

THE
ONE THING NECESSARY :

OR
CHRIST'S JUSTIFICATION OF MARY'S CHOICE;

AND
OF HIS SERVANT'S WRONGFULLY ACCUSED

VOL. X.

D D

PREFACE.

IT is not a needless subject which I here offer about needless or less needful things. Little do most men think how much of their wisdom or folly lieth in their right or wrong valuing and using things lawful, and that have an inferior sort of goodness; and how much their salvation or damnation is herein concerned. Men are condemned for an evil love, but not for the love of evil as evil. Nature is against that. To love a lesser good too much, and a greater too little; to love the end but as the means, and the means as the end, is an evil love; '*Non malum volumus, sed male.*' It is the act that is evil when the object is good, either in deed, or in the apprehension of the lover. He may will hurt as hurt to another, but it is as conceited to be some good to himself. Apprehension of good or evil, that is, practical judgment, ruleth the wills and actions of the world. Of how great moment then is it to have a truly informed judgment, and to have teachers that will thus truly inform us! Not about matter of mere talk and dispute, that little concerneth us, but about that which is good or evil to ourselves, and to know indifferent things to be indifferent. It is the pernicious enmity of the fleshly appetite to the soul, that it biasseth the practical judgment and will to take things indifferent to be good and desirable, and almost necessary; and a small sensible good to be a great one, and a great good, which displeaseth sense and appetite, to be small, if not a hurtful evil.

And indeed the Holy Ghost hath told us (Rom. viii. 5—8.) that this is the difference between the truly godly and ungodly, that one is spiritually minded, and the other carnally; that is, one savoureth things spiritual, and judgeth of things according to spiritual reason and interest, and loveth and chooseth them for spiritual goodness; but the carnal have

no such gust, judgment, or love, but value things as the appetite and interest of the flesh inclineth them. Be they both of the same calling, education, and profession, if both were pastors of churches, and preachers of the same doctrine, yet this difference is at the hearts of spiritual and carnal men ; and it usually appeareth to others in their lives. If they be public persons, they will shew men what things they value, and what gain it is that they pursue. The flesh loveth not mortification, nor the cross ; it is always against spiritual laws and life, and spiritual worship and persons, so far as they cross their carnal interest. He that will worship God, that is a Spirit, in spirit and truth, must have a judgment that most valueth spiritual things, and place his love and hope on spiritual delights and happiness. A carnal mind that savoureth only carnal things, and neither is nor can be subject to God's spiritual law, will hardly relish spiritual worship, or a spiritual kind of life.

One of the greatest signs of a hypocrite is, making a great matter of little (worldly and fleshly) things, and making a little matter of great things. All the things of the flesh and world are things indifferent in themselves, or almost indifferent, further than their relation to spiritual good doth make them become good or evil ; good if they further it, and evil if they hinder it. But the hypocrite is never indifferent toward them ; he feeleth no great need of spiritual thoughts, spiritual counsel, or discourse, or preaching, or books, or company. Perhaps he can bear them, but he can be without them ; and doth neither much desire them, or delight in them. A history, or romance, or merry jest, or game is more pleasant to him. But his thoughts are serious for his carnal commodity, pleasure, and reputation ; what he shall eat and drink, and wherewith he shall be clothed. If his house, his maintenance, his meat and drink be not such as the flesh desireth, especially if it be put to straits and sufferings, his sense of it is as quick, and his complaint as serious, as if he were half undone, or it were some great matter at least that he complaineth of. The complaints and tears of many that are in some straits or sufferings should cause wiser tears from serious believers, to see men so miserably carnal, like children that cry for a pin or a feather, as if they had lost their greatest good.

Seriousness is it that sheweth what is next to a man's

heart. It is seriousness and earnestness about fleshly vanity, and want of seriousness about things spiritual and eternal, which is the temperament and character of the hypocrite.

And here I would entreat some that I hope are godly, to forbear so suspicious and disgraceful a course as they are openly guilty of; I mean when they talk so concernedly and eagerly about their meat, and drink, and clothes, and every fleshly thing, as if their hearts were set upon them. Passion and chiding if all be not as their fancies or appetite would have it, doth shew that they are dangerously diseased at least. This meat is not well drest, and the other is too little, or too much; and that sauce is not rightly made, and something or other is still amiss. And all these are talked of as seriously as if the fleshly appetite were the man. In a word, the more serious any man is about great things, the more indifferent he will be about things indifferent. And the more indifferent a man is about the greatest things, the more earnest and serious will he be about things indifferent; and 'vice versa,' the more serious he is about things indifferent, the more indifferent he will be about the one thing necessary. Taking great things for small, and small things for great; necessary things for indifferent, and indifferent or smaller things for necessary, is the folly, and the sin, and the damnation of the ungodly. And because all men will do as they are, it is also the corrupter, troubler, and divider, of the Christian societies, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and conversation, and the confounder of the world. Of which faith and serious godliness is the remedy, which valueth and useth all things as they are.

September 29,
1684.

THE
ONE THING NECESSARY;
OR,
MARY'S CHOICE JUSTIFIED.

LUKE x. 41.

Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful.

HAVING long ago published some sermons on the One Thing Needful, in a Treatise called, "A Saint or a Brute," I find by more experience than I had then, that it is more necessary to say something on the former part of the text than I thought it was. I then lived among poor, labouring, honest people, who had indeed some temptations from outward wants, but little from wealth and superfluities, nor had leisure to waste time upon so many trifles as I see rich and idle persons think they have.

It is here very considerable, 1. That the Author of this reproof was one who was not to be suspected to mistake through ignorance, or want of love to Martha. And though he lived in a low manner, and not as the rich, yet it was not because he wanted such things that he blameth the minding of unnecessary things, for he was Lord of all; and for our sakes he became poor, yet suffered as rich men, that are supposed to be usually the greatest sinners. "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." Isa. liii. 9.

2. And that his reproof was very serious and compassionate, repeating her name, "Martha, Martha."

3. The person reproved was not a wicked, fleshly, worldly person; but one that was beloved by him, and a religious believer.

4. The matter which she is reproved for is partly positive expressed (being "careful and troubled about many things"), and partly implied as privative; not preferring the one thing needful at that time so much as she should have done. Which implieth, 1. That the many things were needless, or less needful things. 2. That they took up both her unseasonable time, and the cares of her mind, unto her trouble.

I need no more words to convince you that Christ here teacheth us this lesson, viz.

'That care and trouble about many needless or less needful things, hindering them from the due minding of the one thing needful, is a sin which Christ reproved in Martha, and therefore blameth in all others who are guilty of it.'

Here, I. Let us consider what Martha's sin in particular was. II. Whether we are not like to be more guilty of the like. III. In what kind this sin is usually committed. IV. What are the excuses for it. V. What is the evil of it which deserveth such reproof. VI. What use we should make of Christ's reproof.

I. Martha's sin (already mentioned) was overmuch care and trouble about her table for Christ's entertainment, while Mary sat hearing his holy discourse; which shewed that she had less appetite than Mary to the holy doctrine of Christ, that could be more easily without it. 2. And that she overvalued the lower part, his bodily entertainment.

Yet there were these extenuations of it. 1. It was not doing any sinful work in itself.

2. It was not needless in its time and measure.

We are allowed to pray for our daily bread; and here is no mention of any superfluities or excess: and so worthy a guest deserved the best provisions: and it is probable that Martha was the chief housekeeper, to whom it most belonged. And no doubt it was a work of love and honour to Christ. Yet though it was for his own person, and had such excuses, Christ would not take part with it, or forbear to blame it.

And indeed one half of her fault lay in blaming her sister that was wiser, and chose better than herself; and Christ spake this as much to justify Mary, as to blame Martha, as the following words shew.

II. And if we judge but by her quality and case, and ours, we are far liker to be thus culpable than Martha was. For,

1. That country was poor in comparison of ours, and had not half the temptations to many needless things, as we have by our riches and their effects.

2. Christ would not have endured such vanities and excesses as we are usually guilty of.

3. It is like, Martha, that was so familiar with Christ, was less addicted to vanities than we now are.

4. Our common vanities, for which few of the better sort blame themselves, have no such extenuations or excuses as the case of Martha had.

III. But we need no more to convince us, than to name some of the many instances in which our sin is far, yea, very far worse than Martha's.

1. How much of most men's thoughts and time is taken up with the needless cares to grow richer, and be better provided in the world? From one end of the year to the other how great a proportion is thus laid out? Cannot we serve God's providence, and labour in our callings, and do our duty, without such a measure of care and trouble? Into how narrow a compass do worldly cares and troubles cast God's service, and men's cares and thoughts of their endless state in the hearts and houses of most men! These thorns and briars are so rank and plentiful, that they choke much of the seed of the Gospel, and make true godliness and heavenly delight to wither away, and come to little.

2. How many needless cares and troubles have most about God's part and providence, which belongs not to them; fearing what may befall them, lest they should be poor or oppressed, or suffer by others, when they should spend those thoughts in caring for their duty, and trusting the love and faithfulness of God? And no other care will avoid their suffering.

3. How much needless, yea, and brutish thoughts and works have many to please and gratify their appetites? What a base, and yet costly service have they that serve a greedy throat, and a beastly fancy!

Had God taken away many men's health, and appetite, that meat and drink had been loathsome to them, it had been a mercy to many such, who by the pleasure that they have in these, are made slaves to the flesh, and sinks of shameful sin, and the football of temptations, and live under continual

wounds of conscience ; and when the cup is absent, they are sinning in their imaginations and desires, and are contriving how the next meal or day to gratify their appetites again. I speak not of the reeling, befooled drunkard, or the spewing glutton, but of them whose care is for throat and belly, that make a great matter of the pleasing or displeasing of their appetites, and think and talk of it so seriously, as if it were some needful or important thing ; that are displeased in mind if their throats be not pleased, and they fare not sumptuously or deliciously every day. When the poor Israelites had not tasted bread or flesh for many years in a wilderness, nor so much as the Egyptian onions, but only manna, they are killed by God's justice because they murmured ; and when they asked flesh, it is said, " They asked meat for their lusts" (Psal. lxxviii.) ; that is, for their mere appetites, without necessity, for life or health. But how much further do most go now, exceeding even the princes or great men in Israel in the matter and manner of their diet (as I believe the most in England do), and yet never blame or suspect themselves ! Turks can forbear wine at Mahomet's command, and the Rechabites, because their father bid them ; and if the physician forbid strong drink or wine to the sick they can forbear ; but sensual sinners will rebel against God for their desired bait, and their heart and thoughts are set upon it.

4. How much also of many vain people's thoughts and care is spent about needless ornaments of apparel ! Do we need any other proof than the opening of our eyes in the streets, yea, in the holy assemblies, as well as in places of evil fame ? Dives is noted by Christ to wear purple and silk, or as we translate it, fine linen ; and then those that were gorgeously apparelled were in king's houses ; but how few here of the vulgar, yea, of servants, affect it not now that can but procure it ! If the highest do but take it up, inferiors quickly strive to imitate them. In my short time the garb of England is so changed, that but fifty years ago men would have gazed at such as painted Indians, or outlandish strangers, or ugly ruffians, that had gone as most civil and religious people do in this city now. Paul would have forborne wine and flesh while he had lived, rather than this liberty should hurt his weak brother's soul. But if the scandal of our pride and gaudery do make many weak persons turn

Quakers to fly from it, how few for to avoid this would avoid the most gaudy, and effeminate, or ruffianly fashion of clothes or hair? And instead of receiving reproof from such Quakers, they are hardened the more because of the weakness of their reprovers. I am loath to name those gauds with which especially the female sex do openly shew their vanity, which tell all beholders what needless trifles take up much of their time, and cost, and care. And alas, for men's stupid folly all this is, while thousands want food and raiment, while whole countries are impoverished by cruel wars, when dreadful flames have consumed our wealth, and rebuked our pride, and humbling diseases have shewed us what flesh is; and when our daily feeling tells us it is perishing; and while we are going to a loathsome grave, and see the dust and bones of those whom we are following; and the plain warnings of Peter, 1 Pet. iii. 3—6. and many such stand in the Bible as ciphers to them.

5. How many needless things take up the rich, about their houses, furniture, retinue, and entertainments? Especially those that are most proud, and most curious and vain. Conveniency must be a pretence for sinful cost and labour; handsomeness or decency must be a pretence for needless charge in furniture, while the poor go almost naked. Cleanliness must be a pretence for their servants spending much of the day and year in needless vanities, which might be much better spent. Not to be accounted careless or uncleanly by others of the like vanity seems to be excuse enough for a multitude of needless curiosities. To find poor people work, doth pass for an excuse for employing servants and tradesmen in making and providing all these need-nots, as if they might not have been better employed for the common good, and encouraged to learn some better trades; as if they knew not how narrow a coffin, and little furniture must shortly serve them. The report of good housekeeping and entertainments must justify the excesses, and chargeable, needless superfluities of the rich.

6. What needless cares and business have many to avoid the contempt or hard thoughts of others! How near goeth it to a proud heart what is thought and spoken of them! And their avoiding of contempt must be the reason of most of the forementioned vanities, in their dress their houses,

their retinue, and the rest ; when alas, they have another kind of judgment to prepare for, and they, and those whose thoughts they so much regard, are almost dead and dust already.

7. What a deal of some men's care and thoughts are spent in needless contrivances for power and greatness in the world ! What works find some Ahithophels and Hamans for their minds ! As if it were needful for a man to fall at last from a higher place than the rest about him ; or to have his will fulfilled by all others ; or to have the souls or lives of many to answer for ; or to be more strongly allured to the damning love of this world than other men ; or to be envied by many ; or to be a ruler of others, before one knoweth how to be obedient to God, and to rule himself. And O what worse than needless troubles, even horrible wickedness, doth this ambition lead many to ! Even to be the plagues of the earth, and incarnate devils, by bloody wars, and cruel oppressions, desolations, and persecutions.

8. Yea, some of lower rank have such imperious idol wills that nothing must cross them, or be said or done by any about them, but as they would have it. And yet it is two to one but so many persons and things will cross them, and go quite contrary to their wills, as that their disease will be their continual torment. And they will be like one in winter that cannot bear the cold, and yet must bear it ; or like a poor man that is a servant to his appetite, and hath not wherewith to please it ; or like one that dwelleth by the sea, and cannot bear the sight of the water ; or in a wood, and cannot bear the shaking of a leaf. Such worse than needless troubles doth an idol will produce.

9. And how much time is lost in vain and needless talk about things not justly pleasing, and no way profiting ourselves and others ! A vain tongue being the index of a vain mind, as if mind and tongue had no higher or better subjects or employment.

10. And in this city it is not a little time that is taken up with needless sports and recreations. I will not honour the gamester's trade with so soft a name as needless work ; nor the playhouses, nor the houses of excess and lust. But if cards, dice, and stage-plays had never been branded and condemned by the ancient canons of the Christian churches,

and did not notoriously bear the marks of temptation, and much gross folly and sin, yet vanity and needlessness should be enough to make men that believe in another world, and the shortness of this life, to abhor them, and better spend their time. There is a sort of pleasure and recreation that is needful. That which fits us best for our necessary works and duties, preserving by motion the health of the body, or refreshing the weary spirits of hard students. But God hath left no man in such a penury of recreation but that he may find more useful, profitable, manly, time-saving, and safe ones, than gaming or stage-plays, or romances, and such ensnaring, befooling, unprofitable time-wasters are.

11. And among all the needless, deceitful vanities, unprofitable studies and arts are not the least. When Cornelius Agrippa had strained his brain to such curiosities that he passed for a conjurer, and had written a commentary upon Lullius' arts after many others; he concludeth all with an honest and Christian-like treatise, 'De Vanitate Scientiarum,' commending the study and practice of God's word as the only true wisdom. And though I have marvelled at the Carthage council, which forbade the reading of heathens' books, I never wondered that men's excess herein should be rebuked, nor that Paul called men to beware lest they were deceived by vain philosophy, and to avoid opposition of sciences falsely so called. Languages, logic, metaphysics, physics, mathematics, &c. have their use; but he is a learned man indeed who rightly applieth them to that use, and separateth the needful from the needless part, the certain from the uncertain, truth from falsehood, and presumptuous conceits; the plausibleness of the thing inviteth many to waste their time in unprofitable studies, who durst not have spent it in playhouses and gaming; and yet I doubt to many it will prove no better.

Query. But the doubt is, 'What are these needless, sinful things, that seemeth needless to one that is not so indeed, or to another? Cynics call decencies, and ornaments, and conveniences, and pleasure needless.'

Ans. 1. That is needless which doth no good.

2. Those things that do more hurt than good.

3. Those things which answer not the cost and labour which is bestowed upon them.

4. Those things that are good, but hinder and deprive us

of a greater good, which we may well spare, but are hindrances to the one thing necessary, which we cannot spare; all these are certainly needless, if not worse.

But because vain persons are hardly convinced, till God by light or fire do convince them, I will help them by these few questions following.

Quest. 1. Is that act which you plead for a thing which God doth any way command you directly or indirectly? If not, how can it be needful to you? You will say, Are there not some things indifferent and lawful which are no duties?

Ans. 1. There are natural things which are not moral (either virtue or vice); as your health or sickness, and such things as are God's works, and not yours; of these I speak not. 2. There are actions of your own which are merely natural, neither commanded nor forbidden, and that is all those which are no matter for rational choosing or refusing, such as have no moral use; as winking with the eye, which foot I shall first put forward; which of two equal things, in meat, drink, and apparel, &c., I shall take (not choose), when it is needful that I do one, but it is perfectly indifferent which. But the things which I am speaking of are of no such nature, but such as belong to rational choice, and are accordingly chosen by you.

Quest. 2. Would your consciences trouble you for it as any sin, if you omitted the thing which I call needless? I suppose not.

Quest. 3. Is it to please God as an act of obedience that you do them? Is your curiosity, and your vain attire, and the rest forementioned chosen to please God, or to please your fleshly sense and fancy, or the world?

Quest. 4. Will it be any hurt to you, or real loss, if they be omitted, or be denied you?

Quest. 5. Have you got any thing by them already, or not lost more than you have gotten?

Quest. 6. Are they things that the better or the worse sort of persons more mind and plead for? Whose delights are cards, and dice, and plays, and vain fashions? Is it the most heavenly, or the most fleshly persons that are most eager of them, and most use them?

Quest. 7. Do you find that they more help or hinder you in prayer and other holy exercises? Especially your heavenly delights?

Quest. 8. How do they relish with you when you think of death and judgment? Are they a comfortable part of your preparation? Had you rather then review and answer for your time spent in these, than in greater things?

If you will but set conscience to answer these questions, methinks you should soon perceive yourselves what things they be that are needless, and therefore not to be chosen, and consequently unlawful.

But that you may see that I drive you not to any extremes, I shall negatively add,

1. I do not number all our thoughts, care, and labour for our bodies, children, or others, about things needful and convenient, to be these needless things.

2. Nor is our diligent labour in a constant calling needless; he that will not labour, St. Paul saith, should not eat; this is a part of our obedience to God, "Six days shalt thou labour."

3. Nor is it needless to labour for more than we need ourselves, that we may have to give to him that needeth, and to do good to others.

4. Nor is it needless to do our best for our bodily health to fit our bodies to be able and cheerful servants to our souls. That food, that recreation and pleasure, which is necessary to fit body or mind for service, and the work of a Christian life, is not vain.

5. All men are not called to the same kind of labour and employment. That is needful to one, which is not to another.

6. The lowest things which we do in obedience to God, if it were but sweeping the streets or chimnies, is not to be numbered with the needless things, but rather a comfortable exercise of humility and obedience.

But every man must prefer the greatest thing.

IV. What are the common excuses of this sin?

Object. 1. 'Some say, that it is but few persons, at least not all, that are fitted for, and called to great employments. They that cannot do greater matters must do lesser.

Ans. All are not called to govern kingdoms, nor to be teachers and pastors of the church; but all have some talent, which they must use and answer for; and all may do somewhat which tendeth to the common good; the servant of labour that plougheth, soweth, and reapeth doth serve the

commonwealth; and if his master live idly, and spend his time in gaming, plays, or other vanity, can he excuse it by claiming a greater incapacity than his servant had? A mason, a carpenter, a tailor, a chimney-sweep, do that which is needful to be done; and shall rich men live idly, and do no good, because they are rich?

Object. 2. 'I was not bred up to labour; they that were bred up to it must use it.'

Answ. If you were not bred up to some calling or employment, profitable to yourself and others, you were bred in sin, and then it were time to break it off. Idleness, with pride, and fulness, are noted to have been Sodom's sins; and will you not amend because you were bred in sin? Can you bear the doom of the unprofitable, slothful servant? *Matt. xxv.* Or will it excuse you because you have been slothful from your youth?

Object. 3. 'God doth not require toil and labour from those that are rich, and need it not.'

Answ. God doth not require the same kind of labour from all; but if he give you more than the poor, he requireth not less, but more from you; that is, your constant diligence in more profitable work; else you may as well say, That God is the Governor of none but the poor; or that he looketh for least service where he giveth most wages.

Your labour is not only to supply your own needs, but to profit others, and for the common good.

And the more you do in way of duty, the more you receive and profit yourselves. Idleness is your own loss to soul and body.

Object. 4. 'Men need recreation and relaxation.'

Answ. What do you need it for? Is it not for your work, and your health, to enable you to work? Use no more than furthereth your health and work, and that shall not be called needless.

Object. 5. 'Little things are useful in their places: Christ saith of some such, "Those ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."'

Answ. No doubt but there are things good and needful of several degrees; all are not of the most needful kind. But what is this to that which is not needful? Or that hindereth more needful things, as afore described?

Object. 6. 'Old men are incompetent judges of the case

of youth, as not having their inclinations to sports and pleasures ; and all men, especially divines and lawyers, and such like grave men, who are themselves taken up with greater matters, are incompetent judges of the affairs of women, their clothes, their furniture, their expenses, and their employments, and are apt to call all needless which is below their work.

Answ. Yet Christ thought himself meet to judge of the choice of Martha and Mary, and Solomon to give directions to women, and so did St. Peter and St. Paul. Old men were once young, and know what youthful inclinations are ; and grave men that live among women, see their business, and know their reasons. And if all sorts of persons shall judge ministers, lawyers, and judges incompetent to judge of their tradings, actions, and affairs, and so appropriate the judgment of them to themselves alone, then all persons will by their own judgments be always in the right, and none will be capable of amendment ; the proverb is, ‘ A stander-by may see more than a player ;’ but it is confessed that a just judge must hear and consider the whole case.

Object. 7. ‘ We shall be derided if we are singular.’

Answ. Will God deride you for obeying him ? Hath not he said, “ Be not conformed to this world ?” You will be derided and persecuted too by wicked men, if you will be true to Christ, to godliness, sobriety, and honesty ; and is that a good reason why you should be sensual, worldly, and ungodly ?

V. But what is the sin here reprov'd, &c. ? What harm is it to be thus careful and troubled about many things that are not comparatively needful ?

Answ. 1. To prefer little things before greater, and thus to employ ourselves, is a wilful debasing of our souls, which should be exercised about that which is answerable to the dignity of their natures ; as it is a debasing of a prince to use him as beggars, or in sordid work ; and as it were below a wise man to talk at the rate of fools and children ; so is it a debasing of a soul that is made for things of endless consequence to employ it upon needless trifles. Pride maketh men think well of themselves, and look high in the world, and disdain to be set low in men’s thoughts, words, or em-

ployments; and yet when God commandeth them to look higher, they choose a low and sordid life.

2. It is a wilful contempt of the most excellent things: God and our Redeemer, grace and glory, are before us, and should be remembered and sought in the first place; and it is a contempt of them needlessly to turn from them our minds and time to vanity. The mind of man is not infinite, but narrow, and cannot be employed on many things at once; if it be taken up with trifles, it cannot choose but neglect greater things. And for God, and Christ, and heaven, to be set by, while we play with toys, is profane contempt.

Object. 'We cannot be always thinking of God and heaven.'

Ans. But you must always be serving God in one kind or other, and always doing that which tends to heaven; as you are not all day meditating of the light, but you are all day using it.

3. This taking up our minds and time with needless things, is a great injury to ourselves by neglect of our own greatest benefit and necessities. Did but men know what they have to mind and seek, it would be their speedy cure. Alas! we are all behindhand in our great and necessary business; and these triflers usually are more behindhand than others. They have more to do of unspeakable consequence than all their time and diligence will serve for, as it deserveth, (having lost so much already,) and yet have they so much to spare for trifles.

O that these loiterers knew their necessity and their work! 1. You have a God to know, of whom you are too ignorant; you have his word and will to know, which you are yet much unacquainted with. 2. Do you know what it is to get, keep, use, and strengthen a lively belief of the word of God, and the unseen world? 3. Do you know what it is to get assurance that God is your reconciled Father, that Christ and salvation are yours; that you are truly sanctified, and shall live in heaven for ever? 4. Do you know what it is to get the heart in love with God, and to long after communion with him in glory? 5. Do you know what it is to get down all the lusts of the flesh, and watch against all the snares of sense and vain imagination, and to escape the love of these alluring pleasures, and the danger of particu-

lar sins of sensuality? 6. Do you know what it is to subdue all your carnal affections and passions, and to get in their stead a zeal for God, and to be fervent in his service? 7. Do you know what it is to get above the love of riches, and to escape all the snares of covetous desires? 8. Do you know what it is to keep a holy government of your thoughts, and to employ them in their proper work? 9. Do you know what it is to rule your tongues, in forbearing evil, and using them for that which they are made for? 10. And do you know what the spiritual, sincere, and constant use of all God's worship is, word, prayer, sacraments, &c. 11. Do you know what it is to renew repentance for our renewed sins? 12. And to keep down all pride, and to walk humbly before God and man? 13. Do you know what it is to love others as yourselves; to do as much good to all men's souls and bodies as you can? 14. And what it is to discharge all the duties of your several relations, to all your superiors, inferiors, and equals? 15. And what it is to find out the corruptions and deceitfulness of your own hearts, and well to understand yourselves? 16. And what it is to understand the nature and danger of all satan's temptations, and to escape or overcome them? 17. And what it is to obey all the motions of God's Spirit? 18. And to use all our daily mercies well? 19. And to bear afflictions patiently, and profitably? 20. And to be above the love of this body and life, and ready to die? 21. And to live in the joy and comfort which beseemeth the children of God, the members of Christ that wait in hope of endless glory? Do but understand what all, or half this is, and conscionably do it, and then spend the rest of your time in cards, dice, plays, vain adornings, curiosities, and other trifles.

4. Consider also that time and life are very short, and very uncertain, and therefore not to be spent on needless things by one that standeth at the door of eternity.

5. The experience of other men should move us: all right repenting men, and most dying men, wish that their time had not been so wasted, but spent on that which was necessary to the great ends of life.

6. Conscience telleth most that have not seared it, that at death and judgment we are like to wish that needful things had taken up all our time.

7. It is a wrong to our great Creator and Preserver, that

we should thus waste our time while he maintaineth us, as if he gave us life and mercy for such vanity.

8. The example of Christ and his saints is a reproof of all such vanity; we find not that they thus spent their thoughts and time.

VI. The uses we should make of this are these.

1. Parents may hence learn for what employment they should educate their children in the world, what they should teach them, and to what trades and callings they should set them; not to such as will spend their lives in vanities; but such in which they may be most useful to themselves and others in the world. Not that all can be of the best or highest callings, but all should be educated for the most use and service, and all employed in the best which they are fit for. It is a debasing of your children to intend them for no better than to live at ease to get money; a heathen would tell you, that usefulness to the commonwealth is more to be regarded; and a Christian knoweth that the serving of God in the greatest profiting of ourselves and others, must be preferred.

II. Let us all review our lives, and see here how much we have to repent of; and let us see also what cause of lamentation we have for the common guilt of all sorts, against these and such like words of Christ.

But to prevent your misunderstanding of me, I first profess that I intend not to make you cynics, or superstitious, nor to persuade you that it is necessary to your salvation to live nastily and indecently; nor that it is any part of your holiness or perfection to be singularly sordid, and to avoid things comely and convenient, as some old hermits and anchorites, and divers Popish saints seemed to think. I am not drawing you to imitate that present sect among us, that set up at first with a holiness which consisted much in forbearing cuffs, and bands, and hatbands, and ribands, and saying thou instead of you, and withal in open reviling the most faithful ministers. It is not a superstitious "touch not, taste not, handle not;" (Col. ii. 20, 21.) I am commending to you; but I fear lest the contrary common extreme be much more dangerous. I would not speak against your smallest convenience, so far as it become not a time-wasting snare, and hindered not your heads, hearts, and lives from greater necessary things. I know that when St. Paul speak-

eth often for providing things honest, and living honestly, he meaneth things decent, and of good report; to expose one's self purposely to be laughed at, as St. Francis, and such others are said to have done, is no just exercise of piety or humility.

But alas what a doleful spectacle is it, to one that believeth whither we are going to see what it is that most men are doing, and what it is that they leave undone! I am not now speaking of the time that is spent in direct evil; but little do men know how dangerously they sin in spending too much in things that have some good, and in preferring conveniences, and small bodily pleasures and commodities, before the great and needful things; who can doubt but it was a decent and good thing for Martha to make provision for Christ, and to attend and serve him? Are not most of your unseasonable cares and troubles about much smaller matters than this? But at the time when greater things should be done, even these are culpable cares and troubles; much more those many little trifles, which only pride and folly calleth needful. And verily we have all so much of this necessary work to do, that leaveth us little room or time to spare for things which most men spend much of their lives in; so great and urgent are our main concerns, as should make every wise man study diligently to put by as many of the less diverting matters as he can. He that had money to lay out for his ransom, or for his life, or necessary livelihood, would spend little on small matters, till he were sure he had enough to spare. Hearken but wisely to God and conscience; foresee whither you are going, and what you have to do, and of what inconceivable importance, and then consider whether you have room and time for all or any of those diverting trifles which are the chiefest care and business of the unbelieving carnal world.

This needless business plainly sheweth that you have low and little souls. As children playing in the sand shew their difference from men that apply themselves to manly business, so your over-business about your ornaments, dresses, compliments, rooms, and many such trifles, doth tell others (whether you will know it yourselves or not,) that you have both childish understandings, (and worse, because you are at age,) that set too much by little things; and that you have too much carnality of affection, when you have so

much mind of trifling neednots. And worst of all, it plainly sheweth that you greatly want a sounder belief and deeper sense of your great business and interest in the world, and live not in the sense of the nearness of death, and things eternal, as wise believers should still do.

I am not saying that you should always have the sinful fears and sadness, which the sentence of death doth bring on most; I had rather you were quite above these to the last. Nor do I say you should always have just the same kind of passions, or do all things just in the same manner, as you ought to have and do if you were sure to die to-morrow. But I must say, that you should have the same wisdom, and the same esteem of God, and of the world, of soul and body, of heaven and earth, of eternity and time, of duty and sin, of necessities and trifles, as you will then have; and the same holy affections, and diligence, and practice of life, which this wisdom will then teach you to wish that you had sooner had. O let there not be too great and shameful a difference between your living and your dying thoughts. If your father, or child, or husband, or wife, were on their deathbed, or going to execution, would not all be ashamed of you, that should hear you talk to them about cards, or plays, or fine clothes, or laces, or greater worldly toys than these? Yea, if you were taken up yourselves about your own ornaments, dressings, curiosities, and troublesome triflings, who would not say that you were disgracefully senseless of your own and your dying friend's condition? O promise not yourselves more time than God hath promised you! Dream not that you dwell further from the grave than you do: you know not what it is to live as Christians, or as men, if you know not that all our life should be spent in our best preparation for death. Though you must do much which you would not be just found doing, you must do nothing but what you can then comfortably review, nor spend a moment in that which then you must wish that you had not spent it in. And whether time-wasting trifles and neednots will be comfortably remembered then, by one that hath reason and faith, and had so little time, and so much to do with it, methinks it might be easy to foresee.

Verily if you spent your time in no greater matters, than in getting gold and worldly glory, crowns, and kingdoms, merely for your flesh, and the greatest pleasures of a carnal,

transitory life, you will in the everlasting review be confounded and tormented in remembering your self-abasing folly. And are your many little trifles then of more worth to make you a just excuse? Gentlemen, ladies, and gentlewomen, do not only bear with me, but be willing and thankful that I deal plainly with you, when it is not for me, but for yourselves: it is such as you that are most ordinarily and inexcusably guilty of this sin and folly. The poor labouring countryman and tradesman indeed is inexcusable that will be diverted from the care of his everlasting state, even by his most lawful and necessary labours: but usually their guilt is less far than yours in all these following respects.

1. That which they do is profitable to the commonwealth, and so is good, and part of their duty in itself considered. To plough, and sow, and reap, and make you bread, and drink, and clothes, &c. But what good cometh to the commonwealth by your curiosities, and vanities, and plays, and compliments, though decency, and cleanliness, and handsomeness, and avoiding contempt and reproach be vainly pretended for them. They gather, and you waste. They are the bees, and you are the drones. They labour, and you consume it on your lusts and fancies. God bid them labour six days, but he never bade you make such a stir for mere unnecessary vanities.

2. Necessity is some reason for what they do, though it be no good excuse for leaving undone greater things. They must maintain themselves and families, and pay you your rents. But what necessity have you to waste thoughts and times about your many unprofitable toys? Martha had some excuse, but you have none.

3. God giveth you more wages, and therefore doth expect more work; you are stewards of more trust, and therefore have more to give up an account of.

4. They can say, Christ and his apostles, and all good men, have laboured and done such things as we do; and it is part of his law, that if we will not work we shall not eat; and Solomon's mother, a queen, and he the wisest king by her teaching, describeth the virtuous woman to be one that worketh willingly with her hands on wool and flax, that riseth before day to look to her household, and her candle goeth not out by night; and eateth not the bread of idle-

ness; (when too many of the rich do eat no other.) The labours of your tenants have such precedents as these. But have you any such for your needless formalities and toys? Did Christ or his apostles spend their time in prating of unprofitable things, or in idleness, or plays, or gaming, or in childish neatifying their bodies, or such like? Was St. Peter of your mind when he wrote to Christian women, that "their adorning be not outward, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart; in that which is not corruptible, even of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in God's sight of great price?" 1 Pet. iii. 3. That is, regard that which is precious, and adorneth you in the sight of God, and affect not neatness or costliness, to make you seem either rich or comely in the sight of man, but clothe your corruptible flesh with cheap and easy plainness, as beseemeth those that are going to the grave. It is not apparel, but ornaments, that he forbids, and a vain desire by our apparel to seem somewhat higher or handsomer than we are to men.

Perhaps you will say, that Christ and his apostles were poor men, and therefore neither patterns nor fit judges for you. *Answ.* But yet they shall judge you, whether you will or not; and they who tell men by their lives, that they take not their doctrine or example for their rule, or Christ for their governor, shall find that unbelief and rebellion are not the way to their justification. But though they that are gorgeously clothed then dwelt in king's houses, do you but read the thirty-first chapter of the Proverbs, and take there the counsel and pattern of a queen and king, and I will reprove you no more.

And you that are so regardful of the thoughts and eyes of men, and whose pride maketh so great a matter of your reputation, that all about you be sightly, and liable to no contempt, why do you not most regard your reputation with the wisest and the best? St. Peter before told you what are the precious ornaments in the sight of God: and wise men and good men come nearest to God in all their estimations. Who will bestow much cost or time, or hire servants, or trim themselves, or their houses, for children or bedlams to look on and admire? None but such as yourselves do think ever the better of you for all your costly or troublesome curiosi-

ties : wise men look at you as at players, or morice dancers, some with laughter, and all with pity ; and think what empty souls are these that mind such little childish things.

And seeing common reason tells you, that a man's dignity or baseness lieth in the dignity or baseness of the things which he mindeth, hopeth for, and seeketh, and of the work in which his life is spent, why will you set yourselves so far below your poor tenants and labouring servants, as to choose employments, so far baser than theirs ? That is basest which is most vain, and of little benefit to yourselves or others. Your ploughman, your baker, your brewer, your cook, yea, your chimney-sweeper, live upon more useful employments, than some rich, vain, curious, idle persons.

And as all sin blindeth and befooleth sinners, it is two to one but these self-abasing persons will distaste what I say, as thinking that it is against them ; when common reason might tell them that all this that I speak is for them, even for their honour, their commodity, their conscience, and their salvation. Should I persuade one that selleth pins and points, or the scavengers that carry out dust and dung, to become merchants that trade for gold and enriching merchandise, few of them would be so sottish, as to think I speak against them, to their dishonour or their loss.

And still I confess that many little things are needful in their place and season. We should miss pins and points if we were without them. Dirt and uncleanness must be swept and washed away. Garments should be warm and comely. Rooms that are convenient are desirable. Comely and stately buildings and furniture for princes and rulers are a due ornament to magistracy, and splendid cities and temples are an honest imitation of the great and glorious works of God. Sweet harmony and melody exhilarate the spirits for and in God's holy praise. All his mercies should be used to fit us to serve him with gladness and joyfulness of heart. It is not a cynical life that I plead for, but a base and childish life that I am dispraising. When comeliness, and decency, and cleanliness, and reputation is made a pretence for such trifling away your own and your servants' time, and setting up such toyish trades and employments, as nothing but your own sinful disease and folly could keep you from being ashamed of, and your consciences from accusing

you for. I am ashamed to name over the trifles within doors and without which I mean.

But satan is subtle as well as malicious, and knoweth that all fish bite not at the same bait. Crowns and enlarged dominions are the diversion of some who think their designs are high and honourable, while they go to damnation with more applause than worldly peasants. Brave speculations and pleasing knowledge of things unnecessary, are the bait of others, that scorn to neglect God, and cast away their salvation for such low and little things as the wanton, and the glutton or drunkard do. Yet these that are pleased in satisfying their appetites, think that they make a wiser bargain, and have somewhat more instead of heaven than sick-brained childish women, that have no better in exchange than things and businesses which I am ashamed to name.

O that God would awaken all our reason by a lively faith, to see where we stand, and what is before us, and with whom we have to do, and how little transitory things of the flesh do signify to a sound understanding! We should then see that time and life are of greater use than to be played and fooled away. Every moment of it would then appear to be very precious, and of great use. Whereas that is vile which is good for nothing but vile employments. That hour which is useful for no greater work than your trifling neednots, is of no greater worth than the work which it is for. Had you no more to do with it, how undesirable were life! Surely the gain or pleasure of an idle or a trifling life will never compensate the cares, and troubles, and sufferings which we must all undergo. Were a prince, judge, or doctor, set up as a picture only to adorn a room, or as a hawk to frighten away crows from the corn or garden, this were not useless, yea, it were better than many of your time-wasting vanities: but sure it would be a great debasing of such persons, as scarce worth the cost and trouble of living.

The Scripture tells us indeed, that man walketh in a vain show, and that "verily every man at his best estate is vanity;" yea, all under the sun is "vanity and vexation of spirit." But all this is said only of man as seeking a felicity in this world, and of all that he is and doth, with no higher respect than to the present prosperity and pleasure of the flesh. But there are greater things offered us which are not

vanity, even the pleasing of God, and the fruition of his love and glory for ever; and were our life and time devoted to these high and noble ends, were our waking and sleeping, our eating and drinking, our health and sickness, our labours, yea, and our needful recreations, employed for these, and measured accordingly as means hereto, they would be holy and comfortable, and the lowest things would be thus honoured and precious. They that are "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," do find their "labour not in vain;" 1 Cor. xv. 58. The same house, goods, money, food, raiment, time, as used by holy believers, and by carnal worldlings, &c. differ more than we can now conceive. HOLINESS TO THE LORD is the name of the one, and VANITY, VEXATION, and SIN of the other.

But alas, man who as a shadow passeth away, doth set his heart on transitory shadows, and dreaming, and seeming, and stage-employments, and enjoyments, make up his hypocritical life and comforts. His religion is naturally (till grace amend him) but show and ceremony; his heartwork, and house-work, and public-work, is little but shadow and ceremony. Time is spent, and money spent, and talk spent, and thoughts spent, upon shadow and ceremony. Servants are employed too often also in wasting their time to serve their master's fancies in mere shadow and ceremony. You can see and hear but little that is better, or of greater use in many rich persons' daily conversations, in their retinue, in their splendid houses, and curious adorned rooms, or any thing even of that which commandeth their hearts and time, and in which they place their dignity and pleasure; until either grace happily, or death miserably, awake their wit, and then they cry out, 'All is vanity and vexation; O that we had better spent our time!' "This their way is their folly, and yet their posterity approve their sayings;" Psal. xlix. 11—13. And still others rise up that tread in their unhallowed steps; and satan's kingdom can truly boast of an uninterrupted succession, even from the days of Cain until now.

I shall end with some directions how to judge, 1. Of needless things. 2. And an answer to some cases of conscience.

I. 1. All things are culpably needless which answer not

the cost, and labour, and time, which is laid out upon them You may judge by the good which they are like to do.

2. Those things are culpably needless which are but to serve a desire or humour, which we have no need to please. If the lust or fancy be vain, the means that serve it can be no better ; whether it be the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or pride of life, which are not of the Father, but of the world. Men say, We delight in this or that, in curiosity, in costly or time-wasting sports, or such as profit not their bodily health, in gawdy dresses, or such like ; and why may we not gratify our delight ? Why, it is supposed to be a needless, unprofitable delight, proceeding from a vain fancy, which should rather be cured than pleased.

3. All things are much more culpably needless which proceed from a vicious, sinful humour, desire, or lust ; make no provision for the flesh, to satisfy the lust therefore :” Rom. xiii. 13, 14. To mind the things of the flesh is enmity to God, and to the minding of spiritual things ; Rom. viii. 6. 7. Unnecessary, sensual delights corrupt the soul, and strongly turn down the mind from God and holy pleasures ; and the mortifying of such fleshly lusts or pleasures is no small part of our religion.

4. All those are culpably needless and worse which are preferred before truly needful things ; and which are against them, and shut them out, or take up that same time and room which they should have ; if you have any thing of greater moment, which should be done at that same time, whatever hindereth it is vanity, and worse ; and therefore there is no cure for vanity of mind and life, till men come to know their great necessities, and important business, which they have for all their thoughts and time, even the regard of their end and all the means, the duties of their spiritual and temporal callings, and see that they have no time to spare.

II. *Quest.* ‘ Is it lawful to be of a trade which serveth the humours of vain persons, as to make cards, or dice, or stage-plays ; or vain attire, as ribbons, perriwigs, and such like ?

Ans. 1. These things are of very different natures. Some of them, as stage-plays, cards and dice (though instances may be devised in which it is possible to use them lawfully) are so ordinarily used sinfully and so seldom well, that the trade that maintaineth them may well be supposed

to be a trade of maintaining sin. And had I a son, I had rather he begged his bread than have such a trade. But laces, and ribbands, and fine clothes, and feathers, and divers such things, have (among some that they are fit for) a more ordinary lawful use ; and therefore I cannot say such trades are sinful. 2. But yet because they are of so little benefit to the commonwealth, and so very frequently used to serve a vain and sinful lust and fancy, I take it to be a sin for any one to prefer such a trade before one that is more blameless and profitable, though the person might get more money by it. And they that will use such a trade without sin, must necessarily be so careful in distinguishing of customers, and not promiscuously sell to all who they perceive will serve their sin by it, that it will much diminish their gain. The case is much like an ale-seller's or vintner's which is lawful in itself, but must be used with so much distinguishing care as I doubt few practise, lest their gain be hindered. And therefore a safer trade is much to be preferred, which is not a continual temptation.

Quest. 2. ' May a servant dwell with and obey such a master, or lady, or mistress, as will command them to spend much of their time in trifles and vanities, that are but to please a proud or curious fancy ?'

Ans. 1. It must be supposed that many times servants, through sloth or education, misjudge those things to be needless or evil which are not such ; and think that their superiors should command them no other labour than what they like themselves. In this case their error will not justify their neglect. Persons of honour and dignity may lawfully go much further in employing their servants in dressing, and adornings, and attendance, and in washing, and rubbing rooms, and such smaller things, than lower persons, from whom it is not expected, and to whom the marks of wealth agree not, though none must be inordinate.

2. In mere doubtful cases servants are not the judges of their governor's commands and business ; and where they are no judges, and know no sin, they must submit.

3. Sometimes that which is sinfully commanded may be lawfully and dutifully obeyed. As it is a sin in a sick man to be peevish, and hardly pleased, and to command many needless things to a servant in that peevish humour ; when yet (they being lawful things to be done) the servant may be

bound to obey them. A patient may sinfully be humourous in his expectations, when a physician may yet lawfully please his humours for his health. A child may faultily cry for something, when the nurse may without fault give him that which he crieth for to quiet him. All is not forbidden the servant to do, which is forbidden the government to command.

4. But all that is sin in the doer must be forborne; and to serve and cherish the sin of others when we may choose, is sinful.

5. Therefore in such cases, though it be lawful for a servant to do many needless things (nor forbidden him by God) when commanded, it is unlawful to choose such a service, in which he shall be so employed, to spend his time in vanity, to satisfy a ruler's pride and humour, unless it be in case of true necessity, or probably to attain a greater good, which will compensate all the inconveniences. As if a pirate or tyrant command me to say some idle words, or do some needless action, or else my friend or I should be murdered; in this case they are not idle, or needless, or unlawful, but a duty, which voluntarily chosen would be a sin.

Object. 'By this you will make it a duty to obey papal commands of idle ceremonies, if we doubt, or if they be not things forbidden us.

Ans. 1. God hath not left us to so much liberty how to worship him, as he hath left us about our houses, and dresses, and common things.

2. The pope and his ministers are unlawful governors, as setting up an unlawful church policy, even a universal, human, ecclesiastical monarchy (or aristocracy, as the conciliar party hold), and therefore we owe them no obedience even in lawful things, and it is a sin to become their subjects.

3. Doubting whether real sin be sin, will not make it no sin, nor change the law of God. Should men be uncertain, whether rebellion, schism, fornication, perjury, or lying be sin, they may not therefore do it though it were commanded them; for no one hath true authority to command them.

4. But if really the thing be lawful to be done, we must do it, if commanded by such as have true authority to do it, though they mistake and sin in the reasons, ends, and manner of their command.

5. If a lawful magistrate or ruler sinfully command [say such or such a needless word, or do such a vain action, or wear such a vain habit (not forbidden us by God), or else you shall be silenced, banished, imprisoned], it ceaseth to be vain in the user, when it is made necessary to such ends, though it be sinfully commanded. But what God forbiddeth must never be done.

Quest. 'May the husband and master bear with sinful vanities in his wife and servants in his house? Seeing he is the ruler, is it not his sin to tolerate them?'

Ans. 1. It is undoubtedly his sin to consent, or not to remedy it, if he can do it by lawful means. 2. It oft falls out that not only needless toys and vanities, but some downright great sins cannot be hindered effectually without so great inconveniences and mischiefs, as that such hindering becometh an unlawful means. If a man have a wife so passionate or unquiet, as that no means would restrain her tongue or hands but turning her away, or using such violence as is unsuitable to a conjugal relation, he must patiently endure her sin.

If he have a wife that will fall into some dangerous disease, or grow distracted, if she may not please her pride in apparel, or sinfully waste much in vain expenses, or may not use an unruly tongue to sin; or at least, if the restraint would cost the husband so dear as would by unquietness unfit him to serve God in his place; in this case it is no sinful toleration to endure it. He is far from consenting to it; he only restraineth not that which he cannot restrain. For what a man cannot do by lawful means, and without doing more hurt than good, it must be said that he cannot do it at all. And so much as a man may lawfully give to purchase his own peace and quietness, or to cure his wife of such a disease or distraction, so much he may lawfully suffer her to spend (though sinfully) to prevent it, as long as he disowneth the sin, and would remedy it, if he could by lawful means.

Object. 'If you tell women this, some will give their husbands no quietness, and some will waste their estates in sin, or vain expenses, to satisfy their lusts.'

Ans. 1. We must use no false doctrine for the preventing of such person's sin. If it be true, some men have need to know it. 2. It is possible that some rates of expense or suffering may be greater than the preventing of the wives'

calamity, and its consequences are worth ; and in such cases it cannot be so prevented. 3. And I hope the case is so rare, that most women's pride, exorbitancy, and passion, and the sins thence proceeding, may be restrained by other means at easier rates.'

Object. 2. 'But by this you would infer, that evils may also be tolerated in the church, if so far in the family.'

Answ. Consenting to any sin is sin, and so is doing that by promoting or tolerating, which signifieth consent ; but not to hinder that which we cannot hinder by lawful means, and without doing greater hurt than good, is no consenting or sinful toleration. Papists that are for burning and banishing dissenters, yet confess this, that they must tolerate them, when else they should more hurt the church by what is done against them.

It is no sin to bear with the greatest sin in the world which we cannot remedy, much less with human, common frailties, in which all mortal men must bear with one another, or else forsake all love and peace.

And this objection mindeth me humbly, but earnestly (though almost hopelessly) to desire all governors to take notice, that the pastoral government of Christ's church (being exercised under him, who calleth it his spouse and body) is very like the government of a husband over his wife, which must be done by no means inconsistent with love, and conjugal offices, and communion to the last. And therefore if men must bear with so many and great offences and inconveniences, yea, and sufferings, in and from a wife, for their household peace and quietness, let them consider whether for church peace, much evil is not to be endured when it cannot be lawfully hindered.

And if human frailty and darkness be such, as that few persons living have the same apprehensions of many or most things, and husband and wife about their ordinary affairs will daily manifest such difference of opinions and humours, as must be borne (or they must bear much worse), let astors consider, while we agree in all things necessary to salvation and the common peace, how much diversity of sense, and consequently of practice, must be endured in the numerous difficulties of religion by them that know the way of peace. And whether they that will not bear a little are not preparing to bear much. And perhaps if the Roman clergy had

not been so much against priests' marriage the experience of their families, and what differing apprehensions and actions must there be borne by conjugal love, might have better taught them how far to bear with differing opinions and practices in religion, instead of their unchristian, inhuman laws and practices of burning, exterminating, and ruining all such as their judgments shall stigmatize as heretics.

Quest. 4. 'What are to be taken for sinful, needless studies, which scholars should avoid?'

Ans. 1. There is great cause to put this question, considering how many years are this way lost, and how little it is repented of, and how much is still owned and applauded by men of greatest reputation.

The case may be resolved by the same rules before given. 1. All learning and studies which are not worth the cost and labour. 2. All that do but serve that vain desire of knowledge which first tempted Eve to sin. 3. Much more all that which is but to serve men's sinful pride and worldly designs; and it were well with many students if their learning (or science, falsely so called, saith Paul) became not more plentiful and dangerous matter of pride and self-deceit than fine clothes and trifles do to women.

4. All that is worse than vain, which keepeth out greater and necessary things, and turneth the mind from holiness and heaven.

But the same knowledge in its proper place, and used in due subordination to the greatest things, and as a true means to the true end, is good and holy, which otherwise placed and used is doating vanity, and delusory dreaming; as too many ungodly students will find to their cost when it is too late. Therefore a sound judgment and holy will, by right intention of the end, and true discerning the aptitude of means, must resolve this case, and most of such cases through all our lives. Happy is he that is wise in things spiritual, and of everlasting consequence to God, and to salvation, though the world should deride him as unlearned, or a fool. And woe to him that is honoured for wit and policy, for many languages, and a rolling tongue, for the prudence of Ahithophel, or the learning of Aristotle, and hath not wisdom to live to God, to resist temptation, to escape damning sin, and to save his soul. It will do him no more good in

hell that he was cried up for a learned, or wise, or reverend man on earth, than it will do to dives (Luke xv.), that he was clothed in purple and silk, and fared sumptuously every day, and had his portion and good things where Lazarus had sorrow and contempt. More than one of the most famous scholars have at last cried out that all learning is vanity, save the knowledge of God in Christ, our duties, and our spiritual and endless benefits and hopes.

I have told you of many evils that come by the preference of unnecessary or less necessary things, but one remaineth to be noted, which the text expresseth in Martha's instance. While she is over careful, and troubled about many things, which were then less necessary, she thinks her sister should have been of the same mind, and done as she did, and grudgeth at her, and accuseth her to Christ, as if Mary's work had been less necessary than hers; which sheweth us,

Observ. That they that choose unnecessary or less necessary employments, are apt to account religious exercises less necessary, and to censure those that choose them.

The wrong censuring of Mary's choice and work was as much of Martha's fault as her own worst choice and needless trouble. Those that sin against knowledge, and confess they do ill, are often desirous that their children and friends should do better. But they that think their sin is their duty, will censure those that sin not with them, as if it were sin to fear sin, and avoid it. And no wonder. For, 1. That which is true to one, is true to another; and that which is best to one, as a common duty, is best to another. And it is natural to us to desire that our friends should know what we know, and choose that common good which we choose, and avoid the error, sin, and misery which we avoid. Our love to truth and goodness will make us desire that they may be common. And our love to our friends will make us desire that they may be happy by choosing what is best. And the love of ourselves maketh men desire that others may be of their mind and way. As God first loveth himself, and next that which is most like himself, so naturally doth a selfish man. Though a holy man as such first loveth God, and then that which is most like God; yet when he erreth, he thinketh that to be like God which is not. And then even the love of God also will be abused to the promoting of er-

ror, and the angry censuring of truth and duty. No doubt but Martha's love to Christ himself, was abused by her error, to censure her sister that did not serve him in the way that she thought then most necessary.

2. And when several things are contrary or inconsistent, the overvaluing of the one must needs cause the undervaluing and rejecting of the other; the weighing down of one end of the balance will lift up the other. As all men that are earthly minded are so much the less spiritual and heavenly, and he that loveth the world hath the less love to God, so they that overvalue unnecessary things, will naturally grow into a greater disesteem of things truly necessary; contrary things cannot be both at once preferred (in the same respect); when unnecessary things seem necessary, inconsistent necessary things will seem unnecessary.

All this we see verified constantly in our experience, in men's judging both for themselves and others.

1. Mark any that grow more in loving and caring for unnecessary worldly, fleshly things, and you shall find that they grow more indifferent to prayer, and to all holy exercises that employ the mind; a little of this will serve their turn. Mark them that overmind their ornaments, their conveniences, their appetites, or their worldly gain, and you shall see how heartless and dead they grow towards God, and holiness, and heaven; when shadows seem substances, the substance goeth but for a shadow. A little of God will serve them, when a little of the world will not serve them; and spiritual things lose all their sweetness, when fleshly pleasures and hopes grow too sweet.

2. And you shall see that such persons do judge accordingly of others. Their love of vanity maketh serious religion seem a vanity to them. When they are over eager for the flesh or world, they judge God's service to be over earnest in religion. When we wonder what they can find in an empty world to take up all their thoughts and hearts, their talk, labour, and time, they wonder what we find in religion to take up ours. As we say to them, 'What needs all this ado for vanity? Cannot you have food and a grave without this overmuch care and trouble?' so they say to us, 'What needs all this ado in religion? Cannot a man be saved without so much violence and stir? Is God so illnatured that no less will please him?' Thus God must be thought to be like them,

(Psal. l.), and to leave his holiness when they leave theirs, (or never had it,) and to grow indifferent and reconcilable to sin when once they love it.

And when serious godliness is thus rejected by themselves, it first seemeth in others to be but a needless, honest superstition, the effect of a weak judgment, and a timorous and trembling heart; and afterward they grow on to call it foolishness, and entitle it as Christ did Martha's case, a care and trouble about many unnecessary things. And from thence many grow to think it evil; and from thence to think it the most insufferable evil, and to take serious conscience of our duty to God to be the greatest rebel against kings, and the greatest troubler of the land, the greatest schismatic, and the most dangerous enemy, and most intolerable plague; and so they proceed to hellish malignity and cruel persecution. This is the natural progress of overvaluing and overminding needless things.

3. And alas, not only the history of thirteen hundred years, but the notice of our own age hath told us, that even in the churches the same cause hath produced the same effect, when many needless and troublesome things are overvalued and thought necessary. Mary is accused, and her hearing so much preaching is taken for the effect of idleness, or itching ears. In the church of Rome, where things first called indifferent have been preferred, true knowledge, explicit faith, spiritual worship, and a holy life, are taken to be necessary only to some few votaries, or saints that are to be canonized as wonders, and not to all that will be saved; and a mass of ceremonies hath shut out mostly serious preaching, praying, and holy living; their tree beareth sometimes only leaves, and at other times the pricks of thorns and thistles. Images pretended to be for the honour of departed saints are cherished, where saints and sanctity are hated; as their forefathers the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. "They build the sepulchres of the prophets and righteous men," and condemn those that murdered them, and keep holy days in honour of them, and go on implacably to kill those that imitate them, and to do as their forefathers did that persecuted them. Ceremony is become the substance of too many men's religion, and an image and shadow of faith and godliness. Justice and charity hath taken place of life and substance. Too many churches are filled with statues and carcases instead

of real saints. The shell, which is but to keep the kernel, is valued in its stead, and the kernel cast away instead of the shell. The letter, which is for the signification of the sense, is first taken up as enough without it, and then turned as an enemy against it; and the oft-repeated names of Jesus, and Mary, and saints, are used first instead of holy love to Jesus and saints, and then to cherish a malignant, murderous hatred of them that are saints indeed within their reach. It was St. Dominic, and such other of their holy men, that promoted the murder of real saints, even of many thousands, if not hundred thousands; do but call them Heretics, Waldenses, Albigenses, Lutherans, Zuinglians, Calvinists, Hugonots, Bigots, Lollards, Whigs, Puritans, and then conscience is as loose and free to hate, revile, imprison, silence or murder them, as if they were so many robbers or rebels, or as bad as their accusers and persecutors, feign them. Paul doth foretel that in the last days some shall be haters of those that are good, and διαβολοι, devils, which we translate false accusers, and yet have a form of godliness, while they deny the power. Diabolism begins in false accusation, and proceedeth to the most cruel persecution. What on earth can be more like a devil, than first to print such horrid lies of the servants of Christ, as they have done of Luther, Zuinglius, Bucer, Calvin, Beza, and the reformed churches, and then to torture and burn such as heretics, and to make it a law and part of their religion to compel princes to do the like in all generations to come; and even to burn the bones of the dead, as they did by Bucer, Phagius, and Wickliff: yea, to murder them by thousands, as in France, and by hundred thousands, as in Ireland; and all this began with the overvaluing unnecessary things, worldly pomp, and power, and wealth, and pleasure, and images, ceremonies, and formalities! What dreadful work was made about images against the Eastern emperors! How many councils of bishops were the authors of schism and rebellion for them! And at last for them did the pope rebelliously cast off his sovereign, and cut off the Western empire from him, and give it (as if it had been his own) to the French. To this day, do but speak against their deified wafer, or their mass, of ceremonies, or their adoring images, or their false doctrine, or their papal or prelatical tyranny and usurpation, and you presently deserve to be painted with the picture of devils,

and after the torment of the inquisition, to be cursed from Christ, and burned to ashes ; and all this as for Christ, the church, and faith.

And the German Interim told the world whither the overvaluing of things, called indifferent, doth tend, when the churches were deserted, the ministers silenced and persecuted, and sadly divided among themselves, and the reformation almost overthrown ; and all because the pastors refused to conform to a book compiled by the emperor's command, by a few self-conceited bishops, pretending to be moderate reconcilers, obtruding divers of the Romish formalities as the means of the peace and concord of the churches. It would grieve one's heart to read what confusions this imposed book, called " The Interim," did cause.

But alas, they are not the only instances of the calamitous effects of the overvaluing and obtruding unnecessary things. As the ruins of Troy long told spectators what a war for one Helena, a beautiful whore, did cost that part of the world (which became the subjects of the famous poems of divers ages), even so the ruins of the Eastern churches, sometime the most great and famous in the world, and now the habitation of owls and serpents, deluded Mahometans, with some ignorant, sad, oppressed Christians, proclaim to all that read, hear, or see them, what are the fruits of striving about unnecessary things, even about worldly preeminence and wealth ; which patriarch should be greatest, and which bishop should sit highest, and go first, and have his will, and pass for the most orthodox, or have most followers ; and about ambiguous words, who it was that spake most wisely, and who should make the words of other men's creeds and professions (for the trade of making liturgies, which whole nations or provinces must be confined to, was not set up till after that of making creeds). In a word, church wars, 1. About the jurisdiction of prelates ; especially whether Rome or Constantinople should be the chief. 2. And about hard and doubtful words. 3. And about images and ceremonies, have laid East and West in the condition of apostacy, desolation, shame, and slavery, in which with amazement we see them at this day.

And what are all the religious wars, murders, and cruelties exercised for by the papal party, but that one prelate and his confederates may be the masters of all the Christian

world, and may have their wills in all religious matters directly, and in all civil matters in order to the religious; and that all their laws may be obeyed, their formalities used, and their words believed? Killing, burning, tormenting, and confounding, seem not too dear to accomplish this. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Who would think, that never before saw it, that a little gunpowder should blow up houses as it doth! And who would have thought that so many churches, kingdoms, lives, and souls should have been blown up, or ruined, as they have been, for the unnecessary domination, wealth, formalities, and ceremonies of the clergy.

I have often, too often, heard preachers themselves, instead of a sermon, pour out scorns against those that preached and lived more seriously, strictly, and holily than themselves. And I have too oft heard the common rabble revile them that were most careful and diligent for salvation, as a company of Precisians, Puritans, and hypocrites. And I have thought with myself, Have these men found better and greater things to lay out their own care, time, and labour for? And alas, I perceived that instead of God, and Christ, and holiness, and heaven, they had nothing to take them up but vanity and vexation; their bellies, and their purses, and their walls, and their titles, and their pride, and lust, and selfish wills; and are these more necessary than Mary's choice? Mark what those persons are saying and doing every day, who think serious godliness to be overdoing; and you shall see, that instead of it, some are doing nothing, and some worse than nothing; wasting their short time, deceiving and destroying themselves and others.

And indeed it is not possible that any one that is a serious Christian himself, and hath tried truly a holy life, should think it needless, or make it a matter of reproach to others. But we grant that particular duties may be misplaced, and prudence is necessary to know their time, and length, and manner; and it is possible, both that a Mary may sometimes here imprudently overdo, and that a Martha may by mistake be quarrelsome, and accuse the innocent, that yet is not against serious piety itself. Therefore I think meet to annex these two cautions to the hearers in this case.

I. Do not presently take yourselves to be truly godly, because some others accuse you of overdoing, or of being re-

ligious overmuch. Every one is not a saint that is derided for sanctity ; every one doth not sincerely preach, hear, pray, or practise, that is derided for these things. If you have no better evidence of grace, than that some call you Puritans, Precisians, or such like, it will be an insufficient evidence. 1. Bad men will deride those that seem holy, though they are not so. 2. And good men in their faulty weakness, may misjudge of the circumstances of your duty, and unjustly blame you, and yet you may not be sincere in the main. 3. And you may actually mistake in circumstances yourselves, and deserve the blame that is cast upon you. The Pharisees were overstrict for the Sabbath, and in avoiding publicans and sinners, and thought Christ too loose. Judas pretendeth more charity to the poor than Christ had. That is not most right which seemeth strictest, but that which is most agreeable to the law of God. Though some misapply Solomon's words, Eccles. vii. 16. "Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise ;" as if it had been written against serious, diligent, obedience to God, and true proper righteousness and wisdom ; yet we must know that it was written by the Holy Ghost, and not in vain. A pharisaical, superstitious sort of religion, and observation of vain traditions, and a zealous strictness which God never commanded, is a righteousness equivocally so called, and it is overmuch. Such is much of the popish righteousness, and such is the affected austerity of several sects, old and new. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," are oft a human, counterfeit righteousness, which God doth neither require nor accept. As God liketh not a popish charity, that killeth or tormenteth men in love to God and religion ; so neither doth he like those superstitious austerities which destroy our own bodies, and disable us from cheerful thankfulness and obedience ; which maketh Solomon say, "Why should thou be desolate (or destroy thyself ?)" That is good which is fitted to do good. All grace and duty is for edification.

II. And as every one is not truly godly who is derided as godly by the profane, or blamed for some superstitious strictness, so you must not take every one for malignant or ungodly who speaketh against such strictness, as either is real superstition, or seemeth so or worse to him.

For 1. If you are guilty of superstition it is a friendly office to shew you your mistake. 2. And if you are in the

right, and another that is in the wrong misaccuseth you, in many cases his error may stand with love to truth and holiness in the main. Every one is not ungodly who misreproach us with the Anabaptists for baptizing infants. Or with the Antinomians as setting up the abrogated law ; and so of many others. As men differ in judgment about God's law, they will accuse each other's differing practice. But opposing serious godliness as such is another thing.

And indeed it is usual with malignant enemies of a holy life, to make themselves a religion of formalities, and imagery, and shadows, to quiet their consciences while they resist the truth, that it may not seem to be an act of impiety and malignity which they do, but an opposition to the faults of others.

But the use which you should make of this lesson is this: Take heed lest you be tempted to an overvaluing of any unnecessary or less needful things, whether it be wealth and honour, or fleshly interest ; or else any formalities, or things indifferent about religion, lest before you are aware (as imagery stole away the hearts of the old idolaters from God, so) these should secretly consume your holy zeal, and turn your hearts from the life and serious exercise of religion, and worshipping God in spirit and truth, and afterwards draw you to condemn that zeal and diligence in others which you want yourselves. We have bodies as well as souls, and must have a just regard to bodily necessities ; and a care that our bodies do their duty. But let the body and its interest keep their place. Remember how far it is below the soul, and use it, and all its interests accordingly. The least things that are good are not to be despised. But alas, what work is made by preferring little things ! The traditions of their fathers, their tithing mint, and annise, their washings, their building the sepulchres of the prophets, their domination, pomp, and ceremonies, did pass with the Pharisees instead of the great things of the law, and sacrifice went before mercy, truth, and judgment ; yea, and become a cloak for devouring widow's houses, and for persecuting and silencing the preachers of the Gospel, and for slandering and murdering Christ himself.

What ruins this hath made in souls, churches, and kingdoms, I have already told you. Know therefore wherein God's kingdom doth consist ; Rom. xiv. 17, 18. And what and whom God bindeth you to approve, and learn what this

meaneth, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," that you may not deceive yourselves, or condemn the guiltless. Even Martha will murmur at her dear sister, and accuse her, if she be herself but tainted with this ill disease.

But whose part doth Christ take? And which of them doth he justify? The defendant Mary; and that, 1. With a compassionate reproof of Martha. 2. With the reason of Mary's justification. 3. And with a sentence of blessing added to her defence. Whence we learn,

Doct. 2. 'That when wiser Christians, and their better choice and work are accused by them that preferred less needful things, Christ will be the advocate and judge, and will defend and justify the wrongfully accused.' He will in this case take the accused's part.

Martha accuseth her sister to Christ, she expecteth that he should blame her as neglecting her duty, and leaving all the trouble and care on Martha. But Christ doth not answer her expectation, but justifieth the wise and innocent.

Reason 1. For it is his office to be both the advocate and the judge. And he will do it in perfection, without error or injustice. He well knoweth who is in the right, and none can deceive him by false accusations or false witnesses.

2. He is so nearly related and deeply obliged to defend the innocent or just, that he will never fail them. They are his members, and his love engageth him. He spared not his life and blood for them, and will he not speak for them? They are his purchase, and interest, his peculiar redeemed ones, and will he forsake his interest, and his own?

3. Indeed in plain justice he is bound to justify them against such injurious accusations. For it is he that commandeth them to do what they are accused of. It is for obeying him. If it were a fault, it would be his that bid them do it. Nay, how much hath he done to bring his servants to that holy choice, and faithful duty, which in the world they are commonly accused for! Alas, we were not forward to it of ourselves. It was not we that made the law, which so strictly forbiddeth sin, and commandeth duty. The Bible is not of our making. It is not we that made the law to "love God with all our heart, and soul, and might; and our neighbour as ourselves; not to take his name in vain, to worship God in spirit and in truth," &c. And it was a higher cause than our own power which taught us, and in-

clined our hearts to obey these. Many a message did Christ send us, by his Bible, ministers, and Spirit, before we were heartily drawn to yield. Many a day's patience did he use, and many a threatening to drive us to it, and many a mercy and promise to draw us, and many a book and teacher to instruct us, yea, and many an affliction to correct us; and will he not justify us for that which he so earnestly commandeth us, and with so much ado doth bring us to obey? Did he come into the world, and live, and die, to save his people from their sins, and purify to himself "a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Tit. ii. 14.), and will he forsake them when they are accused for obeying him? Where shall we meet with a man of any common honesty that would do thus by his poorest servant? And shall not the Judge of all the earth do righteously? For our parts, if we are accused for serious piety, or any duty which Christ commandeth us, it is his command that was our reason and obligation, and which we have to allege for our defence. If that have not authority and truth enough to justify us, we have no other justification. Indeed Christ should forsake himself if he thus deserted us. He should take the blame upon his own laws, yea, and on all the works of his grace and Spirit, and all that he hath done to bring us to that which the world and our flesh was so much against.

4. He defendeth his disciples against the Pharisees' accusations on earth, and will he afterwards forsake them?

5. He hath appointed the great day to judge the world in righteousness, even the secrets of men, and to bring all things open into the manifesting light, even all truth and falsehood, and all the hidden works of darkness. Therefore undoubtedly all truth, all righteousness, and all that is of God, shall be fully justified, and God's truth in all, when false accusers shall be all called liars.

Use. This being then so plain and sure, I would commend the consideration of it to several sorts, and in several instances. I. To the accusers of the godly for their duty to God. II. To the accused. III. To those that are yet in doubt what cause to choose.

I. The unjust accusers of just men are of divers degrees or sorts.

1. Some there be that only accuse them in their thoughts, and take them to be guilty when they are not.

2. Others go further, and too easily believe false reports from others : and then think that they are allowed to tell what they have heard, and so to vend such false reports. And if they can but say, either that it was a great man, or a learned man, or a minister, or a religious man that said it, they think that their calumny or backbiting is no sin. But much more, if many such report it ; and yet more, if they heard none contradict it.

3. Others there be, that because it serveth their interest or design, or pleaseth their malignant minds, do make it part of their business purposely to carry about such reports, and persuade as many as they can to believe them, and plead down those that contradict them.

4. Others go further, and are the first devisers, or the malicious increasers of the slanderous reports themselves ; not only the spreaders or carriers, but the fathers of the lies which they send about by others.

5. Yet some go further, and studiously and maliciously publish them in pulpits, or in print, to draw the world and posterity to believe them ; yea, and this as for God, and as for the church and truth ; as if it were but the detecting of heresies or lies, or dangerous faults or practices of others.

6. And yet further, some in most ages and countries, in offices and places of judicature, who should be the pillars of justice, do pass false sentences against the just, and pronounce them guilty, and persecute and oppress them by their unrighteous punishments.

7. And yet worse ; some slander not only the persons, but the cause of truth, piety, and righteousness itself, and make false laws and canons, calling good evil, and decreeing the common slandering of the truth, and the punishing of the innocent, because they will not break the laws of God, and please proud mistaking men before him.

To all these sorts of accusers of the just, I would give (would they hear me) this following advice :

1. I advise you to stay, and think well of the matter, and be sure that you have thoroughly tried it before you venture to pass your judgment. It is not so small a matter as you think, to wrong the just, and say, I was mistaken. And especially will you be first sure what side Christ will take ? and whether he will be of the accuser's mind.

And Christ hath so fully told us his mind already in his

word, that we may certainly foreknow what judgment he will pass.

(1.) Do you accuse men for pretending to the Spirit, and to be holy? Why, Christ hath said, that "Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" John iii. 6. And "without holiness none shall see God;" Heb. xii. 14. And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his;" Rom. viii. 9.

(2.) Do you accuse godly men for singularity, and for differing from others in their religious diligence and zeal? If they differ from the common faith of Christians, or single themselves from the communion of saints, or from the love and concord of believers, Christ will not justify them in this. For he hath said, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition avoid;" Tit. iii. 10. And "by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;" John xiii. 34, 35. And "Mark those that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them;" Rom. xvi. 17.

But if it be differing from unbelievers, or ungodly men, or formal hypocrites, by a holy resolution to live wholly to God, and obey his laws, whoever be against it; if this be the singularity you mean, Christ is engaged to bear them out. For it is he that hath commanded this, and said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you;" John xv. 14. "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love;" ver. 10. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven;" Matt. v. 20. "What do you more than others?" ver. 47. "He purifieth to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" Tit. ii. 14. Lot differed from Sodom, and Noah differed from all the old world. The wise differ from the foolish, and the righteous from the wicked; or else there would not be hereafter so great a difference as of heaven and hell. What is a physician good for if he make not his patients to differ from the sick? And what came Christ to do, or how is he a Saviour, if he make not his disciples differ from the ungodly world? Even a philosopher would not set up a school, but to make his scholars differ from the unlearned.

(3.) Is it for so much preaching and hearing that you ac-

case men? It is possible indeed to do a duty unreasonably, and to overdo in one thing, when it causeth the omission of other duties. But certainly Christ that so strictly commandeth his ministers to preach, and as they love him to feed his flock, will justify them for so doing. How shall they believe without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" Rom. x. And he that said, "He that heareth you, heareth me," and that here justifieth Mary's hearing, will justify all others in the like case: for he hath bid us (by Solomon) to "get wisdom as the principal thing;" Prov. iv. 5. 7. "To incline the ear, and apply the heart to it; to cry after knowledge, and lift up the voice for understanding; to seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasure;" Prov. xxii. 3, 4 "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord;" Prov. viii. 33—36.

(4.) Is it for much praying that you accuse men? Why, Christ bid his disciples "pray always, and not faint;" Luke xviii. 1, 2. And pray continually; 1 Thess. v. 17.

(5.) Is it for so much ado in their families, in the religious education of their children, and reading the Scriptures that you accuse men? Why, it is God that hath said, "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," &c. Deut. vi. 7—10. xi. 18—20. An angel was sent from heaven unto Cornelius when he was fasting and praying in his house, to signify God's acceptance, and tell him further how to be saved. Daniel would rather be cast to lions, than forbear praying in his house for certain days, when the king and laws forbad him. You may easily know then which side Christ will take.

(6.) Is it for scrupling things which others scruple not; and taking that for sin which others say is none, and so not doing as others do, that you accuse men?

If they mistake, and think that to be sin which is not, Christ will justify their desire to please him, and their fear of sinning, but he will not justify their mistake. But if it be sin indeed, whatever men call it, he will justify our avoid-

ing and abhorring it. He that died for sin, would not have us love it, nor run into the consuming fire, from which he came to save us. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The accuser may call it folly, and precise scrupulosity, but God saith to man, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;" Job xxviii. 28. If we sin with others, we must suffer with them.

(7.) But perhaps it is for not keeping their faith and religion to themselves, but making so much ado to propagate them, that you accuse men.

Indeed Paul, speaking of the knowledge and belief of the lawfulness of lawful, necessary things, saith, "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God;" Rom. xiv. 21. That is, enjoy thy own knowledge and liberty, but use it not so as to tempt and ruin others. But surely it is Christ that hath said, "Ye are the lights of the world, that must not be put under a bushel;" Matt. v. And, "He that gathereth not with us, scattereth abroad;" Matt. xii. 30. And, "Whoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father," &c. Matt. x. 32. And, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;" Rom. x. 10. We must love our neighbours as ourselves, and therefore desire and seek their salvation: "He that seeth his brother have need, (for his body) and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Much less if he have no pity for souls. While we have opportunity we must do good to all men. Gal. vi. 10. The slothful servant that hid his talent is condemned to utter darkness. Matt. xxv. What do we in the world but to receive good, and do good? And how little goodness is in that which tendeth not to men's salvation? What are we made, redeemed, and preserved for, but to serve God, and seek the good of ourselves and others? You accuse not men of giving money to the poor and needy; and is not holiness much better? If money be better than grace, not only Simon Magus was excusable, but Cæsar might be a greater benefactor than Christ. Do you believe a heaven, and do you accuse men for seeking to help men to attain it? Unthankful, miserable sinners, that accuse men for endeavouring to save them from sin and endless misery! Were they drowning, they would not ac-

case men for labouring to save their lives. None but madmen strive against those that would heal or help them ; but it is here no wonder, when the Saviour of the world was as madly and unthankfully used by such sinners : how can we expect that he will accept our help, who despiseth or refuseth God's ?

(8.) But perhaps it is their zeal and earnestness in religion that you accuse ; and think that they should be, as you call it, more moderate ; that is, indifferent and cold.

Indeed imprudent, passionate rashness, and erroneous zeal and factious violence, which is more for self-interest and self-conceit, than for the truth and cause of Christ, is a thing which he will never justify. If James and John have such a feverish zeal, he will tell them, " You know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Where an envious, striving, masterly zeal is, he tells them it is not from above, but the wisdom which it pretendeth to is earthly, sensual and devilish, tending to confusion, and every evil work. Christ is no patron of popish, tyrannical, persecuting, destroying, hurtful zeal ; but surely he will justify the zeal of love, and of good works : not zealous slandering, railing, and false censuring ; but zealous preaching, praying and praising God, and a zealous diligence in all that he commandeth, and a zealous care to mortify fleshly lusts, and avoid sin, and escape damnation, and to glorify God. It is a base contempt and dishonouring of God, and Christ, and holiness, and heaven, to think or speak of them, or seek them, with a cold indifferency, as if they were but common needless things.

How eagerly do worldlings seek the world, and proud men strive to climb into some honour, before they fall into the grave and hell ! How violent do many earthly rulers strive to enlarge their dominions, and have their wills, though by the ruin of countries, and the blood of many thousand innocents ! How hot are all these worldly men, (even popes and prelates, that say they believe a better world) against all how wise and holy soever, that are against their worldly interest ! How fervently did they cry against Christ himself, " Away with him, crucify him !" How furiously did they gnash their teeth at Stephen, and stone him ! And cried out against Paul, " Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live !" The devil is earnest to destroy us. The zeal of infidels, papists and church-tyrants

is burning hot, and no reason, no worth or innocency of the just, will serve to quench it. And is it only God's service and our salvation that must be coldly managed and sought? Is it only that which we are born for, and live for, that must be thrust behind the door, or done as if we did it not? Is it heaven and hell that must be jested with? And souls that must be ventured for a little wealth or lust, or our endless hope cast away for nothing? Idols that have eyes and see not, deserve no better service than the hypocrites imagery, and stage religion; but do you think the God of love and glory can be loved, honoured or obeyed too much? None but the atheistical fool can think so. How quickly, how certainly will you all wish that God and your salvation had been loved, and sought with all your hearts, and strength, and time, and that he that is All had had your All, and that you had been as holy as the holiest of men! O hypocrites, that daily pray that "God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will done on earth as it is done in heaven;" and yet accuse those as doing too much, that, alas! fall far short of the lowest of all the heavenly inhabitants!

(9.) But perhaps they are accused for not serving God just as men command them, and not being of the religion of those that are uppermost.

This hath indeed been the common accusation. But,
1. God is uppermost, and will be; therefore they are resolved to be as near as they can of his mind that is uppermost, and will prevail.

2. Christ went against the rulers of his time, and commanded his apostles so to do, and so did they, and so did the church for three hundred years, and in much of the world ever since.

3. Must we have as many religions as princes have? And must we change our religion as oft as we change our country? Must a man be a heathen under heathens, and a Mahometan under Turks and Persians? And a Papist under Papists, and a Socinian under Socinians, and so on? If not, how shall we know which prince's religion it is that we must be of, and which we must refuse, but by the word of God, which we must ourselves discern (using the best helps of teachers that we can get)? We thank God that we have rulers that so far own truth and righteousness as they do;

but even the apostle saith, they were not lords, "nor had dominion over their faith, but were their helpers;" 2 Cor. i. 24. "As stewards of the mysteries of God;" 1 Pet. v. 1. 3.

4. Why do you honour the martyrs, and keep holidays in remembrance of their sufferings, who died rather than they would obey man against God, if you think we must always be of the ruler's religion? Did the three witnesses so? Dan. iii. Or Daniel himself? Dan. vi. The common case is much like Daniel's: "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Dan. vi. 5.); which they did for praying when the law forbade him. They could find no fault with Christ and his apostles, but for not observing their traditions, and for worshipping God contrary to the law, and doing contrary to the decrees of Cæsar. Acts xviii. 13. xvii. 5. Matt. xv. God's law is perfect, man's is not so: though we cannot ourselves attain perfection in understanding our practice, yet we will choose and set before us a perfect rule, even the perfect law of the perfect Ruler of the world. If we must be all of the prince's or state's religion, where one country hath the true religion, many will have a false one: and when we are right in one point, we may be wrong in another, our copy being so.

(10.) But perhaps it is error, sin, sedition, sects, schism, scandal, that you accuse men of: if that be it, if you do it truly, and do not slander them, certainly Christ will not justify them in these.

1. If you accuse them falsely he will justify them.

2. If they have sinned, and truly believe, and repent, and amend, he will pardon them through his meritorious righteousness and sacrifice, and will make them and pronounce them just.

3. And he will justify in them all that is his own and good, notwithstanding their pardonable infirmities, and will not make their faults greater than they are, but will see the willingness of the spirit when the flesh is weak. If malignant men will see the mote of a ceremonious error or frailty in their brother's eye, and call it a beam because a beam is in their own, Christ will not join with them in their malignity and injustice, but will bid him cast the first stone that is without sin. John viii. 7.

4. And yet he will not justify the least sinful thought,

or word, or deed, nor the least faulty imperfection in their faith, love or obedience : for no man hateth any of these so much as Christ doth, in whomsoever they are found. Do you cry out against error, sedition, rebellion, disobedience, schism, divisions ? So doth Christ, and so do all his true disciples ; we all agree with you in this. But if the question be either, ‘ Who they are that are herein guilty ? ’ Or, ‘ In whom any sin is reigning, wilful and unpardoned ? ’ Here see that you go not beyond proof ; for Christ will not own the condemners of the just, nor confirm any man’s unrighteous and malicious censure.

2. And as I advise you before you accuse any, to know whether Christ be of your mind, and will be against them, or will take their parts ; so next I advise you, as you love yourselves, to think well how great a sin malignant and false accusing is.

1. It sheweth much of the devil in your hearts ; whether you see it or not, it is no better : he is malicious, a murderer, a liar, and the accuser of the just, and slanders are called by his name, *διάβολοι*, as aforesaid.

2. If it be for Christ’s cause, for truth or righteousness, or done in malice, against godliness or faith, Christ taketh it all as done against himself ; Matt. xxv. For it is not only against his servants, but also for their obeying and serving him : it is he that commanded them, as is aforesaid.

3. You set yourself against the office also of Christ ; he is the advocate of his servants, he hath undertaken their defence, and do you think to overcome him ? It is he that justifieth us, (for all that faith, and zeal, and holiness, for which we are accused and persecuted by the world) who then shall condemn us ? It is he that is for us, who then is he that will be against us ? Shall we not be more than conquerors through him whose power hath conquered for us, and whose victorious love will not forsake us ? Rom. viii. 34., &c. Remember in what a manner he said, “ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks ; ” Acts ii. And to him that offendeth one of those little despised ones that believe in him, that “ it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.”

And it is not only to the gross persecuting accusers of the just that I give this advice, but I beseech you all to take

heed of any rash accusing of the just ; for the wrong is most to God himself, and the hurt to you, and Christ will be against you.

1. Some there are, that when they have by ignorance, or a stretching conscience, for worldly interest consented to some sinful practices, are led by that same unhappy interest, to justify first what they do themselves, and then to accuse all those as erroneous, precise, or schismatical that are against their choice and practice. Most men that live in sin for interest, do think that they must be secured from the accusations of conscience, and the disgrace of sinning, by justifying their sin, and accusing those as the sinners that are against it, and dare not sin as much as they ; but how sad a defence will this prove at last, which so much addeth to their crime !

2. There are some on the contrary, that in ignorance having taken a duty or lawful practice for a sin, (as baptizing infants, singing David's psalms, praying constantly in families, observing the Lord's day, praying oft in the same words, communicating with some faulty churches, or such as these men condemn, and such like,) they hereupon become the rash and false accusers of those that be not as erroneous as themselves ; thus did the Pharisees by Christ and his apostles ; thus did the Jewish teachers, that said, " Except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved ;" Acts xv. Thus did the Jewish Christians against Peter, " They contended with him, saying, thou wentest into men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them ;" Acts xi. 23. And after his miraculous conviction by this censoriousness, they drew him to that separation which Paul doth blame him for ; Gal. ii. 12—14. and Barnabas and others dissembled with him, for fear of the censures of these erroneous men ; for it is not the least mischievous effect of these false accusations and censures that they frighten many weak Christians from duty and into sin, while they hear that this or that is no duty, or is some heinous sin, and have not the understanding to try and judge, they are carried away with the name and noise ; and some such as Peter and Barnabas walk not uprightly, but step out of the way for fear of displeasing them, or being accused by them, as others are ; and it is not a little shame, guilt and suffering, that this course hath brought upon the ministers themselves.

3. And there are some that here more heinously offend, Familists, Ranters, Seekers, Quakers, and too many more; that while they are guilty themselves of lamentable errors, fear not to accuse almost all the churches of Christ on earth, as if they were not his church at all, and had no true religion, ministry, ordinances, and were not to be communicated with. The Papists that burn men as heretics for the truth, I think accuse not so many of Christ's ministers and churches, not so deeply as some of these sects do; yea, and father this malignity on the Spirit of God; but Christ will defend and justify his churches against all these false accusers.

O little do either Papists or any other sectaries know how heinous a crime Christ will take it, to accuse the greatest part of Christians on earth as being heretics, schismatics, or no true churches, or having no true religion or part in Christ, or in his Spirit; and for a worldly faction on one side, or a sick-brained, self-conceited sect on the other side, to appropriate the title of the church or saints to themselves alone, and say to most of the members of Christ, 'You are none of his!' If to accuse falsely one man when his estate only is concerned in it, and that before a single judicature, be so great a crime as Scripture maketh it, what is it openly before God and the world, rashly or falsely to accuse whole churches and countries of Christians, yea, the faithfulest of Christ's ministers, with bitter scorns, as many of the afore-said sectaries do; yea, almost all the church of Christ, in this and almost all former ages! For my part (though some censure me for it), I am afraid of too bold censuring even of Papists, or of honest heathens, such as were Antonine, Cicero, and such others that never heard the Gospel of Christ.

II. My next advice is to those that are thus accused by others about religion, or of sin.

1. Do not presently justify yourselves, because you love not to be blamed; rash self-justifying may be more hurtful to you than other men's rash accusing you. Error and sin are not so rare things, even among good men, that it should be taken for hard measure to be judged erroneous and sinners: who knoweth his secret faults? Psal. xix. We must daily pray, "Forgive us our trespasses." Little do most know how great a number of falsehoods are received into the minds of most good Christians in the world, yea, of the best, much more of the more ignorant sort; and therefore we have

great cause to be still cautiously suspicious of ourselves : and it is a mercy to have notice of our sins and errors from whomsoever, friends or foes.

Try therefore, lest it should prove an error or sin that you are accused of; confess it not to be such because another calleth it such; but yet let him know that you are willing of his help for your information and conviction.

It is supposed that none of us love error as error, or sin as sin, or any evil as such; it is no evil that is the object of a sinner's will and choice, but a misplaced good, even a lesser good set against or instead of a greater : (as the creature instead of the Creator, and corporal instead of spiritual, &c.) We do not love and will 'malum, sed male,' not evil, but evilly : it is not the thing loved that is evil itself, but the act of loving it, (or doing it.) The fruit that Adam did eat was not evil, but eating it was; meat, drink, pleasurable objects, beauty, money, lands, honours, are all good, but the inordinate love and use of them is the evil.

Our nature therefore giveth this advantage to our monitors; we would all be delivered from evil as evil, and therefore thankfully accept their help.

'Humanum est errare;' how little doth that man know himself, or what man is, who taketh it for an injury to be supposed to have errors? But to deny necessary saving verities, or to be unwilling to see our errors by finding out the truth, or proudly to defend them, because we have once owned them, and to be rash and confident propagators of such errors, and to rage against wiser men that are against our folly, and ignorantly to cry them down as ignorant, and to charge all this on the Spirit of God, this is an unchristian and inhuman sort of erring. Try therefore with a due suspicion of yourselves, lest your accusation should be true, and you be found in the mistake.

The same I say when you are accused of any sin : alas, sin is not so rare a thing with any of us, but that we may well fear and try the case, lest we should be guilty.

2. My next advice is, Take heed lest you go about to interest Christ in any of your sins or errors, or lest you expect that he should justify them. It is a greater sin which many erring men are guilty of in this kind, than is commonly perceived. It is well that men would do that which God owneth if they knew it; but it is dangerous to say that he own-

eth what he abhorreth : to father falsehood on the God of truth, and sin on the God of holiness, is a fearful crime. God that would not endure false fire, (Lev. x.) or to be worshipped like an idol, no, nor to have holy things profaned, will much less endure to be made the father of lies and wickedness.

(1.) Consider that this is to set him against himself, who is the God of truth and holiness.

(2.) This is to use his name against his word, which is the word of truth and holiness,

(3.) This is to put him in the place of satan, and to fashion him the devil's works, who is a liar, and the father of it.

(4.) This is it which the false prophets are so heavily threatened for in Scripture.

(5.) This is to fight against God's kingdom, and the grace of Christ, and the work of the Spirit in his own name.

(6.) This is the direct breach of the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain : " a lie and vanity oft signify the same thing in Scripture. This sin is of the nature of perjury, which is appealing to God, as owning and approving a falsehood ; and do not they so that falsely say, ' God saith this, and that, and the other thing in the Scripture, and by his Spirit in me,' which he never said, yea, which no one so much abhorreth as he ; and will you father on God that one thing which he hateth ? God tells you that he will not hold him guiltless, (that is, he will notably condemn and punish such) as thus profanely and audaciously take his name in vain, or use it to patronize a lie.

I am often near trembling, to hear some of our tremblers, yea, and some others, abuse abundance of plain texts of Scripture, and expound them with palpable falsehood, and deny the articles of the Christian faith, about Christ's person, his intercession, his coming again, his laws, his kingdom, his judgment, and pouring out many heathenish and gross errors, and fathering all this with raging confidence on God himself, and saying, ' I am sure this is true ; the Spirit infallibly tells me so ; God speaketh it in me ; I no more doubt of it than whether I live ; he that doubteth is damned ; the light within me assureth me that this is true, and the meaning of the Scripture.' O patient God ! O sinful man ! O subtle serpent ! O dark, unhappy world !

O pitiful professors of faith, that will be changed or sha-

ken by such heinous sin, as if they heard an oracle of God ! Our God is love, and yet he is a consuming fire : take heed what you say of him, and what you father on him : if pride, blindness and deceit do carry you to blaspheme him, your confidence will not make Christ justify it.

3. But I further advise you, If indeed it be truth and duty which men accuse you for, even such as Christ in the sacred Scriptures did prescribe, doubt not but he will justify you against all accusers ; and let this satisfy you, however you are slandered, against all. As, if your sins were few and small, there would be less use of a Saviour to forgive them ; so, if your slanders by malignant liars be few and small, you will have the less use for Christ to justify you. If it be "all men that revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely (or lying) for Christ's sake, blessed are ye," saith Christ, Matt. v. 11. And if you believe him, you may "rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is our reward in heaven ; and so persecuted they the prophets before you." How many things are here to be observed ! It is supposed to be lies that are reported of you ; and this not of one sort only, but "all manner of evil ;" as if you were impious against God, uncharitable and unjust towards men, heretics against truth, schismatics against unity, rebels and disobedient against authority, and all the rest : and of all these have the just been ordinarily accused ; and this is not by some one exasperated person in a corner, whom few believe, but by all men, that is, the common voice of deluded adversaries ; and it is not only belying, but reviling, yea, and persecuting ; yet must you not only be patient, but joyful and exceeding glad, because it is for Christ, and he will justify you, and give you a great reward in heaven. Here is a noble work for faith, to learn and practise this lesson of cross-bearing, hope and joy. The Judge is at the door, who seeth us and all our case, and is more concerned in it than we are : be not too hasty for a full vindication ; cannot you stay till the assizes ? Were it not that slanderers hurt others and themselves, how small a matter were their thoughts and words to you ? Will a malignant thought of a dying worm deject you from any real honour or felicity ? Is it in the power of a lying tongue, or of many, how high, or how credible soever esteemed, to deprive you of your innocency, or the approbation of God, or your adoption, or

Christ's justification, or your everlasting glory and reward? Do you trust Christ for your souls, and cannot you trust him with your names? Is God your God, and is not his approbation enough for you? Is man nothing to you, who is posting to dust and judgment, and yet cannot you bear his lying words or thoughts? How will you bear the cross of martyrdom, which is to die for well-doing, under the reputation of malefactors, if you cannot bear false words or thoughts? If you say, 'It is the truth that is dishonoured through my dishonour,' I answer,

(1.) God is sufficient to vindicate his truth: every slanderous mouth shall soon be stopped, and God will be proved true, and all men liars; Rom. iii.

(2.) And he hath promised to bring forth your righteousness as the light; your name shall rise as the morning sun, when the most malignant darkness seemed to bury them. Christ is not in heaven reputed a blasphemer, nor rebel against Cæsar; nor is Paul there taken for a pestilent fellow; nor the cross of Christ for foolishness or a stumblingblock, nor are true Christians there reproached or excommunicated, as heretics or evil-doers. Of how small regard is the judgment of man to him that fully trusteth to Christ's justification! Which you may be sure of so far as the Scriptures truly understood do justify you.

III. My next counsel is to those that are unresolved which cause or side is right, and to be chosen, whilst most men are accusers of each other: one talketh against this thing, and another against that, one against this doctrine and practice, and another against that, and so many parties accuse all the rest, that it distracteth ignorant persons.

Either the things which they differ about are such as Christ hath told us his mind of in the Scripture, or not; if not, then pity and bear with the contenders on both sides; interpose not your judgment rashly, but let every one enjoy his own: Paul and Barnabas, as well as Martha and Mary, may differ about persons and circumstances of duty; but if Christ have already decided the case, let that determine you: what need you more? Is the controversy whether God or man should be first obeyed? Whether heaven or earth, Christ or the pleasures of sin, should be preferred? Whether we should live after the flesh or the Spirit? In all such cases it is easy to know what Christ doth judge. I hope

you do not think that he will take part with the sensual, or the covetous, or the malignant enemies of a godly life; nor that he will turn to the oppressors or persecutors of the just; nor that he will renounce his own word, because any men, how great or reverend soever, misapply it, or contradict it; nor that he will call drunkenness, gluttony, worldliness, idleness, filthiness or pride, by gentle, extenuating, deceitful names, though the guilty and impenitent do so.

Some would persuade you that Christ and his Spirit could not speak so much sense as to become intelligible; and though every friend can intelligibly write you his mind, yet Christ could not, or would not; and that you may understand poets and orators, Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Seneca, and philosophers, lawyers, physicians, historians, yea, the voluminous statutes of lawgivers, and canons of the church; but the Holy Scriptures you cannot understand: but it is not reproaching Christ that is the way to have him justify your cause or you. Though ambiguity of words make Scripture, as all other writings, so far difficult as to need some skill in those words to him that will understand them; and though a carnal, blinded mind cannot (savingly in love and lively sense) receive the spiritual things of God, yet men shall shortly be convinced, that the Light of the world was not invisible, though the darkness comprehend it not, and that the wisdom of God hath spoken intelligibly, and in all necessary things you may certainly know which part Christ taketh.

But alas, Christ is unseen, and therefore little regarded by multitudes who customarily honour his name. As among the Turks, we blame not him that rather asketh what the emperor or bashaw commandeth, than what Mahomet commandeth; so these that honour Christ but as the Turks honour Mahomet, do far more regard which side their landlord takes, or which side such a lord, or bishop, or prince is for, than which part Christ is for. O sirs! you would all fain have Christ to be your advocate at last: as ever you would have him be for you then, be now for that which he is for, and hath foretold you he will justify.

O that you were all but truly willing to know what it is that Christ is for, (whether for a holy, or a worldly or fleshly mind and life); and that you were but resolved to be for that which Christ is for, as far as by diligent search you can

know it I should hope then that he would not leave you to damnable mistake, but help you to understand his will for your salvation.

Use. And here you may see, that it is false doctrine which some men confidently preach, that there is no such thing as Christ justifying his people against false accusations; as when we tell them, that against the accusation of being finally impenitent, unbelievers, unconverted, unholy, they must be justified by their own personal repentance, faith, conversion and holiness, or not at all; they have no shift against the plain truth, but to tell us, that we have need of no such justification: the devil will have something else to do than falsely to accuse us. But on the contrary,

1. Is not the devil the accuser of the brethren? And is he not the father of lies? Is not his name Diabolus, a false accuser?

2. Doth he not set the wicked on his work in this life falsely to accuse the faithful, and their faith and duty, that it may reflect on God himself? Yea, through the remnant of ignorance and sin, Christ's servants too oft falsely accuse one another, as unsound, erroneous, heretical, &c. Yea, darkness causeth good men's consciences too often falsely to accuse themselves. And is it not Christ's office to be the advocate of the just? And in justifying them to justify himself, and his cause and truth? Rom. iii. 4. 26. And is it not much of the work of that glorious day, to bring all hidden things to light, and to justify his cause and servants against all the false accusations that ever were brought against them, and thus to shame all falsehood and unrighteousness, and to judge the world in truth?

3. Was it not a false accusation that satan brought against Job; and did not God very solemnly justify him against it? Is not satan's kingdom upheld in the world, by making men in all nations believe that believers are deceived, false believers, and that Christ's servants are wicked hypocrites, the plagues and troubles of the earth? And is there not a day to justify them against all this?

4. If we are not justified against false accusation, we are justified against none at all; for Christ will not justify us against the truth. It is justification by plea and sentence that we are now speaking of: justification sometimes signifieth making us just, and sometimes judging and maintain-

ing us to be just. The first doth make an unrighteous and ungodly man just, by converting him, and giving him repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and pardoning his sins, and giving him right to the heavenly inheritance: this is our first constitutive justification. But when God hath thus made us just by the merits of Christ's righteousness,

1. He virtually by the law of grace doth pronounce us just, and this against the curse of the condemning law of innocency.

2. And in judgment Christ as our advocate will maintain us just.

3. And Christ our Judge will judge us just, against all that can be brought against us: but how far just? Not such as never sinned; nor such as by imputation of his righteousness are by God accounted never to have sinned, nor such as never deserved death: but such as are not to be condemned to pain of sense or loss, but have right to the free gift of life eternal, because Christ for them satisfied justice, and fulfilled all righteousness, and merited all this for them, even forgiveness, grace and glory, and they being penitent believers have part in him, and sincerely obeyed him to the death.

And if it were never so true, that no actual false accusation would be urged against believers, yet is it true that we shall be justified against even a virtual and possible accusation: and where there is not so much as this, there needeth no justification by plea, by witness, or by sentence.

And if we are accused to have been sinners, it is not to be denied; if it be said that our sin deserved death, it must be granted: but if it be said,

1. That we were finally impenitent unbelievers.

2. Or have no part in Christ.

3. Or had no pardon of sin.

4. Or had no right to life eternal.

5. And therefore are to be condemned; all this being false, Christ will justify us against it, and against all other false accusation of men or devils.

Doct. Last. 'Christ doth not only plead his own righteousness for Mary's justification, but justify her choice of the better part, and decree that it shall not be taken from her.'

I. Indeed all the good that we have is his own as the Gi-

ver, though some be also ours as the actors and possessors : and Christ will justify all that is of himself. Nothing but good cometh from infinite good, or him that came to destroy the works of the devil. They that accuse our grace or duty, accuse Christ, his Spirit, and his law. And will he not justify himself? (But of this before.)

II. He that praiseth his servants' holiness and duty, and will praise them in judgment, doth so far justify them. "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Matt. xxv. Yea, he that calleth eternal glory their reward, and the crown of righteousness given by God the Righteous Judge, to such as have fought a good fight, and finished their course, and love the appearing of Christ; and he that is the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him; and will judge all men according to their works, and pronounceth them blessed that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life (2 Tim. iv. 8, 9. Heb. v. 9. Rev. xxii. 14. &c.), doth surely so far justify this personal obedience and righteousness of theirs.

But he justifieth only against false accusations, and not against the charge of culpable imperfection. And do they therefore talk wisely that say, it is no righteousness and no justification, because it is imperfect? Doth any wise man pretend to personal perfect righteousness? And doth not God many hundred times in Scripture call that righteousness and equivalent which is imperfect? And will he justify or save any that hath no such righteousness? Christ was perfectly righteous for us to merit the pardon and salvation of believers, and the acceptance of their imperfect righteousness; and not to bring any to heaven that hath no inherent personal righteousness.

There are some that seem by their arguing to think that so much honour as we give to our holiness and duty, so much we take from Christ, and to praise his saints is to dishonour him. (And yet these men love and look for praise.) But wise men will not believe that the greatness of the gift is a dishonour to the giver, or the excellency of the house or work a dishonour to the builder or workman, or the recovered health of the patient a dishonour to the physician; else what a dishonour will our salvation be to Christ, when we are perfectly holy, without spot or wrinkle, and have no sin! It will be then by the communication of his holi-

ness, as motion, light, and heat is from the sun; and so it is now, though we are imperfect: God accepteth, praiseth, and 'in tantum' proportionably justifieth our imperfect righteousness for the sake and merits of his that was perfect.

I never met with any of this mind, but if one accuse them of less than infidelity, impenitence, impiety, and hypocrisy, they will seek to justify themselves. And why will they justify themselves in that which God will not justify the generation of the just, when malignants call them all deluded hypocrites? And I know no sober man but expecteth that every judge should justify the wrongfully accused and their cause.

Object. 'To justify a good cause is not to justify the person.'

Answ. Untrue. It is not to justify him in all respects, but it is to justify him as to that cause.

Object. 'This is but before men.'

Answ. God doth more hate the condemning of the just than any man doth.

Object. 'This is but as to a particular cause, and not an universal justification.'

Answ. And the justifying of a believer and penitent obedient saint by his faith, and repentance, and obedience, is but the justifying him in that particular cause, which is the medium of his part in Christ; the merit of whose righteousness and sacrifice procureth the pardon of all his sins, and his right to the free gift of life eternally, and so far justifieth him against the guilt of his sin, and the condemnation of the law.

He that is not first made a penitent believer, and justified against chargeable infidelity, impenitence, and hypocrisy, shall never be justified by Christ's merits and sentence against the curse and penalty of the law.

II. 'But Christ doth not only justify Mary and her choice, but decree that it shall not be taken from her.' For,

1. He hath by his covenant given the best and greatest things, and that for ever to every one that will but thankfully accept and choose them.

2. And what he offereth and promiseth he decreeth.

3. And what he decreeth and promiseth he performeth.

For who is it that should take it from her, or from any believer? Or "who shall separate us from the love of God?"

1. Not the malice of *satan* ; else no believer should be saved. If the devil could deprive us of the Gospel, or of grace, it should be surely done ; if he could have kept the world from being redeemed by Christ, it had never been redeemed ; if he could keep men unconvinced, unconverted, and unpardoned, he would surely do it.

2. Not any of his malignant instruments ; for God will not give them power to make a godly man ungodly, and the devil hath no such power to give them.

3. Not the envy of erroneous zealots, or uncharitable hypocrites. The prodigal shall not be turned out of doors because his elder brother envieth his entertainment. The envy of the Jews shall not hinder the blessing of the Gentiles. Resolvedly choose the best, and you shall have it.

Use 1. O that all men would take this sure and necessary direction of Christ for the choice of their comforts, hopes, and happiness. All men had rather be happy for ever, than for a little while ; and what else but holiness and heaven, Christ, grace, and glory, will be such a durable felicity ? Will you choose the favour of great men, and hopes of preferment and worldly honours ; and can you say that this shall not be taken from you ? Will you choose lands and money, and the prospering of your endeavours in growing rich ; and can you say that these shall not be taken from you ? Will you choose mirth and sport, and fleshly lust, and the pleasing of your appetites and fancies ; and can you say that these shall not be taken from you ? Must not life itself be shortly taken from you, and therefore all the pleasures of this life ? If these things be your choice, Christ hath already foretold you what you may expect ; “ Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall all these things be which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God ;” Luke xii. 19, 20. And Luke xvi. 25. “ Son remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” “ Wherefore then do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently to Christ, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto him ; hear, and your

soul shall live; and he will make an everlasting covenant of sure mercies with you :” Isa. lv. 2, 3. “ Labour not for the food which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life,” which Christ will give you ; John vi. 27. “ Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt, nor thieves break through or steal ;” Matt. vi. 19, 20. “ The time is short, therefore weep and rejoice, buy and possess, and use the world, as though you did it not ; for the fashion of this world passeth away ;” 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. O be not as the wicked, who have their portion in this life, in the treasure of their bellies ; “ for their hopes soon perish as the rush that groweth but in the mire, and as the spider’s web, and as the giving up of the ghost ;” Psal. xvii. 14. Flesh will fail you, and the world will fail you ; but God will be a never-failing portion to all that do but sincerely choose him ; Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26. If you drink here you shall thirst again, and if you eat here, you shall hunger again ; but if Christ and his Spirit be your meat and drink, “ you shall hunger and thirst no more for ever.” Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” O do not profanely sell such a birthright for a morsel ; you shall have no better than you choose ; shew not yourselves unworthy of eternal life, by preferring known vanity before it. If you lost heaven because you could not have it, and would have a Christ and holiness, but could not, your case would not be all so bad, as to be the wilful refusers of your own salvation, and lose it because you would not have it. Do not say, We would be saved, if you would not be saved from your sin, and have that holiness and communion with God which is your salvation ; and do not say, we would have God, and Christ, and holiness, if the pleasures of sin seem better to you, and you choose them first ! You may as well say plainly, We will have no God, no Christ, no heaven, as say, We had rather have the pleasures of sin ; and you may as well say so, as choose so, and do so. There are some deceived libertines that think that every good desire is the mark of a justified soul, especially if it be accompanied with a willingness that Christ’s righteousness should justify them, and a belief that

it will do so, though they love sinful pleasure, profit and honour, better than God, and holiness, and heaven, and had rather have a felicity of an epicure, than of a saint.

But Christ himself hath judged contrarily. He saith, "He cannot be his disciple that loveth any thing more than him;" Matt. x. Luke xiv. 23. 26. And he that will have this pearl of greatest price, must think nothing too dear, but sell all that he hath to buy it; Matt. xiii. 46. To be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," is the brand of the worst times and persons; 2 Tim. iii. 4. Let any man that can shew us one promise of God for the saving of any that seek not first God's kingdom and its righteousness; (Matt. vi. 33.) and labour not chiefly for the food that perisheth not; and loveth not God above the world, and holiness more than the pleasures of sin.

If this be not so, where can you fix the difference between the justified and them that perish? Would God make such a difference in the world to come, if there were none here? Doth Christ and his Spirit do no more noble a work in sanctifying souls than so? If one may be justified that loveth one sinful pleasure better than God, and grace, and glory, why not he that loveth another, and another, and all? If fornication, why not gluttony? If gluttony, why not drunkenness? If drunkenness, why not covetousness, and ambition, and all evil? But Paul saith, "Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience;" Eph. v. 6. And "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" Heb. xii. 14. "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into heaven;" no, not those believers that prophesied, and did wonders, and cast out devils in Christ's name; but only they that do the will of God. To the rest he will say, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not."

How oft is it said that all shall be judged according to their works? And Christ so describeth his own judgment, Matt. xxv. Can any man believe James ii., 1 John iii. iv., Rom. viii. 1—14., Rom. ii., and a multitude of such texts, and yet believe that a bare belief that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, will prove any one justified who loveth his sin better than God, grace, and glory; and consequently that Christ's members differ but imputatively from the chil-

dren of the devil? For wherein is a wicked man worse than the godly, but in this? "He that loveth the world (more than God) the love of the Father is not in him! Why, may not life or pleasure separate us from the love of God if we love them better? Rom. viii. 38, 39. Nay, he loveth not God at all in a proper sense, who loveth him not as God; and he loveth him not at all as God, who loveth him not as better than the pleasure of sin, but only as a lesser good.

Object. 'To love God above all sinful pleasure is the fruit and ripeness of grace, but the seed doth not reach so high.'

Ans. It is true, if you call preparatory grace that seed; but such are in no justified state; but it is not true if you mean by the seed any thing proper to a justified man, as all the texts forecited shew.

Object. 'What can the strongest Christian do more than love God above all?'

Ans. Among those that love God above all, and holiness more than sin, there may be a hundred different degrees; one may love him so much as to long after him, and delight in him, and condemn all vanities, and overcome temptations much more easily and effectually than others; and another may do these more faintly, hardly, and with less delight.

Object. 'Did David, Peter, and the disciples that all forsook Christ and fled, love him better than life at such a time?'

Ans. 1. We must distinguish between the rational will, or love, and sensitive passion. 2. Between the habit and the act. 3. Between the ordinary course of action, and a particular extraordinary action.

The weakest true justified Christian loveth God above the creature, and perfect holiness above sinful pleasure.

1. As to the fixed inclination and habit of the soul, (which is the Divine nature.)

2. And in the ordinary act or exercise of his rational love, and deliberate choice, and the seeking endeavour of his life.

3. But not always with the most passionate sensitive love.

4. And passion (of fear or creature love) may in an extraordinary act both weaken the activity of rational, spiritual love, and bear down the executive power into outward contrary sinful acts. But the predominancy of the holy nature will shew itself, in raising the soul from such a fall, and causing it the more to hate and fear the sin. There is difference between a swoon and death, and between an infant

and an image: and so there was between the falls of David, Lot, Peter, and a wicked man, that had rather keep his sin than leave it, and loveth such pleasure more than God.

Use 2. Be thankful then, Christians, for that grace of Christ which caused you to make the wisest choice; even of that which is the real durable felicity, and shall never be taken from you.

Had you chosen houses, they might have been burnt: had you chosen wealth or worldly honours, they might all have been taken from you; yea, all would certainly have left you in distress. Men might have taken away your estates, your liberties, your lives, but not your God, your Christ, your heaven. They may take away your Bibles, and other books, but they cannot take away your grace. They may shut you out of the synagogues, but not out of the love of God. They may imprison you, banish you, cut out your tongues, that you can neither preach nor speak, but still your souls may have communion with God. A Tertullus may call us pestilent fellows and seditious: schismatics may call us the schismatics; and heretics may call us the heretics, and hypocrites may call us hypocrites; but none of them can make us what they call us. They may with some (by God's permission) take away the reputation of your innocency, but not your innocency itself. When a man's food is but on his table, it may be taken from him; if it be but in his stomach he may cast it up: but it is safer when it is digested and turned into his substance. So may your teachers, and Bibles, and churches, be taken from you, but not the law and Gospel which is written in your hearts, and become a spiritual nature in you. What triumphant challenges doth St. Paul make? "Who shall be against us? Who shall condemn us? What shall separate us from the love of God?" Rom. viii. 37, 38, &c. The power of men and devils cannot do it. Death itself the last enemy shall not do it. He will dissolve this frame, and lay our flesh in dust and darkness, and take away from us all the pleasure and possession of this world, but none of our chief good. Tyrants may deprive us of such things as they choose themselves, but not of that which we have chosen! If the devil had said truly, (Matt. iv. Luke iii. 6, 7.) "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered to me, and to whom I will I give it;" he might have said also,

From whom I will I take it away. But sure he is no giver of grace or glory, and therefore cannot forcibly take them from us. Nay, by taking life and all from us, men shall but hasten our perfect fruition of what we choose. Malice may snarl, and rail, and slander, but cannot abate the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, the communion of the Spirit, or deprive us of expected glory.

Let not then worldly fury think that it hath undone us by taking away worldly things. They were none of our choice, nor our trust, nor treasure. If we are true believers, our treasure, heart and conversation are in heaven : let thieves get in and steal it thence if they can. Papal usurpers may pretend Peter's keys to shut out all that obey not their domination ; but while God is our choice, and we shut not out ourselves from heaven, they talk more to their own hurt than ours, and can never take our chosen treasure from us.

Use 3. But if none can take it from us, let us not cast it away ourselves. All that men and devils can do against us is but by allurements, or fear, or other temptations, to deceive us into self-destruction, and to cast away that ourselves which none can take from us. Great disputes we have about free-will and perseverance ; whether it be possible to fall away. But it is past dispute with men that believe the word of God, that we have such freedom, as that Christ, and grace, and glory, are freely offered to our accepting choice ; and that he that truly chooseth them shall have them ; and that all that choose them not before that pleasure of sin which is set in competition against them, shall never have them ; and that it is just so far possible or impossible to fall from grace, as it is possible or impossible for the will of one that hath grace to change : so far as your serious choice continueth, you persevere ; and so far as you change it, you lose your grace. While you plead for the impossibility of the ill changing of your wills, confute not yourselves by your actual change ; but when you feel them again pleased with the forbidden things of the flesh and world, and your appetite to holy pleasure groweth dull and cold, methinks you should perceive that in yourselves there is no impossibility of a change : if there be any, it is out of you, in God ; and no doubt but a change of his decree and will is impossible. All the doubt is, whether he have decreed that no gracious will shall change. It is certain that being so very mutable

in ourselves, that we could not persevere were we left to ourselves, we are all under many and great obligations to "keep ourselves in the love of God;" Jude 21. and to "continue in the love of Christ;" John xv. 9. And we have need of commands to "abide in Christ, and he in us:" John xv. 4. And need of threatenings of destruction if we fall away. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned;" John xv. 6. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let us fear lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it;" Heb. iv. 1. And all God's threatenings are the objects of our belief and fear. "If we sin wilfully after the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which devoureth the adversaries: of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace.— If any draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" Heb. x. 26, 27, 29, 38. Which is the same with Ezek. xxxiii. 18. "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness he shall die," and xxviii. 24.

Yea, God seeth it meet to give us the comforts of the faithful still conditionally, Rev. ii. iii. "To him that overcometh," &c. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved;" Col. i. 21—23. "If ye continue in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel."

All this tells us, that notwithstanding God's unchangeable decree, the care and diligent labour to persevere is our duty, and that falling away must be our fear, and that there is no such impossibility as excludeth this care and fear: and that so far as it is impossible to fall away, so far it is impossible not to fear falling away, with a preserving, watchful fear: and how far a known impossibility is the object of due fear I leave to further consideration.

God hath put us into the hands of Christ, in whose care and trust is our chief security; but he hath also trusted us or put our perseverance and salvation more in our own hands than in any others; and so far that if we do not undo

ourselves by wilful and final neglect or refusal of offered grace and mercy we are safe. Choose Christ as Christ, and God as God; choose grace and glory before all the vanities of the world, and before all the pleasures of sin for a season, and stand to this choice unto the end, expressing it in faithful victorious endeavours, and then neither men nor devils, life or death, shall take your chosen treasure from you.

Object. 'I can easily keep up a resolved choice of God, and holiness, and heaven, but I cannot so constantly keep up the rejection of fleshly pleasures, and profit, and honour, which would be for the time preferred.'

Answ. The worst man would have God and heaven so far as to give him the desires of his flesh, and keep him from all pain and misery; but is it not a plain contradiction to say in proper speech, 'I would have God as God, that is, as best, but I would have pleasant vanity as better? I can easily love my wife as a wife, but I cannot forbear loving harlots better. I can resolve for temperance, but I cannot resolve against gluttony and drunkenness. I am resolved for truth, but not against lying?' Just such is that, to resolve for God and holiness, but not against the pleasures of sin, which alienate the heart from God.

Object. 'But how doth a man choose God and holiness in the hour of his sin, when he is choosing forbidden pleasure?'

Answ. The act of sin is not a choosing God and holiness, but somewhat that is contrary; but every act of the will which is against God and holiness is not a rejecting of them, or a retracting of our choice, nor inconsistent with it; but perhaps only an interruption of the exercise, and an abatement of the degree. Play-fellows may draw a child to disobey a father for love of play, and them, when yet he doth not forsake his father, nor love them better; but only forgets him, or abateth desire through the diversion of the sport.

Quest. 'What is it that is our duty in order to the unchangeableness of our own wills and choice?'

Answ. 1. Trust not yourselves too far: the will goeth not against the mind's apprehensions; and a man's mind is a very dark, weak, mutable thing: what a temptation, or a subtle wrangler or argument, or a new thought may do upon us, we do not well know. Presumption seldom escapeth danger. A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: con-

fidence in your own understanding, goodness and stability, is the prognostic of backsliding.

2. Away from the temptations which do most strongly allure the flesh : to be overpleased with things temporal and sensible, turneth the heart from things spiritual and eternal. To desire a more pleasing condition to the flesh, is to desire stronger temptations, and greater danger to the soul.

3. Think much and seriously on the great and certain things which first converted and resolved your wills : they are the same, and as good now as they were then, and you should know them better. A man that loveth and chooseth rationally, knoweth why he doth it : and the fixing and renewing of your knowledge and belief, is it that must fix your love and choice. The greatest things forgotten do not affect us.

4. Flatter not yourselves with the hope of living long on earth, and look not at death and the following life as a great way off. The power of tempting vanities lieth in men's hopes of long enjoying them : to a man under the sentence of present death they have little power. And the best things that seem far off, do not much and powerfully affect us. Live therefore as dying men, and you will have the mind and choice of dying men.

5. See that your meditations and belief be practical, and brought close to the heart : and take not bare thinking of God and heaven as enough, but know that holy thoughts fall short of their use and end, if they come not to the heart and life. It is not the speculative disputing Christian that hath the fixed will and choice, unless he be also a hearty practising, experienced Christian. He that hath a heavenly heart and conversation, and hath felt the power and sweetness of things spiritual, will hold them fast, when bare hearsay and opinion will let them go.

6. Depend in the constant exercise of faith and prayer upon the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, and seek to please God as your greatest pleasure, and so live by the faith of the Son of God, that you may say, " it is Christ that liveth in you ;" Gal. ii. 19, 20. And then none can take you out of his hands, nor separate you from the love of God, (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) nor take your chosen portion from you.

In a word, that your choice may be unchangeable, you must firmly trust to the unchangeable promise of the unchangeable God, for the unchangeable kingdom, as purchased by Christ, and our title sealed by his Spirit. The world and the flesh must be crucified, dead and buried to you by the virtue of his cross believed, and you must be risen with him to a heavenly mind, and hope, and conversation: every weight must be laid by, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, (Heb. xii. 1.); and we must not look back to the forsaken world behind us, but press forward for the prize unto the mark (Phil. iii.), looking still to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. We must consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners, lest we be weary and faint. We must count nothing dear to us that we may finish our course with joy; and must know by faith that "our labour is not in vain in the Lord," if we would be "stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" 1 Cor. xv. 58. We must serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, as for a kingdom which cannot be moved; and all this in dependance on the grace of Christ; Heb. xii. 28. Considerate men know by grace and experience that this world is vanity and vexation: if we know also by a living constant faith, that a better world of holy joy is the near and certain portion of the faithful, it will fix the will in a resolved choice, and we shall not be like profane Esau, that sold his birthright for one morsel; and the living eternal God will be eternally our Life and Joy, to whom all the blessed with Christ shall give glory and praise for ever. Amen.

END OF THE ONE THING NECESSARY.