom in the soul is of the same nature too. If you are contented with that measure of holiness that you have, you have none at all, but a shadow and conceit of it. Let those men think of this that stint themselves in holiness, and plead for a moderation in it, as if it were intemperance or folly to love God, or fear him, or seek him, or obey him, any more than they do; or as if we were in danger of excess in these.

If ever these men had feelingly, and by experience, known what holiness is, they would never have been possessed with such conceits as these.

3. Consider what abundance of labour hath been lost, and what hopes have been frustrated, for want of proceeding to a rooted confirmation. I say not that such were truly sanctified; but I say they were in a very hopeful way, and went far, and by going further, might have attained to salvation. The heart of many a minister hath been glad to see their hearers humbled, and bewailing sin, and changing their minds and lives, and becoming forward professors of godliness; when a few years' time hath turned all this joy into sorrow: and one of our hopeful seeming converts doth grow cold, and lose his former forwardness; another falls to desperate sensuality, and turns drunkard, or fornicator, or gamester; another turns worldling, and drowneth all his seeming zeal in the love of riches and the cares of this life; and another (if not many to one) is deluded by some deceiver, and infected with some deadly errors, and casts off duty, and sets himself, like a hired instrument of hell, to divide the church, oppose the gospel, and reproach and slander, and rail at the ministers and professors of it, and to weaken the hands of the builders, and strengthen the ungodly, and serve the secret enemies of the truth. Those that once comforted our hearts in the hopes of their conversion, do break our hearts by their apostasy and subversion; and become greater hinderances to the work of Christ, and greater plagues to the church of God, than

those that never professed to be religious. Those that were wont to join with us in holy worship, and went up with us to the house of God as our companions, do afterwards despise both worshippers and worship. Whereas, if these men had been rooted and confirmed, you should never have seen them fall into this misery. O how many prayers, and confessions, and duties, do these men lose? How many years have some of them seemed to be religious, and after all have proved apostates; and the world, and the flesh, and pride, and error, swallow up all. See then what need you have to be rooted, confirmed, and built up in Christ.

4. Consider also, how much of the work of your salvation is yet to do when you are converted. You have happily begun, but you have not finished. You have hit off the right way, but you have your journey yet to go; you have chosen the best commander and fellow-soldiers; but you have many a battle yet to fight. If you are Christians indeed, you know yourselves that you have many a corruption to resist and conquer, and many a temptation yet to overcome, and many a necessary work to do. And there is a necessity of these afterwards as well as of the first. For these are the use and end of your conversion, that you may 'live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.' 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them.' And how can infants go through all these works? Which of you would

desire an infant or cripple to be your servant? But though God be in this more merciful than man, yet he may well expect that you should not be still infants. What work are you like to make him in this decrepit and weak condition! O pitiful blindness! that any man who knows that he hath a soul to save, should think an infant-strength proportionable to those works and difficulties that stand between him and everlasting life! In the matters of this life, you feel the need and worth of strength: you will not think an infant fit to plough or sow, or reap or mow, or travel or play the soldier; and yet will you rest satisfied with an infant-strength, to do those great and matchless works which your salvation lieth on?

5. Moreover, the weak unconfirmed souls are usually full of trouble, and live without that assurance of God's love, and that spiritual peace and comfort, which others do possess. One would think no other arguments should be necessary to make men weary of their spiritual weaknesses and diseases than the pain and trouble that always attend them. It is more pain to a sick man to travel a mile, than to a sound man to go ten. To the lame or feeble, every step hath pain, and all that they do is grievous to them; when far more would be a recreation to one that is in health. O, therefore delight not in your own languishings! Choose not to live in pain and sorrow, but strive after confirmation and growth in grace; that, overgrowing your infirmities, you may overcome your sad complaints and groans, and may be acquainted with

the comfortable life of the confirmed. O, how roundly and cheerfully would you go through your work; how easy, and sweet, and profitable would it prove to you, if once you were strong, confirmed Christians! Alas! the souls of those that are not confirmed, lie open to every temptation of the malicious enemy of their peace; and how small a matter will disquiet and unsettle them! every passage in Scripture which they understand not, and which seems to make against them, will disturb them. A minister cannot preach so plainly or so cautiously, but somewhat which they understand not will be matter of their disquiet. Providences will trouble them, because they understand them not. Afflictions will be bitter to the mind as well as to the body, and will immoderately perplex them, because they understand them not, or have not strength to bear them and improve them. The sweeter mercies of prosperity will much lose their sweetness for want of holy wisdom and strength to digest them. And what man would choose such a weak and languishing state as this, before a confirmed healthful state? Will you run up and down for physic when you are sick? and will you no more regard the health and stability, and spiritual peace and vigour of your souls?

6. Unless you become a confirmed Christian, you have not even the true use and benefit of God's ordinances. Meat is digested by the healthful stomach, and its effects are seen upon them, and they are strengthened by it. And so is the confirmed Christian by God's ordinances. But to the



weak unconfirmed soul, how much of the means of grace is even as lost! How little sweetness do they find in means; and how little good can they say they get by them! I deny not but some good they get, and that they must use them still! for though the sick have little relish of his meat, yet he cannot long live without it; and though it breed not strength or health, yet it maintaineth that languishing life; but this is all, or almost all. What a sad thing is this to yourselves, and unto us; when ministers that are as the nurses of the church, or stewards of the household, to give them all their meat in due season, must see that all that ever they can do for you, will do no more than keep you alive! Yea, how often are you quarrelling with your food, and you do not like it; or you cannot get it down, something still ails it for matter or manner; or else, if the minister displease you, your feeble stomachs do loathe the food, because you like not the cook that dressed it, or because his hands are not so clean as you desire! 'The full soul loatheth an honey-comb, but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.' Or if you get it down, you can hardly keep it, but are ready to cast it up to our faces. And thus a great deal of our labour is lost with you; holy doctrine lost, and sacraments and other ordinances lost, because you have not strength to digest them. Labour, therefore, to be established and built up.

7. I beseech you look upon the face of the world, and see whether it have not need of the strongest helps; whereas the weak and sick are burdensome

to others, rather than fit to help the distressed. It is a multitude among us, and abroad in the world, that are ignorant, and ungodly, and in the depth of misery; and if there be but a few to help them, those few should not be as babes. Abundance of this multitude are obstinate in their sin, blind and wilful, captivated by the devil, and have sold themselves to do evil: and shall such miserable souls as these have none but children or sick folks to help them? I tell you, sirs, their diseases prove too hard for the skilfullest physicians: it will put the wisest man in England to it, to persuade one obstinate enemy of godliness to the hearty love of a holy life, or to cure one old superstitious person of his self-conceitedness, or one covetous person of his love of the world, or one old drunkard or glutton of his sensuality. How then will silly, ignorant Christians be able to persuade them? I know it is not the ability of the instrument, but the will of God that is the principal cause; but yet God useth to work by instruments according to their fitness for the work. What a case is that hospital in, where all are sick, and no healthful persons among them to help them! Poor weak Christians! you are not able much to help one another; how much less to help the dead ungodly world! Woe to the world if it had no better helpers! and woe to yourselves, if you had not the help of stronger than yourselves (seeing it is God's way to work by means). Alas! a child or sick person is so unfit to labour for the family, and to work for others, that they are the burdens of the

family, and must be provided for by others. They are so unmeet to help others in their weakness, that they must be carried, or attended and waited on themselves. What a life is this, to be the burdens of the church, when you might be the pillars of the church ! to be so blind and lame, when you might be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame !

I speak not this to extenuate God's mercies to you ; nor to undervalue the great felicity of the saints, even the poorest and weakest of them. I know that Christ is tender of the weakest that are sincere, and will not forsake them. But though you are so far above the dead world, even in the bed of your groaning and languishing, yet, O how far are you below the confirmed healthful Christian ! You are happy in being alive, but you are unhappy in being so diseased and weak. You are happy in being of the family, and fellow-citizens with the saints ; but you are unhappy in being so useless and unprofitable, and burdensome. For, indeed, you live but as the poor of the parish ; not only on the alms of Christ, for so we do all, but on the alms of your brethren's assistance and support. And I know that in worldly matters you will rather labour with your hands, that you may have to give to them that need, than be troublesome to others, and live upon charity. I know that the time is not yet come, that there shall not be a beggar in Israel, I mean one that needs not our continual relief. The poor we shall have always with us. even the poor in grace, to exercise our charity ; and I know that the strong must bear with their

infirmities, and exercise compassion on them. But yet you should remember the words of Christ; 'It is more honourable to give than to receive.' And therefore be persuaded to bestir yourselves for spiritual health, and strength, and riches, that the multitudes of needy miserable souls may have some help from you; and that when they come to your doors, you may not turn them away with so cold an answer, 'Alas! we have nothing for ourselves.' Were you but strong confirmed Christians, what blessings might you be to all about you! what a stay to the places where you live! Your lips would feed many as a tree of life. The ear that heard you would bless you, and the eye that saw you would bear you witness. You would be to poor souls, as bountiful rich men are to their bodies, the support and relief of many that are needy. You would not eat your morsels alone, nor would you see any perish for lack of clothing, but the loins of the poor would bless you. O pity the poor world, that needeth more than children's help; and grow up unto confirmation. O pity the poor church, that abounds with weaklings, that is pestered with childish, self-conceited quarrellers, and needeth more than children's help; and grow up to confirmation. O pity yourselves, and live not still in so childish, sickly, and beggarly a condition, when the way of riches and health is before you; but up and be doing, till you have attained confirmation.

8. Yea, this is not all; you do not only deny the church your assistance, but most of the troubles and

divisions of the church are from such unsettled weaklings as you. In all ages, almost, these have made the church 'more work than the heathen persecutors did with fire and sword. These novices, as Paul calleth them, that is, young beginners in religion, are they that most commonly are 'puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil.' These are they that are easiest deceived by seducers, as being not able to make good the truth, nor to confute the plausible reasonings of the adversaries: and withal they have not that rooted love to the truth and ways of God, which should hold them fast; and they quickly yield, like cowardly soldiers that are able to make but small resistance. And as Paul speaks, they are 'like children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.' If you will still continue children, what better can we expect of you, but thus to be tossed and carried about? Thus you gratify Satan and seducers when you little think of it; and thus you harden the ungodly in their way; and thus you grieve the hearts of the godly, and especially of the faithful guides of the flocks. Alas! that so many of the children of the church should become the scourges and troublers of the church, and should set their teeth so deep in the breasts that were drawn out for their nourishment! If you were never drawn to do any thing to the reproach of the church, yet what a grief must it be to us, to see so many of yourselves miscarry! 'Ah,' thinks a poor minister, 'what hopes

had I once of these professors! and are they come to this?' O mark, Sirs, the Apostle's warning, (Heb. xiii. 9,) 'Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.' And his way of prevention is, 'that the heart be established with grace.'

9. Consider, also, that it is a dishonour to Christ that so many of his family should be such weaklings, so mutable, and unsettled, and unprofitable as you are. I do not mean that it is any real dishonour to him: for if all the world should forsake him, they would dishonour themselves, and not him, with any competent judge; as it would dishonour the beholders more than the sun, if all the world should say that it is darkness. But you are guilty of dishonouring him in the eyes of the misguided world: O, what a reproach it is to godliness that so many professors should be so ignorant and imprudent; and so many so giddy and inconstant; and so many that manifest so little of the glory of their holy profession! All the enemies of Christ without the church, are not capable of dishonouring him so much as you that bear his name, and wear his livery. While your graces are weak, your corruptions will be strong: and all those corruptions will be the dishonour of your profession. Will it not break your hearts to hear the ungodly pointing at you as you pass by, to say, Yonder goes a covetous professor; or Yonder goes a proud, or a worldly, or a sensual, or a contentious professor? If you have any love to God, and sense of his dishonour, methinks such sayings should touch you at the heart. While you are weak and unconfirmed, you will, like

children, stumble at every stone, and catch many a fall, and yield to temptations which the stronger easily resist; and then you become a stumbling-block to others, since all your faults by foolish men will be charged on your religion. If you do but speak an ill word of another, or rail, or deceive, or overreach in bargaining, or fall into any scandalous opinions or practice, your religion must bear all the blame with the world. Ever since I can remember, it hath been one of the principal hinderances to men's conversion, and strengtheners of the wicked in their way, that the godly were accounted a sort of peevish, unpeaceable, covetous, proud, self-seeking persons; which was a slander as to the most, but too much occasioned by the scandalousness of some. And methinks you should be afraid of that woe from Christ—'Woe be to him by whom offence cometh.' If you be children, you may have the woe of sharp castigations; and if you be hypocrites, you shall have the woe of everlasting sufferings. The world can judge no further than they see: and when they see professors of holiness to be so like to common men, and in some things worse than many of them, what can you expect but that they should despise religion, and judge of it by the professors of it, and say, 'If this be their religion, let them keep it to themselves; we are as well without it as they are with it.' And thus will the holy ways of God be vilified through you. If you will not excel others in the beauty of your conversation, that in this glass the world may see the beauty of your religion, you must expect that they

should take it but for a common thing which bringeth forth but common fruits to their discerning. You should be such that God may boast of, and the church may boast of, to the face of the accuser: then would you be an honour to the church, when God may say of you as he did of Job, 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?' If we could say so of you to men of the world—'See what men the godly are, there is none such among you; men of holiness, wisdom, uprightness, sobriety, meekness, patience, peaceable and harmless, living wholly to God, as strangers on earth and citizens of heaven;'—then you would be ornaments to your holy profession. Were you such Christians as the old Christians were, (Acts iv.) we might boast of you then to the reproaching adversaries.

10. Moreover, till you are confirmed and built up, you may too easily be made the instruments of Satan, to further his designs. The weakness of your understandings, and the strength of your passions, and especially the interest that carnal self hath remaining in you, may lay you open to temptations, and engage you in many a cause of Satan, to take his part against the truth. And how sad a case is this to any that have felt the love of Christ! Have you been warmed with his wondrous love, and washed with his blood, and saved by his matchless mercy; and may it not even break your hearts, to think that, after all this, you should be drawn by Satan to wound your Lord, to



abuse his honour, to resist his cause, to hurt his church, and to confirm his enemies, and gratify the devil? I tell you, with shame and grief of heart, that abundance of weak, unsettled professors, who we hope have upright meanings in the main, have been more powerful instruments for Satan, to do his work for the hindering of the gospel, the vilifying of the ministry, the dividing of the church, and the hindering of reformation, than most of the notoriously profane have been. What excellent hopes had we once in England, of the flourishing of piety and happy union among the churches and servants of Christ? And who hath not only frustrated these hopes, but almost broken them all to pieces? Have any had more to do in it than weak, unstable professors of religiousness? What sad confusions are most parts of England in at this day, by reason of the breaking of churches into sects and shreds, and the contentions and reproaches of Christians against Christians, and the odious abuse of holy truth and ordinances! And who is it that doth this, so much as unstable professors of piety? What greater reproach almost could have befallen us, than for the adversary to stand by, and see Christians at variance, hating, and persecuting, and reproaching one another; and that our own hands should pull down the house of God, and tear in pieces the miserable churches, while men are striving who shall be the master of the reformation? O what a sport is this to the devil, when he can set his professed enemies by the ears, and make them fall upon one another!—when, if he have any notable

work to do against the church and cause of Christ, he can call out unstable Christians to do it! If he would have godliness be scandalized, who hath he to do it but professors of godliness; some of them to give the scandal, and others to aggravate and divulge it? Would he have a church divided; how quickly doth he find a bone of contention; and who should do it but the unstable members of it? Would he have the truth opposed, and error and darkness to be promoted; who must do it but professors of the truth? Persuade some of them that truth is error, and error is truth, and the work will be done: they will furiously march out against their master, and think they do him service while they are fighting against him, and scorning, and shaming, if not killing his servants. Would he have public divisions maintained among all the churches of the world; it is but possessing the weaker, unstable pastors and people, with a perverse zeal for mere words and notions, as if the life of the church did therein consist; and they will be the devil's instruments at a beck, and all that will not word it as they, shall be called heretics, and the church shall have new articles added to its faith, under pretence of preserving and expounding the old ones. And thus when Satan hath a work to do, if heathens and infidels cannot do it, it is only to call out Christians to do it: if drunkards and malignant enemies cannot do it, it is but calling out some unstable professors of godliness to do it, and possessing the more injudicious part of the pastors with some carnal ends or blind consuming zeal.

O Christians! in the name of God, as you would avoid these devilish employments, labour for confirming strengthening grace; and rest not in your childish weakness and instability. If you are delivered from Satan, and have truly renounced him, and tasted the great salvation of Christ, methinks you should even tremble to consider what a thing it would be, if, after all this, you should prove, through your weakness, so serviceable to the devil, and so injurious to your dearest Lord. What! must those abuse him whom he hath redeemed from damnation? must those hands be employed to demolish his kingdom, that were washed by him, and should have built it up?—as if you were like Judas, that even now hath his hand with his Master in the dish, and presently lifts it up against him.

11. Moreover, while you are weaklings and unconfirmed, you will exceedingly encourage the ungodly in their false hopes, by being so like them as you are. When they see that you excel them so little, and in many things are as bad or worse than they, it strongly persuadeth them that their state is as good as yours, and that they may be saved as well as others, seeing the difference seemeth to be so small. They know that heaven and hell are much unlike, and vastly distant; and therefore they will hardly believe that they must be thrust into hell, when men that seem so little to differ from them must go to heaven. You would not believe how it hardeneth them in their sin when they see professors do as bad; and how it setteth them in presumption and impenitency to perceive your faults. When a

minister hath laboured to make the sins of the ungodly odious to him, and to break his heart with the terrors of the Lord, O, how it quieteth him, and healeth all again, to see the like sins, or others as bad, in the professors of religion! 'If these,' saith he, 'may be saved, notwithstanding such and such sins, what cause have I to fear!' O, wretched, unprofitable, scandalous professors! when we have studied and preached for men's conversion many a year, you go and undo all that we have done, by the scandal, or levity, or imprudence of an hour. When we have almost persuaded men to be Christians, you unpersuade them, and turn them back again, and do more harm by the weakness and scandal of your lives, than many of us can do good by life and doctrine. When we have brought sinners even to the door of life, you prove their enemies, and take them out of our hands again, and bring them back to their old captivity. Doth it not pierce your very hearts to think of it, that ever one soul, much more so many, should be shut out of glory, and burn in everlasting misery, and you should have a hand in it? Consider of this, and methinks you should desire confirming grace.

12. And methinks it should be very grievous to you, to be so like to the ungodly yourselves, and that Satan should still have so much interest in you. Holiness is God's image; and doth it not grieve you that you are so little like him? By his graces he keeps possession of you: and doth it not grieve you that God hath no more possession of you, but that Satan and sin should so defraud him of his own?

Will he condescend to dwell in so low a worm, so oft defiled with its iniquities? and doth it not wound you to think that even there he should be so straitened, and thrust into corners by a hellish enemy, as if that simple habitation were too much for him, and that dirty dwelling were too good for him, and as if you grudged him so much of the leavings of Satan, who had taken up the beginning of your days in sin?

Your corruption is the very image of the devil: and doth it not affright you to think that you should be so like him? You are charged not to be 'conformed to this world,' but to 'be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God:' and yet will you stop in a state so like to those that perish? He that hath the least measure of saving grace, is likest to the children of the devil, of any man in the world that is not one of them. Seek therefore to increase.

13. And I beseech you consider that your excellency, and the glory and lustre of your graces, is one of God's appointed means for the honour of his Son, and gospel, and church, and for the conviction and conversion of the unbelieving world: and therefore, if you use not this means, you rob God and the church of that which is their due, and deprive sinners of one of the means of their salvation. You are commanded to 'let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Christians, be awakened in the name of God to consider what you have to do with your graces;—you have the living

God to please and honour by them! As the excellency of the work doth honour the workman, so must your graces and lives honour God. You have the souls of the weak to confirm by your lives, and the souls of the ungodly to win by your lives. You should all be preachers, and even preach as you go up and down in the world, as a candle lighteth which way ever it goeth. As we are sent to save sinners, as ambassadors of Christ, by public proclamation of his will; so are you sent to save them as his servants and our helpers, and must preach by your lives and familiar exhortations, as we must do by authoritative instruction. A good life is a good sermon; yea those may be won by your sermons, that will not come to ours, or will not obey the doctrine which they hear. Even to women that must keep silence in the church, doth Peter command this way of preaching, 'that if any of them have husbands that obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.' Thousands can understand the meaning of a good life, that cannot understand the meaning of a good sermon. By this way you may preach to men of all languages, though your tongues had never learnt but one: for a holy, harmless, humble life, doth speak in all the languages of the world to men that have eyes to read it. This is the universal character and language, in which all sorts may perceive you speak the wondrous works of the Holy Ghost. I charge you therefore, Christians, deprive not God of the honour you owe him, nor the church, or souls of wicked men, of this excellent, powerful help, which you owe them, by continuing in your

weakness, and unsettled minds, and spotted lives; but grow up to that measure that may be fit for such a work. As you durst not silence the preachers of the gospel, so do not dare to silence yourselves from preaching by your holy exemplary lives. And, alas! do you think that feeble, giddy, scandalous professors, are like to do any great good by their lives? Would you wish the poor world to write after such a crooked and blotted copy? Will it win men's hearts to a love of holiness, to talk with a Christian that can scarce speak a word of sense for his religion; or to see a professor as greedy for a little gain as the veriest worldling that hath no other hope; or to hear them rail, or lie, or slander, or to see them turn up and down like a weathercock, according as the wind of temptation sets, and to follow every new opinion that is but put off with a plausible fervency? Do you think that men are like to be won by such lives as these?

14. Do you consider what great things you must make account to suffer for Christ? You must forsake all that you have. You must not save your lives, if he bid you lose them. You must suffer with him, if you will be glorified with him. You may be called to confess Christ before the kings or judges of the earth: and then, if you deny him, he will deny you; and if you be ashamed of him, he will be ashamed of you, (unless you be brought to a better state.) You may be called to 'the fiery trial,' and to suffer also 'the spoiling of your goods,' and, in a word, the loss of all. And do you think that you shall not find use for the strongest graces

then? Have you not need to be confirmed, rooted Christians, that must expect such storms? Are infants meet for such encounters? Have you not seen how many that seemed strong have been overthrown in a time of trial; and yet will you stop in a weak estate? Perhaps you will say, 'We cannot stand by our own strength; and therefore Christ may uphold the weakest, when the strongest may fall.' To which I answer, it is true; but it is God's common way to work by means, and to imitate nature in his works of grace: and therefore he useth to root and strengthen those that he will have to stand and conquer; yea, and to arm them as well as strengthen them, and then to teach them to use their arms. 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.' You must look, 'when you are illuminated, to endure a great fight of afflictions; to be made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions, and to be companions of them that are so used: and therefore ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.' If you will endure in the time of persecution, the word must take deep rooting in your



hearts. And you must be ‘founded on a rock,’ if you look to stand in time of storms.

In the mean time, it is a fearful thing to see in what a wavering condition you seem to stand; like a tree that shakes, as if it were even falling; or like a cowardly army that are ready to run before they fight: and, like cowardly soldiers, you are still looking behind you, and a small matter troubleth, and perplexeth, and staggereth you, as if you were ready to repent of your repentings. And must God have such servants as these, that, upon every rumour or word of trouble, are wavering and looking back, and ready to forsake him?

15. Consider, also, that the same reasons that moved you at first to be Christians, should now move you to be confirmed thriving Christians: for they are of force as well for this as for that. You would not have missed your part in Christ for all the world, if indeed you have the least degree of grace. And if the beginning be good and necessary, the increase is neither bad nor needless. If a little grace be desirable, surely more is more desirable. If it was then but a reasonable thing that you should forsake all for Christ, and follow him; it is surely as reasonable that you should follow him to the end, till you reach that blessedness which was the end for which at first you followed him. What, Christian! hast thou found God a hard master, a barren wilderness to thee; or his service an unprofitable thing? Say so, and I dare say thou art a bastard, (to use the Apostle’s phrase, Heb. xii. 8,) and not a Christian. Some trial thou

hast made of him: what evil hast thou found in him, or what wrong hath he ever done thee, that thou shouldst now begin to make a stand, as if thou wert in doubt whether it be best to go further? If ever Christ were needful, he is needful still; and if ever heaven and holiness were good, they are good still: and therefore go on till thou hast obtained more, and forget not the reasons that first persuaded thee.

16. Nay, more than so, you have the addition of much experience, which should be an exceeding help to quicken your affections. When you first repented and came unto Christ, you had never had any experience in yourselves of his saving special grace before, but you came in upon the bare hearing and believing of it: but now you have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and you have received at his hands the pardon of sin, the Spirit of adoption, the hope of glory, which before you had not; you have had many a prayer answered, and many a deliverance granted; and will you make a stand, when all these experiences do call you forward? Should not new motives and helps, thus added to the old, be the means of adding to your zeal and holiness? Surely, more wages and encouragement do bespeak more work and diligence: and therefore see that you increase.

17. And most or many of you have cause to consider how long you have been already in the family and school of Christ. If you are but newly entered, I may well exhort you to increase, but I cannot reprove you for not increasing. But, alas!

what a multitude of dwarfs hath Christ, that are like infants, at twenty, or forty, or threescore years of age! What! be so many years in his school, and yet be in the lowest form! ‘For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat: for every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe: but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, that by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.’ O, poor, weak, diseased Christian, hast thou been so many years beholding the face of God by faith; and yet art thou no more in love with him than at the first? Hast thou been so long making trial of his goodness; and dost thou see it and favour it no more than in the beginning? Hast thou been so long under his cure; and art thou no more healed than the first year or day? Hast thou been hearing and talking of heaven so long; and yet art thou no more heavenly nor ready for heaven? Hast thou heard and talked so much against the world and the flesh; and yet is the world as high in thee as at first, and the flesh as strong as in the beginning of thy profession? O, what a sin and shame is this; and what a wrong to God and thee!

Yea consider here, also, what means thou hast had, as well as what time. O, who hath gone beyond thee for power, and plenty, and purity of ordinances; or at least how few! Surely, few parts of all the earth are like to England, for the showers

of heaven, and the riches of the precious ordinances of God! You have sermons till you can scarce desire more; and those so plain that men can scarce tell how to speak plainer; and so earnest, as if the servants of Christ would take no nay, even almost as if they must perish if you perished. You have as frequent, as plain, and powerful books. You have the warnings and examples of the godly about you. And what yet would you have more? And should a people thus fed be dwarfs continually? Is ignorance, and dulness, and earthliness, and selfishness excusable, after all these means? Surely, Sirs, it is but just that God should expect you all to be giants; even heavenly grown, confirmed Christians: whatever others do, it should be so with you.

18. And methinks it should somewhat move you to consider, how others have thriven in less time, and by smaller means by far than you have had; and how some of your neighbours can yet thrive by the same means that you so little thrive by. Job, who was so magnified by God himself, had not such means as you. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, had none of them such means as you. 'Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' Though John Baptist was greater than any of the prophets, yet the least of you that are in the gospel kingdom are greater than he, in respect of means. As the times of the gospel have far clearer light, and give out greater measures of grace; so the true genuine children of the gospel should,

taking them one with another, be far more confirmed, strong, and heavenly, than those that were under the darker and scantier administrations of the promise.

And do you not see and hear how far you are outstripped by many of your poor neighbours, that are as low in natural parts, and as low in the world and the esteem of men as you? How many do shine before you in knowledge, and meekness, and patience, and a blameless upright life; in fervent prayers, and a heavenly conversation!—men that have had as much need to look after the world as you; and no longer time to get these qualifications; and no other means but what you have had, or might have had as well as they. And now they shine as stars in the church on earth, while you are like sparks, if not like clods. I know that God is the free disposer of his graces; but yet he so seldom faileth any, even in degrees, that be not wanting to themselves, that I may well ask you, why you might not have reached to some more eminency, as well as these about you, if you had but been as careful and industrious as they?

19. Consider that your holiness is your personal perfection; and that of the same kind you must have in glory, though not in the same degree. And therefore if you be not desirous of its increase, it seems you are out of love with your souls, and with heaven itself: and when you cease to grow in holiness, you cease to go on any further to salvation. If you would indeed yourselves be perfect and blessed, you must be perfected in this holiness,

which must make you capable of the perfect fruition of the most holy God, and capable of his perfect love and praise. There is no heaven without a perfection in holiness. If, therefore, you let fall your desires of this, it seems you let fall your desires of salvation. Up then and be doing; and grow as men that are growing up to glory: and if you believe that you are in your progress to heaven, being nearer your salvation than when you first believed, see then that you make a progress in heavenly-mindedness, and that you be riper for salvation than when you first believed. How ill doth it become men to make any stand in the way to heaven; especially when they have been in the way so long that we might have expected, before this, they should have been, as it were, almost within sight of it!

20. Consider, also, that little grace, little glory; and the greater measure of holiness, the greater measure will you have of happiness. I know that the glory of the lowest saint in heaven will be exceeding great; but, doubtless, the greatest measure is unspeakably most desirable. And as it will not stand with the truth of grace for a man to be satisfied with a low degree of grace, though he plead the happiness of the lowest Christian, and his own unworthiness of the least degree; so, at least, it ill beseems an heir of glory to desire but the lowest degree of glory, though he plead the happiness of the lowest saint in heaven, and his own unworthiness of the lowest place. For he that will be so content with the smallest glory as not to have hearty desires of more, is accordingly

content to have in himself the smallest measure of the knowledge and love of God; and to be loved in the smallest measure by him; and to have the least enjoyment of him; and to bear the smallest part in his praises, and in pleasing and glorifying him for ever. For all these things are our happiness itself: and how well this agreeth with a gracious frame of mind, I need not any further tell you.

But, because some make question of it, whether the degree of glory will be answerable to the degree of holiness, I shall prove it in a few words.

(1.) It is the very drift of the parable of the talents in Matt. xxv. He that had gotten most by improvement was made ruler, proportionably, over most cities. Not he that had been at the greatest bodily labour in religion, nor every one that had passed the greatest sufferings; but he that had got most holiness to himself and honour to God by the improvement of his talents, and so had doubled them.

(2.) The degrees of holiness, hereafter, will be divers, as are the degrees of holiness here; 'for as men sow they will reap;' and there is no promise in Scripture that men that die with the smallest holiness shall be made equal to them that died with the greatest holiness. And that the greatest holiness hereafter, must have the greatest happiness, is past denial. For 1. Holiness in heaven is an essential part of the felicity itself. It is the perfection of the soul. 2. The use of it is for perfect fruition, and perfect exercise of love

and praise, which are the other parts of glory. And God will not give men powers, capacities, and dispositions, in heaven, which shall be in vain: as he giveth hungering, and thirsting, and love, so will he give proportionable satisfaction; and not tantalize his servants in their blessedness, and leave a part of hell in heaven. 3. And holiness is pleasing to God in its own nature; and therefore the greatest holiness will greatliest please him; and he that most pleaseth God, hath the greatest glory. These things are plain.

(3.) Moreover, we have great reason to conceive of the state of the glorified, in some congruency with the rest of the workmanship of God. But in all the rest there is a difference or imparity; therefore we have reason to think it is so here. On earth, there are princes and subjects in the commonwealth; and pastors and people in the churches; and several degrees among the people as to gifts and comforts. Among the devils, there are degrees; and among angels themselves there are principalities and powers, and thrones and dominions. And why, then, should we imagine that the heavenly Jerusalem shall not be so too?

(4.) And Christ plainly intimateth that there is a place on his right hand and his left to give, in that kingdom, though as the Son of Man he had not the principal disposal of it: 'And then the kingdom must be delivered to the Father, and God be all and in all;' and therefore the Mediator, as such, have somewhat less to do than now. And when Christ telleth us of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom,



and of many from the east and west sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he intimateth to us, that every place in heaven is not so high as Abraham's bosom, nor a sitting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So that I take it as a plain revealed truth, that divers degrees of holiness will have divers degrees of glory hereafter.

The chief argument to the contrary is fetched from the parable of the labourers, that, coming in at several hours, received every one a penny. But this is much misunderstood; for here is not a word in it contrary to our assertion. The parable only saith that glory shall not be proportioned to the time; but they that come the later shall have never the less for that; which is nothing to our question about the degree of holiness: for many that are first in time, may be least and last in holiness; and many that are last in time may, in that little time, come to be best and greatest in holiness, and, consequently, in glory. The parable, in Matt. xxv., shews that God will give different degrees of glory, according to the difference in improvement of our talents. And the other parable shews that he will not give out his glory according to men's time and standing in the church, seeing a weaker Christian may be of longer standing, and a stronger of a later coming in. And what show of discord is there between these? And yet it is doubtful, in the judgment of good expositors, whether the parable of the penny do speak of heaven at all or not; or whether it speak not only of the vocation of the Gentiles, and taking

them into the gospel church in equality with the believing Jews: though the Jews, being God's ancient people, had been longer in the vineyard, and the Gentiles were called but as at the eleventh hour, yet God will make the Gentiles equal in the grace of vocation, because in this he hath not engaged himself, but may do with his own as he list: Whichever of these two is the thing intended in the text, or possibly both, it is certain that this general is the sum of the parable, 'that the first may be last, and the last first;' that is, that God will not give men the greatest reward, that were first called; but he never said that he would not reward them most, that had done him the truest service and were highest in holiness.

*Object.* 'But the reason is, may I not do as I will with my own?' True, but you must remember what it is a reason of, even of the cause in question, and may not by you be extended to other causes, without a warrant. You never read that he equally pardoneth the believer and the unbeliever, or saveth the regenerate and unregenerate, and then gives this reason of it—May I not do as I will with my own? For this can be no reason for any thing which he hath revealed that he will not do. Prove, first, that he will do it; and then bring your reasons why; but not before. So that it extendeth not to the case of different glory, upon different degrees of holiness; for this he hath revealed that he will do.

So much, and perhaps too much, to satisfy the doubtful. Now I desire to return to the dull and

languishing Christian, and beseech him to remember what a difference there will be between one saint and another, in glory! And O, who would not aspire after the highest measure of holiness, in hope of a high degree of glory? Christian, hadst thou not infinitely rather love God with the greatest love than with a less, and be beloved again with the greatest of his love;—I mean, by partaking of the greatest effects of it, and the fullest sense of his everlasting favour? Remember this; and sure it will persuade thee to gird up thy loins, and run as for the incorruptible crown, and press on to the mark for the prize of the high calling, and not to sit down with weak beginnings; especially when the way is so sweet as well as the end, and the greatest holiness hath here also the greatest spiritual reward, and is attended with the greatest peace and joy in the ordinary course of God's dispensations; and when all the knocks, and falls, and cries of Christians, in this life, proceed from the childish weakness of their spirits; and almost all the woes and calamities that attend us—our shames, our pains, our contentions and divisions, and the lamentable difficulty that seems an impossibility of healing them or preventing more—all is from the corruptions that are the companions of our weakness; and could we but grow up to a manhood of understanding, humility, meekness, self-denial, and the love of God in Christ, and of one another, we might then have some hope of the cure of all. Alas! that men are so sensible of the difference between a weak body and a strong, a sick and a sound, a child and a man, an idiot and a

man of wisdom, (though all of them have human nature,) should yet be so little sensible of the great difference between a weak Christian and a strong, a sick and a sound, (comparatively sound,) a childish, and a manly, wise, confirmed Christian! Did you well know the difference, you would shew us that you make a greater matter of it.

And now, Christian reader, I entreat thee soberly to consider of these motives, whether they do not shew thee reason enough to move thee to look after higher things, and not to stay in an infancy of holiness. It is a blessed mercy, I confess, that God hath given thee a true conversion, and the smallest measure of the heavenly life. I do not move thee to undervalue it; nay, I am blaming thee for undervaluing it: for, if thou didst not undervalue it, thou wouldst earnestly desire more. Thou hast cause to bless God to all eternity, and to all eternity thou shalt bless him, for making thee a new creature, even a living member of his Son; and I know that thy condition is unspeakably better than the greatest prince's or emperor's upon earth, that is void of holiness. I know that thou hast still ground of exceeding consolation; I am not taking thy comforts from thee; I know God despiseth not the day of small things; and that Christ will not 'quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed,' nor cast off the poorest infants of his family, nor lose any one of the lambs of his flock. But yet, for all this, I must tell thee, that there is a great deal of difference in excellency, and strength, and comfort, and happiness,

between one sanctified person and another ; and if thou be so apt to be over-covetous of worldly riches where God forbiddeth it, and limiteth thy desires, and where there is no such necessity or excellency to entice thee, why shouldst thou not cherish that holy covetousness which God expressly commandeth thee ; ‘ Covet earnestly the best gifts : ’ and which he hath promised a blessing to ; ‘ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled ? ’ This is not spoken of them that have no righteousness, but of them that have it, and fain would have more : for, 1. There is no such promise made to any that are short of saving faith. It is not any common grace that God makes this promise to, but a special grace. And, 2. It is evident that no man can thus hunger and thirst after righteousness without righteousness ; for even this hungering and thirsting is a degree of true sanctification. You would not take up with a cottage or smoky cabin, if you could have a palace ; nor with dry bread, if you could lawfully have plenty ; nor with a torn or threadbare coat, if you can have better ; nor with a poor, laborious, toilsome life, in disgrace and the reproach of men, if you could have honour and ease and abundance. And yet will you take up with so poor a stock of holiness, and so dark a mind, and small a measure of heavenly light, and so cold a love to God and glory, and so barren and common a kind of life ? God hath commanded you, that having food and raiment, you should therewith be content ; but he never commanded you that being once converted and made an infant in grace,

you should therewith be content. So content you must be as not to murmur ; but not so content as not to desire more.

You can see the difference I doubt not in others, between a little grace and more ; O, that you would but see this for yourselves ! If you have a froward wife, or husband, or child, that hath a harsh and passionate nature, and hath so much grace only as to lament this when they are calmed, and to strive against it, but not to forbear the often exercise of it ; though such a nature may be pardoned to the penitent, yet it may prove such a thorn in your own side, and such a smoke or continual dropping in your house, as will make you a-weary of it. I have oft known men that had wives of so much folly and passion, and unruliness of tongue, that yet they hoped had some saving grace, that made them even a-weary of their lives, and wish that they had met with a gentle nature. And methinks you should know that corruption in yourselves is much more dangerous and hurtful to you than any that can be in wife or husband ; and should be much more offensive and wearisome and grievous to you. It is a desperate sign of a bad heart that can bear with corruption in themselves, and cannot bear with it in wife or husband, or those that do them wrong by their corruptions. If weakness of grace do leave your nearest friends thus liable to wrong and abuse you, and this trouble you ; consider that your own weakness leaves you liable to far greater and oftener offences against God ; and this should trouble you much more.

Let me give you another instance: If you have a pastor that is truly godly, and yet is so weak that he can scarcely speak with any understanding or life, the message that he should deliver, and withal is indiscreet, and as scandalous as will stand with grace; what good is this man like to do for all his godliness? At least you will soon see a lamentable difference between such a one and a judicious, convincing, holy, heavenly, powerful, and unspotted man. O what a blessing is one to the place! and the other may be a grievous judgment; and you would be ready to run away from his ministry. Why, sirs, if there be so great a difference between pastor and pastor, where both have grace, methinks you should see what a difference there is also between people and people, even where all have grace. For truly poor ministers find this to their sorrow in their people, as well as you can find it in them. Some ministers have a stayed, confirmed, judicious, humble, meek, self-denying, teachable, peaceable, and experienced people; and these walk comfortably, and guide them peaceably, and labour with them cheerfully: and O what beauty and glory is upon such assemblies! and what order, and growth, and comfort is among them! But alas, how many ministers have a flock (even of those that we hope are godly) that grieve them by their levity, or weary them by their unteachable ignorance or self-conceit-  
edness, or hinder their labours by errors and quarrels, and perverse opposition to the truths which they do not understand? So that there is a great difference between people and people that are godly.

Brethren, it is far from the desire of my heart, to cast any unjust dishonour upon saints; much less to dishonour the graces of God in them. No; I take it rather for an honour to that immortal spark, that it can live among its enemies and not be conquered—and in the waters of corruption, and not be quenched. But yet I must take up a just complaint, that few of us answer the cost of our redemption and the provisions of God, or are near such a people as our receivings or professions require we should be. It is one of the most grievous thoughts that ever came to my heart, to observe how the lives of the greatest part of professors do tend to dishonour the power and worth of grace in the eyes of the world! and that the ungodly should see that grace doth make no greater a difference, and do no more upon us than it doth! Yea, it is a sore temptation oftentimes to believers, to see that grace doth no more in the most, but that so many are still a shame to their profession.

I must confess that I once thought more highly of professors, as to the measure of their grace, than experience now will suffer me to think. Little did I think that they had been so unstable, so light, so ignorant, so giddy, as to follow almost any that do but whistle them. What a dreadful sight it is to see, how quickly the most odious heresies do infect and destroy even multitudes of them, and that in a moment, as soon as they appear! the grossest mists of the bottomless pit are presently admired as the light of God.

If a church-divider do but arise, how quickly doth he get disciples!



If a papist have but opportunity, he will lightly catch some as oft as he doth cast his net. If he cannot prevail barefaced, it is but putting on the visor of some other sect.

O, sad day, that ever these things should come to pass! and that we are forced to utter them, having no possibility of concealing them from the world! Were these men confirmed and stablished in the faith? Were these men rooted and built up in Christ? Alas, sirs, if any deceivers come among us, how few of our people are able to withstand them, and defend the truth of God against them!—but they are caught up by the devil's falconers, as the poor chickens by the kite, except those that fly under the wings of a judicious settled minister.

If an anabaptist assault their baptism, how few of them can defend it! And, silly souls, when they find themselves nonplussed, they suspect not their own unfurnished understandings, or inexperienced unsettled hearts, but suspect the truth of God, and suspect their teachers, be they never so far beyond them in knowledge and holiness; as if their teachers had misled them, whenever these unprofitable infants are thus stalled.

If a papist be to plead his cause with them, how few have we that can answer him!

If an infidel should oppose the Scripture, or Christ himself, how few among us are able to defend them, and solidly give proof either of the truth of Scripture, or of the faith that they do profess!

And this is not all (though it is a heart-breaking

case), but even in their practice, alas, what remissness, and what corruptions do appear! How few in secret do keep any constant watch upon their hearts, and fear and abhor the approach of an evil thought! Nay, how few are they that do not leave their fancy almost common, and ordinarily even feed on covetous, proud, malicious, or lustful thoughts, and make no great matter of it, but live in it from day to day! How few do keep up life and constancy in secret prayer or meditation! How few are the families where the cause, and worship, and government of Christ is kept up in life and honour; and where all is not dissolved into a little, weary, disordered, heartless performance!

Look into our congregations, and judge but by their very looks, and carriage, and gestures, how many even of those that we think the best, do so much as *seem* to be earnest and serious in prayer or praise, when the church is upon that work! Though it be the highest and noblest part of worship, and should be done with all the heart and might, and with a participation of a kind of angelical reverence, devotion, and spirituality; and if it were so, we should see it by some of the signs of reverence and affection: yet, alas, when we think the best of them should be striving with God, or wrapped up in his praises, they do but hear us pray as they hear us preach, and think they have done fair to give us the hearing. They sit on their seats in prayer, or use some crooked leaning gesture, perhaps looking up and down about them, perhaps half asleep; but few of them with eyes, and hands,

and hearts, lift up to Heaven, do behave themselves as if they believed that they had so nearly to do with God. I know reverent gestures may easily be counterfeited : but that shows that they are good, when hypocrites think them a fit cover for hypocrisy ; for they are used not to borrow credit from evil, but from some good to be a cover to the evil : and it leaveth the neglects of the godly more inexcusable, when they will not go so far herein as hypocrites themselves, nor by their behaviour in a public ordinance, so much as *seem* to be seriously employed with God.

And if we try the graces or obedience of professors, alas, how small shall we find them in the most ! How little are most acquainted with the life of faith ! How little do they admire the Redeemer and his blessed work ! How unacquainted are they with the daily use and high improvement of a Saviour ; for access to God, and supportation, and corroboration of the soul, and for conveyance of daily supplies of grace and help against our spiritual enemies ! How few are they that can rejoice in tribulation, persecution, and bodily distresses, because of the hopes laid up in heaven ; and that can live upon a promise, and comfortably wait on God for the accomplishment ! How few that live as men that are content with God alone, and can cheerfully leave their flesh, and credit, and worldly estate to his disposal, and be content to want or suffer when he sees it good for them ! What repinings and troubles possess our minds if the flesh be not provided for, and if God do but cross us in

these worldly things ; as if we had made our bargain with him for the flesh, and for this world, and had not taken him alone for our portion ! How few can use prosperity in riches, and health, and reputation, with a mortified, weaned, and heavenly mind ! Nay, how few are there that do not live much to the pleasure of the flesh, and pamper it as indulgently, under the appearance of temperance and religion, as others do in grosser ways ! Do but try the godly themselves by plain and faithful reproof of their corruptions, and see how many of them you will find, that will not excuse them and take part with the enemy, and be offended with you for your close reproof. If any of them be overtaken with a scandalous fault, and the pastors of the church shall call them to open confession, and expression of repentance, though you would little think a penitent man should once stick at this, and refuse to do any thing that he can do to repair the honour of God and his profession, and to save the souls of others whom he hath endangered, yet how many will you find that will add a wilful obstinacy to their scandal, and will deliberately refuse so great, and clear, and necessary a duty : so great is the interest of self and flesh in them, and, consequently, so little the interest of Christ, that they will live in impenitency in the eye of the church, and venture on the high displeasure of God, come of it what will, and resist the advice of their best, and wisest, and most impartial friends, rather than they will so far deny themselves as to make such a free and faithful confession. They are, many of them, so much for

holy discipline, that they are ready to fall out with church and ministers, and to be gone to a purer society, because it is not exercised. But on whom? On others only, and not upon them. When they need discipline themselves, how impatient are they of it, and how do they abhor it; and what a stir do they make before they will submit! even more, sometimes, than a drunkard or a swearer, so small is their repentance and detestation of their sin,—whereby they shew that their zeal for discipline and reformation is much out of pride, that others may be brought to stoop, or be cast out from them; and not out of a sincere desire to have the refining and humbling benefit of it themselves.

And if any among them be either faulty or reported so to be, who is forwarder than many professors of godliness, to backbite them, and speak of their faults when they cannot hear, nor answer for themselves, nor receive any benefit by it; and if another, that hates backbiting, do but reprove them, they will slander him also for a defender of men's sins! But when they should go in Christ's way, and tell men of their faults, and draw them to repentance, and, if they hear not, take two or three, and speak to them again, how hardly can you draw them to the performance of this duty! What shifts and frivolous excuses have they then! Nay, they will reproach the church or minister for not casting such out, or not keeping them from communion, before they have done, or will be persuaded to do these duties that must go before.

Alas, how little hearty love is there to Christ in

his members, even in them that are confident they love the brethren ! How few will do or suffer much for them, or relieve them in their want as suffering with them ! How small a matter, a word, a seeming wrong or disrespect, will turn their love into estrangedness or bitterness ! If they be tried by an ill word, or a wrong, how touchy, and froward, and impatient do they appear ; and it is well if they prove not downright malicious, or return not reviling for reviling.

Alas, how much pride prevaieth with many that seem to go far in the way of piety ! how wise are they in their own conceits ! how able to judge of controversies, and how much wiser than their teachers, before they can give a good account of the catechism or fundamental truths ! how well do they think of themselves and their own parts and performances ! how ill do they bear dis-esteem or undervaluing ! and needs they must be noted for somebody in the world !

How worldly, and close-handed, and eager of gain, are many that say they despise the world and take it for their enemy ! if any duty be cross to their profit or credit with men, how obstinate are they against it ! and such interest hath the flesh in them, that they will hardly believe that it is their duty.

How censorious are they of others, especially that differ from them in lesser things, and how unapt to judge themselves ! O how few are the Christians that are eminent in humility, meekness, and self-denial, that are content to be accounted nothing, so

that Christ may be all, and his honour may be secured! that live as men devoted to God, and honour him with their substance, and freely expend, yea study for advantages, to improve all their riches and interest to his service! How few are they that live as in heaven upon earth, with the world under their feet, and their hearts above with God, their happiness! that feel themselves to live in the workings and warmth of love to God, and make him their delight, and are content with his approbation whoever disapproveth them! that are still groaning or reaching and seeking after him, and long to be with him; to be rid of sin, and see his blessed face, and live in his perfect love and praises! that love and long for the appearance of Jesus Christ, and can heartily say, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!' How few are they that stand in a day of trial! if they are tried but with a foul word, if tried but with any thing that toucheth their interests, if tried but with the emptiest reasonings of deceivers, much more if they be tried with the honours and greatness of the world, how few of them stand in trial and do not fall and forget themselves, as if they were not the men that they seemed to be before! what then would they prove if they were tried by the flames?

Mistake me not in all this sad complaint, as I intend not the dishonour of godliness by this, but of ungodliness (for it is not because men are godly that they have these faults, but because they are not godly more). So here is no encouragement to the unsanctified to think themselves as good as the more religious, because they are charged with so

many faults; nor do I affirm all these things to be consistent with true grace that I have here expressed: but only this, that professors that seem godly to others are thus too many of them guilty; and those that have true grace may have any of these faults in a mortified degree, though not in a reigning predominant measure.

But methinks, sirs, you should, by this time, be convinced and sensible how much we dishonour God by our infirmities; and what a lamentable case it is that the church should consist of so many infants, and so many should be so little serviceable to God or the common good, but rather be troublers of all about them: alas, that we should reach no higher, that yet no greater things should be attained! O what an honour would you be to your profession, and what a blessing to the church, if you did but answer the cost and pains of God and man, and answer the high things that you have been acquainted with and profess; that we could but boast of you as God did of Job, and could say to Satan or any of his instruments, ‘Here be Christians rooted and stablished in the faith, try whether you can shake them or make them stagger, and do your worst!’ ‘Here is a man eminent in meekness and humility, and patience and self-denial, discompose and disturb his mind if you can—draw him to pride or immoderate passion, or censoriousness, or uncharitableness, if you can: here are a people that are in unity, and knit together in faith and love; of one heart, and one soul, and one lip—do your worst to divide them or break them into parties, or draw them into several minds and



ways, or exasperate them against each other : here are a people established in mortification, and that have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts—do your worst to draw them to intemperance in eating, or drinking, or recreations, or any of the delights of the flesh ; or to puff them up by greatness and prosperity, and make them forget themselves or God. Try them with riches, or beauty, or vain-glory, or other sensual delights, and see whether they will turn aside, and be ever the less in communion with God, and enticed to forget the joy that is set before them ; or will not rather despise your baits, and run away from alluring objects as their greatest dangers : daunt them, if you can, by threatenings ; try them by persecution, by fire and sword, and see whether they are not past your shaking, even rooted, confirmed, and built up in Christ.’

O what a glory would you be to your profession if you could attain to this degree ? could we but truly thus boast of you, we might say our people are Christians of the right strain. But when we must come about you like men in a swoon, and can hardly perceive whether you are alive or dead, and can scarce discern whether you have any grace or none, what a grief is this to our hearts, what a perplexity to us in our administrations, not knowing whether comfort or terror be your due ; and what a languishing uncomfortable life is this to yourselves, in comparison of what you might attain to !

Rouse up yourselves, Christians, and look after higher and greater things, and think it not enough

that you are barely alive. It is an exceeding righteousness that you must have if you will be saved, even exceeding all that the unsanctified do attain : for, ‘ except your righteousness exceed even the righteousness of scribes and pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ But it is yet a more exceeding righteousness that you must have if you will be confirmed, built up, and abound, and would honour your profession, and cheerfully, successfully, and constantly go on in the journey, the race, the warfare, that you have begun; you must then exceed yourselves, and exceed all the feeble, unstable, wavering, infant Christians that are about you : and, to persuade you yet further to look after this, I shall here annex a few motives more.

1. Consider, Christian, that ‘ it is a God of exceeding infinite greatness and goodness that thou hast to do with, and therefore it is not small and low matters that are suitable to his service.’ O if thou hadst but a glimpse of his glory, thou wouldst say that it is not common things that are meet for such a dreadful Majesty. Hadst thou but a fuller taste of his goodness, thy heart would say—‘ This pittance of love and service is unworthy of him.’ You will not offer the basest things to a king, much less to the highest King of kings : ‘ If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick, it is not evil ? offer it now to thy governor : will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person ? saith the Lord of hosts.’ ‘ But ye have profaned it’ (his great name), ‘ in that ye say, the table of the Lord is polluted ; and the

fruit thereof, his meat, is contemptible. Ye have said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts: and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this at your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.' If you better knew the majesty of God, you would know that the best is too little for him, and trifling is not tolerable in his service. When Nadab and Abihu ventured with false fire to his altar, and he smote them dead, he silenced Aaron with this reason of his judgment: 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' That is, I will have nothing common offered to me, but be served with my own holy peculiar service. When the Bethshemites were smitten dead for looking into the ark, fifty thousand and seventy men of them, they found that God would not be dallied with, and cried out, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?'

2. It was an exceeding great price that was paid for your redemption! for 'ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.' It was an 'exceeding great love' that was manifested by God the Father, and by Christ, in this work of redemption, such as even poseth angels and men to

study it and comprehend it; and should all this be answered but with trifling from you? Should such a matchless miracle of love be answered with no greater love? especially when you were purposely redeemed from all iniquity, that you might be sanctified to Christ 'a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' It being therefore so great a price that you are bought with, remember that 'you are not your own,' but must glorify him that bought you 'in body and spirit.' 1 Cor. vi. 20.

3. Consider also, that it is not a small, but an exceeding glory that is promised you in the gospel, and which you live in hope to possess for ever. And, therefore, it should be an exceeding love that you should have to it, and an exceeding care that you should have of it. Make light of heaven, and make light of all. Truly it is an unsuitable, unreasonable thing, to have one low thought, or one careless word, or one cold prayer, or other performance, about such a matter as eternal glory. Shall such a thing as heaven be coldly, or carelessly, minded and sought after? shall the endless fruition of God in glory, be looked at with sleepy heartless wishes? I tell you, sirs, if you will have such high hopes, you must have high and strong endeavours. A slow pace becomes not him that travelleth to such a home as this: if you are resolved for heaven, behave yourselves accordingly. A gracious, reverent, godly, frame of spirit, producing an acceptable service of God, is fit for them that look to 'receive the kingdom which cannot be moved.' The believing thoughts of the end of all our labours must

needs convince us that we should be 'stedfast, and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' O hearken, thou sleepy slothful Christian, doth not God call, and conscience call, 'Awake, and up, and be doing, man! for it is for heaven!' Hearken, thou negligent lazy Christian! do not God and conscience call out to thee, 'O man, make haste and mend thy pace, it is for heaven!' Hearken, thou cowardly faint-hearted Christian! do not God and conscience call out to thee, 'Arm man, and see thou stand thy ground; do not give back, nor look behind thee; but fall on, and fight in the strength of Christ; for it is for the crown of endless glory!' O what a heart hath that man that will not be heartened with such calls as these! methinks the very name of God and heaven should awaken you and make you stir, if there be any stirring power within you. Remissness in worldly matters hath an excuse, for they are but trifles; but slackness in the matters of salvation is made inexcusable by the greatness of those matters. O let the noble greatness of your hopes appear in the resolvedness, exactness, and diligence of your lives.

4. Consider also, that it is not only low and smaller mercies that you receive from God, but mercies innumerable, and inestimable, and exceeding great; and, therefore, it is not cold affections and dull endeavours that you should return to God for all these mercies. Mercy brought you into the world, and mercy hath nourished you and bred you up, and mercy hath defended and maintained you, and plentifully provided for you—your bodies live

upon it—your souls were recovered by it—it gave you your being—it rescued you from misery—it saveth you from sin and Satan, and yourselves—all that you have at present, you hold by it—all that you can hope for, for the future, must be from it—it is most sweet in quality—what sweeter to miserable souls than mercy? It is exceeding great in quantity. The mercy of the ‘ Lord is in the heavens, and his faithfulness reacheth to the clouds. His righteousness is like the great mountains ; his judgments are a great deep.’ ‘ O how great is his goodness which he hath laid up for them that fear him ; which he hath wrought for them that trust in him before the sons of men !’ ‘ His mercy is great unto the heavens, and his truth unto the clouds.’ And O what an insensible heart hath he that doth not understand the voice of all this wondrous mercy ! doubtless it speaketh the plainest language in the world ; commanding great returns from us of love, and praise, and obedience, to the bountiful bestower of them. With David we must say, ‘ Blessed be the Lord ; for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. O love the Lord, all ye his saints : for the Lord preserveth all the faithful.’ And, again, ‘ Teach me thy way, O Lord ; I will walk in thy truth : unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart ; and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy towards me ; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.’ Unspeakable mercies must needs be felt in deep impressions, and be so savory with the gracious

soul, that methinks it should work us to the highest resolutions ;—unthankfulness is a crime that heathens did detest ; and it is exceeding great unthankfulness if we have not exceeding great love and obedience, under such exceeding great and many mercies as we possess.

5. Consider that they are exceeding great helps and means that you possess to further your holiness and obedience to God ; and, therefore, your holiness and obedience should also be exceeding great. You have all the book of nature to instruct you ; every creature may teach you God, and calls loud upon you to persuade your hearts yet nearer to him ; every work of disposing providence is an instructor and persuader of you ; every leaf and line of Scripture is a guide or spur to you ; you have ministers able and willing to help you ; you have the help of the communion of saints ; the help of the examples of the good ; and the warnings of the judgments of God upon the wicked ; the helps of sermons ; the helps of sacraments ; the helps of prayer, and holy meditation, and conference ; mercies to encourage you ; afflictions to excite you : what more would you have ? and yet will you be infants, and do no more with all your helps ? But this I touched upon before.

6. It is an exceeding great necessity that is upon you, and therefore your resolutions should be exceeding high, and your diligence exceeding great ; for all you are converted, your salvation lieth yet upon your stability and perseverance. ‘ Christ hath reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and

unreproveable in his sight; if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard.' (Col. i. 22, 23.) God will not be an acceptor of persons, you must stick to his terms if you will partake of his salvation! He will not make two words with you; he hath told you what he expecteth of you; and that he will have. Death will not be bribed, nor put by—judgment is coming on—there is no shifting out of the hands of God—and, under such pressing necessities as these, what Christians should we be! how stable and abundant in faith and righteousness!

7. It is a great account that you have to make, and therefore a great preparation that should be made. When you shall be brought before the living God, and all your times, and thoughts, and ways, must be called over, and you see what follows, and are waiting for the final doom, then there will be no dull thoughts in your hearts; all will be then lively, and quite above this careless frame. Then even the wicked will have strong desires, 'O that we had taken another course—that we had but prevented this dreadful doom, whatever it had cost us!' And should not believers now be awakened to great and careful preparations for such a day as this?

8. For trifles here are great endeavours used:—to climb up into honour or riches in the world; to satisfy the flesh; to lay up a treasure on earth, and labour for the meat that perisheth. O what endeavours then should be used for the heavenly everlasting treasure!



9. Consider also how forward and diligent should those men be that are sure they can never go too high, nor be too diligent, when they have done their best; nay, that are certain that the best do come so abundantly short, that they must after sit down and lament that they were no better. O there is not the holiest saint on earth but will confess, with lamentation, how little his love to God is, in comparison of what it should be! how short all falls below our duty—below the glorious majesty of God—below the precious love of Christ—below the worth of precious souls—below the weight of endless glory—below the mercies that should warm our hearts—below the great necessity that is on us—and, consequently, below their own desires. Look therefore after greater things while you may attain them.

10. Lastly, Consider what abundance of great engagements are on you that are sincere believers, more than upon others.

(1.) You are more nearly related to Christ than any others are, and therefore you should be more tender of offending him, and more eminent in love and service to him. You are his household servants, and will you not labour for him and stick to him? you are his friends, and should a friend abuse him—should not a friend be faithful? You are his dear adopted children, and his spouse; and should not you be faithful to the death—should not all the love and service that you have be his?

(2.) You have bound yourselves to him by more serious frequent vows and covenants than other men

have done. How many persons and places and necessities of yours can witness against you, if you be not firm and forward for the Lord. As Joshua said to Israel, 'Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto you, lest you deny your God;' so I may say, the places where you have kneeled, and prayed and promised, will be witnesses against you, if you be not firm to God; the churches that you have assembled in—the places you have walked in, in your solitary meditations—the persons that have heard your promises and professions—the world about you that hath seen your forwardness, will all witness against you if you be not firm.

(3.) It is you that have the life and kernel of mercies, others have but the crumbs that fall from your tables; others have common mercies, but you have the great and special mercies that accompany salvation: 'All things are yours,' and should not you 'be Christ's?' Of you it is that God is so exceeding tender, that he chargeth your enemies not to touch you; and tells them that touch you, that they 'touch the apple of his eye.' And should not you abound in love and holiness?—and should you not be as tender of his favour and his law, and honour, as of the apple of your eye? Should not he that toucheth the name, and law, and honour of God, by profaning them by sin, be as one that toucheth the apple of your eye?

(4.) You have a spirit and heavenly life within you, which the rest of the world are unacquainted with. And can you think it is not something extraordinary that God must needs expect from you? Will you

not 'walk in the Spirit" which is given you, and mortify the flesh by it? Is there not more expected from the living than the dead? Surely, He that hath made you 'new creatures,' and made you 'partakers of the divine nature,' doth expect somewhat divine in your affections and devotions, and that you be somewhat more than men.

(5.) Moreover, it is you, above others, for whom the word and messengers of God are sent. We must speak to all; but it is you that God's special eye is upon,—it is your salvation that he intends to accomplish by us. 'There were many widows in the days of Elias, and many lepers in the days of Elisha; but it was but to one of them that the prophet was sent. We make the ungodly multitude even rage against us, and ministers are hated for magnifying the grace of God to you, and declaring his special love to you above others. When Christ himself had spoken the fore-cited words, it is said in the next verses, that 'all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.' This was the entertainment of Christ himself when he did but declare how few it is that God will save, and for whose sakes he specially sends his messengers. And must we incur all this for magnifying you, and will you dishonour yourselves? Is all our study and labour for you, and our lives for you, and all things for you—and will not you be wholly, and to the utmost of your strength, for God? Are you

culled out of all the world for salvation, and will you not answer this admirable differencing grace by an admirable difference from those that must perish, and by an admirable excellency in meekness, humility, self-denial, and heavenliness, above other men?

(6.) Moreover, you know more, and have a greater experience to assist you than others have; and therefore you should excel them accordingly. Others have but heard of the odiousness of sin, but you have seen and felt it. Others have heard of God's displeasure; but you have tasted it to the breaking or bruising of your hearts. You have been warned at the very quick, as if Christ had spoken to your very flesh and bones, 'Go thy way, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' And, as Ezra said, 'After all that is come upon us, should we again break thy commandments, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us?' So, if after all your spiritual experiences,—after so many tastes of the bitterness of sin, and groans, and prayers, and cries against it, you shall yet live as like to the wicked as you dare, and be familiar with that which hath cost you so dear; how do you think that God must take this at your hands? You have tasted of the sweetness of the love of Christ, and wondered at the unspeakable riches of his grace; you have tasted the sweetness of the hopes of glory, and of 'the powers of the world to come.' You have perceived the necessity and excellency of holiness, by inward experience;—and if, after all this, you will draggle on the earth, and

live below your own experiences, contenting yourselves with an infancy of love, and life, and fruitfulness, how much do you then transgress against the rules of reason and of equity?

(7.) Moreover, all the world expecteth much more from you than from any others. God expecteth more from you; for he hath given you more, and meaneth to do more for you. Must you be in the eternal joys of Heaven, when all your unsanctified neighbours are in torments, and yet will you not more endeavour to excel them? Is it not unreasonable to expect to be set eternally at so vast a distance from the ungodly world, even as far as heaven is from hell, and yet to be content to differ here but a little from them in holiness? The Lord knows that poor forsaken impenitent sinners will do no better, but rage and be confident till they are past remedy: he looks for no better from them than to neglect him, and slight his Son, and word, and ways, and to go on in worldliness and fleshly living; to be filthy still, and careless, and presumptuous, and self-conceited still. But he expects better things from you; and good reason, he hath done more for you, and prepared you for better things. The ministers of Christ do look for little better from many of their poor ignorant ungodly neighbours, but even to rub out their days in security and self-deceit, and to be barren after all their labours, if not to hate us for seeking to have saved them. But it is you that their eyes are most upon; and you that their hearts are most upon. Their comfort, and the fruit of their lives, lies much in your hands:

St. Paul saith, (1 Thess. iii. 7—9.) ‘ Brethren, we were comforted over you, in all our affliction and distress, by your faith : for now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God : night and day praying exceedingly, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith ?’ You see here, that your pastors’ lives are in your hands : if you stand fast, they live. For the end of life is more than life ; and your salvation is the end of our lives. If the impenitent world reproach us, and abuse and persecute us, we suffer joyfully, as long as our work goeth on with you. But when you are at a stand,—when you are barren and scandalous, and passionate, and dishonour your profession, and put us in fears lest we have bestowed all our labour on you in vain ; this breaks our hearts above any worldly cross whatsoever. O, when the people, that we should rejoice and glory in, shall prove unruly, self-conceited, peevish, proud, every one running his own way, falling into divisions, contentions, or scandals, this is the killing of the comforts of your ministers : when the ungodly shall hit us in the teeth with your scandals or divisions, and say, ‘ These are the godly people that you boasted of, see now what is become of them ;’ this is the smoke to our eyes, and the gall and vinegar that is given us by the adversary : and though still we know that our reward is with the Lord, yet can we not choose but be wounded for your sakes, and for the sake of the cause and name of God.

Yea, the world itself expecteth more from you than others. When men talk of great matters, and profess, as every Christian doth, to look for the greatest matters of eternity, and to live for no lower things than everlasting fellowship with God and angels, no wonder then if the world do look for extraordinary matters from you. If you tell them of reaching heaven, they will look to see you winged like angels, and not creeping on earth like worms. If you say that you are more than men, they look you should shew it by doing more than men can do ; even by denying yourselves and forgiving injuries, and loving your enemies, and blessing those that curse you, and contemning this world, and having your conversation in heaven. O, sirs, believe it, it is not small or common things that will satisfy the expectations of God or men, of ministers, or of the world themselves, concerning you !

(8.) Yea, moreover, God himself doth make his boast of you, and call out the world to observe your excellency : he sets you up as ‘ the light of the world,’ to be beheld by others. He calls you, in his word, ‘ his peculiar treasure above all people ;’— ‘ a peculiar people, purified, and zealous of good works.’ He called you ‘ a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light : ye are as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.’ You are ‘ born again, not of corruptible seed, but of

incorruptible,' and are 'made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' God hath 'delivered you from the power of darkness, and translated you into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom you have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins.'—'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'—'All things shall work together for your good.'—'He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Nothing but the illuminated soul can discern 'the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.' 'When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ.' He hath 'brought us nigh that were far off,' so that 'by one Spirit we have access to the Father by Christ; and are now no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God.'—'We are members of the body of Christ; we are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all,



and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.'

Brethren, shall the Lord speak all this, and more than this, in the Scripture, of your glory, and will you not prove yourselves glorious, and study to make good this precious word? Doth he say, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' and will you not study to shew yourselves more excellent indeed? Shall all these high things be spoken of you, and will you live so far below them all? What a heinous wrong is this to God! He sticks not in boasting of you, to call you 'his jewels;' and tells the world he will make them one day discern the 'difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.' He tells the world, that his coming in judgment will be 'to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe.' It is openly professed by the Apostle John, 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' He challengeth any 'to condemn you, or lay any thing to your charge,' professing that it is he 'that justifieth you;' casting the saints into admiration by his love—'What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?' He challengeth 'tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, or nakedness, peril or sword, to separate you if they can from the love of God.' He challengeth 'death and life, angels, principalities, and powers, things present, and things to come, height and depth, or any other creature, to separate you,' if they are able, 'from the love of God in Christ

Jesus our Lord.' Shall the Lord of heaven thus make his boast of you to all the world, and will you not make good his boasting? Yea, I must tell you, he will see that it be made good to a word!—and if you be not careful of it yourselves, and it be not made good in you, then you are not the people that God thus boasteth of. He tells the greatest persecutors to their faces, that the meek, the humble, 'little ones' of his flock, 'have their angels beholding the face of God in heaven;' and that, at the great and dreadful day of judgment, they shall be set 'at his right hand' as his sheep, with a 'Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom,' when others are set at his left hand as goats, with a 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' He tells the world, that 'he that receiveth' a converted man, that is become as 'a little child, receiveth Christ himself:' and that, 'whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in him, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.'

O, sirs! must God be thus wonderfully tender of you, and will you not now be very tender of his interest and your duty? Shall he thus difference you from all the rest of the world, and will you not study to declare the difference? The ungodly even gnash the teeth at ministers, and Scriptures, and Christ himself, for making such a difference between them and you; and will you not let them see that it is not without cause? I intreat you, I require you, in the name of God, see that you answer these high commendations, and shew us that God hath not boasted of you beyond your worth.

(9.) Consider this as the highest motive of all ! God doth not only magnify you and boast of you ; but also he hath made you the living images of his blessed self, his Son Jesus Christ, his Spirit and his holy word ; and so he hath exposed himself, his Son, his Spirit and his word, to be censured by the world, according to your lives.

The ‘ express image of the Father’s person is the Son.’ The Son is declared to the world by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost hath indited the holy Scriptures, which, therefore, bear the image of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This holy word, both ‘ law and promise,’ is ‘ written on your hearts, and put into your inner parts,’ by the same Spirit. So that as God hath imprinted His holy nature in the Scriptures, so hath He made this word the seal, to imprint again His image on your hearts. And you know that common eyes can better discern the image in the wax than on the seal. Though I know that the hardness of the wax, or something lying between, or the imperfect application, may cause an imperfection in the image on the wax, when yet the image on the seal is perfect. And, therefore, the world hath no just cause to censure God, or Christ, or the Spirit, or the word, to be imperfect, because that you are so ; but yet they will do it, and their temptation is great. O sirs, how would your prince take it of you, or how would your poorest friend take it of you, if you should hang forth a deformed picture of them, to the view of all that shall pass by : and should represent them as blind, or leprous, or lame, wanting a leg, or an arm, or an

eye? Would they not say that you unworthily exposed them to scorn? So, if you will take on you to be the living images of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, and the word; and yet will be blind, and worldly, and passionate, and proud, and unruly, and obstinate; or lazy and negligent, and little differing from those that bear the image of the devil: what do you but proclaim that the image of God, and of Satan and the world, do but little differ? and, that God is thus unrighteous and unholy as you are?

(10.) Lastly, consider, 'that the faithful servants of Christ are few; and, therefore, if those few dishonour him, and prove not fast to him; what do you but provoke him to forsake all the world,' and make an end of all the sons of men. It is but 'a little flock to whom he will give the kingdom.' It is but a few from whom God expecteth any great matter: and shall those few prove deceitful to him? It must be you or none that must honour the gospel, you or none that must be exemplary to the world; and shall it be none at all? shall all the workmanship of God abuse him? shall he have no honour from any inferior creature? how can you then expect that he should preserve the world? For will he be at so much care to keep up a world to dishonour and abuse him? If the turning of men's hearts prevent it not, he would come and 'smite the earth with a curse.' For the 'land that beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.' 'If, therefore, Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah sin.' If

the vessels of wrath prepared to destruction, will be blind, and sensual, and filthy still, yet let pollution be far from the sanctified. 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified.' O let the Lord be magnified in His saints. Blot not out his image. Receive not his impressions defectively, and by the halves. Let the name of the most Holy One be written in your very foreheads. O that you would be so tender of the honour of the Lord, and shine forth so brightly in holiness and righteousness; that he that runs might read whose servants you are, and know the image and superscription of God upon the face of your conversations! that, as clearly as light is seen in and from the sun, and the power, and wisdom, and goodness of God is seen in the frame of the creation and of Scripture, so might the same shine forth in you: that you might 'be holy as God is holy,' and 'perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect;' that they that would know God may see him in his saints, where his image is, or should be so lively and discernible. And they that cannot read and understand the Scripture, or the works of creation, or disposing Providence; may read and understand the holy and heavenly representations of your lives.

Men are apt to look after images of the Godhead, because they are carnal, and far from God. O you that are appointed to bear his image, see that you so represent him to the eyes of the world, as may be to his glory, and not to his dishonour, and take not the name of God in vain!

It is so desirable for God, and for the church,

and for your own peace and happiness, that Christians should grow up to a ripeness in grace, and be rooted, built up, confirmed, and abound, according to my text; that it hath drawn out from me all these words of exhortation thereunto. Though one would think, that to men of such holy principles and experience, it should be more than needs. But if all will but serve to awaken the weak to a diligent progress, I shall be glad, and have my end. The great matter that I intended, when I began this discourse, is yet behind; and that is, the giving you such directions as may tend to your confirmation and perseverance; which I shall now proceed to: but I intreat every reader that hath any spark of grace in his soul, that he will resolve to put these directions in practice, and turn them not off with a bare perusal, or approbation. Let me reap but thus much fruit of all my foregoing exhortations, and I shall not think my labour lost.

TWENTY DIRECTIONS  
FOR  
CONFIRMATION IN A STATE OF GRACE.

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DIRECTION I.

*Be sure that the foundation be well laid, both in your heads and hearts ; or else you can never attain to confirmation, nor be savingly built up.*

To this end you must know what the foundation is, and how it must be soundly laid. The foundation hath two parts or respects, according to the faculties of the soul where it must be laid. The first is the truth of the doctrine and matter, and the second is the goodness of it. As true, the foundation is laid in our understandings ; as good, it is laid in the will. Concerning both these we must, therefore, first consider of the matter of the foundation, and then, of the manner how that must be received or laid. And the foundation is that matter, or object, of our faith, and hope, and love, which is essential to a Christian : that is, to the Christian saving faith, hope, and love. This hath been always contained in our baptism ; because baptising us, is making us visible Christians, or the solemn entrance into the state of Christianity. As therefore

we are baptised into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil: so the doing of this unfeignedly, without equivocation, according to the Scripture sense of the words, is the essence of Christianity, or the right laying of the foundation. So that the foundation principle, or fundamental matter, is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The secondary foundation, or fundamental doctrine, is those Scripture propositions that express our faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. When we name the three persons as the object of the Christian faith, we express names of relation, which contain both the persons, nature, and offices, or undertaken works: without either of which, God were not God, and Christ were not Christ, and the Holy Ghost were not, in the sense of our articles of faith, the Holy Ghost. As we must, therefore, believe, that there is one only God; so we must believe that God the Father is the first in the Holy Trinity of persons: that the whole Godhead is perfect and infinite in being, and power, and wisdom, and goodness, (in which all his attributes are comprehended; but yet a distinct understanding of them all, is not of absolute necessity to salvation.) That this God is the creator, preserver, and disposer of all things, and the owner and ruler of mankind, most just, and merciful: that as he is the beginning of all, so he is the ultimate end, and the chief good of man, which, before all things else, must be loved and sought. This is to be believed concerning the Godhead, and the Father in person. Concerning



the Son, we must moreover believe, that he is the same God with the father, the second person in Trinity, incarnate, and so become man, by a personal union of the Godhead and manhood: that he was without original or actual sin, having a sinless nature, and a sinless life: that he fulfilled all righteousness, and was put to death as a sacrifice for our sins, and gave himself a ransom for us; and being buried, he rose again from the dead, and afterward ascended into heaven, where he is Lord of all, and intercedeth for believers: that he will come again and raise the dead, and judge the world, the righteous to everlasting life, and the wicked to everlasting punishment: that this is the only Redeemer, the Way, the Truth, and the Life; neither is there access to the Father but by him, nor salvation in any other. Concerning the Holy Ghost, we must believe that he is the same one God, the third person in Trinity, sent by the Father and the Son, to inspire the prophets and apostles; and that the doctrine inspired and miraculously attested by him is true: that he is the sanctifier of those that shall be saved, renewing them after the image of God in holiness and righteousness, giving them true repentance, faith, hope, love, and sincere obedience; causing them to overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil; thus gathering a holy church on earth to Christ, who have by his blood the pardon of all their sins, and shall have everlasting blessedness with God.

This is the essence of the Christian faith as to the matter of it. As to the manner of receiving it

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by the understanding, 1. It must be received as certain truth of God's revelation, upon the credit of his word, by a lively effectual belief; piercing so deep, as is necessary for its prevalency with the will. 2. And it must be entirely received, and not only a part of it: though all men have not so exactly formed distinct apprehensions of every member of this belief, as some have, yet all true Christians have a true apprehension of them. We feel by daily experience, that with the wisest, some matters are truly understood by us; which yet are not so distinctly and clearly understood, as to be ready for an expression. I have oft, in matters that I am but studying, a light that gives me a general, imperfect, but true conception, which I cannot yet express; but when another hath helped me to form my conception, I can quickly and truly say, that was it that I had an unformed apprehension of before, and it that I meant, but could not utter; not so much for want of words, as for want of a full and distinct conception.

The matter of our Christianity to be received by the will, is as followeth. As we must consent to all the forementioned truths, by the belief of the understanding, so the pure Godhead must be received as the fountain, and our end: the Father, as our owner, ruler, and benefactor, on the title of creation and redemption; and as our everlasting happiness. The Son, as our only Saviour by redemption, bringing us pardon, reconciliation, holiness, and glory; and delivering us from sin and Satan, and the wrath and curse of God, and from

hell. The Holy Ghost as our guide and sanctifier. All which containeth our renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, and carnal self, that is the point of their unity, and the heart of the old man. This is the good that must be embraced, or accepted by the will.

And secondly, as to the manner of receiving it, it must be done unfeignedly, resolvedly, unreservedly, or absolutely, and habitually, by an inward covenanting of the heart, as I have formerly explained it. And this is the essence of Christianity; this is true believing in God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; this is the foundation, and this is the right laying of it.

And now the thing that I am persuading you to is to see that this foundation be surely laid, in head and heart.

And 1. That it may be surely laid in the head, you must labour; 1. To understand these articles. And 2. To see the evidence of their verity, that you may firmly believe them. And 3. To consider of the worth and necessity of the matter revealed in them, that your judgments may most highly esteem it. This is the sure laying the foundation in the head.

To these ends you should first learn some catechism, and be well acquainted with the principles of religion; and also, be much in reading or hearing the holy Scriptures, and inquiring of your teachers and others that can help you: and see that you take your work before you, and step not higher till this be done: and then, all other following truths, and duties, and promised benefits, must all be so

learnt as to be built upon this foundation, and joined to it, as receiving their life and strength from hence ; and never looked upon as separated from this ; nor as more excellent and necessary.

For want of learning well, and believing soundly, these principles, essentials, or fundamentals of Christianity, some of our people can go no further, but stand all their days in their ignorance, at a nonplus : some of them go on in a blind profession, deceiving themselves, by building upon the sand, and hold true doctrine by a false unsound belief of it : and when the floods and storms do beat upon their building, it falls, and great is the fall thereof. With some of them it falls upon the first assault of any seducer that hath interest in them, or advantage on them ; and abundance swallow up errors, because they never well understood, or firmly believed fundamental truths. With others of them, the building falls not until death, because they lived not under any shaking temptations. But it being but a perseverance in an unsound profession, will nevertheless be ineffectual to their salvation.

2. When you have thus laid the foundation in your understanding, be sure, above all, that it be firmly laid in your heart or will. Take heed lest you should prove false and unsteadfast in the holy covenant ; and lest you should take in the word but into the surface of the soul, and not give it depth of earth and rooting ; and lest you should come to Christ but as a servant upon trial, without making an absolute resignation of yourselves to him ; of which I warned you in the former directions.

O ! this is it that makes our people fall so fast in a day of trial ; some shrink in adversity ; and some are enticed away by prosperity : greatness and honour deceiveth one, and riches run away with another, and fleshly pleasure poisons a third ; and his conscience, religion, salvation, and all, he sacrificeth to his belly, and swalloweth it down his throat ; and all the love and goodness of God, the blood of Christ, the workings of the Spirit, the precepts, and promises, and threatenings of the word, and the joy and torments which once they seemed to believe, all are forgotten, or have lost their force : and all because the foundation was not laid well at the first. But because this was the very business of the former directions, I will dismiss it now.

## DIRECTION II.

*Think not that all is done when once you are converted ; but remember that the work of your Christianity then comes in, and must be as long as the time of your lives.*

Of this, also, I shall say but little, because it is the drift of all the moving considerations foregoing. I doubt it is the undoing of many, to imagine, that if once they are sanctified, they are so sure in the hands of Christ, that they have no more care to take, nor no more danger to be afraid of, and at last think that they have no more to do as of necessity to salvation ; and thus prove that indeed they

were never sanctified. I confess, when a man is truly converted, the principal part of his danger is over : he is safe in the love and care of Christ, and none can take him out of his hands. But this is but part of the truth ; the other part must be taken with it, or we deceive ourselves. There is still a great deal of work before us, and holiness is still the way to happiness ; and much care and diligence is required at our hands : and it is no more certain that we shall be saved by Christ, than it is that we shall be kept in faith, and love, and holy obedience by him. It is as true that none can separate us from the love of God, and from a care to please him, and from a holy diligence in the work of our salvation, as that none can take us out of his hands, and bring us into a state of condemnation. He that is resolved to bring us to glory, is as much resolved to bring us to it by perseverance in holiness and diligent obedience ; for he never decreeth one without the other ; and he will never save us by any other way.

Indeed, when we are converted, we have escaped many and grievous dangers ; but yet there are many more before us, which we must by care and diligence escape. We are translated from death to life, but not from earth to heaven. We have the life of grace, but yet we are short of the life of glory. And why have we the life of grace, but to use it and to live by it ? Why came we into the vineyard, but to work ? And why came we into the army of Christ, but to fight ? Why came we into the race, but to run for the prize ?—or why turned we into

the right way, but to travel in it? We never did God faithful service till the day of our conversion, and then it is that we begin;—and shall we be so sottish as to think we have done, when we have but begun? Now you begin to live, that before were dead;—now you begin to awake, that were before asleep;—and therefore now you should begin to work, that before did nothing, or rather a thousand-fold worse than nothing. Work is the effect of life;—it is the dead that lie still in darkness, and do nothing: if you had rather be alive than dead, you should rather delight in action than in idleness. It is now that you set sail, and begin your voyage for the blessed land;—many a storm, and wave, and tempest, must you yet expect;—many a combat with temptations must you undergo;—many a hearty prayer have you yet to pour forth;—many and many a duty to perform to God and man. Think not to have done your care and work till you have done your lives;—whether you come in at the first hour, or at the last, you must work till night, if you will receive your wages. And think not this a grievous doctrine. It is your privilege; it is your joy, your earthly happiness, that you may be so employed; that you, that till now have lived like swine, or moles, or earthly vermin, may now take wing and fly to God, and walk in heaven, and talk with saints, and be guarded by angels;—is this a life to be accounted grievous? Now you begin to come to yourselves; to understand what you have to do in the world; to live like men, that you may live like angels: and, therefore, now you should begin

accordingly to bestir you. I would not have you retain the same measure of fears of God's displeasure, nor the same apprehensions of your misery, nor the doubts and perplexities of mind which you were under at your first conversion ; for these were occasioned by the passage in your change ; and the weakness of your grace in that beginning, and your former folly, made them necessary for a time : but I would have you retain your fear of sinning, and be much more in the love of God, and in his service, than you were at first. Temptations will haunt you to the last hour of your lives ; if, therefore, you would not fall by these temptations, you must watch and pray to the last. Give not over watching till Satan give over tempting, and watching advantages against you. The promise is still but on condition, that you persevere and abide in Christ, and continue rooted and steadfast in the faith, and overcome and be faithful to the death, as you may see in John xv. throughout ; John viii. 31. ; Rev. ii. and iii. ; Col. i. 22, 23. ' Work out,' therefore, ' your salvation with fear and trembling.' If you have begun resolvedly, proceed resolvedly. It is the undoing of men's souls to think that all the danger is over, and to lose their apprehensions of it, when they are yet but in the way ;—when their care and holy fears abate, their watch goes down, the soul is laid open as a common wilderness, and made a prey to every lust. And therefore, still know, your work is not done till your life be done.

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## DIRECTION III.

*Be sure that you understand wherein your establishment and growth consisteth, that you may not miscarry by seeking somewhat else instead of it: nor think you have it when you have it not; or that you want it, when you have it, and so be needlessly disquieted about it.*

For your assistance in this, I shall further shew you wherein your confirmation and growth consisteth in its several parts, both as it is subjected or exercised in your understandings, your wills and affections, and your conversations.

I. As holiness is in the understanding, it is commonly in Scripture called 'light' and 'knowledge,' as comprehending the several parts. And the confirmation and growth of this must consist in these seven following parts:—

1. It is ordinary with new converted Christians to see the great essential truths of the Christian profession with a great imperfection, as to the evidences that discover them. Either they see but some of the solid evidence, overlooking much more than they see; or, more usually, they receive the truth itself upon some low insufficient evidence at first, and then proceed to a kind of mixture, taking it upon some evidences that are valid and sufficient, and joining some that are invalid with them. But you must grow beyond this infancy of understanding: when you see greater and sounder evidences

for the truth than you did before ; and when you see more of these solid evidences, and leave not out so many as you did ; and when you lay smaller stress upon the smaller evidences, and none upon those that are invalid, and indeed no evidences, then are your understandings more confirmed in the truth ; and this is a principal part of their growth. So we find the Samaritans of Sychar : ‘ Many of them believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.’ (This was the first faith upon a weaker evidence.) ‘ And many more believed, because of his own words, and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.’ Here is a notable confirmation and growth, by believing and knowing the same thing which they believed before ;—it was before believed on weaker evidence, and now upon stronger. Thus Nathaniel by Philip’s persuasion was drawn to Christ ; but when he perceived his omniscience, that he knew the heart, and things that were distant and out of the reach of common knowledge, he is confirmed, and saith, ‘ Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.’ And yet Christ telleth him that there were far greater evidences yet to be revealed, which might beget a more confirmed, stronger faith : ‘ Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? Thou shalt see greater things than these : verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon

the Son of man.' There is not one Christian, of many thousands, that at first hath a full sight of the solid evidences of the Christian doctrine ; but must grow more and more in discerning those reasons for the truth which he believeth, which in the beginning he did not well discern. It is not the most confident belief that is always the strongest confirmed belief ; but there must be sound grounds and evidence to support that confidence, or else the confidence may soon be shaken ; and is not sound even while it seems unshaken. And here young beginners must be forewarned of a most dangerous snare of the deceiver ; because at first the truth itself is commonly received upon feeble and defective grounds or evidence. It is the custom of the devil, and his deceiving instruments, to shew the young Christian the weakness of those grounds, and thence to conclude that his cause is naught : for it is too easy to persuade such that the cause hath no better grounds than they have seen ; for having not seen any better, they can have no particular knowledge of them. And they are too apt to think over highly of their knowledge, as if there were no more reasons for the truth than they themselves have reached to, and other men did see no more than they. And thus poor souls forsake the truth, which they should be built up and confirmed in ; and take that for a reason against the truth which is but a proof of their own infirmity. I meet with very few that turn to any heresy or sect, but this is the cause : they were at first of the right mind, but not upon sound and well-laid grounds ; but held the truth upon

insufficient reasons ; and then comes some deceiver, and beats them out of their former grounds, and so having no better, they let go the truth, and conclude that they were all this while mistaken. Just as if in my infancy I should know my own father only by his clothes ; and when I grow a little bigger, one should tell me that I was deceived, this is not my father, and to convince me should put his clothes upon another, or tell me that another may have such clothes, and hereupon I should be so foolish as to yield that I was mistaken ; and that this man is not my father ; as if the thing were false because my reasons were insufficient. Or, as if you should ask the right way on a journey, and one should tell you, that by such and such marks you may know your way ; and you think you have found those marks a mile or two short of the place where they are : but when you understand that those are not the marks that you were told of, you turn back again before you come at them, and conclude that you have missed the way. So is it with these poor deluded souls that think all discoveries of their own imperfections, and every confutation of their own silly arguments, to be a confutation of the truths of God, which they did hold : when, alas, a strong well-grounded Christian would make nothing of defending the cause which they give up, against more strong and subtle enemies ; or, at least, would hold it fast themselves. Well ! this is the first part of your growth in knowledge, when you can see more or better evidences for the great truths of Christianity, than you saw before.

2. Moreover, you must grow to a clearer apprehension of the very same reasons and evidences of the truth, which you saw before. For when a weak Christian hath the best arguments and grounds in the world, yet he hath so dim a sight of them, that makes them find the slighter entertainment in his affections. The best reason in the world can work but little on him that hath but a little understanding of it. There are various degrees of knowledge, not only of one and the same truth, because of the diversity of evidence, but of one and the same evidence and reason of that truth. I can well remember myself, that I have many a year had a common argument for some weighty truth, and I have made use of it, and thought it good, but yet had but little apprehension of the force of it: and many years after, a sudden light hath given me (in my studies) so clear an apprehension of the force of that same argument which I knew so long, as that it hath exceedingly confirmed and satisfied me more than ever I was before. I beseech you, Christians, consider of this weighty truth: it is not the knowledge of the truth that will serve your turns, without a true and solid knowledge of that truth: nor is it the hearing or understanding of the best grounds, and reasons, or proofs, in the world, that will serve the turn, unless you have a deep and solid apprehension of those proofs and reasons. A man that hath the best arguments, may forsake the truth, because he hath not a good understanding of those arguments: as a man that hath the best weapons in the world may be killed, for want of

strength and skill to use them. I tell you, if you knew every truth in the Bible, you may grow much in knowledge of the very same truths which you know.

3. Moreover, a young ungrounded Christian when he seeth all the fundamental truths, and seeth good evidence and reasons of them, perhaps, may be yet ignorant of the right order and place of every truth. Its a rare thing to have young professors to understand the necessary truths methodically; and this is a very great defect. For a great part of the usefulness and excellency of particular truths consisteth in the respect they have to one another. This, therefore, will be a considerable part of your confirmation and growth in your understandings; to see the body of Christian doctrine as it were at one view, as the several parts of it are united in one perfect frame; and to know what aspect one point hath upon another; and which are their due places. There is a great difference between the sight of the several parts of a clock or watch, as they are disjointed and scattered about, and the seeing of them conjoined, and in use and motion. To see here a pin, and there a wheel, and not know how to set them all together, nor ever see them in their due places, will give but little satisfaction. It is the frame and design of holy doctrine that must be known, and every part should be discerned as it hath its particular use to that design, and as it is connected with the other parts. By this means only can the true nature of theology, together with the harmony and perfection of truth,

be clearly understood. And every single truth also, will be much better perceived, by him that seeth its place and order, than by any other. For one truth exceedingly illustrates and leads in another into our understanding. Nay, more than so, your own hearts and lives will not be well ordered if the method or order of the truths received should be mistaken. For the truths of God are the very instruments of your sanctification, which is nothing but their effects upon your understandings and wills as they are set home by the Holy Ghost. Truths are the seal, and your souls are the wax, and holiness is the impression made. If you receive but some truths, you will have but some part of the due impression: nay, indeed, they are so coherent, and make up the sense by their necessary conjunction, that you cannot receive any one of them, sincerely, without receiving every one that is of the essence of the Christian belief. And if you receive them disorderly, the image of them on your souls will be as disorderly as if your bodily members were monstrously misplaced. Study therefore to grow in the more methodical knowledge of the same truths which you have received; and though you are not yet ripe enough to discern the whole body of theology in due method, yet see so much as you have attained to know, in the right order and placing of every part. As in anatomy it is hard for the wisest physician to discern the course of every branch of veins and arteries, but yet they may easily discern the place and order of the principal parts, and greater vessels; so it is in divinity, where no man

hath a perfect view of the whole, till he come to the state of perfection with God; but every true Christian hath the knowledge of all the essentials, and may know the order and places of them all.

4. Another part of your confirmation and growth in understanding, is in discerning the same truths more practically than you did before, and perceiving the usefulness of every truth for the doing of its work on your hearts and lives. It was never the will of God that bare speculation should be the end of his revelations, or of our belief. Divinity is an effective practical science, therefore must truths be known and believed, that the good may be received, and a holy change may be made by them on the heart and life. Even the doctrine of the Trinity itself is practical, and the fountain of that which is more easily discerned to be practical. There is not one article of our faith but hath a special work to do upon our hearts and lives,—and therefore a special fitness for that work. Now the understandings of young Christians do discern many truths, when they see but little of the work to be done by them, or of the special usefulness of those truths to those works. This, therefore, must be your daily inquiry; and in this you must grow—as, if you come into a workman's shop, and see a hundred tools about you, it is a small matter to discern the shape and fashion of them, and what mettle they are made of. But you will further ask, What is this tool to do, and what is that to do? If ever you will learn the trade, you must know the use of every tool. So must you, if



you will be skilful Christians, be acquainted with the use of the truths which you have received;—and know, that this truth is to do this work, and that truth to do that work, upon the soul and life. A husbandman may know as many herbs, and flowers, and fruits, as a physician, and be able to tell them all by name, and say this is such an herb, and that is such a one, and to perceive the shape and beauty of them. But he knows little or nothing that they are good for, unless to feed his cattle; whereas the physician can tell you that this herb is good against this disease, and that herb against another disease, and can make use of those same herbs to save men's lives, which other men tread under foot as useless. A countryman may see the names that are written on the apothecary's boxes, but it is the physician that knows the medicinal use of the drugs; so many men that are unsanctified may know the outside of holy doctrine, that little know what use is to be made of it; and the weak Christian knows less of this than the grown confirmed Christian doth. Learn, therefore, every day more and more, to know what every truth is good for—that this is for the exercise and strengthening of such a grace, and this is good against such or such a disease of the soul. Every leaf in the Bible hath a healing virtue in it; they are the leaves of the 'Tree of Life;' every sentence is good for something: 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished

unto all good works.' 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Not a word is without its usefulness.

5. Moreover, you must grow, not only in knowing the usefulness of truths, but also in knowing how to use them, that you may have the benefit of that worth that is in them. Many a man knows what use a workman's tools are for, that yet knows not how himself to use them; and many a one knows the use and virtue of herbs and drugs that knows not how to make a medicine of them, and compound and apply them. There is much skill to be used in knowing the seasons of application, and the measure, and what is fit for one, and what for another, that we may make that necessary variation which diversity of conditions doth require. As it is a work of skill in the pastors of the church to 'divide the word of God aright,' and 'speak a word in season to the weary,' and 'give the children their meat in due season,' so is it also a work of skill to do this for yourselves, to know what scripture it is that doth concern you; and when, and in what measure, to apply it; and in what order, and with what advantages or correctives, to use it, as may be most for your own good. You may grow in this skill as long as you live—even in understanding how to use the same truths which you have long known. O what excellent Christians should we be, if we had but this holy skill, and hearts to use it! We have 'the whole armour of God' to put on and use—but all the matter is how to use it. The same 'sword of the Spirit,' in the hand of a strong and skilful Christian, may do very much, which, in the hand of

a young unskilful Christian, will do very little, and next to nothing. A young raw physician may know the same medicines as an able experienced physician doth—but the great difference lieth in the skill to use them. This is what must make you rich in grace, when you increase in the skilful use of truths.

6. Moreover, your understandings may be much advanced, by knowing the same truths more experimentally than you did before: I mean such truths as are capable of experimental knowledge. Experience giveth us a far more satisfactory manner of knowledge than others have, that have no such experience. To know by hearsay is like the knowing of a country in a map; and to know by experience is like the knowing of the same country by sight. An experienced navigator, or soldier, or physician, or governor, hath another manner of knowledge than the most learned can have without experience; even a knowledge that confirmeth a man, and makes him confident. Thus may you daily increase in knowledge about the same points that you knew long ago. When you have ‘tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious,’ you will know him more experimentally than you did before;—when you have tasted the sweetness of the promise, and of pardon of sin, and peace with God, and the hopes of glory, you will have a more experimental knowledge of the riches of grace than you had before;—and when you have lived a while in communion with Christ and the saints, and walked awhile with God in a heavenly conversation, and maintained your integrity, and kept yourselves unspotted of the world,

you will then know the nature and worth of holiness by a knowledge more experimental and satisfactory than before. And this is confirmation and growth in knowledge.

7. Moreover, you must labour to grow in a higher estimation of the same truths which you knew before; and this will be a consequent of the forementioned acts. A child that findeth a jewel may set by it for its shining beauty, when yet he may value it many thousand pounds below its worth. You see so much wisdom and goodness in God, the first hour of your new life, as causeth you to prefer him before the world;—and you see so much necessity of a Saviour, so much love and mercy in Jesus Christ, as draweth up your hearts to him;—and you see so much certainty and glorious excellency of the life to come, as makes you value it even more than your lives. But yet there is in all these such an unsearchable treasure, that you can never value them near their worth;—for all that thou hast seen of God, and Christ, and glory, there is a thousand times more excellency in them yet to be discerned;—for all the beauty thou hast seen in holiness, it is a thousand-fold more beautiful than ever thou didst apprehend it;—for all the evil thou hast seen in sin, it is a thousand-fold worse than ever thou didst perceive it to be. So that if you should live a thousand years, you might still be growing in your estimation of those things which you knew the first day of your true conversion;—for the deeper you dig into this precious mine the greater riches will still appear to you. There is an ocean of excellency in one

article of your belief, and you will never find the banks or bottom till you come to heaven, and then you will find that it had neither banks nor bottom.

And thus I have shewed you what confirmation and growth is needful for your understandings, even about the very same truths which at first you knew. And now I shall add—

8. You must also labour to understand more truths for number than at the first you understood, and to reach to as much of the revealed will of God as you can, and not to stop in the mere essentials. For all divine revelations are precious, and of great use; and none must be neglected. And the knowledge of many other truths is of some necessity to our clear understanding of the essentials; and also to our holding them fast, and practising them. ‘ Secret things belong to God, but things revealed, to us, and to our children.’

But here I must give you this further advice:—

1. That you proceed in due order, from the fundamental points to those that lie next them; and do not overpass the points of next necessity and weight, and go to higher and less needful matters, before you are ready for them. 2. And also see that you receive all following truths that are taught you, as flowing from the foundation, and conjoined with it. Disorderly proceedings have unspeakably wronged the souls of many thousands, when they are presently upon controversies and smaller matters, before they understand abundance of more necessary things that must be first understood. This course

doth make them lose their labour, and worse;—it deceiveth the understanding instead of informing it; and thereupon it perverts the will itself, and turns men to an heretical, proud, or perverse frame of spirit; and then it must needs mislead their practices, and cause them, like deluded men, to be zealous in doing mischief while they think they are doing good. In common matters you can see, that you must learn and do things in their due order, or else you will but make fools of yourselves. Will you go to the top of the stairs or ladder without beginning at the lower steps? Will you sow your ground before you manure or plough it? or can you reap before you sow it? Will you ride your colt before you break him? Will you rear an house before you frame it?—or will you teach your children Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, before they learn English?—or to read the hardest books before they learn the easiest?—or can they read before they learn to spell, or know their letters? No more can you learn the difficult controversies in divinity (as about the exposition of obscure prophecies or doctrinal doubts), till you have taken up before you those many great and necessary truths that lie between. It would make a wise man pity them, and be ashamed to hear them, when young, raw, self-conceited professors will fall into confident expositions of Daniel, the Revelations, or the Canticles, or such like—or into disputes about free-will, or predestination, or about the many controversies of the times—when, alas, they are ignorant of a hundred truths (about the covenants, justification,

and the like), which must be known before they can reach the rest.

By this much that I have said already, you may understand that, (though we should reach as far as we can, in knowing all necessary revealed truths), yet, the principal part of your growth in knowledge when once you are converted, consisteth, not in knowing more than you knew before as to the number of truths; but, in knowing better the very same fundamental truths which you knew at first. This is the principal thing that I would here teach you. Abundance are deluded by not knowing this. You see here you have seven several things in which you must daily grow in knowledge about the same truths which you first received. 1. You must see better and sounder reasons and evidences for the fundamental truths than you saw at first, or more such evidences than you did then perceive. 2. You must grow to a clearer sight or apprehension of those same evidences. 3. You must see truths more methodically, all, as it were, at one view; and all in their due proportion and place, as the members of a well composed body, and how they grow together, and what strength one truth affords to another. 4. You must see every truth more practically than before, and know what use it is of for your hearts and lives, and what you must do with it. 5. You must learn more skill in the using of these truths when you know what they are good for, and must be better able to manage them, on yourselves and others. 6. You must know more experimentally than you did at first.

7. You must grow into a higher esteem of truths. All this you have to do, besides your growing in the number of truths. And I must tell you, that, as it was these essentials of Christianity that were the instrumental causes of your first conversion, and were more needful and useful to you then, than ten thousand others; so it is the very same points that you must always live upon: and, the confirmation and growth of your souls in these will be more useful to you, than the adding of ten thousand more truths which yet you know not; and, therefore, take this advice, as you love your peace and growth. Neglect not to know more, but, bestow many and many hours in labouring to know better the great truths which you have received, for one hour that you bestow in seeking to know more truths, which you know not. Believe it, this is the safe and thriving way. You know already, that God is 'all-sufficient, and infinitely wise, and good, and powerful;' and, you know not, perhaps, the nature of free will, or of God's decrees of election and reprobation, or a hundred the like points. True knowledge of any of the revealed things of God is very desirable: but yet, I must tell you that you are forty times more defective here, in your knowledge of that of God which you do know, than of the other which you know not; that is, the want of more degrees of this necessary knowledge is more dangerous to your souls, than the total want of the less necessary knowledge. And the addition of more degrees to the more needful parts of knowledge, will strengthen and enrich you, more than



the knowing of less necessary things, which you knew not before at all. You know Christ crucified already; but, perhaps, you know not certain controversies about church government, or the definitions and distinctions of many matters in divinity. It will be a greater growth now, to your knowledge, to know a little more of Christ crucified, whom you know already, than to know these lesser matters, which you know not yet at all. If you had already, a hundred pound in gold, and not a penny of silver, it will more enrich you to have another purse full of gold than a purse full of silver. Trading in the richest commodities is liker to raise men to great estates, than trading for matters of a smaller rate. They that go to the Indies for gold and pearl, may be rich, if they get but little in quantity: when he may be poor, that brings home ships laden with the greatest store of poor commodity. That man that hath a double measure of the knowledge of God in Christ, and the clearest, and deepest, and most effectual apprehensions of the riches of grace, and the glory to come; and yet never heard of most of the questions in Scotus, or Ockam, or Aquinas's sums, is far richer in knowledge, and a much wiser man than he that hath those controversies at his fingers' ends, and yet hath but half his clearness and solidity of the knowledge of God and Christ; of grace and glory. There is enough in some one of the articles of your faith, in one of God's attributes, in one of Christ's benefits, in one of the Spirit's graces, to hold you study all your lives, and afford you still an increase of knowledge. To know

God the Father, Son, and Spirit, and their relations to you, and operations for you ; and your duties to them ; and the way of communion with them, is that knowledge in which you must still be growing, till it be perfected by the celestial beatifical vision. Those be not the wisest men that can answer most questions ; but those that have the fullest intellectual reception of the infinite wisdom. You will confess, that he is a wiser man that hath wisdom to get and rule a kingdom, than he that hath wit enough to talk of a hundred trivial matters which the other is ignorant of. He is the wisest physician who can do most to save men's lives ; and, not he that can best read a lecture on anatomy, or, is readiest in the terms of his art. Knowledge is to be esteemed according to the use of it, and the dignity of its object : and not according to the number and subtlety of notions. And, therefore, I beseech you all that are young, and weak in faith, take much more pains to grow in the fuller acquaintance with the same faith which you have received, than to be acquainted with smaller controversial truths which you never knew. Men used to call these higher points, because they are more difficult ; but, certainly, the articles of your faith are much higher in point of excellency, though they are lower in the due order of learning them ; as the foundation is the lowest part of the building, and is first laid ; but is that which must bear up all the rest.

And here you must observe how gracelessly and unlike to Christians, those men speak that say,

'they care not for reading such a book, or hearing such a minister; because he tells them no more than they know already;' and, on that account, some of them stay from church, because they hear nothing but what they know already. It is a certain sign that they do not know already, the blessed nature of God, and the riches of Christ, which they say they know. For if they did, they could not hear or think too much of them. They would long to know more, and therefore to hear more of the same things. It is a sign the minister takes the course that tends to your edification and enriching in knowledge, when he is most upon the great and most necessary truths. All saints do make it their study to 'comprehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, and know the love of God in Christ;' but, when they have done, they confess that it 'passeth knowledge.' It is a graceless wicked soul, in a state of damnation, that conceits that he knows so much of God and Jesus Christ, and the essentials of Christianity, that he cares not for hearing these things any more; but had rather have novelties, and let these alone; and feeleth not need of knowing much more, and more of the same truths; and of using and living upon these vital principles which he knows. You have eaten bread, and drank beer, an hundred times, but perhaps, you never did eat of sturgeon or whale, of a bear or a leopard, of chesnuts or pig-nuts, or many strange and dangerous fruits, in all your life: and yet I hope you will not seek after these, because they are novelties; and give over eating bread, because you

have eaten of it already: nor will you churlishly refuse to go to a feast because there is no meat but what you have eaten of before. We have not a new God to preach to you, nor a new Christ, nor a new Spirit, nor a new gospel, nor a new church, nor a new faith, nor a new baptismal covenant, nor a new heaven, or hope, or happiness, to propound. Your growth in methods, and definitions, and distinctions, and in additional points of knowledge, is principally to be valued as it cleareth your understandings in the foresaid great essential points, and brings you up to God himself. Some wretches think they have quickly learned past the essential articles of faith; and ere long, they are past the higher points; and shortly, they are past the Scripture itself; and, throw it by as a scholar that hath learnt one book, and must be entered into another. They understand not that the ministry and Spirit are but to teach them the word of the gospel; but they think they must outgrow the word and ministry, and the Spirit must teach them some other doctrine, or gospel, which the written word doth not contain. I pray mark the Apostle's warning, Heb. xiii. 9. 'Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be stablished with grace.' And Eph. iv. 14. 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of man and cunning craftiness.'

II. Having shewed you wherein your growth consisteth in the understanding, I shall be short in the rest; and next, I must tell you wherein it consisteth

in the will. And that is, 1. When, upon good understanding and deep consideration, you are more fixedly, habitually, absolutely, and practically, resolved for God and glory than before. So that you are grown more beyond all shaking doubtfulness or wavering of mind, and beyond all unevenness, mutability, and inconstancy. When a man is thus satisfied, that none but God hath title to him, or can make him happy, and that none but Christ can reconcile him to God, and that it were a madness to make any other choice; and, thereupon, is settled and firm as Mount Zion, and says, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee:’ when you are firmly resolved, that let God do with you what he will, and come of it what will, you will never choose another master, or saviour, or rule, or happiness, or way, or body, than you are in; and will never forsake the path of holiness; this is the fixed stability of the will, and the more of this, the more you grow. 2. And when you have the lowest esteem of the creatures, and greatest and most resolved averseness to all that would draw you from God; and can meet the greatest worldly or fleshly allurements with a holy contempt; this shews a settled confirmed will. 3. And also, when you are speedy in holy resolutions, and see nothing in a temptation, how great soever, that can make you demur upon it, or make a stop in a Christian course; but, go on to do as if the tempter had said nothing to you, and the flesh and the world had no interest in you; and you do not so much as stand to think on it, whether you should yield to sin or not, as

abhorring to call such a matter into question ; this shows a confirmed fixed will : and the more of this, the more of holiness.

III. The strength and growth of holy affections consist principally in these particulars: 1. When the affections are lively and not dull ; so that we make out after God and heaven with vigour and alacrity. 2. When they are ready at hand, and not to seek, and need not a great deal ado to quicken them, or call them in. 3. When they are most pure and unmixed, having least of the creature and most of God in them. 4. But principally (and the surest point to try them by) when they contain in them, or accompany, the foresaid confirmation and resolvedness of the will. For it is more the willingness that is in or with our affections, than the heat of them, that we must judge them by. 5. And lastly, when they follow the best guidance of the understanding : when they are hottest about the greatest matters, and not about the smaller, or more doubtful things : when they are obedient and yielding to faith and holy reason, and not too ready to hearken to sense, and be moved about fleshly sensible things. In these things lieth the growth of your affections.

IV. And then, lastly, for your conversations, your stability and growth consist : 1. In the readiness of your obedience. 2. In the fulness and universal exactness of it. 3. In the resolved conquest of all temptations that would prevent you. 4. In the diligent use of all those means that may farther confirm and strengthen you. 5. In the evenness of it, that it be constant and not mixed with scandals,

and stops in the way, or stepping out into by-paths. 6. In your fruitfulness and profitableness to others, according to the proportion of your talents; that you study to do good, and do it with all the care, and wisdom, and diligence, you can. 7. In the spirituality of it, that God be the principal and the end of all; and that all be animated from the believing consideration of his attributes, and the views of everlasting blessedness. So that you have such lively fixed intentions towards God, that you can perceive that you do all, even common things, of purpose for his pleasure, will, and glory: and, that the love of God doth carry you about from duty to duty; and constrain you to it. 8. And lastly, in the measure of your present attainment of the end and fruits of your obedience. For a taste of these ends is here to be attained. When your inward graces are more confirmed and increase, and your talents are doubled; and when you bring God a great deal of honour in the world; so, that his graces shining in your works, your Father is glorified; and when yourselves are readier to go to God, and meet your Redeemer, and long more for his appearing; in all these, consisteth the stability, growth, and excellency of your conversations.

And now, by all that I have said, you may see wherein your stability, strength, and growth, doth not consist. 1. It doth not most, or much, consist in speculations or less useful truths. 2. It doth not consist in the mere heat of affections: for zeal may be misguided, and do hurt; and may prove sometimes, but a mere natural or sinful passion.

3. It consisteth not in mere fears, or purposes, that you are frightened into against your wills. 4. Nor doth it consist in the common gifts of grace or nature. 5. Nor yet in running into groundless singularities, and unusual strains. But, in a word, it consisteth in holy love, kindled by effectual faith. When a firmly believing soul is fullest of love to God, and Christ, and holiness, this is the most confirmed state of the soul ; and in this your chiefest growth consisteth.

#### DIRECTION IV.

My next advice to all young Christians for their confirmation, and growth in grace, is this.

*Grow downwards in humility; be low and small in your own eyes; and affect not to be high or great in the eyes of others; and still keep a deep apprehension of the greatness and danger of the sin of pride; but specially of that called spiritual pride.*

It is the tree that hath the shallowest, weakest rooting that most shaketh, and is soonest overthrown. The deeper roots, the higher growth, for the most part. The building that hath not a deep foundation, is soonest shaken and overthrown. Christ is our foundation; and humiliation digs deep into the heart. Pride is commonly thought to be the devil's first or chiefest sin; sure I am it is the proud that fall into his condemnation. The pride of our first parents affecting to be as gods in



knowledge, was the inlet of all our sin and misery; and the tempter still followeth the way that he hath found to be so successful. It is pride, that like a storm or tempest, doth set all the world in the rage and contention, and differences, and confusion, that we see them in. It is pride that hath filled the church with divisions; and it is pride that causeth the apostasy of most that fall away. And, the more men have of it, the less do they usually discern it in themselves: I am sure the less do they hate it and lament it. And though one would think that young beginners and weak Christians, that have little to be proud of, should be out of the danger of this temptation; yet experience tells us that it is they that fall by it, more than the wiser and stronger Christians that have more to glory in. For, the more men increase in wisdom, the more do they know their own unworthiness, their emptiness, and ignorance, and manifold sins: and the more do they know of the holiness and jealousy of God; and the more do they know of the evil of sin, and see what abundance of knowledge and grace they yet want: so that the more holy wisdom and experience, the less pride. But folly is the parent and nurse of pride. Children will be proud of toys and things of no value. There are two or three things that make young Christians in greater danger than others. 1. Because they come so lately out of darkness, and so great a change is made upon their souls, that it makes them the more sensible of it; and therefore, the readier to have high thoughts of themselves. Though one would think that the

remembrance of former folly, and late dejectedness, should keep them low; yet, with too many, that is quickly gone, and they know not how to receive a comforting message, but they make it an occasion of lifting up. 2. The ignorance of these novices or young Christians, is such, that they little know what abundance of things they are yet ignorant of. Little do they know what knowledge they yet want. They think there is little more to be reached to than is in their sight; and therefore, suppose themselves somebody in the school of Christ, because they have learned the first lesson. 3. And by reason of this ignorance, they know not how to value the higher attainments and understandings of others; but look on the wisest as little wiser than themselves, because they are unacquainted with the matter of their wisdom, and, therefore, overlook it as if it were none, and consequently think too highly of themselves. 4. And withal, they have not that experience of their own hearts that should make them jealous of them as ancient Christians have.

The humble soul is still in an empty craving temper: he hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness, and therefore shall be satisfied. No man setteth so high a price on Christ and grace, and all the means of grace. Even the crumbs are welcome to him which the proud despise:—‘The full soul loathes the honey-comb, but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.’ Therefore such beggars are welcomest to God;—he hath respect to the humble contrite soul;—‘the hungry he filleth with good,

but the rich he sendeth empty away ;—‘ He giveth more grace to the humble, when the proud are abhorred by him.’ The church of Laodicea, that said, ‘ I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,’ was ‘ miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.’ As many, that are proud of their honour and birth, run out of all by living above their estates, when meaner persons grow rich, because they are still gathering, and make much of every little,—so proud professors of religion are in a consumption of the grace they have, while the humble increase by making much of every little help, which is slighted and neglected by the proud ; and by shunning all those spending courses which the proud are plunged in. Be sure to keep mean thoughts of yourselves, of your knowledge, and parts, and grace, and duties ; and be content to be mean in the esteem of others, if you would not be worse than mean in the esteem of God.

#### DIRECTION V.

*Exercise yourselves daily in a life of faith upon Jesus Christ as your Saviour, your Teacher, your Mediator, and your King ; as your Example, your Wisdom, your Righteousness, and your Hope.*

All other studies and knowledge must be merely subservient to the study and knowledge of Christ. That vain kind of philosophy which St. Paul so much cautioneth Christians against, is so far yet from being accounted vain, that by many, called

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Christians, it is preferred before Christianity itself; and to shew that it is vain while they overvalue it, they can shew no solid worth or virtue which they have got by it; but only a tumefied mind, and an idle tongue like a tinkling cymbal. We are ‘complete in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.’ No study in the world will so much lead you up to God, and acquaint you with him, especially in his love and goodness, as the study of Christ, his person, his office, his doctrine, his example, his kingdom, and his benefits. As the Deity is your ultimate end, to which all things else are but helps and means; so Christ is that great and principal means by whom all other means are animated. Remember that you are in continual need of him, for direction, intercession, pardon, sanctification, for support and comfort, and for peace with God. Let no thoughts therefore be so sweet and frequent in your hearts, nor any discourse so ready in your mouths, (next to the excellencies of the eternal Godhead,) as this of the design of man’s redemption. Let Christ be to your souls as the air, the earth, the sun, and your food, are to your bodies, without which your life would presently fail. As you had never come home to the Father but by him, so without him you cannot a moment continue in the Father’s love, nor be accepted in one duty, nor be protected from one danger, nor be supplied in any want:—‘for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell;’—‘and by him,’ it is, that, ‘being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and have access by faith unto this

grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' And it is 'in him,' the Head, that we must 'grow up in all things, from whom the whole body doth receive its increase.' You grow no more in grace than you grow in the true knowledge and daily use of Jesus Christ. But of this I will say no more, because I have said so much in my directions for a sound conversion.

## DIRECTION VI.

*Let the knowledge and love of God, and your obedience to him, be the works of your religion; and the everlasting fruition of him in heaven be the continual end and ruling motive of your hearts and lives;—that your very conversation may be with God in heaven.*

You are so far holy as you are divine and heavenly. A Christian indeed in casting up his accounts, being certain that this world doth make no man happy, hath been led up by Christ to seek a happiness with God above. If you live not for this everlasting happiness,—if you trade not for this,—if this be not your treasure, your hope, and home, the chief matter of your desires, love, and joy,—and if all things be not pressed to serve it, and despised when they stand against it—you live not indeed a christian life. God and heaven, or God in heaven, is the life and soul, the beginning and the end, the sum, the all, of true religion: and therefore it is that we are directed to lift up our

heads and hearts, and begin our prayers with ‘ Our Father which art in heaven,’ and end them with ascribing to him ‘ the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.’ It is not the creatures, but God the Creator, that is the Father, the guide and the felicity of souls—and therefore the ultimate end and object of all religious actions and affections. Dwell still upon God, and dwell in heaven, if you would understand the nature and design of Christianity. Take God for all—that is, for God. Study after the knowledge of him in all his works; study him in his word; study him in Christ; and never study him barely to know him, but to know him that you may love him; take yourselves as dead when you live not in the love of God; keep still upon your hearts a lively sense of the infinite difference between him and the creature; look on all the world as a shadow, and on God as the substance. Think not all the pleasures, honours, or riches of the world, worthy to be named in comparison of heaven; nor the greatest of men worthy to be once thought on in comparison of God: as one straw or feather won or lost, would neither much rejoice or trouble you, if all the city or land were yours. So live as men whose eyes are open, and who discern a greater disproportion between the portion of a worldling and a saint. Let God be your king, your father, your master, your friend, your wealth, your joy, your all. Let not a day go over your heads in which your hearts have no converse with God in heaven: when any trouble overtaketh you on earth, look up to heaven, and

remember that it is there that rest and joy are prepared for believers. When you are under any want, or cross, or sorrow, fetch not your comfort from any hopes of deliverance here on earth, but from the place of your final full deliverance. If you feel any strangeness and backwardness on your minds to heavenly contemplations, do not make light of them, but presently by faith get up to Christ, who must make your thoughts of heaven familiar, and seek a remedy before your estrangedness increase. The soul is in a sad condition when it cannot fetch comfort and encouragement from heaven; for then it must have none, or worse than none. When the thoughts of heaven will not sweeten all your crosses, and relieve your minds against all the incumbrances of earth, your souls are not in a healthful state: it is time then to search out the cause, and seek a cure, before it come to worse.

There are three great causes of this dark and dangerous state of soul, which make the thoughts of heaven ineffectual and uncomfortable to us, which therefore must be overcome with the daily care and diligence of your whole lives. First, unbelief, which maketh you look towards the life to come with doubting and uncertainty: and this is the most common, radical, powerful, and pernicious impediment to a heavenly life. The second is the love of present things, which being the vanity of a poor, low, fleshly mind, the reviving of reason may do much to overcome it; but it is the sound belief of the life to come that must indeed prevail. The

third is the inordinate fear of death, which hath so great advantage in the constitution of our nature, that it is commonly the last enemy which we overcome, as death itself is the last enemy which Christ overcometh for us. Bend all your strength, and spend your days in striving against these three great impediments of a heavenly conversation : and remember that, so far as you suffer your hearts to retire from heaven, so far they retire from a life of Christianity and peace.

#### DIRECTION VII.

*In the work of mortification, let self-denial be the first and last of all your study, care, and diligence.*

Understand how much of the fallen depraved state of man consisteth in the sin of selfishness: how he is sunk into himself, in his fall, from the love of God and of his neighbour, of the public or private good of others: and how this inordinate self-love is now the grand enemy of all true love to God or man, and the root and heart of covetousness, pride, voluptuousness, and all iniquity. Let it be your work, therefore, all your days, to mortify it, and watch against it. When you feel yourselves partial in your own cause, and apt to be drawing from others to yourselves, in point of reputation, precedency, or gain, and apt to make too great a matter of every word that is spoken against you, or every little wrong that is done you,



observe then the pernicious root of selfishness, from whence all this mischief doth proceed. Read more of this in my Treatise of Self-denial.

### DIRECTION VIII.

*Take your corrupted fleshly desires for the greatest enemy of your souls; and let it be every day your constant work to mortify the flesh, and to keep a watch upon your lusts, and appetites, and every sense.*

Remember that our senses were not made to govern themselves, but to be governed by right reason; and that God made them at the first to be the ordinary passage of his love and mercy to our hearts, by the means of the creatures which represent or manifest him unto us: but now, in the depraved state of man, the senses have cast off the government of reason, and are become the ruling power, and so man is become like the beasts that perish. Remember then, that to be sensual is to be brutish; and though grace doth not destroy the appetite and sense, yet it subjecteth it to God and reason. Therefore, let your appetite be pleased in nothing, but by the allowance of right reason: and think not that you have reason to take any meats, or drink, or sport, merely because your flesh desireth it; but consider whether it will do you good or hurt, and how it conduceth to your ultimate end? It is a base and sinful state to be in servitude to your appetite and sense! when, by

using to please it, you have so increased its desires, that now you know not how to deny it and displease it; when you have taught it to be like a hungry dog or swine, that will never be quiet till his hunger be satisfied; whereas a well-governed appetite and sense is easily quieted with a rational denial.

### DIRECTION IX.

*Take heed lest you fall in love with the world, or any thing therein, and lest your thoughts of any place or condition which you either possess or hope for, do grow too sweet and pleasing to you.*

For there is no one perisheth, but for loving some creature more than God; and complacency is the formal act of love. 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Value all earthly things as they conduce to your Master's service, or to your salvation, and not as they tend to the pleasing of your flesh. It is the commonest and most dangerous folly in the world, to be eager to have our houses, and lands, and provisions, and every thing about us in the most pleasing and amiable state: whereas this is the acknowledged way to hell, and the only poison of the soul. Are you not in more danger of overloving a pleasing and prosperous condition than a bitter and vexatious state? and of overloving riches, honour, and sensual fulness and delights, rather than poverty, reproach, and mortification? and do

you not know that if ever you be damned, it will be for loving the world too much and God too little? Is it for nothing that Christ describeth a saint to you as a Lazarus in poverty and sores, and a lost soul, when in the body, clothed in purple and silk, and faring sumptuously every day? did not Christ know what he did when he put the rich man upon this trial, to part with all his worldly riches, and follow Christ for a treasure in heaven? All things must be esteemed as loss and dung for the knowledge of Christ and the hopes of heaven, if ever you will be saved. You must so live by faith, and not by sight, as not to look at the temporal things that are seen, but at the things eternal which are unseen. And one that is running in a race for his life, would not so much as turn his head to look back on any one that called to him to stay, or to look aside to any one that would speak with him in his way. Thus must we forget the things that are behind, as counting them not worthy a thought, or remembrance, or a look. If you feel this poison seize upon your hearts, and your condition in the world (or at least your hopes) begin to grow too sweet and pleasing to you, presently make haste to Christ, your physician, and take his antidote, and cast up the poison as you love your souls. You must know no other pleasure in your outward mercies, but as God appeareth in and by them, and as they tend to profit you and further you in God's service, or to promote your own or others' good, but not as they are provision for the flesh. See my book of Crucifying the World.

## DIRECTION X.

*Cast not yourselves wilfully upon temptations, but avoid them as far as lawfully you can : and if you are cast upon them unwillingly, resist them resolutely, as knowing that they come to entice you into sin and hell, from God and your everlasting happiness ; and therefore be well acquainted with the particular temptations of every company, calling, relation, business, time, place, and condition of life ; and go always furnished with particular antidotes against them all.*

Strong grace will do no more against strong temptations, than weak grace against weak ones. Temptation is the way to sin, and sin is the way to hell. If you saw the dangerousness of your station when you cast yourself upon temptations, you would tremble and fly as for your lives. I take that man as almost gone already, who chooseth temptations, or avoideth them not when he may. Especially be acquainted with the diseases and greatest dangers of your soul ; and there keep up a constant watch. Are you liable to a gluttonous pleasing of your appetite ? avoid the temptation ; set not that before you which may be your snare ; let a little, and that of the least tempting kind of food, be your ordinary provision. Sit not at the glutton's table (who fareth deliciously every day) if you would escape the glutton's sin and misery. Or if the provision be of other men's disposal, at least rise quickly and be gone. Are you inclined to

please your appetite in drinking? avoid such strong drink as may tempt your appetite; and avoid the place and company that draweth you to it. Are you inclined to fleshly lusts? avoid the presence of such of the other sex as are a temptation to you; look not on them, nor talk of them; but above all take heed of nearness, and familiarity, and privacy with them, and of all opportunity of sin. When the devil hath brought the bait to your hand, and telleth you, now you may sin without any molestation or discovery, you are then in a very dangerous case. Some that think they would not be guilty of the sin, will yet tempt themselves, and delight to have it in their power, and to have the opportunity of sinning, and to come as near it as they dare; and these are gone before they well perceive their danger. So if you are inclined to pride and ambition, avoid the society of those that tempt you to it; come not among superiors and gallants, or such as kindle your ambition. A retired life, in company of mean and humble persons, is fittest for one that hath your disease. 'Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.'

But if you cannot avoid the temptation, be sure yet to avoid the sin; take it as if you saw and heard the devil himself persuading you to sin, and damn your souls. Abhor the motion, and give not the devil a patient hearing, when you know what he cometh about: resolution scapeth many a danger, which those are ruined by who stand disputing and dallying with the tempter. Especially look about you when the tempter employeth great men, or

learned men, or godly men, or nearest friends, to be his instruments. And if their subtilty puzzle you, go to the stronger and more experienced Christians for advice and help. ‘ Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.’ It is a dreadful thing to think what persons temptations have overthrown; how wise, and learned, and excellent men have been over-witted by Satan, and sinned like fools, when they have let go their watch: if we be as resolved as Peter, temptations may quickly change our resolutions, if God leave us to ourselves and we grow presumptuous or secure; and then our very reason will lose its power, and false representations will make things appear to us quite contrary to what indeed they are, and those reasonings will seem probable to us, which at another time we could easily see through as mere deceit. Temptation, as it prevaieth, doth damp and cast asleep our graces, and charm and bewitch all the faculties of the soul.

## DIRECTION XI.

*If it be possible, make choice of such a pastor for the help and guidance of your souls, as is judicious, experienced, humble, holy, heavenly, faithful, diligent, lively, and peaceable; that liveth not in separation from the generality of the sober godly ministers and Christians where he liveth.*

I. Think not of being sufficient for yourselves, without the help of those whom Christ hath

appointed to be watchmen for your souls. As you cannot live without the teaching and the grace of Christ, so Christ doth vouchsafe you his teaching and his grace by the ministry of his own officers, whom he hath appointed to that end and use. It is marvellous to observe how Christ chose rather to convert men by the preaching and miracles of his apostles than by his own; and how he would not fully convert Paul without the ministry of Ananias, though he spoke to him from heaven himself, and reasoned the case with him against his persecution; and how he would not fully convert Cornelius and his household without the ministry of Peter, though he sent an angel to direct him to a teacher; nor would he convert the Ethiopian eunuch without the ministry of Philip, nor the Jailor without the ministry of Paul and Silas, though he wrought a miracle to prepare for his conversion; and Paul must plant and Apollos must water, before God will give the increase; and though all true Christians are taught of God, and must call no man on earth the master of their faith but Christ, yet have they their teachers, fathers, and instructors under Christ, who are helpers of their joy, though they have not dominion over their faith; and are overseers, though not lords and owners of the flock; and are ministers of Christ by whom he teacheth, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and ambassadors by whom he beseecheth sinners to be reconciled to God, having committed to them the word of reconciliation. These are labourers together with God upon his husbandry and building; some being master-builders

and others superstructors. Christ knew the necessity that the infants of his family had of such nurses, and he knew what numbers of such weak ones there would be in comparison of the strong; or else he had never appointed the strong to such an office; and having appointed it he will keep up the honour of his officers, and will send you his alms, your food, your physic, your pardon, your privileges, by their hands. If you be drawn by seducers to forsake or neglect the ministry of Christ's officers, you forsake or neglect your helps and mercies, you refuse his grace, you are like infants that scorn their nurse's help, and like subjects who reject all the officers of the king, and like the chickens that forsake the hen; you forsake the school and Church of Christ, and may expect to be quickly caught up by the devil as stragglers that have no defence or guide.

II. Yet is there great difference between one minister or pastor and another, as much as between physicians, lawyers, or men of any other function. And there being no case in the world that you are so much concerned to be careful in as the instructing, and conduct, and safety of your souls, you have exceeding great reason to take heed whom you choose to commit the care and conduct of your souls to. It is not enough to say, that he is a true ordained minister, and that his administrations are not nullities, no more than to say of an ignorant physician or cowardly captain, that he hath a valid license or commission, when for all that, if you trust him, it may cost you your lives. Nor is it a



wise man's answer. to say, that God giveth his grace by the worst as soon as by the best, and by the weakest as soon as by the strongest, and therefore I need not be so careful in my choice. For though God have not confined the working of his Spirit to the most excellent means, yet ordinarily he worketh according to the means he useth; and this both scripture, reason, and daily experience fully prove. God worketh rationally on man as man; that is, as a rational free agent, by moral operation, and not by a mere physical injection of his grace. When we see the man that is made wise unto salvation by mere infusion of wisdom, without a teacher or the study of the word of God, or when we see God work by his word as by a charm, that a few words shall convert a man, though the speaker or hearer understand them not, then we may hearken to this conceit: and then we may think that a heretic may as well teach you the truth as the orthodox, or a schismatic teach you unity and peace as well as a catholic peaceable pastor; or a man that is ignorant of the mysteries of regeneration and holy communion with God may best teach you that which he knoweth not himself; and an enemy to piety and charity may teach you to be pious and charitable as well as any other. But I need not say much more of this, for all parties would never so strive to have such ministers as they like, and to put out such as they dislike, if they thought not that the difference between ministers and ministers were very great.

See therefore that the guide whom you choose

for your souls be, 1. Judicious; for an injudicious man may pervert the scripture, and lead you into error, and heresy, and sin, before you are aware: yea, though he be a zealous fervent preacher, yet, if he be injudicious, he may ignorantly give you poison in your food, as the experience of this age hath lamentably proved.

2. See, if possible, that he be an experienced man, that knoweth by experience on himself not only what it is to be regenerate and sanctified, and made a new creature, but also how all the combat between the spirit and the flesh is to be managed, and what are the methods and stratagems of the tempter, and what are the chief helps and defensatives of the soul, and how they are all to be used; for it is not harder to be a judicious physician, or lawyer, or soldier, without experience, than a judicious pastor; and, therefore, the Holy Ghost commandeth that he be not a novice or raw inexperienced Christian.

3. See that he be humble, for if he be puffed up with pride, he falleth into the condemnation of the devil; and then he will either scorn the labour of the ministry as a drudgery (to preach in season and out of season, to beseech, and exhort, and stoop to the poorest of the flock); or else he will speak 'perverse things to draw away disciples after him;' or he will, as Diotrephes, reject the brethren, as loving himself to have the pre-eminence, and will oversee the church by constraint, for filthy lucre, as being a lord over God's heritage. See Doctor Hammond on this Text, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3.

4. See that he be holy in his life; for though this be not essential to his office, yet the unholy are inexperienced, yea, and have a secret enmity in their hearts against that holiness which they should daily preach, and will usually be shewing it by discouraging speeches against that serious piety which they should promote; and they will neglect most of the personal care of their flock, and will unpreach by their lives the good which they preach by their tongues, and harden and embolden the people in their sins, and make them believe that they believe not what they preach themselves. Choose not an enemy of holiness to lead you in the way of holiness (a way that he never went himself), nor an enemy of Christ to conduct you in the Christian warfare, when he is a servant of the devil, the world, and flesh, against whom you fight.

5. See that he be of a heavenly mind, or else his doctrine will be unsavory and dry, and he will be preaching some speculations or barren controversies instead of heavenly edifying truth.

6. See that he be faithful and diligent in his ministry, as one that knoweth the worth of souls, and will not sell them or betray them to the devil for filthy lucre, or his fleshly ends; nor make merchandize of them, as desiring rather theirs than them, and preferring the fleece before the safety of the flock; but one that imitateth the pattern, Acts xx., and in meekness instructeth those that are opposers.

7. See that he be a lively serious preacher; for

all will be little enough to keep up a lively seriousness in such dull and frozen hearts as ours : a cold preacher, with cold hearts, is like to make cold work. He that speaks senselessly and sleepily about such matters as heaven and hell, doth by the manner of his speech contradict the matter. When hard-heartedness, and security, and deadness, and lethargic drowsiness, is the common and dangerous disease of souls, let him that loveth his soul and would not perish by his disease, make use of a physician and remedy that is suited to the cure, and not of one to rock him asleep, or give him an opiate to increase his malady.

8. See also that he be one that is of a truly catholic spirit, not addicted to a sect, nor to divisions in the church, nor one that liveth in a separation or distance from the generality of the godly sober ministers. For you take him not for your guide, as separated from the catholic church, but as united to it, and a member of it ; as valuing the judgment of all the church above the judgment of any one pastor, and knowing that you are yourselves to be kept in the unity of the church, and not seduced into a sect ; and that the pastors are to be the bonds and ligaments of the body, that by their help it may grow up in love and unity, and not the dividers of the body ; as captains and inferior officers in an army, that are to conduct each soldier in unity with the army, and not to separate, and make every troop or regiment an army by itself, that they may be the petty generals. In a word, read some good visitation sermons,

which tell you what a minister must be, and choose, if possible, to live under such a minister ; I say, if possible, for I know to many it is not possible. Wives, and children, and servants (while they are bound), cannot leave their husbands, parents, or masters ; and strong Christians who are called to do good to others, must prefer that before such advantages to themselves ; and many other impediments may deny men such a blessing : but yet I say, undervalue not so great a mercy, and neglect it not where lawfully it may be had, and prefer nothing before it (as a just impediment) which is not really more worth. And remember that divines do commonly resolve the case of the infidel nations of the world, that they are inexcusable in their infidelity, because, when they hear that other nations profess to know the way to heaven, they do not in so great a case go over sea and land to inquire after the doctrine which we profess. And if the Tartarians, Indians, and other nations, are bound to send to Christian nations for preachers of the Gospel, I only leave you proportionably to measure your case by theirs (allowing for the disproportion), and to consider how far you should deny your worldly profit, in removing your habitations, for such helps as your own necessities require.

## DIRECTION XII.

*Make choice of such Christians for your familiar friends and the companions of your lives as are holy, humble, heavenly, serious, mortified, charitable, peaceable, judicious, experienced and fixed in the ways of God; and not of ungodly persons, or proud, self-conceited, censorious, dividing, injudicious, inexperienced, sensual, worldly, opinionative, superficial, lukewarm, or unsettled professors.*

The reasons of this direction you may perceive in what I said under the last. Your company is a matter of exceeding great concernment to you, as one of the greatest helps or hindrances, comforts or discomforts of all your lives, especially those that you dwell with, and those that you choose for your familiars and bosom friends; and therefore (so far as God's providence doth not forbid you and make it impossible) choose such as are here described, or at least one such for your bosom friend, if you can have acquaintance with no more. It is of unspeakable importance to your salvation with whom you are associated for most familiar converse. A good companion will teach you what you know not, or remember you of that which you forget, or stir you up when you are dull, or warm you when you are cold, and watch over you and warn you of your danger, and save you from the poison of ill companions. O what a help and delight it is to have a holy, judicious, faithful friend

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to open your heart to, and to walk with in the ways of life! And how exceeding hard is it to scape sin and hell, and get well to heaven, in company and familiarity of the servants of the devil, who are posting unto hell. Let not your companions be worse than yourselves, lest they make you worse; but as much wiser and better as you can procure.

### DIRECTION XIII.

*Subdue your passions, and abhor all uncharitable principles and practices, and live in love; maintaining peace in your families and with your neighbours, but especially in the church of God.*

Love as you would be loved; yea, love if you would be loved, for there is no surer way to purchase love; and love because you are so freely loved by that God whose wrath you have so oft deserved: let the thankful feeling of his love in Christ even turn you wholly into love to God and man. Abhor every thought, and word, and deed, which is contrary to love, and tendeth to the hurt of others; and hate the backbitings and bitter words of any, which tend to make another odious, and to destroy your love to any one that God commandeth you to love. Allow that moderate passion which is the fruit of love, and tendeth only to do good; but resist that which inclineth you to hatred or to do evil. The more men wrong you, remember that you are the more watchfully to maintain

your love, knowing that these temptations are sent by the devil on purpose to destroy and quench it, and fill your heart with uncharitableness and wrath. Give place to the wrath of others, and stand not resisting it by words or deeds; 'recompense to no man evil for evil,' in word or action. Especially be most tender of the union of true Christians, and of the church's peace: when you hear the men of several sects representing one another as odious, understand that it is the language of the devil to draw you from love into hatred and divisions; and when you must speak odiously of men's sins, speak charitably of their persons, and be as ready to speak of the good that is in them as of the evil. Believe not that dividing ungrounded doctrine, which telleth you that you cannot sufficiently disown the errors of any party in doctrine, and worship, and discipline, without a separation or withdrawing from their communion; and which telleth you that you are guilty of the ministerial faults of every pastor that you join with, or of the faults of all that worship which you are present at; which would first separate you from every worshipping society and person upon earth, and then lead you to give over the worshipping of God yourselves. You must love Christians as Christians, though they have errors and faults repugnant to their Christianity; and you must join in worship with Christians as Christians, though their worship hath errors and faults repugnant to the right order and manner of worship; so be it you join not in that worship which is substantially evil, and such as God doth



utterly disown; or that you commit no actual sin yourselves, or that you approve not of the errors and faults of the worshippers, and justify not their smallest evil; or that you prefer not defective faulty worship before that which is more pure and agreeable to the will of God. For while all the worshippers are faulty and imperfect, all their worship will be so too: and if your actual sin, when you pray or preach defectively yourselves, doth not signify that you approve your faultiness, much less will your presence prove that you allow of the faultiness of others. The business that you come upon is to join with a Christian congregation in the use of those ordinances which God hath appointed, supposing that the ministers and worshippers will all be sinfully defective in method, order, words, or circumstances; and to bear with that which God doth bear with, and not to refuse that which is God's for the adherent faults of men, no more than you will refuse every dish of meat which is unhand-somely cooked, as long as there is no poison in it, and you prefer it not before better.

#### DIRECTION XIV.

*Keep up a constant government over your thoughts and tongues; especially against those particular sins which you are strongest tempted to, and which you see other Christians most overtaken with.*

Keep your thoughts employed upon something that is good and profitable; either about some

useful truths, or about some duty to God or man, of your general or particular calling; yea, about all these in their several seasons: learn how to watch your thoughts, and stop them at their first excursions, and how to quicken them and make them serviceable to every grace and every duty. You can never improve your solitary hours, if you have not the government of your thoughts.

And as the thoughts must be governed because they are the first and intimate actings of good or evil, so the tongue must be governed as the first expresser of the mind, and the first instrument of good or hurt to others. Especially take heed of these sins which the faultiness of most professors of religion doth warn you to avoid: 1. An ordinary course of vain jesting and unprofitable talk. 2. Provoking, passionate, inconsiderate words, that tend to kindle wrath in others. 3. Backbiting, censuring, and speaking evil of others without any just call, when it is either upon uncertain reports, or uncharitable suspicion, or tendeth more to hurt than good. 4. A forward venting of our own conceits, and a confident pleading for our uncertain unproved opinions in religion, and a contentious wrangling for them, as if the kingdom of God lay in them; and a forwardness in all company to be the speakers rather than the hearers; and to talk in a magisterial teaching way, as if we took ourselves to be the wisest, and others to have need to learn of us. But especially take heed of speaking evil of those that have wronged you, or of those that differ from you in some tolerable opinions in religion; and

hate that devilish uncharitable vice, which maketh many ready to believe any thing or say any thing, be it never so false, of those that are against their sect; yea, of whole parties of men that differ from them, when there is not one of a thousand of all the party that ever they were acquainted with, or ever could prove the thing by, of which they are accused. By the means of these bold uncharitable reports, the devil hath unspeakably gained against Christ, and the kingdom of malice hath won upon the kingdom of love; and most Christians are easier known to be factious by hating or slandering one another, than they can be known to be Christ's disciples by loving one another. And while every sect, without remorse, doth speak reproachfully and hatefully of the rest, they learn hereby to hate one another, and harden the infidel and ungodly world in hating and speaking evil of them all: so that a Turk or heathen need no other witness of the odiousness of all Christians, than the venomous words which they speak against each other. And as foul words in quarrels prepare for blows; so these malicious invectives upon differences in religion, prepare for the most cruel persecutions.

From my own observation, which, with a grieved soul I have made in this generation, I hereby give warning to this and all succeeding ages, that if they have any regard to truth or charity, they take heed how they believe any factious partial historian or divine, in any evil that he saith of the party which he is against: for, though there be good and credible persons of most parties, yet you shall find

that passion and partiality prevail against conscience, truth, and charity, in most that are sick of this disease. And that the envious zeal which is described, Jam. iii., doth make them think they do God service, first in believing false reports, and then in venting them against those whom their zeal or faction doth call the enemies of truth ; so that there is little credit to be given to their reproaches unless some better evidence is brought to prove the thing. Nay, it would astonish a man to read the impudent lies, which I have often read, obtruded upon the world with such confidence, that the reader will be tempted to think, surely all this cannot be false: yea, about public words or actions, where you would think that the multitude of witnesses would deter them from speaking it, if it were not true, and yet all as false as tongue can speak. Therefore, believe not pride, or faction, or malice, in any evil that it saith, unless you have better evidence of the truth.

Most christian is that advice of Dr. H. More, that " all parties of Christians would mark all the good which is in other parties, and be more forward to speak of that than of the evil : " and this would promote the work of charity in the Church, and the interest of Christianity in the world ; whereas the overlooking of all that is good, and aggravating all the evil (and falsely feigning more than is true), is the work of greatest service to the devil, and of greatest enmity to Christianity and love, that I know commonly practised in the world. Keep your tongues from all such hellish work as this.

## DIRECTION XV.

*Let every state of life and relation that you are in be sanctified unto God, and conscionably used : and to that end, understand the advantages and duties of every condition and relation, and the sins and hindrances and dangers which you are most liable to.*

The duties of our relations are a great part of the work of a Christian's life : as magistrates and subjects, pastors and flocks, parents and children, husband and wife, masters and servants ; as superiors in gifts or places, or inferiors, or equals ; as neighbours and companions ; in our teaching and learning, ruling and obeying, buying and selling. Be conscionable in all these, which are your own relations, if you will live as Christians and be acceptable unto God. An ungodly or oppressing magistrate ; a murmuring rebellious subject ; an ungodly, negligent, or factious pastor ; an unteachable, refractory, ungodly flock ; a husband, parent, or master, without religion, love, or justice ; a wife, or child, or servant, without love and dutiful obedience, and faithful diligence ; a proud, contemptuous superior ; a malicious, censorious inferior ; an unjust, uncharitable neighbour ; a deceitful buyer or seller, borrower or lender ; and a self-seeking friend, and seducing, unprofitable companion ; are all as far from pleasing God by the rest of their works or professions of religion, as they are from being obedient to his will. They provoke him to abhor their

prayers and profession, and to tell them that he will rather have 'obedience than sacrifice;' if you are false to men you are not true to God: it is 'he that feareth God and worketh righteousness' that is 'accepted of him;' and the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

### DIRECTION XVI.

*Live as those that have all their powers, receivings, and opportunities to do good with in the world, and must be answerable how they have improved all; and as those who believe that the more good they do, the more they do receive, and the greater is the honour, the profit, and the pleasure of their lives.*

To do no harm, is an honour which is common to a stone or a clod of clay, with the most innocent man. If this were all the excellency that you aim at, it were better that you had never been born, for then you would certainly have done no harm. Remember that to do good is the highest imitation of God, supposing that it proceed from holy love, and be done to the pleasing and glorifying of God, that the principle and end be suitable to the work. Remember who hath told you that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive;' and hath promised that 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward: and whosoever shall give to drink unto

one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward ;' (supposing that he have no better to give.) ' Give to every man that asketh of thee ;' (according to thy ability.) ' Give, and it shall be given to you.' Take that day or hour as lost in which you do no good, directly or preparatorily ; and take that part of your estate as lost, with which, directly or remotely, you do no good. Remember how the judgment must pass on you at last, according to the improvement of your several talents. When your time is past, and your estates are gone ; or your understandings, or your strength decayed ; and your power and greatness is levelled with the poorest ; it will be an unspeakable comfort to you, if you are able to say, We laid them out sincerely to our Master's use ; and an unspeakable terror to you to say, They were lost and cast away on the service of the flesh. If, therefore, you are rulers, and are entrusted with power, study how to do all the good with your power that possibly you can : if you are ministers of Christ, lay out your time, and strength, and parts in doing good to the souls of all about you ; study how you may be most serviceable to the church and cause of Christ. If you are rich men, study how to do all the good with your riches that possibly you can do (not violating the order appointed you by God) ; in your neighbourhoods, and in all your families and relations, study to do the greatest good you can ; take it thankfully, as a great mercy to yourselves, when opportunity to do good is offered you ; and content

not yourselves to do a little, while you are able to do more. 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith. He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver. To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Let doing good be the business and employment of your lives; preferring still the public good before the private good of any, and the good of men's souls before that of the body; but yet neglecting none, but doing the lesser in order to the greater.

*Objection.*—But I am a poor obscure person, that have neither abilities of mind, or body, or estate; and what good can I do?

*Answer.*—There is no rational person that is not entrusted with one talent at the least, and that is not in a capacity of doing good in the world, if they have but hearts, and be but willing. If you had neither money to give, nor tongues to speak for



God, and to provoke others to do good, yet a holy, humble, heavenly, patient, blameless life, is a powerful means of doing good, by shewing the excellency of grace, and convincing the ungodly, and stopping the mouths of the enemies of piety, and honouring the ways of God in the world : such a holy, harmless, exemplary life is a continual and a powerful sermon ; and for ‘ giving, if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.’ 2 Cor. viii. 12. If you are unfeignedly willing to give if you had it, God taketh it as done : what you would have given, is set down on your account as given indeed. The widow’s two mites were praised by Christ as a bountiful gift, and a cup of cold water is not unrewarded to the willing soul. No one therefore is excusable that liveth unprofitably in the world. But yet men of power, and parts, and wealth, have the greatest reckoning to make : their ten talents must have a proportionable improvement ; it is a great deal of good that they must do ; ‘ For to whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required ; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.’ Luke xii. 48.

## DIRECTION XVII.

*Redeem your time, and highly value every minute, and spare for no labour in the work of your salvation : dream not of an easy, idle, sluggish life, as sufficient to your high and glorious ends ; nor rest*

*in a customary and outside way of duty, without regard to the life and the success.*

If any thing in all the world require all our powers and time, it is that for which all our powers and time are given us, and which, we are sure, will a thousand-fold recompense us for all. O what a sottish kind of stupidity is it, for a man to trifle in the way to eternity, that hath an endless life of joy or sorrow depending on the preparations of so short a life. How little doth he know the worth of his soul, the joys of heaven, the terrors of hell, the malicious diligence of Satan, or the difficulty of salvation, that can idle and play away whole hours of time, and pray as if he prayed not, and seem to be religious when he is not in good earnest; and bestirreth not himself so much to escape hell-fire, and to obtain everlasting joys with Christ, as he would do to escape a temporal death or misery, or to obtain some dignity or riches in the world. O therefore, as ever you care what becometh of your souls, and as ever you will have comfort in the review of your present life, make not a jest of heaven and hell; trifle not in your race and warfare; dally not with God and conscience; play not, and dream not away your time; know the worth of an hour's time, for the sake of your work and of your souls, as it is commonly known by dying men. But of this I have spoken already in my "Now or Never," and "A Saint or a Brute," and in the third part of the "Saint's Rest."

## DIRECTION XVIII.

*Sit down and count what it may cost you to be Christians indeed, and to be saved. Reckon not on prosperity, or a cheap religion, but resolve to take up the cross and follow Christ in suffering, and to be crucified to the world, and by many tribulations to enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

‘All that will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution.’ It is not all that are baptized and called Christians, but all that will live godly in Christ Jesus. It is godliness, and not the bare name of Christianity, which the serpent’s seed have so great an enmity to. I have elsewhere cited an excellent saying of Dr. Thomas Jackson’s, to prove that this is to be expected under Christian, as well as heathen governments; and that it is not through the goodness of the great ones of the world, but the cowardliness of our hearts, that the ministers of Christ are not ordinarily martyrs. Though God may possibly exempt you from any notable suffering for his cause, yet it is not wise or safe to expect such an exemption; for that will hinder your preparation for suffering; and a mind prepared to suffer is essential to true Christianity: and no man that is not a martyr in resolution and disposition can be saved. If the ‘fiery trial’ come upon you, let it not seem a ‘strange’ unexpected thing. When ‘persecution ariseth because of the word,’ the unrooted, unsound, unsettled Christian, is presently offended, and falls away. Then they will fall to

distinguishing and carnal reasoning, and prove any thing lawful which is necessary to their peace. 'As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.' Shrink not for sufferings; 'fear not them that can but kill the body.' Never doth the Spirit of God and glory so much rest upon believers, as in their greatest 'sufferings for righteousness' sake; and never have they cause of more 'exceeding joy.' Prosperity doth not so well agree with a life of faith, as sufferings and adversity. 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the (temporal) things which are seen, but at the things (eternal) which are not seen.' Read Rom. viii. 33. to the end.

### DIRECTION XIX.

*If you fall into any sin, rise speedily by a thorough repentance; and take heed both of delay, and of a palliate cure.*

Take heed of trusting to a general repentance or a converted state, instead of a particular repentance and conversion from every sin, especially if in any respect you have sinned presumptuously. For it is not a true general repentance which reacheth not to every known particular. If temptations have cast you down, take heed of lying there, but presently get up again:—what the

apostle saith of 'wrath,' the same I may say of other falls, 'let not the sun go down upon them:' but go out with Peter and weep with him, if you have sinned with him. If your bones be out of joint, or broken, get them set presently, before they settle in their dislocation: and let the cure be thorough, and spare not for a little pain at first. Let as open confession as the case requireth, and as full restitution, signify the sincerity of your repentance; for a gentle handling of yourselves may undo you,—and palliation is the hypocrite's cure. O take heed lest you presume to sleep one night in your unrepented sin; and take heed lest delay encourage the tempter to offer you the bait again and again, and to say, Why not once more? Why may you not be as well pardoned for twice as for once; and for thrice as for twice? &c. It is dangerous playing or sleeping at the brink of hell. Away from the temptation and occasion of your sin; stand not disputing, but resolve and be gone; and 'sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you.' Stick not, man, at the shame or loss or suffering, which confession, restitution, or reformation, may bring; but remember that you can never escape damnation at too dear a rate. This is Christ's meaning, when he speaketh of 'cutting off a right hand,' or 'plucking out a right eye,' if it 'offend;' that is, ensnare and tempt you unto sin. Not that you should do so indeed, for you have an easier way to avoid the sin; but that, this is far the lesser of the two evils, to lose a hand or eye, than to lose the soul, and therefore to be chosen if there were no other remedy.

If the thief had no other way to forbear stealing than to cut off his hand; or the fornicator to cure his lust, than to put out his eyes, it were a cheap remedy. A cheap and easy superficial repentance may skin over the sore, and deceive a hypocrite; but he that would be sure of pardon, and free from fear, must go to the bottom.

## DIRECTION XX.

*Live as with death continually in your eye, and spend every day in serious preparation for it, that when it cometh, you may find your work dispatched; and may not then cry out in vain to God to try you once again.*

Promise not yourselves long life; think not of death as at many years' distance, but as hard at hand. Think what will then be needful to your peace and comfort, and order all your life accordingly, and prepare that now, which will be needful then. Live now while you have time, as you will resolve and promise God to live, when on your death-bed you are praying for a little time of trial more. It is a great work to die in a joyful assurance and hope of everlasting life, and with a longing desire to depart and be with Christ, as best of all. O, then, what a burden and terror it will be to have an unbelieving, or a worldly heart, or a guilty conscience! Now, therefore, use all possible diligence to strengthen faith, to increase love, to be acquitted of guilt, to be above the world, to have

the mind set free from the captivity of the flesh, to walk with God, and to obtain the deepest, most delectable apprehensions of his love in Christ, and of the heavenly blessedness which you expect. Do you feel any doubts of the state of immortality, or staggering at the promise of God through unbelief? Presently do all you can to conquer them, and get a clear resolution to your souls, and leave it not all to do at the time of sickness. Are the thoughts of God and heaven unpleasant or terrible to you? Presently search out the cause of all, and labour in the cure of it as for your lives. Is there any former or present sin which is a burden or terror to your consciences? Presently seek out to Christ for a cure, by faith and true repentance; and do that to disburden your consciences now, which you would do on a sick-bed; and leave not so great and necessary a work to so uncertain, and short, and unfit a time. Is there any thing in this world that is sweeter to your thoughts than God and heaven, and which you cannot willingly let go? Mortify it without delay; consider of its vanity; compare it with heaven; crucify it by the cross of Christ; cease not till you account it 'loss and dung,' for the excellent knowledge of Christ and life eternal. Let not death surprise you as a thing that you never seriously expected: Can you do no more in preparation for it than you do? If not, why do you wish at death to be tried once again? and why are you troubled that you lived no better? But if you can, when think you should it be done? Is the time of uncertain painful sickness better than this? O how

doth sensuality besot the world!—and inconsiderateness deprive them of the benefit of their reason! O, sirs! if you know indeed that you must shortly die, live then as dying men should live: choose your condition in the world, and manage it as men that must shortly die;—use your power, and command, and honour, and use all your neighbours, and especially use the cause and servants of Christ as men should do that must shortly die. Build and plant, and buy and sell, and use your riches, as those that must die, remembering that the fashion of all these things is passing away. Yea, pray and read, hear and meditate, as those that must die. Seeing you are as sure of it as if it were this hour; in the name of God, delay not your preparations. It is a terrible thing for immortal souls to pass out of the body in a carnal, unregenerate, unprepared state; and to leave a world which they loved and were familiar with, and go to a world which they neither know nor love, and where they have neither heart nor treasure. The measure of faith which may help you to bear an easy cross, is not sufficient to fortify and encourage your souls, to enter upon so great a change. So also bear all your wants and crosses as men that must shortly die;—fear the cruelties of men but as beseemeth those that are ready to die. He that can die well, can do any thing, or suffer any thing; and he that is unready to die, is unfit for a fruitful and comfortable life. What can rationally rejoice that man who is sure to die, and is unready to die, and is yet unfurnished of dying comforts? Let nothing be



now sweet to you, which will be bitter to your dying thoughts. Let nothing be much desired now, which will be unprofitable and uncomfortable then. Let nothing seem very heavy or grievous now, which will be light and easy then;—let nothing now seem honourable, which will then seem despicable and vile. Consider of every thing as it will look at death; that when the day shall come which endeth all the joys of the ungodly, you may look up with joy, and say,—Welcome heaven; this is the day which I so long expected, which all my days were spent in preparation for, which shall end my fears, and begin my felicity, and put me into possession of all that I desired, and prayed, and laboured for; when my soul shall see its glorified Lord: for he hath said, ‘If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.’ even so, Lord Jesus, remember me now thou art in thy kingdom, and let me be with thee in Paradise. O thou that spakest those words so full of inexpressible comfort to a sinful woman in the first speech after thy blessed resurrection, (John xx. 17.) ‘Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.’ Take up now this soul that is thine own, that it may see the glory given thee by the Father; and instead of this life of temptation, trouble, darkness, distance, and sinful imperfection, I may delightfully behold, and love, and praise, thy Father, and my Father, and thy God and my God. ‘Lord, now lettest thou

thy servant depart in peace !'—' Lord Jesus, receive my spirit !'

And now I have given you all these directions, I shall only request you in the close, that you will set your very hearts to the daily serious practice of them; for there is no other way for a ripe confirmed state of grace: and as ever you regard the glory of God, the honour of your religion, the welfare of the church and those about you, and the living and dying comforts of yourselves, O do not sluggishly rest in an infant state of grace! Did you but know how a weak and strong faith differ, and how a weak and a sound confirmed Christian differ, as to the honour of God, and the good of others, and especially to themselves, both in life and death, it would quickly awaken you to a cheerful diligence for so high and excellent an end. Did you but well understand the wrong that Christ and the Gospel have sustained in the world, yea in England, by weak, diseased, distempered Christians, your hearts would bleed, and with shame and grief it would be your secret and open lamentation. Stir up then the grace that is given you, and use Christ's means, and do your best, and you will find that Christ is not an insufficient physician, nor an ineffectual Saviour, or an empty fountain; but that he is filled with all the fulness of God, and hath Spirit and life to communicate to his members; and that there is no want which he cannot supply, and no corruption or temptation which his grace is not sufficient to overcome.

**THE CHARACTER**  
**OF A SOUND**  
**CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN;**  
**AS ALSO OF**  
**A WEAK CHRISTIAN,**  
**AND OF**  
**A SEEMING CHRISTIAN.**

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**WRITTEN TO IMPRINT UPON MEN'S MINDS THE TRUE IDEA**  
**OR CONCEPTION OF**  
**GODLINESS AND CHRISTIANITY.**

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**The Second Part of the Directions for Weak Christians.**



THE CHARACTER  
OF  
A SOUND CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN,

*&c. &c.*

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IN the explication of the text, which I made the ground of the foregoing discourse, I have shewed you that there is a degree of grace to be expected and sought after by all true Christians, which putteth the soul into a sound, confirmed, 'radicated state, in comparison of that weak, diseased, tottering condition, which most Christians now continue in. And I have shewed you how desirable a state that is, and what calamities follow the languishing, unhealthful state even of such as may be saved. And, indeed, did we but rightly understand how deeply the errors and sins of many well-meaning Christians have wounded the interest of religion in this age; and how heinously they have dishonoured God, and caused the enemies of holiness to blaspheme, and hardened thousands in popery and ungodliness, in probability to their perdition: had we well observed when God's judgments have begun, and understood what sins have caused our wars, and plagues, and flames; and, worse than all

these, our great heart-divisions, and church-distractions, and convulsions; we should ere this have given over the flattering of ourselves and one another in such a heaven-provoking state; and the ostentation of that little goodness, which hath been eclipsed by such lamentable evils. And instead of these, we should have betaken ourselves to the exercise of such a serious deep repentance as the quality of our sins, and the greatness of God's chastisements, do require. It is a doleful case to see how light many make of all the rest of their distempers, when once they think that they have so much grace and mortification as is absolutely necessary to save their souls; and expect that preachers should say little to weak Christians but words of comfort, setting forth their happiness: and yet if one of them, when he hath the gout, or the dropsy, doth send for a physician, he would think himself derided or abused, if his physician, instead of curing his disease, should only comfort him by telling him that he is not dead. What excellent disputations have Cicero and Seneca, the Platonists and Stoics, to prove that virtue is of itself sufficient to make man happy? And yet many Christians live as if holiness were not the way and means to their felicity, or at best but a small part of their felicity itself; or as if felicity itself grew burdensome, or were not desirable in this life; or a small degree of it were as good as a greater.

And too many mistake the will of God, and the nature of sanctification, and place their religion in the hot persecution of those mistakes: they make a

composition of error and passion, and an unyielding stiffness in them, and siding with the church or party which maintaineth them, and an uncharitable censuring those that are against them, and an unpeaceable contending for them; and this composition they mistake for godliness, especially if there be something of godliness and truth in the composition, though corrupted and overpowered by the rest.

For these failures in many well-meaning zealous persons the land mourneth, the churches groan; kingdoms are disturbed by them; families are disquieted by them; godliness is hindered, and much dishonoured by them; the wicked are hardened by them, and encouraged to hate, and blaspheme, and oppose religion; the glory of the Christian faith is obscured by them; and the Infidel, Mahometan, and Heathen world, are kept from faith in Jesus Christ, and many millions of souls destroyed by them. I mean, by the misconduct of the weaker sort of Christians, and by the wicked lives of those carnal hypocrites, who, from custom or worldly interest, do profess that Christianity which was never received by their hearts.

And all this is much promoted by their indiscretion, who are so intent upon the consolatory opening of the safety and happiness of believers, that they omit the due explication of their description, their dangers, and their duties.

One part of this too much neglected work I have endeavoured to perform in the foregoing treatise; another I shall attempt in this second part.

There are five degrees or ranks of true Christians observable, 1. The weakest Christians, who have only the essentials of Christianity, or very little more, as infants that are alive, but of little strength or use to others. 2. Those that are lapsed into some wounding sin, though not into a state of damnation: like men at age, who have lost the use of some one member for the present though they are strong in other parts. 3. Those that have the integral parts of Christianity in a considerable measure, are in a sound and healthful state, though neither perfect nor of the highest form or rank of Christians in this life, nor without such infirmities as are the matter of their daily watchfulness and humiliation. 4. Those who are so strong as to attain extraordinary degrees of grace, who are, therefore, comparatively, called perfect, as Matt. v. 45. 5. Those that have an absolute perfection, without sin, that is, the heavenly inhabitants.

Among all these, it is the third sort or degree which I have here characterized, and which I contrast with the first sort and the hypocrite. I meddle not now with the lapsed Christian as such, nor with those giants in holiness, of extraordinary strength, nor with the perfect blessed souls in heaven; but it is the Christian who hath attained that confirmation in grace, and composed, quiet, fruitful state which we might ordinarily expect if we were industrious, whose image or character I shall now present you with. I call him oftentimes a Christian indeed, in allusion to Christ's description of Nathaniel; and as we commonly use that word for one that



answereth his own profession without any notable dishonour or defect: as we say, such a man is a scholar indeed, and not as signifying his mere sincerity; I mean one whose heart and life is so conformed to the principles, the rule, and the hopes of Christianity, that, to the honour of Christ, the true nature of our religion is discernible in his conversation; in whom an impartial infidel might perceive the true nature of the Christian faith and godliness. If the world were fuller of such living images of Christ, who, like true regenerate children, represent their Heavenly Father, Christianity would not have met with so much prejudice, nor had so many enemies in the world, nor would so many millions have been kept in the darkness of heathenism and infidelity by flying from Christians as a sort of people that are common and unclean.

Among Christians there are 'babes,' that must be fed with 'milk,' and not with 'strong meat,' that are 'unskilful in the word of righteousness,' and novices, who are unsettled and in danger of an overthrow. In these the nature and excellency of Christianity is little more apparent than reason in a little child. And there are strong, confirmed Christians, who 'by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil,' and who shew forth the glory of him 'that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light;' of whom God himself may say to Satan and their malicious enemies, as once of Job, 'Hast thou not seen my servant Job?' &c. This Christian indeed I shall now describe to you, both to confute the infidel

slanders of Christianity, and to unteach men those false descriptions which have caused the presumption of the profane, and the irregularities of erroneous sectaries ; and to tell you what manner of persons they be that God is honoured by ; and what you must be if you will well understand your own religion. Be Christians indeed, and you will have the comforts indeed of Christianity ; and will find that its fruits and joys are not dreams, and shadows, and imaginations, if you content not yourselves with an imagination, dream, and shadow of Christianity, or with some clouded spark or buried seed.

### THE CHARACTERS.

I. A Christian indeed, (by which I still mean, a sound confirmed Christian,) is one that contenteth not himself to have a seed or habit of faith, but he liveth by faith, as the sensualist liveth by sight or sense ; not putting out the eye of sense, nor living as if he had no body, or were not in a world of sensible objects ; but as he is a reasonable creature, which exalteth him above the sensitive nature, so faith is the true information of his reason, about those high and excellent things which must take him up above things sensible. He hath so firm a belief of the life to come, as procured by Christ, and promised in the Gospel, as that it serveth him for the government of his soul, as his bodily sight doth for the conduct of his body. I say not that

he is assaulted with no temptations, nor that his faith is perfect in degree, nor that believing moveth him as passionately as sight or sense would do; but it doth effectually move him through the course and tenour of his life, to do those things for the life to come which he would do if he saw the glory of heaven, and to shun those things for the avoiding of damnation which he would shun if he saw the flames of hell. Whether he do these things so fervently or not, his belief is powerful, effectual, and victorious. Let sight and sense invite him to their objects, and entice him to sin and forsake his God, the objects of faith shall prevail against them, in the bent of an even, a constant and resolved life. It is things unseen which he taketh for his treasure, and which have his heart, and hope, and chiefest labours. All things else which he hath to do are but subservient to his faith and heavenly interest, as his sensitive faculties are ruled by his reason. His faith is not only his opinion, which teacheth him to choose what church or party he will be of; but it is his intellectual light by which he liveth, and in the confidence and comfort of which he dieth. 'For we walk by faith, not by sight;' we groan to be clothed upon with our heavenly house: 'Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him.' 'Now the just shall live by faith.' And (Heb. xi. 1,) 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Most of the examples in Heb. xi. do shew you this truth, that true Christians live and govern their actions by the firm belief of

the promise of God, and of another life when this is ended. 'By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.' — 'Abraham looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' — 'Moses feared not the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' So the three witnesses, and Daniel himself, and all believers, have lived this life, as Abraham the father of the faithful did; who, as it is said of him, 'Staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' The faith of a Christian is truly divine; and he knoweth that God's truth is as certain as sight itself can be, however sight be apter to move the passions: therefore, if you can judge but what a rational man would be, if he saw heaven and hell, and all that God had appointed us to believe, then you may conjecture what a confirmed Christian is, (though sense do cause more sensible apprehensions.)

2. The weak Christian also hath a faith that is divine, as caused by God, and resting on his word and truth. And he so far liveth by this faith, as that it commandeth and guideth the scope and drift of his heart and life; but he believeth with a great deal of staggering and unbelief, and therefore his hopes are interrupted by his troublesome doubts and fears; and the dimness and languor of his faith is seen in the faintness of his desires, and

the many blemishes of his heart and life; and sight and sensual objects are so much the more powerful with him, by how much the light and life of faith is dark and weak.

3. The hypocrite, or best of the unregenerate, believeth but either with a human faith, which resteth on the word of man, or else with a dead opinionative faith, which is overpowered by infidelity, or is like the dreaming thoughts of a man asleep, which stir him not to action: he liveth by sight and not by faith; for he hath not a faith that will overpower sense and sensual objects.

II. 1. A Christian indeed not only knoweth why he is a Christian, but seeth those reasons for his religion which disgrace all that the cunningest atheist or infidel can say against it, and so far satisfy, confirm, and establish him, that emergent difficulties, temptations, and objections, do not at all stagger him, or raise any deliberate doubts in him of the truth of the word of God. He seeth first the natural evidence of those foundation-truths which nature itself maketh known; (as that there is a God of infinite being, power, wisdom, and goodness, the creator, the owner, the ruler, and the father, felicity and end of man; that we owe him all our love and service; that none of our fidelity shall be in vain or unrewarded, and none shall be finally a loser by his duty; that man, who is naturally governed by the hopes and fears of another life, is made and liveth for that other life, where his soul shall be sentenced by God his judge, to happiness or misery, &c.): and then he

discerneth the attestation of God to those supernatural, superadded revelations of the Gospel, containing the doctrine of man's redemption; and he seeth how wonderfully these are built upon the former, and how excellently the Creator's and Redeemer's doctrine and laws agree, and how much countenance supernatural truths receive from the presupposed natural ones; so that he doth not adhere to Christ and religion by the mere engagement of education, friends, or worldly advantages, nor by a blind resolution, which wanteth nothing but a strong temptation (from a deceiver or a worldly interest) to shake or overthrow it; but he is built upon the rock, which will stand in the assault of Satan's storms, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

2. But a weak Christian hath but a dim and general kind of knowledge of the reasons of his religion, or, at least, but a weak apprehension of them, though he have the best and most unanswerable reasons; and either he is confident in the dark upon grounds which he cannot make good, and which want but a strong assault to shake them, or else he is troubled and ready to stagger at every difficulty which occurreth; every 'hard saying' in the scripture doth offend him, and every seeming contradiction shaketh him; and the depth of the mysteries which pass his understanding, do make him say, as Nicodemus of regeneration, 'How can these things be?' And if he meet with the objections of a cunning infidel, he is unable so to defend the truth, and clear his way through them, as to

come off unwounded and unshaken, and to be more confirmed in the truth of his belief, by discerning the vanity of all that is said against it.

3. The seeming Christian either hath no solid reasons at all for his religion, or else, if he have the best, he hath no sound apprehension of them : but though he be never so learned and orthodox, and can preach and defend the faith, it is not so rooted in him as to endure the trial ; but if a strong temptation from subtlety or carnal interest assault him, you shall see that he was built upon the sand, and that there was in him a secret root of bitterness, and an evil heart of unbelief, which causeth him to depart from the living God.

III. 1. A Christian indeed, is not only confirmed in the essentials of Christianity, but he hath a clear delightful sight of those useful truths which are the integrals of Christianity, and are built upon the fundamentals, and are the branches of the master-points of faith. Though he see not all the lesser truths, (which are branched out at last into innumerable particles,) yet he seeth the main body of sacred verities delivered by Christ for man's sanctification, and seeth them methodically in their proper places, and seeth how one supports another, and in how beautiful an order and contexture they are placed ; and as he sticketh not in the bare principles, so he receiveth all these additions of knowledge, not notionally only, but practically, as the food on which his soul must live.

2. A weak Christian (in knowledge) besides the principles or essentials of religion, doth know but a

few disordered scattered truths, which are also but half known, because while he hath some knowledge of those points, he is ignorant of many others which are needful to the supporting, and clearing, and improving of them : and because he knoweth them not in their places, and order, and relation, and aspect upon other truths ; and, therefore, if temptations be strong, and come with advantage, the weak Christian in such points is easily drawn into many errors, and thence into great confidence and conceitedness in those errors, and thence into sinful, dangerous courses in the prosecution and practice of those errors. Such are, like ‘ children, tossed up and down, and carried to and fro by every wind of doctrine, through the cunning sleight and subtlety of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.’

3. The seeming Christian, having no saving practical knowledge of the essentials of Christianity themselves, doth therefore, either neglect to know the rest, or knoweth them but notionally, as common sciences, and subjecteth them all to his worldly interest ; and therefore is still of that side or party in religion which upon the account of safety, honour, or preferment, his flesh commandeth him to follow : either he is still on the greater, rising side, and of the ruler’s religion, be it what it will ; or, if he dissent, it is in pursuit of another game which pride or fleshly ends have started.

IV. 1. The Christian indeed hath not only reason for his religion, but also hath an inward connatural principle, even the Spirit of Christ, which is a new nature, inclining and enlivening him to a



holy life, whereby he mindeth and savoureth the things of the Spirit; not that his nature doth work blindly, as nature doth in the irrational creatures; but at least it much imitateth nature as it is found in rational creatures, where the inclination is necessary, but the operations free, and subject to reason; it is a spiritual appetite, in the rational appetite, even the will, and a spiritual visive disposition in the understanding; not a faculty in a faculty; but the right disposition of the faculties to their highest objects, to which they are by corruption made unsuitable. So that it is neither a proper power in the natural sense, nor a mere act, but nearest to the nature of a seminal disposition or habit. It is the health and rectitude of the faculties of the soul. Even as Nature hath made the understanding disposed to truth in general, and the will disposed or inclined to good in general, and to self-preservation and felicity in particular; so the Spirit of Christ doth dispose the understanding to spiritual truth, to know God, and the matters of salvation, and doth incline the will to God and holiness; not blindly, as they are unknown; but to love and serve a known God. So that whether this be properly or only analogically called a nature, or rather should be called a habit, I determine not; but certainly it is a fixed disposition and inclination, which Scripture calleth the 'divine nature,' and 'the seed of God abiding in us.' But most usually it is called 'the Spirit of God,' or of 'Christ in us:' 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his.' And again, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body:'—therefore we are said

to be 'in the Spirit,' and 'walk after the Spirit,' and 'by the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body.' And it is called, 'the Spirit of the Son,' and 'the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father;' or are inclined to God, as children to their father; and the 'Spirit of grace and supplication.' From this Spirit, and the fruits of it, we are called 'new creatures,' and 'quickened' and 'made alive to God.' It is a great controversy, whether this holy disposition and inclination was natural to Adam, or not; and, consequently, whether it be a restored nature in us, or not. It was so natural to him as health is natural to the body, but not so natural as to be a necessitating principle, nor so as to be inseparable and unlosable.

2. This same Spirit and holy inclination is in the weakest Christian also, but in a small degree, and remissly operating, so as that the fleshly inclination oft seemeth to be the stronger, when he judgeth by its passionate strugglings within him: though, indeed, the Spirit of life doth not only strive, but conquer in the main, even in the weakest Christians.

3. The seeming Christian hath only the ineffectual motions of the Spirit to a holy life, and effectual motions, and inward dispositions to some common duties of religion: and from these, with the natural principles of self-love and common honesty, with the outward persuasions of company and advantages, his religion is maintained, without the regeneration of the Spirit.

V. From hence it followeth: 1. That a Christian indeed doth not serve God for fear only, but for love; even for love both of himself and of his holy

work and service : yea, the strong Christian's love to God and holiness, is not only greater than his love to creatures, but greater than his fear of wrath and punishment. The love of God constraineth him to duty : ' Love is the fulfilling of the law ;' therefore the Gospel cannot be obeyed without it. He saith not, O that this were no duty ! and O that this forbidden thing were lawful ! (though his flesh say so, the Spirit, which is the predominant part, doth not) ; but he saith, ' O how I love thy law ! O that my ways were so directed that I might keep thy statutes !' For ' the spirit is willing ' even when ' the flesh is weak : '—he serveth not God against his will ; but his will is to serve him more and better than he doth : he longeth to be perfect, and perfectly to do the will of God, and taketh the remnant of his sinful infirmities to be a kind of bondage to him, which he groaneth to be delivered from : to will even perfection is present with him, though not perfectly, and though he do not all that he willeth : and this is the true meaning of Paul's complaints, Rom. vii. Because ' the flesh warreth against the Spirit, he cannot do the good that he would ;' that is, he cannot be perfect, for so he would be. His love and will excel his practice.

2. The weak Christian also hath more love to God and holiness than to the world and fleshly pleasure : but yet his fear of punishment is greater than his love to God and holiness. To have no love to God is inconsistent with a state of grace, and so it is to have less love to God than to the world, and less love to holiness than to sin ;—but

to have more fear than love is consistent with sincerity of grace; yea, the weak Christian's love to God and holiness is joined with so much backwardness and averseness, and interrupted with weariness, and with the carnal allurements and diversions of the creature, that he cannot certainly perceive whether his love and willingness be sincere or not: he goeth on in a course of duty, but so heavily, that he scarce knoweth, whether his love or loathing of it be the greater. He goeth to it as a sick man to his meat, or labour: all that he doth is with so much pain or indisposedness, that to his feeling his averseness seemeth greater than his willingness, were it not that necessity maketh him willing. For the habitual love and complacency which he hath towards God and duty, is so oppressed by fear, and by averseness, that it is not so much felt in act as they.

3. A seeming Christian hath no true love of God and holiness at all, but some ineffectual liking and wishes which are overborne by a greater backwardness, and by a greater love to earthly things; so that fear alone, without any true effectual love, is the spring and principle of his religion and obedience. God hath not his heart, when he draweth near him with his lips: he doth more than he would do, if he were not forced by necessity and fear; and had rather be excused, and lead another kind of life. Though necessity and fear are very helpful to the most sincere, yet fear alone without love or willingness is a graceless state.

VI. 1. A Christian indeed doth love God in

these three gradations : he loveth him much for his mercy to himself, and for that goodness which consisteth in benignity to himself; but he loveth him more for his mercy to the church, and for that goodness which consisteth in his benignity to the church. But he loveth him most of all for his infinite perfections and essential excellencies;—his infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, simply in himself considered. For he knoweth that love to himself obligeth him to returns of love, especially differencing saving grace. And he knoweth that the souls of millions are more worth incomparably than his own, and that God may be much more honoured by them than by him alone: and therefore he knoweth that the mercy to many is greater mercy, and a greater demonstration of the goodness of God; and therefore doth render him more amiable to man. And yet he knoweth that the essential perfection and goodness of God, as simply in himself and for himself, is much more amiable than his benignity to the creature; and that He that is the first efficient must needs be the ultimate final cause of all things: and that God is not finally for the creature, but the creature for God, (for all that he needeth it not,) ‘For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.’ And as he is infinitely better than ourselves, so he is to be better loved than ourselves: as I love a wise and virtuous person, though he be one I never expect to receive any thing from, and therefore love him for his own sake, and not for his benignity or usefulness to me; so must I love God most for his essential perfections,

though his benignity also doth represent him amiable. As he is blindly selfish that would not rather himself be annihilated or perish, than whole kingdoms should all perish, or the sun be taken out of the world; (because that which is best must be loved as best, and therefore be best loved :) so is he more blind who in his estimative complacential love preferreth not infinite eternal goodness before such an imperfect silly creature as himself (or all the world.) We are commanded to 'love our neighbour as ourselves,' when God is to be 'loved with all the heart, and soul, and might,' which therefore signifieth more than to love him as ourselves; (or else he were to be loved no more than our neighbour.) So that the strong Christian loveth God so much above himself, as that he accounteth himself and all his interests as nothing in comparison of God; yea, and loveth himself more for God than for himself: though his own salvation be loved and desired by him, and God must be loved for his mercy and benignity; yet that salvation itself, which he desireth, is nothing else but the love of God; wherein his love is the final felicitating act, and God is the final felicitating object; and the felicity of loving is not first desired, but the attractive object doth draw out our love, and thereby make us consequentially happy in the enjoying exercise thereof. Thus God is 'All and in all' to the soul.

2. A weak Christian also loveth God as one that is infinitely better than himself and all things: (or else he did not love him at all as God.) But in the exercise he is so much in the minding of himself,

and so seldom and weak in the contemplation of God's perfections, that he feeleth more of his love to himself, than unto God; and feeleth more of his love to God as for the benefits which he receiveth in and by himself, than as for his own perfections; yea, and often feeleth the love of himself to work more strongly than his love to the church, and all else in the world. The care of his own salvation is the highest principle which he ordinarily perceiveth in any great strength in him; and he is very little and weakly carried out to the love of the whole church, and to the love of God, above himself.

3. A seeming Christian hath a common love of God as he is good, both in himself, and unto the world, and unto him. But this is not for his holiness; and it is but a general ineffectual approbation and praise of God, which followeth a dead ineffectual belief: but his chiefest predominant love is always to his carnal self, and the love both of his soul and of God is subjected to his fleshly self-love. His chiefest love to God is for prospering him in the world, and such as is subservient to his sensuality, pride, covetousness, presumption, and false hopes.

VII. 1. A Christian indeed doth practically take this love of God, and the holy expressions of it, to be the very life and top of his religion, and the very life, and beauty, and pleasure of his soul;—he makes it his work in the world, and loveth himself (complacentially) but so far as he findeth in himself the love of God;—and so far as he findeth himself without it, he loatheth himself as an unlovely carcase: and so far as his prayers and obedience are

without it, he looks on them but as unacceptable loathsome things. And therefore he is taken up in the study of redemption; because he can no where so clearly see the love and loveliness of God as in the face of a Redeemer, even in the wonders of love revealed in Christ. And he studieth them, that love may kindle love. And, therefore, he delighteth in contemplating God's attributes and infinite perfections; and in the beholding of him in the frame of the creation, and reading his name in the book of his works, that his soul may, by such steps, be raised in love and admiration of his Maker:—and, as 'it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun,' or light, so is it to the mind of the Christian indeed to be frequently and seriously contemplating the nature and glory of God: and the exercise of love in such contemplations is most of his daily walk with God. And therefore it is, also, that he is more taken up in the exercises of thanksgiving, and the praises of the Almighty, than in the lower parts of godliness: so that though he neglect not confession of sin and humiliation, yet doth he use them but in subserviency to the love and praise of God; and rejoiceth in casting out every thing which becomes not a heart that is to entertain its God. He placeth not the chief part of his religion in any outward duties, nor in any lower preparatory acts; nor doth he stop in any of these, however he neglect them not. But he useth them all to advance his soul in the love of God; and useth them the more diligently, because the love of God, to which they conduce as to their proper end, is so high and

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excellent a work. Therefore, in David's Psalms, you find a heart delighting itself in the praises of God; and in love with his word and works in order to his praises; as in Psal. cxvi. 1, &c.; ciii.; cvi.; cxlv.; cxlvi. &c.

2. The weak Christian is taken up but very little with the lively exercises of love and praise, nor with any studies higher than his own distempered heart: the care of his poor soul, and the complaining of his manifold infirmities and corruptions, is the most of his religion; and if he set himself to the praising of God or to thanksgiving, he is as dull and short in it as if it were not his proper work.

3. The seeming Christian liveth to the flesh; and carnal self-love is the active principle of his life: and he is neither exercised in humiliation or in praise sincerely, being unacquainted both with holy joy and sorrow; but knowing that he is in the hands of God, to prosper or destroy him, he will humble himself to him to escape his judgments, and praise him with some gladness for the sunshine of prosperity; and he will seem to be piously thanking God when he is but rejoicing in the accommodations of his flesh, or strengthening his presumption and false hopes of heaven.

VIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that is so apprehensive of his lost condition, unworthiness, and utter insufficiency for himself, and of the office, perfection, and sufficiency of Christ, that he hath absolutely put his soul and all his hopes into the hands of Christ; and now liveth in him and upon him; as having no life but what he hath from

Christ, nor any other way of access to God, or acceptance of his person or his service, but by him. In him he beholdeth, and delightfully admireth, the love and goodness of the Father;—in him, he hath access with boldness unto God;—through him, the most terrible avenging Judge is become a reconciled God; and he that we could not remember but with trembling, is become the most desirable object of our thoughts. He is delightfully employed in looking into the unsearchable mystery; and Christ doth even ‘dwell in his heart by faith: and being rooted and grounded in love,’ he ‘apprehendeth with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,’ and knoweth ‘the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.’ He perceiveth that he is daily beholden to Christ, that he is not in hell, that sin doth not make him like to devils, and that he is not utterly forsaken of God: he feeleth that he is beholden to Christ for every hour’s time, and every mercy to his soul or body, and for all his hope of mercy in this life, or in the life to come. He perceiveth that he is dead in himself, and that ‘his life is hid with Christ in God.’ And therefore he is as ‘buried and risen again with Christ;’ even ‘dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ.’ He saith with Paul, (Gal. ii. 20.) ‘I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.’ Thus doth he live as truly and constantly by the ‘second Adam,’ who is a ‘quickening spirit,’ as he doth by the

‘first Adam,’ who was a ‘living soul.’ This is a confirmed Christian’s life.

2. But the weak Christian, though he be also united unto Christ, and live by faith, yet how languid are the operations of that faith! How dark and dull are his thoughts of Christ! How little is his sense of the wonders of God’s love revealed to the world in the mystery of redemption! How little use doth he make of Christ! And how little life receives he from him! And how little comfort findeth he in believing, in comparison of that which the confirmed find! He is to Christ as a sick person to his food;—he only picketh here and there a little of the crumbs of the Bread of Life, to keep him from dying; but is woefully unacquainted with the powerfulest works of faith. He is such a believer as is next to an unbeliever, and such a member of Christ as is next to a mere stranger.

3. And for the seeming Christian, he may understand the letter of the Gospel, and number himself with Christ’s disciples, and be baptized with water, and have such a faith as is a dead opinion; but he hath not an effectual living faith, nor is baptized with the Holy Ghost, nor is his soul engaged absolutely and entirely in the covenant of Christianity to his Redeemer: he may have a handsome well-made image of Christianity, but it is the flesh and sense, and not Christ and faith, by which his life is actuated and ordered.

IX. 1. A Christian indeed doth firmly believe that Christ is a ‘teacher sent from God,’ and that he came from heaven to reveal his Father’s will,

and to bring life and immortality more fully to light by his Gospel; and that if an angel had been sent to tell us of the life to come, and the way thereto, he had not been so credible and venerable a messenger as the Son of God: and therefore he taketh him alone for his chief teacher, and knoweth no master on earth but him, and such as he appointeth under him; his study in the world is to know a crucified and glorified Christ, and God by him, and he regardeth no other knowledge, nor useth any other studies but this, and such as are subservient to this. Even when he studieth the works of nature, it is as by the conduct of the restorer of nature, and as one help appointed him by Christ, to lead him up to the knowledge of God. And, therefore, he perceiveth that Christ is made of God unto us wisdom as well as righteousness; and that Christianity is the true philosophy; and that the wisdom of the world, which is only about worldly things, from worldly principles to a worldly end, is foolishness with God: he taketh nothing for wisdom which tendeth not to acquaint him more with God, or lead him up to everlasting happiness. Christ is his teacher, either by natural or supernatural revelation, and God is his ultimate end in all his studies, and all that he desireth to know in the world. He valueth knowledge according to its usefulness; and he knoweth that its chief use is to lead us to the love of God.

2. Though the weak Christian hath the same Master, yet, alas, how little doth he learn! and how oft is he hearkening to the teaching of the

flesh! and how carnal and common is much of his knowledge? how little doth he depend on Christ in his inquiries after the things of nature! and how apt is he to think almost as highly of the teaching of Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, or at least of some excellent preacher, as of Christ's! and to forget that these are but his messengers and instruments to convey unto us several parcels of that truth which is his and not theirs, and which, naturally or supernaturally, they received from him; and all these candles were lighted by him who is the Sun! And how little doth this weak Christian refer his common knowledge to God! or use it for him! or to the furtherance of his own and others' happiness!

3. And the seeming Christian, though materially he may be eminent for knowledge, yet is so far from resigning himself to the teachings of Christ, that he maketh even his knowledge of Christian verities to be to him but a common carnal thing, while he knoweth it but in a common manner, and useth it to the service of the flesh, and never yet learned so much as to be a new creature, nor to love God as God above the world.

X. 1. A Christian indeed is one whose repentance hath been deep, and serious, and universal, and is unchangeable: it hath gone to the very roots of sin, and to the bottom of the sore, and hath not left behind it any reigning unmortified sin; nor any prevalent love to fleshly pleasures: his repentance did not consist in some reproachful words against his sin, and then allow him to rest satisfied with its confession instead of its mortification. Nor

doth he only repent of his open sins, and those that are most censured by the beholders of his life; but he specially perceives the dangerous poison of pride, and unbelief, and worldliness, and the want of the love of God, and all his outward and smaller sins do serve to shew him the greater malignity of these, and these are the matter of his greatest lamentations. He taketh not up a profession of religion with strong corruptions secretly covered in his heart; but his religion consisteth in the death of his corruptions and the purifying of his heart: he doth not secretly cherish any sin as too sweet or too profitable to be utterly forsaken, nor overlook it as a small inconsiderable matter; but he feeleth sin to be his enemy and his disease, and as he desireth not one enemy, one sickness, one wound, one broken bone, one serpent in his bed, so he desireth not any one sin to be spared in his soul, but saith with David, ‘Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’ He liveth in no gross or scandalous sin, and his infirmities are comparatively few and small; so that if he were not a sharper accuser of himself than the most observant spectators are, that are just, there would little be known by him that is culpable and matter of reproof. He ‘walketh in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless,’ as to any notable failure. He is ‘blameless and harmless, as the son of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom he shineth

as a light in the world.' The fear, and love, and obedience of God is the work and tenour of his life.

2. But the weak Christian, though he hath no sin but what he is a hater of, and fain would be delivered from, yet alas how imperfect is his deliverance! and how weak is the hatred of his sin, and mixed with so much proneness to it, that his life is much blemished with the spots of his offences. Though his unbelief, and pride, and worldliness are not predominant in him, yet are they, or some of them, still so strong, and fight so much against his faith, humility, and heavenliness, that he can scarcely tell which hath the upper hand; nor can others that see the failings of his life, discern whether the good or the evil be most prevalent. Though it be heaven which he most seeketh, yet earth is so much regarded by him, that his heavenly-mindedness is greatly damped and suppressed by it. And though it be the way of godliness and obedience which he walketh in, yet is it with so many stumblings and falls, if not deviations also, as make him oft a burthen to himself, a shame to his profession and a snare or trouble to those about him. His heart is like an ill-swept house that hath many a sluttish corner in it; and his life is like a moth-eaten garment, which hath many a hole which you may see if you bring it into the light.

3. And for the seeming Christian, his repentance doth but crop the branches, it goeth not to the root and heart of his sin: it leaveth his fleshly mind and interest under its dominion; it polisheth his life,

but maketh him not a new creature; it casteth away those sins which the flesh can spare, and which bring more shame, or loss, or trouble with them, than worldly honour, gain, or pleasure: but still he is a very worldling at the heart; and the sins which his fleshly pleasure and felicity consisteth in, he will hide by confessions and seeming oppositions, but never mortify and forsake: as Judas, who, while he followed Christ, was yet a thief and a covetous hypocrite.

XI. 1. Hence it followeth that a Christian indeed doth heartily love the searching light, that it may fully acquaint him with his sins: he is truly desirous to know the worst of himself, and therefore useth the word of God as a candle to shew him what is in his heart, and bringeth himself willingly into the light: he loveth the most searching books and preachers: not only because they disclose the faults of other men, but his own: he is not one that so loveth his pleasant and profitable sins, as to fly the light lest he should be forced to know them, and so to forsake them; but because he hateth them, and is resolved to forsake them, therefore he would know them. John iii. 19—21. Therefore he is not only patient under reproofs, but loveth them, and is thankful to a charitable reprove; and maketh a good use even of malicious and passionate reproofs. He saith as Job, ‘That which I see not, teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.’ His hatred of the sin, and desire to be reformed, suffer not his heart by pride to rise up against the remedy and reject



reproof. Though he will not falsely confess his duty to be his sin, nor take the judgment of every selfish, passionate, or ignorant reprover to be infallible, nor to be his rule; yet if a judicious impartial person do but suspect him of a fault, he is ready to suspect himself of it, unless he be certain that he is clear. He loveth him better that would save him from his sin, than him that would entice him to it; and taketh him for his best friend who dealeth freely with him, and is the greatest enemy to his faults; and a flatterer he taketh but for the most dangerous insinuating kind of foe.

2. But the weak Christian, though he hate his sin, and love reformation, and loveth the most searching books and preachers, and loveth a gentle kind of reproof, yet hath so much pride and selfishness remaining, that any reproof that seemeth disgraceful to him goeth very hardly down with him; like a bitter medicine to a queasy stomach: if you reprove him before others, or if your reproof be not very carefully sugared and minced, so that it rather extenuate than aggravate his fault, he will be ready to cast it up in your face, and with retortions to tell you of some faults of your own, or some way shew you how little he loveth it, and how little thanks he giveth you for it. If you will not let him alone with his infirmities, he will dislike you, if not fall out with you, and let you know, by his smart and impatience, that you have touched him in the sore and galled place. He must be a man of very great skill in managing a reproof, that shall not somewhat provoke him to distaste.

3. And for the seeming Christian, this is his 'condemnation, that light is come into the world, and he loveth darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil.' He cometh not to 'the light, lest his deeds should be discovered and reprov'd.' He liketh a searching preacher for others, and loveth to hear their sins laid open, if it no way reflect upon himself: but for himself he liketh best a general or a smoothing preacher; and he flyeth from a quick and searching ministry, lest he should be proved and convinced to be in a state of sin and misery. Guilt maketh him fear or hate a lively searching preacher, even as the guilty prisoner hateth the judge. He loveth no company so well as that which thinketh highly of him, and applaudeth and commendeth him, and neither by their reproofs nor stricter lives, will trouble his conscience with the remembrance of his sin, or the knowledge of his misery. He will take you for his enemy for telling him the truth, if you go about to convince him of his undone condition, and tell him of his beloved sin: sin is taken to be as himself;—it is he that doth evil, and not only sin that dwelleth in him; and therefore all that you say against his sin, he taketh it as spoken against himself; and he will defend his sin as he would defend himself: he will hear you till you come to touch himself, as the Jews did by Stephen, when they heard him call them 'stiffnecked resisters of God,' and 'persecutors;' then they were 'cut to the heart, and ground their teeth at him.' And as they did by Paul: 'they gave audience to this word, and then

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lift up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live.' The priests and pharisees would have laid hands on Christ, when 'they perceived that he spake of them.' And Ahab hated Micaiah, because he 'did not prophesy good of him, but evil.' Deservedly do they perish in their sin and misery, who hate him that would deliver them, and refuse the remedy: 'Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof is brutish.'— 'He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

XII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that unfeignedly desireth to attain to the highest degree of holiness, and to be perfectly freed from every thing that is sin. He desireth perfection, though not with a perfect desire. He sitteth not down contentedly in any low degree of grace. He looketh on the holiest (how poor soever) with much more reverence and esteem, than on the most rich and honourable in the world. And he had far rather be one of the most holy, than one of the most prosperous and great;—he had rather be a Paul or Timothy, than a Cæsar or an Alexander. He complaineth of nothing with so much sorrow, as that he can know and love his God no more! How happy an exchange would he count it, if he had more of the knowledge and love of God, though he lost all his wealth and honour in the world. His smallest sins are a greater burden to him than his greatest corporeal wants and sufferings. As Paul, who,

because he could not perfectly fulfil God's law, and be as good as he would be, crieth out, as in bondage, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?'

2. And for the weak Christian, though he is habitually and resolvedly of the same mind, yet, alas, his desires after perfection are much more languid in him; and he hath too much patience and reconciledness to some of his sins; and sometimes taketh them to be sweet: so that his enmity to his pride, or covetousness, or passion, is much abated, and suffereth his sin to waste his grace and wound his conscience, and hinder much of his communion with God. He seeth not the odiousness of sin, nor the beauty of holiness, with so clear a sight as the confirmed Christian doth. He hateth sin more for the ill effects of it than for its malignant hateful nature. He seeth not clearly the intrinsic evil that is in sin, which maketh it deserve the pains of hell. Nor doth he discern the difference between a holy and an unholy soul, so clearly as the stronger Christian doth.

3. And as for the seeming Christian, though he may approve of perfect holiness in another, and may wish for it himself, when he thinketh of it but in the general, and not as it is exclusive and destructive of his beloved sin; yet, when it cometh to particulars, he cannot away with it;—he is so far from desiring it, that he will not endure it. The name of holiness he liketh; and that preservation from hell which is the consequent of it; but when he understandeth what it is, he hath no mind to it.

That holiness which should cure his ambition and pride, and make him contented with a low condition, he doth not like : he loveth not that holiness which would deprive him of his covetousness, his intemperance in pleasant meats and drinks ; his fleshly lusts, and inordinate pleasures. Nor doth he desire that holiness should employ his soul in the love of God, and in daily prayer and meditating on his word, and raise him to a heavenly life on earth.

XIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that maketh God and heaven the end, reward, and motive of his life ; and liveth not in the world for any thing in the world, but for that endless happiness which the next world only can afford. The reasons which actuate his thoughts, and choice, and all his life, are fetched from heaven. The interest of God and his soul, as to eternity, is the ruling interest in him. As a traveller goeth all the way, and beareth all the difficulties of it, for the sake of the end or place that he is going to ; (however he may talk of many other matters by the way ;) so is it with a Christian : he knoweth nothing worthy of his life and labours but that which he hopeth for hereafter. This world is too sinful, and too vile, and short, to be his felicity. His very trade and work in the world, is to lay up a treasure in heaven, and to ' lay up a good foundation against the time to come, and to lay hold on eternal life.' And therefore his very heart is there ; and he is employed in seeking and ' setting his affections on the things above.' And his conversation and traffic is in heaven. He ' looketh

not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal.' He is a stranger upon earth, and heaven is to him as his home.

2. The weak Christian also hath the same end, and hope, and motive; and preferreth his hopes of the life to come before all the wealth and pleasures of this life: but yet his thoughts of heaven are much more strange and dull;—he hath so much doubting and fear yet mixed with his faith and hope, that he looketh before him to his everlasting state, with backwardness and trouble, and with small desire and delight;—he hath so much hope of heaven as to abate his fears of hell, and make him think of eternity with more quietness than he could do if he found himself unregenerate; but not so much as to make his thoughts of heaven so free, and sweet, and frequent, nor his desires after it so strong, as the confirmed Christian's are. And therefore his duties, and his speech of heaven, and his endeavours to obtain it, are all more languid and inconstant; and he is much proner to fall in love with earth, and to entertain the motions of reconciliation to the world, and to have his heart too much set upon some place, or person, or thing below, and to be either delighted too much in the possession of it, or afflicted and troubled too much with the loss of it. Earthly things are too much the motives of his life, and the reasons of his joys and griefs: though he hath the true belief of a life to come, and it prevaieth in the main against the world, yet it is but little that he useth it to the commanding,

and raising, and comforting his soul, in comparison of what a strong believer doth.

3. But the seeming Christian would serve God and mammon, and placeth his chief and certainest happiness practically upon earth: though speculatively he know and say that heaven is better, yet doth he not practically judge it to be so to him; and therefore he loveth the world above it, and he doth most carefully lay up a treasure on earth, and is resolved first to seek and secure his portion here below; and yet he taketh heaven for a reserve, as knowing that the world will cast him off at last, and die he must, there is no remedy; and therefore he taketh heaven as next unto the best; as his second hope; as better than hell; and will go in religion as far as he can, without the loss of his prosperity here: so that earth and flesh do govern and command the design and tenour of his life; but heaven and his soul shall have all that they can spare, which may be enough to make him pass with men for eminently religious.

XIV. 1. A Christian indeed is one that, having taken heaven for his felicity, doth account no labour or cost too great for the obtaining of it: he hath nothing so dear to him in this world which he cannot spare and part with for God and the world to come. He doth not only notionally know that nothing should seem too dear or hard for the securing of our salvation; but he knoweth this practically, and is resolved accordingly. Though difficulties may hinder him in particular acts, and his executions come not up to the height of his

desires, yet he is resolved that he will never break terms with Christ: there is no duty so hard which he is not willing and resolved to perform; and no sin so sweet or gainful which he is not willing to forsake: he knoweth how unprofitable a bargain he makes who winneth the world and loseth his own soul; and that no gain can ransom his soul, or recompense him for the loss of his salvation. He knoweth that it is impossible to be a loser by God, or to purchase heaven at too dear a rate: he knoweth that whatsoever it cost him, heaven will fully pay for all; and that it is the worldling's labour, and not the saint's, that is repented of at last. He marvelleth more at distracted sinners for making such a stir for wealth, and honours, and command, than they marvel at him for making so much ado for heaven. He knoweth that this world may be too dearly bought, but so cannot his salvation: yea, he knoweth that even our duty itself is not our smallest privilege and mercy: and that the more we do for God the more we receive, and the greater is our gain and honour: and that the sufferings of believers for righteousness' sake do not only prognosticate their joys in heaven, but occasion here the greatest joys that any short of heaven partake of. He is not one that desireth the end without the means, and would be saved so it may be on cheap and easy terms; but he absolutely yieldeth to the terms of Christ, and saith with Augustin, '*Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis*: Cause me to do what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt.' Though Pelagius contradicted the first sentence,



and the flesh the second, yet Augustine owned both, and so doth every true believer. He greatly complaineth of his backwardness to obey, but never complaineth of the strictness of the command: he loveth the holiness, justness, and goodness of the laws, when he bewaileth the unholiness and badness of his heart: he desireth not God to command him less, but desireth grace and ability to do more. He is so far from the mind of the ungodly world, who cry out against too much holiness, and making so much ado for heaven, that he desireth even to reach to the degree of angels, and would fain have God's will to be done on earth as it is done in heaven; and therefore the more desireth to be in heaven that he may do it better.

2. The weak Christian hath the same estimation and resolution; but, when it comes to practice, as his will is less confirmed and more corrupted and divided, so little impediments and difficulties are great temptations to him, and stop him more in the way of his obedience. All his duty is much more tedious to him, and all his sufferings are much more burthensome to him than to confirmed Christians; and therefore he is easier tempted into omissions and impatency, and walketh not so evenly or comfortably with God. When the spirit is willing, it yieldeth oft to the weakness of the flesh, because it is willing in too remiss a degree.

3. But the seeming Christian (though notionally and generally he may approve of strictness) yet secretly at the heart hath always this reserve, that he will not serve God at too dear a rate. His worldly

felicity he cannot part with for all the hopes of life to come, and yet he will not, he dare not renounce and give up those hopes, and therefore he maketh himself a religion of the easiest and cheapest parts of Christianity, (among which sometimes the strictest opinions may fall out to be one part, provided they be separated from the strictest practice): and this easy cheap religion he will needs believe to be true Christianity and godliness, and so will hope to be saved upon these terms. And though he cannot but know that it is the certain character of a hypocrite to have any thing nearer and dearer to his heart than God; yet he hopeth that it is not so with him, because his convinced judgment can say that God is best and the world is vanity, while yet his heart and affections so much contradict his opinion as almost to say, There is no God; for his heart knoweth and loveth no God as God,—that is, above his worldly happiness. He is resolved to do so much in religion as he findeth necessary to delude his conscience and make himself believe that he is godly and shall be saved; but when he cometh to forsake all and take up the cross, and practise the costliest parts of duty, then you shall see that mammon was better loved than God, and he will go away sorrowful, and hope to be saved upon easier terms: for he was never resigned absolutely to God.

XV. 1. A confirmed Christian is one that taketh self-denial for the one-half of his religion, and therefore hath bestowed one-half of his endeavours to attain and exercise it. He knoweth that the fall of man was a turning to himself from God,

and that selfishness and want of love to God are the sum of all corruption and ungodliness, and that the love of God and self-denial are the sum of all religion, and that conversion is nothing but the turning of the heart from carnal self to God by Christ; and therefore on this hath his care and labour been so successfully laid out, that he hath truly and practically found out something that is much better than himself, and to be loved and preferred before himself, and which is to be his chiefest ultimate end. He maketh not a God of himself any more, but useth himself for God, to fulfil his will, as a creature of his own, that hath no other end and use. He no more preferreth himself above all the world, but esteemeth himself a poor and despicable part of the world; and highlier valueth the honour of God and the welfare of the Church, and the good of many, than any interest of his own. Though God in nature hath taught him to regard his own felicity and to love himself, and not to seek the glory of God and the good of many souls in opposition to his own; yet hath he taught him to prefer them (though in conjunction) much before his own: for reason telleth him that man is nothing in comparison of God, and that we are made by him and for him; and that the welfare of the Church or public societies is better, in order to the highest ends, than the welfare of some one. Selfishness, in the unregenerate, is like an inflammation or imposthume, which draweth the humours from other parts of the body to itself; the interest of God and man are all swallowed up in the regard that men have to self-interest: and the love of God

and our neighbour is turned into self-love. But self is as annihilated in the confirmed Christian, so that it ruleth not his judgment, his affections, or his choice; and he that lived in and to himself, as if God and all the world were but for him, doth now live to God as one that is good for nothing else, and findeth himself in seeking him that is infinitely above himself.

2. And the weak Christian hath attained to so much self-denial, that self is not predominant in him against the love of God and his neighbour; but yet, above all other sins, too great a measure of selfishness still remaineth in him. These words, own, and mine, and self, are too significant with him; every thing of his own is regarded inordinately with partiality and too much selfishness. A word against himself, or an injury to himself, is more to him than worse against his brother: he is too little mindful of the glory of God, and of the public good, and the souls of others; and even when he is mindful of his own soul, he is too regardless of the souls of many, that, by prayer, or exhortation, or other means, he ought to help. As a small candle lighteth but a little way, and a small fire heateth not far off, so is his love so much confined that it reacheth not far from him: he valueth his friends too much upon their respect to please himself, and loveth men too much as they are partial for him, and too little upon the pure account of grace, and their love to Christ and serviceableness to the Church. He easily overvalueth his own abilities, and is too confident of his own understanding, and apt to have too high conceits of any

opinions that are his own; he is too apt to be tempted unto uncharitableness against those that cross him in his interest or way: he is apt to be too negligent in the work of God, when any self-interest doth stand against it; and too much to seek himself, his own esteem, or his own advantage, when he should devote himself to the good of souls, and give up himself to the work of God. Though he is not like the hypocrite that preferreth himself before the will of God and the common good, yet selfishness greatly stoppeth, interrupteth, and hindereth him in God's work: and any great danger, or loss, or shame, or other concernment of his own, doth seem a greater matter to him, and oftener turneth him out of the way, than it will a confirmed Christian. They were not all hypocrites that Paul speaketh of in that sad complaint, 'For I have no man like-minded (to Timothy) who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's;' that is, they too much seek their own, and not entirely enough the things that are Christ's; which Timothy did naturally, as if he had been born to it, and grace had made the love of Christ, and the souls of men, and the good of others, as natural to him as the love of himself. Alas, how loudly do their own distempers and unhappy miscarriages, and the divisions and calamities of the Church, proclaim, that the weaker sort of Christians have yet too much selfishness, and that self-denial is lamentably imperfect in them.

3. But in the seeming Christian selfishness is still the predominant principle: he loveth God but for

himself, and he never had any higher end than self. All his religion, his opinions, his practice is animated by self-love and governed by it, even by the love of carnal self. Self-esteem, self-conceitedness, self-love, self-willedness, self-seeking, and self-saving are the constitution of his heart and life. He will be of that opinion, and way, and party in religion, which selfishness directeth him to choose : he will go no farther in religion than self-interest and safety will allow him to go. He can change his friend, and turn his love into hatred, and his praises into reproach, whenever self-interest shall require it. He can make himself believe, and labour to make others believe, that the wisest and holiest servants of God are erroneous, humorous, hypocrites, and unsufferable, if they do but stand cross to his opinions and interest. For he judgeth of them, and loveth or hateth them, principally as they conform to his will and interest, or as they are against it. As the godly measure all persons and things by the will and interest of God, so do all ungodly men esteem them as they stand in reference to themselves. When their factious interests required it, the Jews, and specially the Pharisees, could make themselves and others believe that the Son of God himself was a breaker of the law, and an enemy to Cæsar, and a blasphemer, and unworthy to live on the earth ; and that Paul was a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the people, and a ring-leader of a sect, and a profaner of the temple. And which of the prophets and apostles did they not persecute ? Because Christ's doctrine doth cross the

interest of selfish men, therefore the world doth so generally rise up against it with indignation, even as a country will rise against an invading enemy; for he cometh to take away that which is dearest to them,—as it is said of Luther, that he meddled with the pope's crown and the friars' bellies, and therefore no wonder if they swarmed all about his ears. Selfishness is so general and deeply-rooted, that (except with a few self-denying saints) self-love and self-interest ruleth the world: and if you would know how to please a graceless man, serve but his carnal interest, and you have done it. Be of his opinion, (or take on you to be so,) applaud him, admire him, flatter him, obey him, promote his preferment, honour and wealth, be against his enemies,—in a word, make him your God, and sell your soul to gain his favour, and so it is possible you may gain it.

XVI. 1. A Christian indeed hath so far mortified the flesh, and brought all his senses and appetite into subjection to sanctified reason, as that there is no great rebellion or perturbation in his mind; but a little matter,—a holy thought, or a word from God,—doth presently rebuke and quiet his inordinate desires. The flesh is as a well-broken and well-ridden horse, that goeth on his journey obediently and quietly, and not with striving, and chafing, and vexatious resisting: though still flesh will be flesh, and will be weak, and will fight against the spirit, so that we cannot do all the good we would; yet, in the confirmed Christian it is so far tamed and subdued, that its rebellion is much

less, and its resistance weaker, and more easily overcome. It causeth not any notable unevenness in his obedience, nor blemishes in his life: it is no other than consisteth with a readiness to obey the will of God. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof: they run not as uncertainly; they fight not as one that beateth the air: but they keep under their bodies, and bring them into subjection, lest by any means they should be castaways. They put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' As we see to a temperate man how sweet and easy temperance is, when, to a glutton or drunkard, or riotous liver, it is exceeding hard; so it is in all other points with a confirmed Christian. He hath so far crucified the flesh that it is as dead to its former lusts; and so far mastered it that it doth easily and quickly yield: and this maketh the life of such a Christian not only pure, but very easy to him in comparison of other men's. Nay, more than this, he can use his sense (as he can use the world, the objects of sense) in subserviency to faith and his salvation. His eye doth but open a window to his mind to hold and admire the Creator in his work; his taste of the sweetness of the creatures is but a means, by which the sweeter love of God doth pass directly to his heart; his sense of pleasure is but the passage of spiritual holy pleasure to his mind; his sense of bitterness and pain is but the messenger to tell his heart of the bitterness and vexatiousness of sin. As God, in the creation of us, made our senses but



as the inlet and passage for himself into our minds, (even as he made all the creatures to represent him to us by this passage,) so grace doth restore our very senses to this their holy original use; that the goodness of God, through the goodness of the creature, may pass to our hearts, and be the effect and end of all.

2. But for the weak Christian, though he have mortified the deeds of the body by the Spirit, and lives not after the flesh, but is freed from its captivity; yet hath he such remnants of concupiscence and sensuality as make it a far harder matter to him to live in temperance, and deny his appetite, and govern his senses, and restrain them from rebellion and excess. He is like a weak man upon an ill-ridden headstrong horse, who hath much ado to keep his saddle and keep his way. He is stronglier inclined to fleshly lusts, or excess in meat, or drink, or sleep, or sports, or some such fleshly pleasure, than the mortified temperate person is, and therefore is oftener guilty of some excess: so that his life is a very tiresome conflict, and very uneasy to himself; because the less the flesh is mortified, the more able it is to raise perturbations, and to put faith and reason to a continual fight. And most of the scandals and blemishes of his life arise from hence, even the successes of the flesh against the spirit; so that though he live not in any gross or wilful sins, yet, in lesser measures of excess he is too frequently overtaken. How few there be that, in meat and sleep, do not usually exceed their measure! And they are easily tempted to libertine opinions, which

indulge the flesh, having a weaker preservative against them than stronger Christians have.

3. But the seeming Christian is really carnal. The flesh is the predominant part with him, and the interest of the flesh is the ruling interest. He washeth away the outward filth, and, in hope of salvation, will be as religious as the flesh will give him leave, and will deny it in some smaller matters, and will serve it in a religious way, and not in so gross and impudent a manner as the Atheists and openly profane; but for all that he never conquered the flesh indeed, but seeketh its prosperity more than the pleasing of God and his salvation: and among prayers, and sermons, and holy conference, and books, yea, and formal fastings too, he is serving the flesh with so much the more dangerous impenitency by how much the more his cloak of formality hindereth him from discerning his sin. Many a one that is of unblemished reputation in religion, doth constantly serve his appetite in meat and drink (though without any notable excess), and his fleshly mind, in the pleasure of his dwelling, wealth, and accommodations, as much as some profane ones do, if not much more. And whenever it cometh to a parting trial, they will shew that the flesh was the ruling part, and will venture their souls to secure its interest.

XVII. 1. Hence it followeth that a Christian indeed preferreth the means of his spiritual benefit and salvation incomparably before all corporeal commodities and pleasures. He had rather dwell under the teaching and guidance of an able experienced

pastor, though it be cross to his prosperity and worldly gain, than to live under an ignorant or dead-hearted preacher, when it furthereth his trading, or more accommodateth his flesh; though yet he must not remove when God layeth any restraint upon him, by his duty to his family or others. He had rather, if he be a servant, dwell in a family where he may do or receive most spiritual good, than in a carnal family where he may have more ease, and better fare, and greater wages. If he be to marry, he had rather have one that hath wisdom and piety without wealth, than one that hath riches without wisdom and piety. He is gladder of an opportunity (in public or private) for the profit of his soul, than of a feast, or a good bargain, or an opportunity for some gain in worldly things.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same mind in the main. He valueth mercies and helps for his soul above those for his body; but it is with less zeal and more indifferency, and therefore he is more easily and often drawn to the omitting of spiritual duties and neglect of spiritual helps and mercies, and goeth to them with more averse-ness, and as driven by necessity, and is much less sensible of his loss when he misseth any such spiritual helps.

3. But the seeming Christian, being a real worldling, doth serve God and mammon; and mammon with the first and best. He had rather miss a sermon than a good bargain or commodity; he had rather dwell where he may thrive best, or have most

ease and pleasure, than where he may find the greatest helps for heaven. He will be religious, but it must be with an easy, and a pleasant, and merry religion; which may not be too niggardly with his flesh, nor use it too strictly, unless when one day's austerity may procure him an indulgence for his liberty all the week following. He will make his bargain with Christ so as to be sure that he may not lose by him: and he will not believe that God is pleased with that which is much displeasing to his flesh.

XVIII. 1. The Christian indeed is one that is 'crucified to the world, and the world is as a crucified thing to him.' He hath overcome the world by faith, and followeth Christ in the pursuit of it to a perfect conquest. He hath seen through all its vanity, and foreseen what it will prove at last: he hath found that it cannot quiet conscience, nor reconcile the guilty soul to God, nor save it from his consuming wrath; nor serve instead of God or heaven, of Christ or grace; but will cast off its servants in their last extremity, naked and and desolate, into remediless despair; and therefore he is resolvedly at a point with all things under the sun. Let them take the world for their portion and felicity that will; for his part, he accounteth all things in it dung and dross in comparison of Christ and things eternal. All the preferments, and honours, and command, and wealth, and greatness of the world, do not seem to him a bait considerable enough to make a wise man once question whether he should persevere in faithfulness

to God, or to tempt him to commit one wilful sin. He would not speak, or own a lie, or approve the sin of any other, for all that worldlings enjoy in their greatest prosperity while they live. He accounteth his peace with God and conscience, and his communion with Christ in the greatest poverty, to be incomparably better than all the pleasures and commodities of sin; yea, the very reproach of Christ is better to him than all the treasures of court or country. Grace hath mortified and annihilated the world to him; and that which is dead and nothing, can do nothing with him against God and his soul. He looketh on it as a carrion, which dogs may love and fight for; but is unfit to be the food of man. He is going to the land of promise; and therefore will not contend for an inheritance in this howling wilderness. Whether he be high or low, rich or poor, are so small a part of his concerns, that he is almost indifferent to them, farther than as the interest of God and souls may accidentally be concerned in them. The world, set against God, and heaven, and holiness, doth weigh no more in his estimation than a feather that is put in the balance against a mountain, or all the world. He feeleth no great force in such temptations as would draw him to win the world and lose his soul. His eye and heart are where his God and treasure is—above; and worldly wealth and greatness are below him, even under his feet. He thinketh not things temporal worth the looking at, in comparison of things eternal. He thinketh that their money and riches do deservedly

perish with them, who think all the money in the world to be a thing comparable with grace.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same judgment and resolution in the main ; but yet the world retaineth a greater interest in his heart : it grieveth him to lose it ; it is a stronger temptation to him. To deny all the preferments, and honours, and riches of it, seemeth a greater matter to him, and he doth it with more striving and less ease. Sometimes the respect of worldly things prevaieth with him, in lesser matters, to wound his conscience, and maketh work for repentance ; and he so entangleth himself in worldly cares, and prosperity tasteth so sweet with him, that grace even languisheth and falleth into a consumption, and almost into a swoon. So much do some such let out their hearts to the world which they renounced, and scrape for it with so much care and eagerness, and contend with others about their commodities and rights so earnestly, that they seem to the standers by to be as worldly as worldlings themselves are, and become a shame to their profession, and make ungodly persons say, ‘ Your godly professors are as covetous as any.’

3. But seeming Christians are the servants of the world. When they have learnt to speak hardliest of it, it hath their hearts. Heaven, as I said before, is valued but as a reserve, when they know they can keep the world no longer. They have more sweet and pleasing thoughts and speeches of the world than they have of God and the world to come. It hath most of their hearts when God

is most preferred by their tongues ; there it is that they are daily laying up their treasure, and they must leave it at the parting hour, when they go naked out as they came naked in. ‘The love of deceitful riches choketh the word of God, and it withereth in them, and becometh unfruitful.’ They go away sorrowful because of their beloved riches, when they should part with all for the hopes of heaven. Yea, though they are beggars, and never have a day’s prosperity in the world, for all that they love it better than heaven, and desire that which they cannot get. Because they have not an eye of faith to see that better world which they neglect, they take it for an uncertain thing : nor are their carnal natures suitable to it, and therefore they mind it not. When an hypocrite is at the best, he is but a religious worldling : the world is nearer to his heart than God is, but ‘pure religion keepeth a man unspotted of the world.’

XIX. 1. A confirmed Christian is one that still seeth the end in all that he doth, and that is before him in his way ; and looketh not at things as at the present they seem or relish to the flesh, or to short-sighted men ; but as they will appear and be judged of at last. The first letter maketh not the word, nor the first word the sentence, without the last. Present time is quickly past ; and therefore he less regardeth what things seem at present, than what they will prove to all eternity. When temptations offer him a bait to sin, with the present profit, or pleasure, or honour, he seeth at once the final shame : he seeth all worldly things as they are

seen by a dying man, and as after the general conflagration they will be. He seeth the godly, in his adversity and patience, as entering into his Master's joys: he seeth the derided, vilified saint, as ready to stand justified by Christ at his right hand, and the lies of the malicious world as ready to cover themselves with shame. He seeth the wicked, in the height of their prosperity, as ready to be cut down and withered, and their flesh to turn to dust, and their souls to stand condemned by Christ at his left hand, and to hear, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Therefore it is that he valueth grace, because he knoweth what it will be; and therefore it is that he flieth from sin, because he knoweth the terrors of the Lord, and what it will prove to the sinner in the end; and how sinners themselves will curse the day that ever they did commit it, and wish, when it is too late, that they had chosen the holiness and patience of the saints. And therefore it is that he pitieth rather than envieth the prosperous enemies of the church, because he foreseeeth what the 'end will be of them that obey not the gospel of Christ; and that if the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?' If the wicked unbelievers saw but the ending of all things as he doth, they would be all then of his mind and way. This putteth so much life into his prayers, his obedience, and patience, because he seeth the end in all.

2. And the weakest Christian doth the same in the main, so far as to turn his heart from things



temporal to things eternal ; and to resolve him in his main choice, and to conduct the course of his life towards heaven. But yet, in particular actions, he is often stopped in present things, and forgetfully loseth the sight of the end, and so is deluded and enticed into sin for want of seeing that which should have preserved him. He is like one that travelleth over hills and vallies, who, when he is upon the hills, doth see the place that he is going to, but, when he cometh into the vallies, it is out of his sight. Too oft doth the weak Christian think of things as they appear at the present, with little sense of the change that is near : when he seeth the baits of sin, whether riches, or beauty, or meat and drink, or any thing that is pleasing to the senses, the remembrance of the end doth not so quickly and powerfully work, to prevent his deceived imaginations, as it ought. And when poverty, or shame, or sufferings, or sickness, are presented to him, the foresight of the end is not so speedy and powerful in clearing his judgment, and settling his resolution, and preventing his misapprehension and trouble, as it ought. And hence come his oft mistakes and falls ; and herein consisteth much of that foolishness, which he confesseth when repentance bringeth him to himself.

3. But the seeming Christian hath so dim and doubtful a foresight of the end, and it is so frequently out of his mind, that things present do carry away his heart, and have the greatest power and interest with him, and are most regarded and sought after in this life, For he is purblind, not

thing to be judged of men, whether they justify or condemn him; because they are fallible and have not the power of determining any thing to his great commodity or detriment, nor is it their judgment by which he stands or falls. He hath a more dreadful or comfortable judgment to prepare for: man is of small account with him in comparison with God.

2. And though with the weakest true Christian it is so also as to the predominancy of God's esteem and interest in him, yet is his weakness daily visible in the culpable effects. Though God have the chiefest place in his esteem, yet man hath much more than his due. The thoughts and words of men seem to such of far greater importance than they should. Praise and dispraise, favours and injuries, are things which affect their hearts too much: they bear not the contempts and wrongs of men with so quiet and satisfied a mind as beseemeth those that live upon God. They have so small experience of the comforts of God in Christ, that they are tasting deeper of other delights, and spare them not so easily as they ought to do. God, without friends, or house, or land, or maintenance, or esteem in the world, doth not fully quiet them; but there is a deal of peevish impatience left in their minds, though it doth not drive them away from God.

3. But the seeming Christian can better take up with the world alone than with God alone. God is not so much missed by him as the world: he always breaks with Christ when it cometh to forsaking all. He is godly, notionally and professedly,

and, therefore, may easily say that God is his portion, and enough for those that put their trust in him: but his heart never consented truly to reduce these words to practice. When it comes to the trial, the praise or dispraise of man, and the prosperity or matters of the world, do signify more with him than the favour or displeasure of God, and can do more with him. Christ, and riches, and esteem, he could be content with; but he cannot away with a naked Christ alone. Therefore he is indeed a practical atheist, even when he seemeth most religious: for if he had ever taken God for his God indeed, he had certainly taken him as his portion, felicity, and all; and, therefore, as enough for him without the creature.

XXI. 1. From all this it followeth that a Christian indeed, hath, with himself, devoted all that he hath to God; and so all that he hath is sanctified. He is only in doubt oft times, in particular cases, what God would have him do with himself and his estate; but never in doubt whether they are to be wholly employed for God, in obedience to his will so far as he can know it: and, therefore, doth estimate every creature and condition purely as it relateth to God and life eternal. HOLINESS TO THE LORD, is written upon all that he hath and doth. He taketh it as sent from God; and useth it as his Master's goods and talents, not chiefly for himself, but for his Master's ends and will. God appeareth to him in the creature; and is the life, and sweetness, and glory of the creature to him. His first question in every business he undertaketh,

or every place or condition that he chooseth, is, How it conduceth to the pleasing of God and to his spiritual ends? 'Whether he eateth, or drinketh, or whatever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God.' The motto engraven on his heart is the name of God, with, 'OF HIM, and THROUGH HIM, and TO HIM, ARE ALL THINGS: TO HIM BE GLORY FOR EVER, AMEN. He liveth as a steward that useth not his own, though yet he have a sufficient reward for his fidelity: and he keepeth accounts both of his receivings and layings out; and reckoneth all to be worse than lost which he findeth not expended on his Lord's account. For himself, he asketh not that which is sweetest to the flesh, but that which is fittest to his end and work: and therefore desireth not riches for himself, but his daily bread, and food convenient for him; and, having food and raiment, is therewith content, having taken godliness for his gain. He asketh not for superfluity, nor for any thing to consume it on his lusts, nor to become provision for his flesh, to satisfy its inordinate desires: but, as a runner in his race, he desireth not any provisions which may hinder him: and, therefore, 'forgetting the things which are behind (the world which he hath turned his back upon), he reacheth forth to the things which are before (the crown of glory), and presseth toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus:' not turning an eye to any thing that would stop him in his course. Thus while he is employed about things below, his mind and conversation is heavenly and divine, while all

things are estimated and used purely for God and heaven.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have all this in desire, and be thus affected and resolved in the main, and liveth to God in the scope and course of his life, yet is too often looking aside, and valuing the creature carnally for itself; and oftentimes useth it for the pleasing of the flesh, and almost like a common man. His house, and land, and friends, and pleasures, are relished too carnally as his own accommodations: and though he walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, yet he hath too much of the fleshly taste, and is greatly out in his accounts with God, and turneth many a thing from his Master's use to the service of the flesh; and though he be not as the slothful, wicked servant, yet is it but little improvement that he maketh of his talent.

3. But the seeming Christian being carnal and selfish, while his notions and professions are spiritual and divine, and his selfish and fleshly interest being predominant, it must needs follow that he estimateth all things principally as they respect his fleshly interest, and useth them principally for his carnal self; even when in the manner he seemeth to use them most religiously, as I have said before; and so to the 'defiled nothing is pure.'

XXII. 1. A Christian indeed hath a promptitude to obey, and a ready compliance of his will to the will of God. He hath not any great averseness and withdrawing, and doth not the good which he doth with much backwardness and striving against.

it ; but, as in a well-ordered watch or clock the spring or poise easily sets all the wheels a going, and the first wheel easily moveth the rest, so is the will of a confirmed Christian presently moved, as soon as he knoweth the will of God. He stayeth not for other moving reasons : God's will is his reason. This is the habit of subjection and obedience, which makes him say, ' Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth ;' and ' Lord, what wouldst thou have me do ?' and ' Teach me to do thy will, O God.' ' I delight to do thy will, O God ; yea, thy law is within my heart.' The law written in our heart, is nothing else but the knowledge of God's laws, with this habit or promptitude to obey them ; the special fruit of the Spirit of grace.

2. But a weak Christian, though he loves God's will and way, and be sincerely obedient to him, yet, in many particulars, where his corruption contradicteth, hath a great deal of backwardness and striving of the flesh against the Spirit ; and there needs many words and considerations, and vehement persuasions, yea, and sharp afflictions, sometimes to bring him to obey ; and he is fain to drive on his backward heart, and hath frequent use for the rod and spur, and therefore is more slow and uneven in his obedience.

3. The seeming Christian is forward in those easy, cheaper parts of duty, which serve to delude his carnal heart, and quiet him in a worldly life ; but he is so backward to thorough, sincere obedience in the most flesh-displeasing parts of duty, that he is never brought to it at all ; but either

he will fit his opinions in religion to his will, and will not believe them to be duties, or else he will do something like them in a superficial, formal way; but the thing itself he will not do: for he is more obedient to his carnal mind and lusts than he is to God, and forwarder much to sacrifice than obedience.

XXIII. 1. A Christian indeed doth daily delight himself in God, and findeth more solid content and pleasure in his commands and promises than in all this world. His duties are sweet to him, and his hopes are sweeter; religion is not a tiresome task to him; the yoke of Christ is easy to him, and his burthen light, and his commandments are not grievous. That which others take as physic, for mere necessity against their wills, he goeth to as a feast, with appetite and delight. He prayeth because he loveth to pray; and he thinks and speaks of holy things because he loveth to do it: and hence it is that he is so much in holy duty, and so unwearied, because he loveth it, and taketh pleasure in it. As voluptuous persons are oft and long at their sports, or merry company, because they love them and take pleasure in them; so are Christians oft and long in holy exercises, because their hearts are set upon them as their recreation and the way and means of their felicity. If it be a delight to a studious man to read those books which most clearly open the abstrusest mysteries of the sciences; or to converse with the most wise and learned men, and if it be a delight to men to converse with their dearest friends, or to hear from them and read their

letters ; no marvel if it be a delight to a Christian indeed to read the gospel mysteries of love, and to find there the promises of everlasting happiness, and to see in the face of Jesus Christ the clearest image of the eternal deity, and foresee the joys which he shall have for ever. He sticketh not in superficial formality, but, breaking the shell, doth feed upon the kernel. It is not bare external duty which he is taken up with ; nor any mere creature that is his content ; but it is God in creatures and ordinances that he seeketh and liveth upon, and therefore it is that religion is so pleasant to him. He would not change his heavenly delights, which he findeth in the exercise of faith, and hope, and love to God, for all the carnal pleasures of this world. He had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents or palaces of wickedness. A day in God's courts is better to him than a thousand in the court of the greatest prince on earth. He is not a stranger to that joy in the Holy Ghost, in which the kingdom of God doth in part consist. ' In the multitude of his thoughts within him, the comforts of God do delight his soul.' ' His meditation of God is sweet, and he is glad in the Lord.' The freest and sweetest of his thoughts and words run out upon God and the matters of salvation. The word of God is sweeter to him than honey, and better than thousands of gold and silver. And because ' his delight is in the law of the Lord,' therefore doth he ' meditate in it day and night.' He seeth great reason for all those commands, ' Rejoice evermore : ' ' Let the



righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice ;' ' Be glad in the Lord and rejoice ye righteous ; and shout for joy all that are upright in heart.' He is sorry for the poor unhappy world, that have no better things than meat, and drink, and clothes, and house, and land, and money, and lust, and play, and domineering over others, to rejoice in : and heartily he wisheth that they had but a taste of the saints' delights, that it might make them turn from their grovelling, unclean, unsatisfactory pleasures. One look to Christ, one promise of the gospel, one serious thought of the life which he must live with God for ever, doth afford his soul more solid comfort than all the kingdoms on earth can afford. And though he live not continually in these high delights, yet peace with God, and peace of conscience, and some delight in God and godliness, is the ordinary temperature of his soul, and higher degrees are given him in season for his cordials and his feasts.

2. But the weak Christian hath little of these spiritual delights: his ordinary temper is to apprehend that God and his ways are indeed most delectable : his very heart acknowledgeth that they are worthiest and fittest to be the matter of his delights ; and if he could attain assurance of his special interest in the love of God, and his part in Christ and life eternal, he would then rejoice in them indeed, and would be gladder than if he were Lord of all the world. But, in the mean time, either his fears and doubts are damping his delights, or else (which is much

worse) his appetite is dull, and God and holiness relish not with him half so sweetly as they do with the confirmed Christian ; and he is too busy in tasting of fleshly and forbidden pleasures, which yet more deprave his appetite, and dull his desires to the things of God ; so that though in his estimation, choice, resolution, and endeavour, he much preferreth God before the world ; yet, as to any delightful sweetness in him, it is but little that he tasteth. He loveth God with a desiring love, and with a seeking love, but with very little of a delighting love. The remnant of corrupt and alien affections do weaken his affections to the things above ; and his infant measure of spiritual life, conjunct with many troublesome diseases, allow him very little of the joy of the Holy Ghost. Nay, perhaps he hath more grief, and fear, and doubts, and trouble, and perplexity of mind, than ever he had before he turned unto God ; and perhaps he hath yet less pleasure in God than he had before in sin and sensuality. Because he had his sin in a state of fruition, but he hath God only in a seeking, hoping state : he had the best of sin, and all that it will ever afford him ; but he hath yet none of the full felicity which he expecteth in God : the fruition of him is yet but in the prospect of hope. His sensual, sinful life was in its maturity, and the object present in its most alluring state : but his spiritual life of faith and love is yet only in its weak beginnings, and the object absent from our sight. He is so busy at first in blowing up his little spark, not knowing whether the fire will kindle or go out, that he hath

little of the use or pleasure either of its light or warmth. Infants come crying into the world, and afterwards oftener cry than laugh : their senses and reason are not yet perfected, or exercised to partake of the pleasures of life. And when they do come to know what laughter is, they will laugh and cry almost in a breath : and those weak Christians that do come to taste of joy and pleasure in their religious state, it is commonly but as a flash of lightning, which leaveth them as dark as they were before. Sometimes in the beginning, upon their first apprehensions of the love of God in Christ, and of the pardon of their sins, and the privileges of their new condition, and the hopes of everlasting joy, their hearts are transported with unspeakable delight ; which is partly from the newness of the thing, and partly because God will let them have some encouraging taste to draw them further, and to convince them of the difference between the pleasures of sin and the comforts of believing. But these first rejoicings soon abate, and turn into a life of doubts, and fears, and griefs, and care, till they are grown to greater understanding, experience, and settledness in the things of God : the root must grow greater and deeper before it will bear a greater top. Those Christians that, in the weakness of grace, have frequent joys, are usually persons whose weak and passionate nature doth occasion it ; some, women especially, that have strong phantasies and passions are always passionately affected with whatsoever they apprehend ; and these are like a ship that is tossed in a tempest, that is one while

lifted up as to the clouds, and presently cast down as into an infernal gulf: they are one day in great joy, and quickly after in as great perplexity and sorrow; because their comforts or sorrows do follow their present feeling, or mutable apprehensions. But when they come to be confirmed Christians, they will keep a more constant judgment of themselves, and their own condition, and constantly see their grounds of comfort; and when they cannot raise their souls to any high and passionate joys, they yet walk in a settled peace of soul, and in such competent comforts, as make their lives to be easy and delightful, being well pleased and contented with the happy condition that Christ hath brought them to, and thankful that he hath not left them in those foolish, vain, pernicious pleasures, which were the way to endless sorrows.

3. But the seeming Christian seeketh and taketh up his chief contentment in some carnal thing. If he be so poor and miserable as to have nothing in possession that can much delight him, he will hope for better days hereafter, and that hope shall be his chief delight: or, if he have no such hope, he will be without delight, and shew his love to the world and flesh, by mourning for that which he cannot have, as others do in rejoicing in what they do possess; and he will, in such a desperate case of misery, be such to the world as the weak Christian is to God, who hath a mourning and desiring love when he cannot reach to an enjoying and delighting love. His carnal mind most savoureth the things of the flesh, and therefore in them he findeth or

seeketh his chief delights ; though yet he may have also a delight in his superficial kind of religion, his hearing, and reading, and praying, and in his ill-grounded hopes of life eternal : but all this is but subordinate to his chiefest earthly pleasure. ‘ Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God : they ask of me the ordinances of justice ; they take delight in approaching unto God.’ And yet all this was subjected to a covetous, oppressing mind. ‘ He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it ; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while ; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.’ Whereby it appeareth that his love to the word was subjected to his love to the world.

OBJ. But there are those who seem to have no fleshly delights at all, and yet are not in the way to salvation : *viz.*, some of the religious orders of the papists, who afflict their flesh. ANS. Some of them undergo their fastings and penance for a day, that they may sin the more quietly all the week after ; and some of them proudly comfort themselves with the fancies and conceit of being and appearing more excellent in austerity than others ; and all these take up with a carnal sort of pleasure. As proud persons are pleased with their own or others’ conceits of their beauty, or wit, or worldly greatness ; so prouder persons are pleased with their own and others’ conceits of their holiness : and

verily they have their reward. But those of them that place their chiefest happiness in the love of God, and the eternal fruition of him in heaven, and seek this sincerely according to their helps and power, though they are misled into some superstitious errors, I hope I may number with those that are sincere; notwithstanding all their errors and the ill effects of them.

XXIV. 1. A confirmed Christian doth ordinarily discern the sincerity of his own heart, and, consequently, hath some well-grounded assurance of the pardon of his sins, and of the favour of God, and of his everlasting happiness; and, therefore no wonder if he live a peaceable and joyful life. For his grace is not so small as to be undiscernible, nor is it as a sleepy buried seed or principle, but it is almost in continual act; and they that have a great degree of grace; and also keep it in lively exercise, do seldom doubt of it. Besides that they blot not their evidence by so many infirmities and falls, they are more in the light, and have more acquaintance with themselves, and more sense of the abundant love of God, and of his exceeding mercies, than weak Christians have; and therefore must needs have more assurance. They have boldness of access to the throne of grace, without irreverent contempt; they have more of the spirit of adoption, and therefore more childlike confidence in God, and can call him Father with greater freedom and comfort than any others can. 'And we know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness.'

2. But the weak Christian hath so small a degree of grace, and so much corruption, and his grace is so little in action, and his sin so much, that he seldom, if ever, attaineth to any well-grounded assurance, till he attain to a greater measure of grace. He differeth so little from the seeming Christian, that neither himself nor others do certainly discern the difference. When he searcheth after the truth of his faith, and love, and heavenly mindedness, he findeth so much unbelief and averseness from God, and earthly-mindedness, that he cannot be certain which of them is predominant; and whether the interest of this world, or that to come, do bear the sway: so that he is often in perplexities and fears, and more often in a dull uncertainty. And if he seem at any time to have assurance, it is usually but an ill-grounded persuasion of the truth: though it be true which he apprehendeth, when he taketh himself to be the child of God, yet it is upon unsound reasons that he judgeth so, or else upon sound reasons weakly and uncertainly discerned; so that there is commonly much of security, presumption, fancy, or mistake, in his greatest comforts. He is not yet in a condition fit for full assurance, till his love and obedience be more full.

3. But the seeming Christian cannot possibly in that estate, have either certainty, or good probability that he is a child of God, because it is not true. His seeming certainty is merely self-deceit, and his greatest confidence is but presumption, because the Spirit of Christ is not within him, and therefore he is certainly none of his.

XXV. 1. The assurance of a confirmed Christian doth increase his alacrity and diligence in duty, and is always seen in his more obedient, holy, fruitful life. The sense of the love and mercy of God is as the rain upon the tender grass. He is never so fruitful, so thankful, so heavenly, as when he hath the greatest certainty that he shall be saved: the love of God is then shed abroad upon his heart by the Holy Ghost, which maketh him abound in love to God. He is more 'stedfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord,' when he is most certain that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

2. But the weak Christian is unfit yet to manage assurance well; and therefore it is that it is not given him: graces must grow proportionably together. If he be but confidently persuaded that he is justified and shall be saved, he is very apt to gather some consequence from it that tendeth to security and to the remitting of his watchfulness and care. He is ready to be the bolder with sin, and stretch his conscience, and omit some duties, and take more fleshly liberty and ease, and think, 'Now I am a child of God I am out of danger, I am sure I cannot totally fall away.' And though his judgment conclude not, 'Therefore I may venture further upon worldly, fleshly pleasures, and need not be so strict and diligent as I was;' yet his heart and practice thus conclude. And he is most obedient when he is most in fear of hell; and he is worst in his heart and life when he is most confident that all his danger is past.



8. But the seeming Christian, though he have no assurance, is hardened in his carnal state by his presumption. Had he but assurance to be saved without a holy life, he would cast off that very image of godliness which he yet retaineth. The conceit of his own sincerity and salvation is that which deludeth and undoeth him. What sin would not gain, or pleasure draw him to commit, if he were but sure to be forgiven? It is fear of hell that causeth that seeming religion which he hath: and therefore if that fear be gone, all is gone; and all his piety, and diligence, and righteousness is come to nought.

XXVI. 1. For all his assurance, a confirmed Christian is so well acquainted with his manifold imperfections, and daily failings, and great unworthiness, that he is very low and vile in his own eyes; and, therefore, can easily endure to be low and vile in the eyes of others. He hath a constant sense of the burden of his remaining sin; especially he doth even abhor himself when he findeth the averseness of his heart to God, and how little he knoweth of him, and how little he loveth him in comparison of what he ought, and how little of heaven is upon his heart, and how strange and backward his thoughts are to the life to come. These are as fetters upon his soul: he daily groaneth under them as a captive, that he should be yet so carnal and unable to shake off the remnant of his infirmities, as if he were sold under sin, that is, in bondage to it. He hateth himself more for the imperfections of his love and obedience to God

than hypocrites do for their reigning sin. And O how he longeth for the day of his deliverance ! He thinketh it no great injury for another to judge of him as he judgeth of himself, even to be less than the least of all God's mercies : he is more troubled for being over-praised and over-valued than for being dispraised and vilified ; as thinking those that praise him are more mistaken, and lay the more dangerous snare for his soul. For he hath a special antipathy to pride ; and wondereth that any rational man can be so blind as not to see enough to humble him : for his own part, in the midst of all God's graces, he seeth in himself so much darkness, imperfection, corruption, and want of further grace, that he is loathsome and burdensome continually to himself. If you see him sad or troubled, and ask him the cause, it is ten to one but it is himself that he complaineth of. The frowardest wife, the most undutiful child, the most disobedient servant, the most injurious neighbour, the most malicious enemy, is not half so great a trouble to him as he is to himself. He prayeth abundantly more against his own corruption than against any of these. O could he but know and love God more, and be more in heaven, and willing to die, and freer from his own distempers, how easily could he bear all crosses, or injuries from others ! He came to Christ's school as a little child, and still he is little in his own esteem : and therefore disesteem and contempt from others are no great matter with him. He thinks it can be no great wrong that is done against so poor a worm, and so unworthy a

sinner as himself, except as God or the souls of men may be interested in the cause. He heartily approveth of the justice of God in abhorring the proud; and hath learned that Christians are 'in honour to prefer one another.' 'Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.'

2. But the remnant of pride is usually the most notable sin of the weak Christian: though it reigneth not, it foully blemisheth him. He would fain be taken for some body in the church: he is ready to step up into a higher room, and to think himself wiser and better than he is. If he can but speak confidently of the principles of religion, and some few controversies which he hath made himself sick with, he is ready to think himself fit to be a preacher. He looketh through a magnifying glass upon all his own performances and gifts; he loveth to be valued and praised; he can hardly bear to be slighted and dispraised, but is ready to think hardly of those that do it, if not to hate them in some degree. He loveth not to be found fault with, though it be necessary to his amendment; and though all this vice of pride be not so predominant in him as to conquer his humility, yet doth it much obscure and interrupt it: and though he hate this his pride, and strive against it, and lamenteth it before God, yet still it is the sorest ulcer in his soul: and should it prevail and overcome him, he would be abhorred of God, and it would be his ruin.

3. But in the hypocrite pride is the reigning sin; the praise of men is the air which he liveth in; he

was never well acquainted with himself, and never felt aright the burden of his sins and wants ; and therefore cannot bear contempt from others. Indeed, if his corrupt disposition turn most to the way of covetousness, tyranny, or lust, he can the easier bear contempt from others, as long as he hath his will at home ; and he can spare their love if he can be but feared and domineer. But still his pride is predominant ; and when it affecteth not much the reputation of goodness, it affecteth the name of being rich or great. Sin may make him sordid, but grace doth not make him humble. Pride is the vital spirit of the corrupted state of man.

XXVII. 1. A confirmed Christian is acquainted with the deceitfulness of man's heart, and the particular corrupt inclinations that are in it, and especially with his own ; and he is acquainted with the wiles and methods of the tempter, and what are the materials which he maketh his baits of, and what is the manner in which he spreadeth his nets. He seeth always some snares before him ; and what company soever he is in, or what business soever he is about, he walketh as among snares which are visible to his sight ; and it is part of his business continually to avoid them. He liveth in a continual watch and warfare ; he can resist much stronger and more subtile temptations than the weak can do ; he is always armed, and knoweth what are the special remedies against each particular snare and sin ; and he carrieth always his antidotes about him, as one that liveth in an infectious world, and

in the midst of a froward and perverse generation, from which he is charged to save himself.

2. And the weak Christian is a soldier in the army of Christ, and is engaged in striving against sin ; and really taketh the flesh and world, as well as the devil, to be his enemies ; and doth not only strive, but conquer in the main. But yet, alas ! how poorly is he armed ; how unskilfully doth he manage his Christian armour ; how often is he foiled and wounded ; how many a temptation is he much unacquainted with ; and how many a snare doth lie before him which he never did observe ? And oft he is overcome in particular temptations when he never perceiveth it, but thinks that he hath conquered.

3. But the hypocrite is fast ensnared when he glorieth most of his integrity, and is deceived by his own heart, and thinketh he is something when he is nothing. When he is thanking God that he is not as other men, he is rejoicing in his dreams, and sacrificing for the victory which he never obtained. He is led by Satan captive at his will, when he is boasting of his uprightness ; and hath a beam of covetousness, or pride, or cruelty, in his own eye while he is reviling or censuring another for the mote of some difference about a ceremony or tolerable opinion. And usually such grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

XXVIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that hath deliberately counted what it may cost him to follow Christ and to save his soul ; and, knowing that suffering with Christ is the way to our reigning

with him, he hath fully consented to the terms of Christ. He hath read in the Gospel, that 'bearing the cross and forsaking all' is necessary to those that will be Christ's disciples; and accordingly in resolution he hath forsaken all, and looketh not for a smooth and easy way to heaven. He considereth that all 'that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution,' and that 'through many tribulations we must enter into heaven;' and, therefore, he taketh it not for a strange or unexpected thing if the fiery trial come upon him. He doth not wonder at the unrighteousness of the world, as if he expected reason, or honesty, justice, or truth, or mercy in the enemies of Christ and the instruments of Satan. He will not bring his action against the devil for unjustly afflicting him; he will rather turn the other cheek to him that smiteth him, than he will hinder the good of any soul by seeking right; much less will he exercise unjust revenge: though, where government is exercised for truth and righteousness, he will not refuse to make use of the justice of it to punish iniquity and discourage evil-doers; yet this is for God and the common good, and for the suppression of sin, much more than for himself. Suffering doth not surprise him as a thing unlooked for: he hath been long preparing for it, and it findeth him garrisoned in the love of Christ: yea, though his flesh will be as the flesh of others, sensible of the smart, and his mind is not senseless of the sufferings of his body, yet it is some pleasure and satisfaction to his soul to find himself in the common way to heaven, and to see the predictions

of Christ fulfilled, and to feel himself so far conformed to Jesus Christ his head, and to trace the footsteps of a humbled Redeemer in the way before him. As 'Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh,' so doth the Christian 'arm himself with the same mind.' He rejoiceth that he is made 'partaker of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, he may also be partaker of the exceeding joy : ' yea, he taketh the reproach of Christ for a treasure ; yea, a greater treasure than riches, or man's favour can afford. For he knoweth if he be reproached for the name or sake of Christ he is happy ; for thereby he glorifieth that God whom the enemy doth blaspheme, and so the Spirit of God, and of glory, resteth on him. He liveth and suffereth as one that from his heart believeth, that they are blessed that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for great is their reward in heaven. And 'they are blessed when men shall revile them and persecute them, and say all manner of evil against them falsely for Christ's sake.' In this 'they rejoice and are exceeding glad, as ' knowing that herein they are 'followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' If he be offered upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of God's elect, he can rejoice in it as having greater good than evil. He can suffer the loss of all things, and account them dung that he may 'win Christ, and be found in him, and know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.' Not out of surliness and pride doth he rejoice in sufferings ; as some do

that they may carry the reputation of holy and undaunted men, and seem to be far better and constanter than others. When pride maketh men suffer they are partly the devil's martyrs, though the cause be never so good; though it is much more ordinary for pride to make men suffer rejoicingly in an ill cause than in a good, the devil having more power on his own ground than on Christ's. But it is the love of Christ, and the belief of the reward, and the humble neglect of the mortified flesh, and the contempt of the conquered world, that maketh the Christian suffer with so much joy. For he seeth that the judge is at the door, and what torments the wicked are preparing for themselves; and that as certainly as there is a God that governeth the world, and that in righteousness, so certainly are his eyes upon the righteous, and his face is set against them that do evil. And though sinners do evil a hundred times, and scape unpunished, whilst their days are prolonged, yet vengeance will overtake them in due time. It shall be well with them that fear the Lord; he keepeth all the tears of his servants till the reckoning day. If then judgment begin at the house of God, and the righteous be saved through much suffering and labour, what shall be their end that obey not the Gospel, and 'where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?'

2. And the weak Christian is one that will forsake all for the sake of Christ, and suffer with him that he may be glorified with him, and will take his treasure in heaven for all. But he doth it not with the same easiness, and alacrity, and joy, as the



confirmed Christian doth. He hearkens more to the flesh which saith, 'Favour thyself:' suffering is much more grievous to him; and sometimes he is wavering, before he can bring himself fully to resolve and let go all.

3. But the seeming Christian looketh not for much suffering: he reads of it in the gospel, but he saw no probability of it, and never believed that he should be called to it in any notable degree: he thought it probable that he might well escape it; and therefore, though he agreed verbally to take Christ for better and worse, and to follow him through sufferings, he thought he should never be put to it. And indeed his heart is secretly resolved, that he will never be undone in the world for Christ: some reparable loss he may undergo; but he will not let go life and all. He will still be religious, and hope for heaven; but he will make himself believe (and others if he can) that the truth lieth on the safer side, and not on the suffering side; and that it is but for their own conceits and scrupulosity that other men suffer who go beyond them. Many good men, he says, are of his opinion, and therefore he may be good also in the same opinion, though he would never have been of that opinion if it had not been necessary to his escaping of sufferings. And thus, what flourish soever he maketh for a time, when persecution ariseth he is offended and withereth; unless he be so deeply engaged among the suffering party, that he cannot come off without perpetual reproach, and then perhaps pride will make him suffer more than the belief of heaven or

the love of Christ could do. And all this is because his very belief is unrooted and unsound, and he hath secretly at the heart a fear that if he should suffer death for Christ, he should be a loser by him, and he would not reward him, according to his promise, with everlasting life.

XXIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that followeth not Christ for company, nor holdeth his belief in trust upon the credit of any in the world; and therefore he would stick to Christ, if all that he knoweth or converseth with should forsake him. If the rulers of the earth should change their religion, and turn against Christ, he would not forsake him: if the multitude of the people turn against him; nay, if the professors of godliness should fall off, yet would he stand his ground and be still the same: if the learnedest men, and the pastors of the church, should turn from Christ, he would not forsake him; yea, if his nearest relations and friends, or even that minister that was the means of his conversion, should change their minds, and forsake the truth, and turn from Christ or a holy life, he would yet be constant and be still the same; and what Peter resolved on he would truly practise,— ‘ Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet would not I be offended: though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.’ And if he thought himself, as Elias did, left alone, yet would he not bow the knee to Baal. If he hear that this eminent minister falleth off one day, and the other another day, till all be gone, yet still the foundation of God standeth sure; he falleth not,

because he is built upon the rock. His heart saith, Alas ! whither shall I go, if I go from Christ ? Is there any other that hath the word and spirit of eternal life ? Can I be a gainer if I lose my soul ? He useth his teachers to bring him that light and evidence of truth, which dwelleth in him when they are gone ; and therefore, though they fall away, he falleth not with them.

2. And the weakest Christian believeth with a divine faith of his own, and dependeth more on God than man. But yet if he should be put to so great a trial, as to see all the pastors and Christians that he knoweth change their minds, I know not what he would do : for though God will uphold all his own whom he will save, yet he doth it by means and outward helps, together with his internal grace, and keepeth them from temptations when he will deliver them from evil : and therefore it is a doubt, whether there be not degrees of grace so weak, as would fail, in case the strongest temptations were permitted to assault them. A strong man can stand and go of himself, but an infant must be carried ; and the lame and sick must have others to support them. The weak Christian falleth, if his teacher or most esteemed company fall : if they run into an error, sect, or schism, he keeps them company. He groweth cold, if he have not warming company : he forgetteth himself, and letteth loose his sense and passion, if he have not some to watch over him and warn him. No man should refuse the help of others, that can have it ; and the best have need of all God's means : but the weak Christian needeth them

much more than the strong, and is much less able to stand without them.

3. But the seeming Christian is built upon the sand, and therefore cannot stand a storm. He is a Christian more for company, or the credit of man, or the interest that others have in him, or the encouragement of the times, than from a firm belief and love of Christ; and therefore falleth when his props are gone.

XXX. 1. A strong Christian can digest the hardest truths, and the hardest works of Providence. He seeth more of the reason and evidence of truths than others; and he hath usually a more comprehensive knowledge, and can reconcile those truths which short-sighted persons suspect to be inconsistent and contradictory: and when he cannot reconcile them, he knoweth they are reconcileable, for he hath laid his foundation well, and then he reduceth other truths to that, and buildeth them on it; and so he doth by the hardest providences. Whoever is high or low, whoever prospereth or is afflicted, however human affairs are carried, and all things seem to go against the church and cause of Christ, he knoweth yet that God is good to Israel, and that he is the righteous Judge of all the earth, and that the righteous shall have dominion in the morning, and it shall go well with them that fear the Lord: for he goeth into the sanctuary, and foreseeth the end.

2. But the weak Christian is very hard put to it, when he meeteth with difficult passages of Scripture, and when he seeth it go with the righteous according

to the work of the wicked, and with the wicked according to the work of the righteous. Though he is not overturned by such difficulties, yet his foot is ready to slip, and he digesteth them with much perplexity and trouble.

3. But the seeming, unsettled Christian is often overcome by them, and turneth away from Christ, and saith, These are hard sayings, or hard providences, who can bear them? And thus unbelief thence gathereth matter for its increase.

XXXI. 1. A Christian indeed is one that can exercise all God's graces in conjunction, and in their proper places and proportion, without setting one against another, or neglecting one while he is exercising another. He can be humbled without hindering his thankfulness and joy; and he can be thankful and joyful without hindering his due humility. His knowledge doth not destroy, but quicken his zeal: his wisdom hindereth not, but furthereth his innocency. His faith is a help to his repentance, and his repentance to his faith. His love to himself doth not hinder, but help his love to others; and his love to God is the end of both. He can mourn for the sins of the times, and the calamities of the Church, yea, for his own sins and imperfections, and yet rejoice for the mercies which he hath in possession or in hope. He findeth that piety and charity are necessarily conjunct; and every grace and duty is a help to all the rest: yea, he can exercise his graces methodically, which is the comeliness and beauty of his heart and life.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have every

grace, and his obedience is universal, yet can he hardly set himself to any duty, but it hindereth him from some other duty, through the narrowness and weakness of his mind. When he is humbling himself in confession of sin, he can scarce be lively in thankfulness for mercy: when he rejoiceth, it hindereth his humiliation; he can hardly do one duty without omitting or hindering another. He is either all for joy, or all for sorrow; all for love or all for fear, and cannot well do many things at once; but is apt to separate the truths and duties which God hath inseparably conjoined.

3. And for the seeming Christian, he exerciseth no grace in sincerity, nor is he universal in his obedience to God, though he may have the image of every grace and duty.

XXXII. 1. A Christian indeed is more in getting and using his graces, than in inquiring whether he have them. He is very desirous to be assured that he is sincere; but he is more desirous to be so: and he knoweth that even assurance is got more by the exercise and increase of grace than by bare inquiry whether we have it already. Not that he is a neglecter of self-examination; but he oftener asketh, What shall I do to be saved? than, How shall I know that I shall be saved?

2. But the weak Christian hath more of self, and less of God in his solicitousness. And though he be willing to obey the whole law of Christ, yet he is much more solicitous to know that he is out of danger, and shall be saved, than to be fully pleasing unto God; and therefore, proportionably, he

is more in inquiring by what marks he may know that he shall be saved, than by what means he may attain more holiness, and what diligence is necessary to his salvation.

3. But the seeming Christian is most careful how to prosper in the world, or please his flesh; and next, how he may be sure to escape damnation when he hath done; and, least of all, how he may be conformed to Christ in holiness.

XXXIII. 1. A Christian indeed doth study duty more than events; and is more careful what he shall be towards God, than what he shall have from God in this life. He looketh to his own part, more than unto God's, as knowing that it is he that is like to fail; but God will never fail of his part. He is much more suspicious of himself than of God; and when any thing goeth amiss, he blameth himself, and not God's providence. He knoweth that the hairs of his head are numbered, and that his Father knoweth what he needeth; and that God is infinitely wiser and fitter to dispose of him than he is to choose for himself; and that God loveth him better than he can love himself: and therefore he thankfully accepteth that easy indulgent command, — 'Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you: take no thought what you shall eat or drink, or wherewith you shall be clothed.'

2. But, alas! how guilty is the weak Christian of meddling with God's part of the work! How sinfully careful what will become of him, and of his family and affairs, and of the Church, as if he were afraid lest God should prove forgetful, unfaithful,

or insufficient for his work; so imperfect is his trust in God.

3. And the seeming Christian really trusteth him not at all, for any thing that he can trust himself or the creature for. He will have two strings to his bow if he can; but it is in man that he placeth his greatest trust, for any thing that man can do. Indeed, to save his soul, he knoweth none but God is to be trusted, and therefore his life is still preferred before his soul; and consequently man, whom he trusteth most with his life and prosperity, is really trusted before God, however God may have the name.

XXXIV. 1. A Christian indeed is much more studious of his own duty towards others, than of theirs to him. He is much more fearful of doing wrong, than of receiving wrong. He is more troubled if he say ill of others, than if others speak ill of him. He had far rather be slandered himself than slander others; or be censured himself than censure others; or be unjustly hurt himself than unjustly hurt another; or to be put out of his own possessions or right than to put another out of his. He is oftener and sharper in judging and reproving himself than others. He falleth out with himself more frequently than with others; and is more troubled with himself than with all the world besides. He taketh himself for his greatest enemy, and knoweth that his danger is most at home; and that if he can escape but from himself, no one in earth or hell can undo him. He is more careful of his duty to his prince, his parents, his pastor, or his



master, than theirs to him: he is much more unwilling to be disobedient to them in any lawful thing, or to dishonour them, than to be oppressed, or unjustly afflicted, or abused by them. And all this is, because he knoweth that sin is worse than present suffering, and that he is not to answer for other men's sins but for his own; nor shall he be condemned for the sins of any but himself; and that many millions are condemned for wronging others, but no one for being wronged by others.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same mind in the main; but with so much imperfection, that he is much more frequent in censuring others, and complaining of their wrongs, and finding fault with them, and aggravating all that is said or done against himself, when he is hardly made sensible of as great miscarriages in himself; as having much more uncharitableness, partiality, and selfishness, than a confirmed Christian hath. There are few things which weakness of grace doth more ordinarily appear in, than this partiality and selfishness in judging of the faults or duties of others and of his own. How apt are (not only hypocrites, but) weak Christians, to aggravate all that is done against them, and to extenuate or justify all that they do against another! Oh what a noise they make of it, if they think that any one hath wronged them, defamed them, disparaged them, or encroached on their right! If God himself be blasphemed or abused, they can more patiently bear it, and make not so great a matter of it. Who beareth of such angry complaints on God's behalf

as on men's own? of such passionate invectives, such sharp prosecutions, against those that wrong both God and men's souls, as against those that wrong a selfish person? (and usually every man seemeth to wrong him, who keepeth from him any thing which he would have, or saith any thing of him which is displeasing to him.) Go to the assizes and courts of justice; look into the prisons, and inquire whether it be zeal for God, or for men's selves, which is the plaintiff and prosecutor? and whether it be for wronging God or them that all the stir is made? Men are ready to say, God is sufficient to right himself; as if he were not the original and end of laws and government, and magistrates were not his officers, to promote obedience to Him in the world.

At this time, how universal is men's complaint against their governors! how common are the cries of the poor and sufferers, of the greatness of their burdens, miseries, and wants! But how few lament the sins against government, which this land hath been sadly guilty of! The pastors complain of the people's contempt; the people complain of the pastors' insufficiency and lives; the master complaineth how hard it is to get good servants, that will mind their business and profit, as if it were their own; servants complain of their masters for over-labouring them, or using them too hardly; landlords say that their tenants cheat them; and tenants say that their landlords oppress and grind them. But if you were Christians indeed, the commonest and saddest complaints would be against

yourselves: I am not so good a ruler, so peaceable a subject, so good a landlord, so good a tenant, so good a master, so good a servant, as I ought to be. Your ruler's sin, your subject's sin, your landlord's sin, your tenant's sin, your master's sin, your servant's sin, shall not be charged upon you in judgment, nor condemn you, but your own sin. How much more, therefore, should you fear, and feel, and complain, of your own than of theirs.

3. As for the seeming Christian, I have told you already that selfishness is his nature and predominant constitution; and according to self-interest he judgeth of almost all things,—of the faults and duties of others and himself; and therefore no man seemeth honest or innocent to him, who displeaseth him, and is against his worldly interest. Cross him about mine and thine, and he will beknave the honestest man alive, and call his ancient friend his enemy: but of his dealings with them he is not so scrupulous, nor so censorious of himself.

XXXV. 1. A Christian indeed is much taken up in the government of his thoughts, and hath them so much ordinarily in obedience, that God and his service, and the matters of his salvation, have the precedency in them; and his eye is fixed on his end and duty; and his thoughts refuse not to serve him for any work of God to which he calleth them. He suffereth them not to be the inlets or agents for pride, or lust, or envy, or voluptuousness, or to contrive iniquity; but if any such sparks from hell are cast into his thoughts, he presently laboureth to extinguish them: if they

intrude, he letteth them not lodge or dwell there. And though he cannot keep out all disorder or vanity, or inordinate delights, yet is it his endeavour, and he leaveth not his heart in any thing to itself.

2. The weak Christian also maketh conscience of his thoughts, and alloweth them not to be the inlets or servants of any reigning sin: but, alas! how imperfectly doth he govern them! what a deal of vanity and confusion is in them! how carelessly doth he watch them! how remissly doth he rebuke them, excite them and command them! how oft are they defiled with impurity and uncharitableness! and how little doth he repent of this, or endeavour to reform it! and little serviceable are his thoughts, to any high and heavenly work, in comparison of the confirmed Christian.

3. And the seeming Christian is very little employed about his thoughts; but leaveth them to be the servants of his pride and worldliness, or sensuality, or some reigning sin.

XXXVI. 1. A Christian indeed is much employed in the government of his passions; and hath so far mastered them, as that they prevail not to pervert his judgment, nor to discompose his heart so far as to interrupt much his communion with God, nor to ensnare his heart to any creature, nor to breed any fixed uncharitableness or malice in him, nor to cause his tongue to speak things injurious to God or man, to curse, or swear, or rail, or lie, nor yet to cause him to hurt and injure any in his heart; but when passion would be inordinate,

either in delights or desires, or anger, or grief, or fear, or hope, he flieth to his helps to suppress and govern them. (Though fear is more out of man's power than the rest, and therefore ordinarily hath less of sin.) He knoweth that Christ hath blessed the meek; and bid us learn of him to be 'meek and lowly;' and that 'a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.' It is, therefore, his care and course, to 'give place to wrath,' when others are angry; and 'if it be possible, as much as in him lieth, to live peaceably with all men;' yea to 'follow peace' when it flieth from him. And not when 'he is reviled to revile again,' nor to threaten or revenge himself on them that injure him. Reason and charity hold the reins, and passion is kept under: yea, it is used holily for God. Slow to anger he is in his own cause, and watchful over his anger even in God's cause.

2. But the weak Christian doth greatly shew his weakness, in his unruly passions, (if he have a temper of body disposed to passion.) They are oft rising, and not easily kept under; yea, and too often prevail with such unseemly words, as make him become a dishonour to his profession. Oft he resolveth, and promiseth and prayeth for help; and yet the next provocation sheweth how little grace he hath to hold the reins. And his passionate desires, and delights, and love, and sorrows, are oft as unruly as his anger, to the further weakening of his soul: they are like ague fits, that leave the health impaired.

3. And the seeming Christian hath much less

power over those passions, which must subserve his carnal mind. For anger, it dependeth much upon the temperature of the body; and if that incline him not strongly to it, his credit or common discretion may suppress it; unless you touch his chiefest carnal interest, and then he will not only be angry, but cruel, malicious, and revengeful. But his carnal love, and desire, and delight, which are placed upon that pleasure, or profit, or honour, which is his idol, are indeed the reigning passions in him; and his grief, and fear, and anger, are but the servants unto these.

XXXVII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that keepeth a constant government of his tongue. He knoweth how much duty or sin it will be the instrument of: according to his ability and opportunity, he useth it to the service and honour of his Creator, in speaking of his excellencies, his works and word; inquiring after the knowledge of him and his will; instructing others, and pleading for the truth and ways of God; and rebuking the impiety and iniquities of the world, as his place and calling doth allow him. He bridleth his tongue from uttering vanity, filthiness, ribaldry, foolish and uncomely talk, and jests; from rash and irreverent talk of God, and taking of his name in vain; from the venting of undigested and uncertain doctrines, which may prove erroneous and perilous to men's souls; from speaking imprudently, unhandsomely, or unseasonably about holy things, so as to expose them to contempt and scorn; from lying, censuring others without a warrantable ground and call; from

backbiting, slandering, false accusing, railing and reviling, malicious, envious, injurious speech, which tendeth to extinguish the love of the hearers to those he speaketh of; from proud and boasting speeches of himself, much more from swearing, cursing, and blasphemous speech, and opposition to the truths and holy ways of God, or opprobrious speeches, or derision of his servants. And, in the government of his tongue, he always beginneth with his heart; that he may understand and love the good which he speaketh of, and may hate the evil which his tongue forbeareth; and not hypocritically to force his tongue against or without his heart. His tongue doth not run before his heart, but is ruled by it.

2. But the weak Christian, though his tongue be sincerely subject to the laws of God, yet frequently miscarrieth, and blemisheth his soul by the words of his lips; being much oftener than the confirmed Christian overtaken with words of vanity, meddling, folly, imprudence, uncharitableness, wrath, boasting, venting uncertain or erroneous opinions, &c.; so that the unruliness of his tongue is the trouble of his heart, if not also of the family, and all about him.

3. The seeming Christian useth his tongue in the service of his carnal ends, and therefore alloweth it so much injustice, uncharitableness, falsehood, and other sins, as his carnal interest and desires require; but the rest, perhaps, he may suppress, especially if natural sobriety, good education, and prudence do assist him: and his tongue is always better than his heart.

XXXVIII. 1. The religious discourse of a confirmed Christian is most about the greatest and most necessary matters: heart-work and heaven-work are the usual employment of his tongue and thoughts: unprofitable controversies, and hurtful wranglings, he abhorreth; and profitable controversies he manageth sparingly, seasonably, charitably, peaceably, and with caution and sobriety, as knowing that the servant of the Lord must not strive, and that strife of words perverteth the hearers, and hindereth edifying. His ordinary discourse is about the glorious excellencies, attributes, relations, and works of God, and the mystery of redemption; the person, office, covenant, and grace of Christ; the renewing, illuminating, sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost; the mercies of this life, and that to come; the duty of man to God as his Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator; the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart; the methods of the tempter; the danger of particular temptations, and the means of our escape, and of our growth in grace; and how to be profitable to others, and especially to the Church. And if he be called to open any truth which others understand not, he doth it not proudly to set up himself as the master of a sect, or to draw disciples after him, nor make divisions about it in the Church, but soberly, to the edification of the weak. And though he be ready to defend the truth against perverse gainsayers in due season, yet doth he not turn his ordinary edifying discourse into disputes, or talk of controversies; nor hath such a proud pugnacious soul, as to



assault every one that he thinks erroneous, as a man that taketh himself for the great champion of the truth.

2. But the weak Christian hath a more unfruitful wandering tongue; and his religious discourse is most about his opinions or party, or some external thing, as which is the best preacher, or person, or book; or if he talk of any text of Scripture, or doctrine of religion, it is much of the outside of it; and his discourse is less feeling, lively, and experimental: yea, many a time he hindereth the more edifying, savoury discourse of others, by such religious discourse as is imprudent, impertinent, or turneth them away from the heart and life of the matter in hand. But especially his opinions, and distinct manner of worship, are the chief of his discourse.

3. And for the seeming Christian, though he can affectedly force his tongue to talk of any subject in religion, especially that which he thinks will most honour him in the esteem of the hearers; yet, when he speaketh according to the inclination of his heart, his discourse is first about his fleshly interests and concernments, and next to that of the mere externals of religion, as controversies, parties, and the several modes of worship.

XXXIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that so liveth upon the great substantial matters of religion, as not willingly to commit the smallest sin, nor to utter the smallest falsehood, nor to renounce or betray the smallest holy truth or duty, for any price that man can offer him. The works of repentance,

faith, and love, are his daily business, which take up his greatest care and diligence. Whatever opinions or controversies are afoot, his work is still the same: whatever changes come, his religion changeth not: he placeth not the kingdom of God in meats, and drinks, and circumstances, and ceremonies, either being for them or against them; but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: and he that in these things serveth Christ, as he is acceptable to God, so is he approved by such a Christian as this, however factious persons may revile him. The strong Christian can bear the infirmities of the weak, and not take the course that most pleaseth him, but that which pleaseth his neighbour for his good to edification. The essentials of religion, faith, and love, and obedience, are as bread and drink, the substance of his food. These he meditateth on, and these he practiseth, and according to these he esteemeth of others.

No price can seem sufficient to him to buy his innocency; nor will he wilfully sin, and say it is a little one, nor do evil that good may come by it; nor offer to God the sacrifice of disobedient fools, and then say, I knew not that I did evil: for he knoweth that God will rather have obedience than sacrifice, and that disobedience is as the sin of witchcraft. And he that breaketh one of the least commands, and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of God; and he that teacheth men to sin by the example of his own practice, can little expect to turn them from sin by his better instructions and exhortations. He that will deli-

berately sin in a small matter, doth set but a small price on the favour of God and his salvation. Wilful disobedience is odious to God, how small soever the matter be about which it is committed. Who can expect that he should stick at any sin, when his temptation is great, who will considerably commit the least, especially if he will approve and justify it? Therefore the sound Christian will rather forsake his riches, his liberty, his reputation, his friends, and his country, than his conscience; and rather lay down liberty, and life itself, than choose to sin against his God, as knowing that never man gained by his sin. The sin that Saul was rejected for seemed but a little thing, and the sin that Uzzah was slain for; and the service of God, even his sacrifice and his ark, were the pretence for both. The sin of the Bethshemites, of Achan, of Gehazi, of Ananias and Sapphira, which had grievous punishments, would seem but little things to us. And it is a great aggravation of our sin to be chosen, deliberate, justified, and fathered upon God, and to pretend that we do it for his service, for the worshipping of him, or the doing good to others; as if God would own and bless sinful means, or needed a lie to his service or glory; when he hateth all the workers of iniquity, and requireth only the sacrifices of righteousness. He abhorreth sacrifice from polluted hands; they are to him as the offering a dog; and he will ask, who hath required this at your hand? 'The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord.' 'It is not pleasing to him: all that eat thereof shall be polluted.' The preaching, the

praying, the sacraments of wilful sinners, especially when they choose sin as necessary to his service, are a scorn and mockery put upon the most Holy One; as if your servant should set dung and carrion before you on your table for your food: such offer Christ vinegar and gall to drink.

2. In all this, the weakest Christian that is sincere is of the same mind, saving that, in his ordinary course, he useth to place too much of his religion in controversies, and parties, and modes, and ceremonies (whether being for them or against them), and allow too great a proportion in his thoughts, and speech, and zeal, and practice; and hindereth the growth of his grace by living upon less edifying things, and turning too much from the more substantial nutriment.

3. And the seeming Christians are here of different ways. One sort of them place almost all their religion in pharisaical observation of little, external, ceremonial matters; as their washings, and fastings, and tythings, and formalities, and the traditions of the elders; or in their several opinions, and ways, and parties, which they call, 'being of the true church,' as if their sect were all the church: but living to God in faith and love, and in a heavenly conversation, and worshipping him in spirit and truth, they are utterly unacquainted with. The other sort are truly void of these essential parts of Christianity, in the life and power, as well as the former: but yet, being secretly resolved to take up no more of Christianity than will consist with their worldly prosperity and ends, when any sin seemeth

necessary to their preferment or safety in the world, their way is to pretend their high esteem of great matters, for the swallowing of such a sin as an inconsiderable thing; and then they extol those larger souls that live not upon circumstantialia, but upon the great and common truths and duties, and pity those men of narrow principles and spirits, who, by unnecessary scrupulosity, make sin of that which is no sin, and expose themselves to needless trouble. And they would make themselves and others believe that it is their excellency and wisdom to be above such trifling scruples: and all is because they never took God and heaven for their all, and therefore are resolved never to lose all for the hopes of heaven; and therefore to do that, whatever it be, which their worldly interest shall require, and not to be of any religion that will undo them.

And three great pretences are effectual means in this their deceit. One is because, indeed, there are a sort of persons that tythe mint and cummin, while they pass by the greatest matters of the law, and that are causelessly scrupulous, and make that to be a sin which indeed is no sin: and when such a scrupulous people are noted by their weakness, and under dishonour among wiser men, the hypocrite hath a very plausible pretence for his hypocrisy, in seeming only to avoid this ignorant scrupulosity, and taking all for such who judge not his sin to be a thing indifferent.

Another great shelter to the credit and conscience of this hypocrite is, the charity of the best, sincerest Christians, who always judge rigidly of themselves

and gently of others. They would rather die than wilfully choose to commit the smallest sin themselves; but if they see another commit it, they judge as favourably of it as the case will bear, and hope that he did it not knowingly or wilfully; for they are bound to hope the best till the worst be evident. This being the upright Christian's case, the hypocrite knoweth that he shall still have a place in the esteem and love of those charitable Christians, whose integrity and moderation maketh their judgments more valuable: and then for the judgment of God he will venture on it; and for the censures of weaker persons, who themselves are censured by the best for their censoriousness, he can easily bear them.

And another covert for the hypocrite in this case is, the different judgments of learned and religious men, who make a controversy of the matter: and what duty or sin is there that is not become a controversy? Yea, and among men otherwise well esteemed of, except in the essentials of religion. And if once it be a controversy, whether it be a sin or not, the hypocrite can say, I am of the judgment of such and such good, learned men.; they are very judicious, excellent persons, and we must not judge one another in controverted cases: though we differ in judgment, we must not differ in affection. And thus, because he hath a shelter for his reputation from the censures of men, by the countenance of such as accompany him in his sin, he is as quiet as if he were secured from the censures of the Almighty.

**XL. 1.** A Christian indeed, is one that highly valueth time. He abhorreth idleness, and all diversions which would rob him of his time, and hinder him from his work; he knoweth how much work he hath to do, and of what unspeakable consequence to his soul, if not also to others; he knoweth that he hath a soul to save or lose; a heaven to win; a hell to scape; a death and judgment to prepare for; many a sin to mortify, and many graces to get, and exercise, and increase; and many enemies and temptations to overcome; and that he shall never have more time of trial; but what is now undone, must be undone for ever. He knoweth how short and hasty time is, and also how uncertain; and how short many hundred years is to prepare for an everlasting state, if all were spent in the greatest diligence: and, therefore, he wondereth at those miserable souls that have time to spare, and waste in those fooleries which they call pastimes; even in stage-plays, cards, and dice, and long and tedious feasting, delights, compliments, idleness, and over-long or needless visits, or recreations. He marvelleth at the distraction or sottishness of those persons that can play, and prate, and loiter, and feast away precious hours, as if their poor unprepared souls had nothing to do, while they stand at the very brink of a dreadful eternity, and are so fearfully unready as they are. He taketh that person who would cheat him of his time, by any of these fore-named baits, to be worse to him than a thief that would take his purse from him by the highway. O precious time! how highly doth he value it when

he thinks of his everlasting state, and thinks what haste his death is making, and what reckoning he must make for every moment: what abundance of work hath he for every hour, which he is grieved that he cannot do! He hath a calling to follow, and he hath a heart to search, and watch, and study; and a God to seek and faithfully serve, and many to do good to; and abundance of particular duties to perform, in order to every one of these: but, alas! time doth make such haste away that many things are left undone, and he is afraid lest death will find him very much behindhand; and therefore he is up and doing, as one that hath use for every minute; and worketh while it is day, because he knoweth that the night is coming when none can work. Redeeming time is much of his wisdom and his work; he had rather labour in the house of correction than live the swinish life of idle and voluptuous gentlemen or beggars, that live to no higher end than to live, or to please their flesh; or to live as worldlings, that lose all their lives in the service of a perishing world. He knoweth how precious time will be ere long in the eyes of those that now make light of it, and trifle it away as a contemned thing, as if they had too much.

2. The weak Christian is of the same mind in the main: but when it cometh to particular practice he is like a weak or weary traveller, that goeth but slowly and maketh many a stop. Though his face is still heaven-wards he goeth but a little way in a day; he is too easily tempted to idle, or talk, or feast, or play away an hour unlawfully, so it be not



his ordinary course, and he do it but seldom : he taketh not the loss of an hour for so great a loss as the confirmed Christian doth ; he could sooner be persuaded to live, though not an idle and unprofitable, yet an easier, less profitable life. The world and the flesh have far more of his hours than they ought to have ; though his weakness tell him that he hath most need of diligence.

3. But the time of a seeming Christian is most at the service of his fleshly interest, and for that it is principally employed ; and for that he can redeem it, and grudge if it be lost. But as he liveth not to God, so he cannot redeem his time for God. He loseth it even when he seemeth to employ it best : when he is praying, or otherwise worshipping God, and doing that good which feedeth his false hopes, he is not redeeming his time in all this. While he is sleeping in security, and deluding his soul with a few formal words, and an image of religion, his time passeth on, and he is hurried away to the dreadful day, and his damnation slumbereth not.

XLI. 1. A Christian indeed is one whose very heart is set upon doing good ; as one that is made to be profitable to others, according to his ability and place, even as the sun is made to shine upon the world. He cannot be content to live idly or to labour unprofitably, or to get never so much for himself, and live in never so much plenty himself, unless he someway contribute to the good of others. Not that he grudgeth at the smallness of his talents, and lowness and obscurity of his place ; for he knoweth that God may dispose his creatures

and talents as he pleases, and that where much is given much is required : but what his Lord hath entrusted him with he is loth to hide, and willing to improve to his Master's use. He is so far from thinking that God is beholden to him for his good works, that he taketh it for one of his greatest mercies in the world that God will use him in doing any good. And he would take it for a very great suffering to be deprived of such opportunities, or turned out of service, or called to less of that kind of duty. If he were a physician, and denied liberty to practice, or a minister, and denied liberty to preach, it would far more trouble him that he is hindered from doing good, than that he is deprived of any profits or honours to himself. He doth not only comfort himself with the foresight of the reward ; but, in the very doing of good, he findeth so much pleasure, as maketh him think it the delightfulest life in the world ; and he looketh for most of his receivings from God, in a way of duty.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have the same disposition, is far less profitable in the world. He is more for himself, and less able to do good to others ; he wanteth either parts, or prudence, or zeal, or strength ; yea, he is oft like the infants and sick persons of a family, that are not helpful, but troublesome to the rest. They find work for the stronger Christians, to bear their infirmities, and watch them, and support and help them. Indeed as an infant is a comfort to the mother, through the power of her own love, even when she endureth the trouble of its crying and uncleanness, so weak

Christians are a comfort to charitable ministers and people ; we are glad that they are alive, but sadded often by their distempers.

3. The seeming Christian liveth to himself, and all his good works are done but for himself, to keep up his credit, or quiet his guilty conscience, and deceive himself with the false hopes of a reward, for that which his falseheartedness maketh to be his sin. If he be a man of learning and good parts, he may be very serviceable to the church ; but the thanks of that is due to God, and little to him, who seeketh himself more than God, or the good of others, in all that he doth.

XLII. 1. A Christian indeed doth truly love his neighbour as himself: he is not all for his own commodity ; his neighbour's profit or good name is as his own ; he feeleth himself hurt when his neighbour is hurt ; and if his neighbour prosper he rejoiceth as if he prospered himself ; though his neighbour be not united to him in the nearest bonds of Christianity or piety, yet he is not disregardful of the common unity of humanity. Love is the very soul of life.

2. But the love that is in weaker Christians, though it be sincere, is weak as they are, and mixed with too much selfishness, and with too much sourness and wrath. Little matters cause differences and fallings out. When it cometh to mine and thine, and their neighbours cross their interest or commodity, or stand in their way when they are seeking any preferment or profit to themselves, you shall see too easily, by their sourness and contention, how weak their love is.

3. But in the seeming Christian selfishness is so predominant, that he loveth none but for himself with any considerable love; all his kindness is from self-love, because men love him, or highly value him, or praise him, or have done him some good turn, or may do him good hereafter, or the like. If he hath any love to any for their own worth, yet self-love can turn all that to hatred if they seem against him, or cross him in his way; for no man that is a lover of the world, and flesh, and carnal self, can ever be a true friend to any other; for he loveth them but for his own ends, and any cross interests will shew the falsehood of his love.

XLIII. 1. A Christian indeed hath a special love to all the godly; such as endeareth his heart unto them; and such as will enable him to visit them and relieve them in their wants, to his own loss and hazard, according to his ability and opportunity; for the image of God is beautiful and honourable in his eyes; he loveth not them so much as God in them, Christ in them, the Holy Spirit in them; he foreseeth the day when he shall meet them in heaven, and there rejoice in God with them to eternity; he loveth their company and converse, and delighteth in their gracious words and lives; and the converse of ungodly empty men is a weariness to him, unless in a way of duty, or when he can do them good. 'In his eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.' Other men grieve his soul with their iniquities, while he is delighted with

the appearances of God in his holy ones, even the excellent ones on earth ; yea, the infirmities of believers destroy not his love ; for he hath learned of God himself to difference between their abhorred frailties and their predominant grace, and to love the very infants in the family of Christ ; yea, though they wrong him, or quarrel with him, or censure him in their weakness, he can honour their sincerity and love them still ; and if some of them prove scandalous, and some seeming Christians fall away, or fall into the most odious crimes, he loveth religion never the less, but continueth as high an esteem of piety and of all that are upright as he had before.

2. The weak Christian sincerely loveth all that bear his Father's image ; but it is with a love so weak, even when it is most passionate, as will sooner be abated or interrupted by any tempting differences : he is usually quarrelsome and froward with his brethren, and apter to confine his love to those that are of his own opinion or party ; and because God hath taught him to love all that are sincere, the devil tempteth him to censure them as not sincere, that so he may justify himself in the abatement of his love ; and weak Christians are usually the most censorious, because they have the smallest degree of love, which covereth faults, and thinketh no evil, and is not suspicious, but ever apt to judge the best, till the worst be evident. ' It beareth all things, believeth all things (that are credible), hopeth all things, endureth all things.' But it is no wonder to see children fall out, even

about their childish toys and trifles ; and what the dissensions of the children of the church have done against themselves in these kingdoms I need not, I delight not, to record. ‘ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat ; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal ; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men ? ’

3. The seeming Christian may have some love to real Christians, even for their goodness’ sake ; but it is a love subservient to his carnal self-love, and therefore it shall not cost him much. As he hath some love to Christ, so he may have some love to Christians ; but he hath more to the world and fleshly pleasures, and therefore all his love to Christ or Christians will not make him leave his worldly happiness for them ; and therefore Christ at the day of judgment will not inquire after empty barren love, but after that love which visited and relieved suffering saints. An hypocrite can allow both Christ and Christians such a cheap superficial kind of love as will cost him little : he will bid them lovingly, ‘ Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled.’ But still the world is most beloved.

XLIV. 1. A Christian indeed doth love his enemies, and forgive those that injure him, and this out of a thankful sense of that grace which forgave him a far greater debt : not that he thinketh it unlawful to make use of the justice of the government

which he is under for his necessary protection, or for the restraint of men's abuse and violence; nor is he bound to love the malice or injury, though he must love the man; nor can he forgive a crime, as it is against God or the common good, or against another, though he can forgive an injury or debt that is his own; nor is he bound to forgive every debt, though he is bound so far to forgive every wrong as heartily to desire the good of him that did it. Even God's enemies he so far loveth as to desire God to convert and pardon them, while he hateth their sin, and hateth them as God's enemies, and desireth their restraint. But those that hate, and curse, and persecute himself, he can unfeignedly love, and bless, and pray for; for he knoweth that else he cannot be a child of God; and that to love those that love him is not much praiseworthy, being no more than heathens and wicked men can do. He is so deeply sensible of that wondrous love which so dearly redeemed him, and saved him from hell, and forgave him a thousandfold worse than the worst that ever was done against himself, that thankfulness, and imitation or conformity to Christ in his great compassions, do overcome his desires of revenge, and make him willing to do good to his most cruel enemies, and pray for them as Christ and Stephen did at their deaths. And he knoweth that he is so inconsiderable a worm, that a wrong done to him as such is the less considerable; and he knoweth that he daily wrongeth God more than any man can wrong him, and that he can hope for pardon but on condition that he

himself forgive, and that he is far more hurtful to himself than any other can be to him.

2. And the weakest Christian can truly love an enemy and forgive a wrong ; but he doth it not so easily and so fully as the other ; but it is with much striving, and some unwillingness and averness, and there remaineth some grudge or strangeness upon the mind : he doth not sufficiently forget the wrong which he doth forgive ; indeed, his forgiving is very imperfect, like himself, not with the freeness and readiness required. ‘ With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.’ ‘ Put on, therefore, (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another ; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.’ ‘ Avenge not yourselves,’ &c.

3. As for the seeming Christian, he can seem to forgive wrongs for the sake of Christ ; but if he do it indeed it is for his own sake, as because it is for his honour, or because the person hath humbled himself to him, or his commodity requireth it, or he can make use of his love and service for his advantage, or some one hath interposed for reconciliation who must not be denied, or the like : but to love an enemy indeed, and to love that man (be he never so good) who standeth in the way of his preferment, honour, or commodity in the world, he never doth it from his heart, whatever he may seem to do. The love of Christ doth not constrain him.

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XLV. 1. A Christian indeed is as precise in the justice of his dealings with men as in acts of piety to God; for he knoweth that God requireth this as strictly at his hands: 'That no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter; for the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned and testified.' He is one that 'walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. If he swear to his own hurt, he changeth not; he putteth not out his money to (unjust or unmerciful) usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent.' He obeyeth that injunction, 'Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him; the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.' He can say, as Samuel, 'Whose ox or ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith, and I will restore it? And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.' And if heretofore he was ever guilty of defrauding any, he is willing to his power to make restitution; and saith, as Zaccheus, 'If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.' Though flesh and blood persuade him to the contrary, and though it leave him in want, he will pay his debts, and make restitution of that which is ill-gotten, as being none of his own; he

will not sell for as much as he can get, but for as much as it is truly worth; he will not take advantage of the weakness, or ignorance, or necessity of his neighbour; he knoweth that 'a false balance is abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight;' he is afraid of believing ill-reports, and rebuketh the backbiter; he is apt to take part with any man behind his back who is not notoriously inexcusable, not to justify any evil, but to shew his charity and his hatred of evil speaking, especially where it can do no good; he will not believe evil of another till the evidence do compel him to believe it; if he have wronged any by incautious words, he readily confesseth his fault to him, and asketh him forgiveness, and is ready to make any just satisfaction for any wrong that he hath done; he borroweth not when he seeth not a great probability that he is like to pay it; nor will remain in debt, by retaining that which is another man's against his will, without an absolute necessity. 'Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.' For to borrow when he cannot pay is but to steal. Begging is better than borrowing for such. 'The wicked borroweth and payeth not.'

2. And the weak Christian maketh conscience of justice as well as acts of piety, as knowing that God hath no need of our sacrifices, but loveth to see us do that which is good for human society, and which we have need of from each other. But yet he hath more selfishness and partiality than the confirmed Christian hath, and therefore is often overcome by temptations to unrighteous things:

as to stretch his conscience for his commodity, in buying or selling, and concealing the faults of what he selleth, and sometimes overreaching others : especially he is ordinarily too censorious of others, and apt to be credulous of evil reports, and to be overbold and forward in speaking ill of men behind their backs, and without a call, especially against persons that differ from him in matters of religion, where he is usually most unjust and apt to go beyond his bounds.

3. The seeming Christian may have a seeming justice : but really he hath none but what must give place to his fleshly interest ; and if his honour, and commodity, and safety require it, he will not stick to be unjust ; and that justice which wanteth but a strong temptation to overturn it is almost as bad as none. If he will not seize on Naboth's vineyard, nor make himself odious by oppression or deceit ; yet, if he can raise or enrich himself by secret cozenage, and get so fair a pretence for his injustice as shall cloak the matter from the sight of men, he seldom sticketh at it. It is an easy matter to make an Achan think that he doth no harm, or a Gehazi think that he wrongeth no man, in taking that which was offered and due. Covetousness will not confess its name, but will find some reasonings to make good all the injustice which it doth.

XLVI. 1. A Christian indeed is faithful and laborious in his particular calling, and that, not out of a covetous mind, but in obedience to God, and that he may maintain his family, and be able to do good to others ; for God hath said, ' In the sweat

of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread ;' and ' six days shalt thou labour ;' and ' with quietness men must work and eat their own bread,' and ' if any will not work, neither should he eat.' Abraham, and Noah, and Adam, laboured in a constant course of employment. He knoweth that a sanctified calling and labour is a help, and not a hinderance to devotion, and that the body must have work as well as the soul, and that religion must not be pretended for slothful idleness, not against obedience to our Master's will.

2. The weak Christian is here more easily deceived, and made believe that religion will excuse a man from bodily labour, and, under the colour of devotion, allow him to live idly. ' They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle, but tatlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.' Slothfulness is a sin much condemned in the Scriptures.

3. The seeming Christian in his labour is ruled chiefly by his flesh. If he be rich, and it incline him most to sloth, he maketh small conscience of living in idleness, under the pretence of his gentility or wealth : but if the flesh incline him more to covetousness, he will be laborious enough ; but it shall not be to please God by obedience, but to increase his estate, and enrich himself and his posterity, whatever better reason he pretend.

XLVII. 1. A Christian indeed is exactly conscionable in the duties of his relation to others in the family and place of his abode. If he be a husband, he is loving, and patient, and faithful to

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his wife ; if he be a father, he is careful of the holy education of his children ; if he be a master, he is just and merciful to his servants, and careful for the saving of their souls ; if he be a child, or servant, he is obedient, trusty, diligent, and careful, as well behind his parents or his master's back as before his face ; he dare not lie, nor steal, nor deceive, nor neglect his duty, nor speak dishonourably of his superiors, though he were sure he could conceal it all ; for he knoweth that the fifth commandment is enforced with a special promise, and that a bad child, or a bad servant, a bad husband or wife, a bad parent or master, cannot be a good Christian.

2. But weak Christians, though sincere, are ordinarily weak in this part of their duty, and apt to yield to temptations, and carry themselves proudly, stubbornly, idly, disobediently, as eyeservants that are good in sight ; or to be unmerciful to inferiors, and neglecters of their souls ; and to excuse all this from the faults of those that they have to do with, and lay all upon others, as if the fault of husband, wife, parent, master, or servant, would justify them in theirs, and passion and partiality would serve for innocency.

3. And the hypocrite ordinarily sheweth his hypocrisies, by being false in his relations to man, while he pretendeth to be pious and obedient unto God. He is a bad master, and a bad servant, when his self-interest requireth it, and yet thinketh himself a good Christian for all that ; for all men being faulty, it is easy to find a pretence from all

men that he doth abuse, to cover the injury of his abuse. Cain, Ham, Eli, Absalom, Judas, &c. are sad examples of this.

XLVIII. 1. A Christian indeed is the best subject, whether his prince be good or bad, though by infidel and ungodly rulers he be oft mistaken for the worst. He obeyeth not his rulers only for his own ends, but in obedience to God; and not only for fear of punishment, but for conscience sake. He looketh on them in their relations as the officers of God, and armed with his authority, and therefore obeyeth God in them. He permitteth not dishonourable thoughts of them in his heart, much less dare he speak dishonourably of them. He knoweth that every soul must be subject to the higher powers, and not resist; and that there is no power but of God: 'Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and he that resisteth shall receive to himself damnation.' Therefore in all things lawful he obeyeth them; and though he must not, and will not obey them against God, yet will he suffer patiently when he is wronged by them, and not only forbear resistance by arms or violence, but also all reproachful words, as knowing that the righting of himself is not so necessary to the public order and good as the honour of his rulers is. Usurpers may probably charge him to be a traitor, and seditious and rebellious, because he dare not approve of their usurpations; and when several are contending for the government, and in a litigious title the lawyers mislead him, when the controversy is only among

them, and belongs to their profession, it is possible he may mistake as well as the lawyers, and take him to have the better title that hath the worse ; but in divinity he knoweth there is no controversy, whether every soul must be subject to the highest power, so far as he can know it, and that prayers and patience are the subject's arms, and religion is so far from being a warrant to resist, that it plainly forbiddeth disobedience and resistance, and none are more obliged to submission and quietness than Christians are. The spirit of Christianity is not of this world : their kingdom and their hopes are not of this world ; and therefore they contend not for dignities and rule, much less by resisting or rebelling against their lawful governors. But they are resolved to obey God, and secure their everlasting portion, and bear all the injuries which they meet with in their way, especially from those whom God hath set over them. There is no doctrine that ever was received in the world so far from befriending seditions and rebellion as the doctrine of Christ ; nor any people in the world so loyal as Christians, while Christianity retained its genuine simplicity, till proud, domineering, worldly men, for carnal ends, pretended themselves to be Christians, and perverted the doctrine of Christ, to make it warp to their ambitious ends. Suffering seemeth not so great a matter to a holy, mortified, heavenly mind, as to tempt him to hazard his salvation to resist it. No man is so likely to be true to kings as he that believeth that his salvation lieth on it by the ordinance of God ; and princes that are wise and just

do always discern that the best Christians are their best subjects, though those that are unbelieving and ungodly themselves have ever hated them as the greatest troublers of the earth ; and it hath ever been the practice of the enemies of Christ and godliness to do all they can to engage the rulers of the earth against them, and to persuade them that the most godly Christians are persons of disloyal and unquiet minds ; and by vexing and persecuting them they do their worst to make them such as they falsely called them. Even Christ himself was crucified as an enemy to Cæsar, and Pilate driven to it by the noise of them that cried out, that if he ‘ let them go, he was not Cæsar’s friend.’ John xix. 12. They first tempted him with the question, ‘ Whether it were lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar?’ And though they could this way take no hold of him, yet this was the first article of his accusation : ‘ We have found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.’ And how loyal would those rebellious Jews seem, when they thought it the only way to engage the Roman power against Christ ! Then they cry out ‘ We have no king but Cæsar !’ And this was the common accusation against the Christians both by Jews and Gentiles. The language of the Jews you may hear from Tertullus, Acts xxiv. 5, ‘ We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.’ And at Thessalonica, the charge against them was, that they turned the world upside down, and did all



contrary to the decrees of Cæsar. And thus the best Christians have by such been slandered from age to age, because the devil and his instruments know not how sufficiently to molest them, except they engage the rulers against them. But yet all this doth not conquer the patience and loyalty of confirmed Christians. They are wiser than that wise man whom, as Solomon saith, 'Oppression maketh mad.' If usurpers or malicious liars shall a thousand times call them rebellious and seditious, it shall not drive them from their due subjection; they can patiently follow their Lord and the ancient Christians in the enduring of such slanders, and suffering as enemies to Cæsar, so they do but escape the sin, and be not such as malice calleth them; they had rather die as reputed enemies to government than to be such indeed; they prefer subjection before the reputation of it, for they look not for their reward from princes, but from God. If they can preserve their innocency, they can bear the defamation of their names, being satisfied in the hopes of the joyful day of the judgment of Christ, which will fully justify them, and set all right; indeed, they know that a state of subjection is easier and safer than places of command, and that it is easier to obey than govern; and so far are they from envying men's greatness, and from desiring dominion, that they pity the tempted, and dangerous, and troublesome state of those in power, and are thankful to God for their quieter and safer station. They heartily pray for kings, and all that are in authority, not that by their favour they may

rise to places of wealth and honour, but 'that under them they may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.' Yea, though infidel princes hate and persecute them, they continue to pray for them, and to honour their authority, and will not thereby be driven from their duty. If God cast their lot under infidel, ungodly, and malicious governors, they do not run to arms to save themselves, or save the gospel, as if God had called them to reform the world, or keep it from the oppression of the higher powers; nor do they think it a strange intolerable matter for the best men to be lowest, and to be the suffering side, and so fall to fighting that Christ and the saints may have the rule; for they know that Christ's kingdom is not of this world (that is, not a visible monarchy, as his usurping vicar doth pretend), and that Christ doth most eminently rule unseen, and disposeth of all the kingdoms of the world, even where he is hated and resisted, and that the reign of saints is in their state of glory, and that all God's graces do fit them more for a suffering life than for worldly power. Their humility, meekness, patience, self-denial, contempt of the world, and heavenly mindedness, are better exercised and promoted in a suffering than a prosperous reigning state. When they think of the holy blood which hath been shed by heathen Rome, from Christ and Stephen till the days of Constantine, and the far greater streams which have been shed by the bloody papal Rome, wherever they had power, in Piedmont, Germany, Poland, Hungary, in Belgia, England, and in other

lands—the thirty or forty thousand murdered in a few days at the Bartholomew massacre in France, the two hundred thousand murdered in a few weeks in Ireland—they are not so unlike their suffering brethren as to think that striving for honours and command is their way to heaven. When Christ hath foretold them that self-denial under the cross, tribulation and persecution, is the common way, so far are they from fighting against the injuries and cruelties of their governors, that they account the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all their treasures, and think they are blessed when they are persecuted, and say with Paul, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.’ And again, ‘Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake ; for when I am weak then I am strong.’ ‘Nay, in all these things (when persecuted and killed all the day long, and counted as sheep to the slaughter) they are more than conquerors through Christ ;’ they obtain a nobler conquest than that which is obtained by the sword.

2. But the weak Christian having less patience, and more selfishness and passion, is easier tempted to break his bounds, and, with Peter, to run to his unauthorized sword, when he should submit to suffering. And his interest and sufferings cause his passion to have too great a power on his judgment, so that he is easilier tempted to believe that to be lawful which he thinks to be necessary to his own

preservation, and to think that the gospel and the church are falling when the power of men is turned against them, and therefore he must, with Uzzah, put forth his hand to save the ark of God from falling. He is more troubled at men's injustice and cruelty, and maketh a wonder of it to find the enemies of Christ and godliness to be unreasonably impudent and bloody, as if he expected reason and righteousness in the malicious world. His sufferings fill him more with discontent and desires of revenge from God, and his prosperity too much lifts him up. And in the litigious claims of pretenders to supremacy he is oft too hasty to interest himself in their contentions, as if he understood not, that whoever is the conqueror will count those rebels that were on the other side, and that the enemies of Christ will cast all the odium upon Christianity and piety, when the controversy is only among the statesmen and lawyers, and belongs not to religion at all.

3. The seeming Christian will seem to excel all others in loyalty and obedience when it maketh for his carnal ends. He will flatter rulers for honours and preferment, and always be on the rising side, unless when his pride engageth him in murmurings and rebellions. He hath a great advantage above true Christians and honest men to seem the most obedient subject, because he hath a stretching conscience that can do any thing for his safety or his worldly ends. If he be among papists, he can be a papist; if among protestants, he is a protestant; and if he were among Turks, it is like he would

rather turn a Mahometan than be undone. No prince or power can command him any thing which he cannot yield to, if his worldly interest require it. If there be a law for worshipping the golden image, it is the conscionable servants of God, and not the time-servers, that refuse to obey it, Dan. iii. If there be a law against praying, (Dan. vi.) it is Daniel, and not the ungodly multitude that disobey it. If there be a command against preaching, (Acts iv. 17, 18), it is the holy apostles and best Christians that plead the command of God against it, and refuse obedience to it, ver. 20—29. The self-seeking temporizing hypocrite can do anything, and yet he obeyeth not while he seemeth to obey: for it is not for the authority of the commander that he doeth it, but for his own ends. He never truly honoureth his superiors, for he doth not respect them as the officers of God, nor obey them for his sake with a conscionable obedience. He feareth the higher powers as bears or tigers that are able to hurt him, or useth their favour as he useth his horse, to do him service: were it not for himself, he would little regard them. The true Christian honoureth the basest creature more than the hypocrite and worldling honoureth his king; for he seeth God in all, and useth the smallest things unto his glory; whereas the worldling debaseth the highest by the baseness of his esteem, and use, and end, for he knoweth not how to esteem or use the greatest prince, but for himself or for some worldly ends. 2 Tim. iii. 3, 4.

XLIX. 1. A Christian indeed is a man of courage

and fortitude in every cause of God ; for he trusteth God, and firmly believeth that he will bear him out. He knoweth his superiors, and hath a charitable respect to all men ; but, as for any selfish or timorous respect, he hath the least regard to man, for he knoweth that the greatest are but worms, whose breath is in their nostrils, that pass away as shadows and return to dust ; and that the most potent are impotent when they contend with God, and are unequal matches to strive against their Maker, and that it will prove hard for them to kick against the pricks ; and that whoever seemeth now to have the day, it is God that will be conqueror at last. ‘ Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help : his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth : in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help : whose hope is in the Lord his God.’ ‘ Woe to him that striveth with his Maker.’ He knoweth that it is more irrational to fear man against God, than to fear a flea or a fly against the greatest man. The infinite disproportion between the creature that is against him, and the Creator that is for him, doth resolve him to obey the command of Christ : ‘ Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear : fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear him.’ ‘ Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law : fear ye not the reproach of man, neither be afraid of

their revilings : for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool : but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.' ' I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me ; therefore shall I not be confounded : therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me ; who will contend with me ? let us stand together : who is mine adversary ? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me ; who is he that shall condemn me ? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment ; the moth shall eat them up.' ' Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein is he to be accounted of ?' ' Cursed be the man that trusteth in man,' &c. ' Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord,' &c. Alas, how terrible is the wrath of God in comparison of the wrath of man ! and how easy an enemy is the cruellest afflicter, in comparison of a holy sin-revenging God. Therefore the confirmed Christian saith, as the three witnesses, ' We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. The God whom we serve is able to deliver us . . . . But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' When Daniel knew that the decree was past, he prayed openly in his house, as heretofore. ' Moses feared not the wrath of the king : for he endured, as seeing him that is invisible.'

‘ The righteous are bold as a lion.’ ‘ When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled.’ Paul’s bonds made others bold ; ‘ Perfect love casteth out fear ;’ ‘ If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye : and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled ;’ so that we may boldly say, ‘ The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.’

2. But the weak Christian, though he also trust in God, is much more fearful, and easily daunted and discouraged ; and ready with Peter to be afraid if he perceive himself in danger. He is not valiant for truth, though he can forsake all (even life itself) for Christ, yet is it with a deal of fear and trouble ; and man is a more significant thing to him than to the stronger Christian.

3. But the seeming Christian doth fear man more than God, and will venture upon the displeasure of God to avoid the displeasure of men that can do him hurt ; because he doth not soundly believe the threatenings of the word of God.

L. 1. A Christian indeed is made up of judgment and zeal conjunct ; his judgment is not a patron of lukewarmness, nor his zeal an enemy to knowledge ; his judgment doth not destroy but increase his zeal ; and his zeal is not blind nor self-conceited, nor doth run before or without judgment. If he be of the most excellent sort of Christians, he hath so large a knowledge of the mysteries of godliness, that he seeth the body of sacred truth with its parts and compages or joints, as it were, at once. It is all written deeply and methodically in his understanding : he hath, by long use, his senses exercised



to discern both good and evil. He presently discerneth where mistaken men go out of the way, and lose the truth by false suppositions, or by false definitions, or by confounding things that differ. And therefore he pitieth the contentious sects and disputers who raise a dust to blind themselves and others, and make a stir to the trouble of the Church, about things which they never understood: and in the sight of that truth which others obscure or contradict, he enjoyeth much content or pleasure in his own mind, though incapable persons zealously reject it. Therefore he is steadfast, as knowing on what ground he setteth his foot. And though he be the greatest lover of truth, and would with greatest joy receive any addition to his knowledge, yet ordinarily by erroneous zealots, he is censured as too stiff and self-conceited, and tenacious of his own opinions, because he will not entertain their errors and obey them in their self-conceitedness: for he that knoweth that it is truth which he holdeth, is neither able nor willing to hold the contrary (unless he imprison the truth in unrighteousness.) But if he be one that hath not attained to such a clear comprehensive judgment, yet with that measure of judgment which he hath, he doth guide and regulate his zeal, and maketh it follow after, while understanding goeth before. He treadeth on sure ground, and knoweth it to be duty indeed which he is zealous for, and sin indeed which he is zealous against; and is not put to excuse all his fervour and forwardness after with a *non putarem*, or I had thought it had been otherwise.

2. But the weak Christian either hearkeneth too much to carnal wisdom, which suppresseth his zeal, and maketh him too heavy and dull and indifferent in many of his duties and the concernments of his soul, permitting the world to take up too much of the vigour of his spirit: or else he is confident in mistakes, and verily thinks that he understandeth, better than many wiser men, those things which he never understood at all. He chooseth his party by the zeal that he findeth in them without any judicious trial of the truth of what they hold and teach. He is very earnest for many a supposed truth and duty, which proveth at last to be no truth or duty at all; and he censureth many a wiser Christian than himself, for many a supposed sin which is no sin, but perhaps a duty. For he is always injudicious, and his heat is greater than his light (or else his light is too flashy without heat.) Peremptorily he doth set down some among the number of the most wise and excellent men, for keeping him company in his mistakes; and he boldly numbereth the best and wisest of his teachers with the transgressors, for being of a sounder understanding than himself, and doing those duties which he calleth sins: and hence it is that he is a person apt to be misled by appearances of zeal, and the passions of his teachers prevail more with him than the evidence of truth. He that prayeth and preacheth most fervently is the man that carrieth him away, though none of his arguments be truly cogent. If he hear any hard name against any opinion or manner of worship, he receiveth that prejudice which turneth him more

against it than reason could have done: so the bugbear name of Heresy, Lutheranism and Calvinism, frighteneth many a well-meaning papist both from the truth and almost from his wits: and the names of Popery, Arminianism, Prelacy, Presbyterianism, Independency, &c. do turn away the hearts of many from things which they never tried or understood. If a zealous preacher do but call any opinion or practice antichristian or idolatrous, it is a more effectual terror than the clearest proof. Big and terrible words do move the passions, while the understanding is abused, or a stranger to the cause; and passion is much of their religion. And hence, alas, is much of the calamity of the church.

3. But the seeming Christian is only zealous finally for himself, or zealous about the smaller matters of religion, as the Pharisees were for their ceremonies and traditions; or for his own inventions, or some opinions or ways in which his honour seemeth to be interested, and pride is the bellows of his zeal: but as for a holy zeal about the substance and practice of religion, and that for God as the final cause, he is a stranger to it. He may have a zeal of God, and of and for the law and worship of God as the material cause, but not a true zeal for God as the chief final cause.

LI. 1. A Christian indeed can bear the infirmities of the weak: though he love not their weakness, yet he pitieth it, because he truly loveth their persons. Christ hath taught him not to break the 'bruised reed,' and to 'gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead them that

are with young.' If they have diseases and distempers, he seeketh in tenderness to cure them, and not in wrath to hurt and vex them. He turneth not the infants or sick persons from the family, because they cry or are unquiet, unclean, infirm and troublesome: but he exerciseth his love and pity upon their weaknesses. If they mistake their way, or are ignorant, and peevish and froward in their mistakes, he seeketh not to undo them, but gently to reduce them. If they censure himself, and call him erroneous, heretical, antichristian, idolatrous, because he concurrerth not with them in their mistakes, he beareth it with love and patience, as he would do the peevish chidings of a child, or the frowardness of the sick. He doth not lose his charity, and set his wit against a child, and aggravate the crimes, and being reviled revile again; and say, you are schismatics, hypocrites, obstinate, and fit to be severely dealt with: but he overcometh them with love and patience, which is the conquest of a saint, and the happiest victory both for himself and them. It is a 'small matter to him to be judged of man.' He is more troubled for the weakness and disease of the censorious, than for his own being wronged by their censures.

2. But the weak Christian is readier to censure others than patiently to bear a censure himself. Either he stormeth against the censurers as if they did him some insufferable wrong, (through the overgreat esteem of himself and his reputation,) or else to escape the fangs of censure, and keep up his repute with them, he complieth with the censorious,

and overruns his judgment and conscience to be well spoken of, and counted a sincere and steadfast man.

3. But the seeming Christian is so proud and selfish, and wanteth charity and tenderness to the weak, that he is impatient of their provocations; and would cure the diseases of the servants of Christ, by cutting their throats, or ridding the country of them. If a child do but wrangle with him, he crieth, Away with him, he is a troubler of the world: He taketh more notice of one of their infirmities than of all their graces: yea, he can see nothing but obstinacy and hypocrisy in them, if they do but cross him in his opinions or reputation, or worldly ends. Selfishness can turn his hypocrisy into malignity and cruelty, if once he take them to be against his interest. Indeed his interest can make him patient: he can bear with them that he looketh to gain by, but not with them that seem to be against him. The radical enmity against sincerity that was not mortified, but covered in his heart, will easily be again uncovered.

LII. 1. A Christian indeed is a great esteemer of the unity of the church, and greatly averse to all divisions among believers. As there is in the natural body an abhorring of dismembering or separating any part from the whole; so there is in the mystical body of Christ. The members that have life cannot but feel the smart of any distempering attempt; for abscision is destruction: the members die that are separated from the body. And if there be but any obstruction or hinderance of communion,

it will be painful or unuseful. He feeleth in himself the reason of all those strict commands, and earnest exhortations: 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.' Again: 'If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.' Or as the same apostle exhorted the Ephesians: 'I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' He looketh at uncharitableness and divisions with more abhorrence than weak Christians do at drunkenness or whoredom, or such other heinous sin. He feareth such dreadful warnings, as Acts xx. 29, 30:

‘ For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.’ And he cannot slight such a vehement exhortation, as Rom. xvi. 17, 18: ‘ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.’ Therefore he is so far from being a divider himself, that when he seeth any one making divisions among Christians, he looketh on him as on one that is slashing and mangling the body of his dearest friend; or as on one that is setting fire on his house; and therefore doth all that he can to quench it, as knowing the confusion and calamity to which it tendeth. He is of a Christian, and therefore of a truly catholic spirit; that is, he maketh not himself a member of a divided party or a sect; he regardeth the interest and welfare of the body, the universal church, above the interest or prosperity of any party whatsoever; and he will do nothing for a party which is injurious to the whole, or to the christian cause. The very names of sects and parties are displeasing to him; and he could wish that there were no name but that of Christians among us, save only the necessary names of the criminal, such as that of the Nicolaitanes, by which those that are to be avoided by Christians must be



known. Christianity is confined to so narrow a compass in the world, that he is unwilling to contract it yet into a narrower. The greatest party of divided Christians, whether it be the Greeks or Papists, is too small a body for him to take for the catholic (or universal) church. He admireth at the blindness and cruelty of faction, that can make men damn all the rest of the church for the interest of their proper sect; and take all those for no Christians that are better Christians than themselves. Especially the papists, who unchurch all the church of Christ, except their sect; and make it as necessary to salvation to be a subject of the Pope as to be a Christian: and when, by their great corruption and abuses of Christianity, they have more need of charitable censures themselves than almost any sort of Christians, yet are they the boldest condemners of all others. The confirmed Christian can difference between the strong and weak, the sound and unsound members of the church, without dismembering any, and without unwarrantable separations from any. He will worship God in the purest manner he can; and locally join with those assemblies where, all things considered, he may most honour God, and receive most edification; and will not sin for communion with any. He will sufficiently difference between a holy orderly assembly, and a corrupt disordered one; and between an able faithful pastor, and an ignorant or worldly hireling: and he desireth that the pastors of the church may make that due separation by the holy discipline of Christ, which may prevent the people's



disorderly separation. But for all this, he will not deny his presence upon just occasion to any christian congregation that worshippeth God in truth, though with many modal imperfections, so be it they impose no sin upon him as necessary to his communion with them. Nor will he deny the spiritual communion of faith and love to those that he holdeth not local communion with. He knoweth that all our worship of God is sinfully imperfect; and that it is a dividing principle to hold, that we may join with none that worship God in a faulty manner; for then we must join with none on earth. He knoweth that his presence in the worship of God, is no sign of his approbation of all the failings of pastors or people in their personal or modal imperfections, as long as he joineth not in a worship so corrupt as to be itself unacceptable to God. While men who are all imperfect and corrupt are the worshippers, the manner of their worship will be such as they, in some degree imperfect and corrupt. The solid Christian hath his eye upon all the churches in the world, in the determining of such questions. He considereth what worship is offered to God in the churches of the several parties of Christians, the Greeks, Armenians, Abyssinians, Lutherans, &c., as well as what is done in the country where he liveth; and he considereth whether God disown and reject the worship of almost all the churches in the world, or not; for he dare no further reject them than God rejecteth them: nor will he voluntarily separate from those assemblies where the presence of Christ, in his Spirit and

acceptance, yet remaineth. And his fuller acquaintance with the gracious nature, office, and tenderness of Christ, together with greater love to his brethren, doth cause him in this to judge more gently than young censorious Christians do. And his humble acquaintance with his own infirmities maketh him the more compassionate to others. If he should think that God would reject all that order not, and word not their prayers aright, he would be afraid of being rejected himself, who is still conscious of greater faultiness in his own prayers, than a mere defect in words and order; even of a great defectiveness in that faith, and desire, and love, and zeal, and reverence which should be manifested in prayer. Though he be more apprehensive than others of the excellency and necessity of the holiness and spirituality of the soul in worship; yet withal he is more judicious and charitable than the peevish and passionate infant Christians, who think that God doth judge as they do, and seeth no grace where they see none; and taketh all to be superstitious or fanatical, that differ from their opinions or manner of worship; or that he is as ready to call every error in the method or the words of prayer, idolatry or will-worship, as those are that speak not what they know, but what they have heard some teachers whom they reverence say before them. 'He that dwelleth in love, doth dwell in God, and God in him,' and he that dwelleth in God, is liker to be best acquainted with his mind concerning his children and his worship, than he that dwelleth in wrath, and pride, and partiality.

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2. But the weak Christian (though so far as he hath grace, he is of the same mind, and abhorreth discord and division among the flock of Christ, yet) being more dark, and selfish, and distempered, he is much more prone to unwarrantable separations and divisions than the stronger Christian is. He is narrower sighted, and looketh little further than his own acquaintance, and the country where he liveth, and mindeth not sufficiently the general state of the churches through the world, nor understandeth well the interest of Christ and Christianity in the earth. His knowledge and experience being small, his charity also is but small; and a little thing tempteth him to condemn another, and aggravate his faults, and think him unworthy of the communion of the saints. He is much more sensible of the judgment, and affections, and concerns of those few with whom he doth converse, and that are of his opinion, than of the judgment, and practice, and concerns of the universal church. He knoweth not how to prefer the judgments and holiness of some that he thinketh more excellent than the rest, without much undervaluing and censuring of all others that are not of their opinion: he cannot choose the actual local communion of the best society, without some unjust contempt of others, or separation from them. He hath not so much knowledge as may sufficiently acquaint him with his ignorance; and therefore he is apt to be unreasonably confident of his present apprehensions, and to think verily that all his own conceptions are the certain truth; and to think

them ignorant or ungodly, or very weak at least that differ from him; for he hath not thoroughly and impartially studied all that may be said on the other side. The authority of his chosen teacher and sect is greater with him (if he fall into that way) than the authority of all the most wise and holy persons in the world besides. What the Scripture speaketh of the unbelieving world, he is apt to apply to all those of the church of Christ that are not of his mind and party. And when Christ commandeth us to come out of the world, he is prone to understand it of coming out from the church into some stricter and narrower society; and is apt, with the papists, to appropriate the name and privileges of the church to his party alone, and to condemn all others. Especially if the church-governors be carnal and self-seeking or otherwise very culpable, and if discipline be neglected, and if profaneness be not sufficiently discountenanced, and godliness promoted; he thinketh that such a church is no church, but a profane society: God hath taught him by repentance to see the mischief of ungodliness; but he yet wanteth that experience which is needful to make him know the mischiefs of church-divisions. He had too much experience himself of the evil of profaneness before his conversion; but he hath not tried the evil of schism; and without some sad experience of its fruits, in himself or others, he will hardly know it as it should be known. Because it is the custom of some malignant enemies of godliness to call the godly, heretics, schismatics, factious sectaries, &c.,

therefore the very names do come into credit with him; and he thinks there are no such persons in the world, or that there is no danger of any such crimes, till he be taught by sad experience that the professors of sincerity are in as much danger on that side as on the other; and that the church (as well as Christ) doth suffer between two thieves, the profane and the dividers. Paul was unjustly called the ringleader of a sect, and Christianity called a heresy and a sect every where spoken against. But for all that, heresy is a fruit of the flesh, and some heresies are called damnable, as in 2 Pet. ii. 1; and they are the trial of the church, to difference the approved members from the chaff. And an obstinate heretic is to be avoided by true believers. And the Pharisees and Sadducees are well reputed to be several sects. And dividers and divisions are justly branded in Scripture, as afore-said. There must be no schism in the body of Christ. The following of selected teachers in a way of division from the rest, or opposition to them, doth shew that men are carnal in too great a measure, though it be not in predominancy, as in the profane. What saith Paul to the Corinthians: 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of

Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?' How much more when he that is for Paul doth censure and rail at Cephas and Apollos? He that hath seen the course of men professing godliness in England in this age, may easily and sadly know how prone weak Christians are to unjust separations and divisions, and what are the effects. He that had heard many zealous in prayer, and other duties, and the next year seen them turning from their brethren,\* and railing in the open congregations at the ablest, holiest, self-denying ministers of Christ, and at their flocks, and shall see how poor souls separate themselves from the flock of Christ, will no longer doubt whether the weak be inclinable to schism, but will rather lament the dangerousness of their station; and know that all is not done when a sinner is converted from an ungodly state. Study the reason of those three texts, Ephes. iv. 13—16; 'For the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined

\* The words of the author have been partially changed, for a reason which will be obvious to any one who refers to a previous edition. His meaning has been faithfully retained.



together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.' Here you see the children are apt to be carried into dividing parties. And they are aptest to be proud, and that way to miscarry, see 1 Tim. iii. 6: 'Not a novice (or raw young Christian), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.' And then followeth the effect, Acts xx. 30: 'Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' I would not have you groundlessly accuse any Christian with a charge of pride; but I must tell you, that the childish pride of apparel is a petty business, in comparison of that pride which many in sordid attire have manifested, who in their ignorance do rage and foam out words of falsehood and reproach against Christ's ministers and servants, as if they were all fools or impious in comparison of them; speaking evil of that which they never understood; the lifting up the heart above the people of the Lord, in the pride of supposed holiness, is incomparably worse than pride of learning, honour, greatness, wit, or wealth. Nay, it hath oft been to me a matter of wonder to observe how little all those plain and urgent texts of scripture, which cry down division, do work upon many of the younger Christians, who yet are as quickly touched as any, with a text that speaketh against profaneness and lukewarmness. In a word, they are often of the temper of James and John, when they would

tain have had Christ have revenged himself on his opposers by fire from heaven : ' They know not what manner of spirit they are of.' They think verily that it is a holy zeal for God, when it is the boiling of passion, pride, and selfishness. They feel not the sense of such words as Christ's, John xvii. 20—24 : ' I pray also for them who shall believe on me, through their word ; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou has sent me,' &c.

3. And as for the seeming Christians, in this they are of several sorts. When their carnal interest lieth in compliance with the major part and stronger side, then no men do more cry up unity and obedience : what a noise do many thousand papist prelates, jesuits, and friars, make with these two words throughout the world ! Unity and obedience (unto them upon their terms) do signify principally their worldly greatness, wealth, and power. But if the hypocrite be engaged in point of honour or other carnal interest on the suffering side, or be out of hope of any advantage in the common road, then no man is so much for separation and singularity as he. For he must needs be noted for somebody in the world, and this is the chief way that he findeth to accomplish it. And so being lifted up with pride, he falleth into the condemnation of the devil, and becomes a firebrand in the church.

LIII. 1. A Christian indeed is not only zealous for the unity and concord of believers, but he seeketh it on the right terms, and in the way that



is fittest to attain it. Unity, peace, and concord, are like piety and honesty, things so unquestionably good, that there are scarce any men of reason and common sobriety, that ever were heard to oppose them directly and for themselves: and therefore all that are enemies to them are yet pretenders to them, and oppose them. 1. In their causes only. 2. Or covertly and under some other name. Every man would have unity, concord, and peace in his own way and upon his own terms. But if the right terms had been understood and consented to as sufficient, the christian world had not lain so many hundred years in sin and shame and ruins as it hath done. And the cause of all is, that Christians indeed, that have clear confirmed judgments, and strength of grace, are very few; and for number and strength unable to persuade or overrule the weak, the passionate and false-hearted worldly hypocritical multitude, who bear down all the counsels and endeavours of the wise.

The judicious faithful Christian knoweth that there are three degrees or sorts of christian communion, which have their several terms. 1. The universal church communion, which all Christians, as such, must hold among themselves. 2. Particular church communion, which those that are conjoined for personal communion in worship do hold under the same pastors and among themselves. 3. The extraordinary intimate communion that some Christians hold together, who are bosom friends, or are specially able and fit to be helpful and comfortable to each other.

The last concerneth not our present business: we must hold church communion with many that are unfit to be our bosom friends, and that have no eminency of parts or piety, or any strong persuading evidence of sincerity. But the terms of catholic communion he knoweth are such as these: 1. They must be such as were the terms of church communion in the days of the apostles. 2. They must be such as are plainly and certainly expressed in the holy Scriptures. 3. And such as the universal church hath in some ages since been actually agreed in. 4. And those points are likeliest to be such, which all the differing parties of Christians are agreed in as necessary to communion to this day (so we call not those Christians that deny the essentials of Christianity.) 5. Every man in the former ages of the church was admitted to this catholic church communion, who in the baptismal vow or covenant, gave up himself to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; as his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, his Owner, Governor, and Father, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil. And more particularly as man hath an understanding, a will, and an executive power, which must all be sanctified to God, so the creed was the particular rule for the *credenda*, or things to be believed; and the Lord's prayer for the *petenda*, or things to be willed, loved, and desired; and the ten commandments for the *agenda*, or things to be done: so that to consent to these rules particularly, and to all the holy Scriptures implicitly and generally, was the thing then required to catholic communion. The

belief of the doctrine being necessary for the sanctifying of the heart and life, the belief of so much is of necessity, without which the heart cannot be sanctified, or devoted in covenant to God our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator ; and without which we cannot love God (as reconciled to us in Christ,) above all, and our neighbours as ourselves. So that in a word, he that can tell what the baptismal vow or covenant is, can tell what is necessary to that catholic church communion, which belongeth to Christians as Christians, at how great a distance soever they dwell from one another.

And then for particular church communion, which is local and personal, it is moreover necessary, 1. That each member acknowledge and submit to the same pastors. 2. That they be guided by them in the convenient circumstances and adjuncts of worship. For if some persons will not consent or submit to the same pastors that the body of the church consenteth and submitteth to, they cannot have communion particularly and locally with that church, nor are they members of it ; no more than they can be members of the same kingdom that have not the same king ; and there being no solemn worship performed but by the ministry of those pastors, they cannot join in the worship that join not with the minister. And if some members will not consent and submit to the necessary determination of the adjuncts or external modes of worship, they cannot join in local, particular church communion where that worship is performed : as if the pastor and the body of the church will meet in such a place, at such

a day and hour, and some members will not meet with them at that place and day and hour, they cannot possibly then have their local personal communion. Or if the pastor will use such a translation of the Scriptures, or such a version of the Psalms, or such a method in preaching and prayer, or such notes or books and other like helps; if any members will not submit, nor hold communion with the rest, unless that translation, or version, or method of preaching, or praying, or notes or books be laid aside, he cannot have communion while he refuseth it. If the pastor and all the rest will not yield to him, he must join with some other church that he can agree with. And as long as the catholic church communion is maintained (which consisteth in unity of the christian-covenant, or of Christianity, or of faith, love and obedience) the difference of modes and circumstances between particular churches must be allowed without any breach of charity or without disowning one another: and he that cannot be a member of one particular church, may quietly join himself to another without condemning that which he dissenteth from, so far as to hinder his catholic communion with it; (even as among the papists, men may be of which order of religious persons they best like, as long as they submit to their general government.) And here the strong judicious Christian for his part will never be guilty of church-divisions. For, 1. He will make nothing necessary to church-communion, which any sober, pious, peaceable minds shall have any just reason to except against, or which may not well be manifested

to be for the edification of the church. 2. And he will bear with the weak dissenters, so far as will stand with the peace and welfare of the church. 3. And he will particularly give leave to such weak ones as cannot yet hold communion with him, being peaceable, and not promoting heresy, ungodliness or sedition, to join to another church where they can hold communion, with peace to their own consciences; as long as they continue their foresaid catholic communion. For the strong know that 'they must not only (bear with) but (bear) the infirmities of the weak, and not please themselves, but every one of them please his neighbour for his good to edification, for even Christ pleased not himself.' And so they will 'receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God, not despising the weak, nor rejecting them that God receiveth.' And thus you may see how easy a matter it were to unite and reconcile all the christian world, if the principles of the judicious confirmed Christian might be received and prevail; and that it is not he that is the cause of the abundance of sin and calamity which divisions have caused, and continued in the church. But that which now seemeth an impossible thing may quickly and easily be accomplished if all were such as he: and that the difficulty of reconciling and uniting Christians lieth not first in finding out the terms, but in making men fit to receive and practise the terms from the beginning received by the churches. This is *Lirinensis's Quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus receptum est* (supposing still

that the magistrate be submitted to by every soul, even as he is the keeper of both tables.)

2. But the weak Christian is too easily tempted to be the divider of the church, by expecting that it be united upon his impossible or unrighteous terms. Sometime he will be orthodox overmuch, or rather 'wise in his own conceit,' and then none are judged fit for his communion that be not of his opinion, in controverted doctrinals (*e. g.* predestination, the manner of the work of grace, freewill, perseverance, and abundance such :) sometime he will be righteous overmuch, or (to speak more properly) superstitious. And then none are fit for his communion, that worship not God in that method and manner for circumstantialia which he esteemeth best: and his charity is so weak that it freeth him not from thinking evil, and so narrow that it covereth not either many or great infirmities. The more need he hath of the forbearance and charity of others, the less can he bear or forbear others himself. The strong Christian must bear the infirmities of the weak; but the weak Christian can scarce bear with the weak or strong: nay he is oft too impatient with some of their virtues and duties, as well as with their infirmities. He is of too private a spirit, and too insensible of the public interest of the Church of Christ. And therefore he must have all the world come over to him, and be conformed to his opinion and party, and unite upon his mistaken narrow terms if they will have communion with him: I mean, it is thus with him when the temptation on that side



prevaileth. And sometime he is overcome with the temptation of domination, to make his judgment the rule to others: and then he quite overvalueth his own understanding, and will needs be judge of all the controversies in the church; and taketh it as insufferable, if wiser and better men do not take him as infallible, and in every thing observe his will. And when his brethren give him the reason of their dissent, as his judgment is not clear enough to understand them, so his passion and partiality are too strong to suffer his judgment to do its part. And thus oftentimes he is a greater hinderance to the church's unity, than the enemies of the church themselves. For he hath not judgment enough to guide him the right way, and yet he hath so much zeal as will not suffer him to keep his errors to himself.

3. And all these distempers that are but in a lower degree in the weak Christian, are predominant in the hypocrite. The church shall have no concord or peace if he can hinder it, but what is consistent with his carnal interest, his honour, or wealth, or dignity in the world. The pride and covetousness which rule himself, he would have to make the terms of concord, and to rule all others. It is hypocrites in the church that are the greatest cause of discord and divisions; having selfish spirits, principles and ends, and having always a work of their own to do, which suits not well with the work of Christ; and yet Christ's work must be subjected to it, and ordered and overruled by it. And while they pretend to go to the Scriptures, or to councils

or fathers for their reasons, indeed they go first for them to their worldly interest; and then would fain hire or press the Scripture, church, or fathers to serve their turn, and come in as witnesses on their side. And thus the church, as well as Christ, is betrayed by the covetous Judases of his own family: and the servants of the world, the flesh and devil, that take up the livery of Christ, and usurp the name and honour of Christians, do more effectually hinder the concord and prosperity of the church, than any open enemies do. And those that are indeed no Christians, do cause Christianity to be reproached: even as spies and traitors that are hired by the enemy to take up arms in the army which they fight against, that they may betray it by their fraud, and do more harm to it, by raising mutinies and by false conduct, than a multitude of professed enemies could have done. It is proud and worldly carnal hypocrites that hinder most the concord of believers.

LIV. 1. A confirmed Christian is of a peaceable spirit. He is not masterly, domineering, turbulent, cruel, seditious, factious, or contentious. He is like ripened fruits, that are mellow and sweet, when the younger greener fruits are sour and harsh. He is not 'wise in his own conceit,' and therefore not over urgent in obtruding his conceits on others, nor quarrelsome with all that cannot entertain them; nor will he easily lay men's salvation or damnation, no, nor the church's peace upon them. 'He is kindly affectioned to others with brotherly love, yea, loveth his neighbour as himself.' And therefore he



‘doth to others as he would they should do to him;’ and useth them as he would be used by them: and then how far they are like to suffer by him, you may easily judge. For ‘Love worketh no ill to his neighbour.’ He is above the portion of the worldling, and a contemner of that vanity which carnal men account their felicity; and therefore he preferreth love and quietness before it, and can lose his right when the interest of love and peace requireth it. He is become as a little child in his conversion, and is low and little in his own eyes, and therefore contendeth not for superiority or preeminence, either in place or power, or reputation for his learning, wisdom or piety; but ‘in honour preferreth others before himself.’ ‘He mindeth not high things, but condescendeth to men of low estate,’ and therefore will not contend for estimation or precedency, nor scramble to be highest, though he rise by the ruins of men’s bodies and souls. ‘If it be possible, as much as lieth in him, he will live peaceably with all men.’ For he is not one that by word or deed will avenge himself; but when the wrath of others is up like a blustering storm, he giveth place to it, he boweth before it, or goeth out of the way. ‘If his enemy hunger, he feedeth him; if he thirst, he giveth him drink, when oppressors would deprive not only an enemy, but the righteous of their meat and drink: and thus he melteth his hardened enemies, by heaping kindnesses upon them when they are wrathful, and proud, and contentious, and do him wrong, or use provoking words against him; he is ‘not overcome of their evil to imitate them, but

he overcometh their evil with his good.' If God have given him more knowledge and abilities than others, he doth not presently set up himself to be admired for it, nor speak disdainfully and contemptuously of those that are not of his mind: but he sheweth 'out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of wisdom,' and by doing better than the unwiser do. He is endued with 'the wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruit, without partiality (or wavering in persecution, as Dr. Hammond renders it) and without hypocrisy.' And thus 'the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.' As he is 'taught of God to love his brother,' so that same teaching, with experience of the effects, assureth him, that they who pretend to be wiser and better than others, when they have bitter, envious zeal and strife in their hearts, vainly glory and lie against the truth. 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.' (Read but the story of the Jewish zealots in Josephus, and the heretical zealots in all ages of the church, and you will perceive the truth of this.) When such quarrelsome spirits are filling the church with contentions or vexations about their meats, and drinks, and days, &c. the Christian indeed understandeth that the kingdom of God consisteth not of such things as these, but in 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God,

and approved of (wise and sober) men. Therefore he followeth after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another ; and will not for meats, &c. destroy the work of God.' He stayeth not till peace be offered him, or brought home to him, but he ' followeth peace with all men, as well as holiness.' If it fly from him, he pursueth it : if it be denied him, he seeketh it, and will not refuse to stoop to the poorest for it, and to beg it of his inferiors, if it were upon his knees, rather than be denied it, and live an unpeaceable disquiet life. For he believeth, that ' blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.'

2. And the weak Christian hath the same spirit, and therefore the love of peace is most predominant in him. But alas, he is too easily tempted into religious passions, discontents, contentious disputations, quarrelsome and opprobrious words ; and his judgment lamentably darkened and perverted whenever contentious zeal prevaieth, and passions do perturb the quiet and orderly operations of his soul. He wanteth both the knowledge and the experience and the mellowness of spirit, which riper Christians have attained. He hath a less degree of charity, and is less acquainted with the mischiefs of unpeaceableness : and therefore it is the common course of young professors, to be easily tempted into unpeaceable ways : and when they have long tried them (if they prove not hypocrites) to come off at last upon experience of the evils of them ; and so the young Christians conjunct with some hypocrites make up the rigorous, fierce, contentious and vexatious party,

and the aged riper Christians make up the holy, moderate, healing party, that groan and pray for the church's peace, and mourn in secret both for the ungodliness and violence which they cannot heal. Yea the difference is much apparent in the books and sermons which each of them is best pleased with. The ripe experienced Christian loveth those sermons that kindle love and tend to peace; and love such healing books as do narrow differences, and tend to reconcile and heal, such as Bishop Hall's *Peacemaker*, and *Pax terris*, and all his writings; and Bishop Davenant's, Bishop Morton's, and Bishop Hall's *Pacificatory Epistles to Duræus*, and Mr. Burroughs's *Irenicon*, Ludov. Crocius, Amyraldus, Junius, Paræus's, and many other *Irenicons* written by foreign divines, to say nothing of those that are upon single controversies. But the younger uncharitable Christians are better pleased with such books and sermons as call them aloud to be very zealous for this or that controverted point of doctrine, or for or against some circumstance of worship or church discipline, or about some fashions, or customs, or indifferent things, as if the kingdom of God were in them.

3. But the seeming Christian is either a mere temporiser, that will be of that religion whatever it be which is most in fashion, or which the higher powers are of, or which will cost him least: or else he will run into the other extreme, and lift up himself by affected singularities, and by making a bustle and stir in the world about some small and controverted point, and careth not to sacrifice the peace

and safety of the church, to the honour of his own opinions. And as small as the Christian church is, he must be of a smaller society than it, that he may be sure to be amongst the best; while indeed he hath no sincerity at all, but placeth his hopes in being of the right church or party or opinion: and for his party or church, he burneth with a feverish kind of zeal, and is ready to call for fire from heaven; and to deceive him, the devil sendeth him some from hell, to consume those that are not of his mind: yet doth he bring it as an angel of light to defend the truth and church of Christ. And indeed when the devil will be the defender of truth, or of the church, or of peace, or order, or piety, he doth it with the most burning zeal: you may know him by the means he useth. He defendeth the church by forbidding the people to read the Scriptures in a known tongue, and by imprisoning and burning the soundest and holiest members of it, and abusing the most learned faithful pastors, and defendeth the flock by casting out the shepherds, and such like means; as the murders of the Waldenses, and the massacres of France and Ireland, and the Spanish inquisition, and Queen Mary's bonfires, and the Powder-plot; yea and the Munster, and the English rage and frenzies, may give you fuller notice of. He that hath no holiness, nor charity to be zealous for, will be zealous for his church, or sect, or customs, or opinions. And then this zeal must be the evidence of his piety: and so the inquisitors have thought they have religiously served God by murdering his servants: and it is the badge of their honour to be the devil's

hangmen, to execute his malice on the members of Christ; and all this is done in zeal for religion by irreligious hypocrites. There is no standing before the malicious zeal of a graceless Pharisee, when it riseth up for his carnal interest, or the honour, and traditions, and customs of his sect. ‘And they were filled with madness, and communed with one another what they might do to Jesus.’ The zeal of a true Christian consumeth himself with grief to see the madness of the wicked: but the zeal of the hypocrite consumeth others, that by the light of the fire his religiousness may be seen. You may see the Christian’s fervent love to God, by the fervent flames which he can suffer for his sake: and you may see the fervent love of the hypocrite, by the flames which he kindleth for others. By these he crieth with Jehu, ‘Come and see my zeal for the Lord.’

LV. 1. A Christian indeed is one that most highly esteemeth and regardeth the interest of God and men’s salvation in the world; and taketh all things else to be inconsiderable in comparison of these. The interest of great men, and nobles, and commanders; yea and his own in temporal respects, as riches, honour, health and life, he taketh to be things unworthy to be named in competition with the interest of Christ and souls. The thing that his heart is most set upon in the world, is that God be glorified, and that the world acknowledge him their King, and that his laws be obeyed, and that darkness, and infidelity, and ungodliness may be cast out; and that pride, and worldliness, and fleshly



lusts may not hurry the miserable world into perdition. It is one of the saddest and most amazing thoughts that ever entereth into his heart, to consider how much of the world is overwhelmed in ignorance and wickedness, and how great the kingdom of the devil is, in comparison of the kingdom of Christ; that God should forsake so much of his creation; that Christianity should not be owned in above the sixth part of the world; and popish pride and ignorance, with the corruptions of many other sects, and the worldly carnal minds of hypocrites, should rob Christ of so much of this little part, and leave him so small a flock of holy ones, that must possess the kingdom. His soul consenteth to the method of the Lord's Prayer, as prescribing us the order of our desires. And in his prayers he seeketh first (in order of estimation and intention) the hallowing of God's name, and the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven, before his daily bread, or the pardon of his sins, or the deliverance of his own soul from temptations and the evil one. Mark him in his prayers, and you shall find that he is, above other men, taken up in earnest petitions for the conversion of the heathen and infidel world, and the undeceiving of Mahometans, Jews, and heretics, and the clearing of the church from those papal tyrannies, and fopperies, and corruptions, which make Christianity hateful or contemptible in the eyes of the heathen and Mahometan world, and hinder their conversion. No man so much lamenteth the pride, and covetousness, and laziness, and unfaithfulness of the pastors

of the church, because of their doleful consequences to the Gospel and the souls of men ; and yet with all possible honour to the sacred office which they thus profane. No man so heartily lamenteth the contentions and divisions among Christians, and the miserable destruction of charity thereby. It grieveth him to see how much selfishness, pride, and malice prevaileth with them that should shine as lights in a benighted world, and how obstinate and incurable they seem to be, against the plainest means and humblest motions, for the church's edification and peace. He envieth not kings and great men their dominions, wealth, or pleasure ; nor is he at all ambitious to participate in their tremendous exaltation : but the thing that his heart is set upon is, that the ' kingdoms of the world may all become the kingdoms of the Lord,' and that the Gospel may every where ' have free course and be glorified,' and the preachers of it be encouraged, or at least ' delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.' Little careth he who is uppermost or conquereth in the world, or who goeth away with the preferments or riches of the earth (supposing that he fail not of his duty to his rulers), so that it may go well with the affairs of the Gospel, and souls be but helped in the way to heaven. Let God be honoured, and souls converted and edified, and he is satisfied. This is it that maketh the times good in his account : he thinketh not as the proud and carnal church of Rome, that the times are best when the clergy is richest and greatest in the world, and overtop princes, and claim the secular power, and live in worldly pomp



and pleasures. But when holiness most aboundeth, and the members of Christ are likest to their head, and when multitudes of sincere believers are daily added to the church; and when the mercy and holiness of God shine forth in the numbers and purity of his saints. It is no riches or honour that can be heaped upon himself or any others, that make the times seem good to him, if knowledge and godliness are discountenanced and hindered, and the way to heaven is made more difficult; if atheism, infidelity, ungodliness, pride, and malignity do prevail, and truth and sincerity are driven into the dark, and when 'he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey;' when 'the godly man ceaseth, and the faithful fail from among the children of men; when every man speaketh vanity to his neighbour, and the poor are oppressed, and the needy sigh, and the wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.' The times are good when the men are good, and evil when the men are evil, be they never so great or prosperous; as Nehemiah, when he was cup-bearer to the king himself, yet wept and mourned for the desolations of Jerusalem. Whoever prospereth, the times are ill when there is a 'famine of the word of the Lord,' and when 'the chief of the priests and people do transgress, and mock God's messengers, and despise his words, and misuse his prophets;' when the apostles are 'charged to speak no more in the name of Christ.' It is a text enough to make one tremble, to think into what a desperate condition the Jews were carried by a partial selfish zeal, 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 sin alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.' When the interest of themselves and their own nation and priesthood did so far blind and pervert them, that they durst persecute the preachers of the Gospel, and 'forbid them to speak to the people that they might be saved,' it was a sign that wrath was come upon them to the uttermost. A Christian indeed had rather be without Jeroboam's kingdom, than make Israel to sin, and make the basest of the people priests, and 'stretch out his hand against the prophet of the Lord.' He had rather labour with his hands, as Paul, and live in poverty and rags, so that the Gospel may be powerfully and plentifully preached, and holiness abound, than to live in all the prosperity of the world with the hinderance of men's salvation. He had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than be a lord in the kingdom of Satan. He cannot rise by the ruins of the church, nor feed upon those morsels that are the price of the blood of souls.

2. And the weakest Christian is in all this of the same mind, saving that private and selfish interest is not so fully overcome, nor so easily and resolutely denied.

3. But here the hypocrite sheweth the falseness of his heart; his own interest is it that chooseth his religion; and, that he may not torment himself by being wicked in the open light, he maketh himself

believe that whatsoever is most for his own interest, is most pleasing unto God, and most for the good of souls, and the interests of the Gospel; so that the carnal Romish clergy can persuade their consciences that all the darkness and superstitions of their kingdom, and all their opposition of the light of the Gospel of Christ, do make for the honour of God and the good of souls, because they uphold their tyranny, wealth, and pomp, and pleasure; or if they cannot persuade their consciences to believe so gross a lie, let church and souls speed how they will, they will favour nothing that favoureth not their interest and ends; and the interest of the flesh and spirit, of the world and Christ, are so repugnant, that commonly such worldlings take the serious practice of godliness for the most hateful thing, and the serious practisers of it for the most insufferable persons. The enmity of interests with the enmity of nature, between the woman's and the serpent's seed, will maintain that warfare to the end of the world, in which the prince of the powers of darkness shall seem to prevail (as he did against our crucified Lord); but he shall be overcome by his own successes, and the just shall conquer by patience, when they seem most conquered. The name, and form, and image of religion, the carnal hypocrite doth not only bear, but favour, and himself accept; but the life and serious practice he abhorreth, as inconsistent with his worldly interest and ends. For these he can find in his heart, with Ahab, to hate and imprison Micaiah, and prefer his four hundred flattering prophets. If Luther will

touch the pope's crown, and the friars' bellies, they will not scruple to oppose and ruin both him and all such preachers in the world, if they were able.

LVI. 1. A Christian indeed, is one whose holiness usually maketh him an eyesore to the ungodly world; and his charity, and peaceableness, and moderation, maketh him to be censured as not strict enough, by the superstitious and dividing sects of Christians. For seeing the church hath suffered between these two sorts of opposers ever since the suffering of Christ himself, it cannot be but the solid Christian offend them both, because he hath that which both dislike. All the ungodly hate him for his holiness, which is cross to their interest and way; and all the dividers will censure him for that universal charity and moderation, which is against their factious and destroying zeal. Even Christ himself was not strict enough (in superstitious observances) for the ceremonious zealous Pharisees. He transgressed (with his disciples) the tradition of the elders, in neglecting their observances, who transgressed the commandment of God by their tradition. He was not strict enough in their uncharitable observation of the Sabbath day. John, that was eminent for fasting, they said, had a devil. 'The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man, gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; but wisdom is justified of her children.' And the weak Christians did censure those that durst eat those meats, and do those things which they conceived to be unlawful; they that err themselves, and make

God a service which he never appointed, will censure all as lukewarm, or temporisers, or wide-conscienced men, that err not with them, and place not their religion in such superstitious observances, as 'touch not, taste not, handle not,' &c. And the raw censorious Christians are offended with the charitable Christian because he damneth not as many and as readily as they, and shutteth not enow out of the number of believers, and judgeth not rigorously enough of their ways. In a word, he is taken by one sort to be too strict, and by the other to be too compliant or indifferent in religion, because he placeth not the kingdom of God in meats and days, and such like circumstances, but in 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' And as Paul withstood Peter to his face, for drawing men to make scruple or conscience of things lawful, so is the sound Christian withstood by the superstitious, for not making scruple of lawful things.

2. And the weak Christian is in the same case, so long as he followeth prudent, pious, charitable guides; but if he be taken in the snares of superstition, he pleaseth the superstitious party, though he displease the world.

3. And whereas the solid Christian will not stir an inch from truth and duty, to escape either the hatred of the wicked, or the bitterest censures of the sectary or the weak, the hypocrite must needs have one party on his side; for if both condemn him, and neither applaud him, he loseth his peculiar reward.

LVII. 1. The confirmed Christian doth under-

stand the necessity of a faithful ministry, for the safety of the weak (as well as the conversion of the wicked), and for the preservation of the interest of religion upon earth; and, therefore, no personal unworthiness of ministers, nor any calumnies of enemies, can make him think or speak dishonourably of that sacred office. But he reverenceth it as instituted by Christ; and though he loaths the folly and wickedness of those that run before they are sent, and are utterly insufficient or ungodly, and take it up for a living or trade only, as they would a common work, and are 'sons of Belial that know not the Lord,' and cause the 'offering of the Lord to be abhorred;' yet, no such temptation shall overthrow his reverence to the office, which is the ordinance of Christ; much less will he be unthankful to those that are able and faithful in their office, and labour instantly for the good of souls, as willing to spend and be spent for their salvation. When the world abuseth, and derideth, and injureth them, he is one that honoureth them, both for their work and Master's sake, and the experience which he hath had of the blessing of God on their labours to himself; for he knoweth that the smiting of the shepherds is but the devil's ancient way for the scattering of the flock; though he knoweth that 'if the salt have lost its savour, it is good for nothing, neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out, and it is trodden under foot: (he that hath ears to hear, let him hear).' Yet he also knoweth, that 'he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's



reward;' and that he that 'receiveth them, receiveth Christ; and he that despiseth them,' that are sent by him, 'despiseth him.' He therefore readily obeyeth those commands: 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as those that must give account.' 'We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work sake, and be at peace among yourselves.' 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.'

2. But though the weak Christian be of the same mind, so far as he is sanctified, yet is he much more easily tempted into a wrangling censoriousness against his teachers, though they be never so able and holy men: and by seducers may be drawn to oppose them or speak contemptuously of them, as the Galatians did of Paul, and some of the Corinthians: accounting him as their enemy for telling them the truth, when lately they would have plucked out their eyes to do him good.

3. But the hypocrite is most easily engaged against them, either when they grate upon the guilt of his bosom-sin, or open his hypocrisy, or plainly cross him in his carnal interest; or else when his pride hath conquered his sobriety, and engaged him in some sect or erroneous way, which his teachers are against, and would reduce him from.

LVIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that hath stored up such manifold experience of the fulfilling

of God's promises, and the hearing of prayers, and of the goodness of his holy ways, as will greatly fortify him against all temptations to infidelity, apostasy, or distrust. No one hath stronger temptations usually than he; and no one is so well furnished with weapons to resist them. The arguments of most others are fetched out of their books only; but he hath, moreover, a life of experiences to confirm his faith, and so hath the witness in himself. He hath tried and found that in God, in holiness, in faith, in prayer, which will never suffer him to forsake them. Yea, it is like that he hath upon record some such wonders in the answer of prayers, as might do much to silence an infidel himself. I am sure many Christians have witnessed such demonstrations of the extraordinary hand of God, as have done much to destroy the remnants of their own unbelief.

2. But the experiences of the younger, weaker Christians, are much shorter, and less serviceable to their faith: and they have not judgment enough to understand and make use of the dealings of God, but are ready to plead his providences unto evil ends and consequences, and to take their own passionate imaginations for the workings of the Spirit: it is ordinary with them to say (this or that was set upon my heart, or spoken to me), as if it had been some divine inspiration, when it was nothing but the troubled workings of a weak distempered brain: and it is their own phantasy and heart that saith that to them, which they think the Spirit of God within them said.



3. And the hypocrite wanteth those establishing experiments of the power of the Gospel, and the hearing of prayers, and fulfilling of promises, and communion with Christ in the Spirit; and therefore he is the more open to the power of temptations, and a subtle disputer will easilier corrupt him, and carry him away to flat apostasy: for he wanteth the root and witness in himself.

LIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that highly valueth sanctified affections and passions, that all he doth may be done as lively as possibly he can: and also holy abilities for expression. But he much more valueth the three great essential constant parts of the new creature within him:—that is, 1. A high estimation of God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness in his understanding; above all, that can be set in any competition. 2. A resolved choice and adhesion of the will, by which he preferreth God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, above all that can be set against them, and is fixedly resolved here to place his happiness and his hopes. 3. The main drift and endeavours of his life, in which he ‘seeketh first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.’ In these three (his highest estimation, his resolved choice and complacencies, and his chief endeavours) he taketh his standing constant evidences of his sincerity to consist: and by these he trieth himself as to his state; and not by the passionate feelings or affections of his heart, nor by his memory or gifts, or orderly thinking or expression. And it is these rational operations of his soul in which he knoweth that holiness doth principally

consist ; and therefore he most laboureth to be strong in these. 1. To ground his judgment well ; 2. And to resolve to fix his will ; 3. And to order his conversation aright. Yet highly valuing sensible affections and gifts of utterance, but in subserviency to those which are the vital acts.

2. But the weak Christian usually placeth most of his religion in the more affectionate and expressive part. He striveth more with his heart for passionate apprehensions, than for complacency and fixed resolutions. He is often in doubt of his sincerity, when he wanteth the feeling affectionate workings which he desireth, and thinketh he hath no more grace than that he hath sensibility of expressive gifts. And so as he buildeth his comfort upon these inconstant signs, his comforts are accordingly inconstant : sometime he thinketh he hath grace, when his body or other advantages do help the excitation of his lively affections. And when the dulness of his body, or other impediments, hinder this, he questioneth his grace again, because he understandeth not aright the nature and chiefest acts of grace.

3. The hypocrite hath neither the rational, nor the passionate part in sincerity ; but he may go much further in the latter than in the former. A quick and passionate nature, though unsanctified, may be brought to shed more tears, and express more fervour, than many a holy person can. Especially upon the excitation of some quickening sermon, or some sharp affliction, or great conviction, or at the approach of death. Few of the most holy

persons can constantly retain so lively, fervent, passionate repentings, and desires and resolutions to amend, as some carnal persons have in sickness. The power of fear alone doth make them more earnest, than love maketh many a gracious soul. But when the fear is over, they are the same again. How oft have I heard a sick man most vehemently profess his resolutions for a holy life, which all have come to nothing afterwards? How oft have I heard a common drunkard with tears cry out against himself for his sin, and yet go on in it? And how many gracious persons have I known, whose judgments and wills have been groundedly resolved for God and holiness, and their lives have been holy, fruitful, and obedient, who yet could not shed a tear for sin, nor feel any very great sorrows or joys? If you judge of a man by his earnestness in some good moods, and not by the constant tenor of his life, you will think many a hypocrite to be better than most saints. Who would have thought that had seen him only in that fit, but that Saul had been a penitent man, when 'he lift up his voice and wept, and said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.' A smaller matter will raise some sudden passions, than will renew the soul, and give the pre-eminence to God, and holiness, and heaven, in the judgment, will, and conversation.

LX. 1. A Christian indeed confirmed in grace, is one that maketh it the business of his life to prepare for death; and delayeth not his serious

thoughts of it, and preparations for it till it surprise him ; and therefore when it cometh it findeth him prepared, and he gladly entertaineth it as the messenger of his Father, to call him to his everlasting home. It is not a strange unexpected thing to him, to hear he must die : he died daily in his daily sufferings, and mortified contempt of worldly things, and in his daily expectation of his change. He wondereth to see men at a dying time, surprised with astonishment and terror, who jovially or carelessly neglected it before ; as if they had never known till then that they must die ? or as if a few years' time were reason enough for so great a difference. For that, which he certainly knoweth will be, he looketh at, as if it were even at hand ; and his preparation for it is more serious in his health, than other men's is on their death-bed. He useth more carefully to bethink himself what graces he shall need at a dying time, and in what case he shall then wish his soul to be ; and accordingly he laboureth in his provisions now ; even as if it were to be to-morrow. He verily believeth that it is incomparably better for him to be with Christ, than to abide on earth, and therefore (though death of itself be an enemy, and terrible to nature) yet being the only passage into happiness, he gladly entertaineth it. Though he have not himself any clear and satisfactory apprehensions of the place and state of the happiness of departed souls, yet it quieteth him to know that they shall be with Christ, and that Christ knoweth all, and prepareth and secureth for him that promised rest. Though he is not free

from all the natural fears of death, yet his belief and hope of endless happiness doth abate those fears by the joyful expectation of the gain which followeth. (See my book called the Last Enemy, and the Last Work of a Believer, and that of Self-denial against the Fears of Death.)

But especially he loveth and longeth for the coming of Christ to judgment: as knowing that then the marriage-day of the Lamb is come, and then the desires and hopes of all believers shall be satisfied: 'Then shall the righteous shine as stars in the kingdom of their Father;' and the hand of violence shall not reach them. Every enemy then is overcome, and all the Redeemer's work is consummated, and the kingdom delivered up unto the Father. Then shall the ungodly and the unmerciful be confounded, and the righteous filled with everlasting joy, when their Lord shall thoroughly plead their cause, and justify them against the accusations of Satan, and all the lies of his malicious instruments. O blessed, glorious, joyful day, when Christ shall come with thousands of his angels to execute vengeance on the ungodly world, and to be 'glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe!' When the patient followers of the Lamb shall behold him in glory, whom they have believed in, and shall see, that they did not pray, or hope, or wait in vain! When Christ himself and his sacred truth shall be justified and glorified in the presence of the world, and his enemies' mouths for ever stopped: 'When he shall convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have

ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have 'spoken against him!' Where then is the mouth that pleaded the cause of infidelity and impiety? and reproached the serious holiness of believers? and made a jest of the judgments of the Lord? Then what terrors and confusion, and shame, what fruitless repentings will seize upon that man, that set himself against the holy ones of the Lord, and knew not the day of his visitation, and embraced the image and form of godliness, while he abhorred the power. The joys which will then possess the hearts of the justified, will be such as now no heart can comprehend. When love shall come to be glorified in the highest expression, to those that lately were so low; when all their doubts, and fears, and sorrows, shall be turned into full contenting sight, and all tears shall be wiped away, and all reproaches turned into glory, and every enemy overcome, and sin destroyed, and holiness perfected, and our 'vile bodies changed, and made like the glorious body' of Christ; then will the love and work of our redemption be fully understood; and then a saint will be a saint indeed; when with Christ they shall 'judge the angels and the world,' and shall hear from Christ, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,' 'enter ye into the joy of your Lord.' Then every knee shall bow to Christ, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, 'to the glory of God the Father;' then sin will fully appear in its malignity, and holiness in its lustre unto all: the proud



will then be abased, and the mouths of all the wicked stopped; when they shall see to their confusion the glory of that Christ whom they despised, and of those holy ones whom they made their scorn: in vain will they then knock when the door is shut, and cry, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us;' and in vain will they then wish, O that we had known the day of our visitation, that we might have 'died the death of the righteous, and our latter end might have been like his.'

The day of death is to true believers a day of happiness and joy; but it is much easier for them to think with joy on the coming of Christ, and the day of judgment, because it is a day of fuller joy, and soul and body shall be conjoined in the blessedness; and there is nothing in it to be so great a stop to our desires, as death is, which naturally is an enemy. God hath put a love of life, and fear of death into the nature of every sensible creature, as necessary for the preservation of themselves and others, and the orderly government of the world; but what is there in the blessed day of judgment, which a justified child of God should be averse to? O, if he were but sure that this would be the day, or week, or year of the coming of his Lord, how glad would the confirmed Christian be! and with what longings would he be looking up, to see that most desired sight!

2. And the weak Christian is so far of the same mind, that he had rather come to God by death and judgment, than not at all: (except when temptations make him fear that he shall be condemned.) He

hath fixedly made choice of that felicity, which till then he cannot attain. He would not take all the pleasures of this world, for his hopes of the happiness of that day: but yet he thinketh not of it with so strong a faith, and great consolation, nor with such boldness and desire, as the confirmed Christian doth; but either with much more dull security, or more perplexity and fear. His thoughts of God and of the world to come are much more dark and doubtful; and his fears of that day are usually so great as make his desires and joys scarce felt: only he thinketh not of it with that contempt or stupidity as the infidel or hardened sinner; nor with the terrors of those that have no God, no Christ, no hope, (except when temptation bringeth him near to the borders of despair.) His death indeed is unspeakably safer than the death of the ungodly; and the joys which he is entering into will quickly end the terror; but yet he hath no great comfort at the present; but only so much trust in Christ, as keepeth his heart from sinking into despair.

3. But to the hypocrite or seeming Christian, death and judgment are the most unwelcome days, and the thoughts of them the most unwelcome thoughts. He would take any tolerable life on earth, at any time, for all his hopes of heaven; and that not only through the doubts of his own sincerity (which may sometime be the case of a tempted Christian), but through the unsoundness of his belief of the life to come, or the utter unsuitableness of his soul to such a blessedness, which maketh him



look at it as less desirable to him, than a life of fleshly pleasures here. All that he doth for heaven is upon mere necessity, because he knoweth that die he must, and he had rather be in heaven than in hell, though he had rather be in prosperity on earth than either: and as he taketh heaven but as a reserve or second good, so he seeketh it with reserves, and in the second place: and having no better preparations for death and judgment, no marvel if they be his greatest terror. He may possibly, by his self-deceit, have some abatement of his fears, and he may by pride and wit seem very valiant and comfortable at his death, to hide his fear and pusillanimity from the world. But the cause of all his misery is, that he 'sought not first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' and laid not up a treasure in heaven, but upon earth, and loved this world above God, and above the world to come; and so his heart is not set on heaven, nor his affections on the things above; and therefore he hath not that love to God, to Christ, to saints, to perfect holiness, which should make that world most desirable in his eyes, and make him think unfeignedly that it is best for him to depart and live with Christ for ever. Having not the divine nature, nor having lived the divine life in walking with God, his complacency and desires are carnal according to the nature which he hath. And this is the true cause (and not only his doubts of his own sincerity) of his unwillingness to die, or to see the day of Christ's appearance.

And thus I have shewed you from the word of God, and the nature of Christianity, the true cha-

acters of the confirmed Christian, and of the weak Christian, and of the declining Christian.

The uses for which I have drawn up these characters, and which the reader is to make of them; are these.

I. Here the weak Christian and the hypocrite may see what manner of persons they ought to be. Not only how unsafe it is to remain in a state of hypocrisy, but also how uncomfortable, and unserviceable, and troublesome it is, to remain in a state of weakness and diseasedness; what a folly (and indeed a sign of hypocrisy) is it to think, if I had but grace enough to save me, I would desire no more, or I would be well contented. Are you content if you have but life here, to differentiate you from the dead? If you were continually infants, that must be fed and carried, and made clean by others; or if you had a continual gout, or stone, or leprosy, and lived in continual want and misery, you would think that life alone is not enough; and that *non vivere tantum sed valere vita est* that life is uncomfortable, when we have nothing but life, and all the delights of life are gone. He that lieth in continual pain and want is weary of his life, if he cannot separate it from those calamities. He that knoweth how necessary strength is, as well as life, to do any considerable service for God, and how many pains attend the diseases and infirmities of the weak, and what great dishonour cometh to Christ and religion, by the faults and childishness

of many that shall be pardoned and saved, would certainly bestir him with all possible care to get out of this sick or infant state.

II. By this you may see who are the strong Christians and who are the weak : it is not always the man of learning and free expressions, that can speak longest and wiseliest of holy things, that is the strong confirmed Christian ; but he that most excelleth in the love of God and man, and in a heavenly mind and holy life. Nor is it he that is unlearned, or of a weak memory, or slow expression, that is the weakest Christian ; but he that hath least love to God and man, and the most love to his carnal self, and to the world, and the strongest corruptions, and the weakest grace. Many a poor day-labourer or woman, that can scarce speak sense, is a stronger Christian (as being stronger in faith, and love, and patience, and humility, and mortification, and self-denial) than many great preachers and doctors of the church.

III. You see here what kind of men they be that we call the godly ; and what that godliness is which we plead for, against the malicious serpentine generation. The liars would make men believe, that by godliness we mean a few affected strains, or hypocritical shows, or heartless lip-service, or singular opinions, or needless scrupulosity, or ignorant zeal ; yea a schism, or faction, or sedition, or rebellion, or what the devil please to say. If these sixty characters describe any such thing, then I will not deny, that in the way that such men call heresy, faction, schism, singularity, so worship we the God of our

fathers; but if not, the Lord rebuke thee, Satan, and hasten the day when the 'lying lips shall be put to silence.'

IV. By this also you may see how inexcusable the enemies of Christianity and godliness are, and for what it is that they hate and injure it. Is there any thing in all this character of a Christian, that deserveth the suspicion or hatred of the world? what harm is there in it? or what will it do against them? I may say to them of his servants as Christ did of himself, 'Many good works have I shewed you from my Father: for which of these works do ye stone me?' Many heavenly graces are in the sanctified believer: for which of these do you hate and injure him? I know that goodness is so far in credit with human nature, that you will answer as the Jews did, 'For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy:' we hate them not for godliness, but for hypocrisy and sin. But if it be so indeed, 1. Speak not against godliness itself, nor against the strictest performance of our duty. 2. Yea plead for godliness, and countenance and promote it, while you speak against hypocrisy and sin. 3. And choose out the hypocrite, whose character is here truly set before you, and let him be the object of your enmity and distaste: let it fall on those that are worldlings and time-servers, and will stretch their consciences to their carnal interest, and can do any thing to save their skin; and being false to Christ, can hardly be true to any of their superiors, but only in subordination to themselves. As it is said of Constantius, that he commanded that all his

servants should be turned out of their places that would not renounce Christianity: and when he had thereby tried them, he turned out all the apostates, (and kept in the sincere) and told them; ' They could not be true to him, that were not true to their God and Saviour.' 4. And see that you be not hypocrites yourselves. You profess yourselves Christians: and what is it to be a Christian indeed, you may here perceive. If any that fall under the character of hypocrites (or worse) shall vilify or hate the sincere Christians as hypocrites, what a horrid aggravation of their hypocrisy will it be?

Indeed it is the best and strongest Christians that have most of the hatred both of the unbelieving and the hypocritical world. And for my own part, I must confess, that the very observation of the universal implacable enmity, which is undeniably seen throughout the world, between the woman's and the serpent's seed (being such as is not found among any other sorts of men on other occasions) doth not a little confirm my belief of the holy Scriptures, and seemeth to be an argument not well to be answered by any enemy of the Christian cause. That it should begin between the two first brothers that ever were born into the world, and stop in nothing lower than shedding the righteous blood of Abel, for no other cause, but because the works of Cain were evil, and his brother's righteous: and that it should go down to the prophets, and Christ, and the apostles, and primitive saints, and continue to this day throughout the earth: and that the profession of the same religion doth not alter it, but rather enrage the enmity

of hypocrites against all that are serious and sincere in the religion which they themselves profess: these are things that no good account can be given of, save only from the predictions and verities of the word of God.

V. Also you may hence perceive, how exceedingly injurious hypocrites and scandalous Christians are to the name of Christ, and cause of Christianity and godliness in the world. The blind malicious enemies of faith and godliness, instead of judging of them by the sacred rule, do look only to the professors, and think of religion as they think of them. If they see the professors of Christianity to be covetous, proud, usurpers, time-servers, self-exalters, cruel, schismatical, rebellious, they presently charge all this upon their religion, and godliness must bear the blame, when all comes but for want of godliness and religion. And all the world hath not done so much against these and all other sins as Christ hath done. What, if Christ's disciples strive who shall be the greatest? Is it to be brought against him, who girdeth himself to wash and wipe their feet, and telleth them, 'that except they be converted, and become as little children, they shall not enter the kingdom of God;' and addeth, 'that though the kings of the Gentiles do exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, yet ye shall not be so?' Is it to be brought against him that hath said to the elders, 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint; but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.' If any called Christians shall be truly schismatical, factious, or turbulent, is it a fault in him that hath prayed the Father that they may all be one, and hath so vehemently intreated them 'that they speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, and that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;' and hath charged them to 'mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to avoid them?' If any called Christians shall be seditious or rebellious, or as the papists believe, that the clergy are from under the jurisdiction of kings, and that the pope hath power to excommunicate princes, and absolve their subjects from their allegiance, and give their dominion to others, (as it is decreed in the General Council at the Lateran, under Innocent the Third, Can. 3.) Is all this the fault of Christ, who hath paid tribute to Cæsar, and hath commanded that every soul be subject to the higher powers, and not resist, and this for conscience' sake, and hath bid his disciples rather to turn the other cheek than to seek revenge; and hath told them, that they that use the sword (of rebellion, or revenge, or cruelty) shall perish by the sword. If any Christians will, under pretence of religion, set up a cruel inquisition, or kill men to convert them, or become 'self-lovers, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent,

fierce, despisers of those that are good,' &c. Is this the fault of him who hath forbidden all this? If for their own domination, lust, or covetousness, men called Christians will be worse than heathens and wolves to one another, is this the fault of him that hath made it his sheep-mark by which we must be known to all men to be his disciples, 'that we must love one another?' and hath told them, that if they bite and 'devour one another, they shall be consumed one of another?' and hath blessed the merciful, as those that shall find mercy, and hath told men that what they do to his little ones, shall be taken as if it were done to himself; and hath commanded the 'strong to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves;' and 'to receive one another as Christ received us;' and hath told those that offend but 'one of his little ones,' that it 'were good for that man that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea;' and hath told him that 'smiteth his fellow-servants, that his Lord will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' I wonder what men would have Christ do, to free himself and the Christian religion from the imputation of the sins of the hypocrites, and the weak distempered Christians. Would they have him yet make stricter laws (when they hate these for being so strict already?) Or would they have him condemn sinners to more grievous punishment, when they are already



offended at the severity of his threatenings? O what an unrighteous generation are his enemies, that blame the law because men break it? and blame religion, because many are not religious enough? As if the sun must be hated, because that shadows and dungeons do want light; or life and health must be hated, because many are sick and pained by their diseases! But Christ will shortly stop all the mouths of these unreasonable men; and O how easily will he justify himself, his laws, and all his holy ways, when all iniquity shall be for ever silent! And though 'it must needs be that offences come, yet woe to the world because of offences, and woe to the man by whom they come.'

The wrong that Christ receiveth from hypocrites and scandalous Christians (of all ranks and places) is not to be estimated. These are the causes that Christianity and godliness are so contemptible in the eyes of the world! that Jews, and Heathens, and Mahometans, are still unconverted and deriders of the faith; because they see such scandalous tyranny and worship among the Papists, and such scandalous lives among the greatest part of professed Christians in the world: whereas if the papal tyranny were turned into the Christian ministry, and their irrational fopperies, and histrionic hypocritical worship were changed into a reverent, rational, and spiritual worship; and the cruel, carnal, worldly lives of men called Christians, were changed into self-denial, love and holiness: in a word if Christians were Christians indeed, and such as I have here described from their rule; what a powerful

means would it be of the conversion of all the unbelieving world? Christianity would then be in the eye of the world, as the sun in its brightness, and the glory of it would dazzle the eyes of beholders, and draw in millions to inquire after Christ, who are now driven from him by the sins of hypocrites and scandalous believers.

And this doth not contradict what I said before, of the enmity of the world to holiness, and that the best are most abused by the ungodly: for even this enmity must be rationally cured, as by the error of reason it is fed. God useth, by the power of intellectual light, to bring all those out of darkness whom he saveth, and so bringeth them from the power of Satan to himself. Men hate not holiness as good, but as misconceived to be evil. Evil, I say to them, because it is opposite to the sensual pleasures which they take to be their chiefest good. And the way of curing their enmity, is by shewing them their errors, and that is by shewing them the excellency and necessity of that which they unreasonably distaste.

VI. Lastly. In these characters you have some help in the work of self-examination, for the trial both of the truth and strength of grace. Perhaps it will be objected, that in other treatises I have reduced all the infallible marks of grace to a smaller number. To which I answer, I still say, that the predominancy or prevalency of the interest of God as our God, and Christ as our Saviour, and the Spirit as our Sanctifier, in the estimation of the understanding, the resolved choice of the will, and

the government of the life, against all the worldly interest of the flesh, is the only infallible sign of a justified regenerate soul. But this whole hath many parts, and it is abundance of particulars in which this sincerity is to be found: even all the sixty characters which I have here named, are animated by that one, and contained in it. And I think to the most, the full description of a Christian in his essential and integral parts, (yet shewing which are indeed essential,) is the best way to acquaint them with the nature of Christianity, and to help them in the trial of themselves. And as it were an abuse of human nature, for a painter to draw the picture of a man, without arms, or legs, or nose, or eyes, because he may be a man without them: so would it have been in me to draw only a maimed picture of a Christian, because a maimed Christian is a Christian. Yet because there are so many maimed Christians in the world, I have also shewed you their lamentable defects; not in a manner which tendeth to encourage them in their sins and wants under pretence of comforting them, but in that manner which may best excite them to their duty, in order to their recovery, without destroying their necessary supporting comforts.

O happy church, and state, and family, which are composed of such confirmed Christians! where the predominate temperature is such as I have here described! Yea happy is the place where magistrates and ministers are such; who are the vital parts of State and Church, and the instruments appointed to communicate these perfections to the

rest. But how much more happy is the new Jerusalem, the city of the living God, where the perfected spirits of the just in perfect life, and light and love, are perfectly beholding, and admiring, and praising, and pleasing the eternal God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier for ever! where the least and meanest is greater and more perfect than the confirmed Christian here described! and where hypocrisy is utterly excluded, and imperfection ceaseth, with scandal, censures, uncharitableness, division, and all its other sad effects: and where the souls that thirsted after righteousness shall be fully satisfied; and love God more than they can now desire! And never grieve themselves or others with their wants or weaknesses, or misdoings any more. And, O blessed day, when our most blessed Head shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels, and shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe; whose weakness here occasioned his dishonour, and their own contempt! When the seed of grace is grown up into glory, and all the world, whether they will or not, shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; between the clean and the unclean, and between him that sweareth, and him that feareth an oath. And though now 'our life is hid with Christ in God,' and it yet appeareth not (to the sight of ourselves or others) what we shall be; yet then 'when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory.' Away then, my soul, from this dark, deceitful, and vexatious world! Love not thy diseases, thy fetters,

and calamities : groan daily to thy Lord, and earnestly groan to be clothed upon with thy house which is from heaven, that mortality may be swallowed up of life ! Join in the harmonious desires of the creatures, who groan to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. ‘ Abide in him, and walk in righteousness, that when he shall appear, thou mayest have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.’ Join not with the evil servants, who say in their hearts, our Lord delayeth his coming, and begin to smite their fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, whose Lord shall come in a day when they look not for him, and in an hour that they are not aware of, and shall cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. O watch and pray that thou enter not into temptation ! And be patient, for the Judge is at the door ! Lift up thy head with earnest expectation, O my soul, for thy redemption draweth near ! Rejoice in hope before thy Lord, for he cometh ; he cometh to judge the world in righteousness and truth. Behold he cometh quickly, though faith be failing, and iniquity abound, and love waxeth cold, and scoffers say, Where is the promise of his coming ! Make haste, O thou whom my soul desireth ! and come in glory as thou first camest in humility ! and conform them to thyself in glory, whom thou madest conformable to thy sufferings and humility ! Let the holy city, new Jerusalem, be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ; and let God’s tabernacle be with men ! that he may dwell with them and be their God, and

wipe away their tears; and death, and sorrow, and crying, and pain may be no more, but former things may pass away! Keep up our faith, our hope, our love! and daily vouchsafe us some beams of thy directing consolatory light in this our darkness: and be not as a stranger to thy scattered flock, in this desolate wilderness! but let them hear thy voice, and find thy presence, and have such conversation with thee in heaven, in the exercise of faith, and hope, and love, which is agreeable to their low and distant state. Testify to their souls that thou art their Saviour and head, and that they abide in thee, by the Spirit which thou hast given them, abiding, and overcoming in them, and as thy agent preparing them for eternal life. O let not our darkness, nor thy strangeness feed our odious unbelief! O shew thyself more clearly to thy redeemed ones! and come and dwell in our hearts by faith! and by holy love, let us dwell in God, and God in us! that we grope not after him, as those that worship an unknown God. O save us from temptation! and if the messenger of Satan be sent to buffet us, let thy strength be manifest in our weakness, and thy grace appear sufficient for us. And give us the patience which thou tellest us we need, that having done thy will, we may inherit the promise. And bring us to the sight and fruition of our Creator, of 'whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things; to whom be glory for ever.' Amen.









