

A  
TREATISE  
OF THE  
Slownesse of Heart  
TO  
BELEEVE.

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LONDON:

Printed by Robert Ibbitson, for Thomas Parkhurst, and  
are to be sold at his Shop over against the Great  
Conduit in Cheapside, 1656.

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J O H N 1. 50.

*Jesus answered and said unto him, because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the Fig-tree, beleevest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.*



IN the latter part of this Chapter wee see, that goodnes is of a diffusive and spreading nature. If thou bee good, thou wilt desire and indeavour to make others good: when Christ hath once revealed himself to any soul, it will bee very studious to make him known to others. So *vers. 35, 36.* you read, that God having revealed Christ to *John*, hee makes him known to his Disciples, one of whom was *Andrew*, *vers. 40.* hee could not conceal the good news, but makes it known to his Brother *Peter*, *vers. 41.* Afterward Christ reveals himself to *Philip*, *vers. 43.* and upon it *Philip* makes him known to *Nathaniel*, *vers. 45.* so communicative and diffusive is goodnes, like the liquid Elements of Air and Water, which cannot bee kept in their own bounds and limits.

From the forty fifth verse, to the end of this Chapter, there is contained a discourse 1. Between *Philip* and *Nathaniel*. And then 2. Between Christ and *Nathaniel*. The first between *Philip* and *Nathaniel*, is from the 45. to the 47. *verse*, where you have

1. *Philips* discovery of Christ to him, *vers. 45. wee have found him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write.*

2. *Nathaniels* harsh entertainment of it; *vers. 46. can any good thing come out, &c.*

3. *Philips* care to resolve him, and to take away this prejudice, in the latter part of the *46. verse, come and see.*

4. *Nathaniels* desire to bee satisfied: hee goeth out with him, and that is the summe of the discourse between *Philip* and *Nathaniel.*

The second discourse is between Christ and *Nathaniel*, from *vers. 47. ad finem.* In which you have five things observeable.

1. Christs profession, or commendation of him, *vers. 47. Jesus saw Nathaniel comming to him, and saith of him; Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.*

2. *Nathaniels* reply, *vers. 48. Whence knowest thou mee?* which may bee construed two wayes.

1. Either by way of question, being convinced that hee spake right, and that hee discovered his heart to him, hee demands how it came to pass, that hee knew his spirit so right; as though hee had said, it is true, I desire to walk uprightly and sincerely with God, but how canst thou tell that? how is this discovered to thee? art thou able to judge of the heart? none knoweth that but God only.

2. Or the words may bee conceived as a blunt and more rude reply; *whence knowest thou mee?* you never saw mee before, nor I you; and how then can you give so high a commendation of one you are no more acquainted with?

And I take them in this last sense, because hee came with such a prejudice against Christ, *vers. 40.*

3. Christs further and clearer manifestation of himself to him, *vers. 48. Jesus answered, before Philip called thee under the Fig-tree I saw thee; as though hee had said, I there saw enough to discover thy sincerity. I saw what there thou didst; or because I saw thee, when thou thoughtest none did, thou mayest well think I know thy heart.*

4. *Nathaniels* noble confession or profession of Christ, *vers. 49. Nathaniel said Rabbi; thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*

5. We have Christs commendation of this act of his Faith, *v. 50. Jesus answered, because I said I saw thee under the Fig-tree, beleevest thou? with a promise of future and fuller revelation, thou shalt see greater things than these.*

Here you see that Christ passeth by his failings; which were

1. His prejudice against Christ, because of the place; *can any good thing, &c.*

2. His rude reply to Christ, when he discovered himself to him; *whence knowest thou mee;* these Christ passeth by, and falls into the com-

commendation of his present act of Faith.

So gracious a Saviour wee have, that when wee present him with our duties, hee will not remember our infirmities. *Hee saith, I will remember your sins no more*, viz. to object them against us, to upbraid, much less to condemn us for them. Hee did not object against *Manasseh*, his witchcrafts and idolatries, nor against *David*, his Murder and Adultery, nor against *Matthew*, that hee had been a Publican, and an Oppressor; nor against *Zachew*, that hee had been an Extortioner, nor against *Mary Magdalen*, that shee had been an Adulteresse, nor here against *Nathaniel* his behaviour towards him, when once the soul comes in, hee receives it, and remembers its sins no more, but hides and covers them.

In the Text observe three general parts.

1. An open commendation of *Nathaniels* Faith, *because I said, &c.*
2. A silent reprehension of others unbelief. *Beleevest thou?*
3. A gracious promise of future and fuller Revelation, *thou shalt see greater, &c.*

In the first consider,

1. *The Person commending, Christ.*
2. *The Person commended, Nathaniel.*
3. *The thing for what, his readiness to beleeve.*
4. *The ground of his Faith, because I said, I saw thee under the Fig-tree, beleevest thou?* as if hee had said, doth so small a thing induce thee to beleeve, I have wrought no miracles, raised no dead, &c. I shall do greater things in the sight of others, *heal the sick, give sight to the blinde, cleanse the Lepers, cast out Devils, raise the dead*; and yet many of them will not beleeve.

For the promise of fuller Revelation; the words are, *thou shalt see greater things than these*: which is promised;

Either as a reward of his former Faith, or for the increase of his present Faith, and in these words hee points at what after miracles hee would do. Thus you see the parts of the Text laid open to you; but there is one thing yet which is necessarily to bee unfolded in the Text, before wee leave the general view of it, which is the ground of his beleeving, which was Christs saying; *that hee saw him under the Fig-tree*. The question is

*Quest. How so small a thing as this, saying; that hee saw him under the Fig-tree, could bee likely to produce so noble a confession and profession of Christ, or make him to beleeve?*

*Ans.* Wee will not now speak of Gods working by it, for so wee know nothing is so small; but by his working in, and by it, may prove admirably efficacious, as on the contrary, if hee work not, no thing, though never so great otherwise, and seemingly promising, will bee able to do any thing, as wee see in the Jews; who although they saw his miracles; such as none but a God could do, yet they beleeved not.



Wee will consider the thing in it self, and so I finde these two things in it, which might draw out such a confession, and make him put forth such an act of Faith. *Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the Fig-tree.*

1. It may bee hee was then taken up with the meditation of the *Messiah*, who was to come; for at this time their thoughts were all full of it, *Luk. 2. 25. 48.* and so God might now suggest to him, that hee would reveal him to him.

2. Or it may bee out of evidence and conviction of the omnipresence of Christ; that hee could see him under the Fig-tree. *Nathaniel* thought that hee had been alone, and no eye had seen him; and therefore when such an evidence was brought to his spirit, that Christ saw him, yea, not only his person, and outward actions, but his heart also, hee was thereupon convinced of the divinity of Christ, and so cryeth out, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, &c.*

Quest. 2. But you will say, *How did this discover that Christ was the Son of God, or the divinity of Christ?*

Ans. Hee knew that corporally hee was not there, and therefore although his eyes told him, that Christ was a man, yet in that when absent, hee could see him under the Fig-tree, it did discover and declare him to bee God. But

2. I think this speech of Christ, which was the ground of *Nathaniels* Faith; had not only relation to his seeing of *Nathaniels* person, but to some special peece of service which *Nathaniel* was then upon. Either meditation, prayer, or the like, which Christ saw, and his heart in it, as if Christ had said, I saw not only thy person under the Fig-tree, but also the workings of thy spirit there; I saw in them the uprightness and sincerity of thy heart, and the goings out of thy soul, when thou wert there alone; which brought such a conviction of the divinity of Christ with it, that it made him cry out, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel; thou who knowest the heart must needs bee God, &c.* as if a man should say to his friend, thou art one that art charitable, mournest for thy sin, and in case hee should answer, but how know you that? hee should reply, did I not see such an act of charity which you did? did I not see you mourn bitterly for sin at such a time, &c? this in some resemblance commeth somewhat near to this instance, but yet falleth short, because wee judge of the outward act, Christ here of the inward, which manifested him to bee God omniscient, the searcher of the heart, &c.

Thus I have shewed you the coherence with the parts of the Text, and have in part unfolded what might seem difficult and obscure in it.

Now there are some Doctrines which lye about the verge of the Text; some from the person commending, some from the person commended, and some from the thing, for which. But I shall touch

touch only upon those which arise from the main scope of the Text; and they are two.

Doct. 1. *That the eyes of Christ run through the whole World, and behold the evil and the good.*

Hee that saw *Nathaniel* under the Fig-tree, seeth thee in all places, in all companies, &c. to this purpose read *Psal. 139. Amos 9. 2, 3, 4.* Hee is *totus oculus*, all eye, to see, and all hand to feel and finde out. Hee who is to bee Judge of all the actions, and waies of men, must necessarily know them all.

*Use 1.* Say not then, that God sees not, say not that darknes shall cover thee, *esto quod nemo, non tamen nullus*, though no man, yet some eye seeth thee.

*Use 2.* This may bee comfort to the Saints. Christ sees you under the Fig-tree, sees you in a corner, sees your persons, your actions, your spirits: Hee sees your prayers, hee sees your tears, hee sees your afflictions, your pressures, *Exod. 3. 7. Hee hears your groans, &c.*

*Use 3.* This is terror to wicked men, hee sees them too, hee sees your malice against his Saints, your vileness and abominable filthiness. I saw you in such a place, at such a time, in such and such pollutions, in which thou wouldest have been loath, in which thou would have been confounded, if men should then have seen thee.

From the commendation of *Nathaniels* Faith. Observe,

Doct. 2. *That such is the goodness of God, that hee commends us for that which is his own.*

Hee commends *Nathaniel* here for that Grace which hee had given him. God works graces in us, and then commends us for them: hee gives us mony, and then commends us for our riches; hee makes us beautifull, and then commends us for our beauty, in which hee doth only beautifie his own beautie, and love his own graces in us. Hee doth here commend *Nathaniels* Faith, which yet was only the Faith of his own powerfull working. Hee commends *David* for his uprightness, *Hezekiah* for his perfectness, *Moses* for his meekness, *Cornelius* for his devotion, the Publican for his compunction, the poor Widdow for her liberality, and the Woman of *Canaan* for her Faith and importunity; all which was only the work of his own Grace in them. God will finde matter of love and liking in us, from that which is his own; hee can pass by ours, and own his. As a Father loveth his child for that which is of his own nature in him, and so doth God in us.

*Use 1.* Then see what a sweet Saviour wee have, who will pass by our imperfections and deformities, and take notice of his own beauties in us.

*Use 2.* And accordingly wee should learn to look upon our selves, as Christ doth, though black in our selves, yet beautiful in Christ, although I would have you to own, and to blush at your  
own

own detormities; yet not so as to blinde your eyes from beholding Christs excellencies, as in himself, so in you by his grace, take the shame of your own sins, but let God have the honour of his owir Graces; by this you shall nourish your humility; and yet not weaken your Faith, you shall abhor your selves, and yet extoll Gods free Grace.

But these are but by the way, to which many others might bee added. I will fall upon those which the Text doth more fully hold out, and they are these.

1. *That slowness of Heart to beleeve*, is a temper of spirit very offensive to God; this is hinted in the implied tacit reprehension of others, whilst hee so commends *Nathaniels* forwardneis.

2. That God takes it well at our hands, or it is very pleasing unto God, when wee will beleeve in him upon small Revelation.

3. That God will reveal great things to them, who do so beleeve in him. *Thou shalt see greater things than these*, it is a promise of future and fuller manifestation to bee vouchsafed to him.

Wee shall begin with the first, which is

Doct. *That slowness of heart to beleeve, is a temper of spirit very offensive unto God.*

I need not stand long to clear the truth of this Doctrin, if you look into *Joh. 1. 50.* that high commendation of *Nathaniels* Faith, is a silent upbraiding of others for their *slowness of heart to beleeve*. Because I said, I saw thee under the Fig-tree, beleevest thou? It is as if hee had said, for that without question is implied; why I have done greater things in the sight of others. I have healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blinde, raised the dead, cast out Devils, and yet they have not beleeved. And doth so small a manifestation work on thee. Because I said, I saw thee under the Fig-tree, &c. I have not raised thee from the dead: implying hee had done it to others. And hence hee is said to upbraid those Cities wherein his mighty works had been done, because *they beleeved not*, Mar. 16. 14.

And this was a great aggravation of their sin, where so much had been done to perswade them to beleeve, yet slow, &c.

The like in *Joh. 12. 37, 38.* But though hee had done so many miracles before them, yet they beleeved not on him, that the saying of *Esaiah* might bee fulfilled, who hath beleeved? here was a great aggravation of their sin.

And upon this ground hee reproveth his Disciples, *Luk. 24. 25, 26.* Oh fools and slow of heart to beleeve all that the Prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory, &c.

And how often doth hee upon the same ground rebuke his Disciples. O ye of little Faith! Mar. 9. 19. O faithles Generation how long shall I bee with you? how long shall I suffer you? Implying, it put Christ to the utmost of his patience to bear with them in their unbelief.

Which

Which yet if you read the story, you will finde it was no small work; it was because they could not cast out the dumb spirit out of a man possessed; which yet hee himself tells them afterward, *vers. 29.* that this was the greatest of difficulties: this kinde came forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting, which shews the work was of more than ordinary difficulty: yet because their Faith was posed in it, hee tells them they were a faithless Generation, and hee was weary of them, it put him to the utmost exercise of his patience to bear with them.

And you see the like of *Peter*, whose Faith was so great, as to carry him upon the waters; to walk upon the waves, upon a bare command and word of Christ; yet afterwards the wind growing strong, and corruption working, hee was affraid, and begins to sink, and then cryed, *Lord, save mee*, *Mat. 14. 30, 31.* And how much was Christ displeased at him, who had put forth so glorious an act of Faith, as to walk upon the waters upon a bare command, yet because hee held not out, Christ reproved him, *Oh thou of little Faith, wherefore didst thou doubt!* was this a little Faith? &c.

But wee will pass this, and in the prosecution of this Doctrin, wee will shew these eight things.

1. *That wee are slow of heart to believe.*
2. *What are the grounds that wee are slow of heart to believe?*
3. *What are the reasons why this slowness of heart is so offensive to God?*

For the first, *that wee are slow of heart to believe.*

This will bee demonstrated to you, if you consider with mee these five particulars.

1. The greatness of that power which God doth put forth, in the working Faith in an unbelieving heart.

Faith it self is called the work of Gods power, nay, of his almighty power. The same power which God put forth in the raising of Christ from the dead, even the same power hee doth put forth in the working of Faith in an unbelieving heart, *Ephes. 1. 19, 20.*

There are many mighty works of God, which are not saving works. As the works of Creation, the works of Providence: These are mighty works, but they are not saving works.

But there are no saving works of God which are not mighty.

Every work of mercy, is a work of might too; every work of grace, is a work of power too; though every work of power bee not a work of grace, yet every work of grace, is a work of power; And the work of an almighty power. *Altus omnipotens. Altus omnipotentia.*

Not only an Almighty God doth work, but also according to the Almightyness of God, when hee works Faith and Grace in a graceless heart. There are two names given to this in Scripture, both which speak the greatness of Gods power in the working of it.

1. It is called a resurrection from death to life, not of a dead body, but a dead soul, *Psal. 88. 10. wilt thou shew wonders to the dead, shall the dead arise to praise thee?* hee speaks not there of a natural death, but of the condition which hee was in, lying for the present slain and dead as it were, under the apprehensions of Gods wrath. Shall a soul that now lyes dead and slum with the apprehensions of thy wrath and displeasure, arise by Faith to praise thee? *Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise to praise thee?* That is, wilt thou shew the greatness of thy power in working Faith in an unbelieving soul; this is no less than a resurrection from the dead, the dead arise, &c. And therefore this must needs require the greatness of Gods power to effect it.

It is a great work to recover a sick man, but more to restore a dying man; but to raise a dead man to life, this is the work of God only. Yet all this is nothing to the resurrection of a dead soul.

To raise our bodies when consumed by fire, when vanished into air, when corrupted in the water, when turned into dust and rottenness, is not so great a work, as to raise a dead soul, a soul dead in sin, to work Faith in an unbelieving heart.

This is the Almighty work of God.

2. And hence, Secondly, It is called a work of Creation, *2 Cor. 5. 17.* thus in Christ.

And you know Creation is the work of God only, it is the production of something out of nothing. Men may produce something out of something, but to produce something out of nothing is proper to God alone. There is less distance between the least dust, and the most glorious Angel in Heaven, than there is between it and nothing.

Wee say, and its true, *inter ens, & non ens, nulla proportio*, there is infinite distance between something and nothing. Such a distance as none but a God can bring together. Now this work of Faith and Grace in the heart in an unregenerate and unbelieving man; is a new Creation. A Creation of light in a dark heart, of life in a dead heart, of Faith in an unbelieving heart, of Grace, in a graceless heart, which is a work which requires the almightiness of Gods power for the effecting of it. And that is the first demonstration.

2. If you do consider the complaints of Believers, when they first come to believe.

What sighs, what tears, what groans, what pains, what strugglings, with unbelief, with doubts, with fears. Crying out with the man in the Gospel. *Lord I do believe, help my unbelief.* It may bee now the doubt of Gods power, of Christs insufficiency to pardon sin, to forgive so great and heinous wickednesse, and say with him, *Lord, if thou canst do any thing, help,* Mark 9. 22. or if not so, yet they doubt of his will, whether God will pardon them, yea, or no, and say with another in the Gospel, *Lord, if thou wilt,*  
*thou*

*thou canst make mee clean.* Matth. 8. 2.

Every dayes experience tells us, how hard a thing it is to cast a man out of himself, and when that is done, Oh how hard a thing is it to bring that soul over to Christ, and the promise! Now a thousand objections are raised; the soul is now as full of scruples, of doubts, as the Sun is full of moles.

Oh what swarms of unbeleeving thoughts! what multitudes of doubts, and objections, that it is beyond the power of any, but of him alone that can deal with the heart, either to discover them, or answer them, or if answered, yet the soul is still unsettled, till God come in. This is plain in cast down and humbled souls.

3. If you look upon the Rhetorick, God useth to bring a poor humbled and cast down sinner to beleeve. Read *Isa. 40.* beginning. *Comfort you, comfort yee my people, saith my God. Speak yee comfortably.* Say, your warfare is accomplished, your iniquities are pardoned, &c. But least any should say, alas, tell not mee of this! no comfort belongs to mee; hee is buried up in troubles; God doth not regard him: why see how hee saith in *vers. 27.* *Why sayest thou Oh Jacob, and speakest Oh Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgement is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? hee giveth power to the faint, &c.*

Do you doubt of his power? why hee is *the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth;* and hee can pardon, &c.

What though thy sins bee great, yet hee tells thee, *hee will abundantly pardon,* *Isa. 55. 7, 8, 9.* *Let the wicked man forsake his wayes, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and hee will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for hee will abundantly pardon;* the word is, multiply to pardon, as thou hast to sin.

But you will say, how can this bee? this is far above the thoughts of a Creature. Why but saith hee in the next verse, *My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your waies my wayes, saith the Lord; for as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are my wayes higher than your wayes, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* But alas! there are such and such conditions required. Why but saith hee, *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come,* Revel. 22: 17.

Do you doubt of his will? Why hee tells you: *It is not the will of your heavenly Father, that any of these little ones should perish,* Matth. 18. 14. You think it is, but Christ saith it is not; hee knows the thoughts hee thinks to thee, they are thoughts of peace, and not of evill, &c. *Jer. 29. 11.*

And how doth hee say. As I live, I do not delight in the death of him that dyes, turn you, turn you, and live; Oh why will yee dye! *Ezek. 18. 31, 32.*



And God would have all men saved by coming to the Knowledge, &c. 1 Tim. 2. 4.

Yea but this Covenant is not firm, I may sin away mine own mercy. See what God saith, *Isa. 54. 10. the Mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* It is more firm than the Covenant of the day and night, *Jer. 33. 20, 21. can a Woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her womb? yea they may forget, yet will not I forget thee; Isa. 49. 15.*

This with abundance such like Rhetorick God useth to draw a poor humbled doubting sinner to beleieve, and why should God use such Rhetorick to perswade with men, if it were so easy a matter, as men make it to beleieve?

This shews the difficulty of Faith.

4. If you consider the way that God takes to confirm the Covenant of mercy, and pardon to Beleevers.

Hee gives you his Promise, his Oath, his Seal; heaps Mountains upon Mountains, and all to confirm it; hee layes Heaven and Earth at stake, nay hee pawns his Truth, his very being, and all, to perswade with unbelieving men to beleieve.

God needed not to do this in respect of himself, his purpose was as good as his promise, his Promise as good as his oath, his oath as firm as his seal: hee needed not to do this in respect of himself; as if that his oath would binde him more than his promise.

But God hath done this in respect of us, to strengthen our Faith, that wee might bee stedfast in God, when wee stagger in our selves, that wee might bee strong in God, when weak in our selves. As the Apostle in *Heb. 6. 16, 17, 18.* That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, &c. God hath thus condescended to all this, to beget Faith in unbelievers, that if his promise would not perswade with you, then his oath, if not that, yet his seal: The great Seal of Heaven.

You could not desire more of the most faithles and dishonest man in the World, than God hath condescended to, who is yet the faithfull and unchangeable God. You have a Promise, will not that do? you would have an Oath, will not that do? you have a Seal, witness, all.

And what doth all this, but plainly demonstrate the greatness of the difficulty to beleieve? Wee say, it is in vain to do that by more, which may bee as well done by lesse. If Promise would have done it, the Oath added had been in vain, but shall wee think that any thing of this was in vain? that wee cannot.

And was all this then required? would no lesse serve the turn? Tell mee then whether this do not fully enough demonstrate the difficulty of Faith?

Thou that thinkest Faith so easy, thou that never found the diffi-

Væ nobis sine  
juranti Deo  
credimus.

Frustra sit per  
plura quod fieri  
potest per pau-  
ciora.

Entia non sunt  
multiplicanda  
sine necessita-  
te.

difficulty of it, mayest well think thou hast no Faith. In this God shews the difficulty of beleeving, that his Promise, his Oath, &c. are all ingaged to work and confirm it.

5. If you consider the complaint of the Preacher. You hear *Isaiah* complaining, *Isa. 53. 1. Who hath beleeved our reports: or our Doctrine,* as the word *יִשְׁמַע* may import. *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*

And Christ complains of the same, *Joh. 12. 37, 38. Though hee had done so many miracles before them, yet they beleeved not on him, that the saying of the Prophet might be fulfilled, viz. who hath beleeved our report?*

And Paul hee takes up the same complaint, as you see at large, *Rom. 10. 16. 17, 18, &c.*

And wee our selves may take up the same complaint. *Wee have spent our strength in vain, and our labour for nought.*

Though wee have declared the wonderfull things of the Gospel, the freeness, vastness, greatness of the love of Christ, the preciousness of Promises, yet men beleeve not. Oh that I could not complain of those, &c! how many offers of Christ have you had? how many tenders of mercy?

How often hath Christ unbowel'd himself to your souls in the Promise! how often hath God invited, intreated, beseeched, called, *Hoe every one that thirsteth come!*

But yet senselesse people do not thirst, and thirsty people do not come, &c. Oh! here is enough to demonstrate that wee are *slow of heart to beleeve.*

2. Wee come to the second. What are the grounds, &c.

And wee will reduce them to these three general heads.

1. There are some grounds from Satan.

2. Some from our selves.

3. Some which are taken from others, which do foreflow the heart from beleeving in the Promise.

You must know, I speak of men awakened, and convinced of their miserable condition, not such as go on with a high hand in their sins. I speak of men humbled.

1. Then the reasons or grounds why wee are so slow, &c. From Satan, are the delusions and false suggestions of Satan.

You must know there are two main stratagems which hold up Satans Kingdome in the World.

1. Is to keep presumptuous sinners from being humbled.

2. The other is to keep humbled sinners from beleeving.

The first of these is by keeping of presumptuous sinners from being humbled, which hee doth these ways.

1. Either by perswading them they are no sins they live in, and here hee tells the Prodigall hee is but liberal, the drunkard hee is but sociable, the covetous person hee is but frugal, the proud person, hee is but comely, and handsome, &c. wee say, *nullam vitam sine patrocinio.*



*Sauls* Covetousness in sparing the best of the flock; 'twas his devotion, 'twas his zeal to Sacrifice; the Pharisees Covetousness had an act of devotion to patronize or set it off with. So *Fezabel* paints her face, to make it seem comely.

2. Or else if hee cannot perswade them to that, that they are no sins, but conscience is inlightened and quickned, and checks him for them, hee cannot stand against his own light, nor under his own reproofs.

Then hee perswades them they are but veniall, and small sins, or if great, yet pardonable, nay, and that at any time, as the Thief upon the Cross, what? sayes hee, God is mercifull, and if but at the last thou canst say, *God bee mercifull to mee, Lord have mercy upon mee*, why then all is well, there is no doubt of mercy.

And because men are better versed in the Service-book, than in the Scripture, perhaps hee will cite a Text out there.

At what time soever a sinner, &c.

This is the first stratagem, to keep presumptuous sinners from being humbled. And if hee prevail not then, but that notwithstanding all these good words, a soul is convinced of sin, and humbled for it, then hee hath a second.

2. A second Stratagem, and that is to keep humbled sinners from beleiving, and that hee doth these wayes.

1. Hee labours to have them despair of a pardon, and that upon one of these two grounds.

1. Hee will now tell you, either that your sins are greater than can be pardoned. As *Cain*, *Gen. 4. 13*.

So it is in the Original, *my sins are greater than can be pardoned*.

Hee will so aggravate mens sins, and heighten mens trespasses, and so lessen and streighten Gods mercy, that hee will indeavour to perswade their sins are above a pardon, they are greater than Gods mercie to pardon; and that is the first way which hee deals with ignorant consciences in trouble.

2. Or if hee cannot perswade in that, then hee hath another way to bring men to despair, and that is from the will of God.

Why will hee say, though thy sins are not greater than God can pardon, yet they are greater than God will pardon: hee will never be mercifull to such a wretch as thou hast been; dost thou think God will ever shew mercy to such a vile sinner as thou hast been? what, one who hath sinned against such a light, such means, such mercies, and committed so horrible sins, and continued in them. And thus hee aggravates sin.

As before hee lessened sin all hee could to keep men from being humbled; so now hee aggravates sin, all hee can, to keep men from beleiving. As before hee enlarged Gods mercy above the bounds of the Law, now hee enlargeth Gods Justice above the bounds of the Gospel.

Before

Before hee presented to you, Gods mercy in a false glasse, to make you presume. And now hee presents Gods Justice to you in a false glasse, to make you despair.

And indeed of the two, hee is better able to set out Gods Justice, than his Mercy, because hee feels the one, and knows what it is, but hee shall never taste of the other; hee can therefore better present Gods Justice as it is, than Gods Mercy as it is.

2. Or if hee cannot bring men to despair upon these grounds, yet another stratagem hee hath to keep men from beleeving.

3. And that is thirdly, by telling them they are not disposed and fitted for mercy, you are not broken for sin, you do not love God, &c.

And in this stratagem hee labours to hinder us, by telling us wee want such dispositions, as follow beleeving, more than such as go before Faith; yet hee oftentimes useth the other, and tells men, they are not humbled enough, not broken enough; before they were humbled, then any thing would serve the turn to dispose and fit them for Mercy; and now they are humbled, hee tells them, they are never humbled enough.

Before, a sigh in a good mood was enough to qualifie them for Mercy, and the Promise. Now sighs, groans, tears, daily breakings under the burthen of sin is all nothing, all is too little.

Indeed hee saith would have thee to lye in Hell, and stay there, or if hee doth not object against thy soul the want of humiliation. Why then hee will tell thee, thou wants Faith; if thou had'st Faith, then thou might go over to the promise, but thou wants Faith; and what doth hee mean by that, why that is, thou wants assurance; hee would put men to assurance, before they do beleeve; hee would put them to the evidence, Christ is their Saviour, before hee suffer them to rest upon Christ as a Saviour. Or if not this; yet hee will tell thee, thou want'st such and such dispositions before thou can beleeve; hee would faine have men either to bring something of their own to the Promise, or hee would have men to expect these things before they go to the Promise, when indeed these things follow upon the souls closing with the Promise.

Thus doth Satan keep many poor souls in a hoodwinkt condition, and hinders them from going over to Christ and the Promise.

And that is the first.

2. The second ground why men are so slow to beleeve, and that is taken from themselves.

1. It doth arise from their ignorance, they know not the tenor of the Covenant, the terms of Mercy. Men brought out of a sinfull condition, once awakened to see their sins, can think of nothing but working themselves to life, licking themselves whole, therefore they fall upon prayers, duties (as I have sometimes told you) as so many bribes for a pardon, as so many pennies laid

## *The Slowness of*

laid out for the purchase of Mercy.

Wee run naturally to the Covenant of works, but wee must bee drawn before wee can go to the Covenant of Grace. *No man can come except, &c. Joh. 6. 44.* A convinced man runs to the Covenant of works, but hee must bee a converted man, that goes truly to the Covenant of Grace.

2. It doth arise from our pride often, that wee will not take Mercy gratis, wee will not deny our selves, and close with Mercy as God tenders it.

You have a strange phrase in *Rom. 10. 3. they would not submit to the Righteousness of Faith*; here are proud hearts indeed, that it should bee matter of submission for a condemned man to take a pardon, a wounded man to take a plaister, a sick man a cordiall, a naked man cloathing, a lost sinner a Saviour. One would think this is strange, that it should bee a matter of submission to accept of the Righteousness of Christ to bee saved.

But wee like well of the Spiders motto, *mihi solo debeo*; I owe all to my self; and would bee content to climb to Heaven by a thread of our own spinning.

God is willing to give, and wee would deserve, hee would have all of Grace, and wee would have all of debt. Wee would faine bring our penny to the Promise; yea when wee are nothing, wee would bring our own nothingness. So hard it is to make a soul empty, and when that is done to bring that empty soul over to the Promise.

3. A third ground from our selves, which makes men humbled so slow to beleeve. It may bee too much tendernefs, they are afraid of abusing Gods Justice in their closes with his Mercie; Oh say they! I am afraid of presuming of Mercy. It was their fault before to presume the fear of it, their fault now. I say to presume of Mercy was their fault before, and the fear of presuming is their fault now.

One would think this to carry a fair forehead, they dare not beleeve say they, and why so? because they are afraid to presume, is not this a good pretence?

But ah! here is the Prince of darknes, like the Angel of light; let us examine it, thou sayest thou dardest not beleeve, because thou art afraid to presume. And why dost thou fear to presume?

It is presumption to beleeve Mercy, and yet continue in a way of sin; and it is presumption to expect Mercy in a way of unbelief, but it is no presumption to beleeve. Why dost thou fear thou shalt presume? thou canst not say, thou takes that which doth not belong to thee, for it belongs to whoever can take it: But it may bee thou sayest thou art not fitted for Mercy, thou art then fit for Mercy, when thou art made willing to close with Mercy in the terms of Mercy, that is to take Mercy, as to render up thy self to duty, as to give up thy self to obey.

But

But thou sayest thou shalt presume, for thou art not worthy of Mercy.

And wouldest thou bee worthy of Mercy? dost thou know what thou sayest? wouldest thou deserve Mercy? where then were Grace? This overthrowes the Covenant of Grace? it cannot bee a Covenant of Grace, if there should bee any thing of thy bringing, which is not of Gods bestowing.

May wee not say to thee truly what *Eliab*, *Dauids* Brother falsely said to him, when hee told him hee came out for Gods Glory. Hee tells him no, it was the pride of his heart, 1 *Sam.* 17. 28. So thou pretends Gods Glory, thou sayest because thou wouldest not wrong Gods Justice, and make Gods Mercy a sinfull mercy, therefore thou doest not beleeve; but take heed it bee not the pride of thy heart.

If the time would permit, I would put something to thee. 1. By way of Question. 2. By way of Supposal.

1. That which I should have put to thee by way of question should have been. 1. Couldst thou not have beleeved God would bee mercifull unto thee, if thou wert not so sinfull? 2. If thou wert more humble, if thou hadst more Grace, couldst thou not bee content to pennance thy self for a time, for thy former sin; were not this good, and what were this but to make thy humiliation a step to Mercy, to a pardon?

2. That which I would put by way of supposal. Suppose thou hadst been a Traytor, and thy Prince should offer thee a pardon for all thy treason, upon condition of acceptance, and rendring up thy self to him for service. And thou shouldest refuse a pardon because thou art a Rebel or Traitor, or because thou doubt'st of the truth and reality of thy Princes tender? or else because thou thinkest thou art not able to do him service for future, therefore wilt not accept of a pardon for present; what should wee think of this? Or suppose a Creditor should tell thee, if thou wouldest but bring thy books, come to him, and reckon with him, and acknowledge thy debt, hee would pardon thy debt. And the debtor should now refuse to come.

1. Either because hee is not able to pay. 2. Or because hee thinks hee shall bee able to discharge all himself in time. 3. Or else because hee doubts of the truth of his intention, instead of bringing him to reckon that hee might pardon him; hee intends to arrest him, and cast him into prison. Is not here a great deal of pride, and unbeleef, and wronging of love?

And how shall wee interpret this standing off? is not the case alike. God tenders mercy to thee, as a Prince, a pardon, and thou refusest, why? either thou beleevest not the truth of this, that God offers pardon upon beleeving; or else thou thinks to deserve thine own pardon.

So God offers thee an acquittance, if thou wilt bring thy book,  
and

and come and reckon with him, confess sin, acknowledge Mercy; but thou comest not, and what is the reason? either thou beleevest not the truth of this, this is too good news to bee true; thou thinkest it is but to take advantage against thee.

You think when you go to God in confession, you go as a debtor into the hands of a hard Creditor, who doth but wait to arrest him, You cannot beleeve the truth of this offer, or else you think you shall bee able to pay your own debt in time.

4. Another ground from our selves, why wee are so *slow to beleeve*, is, that wee doubt of Gods will, wee doubt whether God will have mercy on us, yea or no.

It is with us as with a Prince or Creditor, as before: were wee but well settled in the Major of the Gospel, in these truths.

1. *That God sent his Son for this end, into the World to save poor sinners.*

2. *That Christ was able to save to the utmost.*

3. *And that Christ was as willing as hee is powerfull, wee should not bee so slow of heart to beleeve.*

My Brethren, what can God do more to perswade you of his willingness? nay more, what could Christ do more than is done?

Will you go by his revealed will? and that you shall bee judged by at the last day, why there you see nothing but willingness of God and Christ to accept of them who come.

If you should go by the revealed will of man, you may bee deceived, they may speak one thing and intend another.

But if you go by the revealed will of God, you cannot miscarry, because Gods heart is really the same that his word is, hee speaks not a syllable more than hee will make good.

Men speak often more than their hearts, or they may speak contrary to their hearts, but God doth not, hee really intends what hee speaks

And his revealed will tells thee, that hee would have thee saved by comming, &c. that if thou wilt beleeve, thou shalt bee saved. That if thou confests, &c. therefore no cause to doubt of Gods will.

5. A fifth ground of our *slowness to beleeve*. It may bee you finde some rest to your souls on this side Christ.

It may bee you have been troubled for sin, have been in anguish of conscience, and you have prayed, you have mourned, and thereupon have gotten some peace, and quiet in your souls, and you seek no further.

This is to lick your selves whole.

And how often, how ordinarily doth these things stand between us and Christ, between us and the Promise; if wee found no peace nor satisfaction in these, then wee should go over to Christ, but finding this on this side Christ, therefore are wee *slow of heart to beleeve*.

Now to take away this, you must know that that peace which is not settled upon the heart by a promise, by beleeving; that peace will never do you good, a true trouble were better.

It is not works, but Christ, not praying, but beleeving, not the Law, but the Gospel, Christ the Promise, that brings true peace into the soul.

Indeed the other may give a man some ease for the time, but this will never work a sound and substantial peace.

You read in the Wilderness there was no plaister for the stung *Israelite*, but looking up to the brazen Serpent.

So there is no remedy for a stung sinner, of which the former was a type, both in the malady, and in the remedy, but looking up unto Christ, beleeving in him.

And you see how Christ doth parallel them in *Joh. 3. 14, 15. As Moses lift up the Serpent in the Wilderness, &c.*

If the stung *Israelite* had made a confection of the best herbs in the Wilderness; a plaister of all the sovereign ingredients in the World, and applied with it Mountains of Prayers, Seas of tears; yet this would not have helped him, if with all he had not looked upon the brazen Serpent.

God had set up that way, and nothing else should do the cure. So let the stung sinner make what plaister hee will of duty, of prayers, for the salving of conscience, the healing of the wound, yet if hee do not look up, beleeve never, healed never.

I grant it (to prevent an objection) that these duties may do something for the stay of a mans spirit, and the quieting of conscience for a time, because being such things as God hath commanded, and in Gods way, they may have some influence into a mans conscience, for the quieting and stilling of it for present.

But these are all too short to bring a sound and substantial peace into the soul; it is not working, but beleeving, not duty, but Christ that must do that.

If God had intended this for thy cure, if these had been sufficient, what need had hee to have sent Christ into the World? what need had Christ to have dyed and shed his blood? God might have given man ability to have performed duty, and all had then been done.

But the sending of Christ into the World, and the shedding of his blood, shews it was a greater work to redeem souls.

Indeed these things are subservient to the plaister, to the cure; but these things are not the plaister, not the cure.

By Prayer wee seek and beg for a plaister in a wounded condition; and by Prayer wee praise God when the plaister hath been applied, but this is not the cure, this is not the plaister, God never intended that.

So by hearing wee have discovered to us where the plaister is to

bee had, and by hearing afterward, wee do but discover our willingness to know more of Gods will, that wee might obey him, but this is not the plaister.

So by works and obedience before healing, wee do but carry our selves in such a deportment and demeanure, as they should do, who wait for such a mercy from God; and by works and obedience afterwards wee do but declare our thankfulness to God when the cure is wrought, but this is not the cure, being justified wee work, wee do not work that wee may bee justified.

And therefore though you should get some obvious refreshment by the performance of duties in the pursuit of Christ, yet let not this slacken, but quicken you in your way; bee thankfull for it, quickened by it, and still remember to arise, this is not your rest.

Hee who rests on this side Christ, will rest on this side Heaven. All your duties will bee but ropes of sand, like chains of glasse, too bricke to draw your souls to Heaven. Though naturall conscience may get some satisfaction from these springs, the performance of duties, yet these are too shallow to satisfie the thirst of a gracious heart.

They are neither full, nor are they pure, nor are they permanent and lasting springs. As I might shew you, not full, because wrought out of our selves, not pure, because mingled with our imperfections, muddy springs; our justifying righteousness is perfect, but our sanctifying righteousness is imperfect, nor are they constant. Drought will come, the time will come, when these will bee too short to reach comfort into thy soul, that if God lead thee not to a spring, at last thou art undone.

The Brook *Cherith* did supply *Elijah* for a time, but at last it dried up, and could afford him no Water, and had not God brought him then unto a spring hee had perished.

So there are many, who lye a long time by the springs of duty, the streams of performances, and they get some refreshment there which keep them off from going to Christ, but the time will come that these waters will fail, and if then thou hast not a fountain, a Christ to go to, thou wilt perish for all this.

Where on the contrary, here in the greatest drought thou shalt finde waters enough, *Ier. 17. 7, 8. Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is, for hee shall bee as a tree planted by waters, and shall not see when drought commeth; his leaf shall bee green, and hee shall not bee carefull in the years of drought.*

Years of drought hee shall never see, never bee sensible when heat commeth; *his leaf shall bee green.* And thus much for the second ground, why wee are so slow of heart to beleeve.

3. Ground why wee are so slow of heart to beleeve, is taken from others,

1. *Their heights.*
2. *Their depths.*



1. We look upon the heights of others. We see others of the Saints eminent in Grace, shining with holiness, adorned with gifts and gracious endowments, they can pray, they can command their passions. And then reflecting upon our selves, and seeing our own imperfections; our frowardness of spirit, our untowardness of heart, our weakness, and deadness, wee are thereupon discouraged, and kept off from the Promise of life, &c.

I told you the last day, that wee look upon the best of others; and the worst of our selves; upon the best, not the worst of others. You look upon their enlargements, not their straits; their graces, not their corruptions; their heights, not their depths; their comforts, not their troubles; their victories, not their toils.

This is the difference between you and wicked men, they look upon the worst of the Saints, and by that draw encouragements to sin, or if not, yet make use of their imperfections to countenance their deadness, but you look upon the best of others; and because you fall short of that eminency in them, you are thereupon discouraged and wounded in your comforts.

But admit that others of the Saints were as excellent as thou seest them; as thou apprehends them, and grant it that thou wert weak and full of many imperfections. Yet why should this keep thee off from Christ and the Promise. It is strange that that which should draw thee to the promise, should drive thee from the Promise; will a man refuse physick, because hee is sick; a cordial, because hee is faint; meat, because hee is hungry; money, because hee is poor; cloathing, because naked; you would think this to be unreasonable, and why not the other?

Affure your selves that is not a good sight of imperfection, that shall either blinde, or blee the eye of Faith, and hinder us from beholding Christ and the Promise, or that shall discourage, and deter us from going over to Christ and the Promise.

Thou would'st bee as others of the Saints before thou didst believe; thou must believe before thou can bee as others are, that which put a difference between thee and him was Faith; there is the same treasury, and the same fulness in Christ for thee, as for others; if thou get Faith to make use of it.

Besides, why should imperfections keep thee off? What man will reject a present pardon because hee sees himself unable to do the Prince future service? who will not take it; and bee more thankfull, and the more admire the Princes clemency that should accept of him after all his rebellions, when yet hee could have no eye or respect to any future service or advantage hee could do the Prince. And why then should wee reject Gods pardon, because wee see not our selves able to do him future service. You should take it and bee more thankfull; more admire the riches and freeness of Gods Grace, who justifies the ungodly.



Certainly that which gives you the advantage, and puts you into the way of the admiration of God, serves the end most which God aims at in giving of pardon; therefore hee pardons that you might admire and say, *Micah 7. 8. Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?* but the more sin, the more imperfections, the more advantage you have to admire the riches and freeness of Gods Grace and Mercy; therefore why should this discourage you?

Besides, though Princes may pardon former treason, yet they cannot change the traiterous heart, nor can they inable them, for the future to bee loyal and obedient. But now God can, with the pardon of sin, hee can and doth change the heart of the sinner, hee sends him away with another heart, with the forgiveness of former disobedience, hee gives strength and ability to obey for future; and therefore why should either present sense of sin and imperfection, or the apprehension of the want of future ability, keep us off from closing with Christ and the Promise; seeing by this the sin is pardoned, the nature is healed, and the soul inabled to future service.

Indeed the way to do him service is to come in, &c.

2. As wee look upon others heights, so wee look upon others depths, and by that keep off from the Promise.

It may bee, wee see and hear of others of the Saints who have been exercised with great troubles, terrors, legal breakings, &c. and have been in sad conditions, it may bee, for many months, nay years, and thou reflectest upon thy self, and seest thou was never thus humbled, thou never had experience of such legal breakings, either none at all, or not in that measure which others have had; and thereupon thou concludest certainly the Promise doth not belong to mee.

And this is another ground which prevails with many, &c.

Now to take off this in a few words.

1. Why should anothers humiliation bee a pattern for thee: when it may bee that which enlarged his troubles were,

1. Some outward cross and affliction which was joyned to his inward trouble; as when the fountains from below, and windows from above were opened, there was a great flood, a deluge.

So when afflictions from beneath, and troubles from above concur, this is a deluge of sorrow.

2. Or may bee that which enlarged another mans trouble, was some horrible temptations, injections of Satan, blasphemous bloody thoughts, &c.

3. Or may bee some bodily distemper, the predominancy of some humour, as melancholly, which gives edge and entertainment to terrors, and spiritual troubles.

4. Or may bee his ignorance, in the Covenant of Grace, the terms of Mercy.

5. Or

5. Or may bee the long concealing of his trouble; as you see *David*, *Psal.* 32.

6. Or may bee giving credit to the lying suggestions of Satan.

7. Or may bee his pride, his unbelief, jealousy, frowardness of spirit, as it is with such as will nourish themselves in a needlesse bondage, and will not hearken after comfort, making their chains heavier than God hath made them; who will not suffer a thought of hope or comfort to enter through the anguish of their bondage. Like the Children of *Israel* in *Egypt*, *Exod.* 6. 9. God sent them delivery, but they looked not after it, through the extreimity of their bondage. And is there any reason then, that others humiliation should bee a pattern to thee. Thou mightest as well desire part of their crosse, which yet thou wouldst not do, for a great part of many mens humiliations, is either their sin, or their crosse, &c.

2. Why should other mens humiliations bee a pattern for thee, when yet God doth not require the same measure, nor is the same measure alike necessary to all, neither in respect of God, or of men?

1. Not in respect of man: some need not so much as others.

As some mens flesh is harder to heal than others, so some mens hearts. A Needle may do that to one, which a lance will not do to another. A frown to one, which blows will not do to another.

Some men are of crabbed and untoward spirits, and knotty blocks had need of hard wedges.

2. Some men have longer scores, greater reckonings, have been greater sinners than others, and though not ever, yet ordinarily God doth proportion the sorrow to the sin.

3. Some men of greater parts, of greater places, who are not so easily humbled, many things may bee in the subject, which may vary the case.

And as the same measure is not necessary in respect of man, so the same is not necessary in respect of God, his ends are various.

1. Some men hee intends to bestow greater measure of grace upon, than upon others, and hee layes a proportionable foundation.

2. Some hee intends to use as one of a thousand, to comfort others; therefore hee doth exercise them with difficulties, with humiliations, eclipses of his favour, with temptations, injections of Satan, decays, relapses, that they may bee experimentally able to settle and comfort others *2 Cor.* 1. 4.

3. Some hee intends for great services, great employments, to make them Champions in his cause. And therefore hee doth humble them the more at their bringing in. As you see *Paul*, *Luther*, *Augustine*. All Gods people are Souldiers, but few are Champions, some hee hath for lighter skirmishes, and less humiliation will serve their turn to prepare them for them.

But

But such as hee intends for the main battle, to bee Champions in his cause, hee doth usually exercise with greater difficulties, that so they might not start aside in the day of tryal.

4. Some hee intends to bee patterns and examples of mortification in the world, and therefore carries them on with troubles of spirit, and lets them lye longer in them, that being raised up, they may bee dead to the World ever after.

Thus you see the like measures are not necessary, neither in respect of Gods ends, nor in respect of your selves; and why then should any mans humiliation bee a pattern for thee?

All that can bee said in it is this, that so much is required, as to cast us out of our selves, make us weary of our sins, willing to sell all, cut off right hands, pull out right eyes, to part with the dearest and beloved sins for Christ.

Wee all agree, it is sufficient when it doth cast a man out of himself, and bring him over to Christ; and how much that is who can set down?

A less degree will do that in one, which it will not in another; if the same measures were alike necessary for all, then it would follow,

1. That every one is so to labour to come to that measure, as to receive no comfort in the Promise till hee have attained it.

2. And it would follow, that what comfort any may have gotten in the Promise, they are to yeeld up, if they have not had the like measures that others have attained to; and what perplexities, fears, doubts, would so bee left in the consciences of men, so that they would never finde a bottome to stand on.

As in Grace, a man would never have comfort, if his comfort were to arise from the measures, and not from the truth. So in humiliation, many poor souls in taking others for a pattern, have lost the rule, and put themselves into a greater incapacity to close with the Promise, at a greater distance from Christ than they were before; and have made themselves miserable for the present, and for the future, and so have gone drooping even to their graves. And it had been better for many speakers and hearers too; if this Doctrin had been pressed more before. How many have had their heads broken in peeces with it, and it is easier for these troubles to break the head, than to break the heart.

But thus much for the second.

Thus you see wee have finished the two generals. That *wee are slow of heart to believe.*

What are the grounds that men are *slow of heart to believe?*

3. Wee come to the next, what are the reasons that this temper of spirit is so offensive unto God? I have given you many reasons in my Sabbath dayes discourse on the third of *Jahn*. Why God was so severe against unbelief.

All which would serve as so many demonstrations of this point,  
wee

wee will at this time adde but these three more.

*Reas. 1. Slowness of heart to beleeve*, is a temper very offensive to God, because it argues and speaks a corrupt heart.

A heart byassed with other respects which hinders from closing with Christ. As Christ saith, *Joh. 5. 44. How can you beleeve when you seek honour; when you are byassed with such respects as these?*

Such a spirit, either it argues ignorance, or pride, or love of sin, or jealousy of the truth of God, the goodness of God, and this is very offensive; jealousy is the rage of a man, &c. which is more provoking, because God hath so far condescended to our weakness for our establishment, that hee hath not only given us his Promise, his Covenant, his Oath and Seal, and all to comfort us. And if notwithstanding all this, wee shall nourish a spirit of jealousy, and cherish our doubts and distrusts; this must needs bee very displeasing unto God. *Va nobis sinec juranti Deo credimus. Aug.* If a man should give you his Promise, and yet to satisfie you to his Promise, hee should annex his Oath, and to his Oath his Seal, &c. If yet notwithstanding you will bee jealous and distrust him, how would this make a mans blood to rise? how would hee break forth into rage? what, will you not beleeve mee? do you think mee to bee a Devil? do you think I will bee perjured? &c.

And how much more must this provoke God, who is immutably true of his word. One syllable being a better bottom for a soul to rest upon, than all the Protestations of men and Angels; men though true, Angels though true, yet they are not in themselves immutably true, because they are but Creatures, but now God is, hee is truth it self, no shadow of change in him.

Nay, and not only true, but able to make good his Word, what hee hath promised. Men may bee true, and yet want ability to perform, but what God hath said, hee will do, because hee is faithfull, and hee is able to do, because almighty.

And hath God condescended to us so far, as not only to give us his Promise, his Oath, Covenant and Seal, and are wee yet *slow of heart to beleeve*? do wee yet nourish jealousies and distrusts? Why then judge if this must not needs bee a high provocation of God.

And that is the first reason, because this sin speaks corruption of heart.

*Reas. 2. Because such a spirit what in it lyes, makes void and null the great things of God*, I say as much as in thee lyes, for thou canst not do it. As the Apostle saith, *God is faithfull whether men beleeve, or beleeve not*: so God is mercifull, powerfull, wise, gracious, true, whether men will beleeve, or beleeve not.

But this I say, as much as in thee lies, thou makest void all the great and stupendious things of God, wee will name these seven,

1. Thou makest void the great counsels of God, all the thoughts of his wisdom in contriving such a way, to advance his glory in the salvation of men. God had purposed and contrived from everlasting to make himself glorious, to set up and advance the glory of his wisdom and grace, and this is the way his wisdom pitched upon from everlasting, to do all this by sending of Christ into the World, and thou by standing out, dost not only frustrate Gods ends in thy salvation, but as much as in thee lyes, nullest and makest void all the thoughts and contrivings of his wisdom; for all this is to no purpose, while thou stands out and wilt not beleeve.

2. Thou makest void all the thoughts of his Mercy, in which he desired to set forth himself, and make himself visible to the lost sons of men, by sending of Christ into the World.

But now if thou wilt not beleeve, to what purpose were all these great things of God, to what purpose was all this glorious fabrick of Gods mercy and counsel, which was the greatest thing that ever came upon his heart? Gods master-peece, which went to the height of his skill and wisdom, to the height of his mercy and love. Beyond which there is a *non ultra* in Gods thoughts, there was no further or more, God could go no higher than himself, all was infinite; but thou in standing off dost annul, and make void all the thoughts of his mercy, and his love, if others should do the like, to what purpose then were all? it would make all this void, and to no purpose: thou dost it as much as in thee lyes. If a man should make a curious peece that should publish his skill, his greatness, wisdom, and a man come and break it all in peeces, would hee not bee greatly offended? And what a fearfull thing is it, to make void that wherein God set himself, to make himself glorious? to obscure that in which God set himself, to make himself visible in? but thou, who art *slow of heart to beleeve* (as far as it lyes in thee) dost this, and therefore what a provocation of God must this bee?

3. Thou dost as much as in thee lyes, make void all the purposes of Gods mercy to thee. The great end which God aimed at in this great work of sending Christ into the World, was that thou mightest beleeve in him, and live. Now if thou stand out, and will not come in, will not close with him, thou dost what lyes in thee, to make void all the purposes of God to thee for good. I say, what lyes in thee, for thou shalt never do it; the election shall bring thee in; Gods purpose shall bring thee to his Promise. Our sins may alter Gods conditional purposes of temporal mercies; as hee tells them, *1 Sam. 2. 30. I said indeed, that thy house, and the house of thy Fathers should walk before mee for ever, but now saith the Lord, bee it far from mee, for they that honour mee, I will honour, &c.* But thou shalt never bee able to make void Gods eternal purposes of good to thee; but yet take heed of tempting God, provoking God;

God, God may make thy body smart for it, though he save thy soul at last; make thee know better, not try conclusions. But I say, what lyes in thee thou dost disanul all the purposes of God to thee for good, which is a fearful thing.

4. Thou dost what lyes in thee, frustrate the expectation of God. You know it is a great affliction to a man to have his expectation frustrated, and the greater the good which was expected, the greater the cut and wound to be disappointed and frustrated. Why I say (may I speak after the manner of men) thou dost what lyes in thee, to frustrate all the expectations of God: Why, what were Gods expectations? but that thou shouldst receive his Son, if hee lent him; that thou shouldst imbrace Christ, beleeve in him. And this seems to be sweetly insinuated in the parable, *Mat. 21. 37. Mark. 12. 6. Surely they will reverence my Son*, though they had abused the Prophets, &c. yet *surely they will reverence my Son*; they owe so much homage to mee, or they will look upon him so great a person, the Son of God; *Surely they will reverence my Son*. But however his Person and Parentage should not procure reverence, yet the service he came about will be a grateful service; hee comes to be Saviour, hee comes to redeem them from Hell. Certainly hee will bee a welcome guest to them; Oh how willing will they be to receive him? how glad to entertain him? with what open armes will they imbrace him? how ready to obey him? *Surely they will reverence my Son*. And in reason who would not have thought so? what welcome might not the King of glory expect, the Prince expect, who came upon such a business? What might not a Prince expect, who came to loosen the captives, to redeem vassals, to relieve distressed, break chains? Sure in all reason hee should have been received with all joy, with all acclamations and willing imbraces: This God expected. But now when instead of receiving, we reject Christ, sleight Christ, undervalue Christ, when we will not close with him, &c. how doth this cross the expectation, and frustrate it.

5. We do what lyes in us to make void Gods end in sending Christ. What was the end which God aimed at in this plot, in contriving such a way, in sending Christ into the World? this was his end, that we might beleeve and live, his glory, in our salvation. Surely the end must needs be glorious, when the means and work was so glorious; if the foundation of this work were so glorious, what will the whole structure bee? Now this was one part of Gods end in sending of Christ, that thou shouldst receive Christ, beleeve in him. And so long as thou standest out, thou crosest Gods end, frustrates the end of God. And this must needs be a great provocation of God. If a man did take a great deal of pains in a work; spent all his time and indeavours for some end, and at last be crossed in the end; the work is nothing to him. This provokes, &c. Why thou dost frustrate Gods end?

6. Thou dost as much as in thee lyes, make void the death of Christ: thou makest all his sufferings, and all his blood shed to be to no purpose. What was the end that Christ shed his blood? what was the end Christ dyed? why it was no other but this, that we might beleeve in him, and have a pardon? &c. But now so long as thou standest out, thou frustratest all this; if all were like thee, I pray thee, to what purpose were the death of Christ, the expence and shedding of his blood? And therefore this provokes much; if one of us should suffer much for the obtaining of such an end, if after hee had indured, to bee disappointed of it, this much provokes us.

7. Thou dost as much as in thee lyes, make void all the Promises of God to Christ.

God promised and entered into Covenant with Christ; that if hee would lay down his life and blood, hee would make him King over Saints; hee would give the Heathen for his inheritance, &c. *Isa. 53. Hee shall see of the travail of his soul and bee satisfied*. God promised Christ, that if hee would lay down his life for a people, hee should have them; hee would give a people to him. And thy standing out doth what lyes in thee, to make this Promise void, to make God a liar to his Son, &c. Thou shalt not bee able. Christ shall have a people, God will yet set his King, &c.



yet if all were like thee, where were Christs people ?

Nay, and thou robbest Christ of the reward and fruit of all his death and sufferings, this was the reward Christ was to have for his death, &c.

If a man had sweat, or shed his blood for such a thing, you would not bee so injurious to him, as to hinder him of the fruit of it, every one would bee ready to cry out, of such an act of injustice.

Why, thou art Christs reward, hee shed his blood, laid down his life for this end, for this purpose. And by thy standing out, thou dost what is in thee to rob Christ of this his reward, the fruit of his death, and therefore what a provocation is it ?

*Reas. 3.* Because this temper keeps a man in an unserviceable condition, both to God and man. And this must needs bee very offensive to God.

It was one great end, that God sent Christ into the World for, that wee might bee able to do him service; it was the end of our Creation, and of our redemption too, that being redeemed out of the hands of our enemies wee should serve him, *Luk. 1. 74, 75.*

Though our service was not the impulsive cause of Gods redeeming us, though it was not the motive, which did perswade and prevail with God to send Christ into the World, to redeem us, yet this was an end, one main end which God aimed at in sending Christ into the World, that wee might bee able to serve him without fear, &c.

Christ did not discharge us from the debt of sin, to free us from the debt of service; but therefore did hee pay the one, that wee might bee able to return the other. As the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 12.* where having shewed that wee are justified, and our sins pardoned, hee concludes, *therefore Brethren, wee are debtors not to the flesh, &c.* Christ hath broken the bands of subjection to others, that wee might take upon us the yoke of service to him.

Christ freed us from the curse of the Law, that wee might yeeld obedience to the Commands of the Law; from the penalties, that wee might obey the Precepts; from the Law, as a Covenant, that we might walk in obedience to the Law as a Rule. *Plane dicimus decessisse legem quod onera, &c.* That as the Law was given with Evangelical purposes, so it might now bee kept of us with Evangelical principles.

So that this was one main end that God aimed at in our redemption, that wee might bee able to do him service.

Now therefore that which crosseth this great end which God aimed at, and keeps us in an unserviceable condition to God, must needs bee very offensive to God,

But that unbelieving doth. It makes you utterly unserviceable to God.

There is a twofold unbelief. 1. Reigning. 2. Remaining unbelief. For

For the first, where Unbelief reigns, that man is altogether dead, and no more able to do a peece of service to God, than a dead man to perform actions of life. As Christ saith, *Joh. 15. 5. without mee ye can do nothing.*

And for the second remaining Unbelief, so far as Unbelief remains, so far it acts, so far as it prevails, so far are you wounded, disabled for service. Though there bee not a total and universal impotency, as in the former, yet there is a partial disability, and this is more or lesse, according to the workings and prevailings of Unbelief in you.

It is said of *Abraham*, *Heb. 11. 8. That by Faith Abraham obeyed God.* And it was a high act of obedience.

It is Faith which doth inable us to obey, and quicken us in obedience.

1. It begets *Soul-inabling-Principles*, such Principles as are suitable to the command, and thing commanded.

2. Faith supplies a man with *Soul-inabling-strength* from Christ.

Wee have not only inherent, but assistant strength, not only operative, but cooperative, &c. from Christ, and Faith furnisheth us with it.

3. Faith doth furnish a man with *Soul-inabling-considerations*,  
1. From God. 2. From the work. 3. From the rewards, &c.

2. It inables the soul to suffer.

1. It puts the soul into a suffering frame.

2. It doth furnish the soul with suffering resolutions; Faith cloatheth the soul with strong resolutions; as in the three Children, *Dan. 3.*

3. Faith begets suffering graces. Courage, magnanimity, patience, humility, self-denial, contempt of the World, high prizings of Christ

4. Faith layes in suffering strength, strength from God, from the Promise, &c.

5. It propounds to the soul suffering rewards, for these light afflictions which are but for a moment, work, &c. *2 Cor. 4. 17.* All which I might insist large upon, to shew you how Faith doth inable the soul, &c. So Unbelief it keeps the soul in an unserviceable condition. Hee that doth not yeeld obedience to the promise in a way of believing, cannot yeeld subjection to the Precept in a way of obeying; men of a bad belief, can never bee men of a good life.

Hence wee read, that Faith and Obedience, and Unbelief, and Disobedience are exprest by the same name, *Rom. 15. 31.* which shews how near they are together. If you bee once believers, you will then bee obedient, and while you continue in Unbelief, you must needs bee disobedient.

It is observeable, that God gave the Law four hundred and thir-



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ty years after the Promise, as the Apostle saith, *Gal. 3. 17.* which shews, that Faith in the Promise must bee the spring of all our obedience to the Precept.

When God gave the Law, see what a preface there is to obedience; *I am the Lord thy God.* As if hee had said, here is that which must inable you to obedience.

After *Adams* fall, God doth not then give him any new commands, hee puts him not to work again, but now to beleve; hee gave the Promise then, and not the Law, to shew that now hee must have a new Principle of working, before hee could work, hee must now beleve, that hee might bee able to do. Many men think they can do God better service by doubting, than by beleevings; by standing off, than by coming in.

But alas! Satan deludes thee, if hee get between thee and the Promise, if hee keep thee off from Christ, hee will either dishearten thee from obedience, or hee will discourage and disable thee in thy obedience. Faith is the spring of action, the rule of all obedience, without Christ wee can do nothing, and without Faith, wee must needs bee without Christ; for Faith gives the soul union and communion with him, it implants us into Christ, and then, and not till then, wee bring forth fruit.

It is said of *Abraham*, *Heb. 11. 8.* *That by Faith Abraham obeyed God;* and you know, it was a high act of Obedience, the sacrificing of his Son, and so is the sacrificing of our sins. It is Faith alone that doth inable the soul to do, to suffer.

Wee now come to the Application, wherein I shall bee brief, because most of it I shall refer to the second Doctrin.

*Use 1.* If so, then see how Satan doth delude their souls; whom hee periwades not to beleve is a vertue, is a thing pleasing unto God.

Are there not many? who as *Jonah* said, *hee did well to bee angry.* So they say, they do well not to beleve, they do well to stand out, &c.

You shall hear some make it a matter of conscience not to beleve; they ought not to beleve; should such sinful creatures, such vile wretches so polluted? &c.

Should they beleve, this were to presume, to sin against Gods Justice in the closes with his Mercy, this were to give holy things to dogs, &c. Satan presents sin.

And some there are so witty, as to object against all that can be brought, as if they took a pride to argue themselves into a condition of misery, setting the pride of their own carnal reasonings, against the riches and freeness of the mercy of God; if you bring a promise to them, when cast down for sin, and indeavour to fasten a promise on them, they can tell you, that this is not the meaning of the Promise, or certainly this Promise doth not be-  
long to mee.

Alas will they say ! all this is but lost labour, you might as well carry a cordial to a dead man, as bring a Promise to them; it is a fruitless thing, if upon examination wee shall discover some spots in a Child in them, some undoubted evidences of one whom God speaks mercy unto. Yet they will tell you all these are false, all these are in Hypocrisy. Its true, if these things were in truth true, I could then conceive some hopes of mercy, but I know they are all in Hypocrisie; they are all unsound and counterfeit, &c. *Ergo no Mercy.*

Thus doth many a poor soul take pains to reason himself into misery, and side with Satan, and take part with the corruptions, and unbelievings of his own heart against himself.

And what will bee the end of it ? sure it will breed bitterness in the latter end; for the present, it is thy sin, and for the future, it will bee thy misery; either it will cause God to withdraw himself from thee, as hee tells them, *Dent. 32. 20.* Or cause thee to withdraw thy self from God. As the Apostle speaketh, *Heb. 3. 12.* *Take heed lest there bee in you an evil heart of Unbelief in departing from the living God.* Hee that withdraws himself from the Promise, cannot long keep close to the Precept; hee that keeps at a distance from Mercy, will not long walk in the wayes of duty.

When the workings of natural conscience are done, when fears are allayed, when troubles are blown over, then will all service bee done too; if not, yet the continuance of troubles, and fears, will make you cast of all, and say, there is no hope; or will discourage your hearts in your walking, that your life will bee little better than a martyrdom, with continual racks and troubles. It was before thy sin not to believe, but now it will bee thy misery, before thou wouldest not, now thou canst not. Thou soughtest arguments before to keep thee off from the Promise, and thou wilt now seek as many arguments, against such arguments which might bring thee over to the Promise. And this miserable unbelief, is the fruit of sinful unbelief. This disability to come to the Promise, is the punishment of thy former slowness to come to the Promise. And this temper you shall see in many, who have reasoned themselves down, do finde it now a harder work to reason themselves up again.

Who have put themselves into a greater incapacity to close with the Promise by those wayes which they have thought to bee helpful to them. It is easier to give entertainment to carnal reasonings, to the suggestions of Satan, and the objections of our own fleshy hearts, than to get rid of them again.

Many have given willing entertainment to these at first, who would more gladly bee rid of them afterward if they could.

But the continuance of them is a fruit of your entertainment of them.

If you will entertain doubts and fears, and set up your own carnal

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and reasonings against the Promise, then you shall have doubts, and fears, and carnal reasonings when you would not, to keep you from the Promise. As God said in another case, *Hos. 8. 11. Because you have made many Altars to sin, therefore Altars shall bee unto you to sin.* So here, because you have set up your carnal reasonings, and your unbelieving thoughts against the Promise, to hinder you from closing with the Promise, therefore carnal reasonings, &c. shall bee a hinderance, &c.

Thus is miserable Unbeleef, a fruit of sinful Unbeleef, which the more miserable, the lesse sinful; the more seen, the more sorrowed for; the more lamented and mourned for, the lesse sinful; while it was your sin it was not seen, it was not sorrowed for, and now it is, &c. and the more misery, the lesse your sin in Gods account. Carnal reasonings were before your pride, now your grief; you sought them before, you would bee rid of them now; they were your delight before, now they are your trouble, your misery, which is something.

But they had not now continued to bee your misery, if they had not before been entertained as your sin, &c. This is the fruit of *slowness of heart to beleeve.*

*Use 2.* Is of Exhortation. If so then, three things. 1. Bee convinced of the greatness of the sin. 2. Bee humbled for it. 3. Bee quickened to beleeve.

1. Bee yee convinced of the greatnesse of the sin, it is a sin whereby you wrong God, gratifie Satan, wrong your own souls.

1. You wrong God in it, you obscure his glory, you limit his power, you contemn his wisdom, you give a lye to his truth, you abuse his love, you sleight and reject all the precious, and peerlesse thoughts of his Mercy and Grace.

I told you not long since, that God was more severe against Unbeleef than any sin, because Unbeleef was most severe to God. No sin was more cruel to God, God hath no greater enemy in the World than Unbeleef. It is an enemy to whatever is most dear and precious unto God. Therefore is hee such an enemy to Unbeleef; if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, *Heb. 10. 38.*

2. You gratifie Satan. I beleeve thou wouldst not willingly (if thou knew it) gratifie Satan for a World.

I tell thee in thy standing off, thou dost not only gratifie him, but thou canst do Satan no greater a pleasure, no greater a courtesy in the World.

In this Satan hath all his desire of thee, that which hee desires is to make void all the great things of God, that which hee desires, is to make the death of Christ in vain; to make the blood of Christ to bee shed in vain, to make the great countel of God, the great things of his wisdom and mercy to no purpose in the World;  
And

## *Heart to Beleeve.*

And by this standing off thou dost what lyes in thee to answer his desire, and therefore this must needs glad him.

Besides Satan knows full well, if hee do not wound thy Faith, thy Faith will wound him, break the head of the Serpent; and therefore it is that which hee laboureth after in all his temptations, if hee cannot keep thee from beleeving, yet to wound and weaken thy Faith, that thou mayest not wound him.

If hee cannot make thee his friend, yet if hee can weaken his adversary. If hee cannot take away thy weapon, yet if hee can weaken thy arm, or blunt thy weapon, hee is content.

If hee cannot destroy thy Faith, yet if hee can weaken thy Faith, if not hurt thy Faith, yet if hee can keep thy Faith from hurting him, by weakening of it: for every act of Faith wounds Satan, bindes him in chains, &c.

And therefore if hee can prevail to keep thee from beleeving, or if hee can weaken and wound thy Faith, hee is well contented, this gratifieth him.

What can gratifie him more, than to make a Pageant of all the great things of God, than to make all thele great things like a dream?

What can gratifie him more, than to keep thy soul at a distance from Christ and the Promise; what can pleasure him more, than to make a soul look upon God, as a God of terror and wrath?

What more, than to keep the soul upon racks, upon fears, discouragements and disquiets; this is some of his own spirit of darkness.

Nay, what can gratifie him more, than to keep a soul in a dead unserviceable condition, make a man unfit to live, unfit to dye, unfit for any service to God and man?

Why, all this doth Satan do, if hee can but prevail to keep thy soul from Christ, at distance from the Promise, as I could shew you at large, &c. The way Satan doth it, is by setting out sin. Though I would bee willing to see sin, yet I am not willing to see sin in the Devils glasse; I am not willing to see sin, when Satan discovers sin.

Satan hath two glasses, wherein hee discovers sin.

1. Hee hath a lessening or extenuating glasse, wherein hee discovers sin to wicked men, which makes them appear less than they are; great sins, small sins, infirmities; and lesser sins to bee no sins.

2. And Satan hath a multiplying or magnifying glasse, wherein hee discovers sin to them, when cast down, and extends it, not only above the greatness of sin, but of mercy also.

As I would have my eyes broad and open, to see sin when God discovers it. So I would shut mine eyes when Satan discovers sin.

*Quest. But how shall I know when God and when Satan discovers sin?*

1. When

1. When God discovers sin, hee keeps up the apprehensions of mercy above the greatness of sin.

But when Satan discovers sin, hee heightens sin above the riches of mercy. As you see in *Cain*, גדול עונו מנשא *my sin is greater than can be pardoned*,

2. When God discovers sin, he doth not bleere, but rather clear the eye of Faith to the beholding of Christ, hee makes the soul fitter to see Christ; doth not hinder, but helpeth the soul in sight of Christ.

But when Satan discovers sin, hee doth ever bleer and blinde the eye of Faith, from the beholding of Mercy; either hee discovers the malady, and conceals the remedy, or hee holds the eye of Faith, that it cannot look upon Christ for mercy.

Hee puts the soul into a present incapacity to look up to God for mercy; hee stings, but holds not up the brazen Serpent.

3. When God discovers sin, it is to drive us out of our selves, and to draw us unto Christ and the Promise, makes the Law a Schoolmaster, &c. *Gal. 3. 24.* but Satans discoveries of sin, sets us further off from Christ.

4. When God discovers sin, it is to make the soul more in love with Christ, to prize Christ more, to advance him more, to love him, and desire him more. It is such a discovery that makes the soul to run to the remedy.

But when Satan discovers sin, it is to make us more affraid of Christ, to flye from Christ as *Adam*, never the more to desire him.

5. When God discovers sin, hee humbles the soul under the sight of it, hee makes a man to abhor himself, makes sin hateful to him.

But when Satan discovers sin, it is to discourage us, not to humble us: hee may make sin fearful, but never makes it hateful.

Besides, as you may know by the manner and the end of the discovery, whether Gods or no.

So by the time and temper wee are in.

Satan discovers sin, when hee hath gotten the soul at an advantage; he comes upon us as *Simeon* upon the *Shechemites* when they were sore, *Gen. 34.* when hee hath gotten the hill and the wind on us; when wee are in some sad condition, when in temptation, when in darknes, when in some distresses, when wee are drawn from our succours.

It is a passage of one, that Satan, when hee discovers sin, and so hee openeth our wound; hee gets us into the wilderness, into the cold, from our friends, succours, &c. But when the Spirit of God openeth our wounds, it is by the fire, friends about us, cordials near us, &c.

But I think the difference is rather to be taken from the manner of the discovery, than from the end and effects of it.

Well then, that is a sinfull looking on sin,

1. Which heighteneth sin above the riches of mercy.  
2. Which bleereth and blindeth the eye of Faith from beholding Christ and the Promise.

3. Which sets the soul at a farther distance from Christ.

4. Which makes the soul affraid of Christ.

5. Which discourageth the soul under sight of it. And hee that thus looks upon sin in Satans glass, no marvel if hee bee *slow to beleeve*, and to come over to the Promise.

7. When Satan discovers sin, hee rather makes a malady, than discovers a malady, never discovereth one wound, but makes another; never discovereth a sin, but takes a course that that discovery shall bee sinfull.

3. Thirdly, as you wrong God, and gratifie Satan, so you injure your own souls,

1. You rob your selves of comfort, and keep your selves in unnecessary racks and troubles, and bondage. And this is a great evil. Nature cannot subsist without comfort; comfort is to the soul, what the soul is to the body; a man cannot live without it; and it puts grace to it too; though for a time Grace may live, and act strongly in the want of comfort; yet when troubles continue, and a man walks long without comfort, it will put Grace to it, to the utmost to subsist.

Oh what abundance of comfort, what floods of consolation, what peace, what joy, dost thou rob thy self of in thy standing off!

2. You hinder your souls of Grace. Grace keeps a proportion with Faith. So much Faith, so much Grace, &c. keep down Faith, and all Grace is kept down; and where Faith stirs, all the wheels move, its the spring of motion, the Master-wheel. Faith is the stomach which receives all for the nourishment of the whole. As all the members depend upon the stomach, so all the Graces upon Faith. It is a Mediatour to our Mediatour; it fetcheth in provision to the soul, all depends upon it. If Grace be weak, Faith goes over to Christ, &c. for the supply of strength.

Quantum credimus, tantum amamus.

3. You make your selves every way unserviceable to God; as I shewed you; you make your selves unable to do, unable to suffer for him. You make your selves good for nothing, unserviceable to God, to the Church, to his cause, to your selves too, &c. Many there are that think they can do God better service in standing off, than in comming in, by Fear, than by Faith.

They think that in nourishing their doubts, and their fears, they do cherish their care, watchfulness, humility.

And on the contrary, they think, that if once they should come to beleeve, then they should bee more loose and careless, and take more liberty to themselves. Indeed, you would have more liberty to service, not to sin. You would not bee tyed to

service with cords of fear, but with bands of love, your principle of service, and your manner of service would be changed, where now you serve him out of fear; then out of love, now out of convictions of conscience, then out of propensions of a divine nature; now you serve him as slaves involuntarily, then as sons with willingness and delight, &c.

Now you do duty as a task, then as your trade. And you will walk in the wayes of duty, though you see no commings in.

As a man that loves his trade, that loves his calling, hee will hold it up, and follow it, though hee get nothing by it, though no gain or comming in by it. So the soul which hath a Principle bred in him suitable to the things of God, which is wrought by Faith, hee will hold up to pray and to do duty, though hee finde not commings in; there is a natural agreeableness between him and duty, between his spirit and the work, and though hee never get good by it, yet hee will hold up his spirit to the doing of it.

As it is with a man, whose nature is sensualized, that hath sinned away the very common Principles, pluckt up the very senses of nature, hee will drink, and be drunk, though hee undo himself by it, though hee hurt his body, impoverish his estate, yet hee will drink, &c. As *Solomon* saith, *a Whore will bring a man to a morsel of bread*, will undo a man, yet hee will go on in sin, hee will not leave his sin, though undone by it; hee will sin, not only though hee get nothing, but though hee get hurt, though hee undo himself thereby, yet hee will go on in sin, and the reason is, that universal suitability that is between his soul and sin.

So on the other side, a godly man hee will serve God, hee will hold on in duty, in obedience, though hee finde no comming in by it.

There is such a suitability between the spirit of a beleever, and the work, that though there is no commings in, though hee finde no peace, no comfort in the wayes of God, yet hee will hold up to the work.

Where now an unbeliever, if hee do not by these things get peace which is all hee looks after in the doing of it, if he do not get comfort, at last hee throws off all, because there was no Principle of suitability to hold him to the duty.

Therefore you see how Satan deludes you. Faith alone is the spring of action, that which sets us a work, and quicken us in working; if Faith be up, all his Graces will be so too, and if that be down, all other Graces are weak, and down with it.

As *Parisensis* saith, it is the vertue of a Chrystal, when the vertues of other precious stones are extinct, to raise them, and revive them again. So doth Faith with our Graces, when *Dauids* heart was down in *Psal. 43. 5.* you see hee recovers himself by his Faith, no sooner did hee exercise his Faith, but his heart is raised.

That which quickeneth you to service, and inables you in service,



vice, is Faith, and that which deads your spirit, and makes you unserviceable, is unbelief, and therefore bee convinced of your sin.

2. Bee humbled for it; this is the great sin, the womb of sin, the Mother and Nurse of sin, as I have shewed.

That which holds up Satans Kingdome in you, is your unbelief; if this fort were once taken, all the rest would quickly yeeld up.

You see when Christ would conquer covetousness, hee labours to conquer unbelieving, as you see, *Mat. 6. 25.* to the end.

That being overcome, all the rest yeeld up, and are vanquisht. Nay it is a sin which doth not only uphold particular sins, but the state of sin. It is called a state of unbelief, wee do not say, a state of drunkenness, a state of swearing, &c. but a state of unbelief; others are but particular, this an universal sin. And is there not then cause to bee humbled for it? you see what a sin it is, how you wrong God, how you gratifie Satan, how you injure your selves; and is there not cause then to bee humbled for it?

Men are hard to bee humbled for this sin, because hard to bee convinced either that they are guilty of it, or that it is a sin.

Prophane and wicked men, worldly men, they will not bee convinced that they do not believe. Though there bee nothing more plain, if the Devil did not delude them, for Faith and sin cannot stand together; you can no more separate Holiness and Faith, than Light and the Sun.

And humbled men they are hard to bee convinced that it is a sin.

Though it is easy to convince them that they do not believe, they are sensible enough of that, yet it is hard to perswade them that it is a sin, not to believe, that it is their duty to believe; they think they do well in keeping off from the Promise; they express their tenderness of Gods justice and holiness, and judge it a great wrong to both, that God should bee merciful to such sinners as they. But I must tell thee, it is a greater sin than all thy sins; a killing, a murthering, an undoing sin. It is a finishing sin that seals thee up in a state of sin; and therefore you had need to bee convinced of it, and humbled for it.

3. Bee yee quickned to believe.

What shall I do now to perswade with you, who are *slow of heart to believe*, to come in and believe? Alas! all that I can say is nothing, if God do not mightily work upon your hearts, and perswade with you.

Shall I tell you there is an inexhaustible fulness of mercy in God, and merit in Christ for the greatest sinner among you; and this is something. Shall I say that God is willing to forgive the greatest sinner of you, if you will now come in and believe?

If you will go by Gods revealed will, and thou hast no other rule to



go by, nor to bee judged by, there God tells thee that hee keeps open house, hee invites, hee excites, hee intreats, hee beseeches to come, these were something to perswade with our hearts. But I shall pass them. I will only name these two to perswade.

1. Consider, God commands thee to beleeve.

2. Consider, thou can do God no greater pleasure than to come in and beleeve.

1. Consider, God commands thee to beleeve, 1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandement, that wee should beleeve on the name of his Son Iesus Christ.*

And what can thy heart now reason against this? will not this bee enough to answer all thy fears and scruples? to beat down all that thy unbelieving heart can say against the Promise.

Why God doth not only invite thee, but hee commands thee to beleeve.

Gods command is a sufficient warrant to beleeve, and will bee sufficient security to all them that do beleeve.

1. I say it is a sufficient warrant to beleeve. Men may command things, and tell us that our obedience to them shall bee sufficient warrant to us, and yet they may want power enough to secure us in our obedience to them, but it is not so with God, his command will be a warrant sufficient to carry out any soul in his obedience to him, Doth Satan say, wherefore dost thou beleeve? thou art a Reprobate, thou art a cast away, thou hast no right to the Promise, but thou must say then, thou art a Creature, and God commands thee to beleeve, and in obedience to Gods command, though thou sees nothing but death for the present, yet thou wilt beleeve.

Doth bee say, thou hast no right to a Promise, not any title to Mercy: yet mayest thou say, thou art bound to the Precept, though I cannot clear my right to the Promise, yet I am sure I am to obey the Precept, I am bound to the obedience of the command, and God commands mee to beleeve.

Yea, and thou may say thus much, if I am bound to beleeve (as I am) then I may bee able by my beleeving to clear my interest in the Promise.

Thou mayest tell him here is a command for thee, none then for him, hee is out of hope. It is an infinite mercy to stand under the command of beleeving, the Devils do not, the damned do not, thou doest, which is infinite mercy.

2. As Gods command is a sufficient warrant to beleeve, so it is sufficient security if wee do beleeve, there was never a soul that perished in a way of obedience, in a way of beleeving.

Doth Satan say, thou mayest venture thy soul if thou wilt? but thou dost but cast away thy soul, for thou shalt never bee saved, God will never own thee.

Thou mayest say again, Gods command is a sufficient warrant for thee to beleeve, men may fail us and bee men, but God cannot fail us and bee God.

But

But put it to the worst, though thou do not know whether thou shalt bee saved, yet this thou knowest, that God commands thee to beleeve.

Well then, bee peremptory, and resolve in beleeving; say, if I dye, I will dye in a way of beleeving, in a way of obedience to the command, not in a way of disobedience to it.

This I know, if I beleeve not, I must perish, *hee that beleevesh not is condemned*, but if I do beleeve, if I do go on in a way of obedience, who knows whether God will bee mercifull? nay, who knows not but that hee will? I must tell you, this resolution will put the Devil to it, hee knows not what to say to such a man; nay and it puts God to it too, for God cannot reject him, who will yet go on to serve him, though hee should never own him.

2. Consider, you can do God no greater pleasure than to come in and beleeve. Thou honourest all-God, as I shall shew thee in the second Doctrin.

It is a great deal of ease and pleasure for a full and pained breast to bee sucked; the breast of Mercy and Promise is full, yea and in pain too, and thou shalt do God (let mee speak after the manner of men) the greatest pleasure thou canst do, to come and suck, *Joh. 6. 28.* when the people asked, *what shall wee do, that wee may work the works of God?* Mark then how Christ answers, *why this is the work of God, that you beleeve in him.* As if hee had said, would you do that which would content God? would you do that which pleaseth him? why this is that which doth wonderfully content God, this is that doth admirably please God, to beleeve, I tell thee by this thou makest God amends for all the wrong thou hast done him all thy life. Nothing else will; if thou shouldest go about to redeem every oath with an age of precizeness and exactness; every idle word and action with an eternity of praises and tears; all thy exactions and injustice with a treasury of alms; all this were nothing to the making of God amends. But here do but come over to the Promise, do but close with Christ, and thou makest God amends for all, God will bee fully satisfied, not with thy Faith, but with Christ, not with thy beleeving, but with Christ, whom thy Faith holds up. Nay, not only satisfied, but *ipse tibi velim & debitor*. I would not only bee satisfied, but I would bee thy debtor, to give thee eternal life. Oh then that you who are *slow of heart to beleeve*, that you would now come in. Close with Christ, and then thou mayest set Christ against all that the Law, Justice, Sin, Hell, Satan can say against thee. You see the Apostle did so, *who is hee that condemneth? it is Christ that dyed*: Hee makes a challenge of all; sets the death of Christ against whatever can bee brought; so mayest thou. Let us weild this weapon, &c.

1. Dost Satan say thou hast sinned?

Why, but may the soul say, I have closed with him who hath suffered for sin, what can my debt of sin bee; that the payment of  
his

his sufferings hath not fully answered.

2. Doth hee say thou hast sinned against the great God of Heaven? yea, but thou mayest say, I have an interest in him, whose Righteousness is the Righteousness of the great God of Heaven. *Jehovah* our Righteousness, and that is able to suffice for that.

3. Doth hee say the glory of the great God is debased by thy sinning? Why, but thou mayest say, will not the emptying of his glory, who is the brightness of his Fathers glory, answer for that?

4. Doth hee say thou hast sinned against knowledge? Why but thou mayest say, all that Christ did, and all hee suffered, hee did with knowledge, *Joh. 18. 4. Jesus knowing all things, &c.*

5. Doth hee say thou hast sinned with delight? Why, but thou mayest say, Christ hath suffered with greater delight, than I have sinned. Hee delighted to do the will of God, and this was the will of his Father, *that hee should give his life for mee, Joh. 6. Luk. 12. 50.* And it was said of him, that hee was straitned till the hour came, as men that delight in a work which they long to bee upon.

6. Doth hee say thy sins lye in thy spirit? Yea, but thou mayest say, the chiefeest part of his suffering did lye in his spirit, *his soul was heavy to death, Mat. 26. 38. when hee sweat drops of blood, &c. Luk. 22. 44.*

7. Doth hee say thou art still full of corruptions? Why, but thou mayest say, Christ is full of holiness, and by him, *though I bee black, yet I am comely.* As I look not to be justified by mine own inherent righteousness, so I shall not bee condemned for this remaining corruption, so long as it is not reigning, so long as seen and forrowed for. Though I desire to bee acceptable to him in holiness, yet I do not desire that my holiness should bee the ground of my acceptance.

Thus may a soul which hath closed with Christ bee able to wield this, to set Christ against whatever Justice, Law, Sin, Satan brings. Oh! then let us bee stirred up, you that are *slow of heart to beleeve* to come over; thou seest thou canst do him no greater pleasure. Thou thinkest thou dost well in doubting, but thou dost exceedingly offend God; thou canst not do him a greater discourtesy, &c.

Object. *But doth God command every one to beleeve pardon?*

Ans. God commands every one to do the act of Faith, but not to beleeve a pardon till hee have done that.

If any shall get hold of the horns of the Altar, and yet rest in sin, God will deal with him as *Joab, &c. 1 King. 2. 28, 29. &c.*

God commands thee not to beleeve a pardon, so long as thou purposest to go on in sin, but yet hee alwayes commands thee to beleeve him, so as to give up thy self to Christ, &c. that thereby thou mayest have pardon, and assurance, and salvation.