



THE FOURTH BOOK.

VIZ.

The only ready Way to Heaven.

Matth. 11. 30.

For my Yoke is easie, and my Burden is light.

CHAP. CXXXIII.

The words in the 30. verse Opened and Explained.

AND now we come to the last verse,
For my Yoke is easie, and my Burden is light. Here we have the Reason, and Encouragement, the Reason why we should take the Yoke of Christ upon us, and the encouragement to take it, because it is easie and his Burden is light.

MY YOAK. Christ would have us take his Yoak upon us, that you had in the former verse, but the Spirits of men are loath to be brought under a Yoak, they count it burdensome, therefore saith Christ, *Learn of me for I am Meek and Lowly in heart*, and then *My Yoak is easie, and my Burden light*, when once you have but learned Meekness and Humility, you shall then find my Yoak easie, and my Burden light.

Easie. The word here that you have translated in your Books, Easie, is *Crestor* in the Greek, a word that signifies *Profitable, Utility, and Commodious*: so it might be turned; and upon this, those that were called *Christians*; *Justin Martyr* hath such an expression; he called them *Crestians*, from this word, because they were men that were usefull and profitable, and so they might be called *Crestians* as well as *Christians*, my Yoak is profitable and that makes it easie, whatsoever it be that a man undertakes, yet if it bring much profit with it, you count it easie, you that take a great deal of pains and endure much difficulty at Sea, go to the Indies, yet if it bring in profit, you count it easie, because there is so much profit comes in.

Secondly: As the word signifies *Profit*, so it signifies *Gentleness*, in opposition to *Severity*, to *roughness*, *barshness*, or *rigidness*, and so I find the word in *Rom. 11. 22* saith the Apostle, *Behold the goodness and severity of God*, there it is, *Crestor*, of *easiness*, for so *Crestor* there is the same word, only here is the Adjective, and there the Substantive, the easiness, and gentleness, and severity, of God, severity and gentleness opposed to one another, God is very gentle, and sweet, and good unto some, and is very severe unto others. So, *Take my Yoak upon you, for it is easie*.

ie, that is, it is gentle, in opposition to fiercie, and this is very suitable to what Christ hath said before, *Learn of me, for I am Meek and Lowly in heart*, and my Yoke is as I am, Low as I am, of a gentle disposition, as I am Meek, so you shall find my Yoke, my Yoke is very gentle, you shall find no rigidness, no harshness, no hardness in my Yoke, that is the meaning of the Yoke; *For my Yoke is easie, and my Burden is light*, it may be a Yoke and seem to be heavy to you, but the Yoke is easie: but it may be a burden. wel, if it be a burden it is light, the word is *Nimble agile*, it is a very strange thing that it should be a burden, and yet light, it may be a burden to flesh and blood, it may be in some respects burdensome many waies, I but when you have taken it upon you, you will find it light. Now the word translated here *Light*, it is taken from the lightness and agility of Stags, of those Creatures that are very swift, and agile, and nimble, and light in their motion, from thence the word comes.

My Burden is light. The meaning in the original is this, it is such a light burden as man may have it upon him, and dance with it, leap and dance, have joy, and delight with this burden upon their backs; other burdens presseth down, makes a man go heavily, but this burden is so light, that those that have it on, it makes their hearts light and easie, that they can go, and skip and dance with this burden upon them, that is the word in the originall, we have not a word in the English to express it thus, and the word that you have in 2 Pet. 1. 5, hath some likeness to that that Christ means. *Add to your Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godliness, and so multiplies*

particulars. And now the word is in the original *ἐκκλυσιν* to lead in the dance, add these virtues one to another; it is true, it signifies the ministring of the supplies that Members have from the Head, only in your English it is said, *Add to your Faith Virtue*, it either signifies the ministring of the Head to the Members, that which the Members receive by the ministring of the Head, and so it is proper there, that all the virtues we have they are but added one to another, from the virtue that is ministed from Christ our Head to us Members. Or else the word signifies, *to lead in a dance*, as first one goes, and the other follows, so Faith goes first, and that leads on the other, it signifies the delightfulness in Christianity, when Faith goes before, and all the other virtues coming after, there is a delightfulness in all the waies of Godliness and Christianity, and in the excercising of Virtues: That for the meaning of the word, *My Burden is light*, such a Burden as will make the heart light, and that one may have a Burden on, and go lightly, and skipping, as if he had none. Only one thing more for the opening of the words, *My Yoke is easie, and my Burden is light* I confesse these two expressions many make but all one, *Yoke* and *Burden*, and others think there is a little difference, that by *Yoke* is meant, what Jesus Christ requires of us in the Gospel to do, and by *Burden* is meant, what we are required in the Gospel to suffer, both active and passive obedience, the coming under the rule and goverment of Christ in the Gospel, that is a *Yoke*, I but it is a very gentle *Yoke*, and so when we come under the obedience of Christ, to be professors of the Gospel, we must expect to suffer much, and bear great Burdens of affliction in the world, I but saith Christ, these Burdens of afflictions, if they come and persecute you never so much

here, you shall find them but light burdens, all that I require of you to do shall be easie, and all that I require of you to suffer shall be light. So that from hence we have this Point of Doctrine, for I shall not handle them asunder, but put them both together.



CHAP. CXXXIII.

Doct. The way of the Gospel that brings to Heaven, is an easie way. This confirmed and explained in Six particulars.

DOCT.

That whatsoever Jesus Christ requires of us, either in doing or in suffering, it is very easie, and very light, The way of the Gospel that brings to Heaven is an easie way: That is the Point. And when we name it, I suppose it will seem one of the strangest points that ever was preached or that you have heard of: That the way of the Gospel to bring People to Heaven, is an easie way, it seems contrary to other Scriptures, Strive to enter in at the straight Gate, for straight is the Gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life; and few there be that find it, and Ministers tell us, the way to Heaven is a very difficult way, and many times it is made an evidence of men that are but carnal, and have not the power of Godliness in them; that they find so much ease in their way; I suppose these you have heard of. Well, before we have done with the Point, we shall reconcile all these things, only for the present seeing

they are the words of Christ, we must yeild them to have a truth in them: That the Yoke of Christ whatever it is that Christ would have us submit unto, it is easie, whatever Burden he would have us bear in this world, it is a light Burden: Let all those that are continually complaining of the difficulties that lie in the waies of Godliness take notice of this Point, many there are, that make it their Religion to be continually complaining of difficulties that there are in Gods waies, as if by that they would shew that they saw somewhat, and felt somewhat more than others did, and are never in waies of thanksgiving, or in waies of rejoycing, but alwaies complaining of the waies of God, and what difficulties they find in them, let them take notice, that whatever thy thoughts have been heretofore, or what thy Speeches have been about them, yet Jesus Christ himself saith, that *his Yoke is easie*, and of his *Burden that it is light*.

Now therefore, First I shall confirm it by Scriptures, and then come to branch it into several particulars for the opening of it.

For Scriptures, take these three, the first is in *Psal. 119. 44, 45. So shall I keep thy Law continually for ever and ever, and I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy Precepts.* The Soul that doth truly seek Gods precepts, to be under the command of the precepts of God, such a one walks at liberty, never hath so much liberty as at that time when he seeks Gods precepts. You may think that to be under the command of the word, and especially that in seeking the commands of the Lord, it will bring you into bondage: There is no such liberty in the world as being under the command of God, and seeking the commands of the word. And then in

*Prov. 15. 19. The way of the slothfull is as a bed of
Thorns, that is, there is a great deal of difficulty in
the way of the slothfull, now this is an opposition
to the waies of the slothfull, But the way of the right-
eous is plain, there is no such difficulty in his way,
a righteous mans way to Heaven it is a plain way,
a plain path, he may go in it with ease, it is not a ri-
gid way, it is not a stony way, a thorny way, but it
is a plain way, that a man may go easie there. Now
if you be walking in any place from Town to Town,
if you walk in a place where is plain way in the
fields, it is easie all the while. Now you go to the
City, and you walk in the fields, it is plain, it is easie,
but when you come upon stones, it is more difficult,
So it is here, *The way of the righteous is plain*, the
righteous have a plain path to Heaven, but the wic-
ked they are upon the stones, they are upon the
dirt, when one comes upon the stones, and it be
dirty too, that is more difficult. *But the way of
righteousness is plain.* And there is one Scripture
more remarkable than these, and that is, in 1 John
5. 3. *And his commandments are not grievous*, the
commands of God have no grievousness in them,
there is nothing in Gods Commandments to be so
much as grieving to a Gracious Soul. It is said in
the Scripture, *that God delights not to grieve the Chil-
dren of Men*, certainly, there is nothing that God
requires of thee if thou understandest it aright that
will grieve thee, when you tender a Child or a
Friend, you will not require of him any thing that
may grieve them, now Christ hath so tender regard
unto you that are the Servants of God, that he will
require nothing of you that wil grieve you, and ther-
fore if nothing be grievous in Gods Command-
ments, surely his Yoke is easie, and his Burden is
light.*

But now for the opening of this Point (for there

is a great deal that had need to be said to it for the opening of it, and making it usefull and profitable) I shall cast what my meditations have been about this Point into these Six heads.

The first is, To give you some Evidences of it, that this is so.

And then the second thing is, The differences that there are between the ease that a carnall heart finds in the waies of Religion, and the ease that a true Gracious heart finds in the waies of Religion; those that are carnall, and take up but a meer formality of Religion, they find not ease, but those that are truly religious, they find rest.

And the third is this, If the waies of God be easie, How comes it to pass, that many that we hope are truly Gracious and Godly, yet make such complaints of so much difficulty as they do find in Gods waies.

And then fourthly, We are to open (which is the principal of all in the explication) wherein the easiness of Gods waies appears, what are those things that do make the waies of God so easie, and in what particulars doth consist the easiness that there is in the waies of Religion.

And then fifthly, Some Consequentes that are to be drawn from this, which is by way of Application.

And sixthly and lastly, Some Directions, what we should do to make the waies of God easie, These are the six Heads that I cast the handling of this Point into.

CHAP.



CHAP. CXXXV.

Six Evidences of the former Doctrine in the last Chapter. 1. *Because the word that enjoyns these waies is Sweet.* 2. *A Gracious Soul counts his Duties his priviledges.* 3. *He would rather come under any other Burden, than cast off the Yoke of Christ.* 4. *Because Christ whose Yoke it is, is Gentle.* 5. *Never any truly that put their neck under this Yoke, would willingly take it out again.* 6. *The Experience of all the Saints of God prove the Point.*

FOR the first then: The Evidences that do demonstrate, that certainly the waies of God are easie, and his Burden is very light unto those that have indeed submitted their necks unto the Yoke of Jesus Christ.

Evidence 1.

First. The first Evidence is this: Surely Gods waies are easie unto them, for there is none that is truly Gracious, but they account the word of God that doth require them to walk in those waies, very sweet unto them, and they prize it highly, now if there were difficulty and a harshness in Gods waies, Certainly, though the word of God may be accounted just and righteous, yet it would not be sweet and comfortable unto the Soul; but there is no-

thing more sweet and comfortable unto a Gracious heart, than the word of God that doth require such waies of him. Ye know the expression of *David*, that *It is sweeter than the Hony and the Hony Comb, more precious than Silver or Gold*, or any riches of the world, read but *Psal. 119.* and there in every verse almost, you find such expressions, of much sweetness that *David* did find in the word of God, if the word be sweet and delightful, certainly the waies of God must needs be sweet and delightfull that are required in the word, that is the first.

Evidence 2.

Secondly : Surely they are sweet and delightful, for those that are in Gods waies, do not account what they do only to be Duties, but Priviledges; they look upon every thing that Christian Religion requires of them, not only as Duties, but as Mercies, as that wherein their happiness consists, *I have received mercy from the Lord that I may be faithfull as Paul*, I do not say, I have received mercy from the Lord, that I may go to Heaven, that I may be rewarded, and have such and such blessings, but I count it mercy from the Lord, that he makes me faithfull in this way, not only dutifull, but faithfull. The Saints of God do not account the bonds of obedience to be fetters to them, they account them chains of Gold about their necks for Ornament, not bonds of necessity to tie them to obedience; because otherwise, they would not obey them, but I say, every Law of God is counted by the Saints of God to be as chains of Gold, Ornaments to them, that they account their Glory as well as their Duty, & therefore in the *Revelation* we find, the new City is described thus, that her Streets is paved with Gold, that is, the very way & path of the Saints it is a Golden way, it is paved with Gold.

it is a glorious way, now that which a man accounts his Priviledg, and Dignity, & Glory, that must needs be ealie, their suffering actively and passively, Paul counts his sufferings Glorious, and Moser counts his sufferings more than the riches of Egypt. It is so be that you had given unto you as much Gold as you could carry, the weightier the bag, the lighter would your heart be, you would count the burden so much the more lighter, by so much the more was in it, Certainly, the suffering for Christ, and dying for Christ is riches, it is so to a Gracious heart, may be this may be a Riddle to carnal hearts, many carnall hearts think they must do such good things, and if they do not, they must perish, and go to Hell, and therefore they force themselves upon Duty, I but it is otherwise with a Godly heart, he doth not think, I must do this, but his work is wages, every work that a Child of God doth is wages to him, he man works hard, I but he expects the more, he expects wages: So an Hypocrite may work, he may do something, but he expects wages, but a Gracious heart his work is wages, *Receiving the end of your Faith, the Salvation of your Souls,* there is receiving continually while we are working. Saith Christ in *Joh. 17. 4. Father I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do:* So the very work that the Father set Christ upon, Christ did count it to be a Gift from the Father, and so the work that Christ sets us upon, if we have the Spirit of Christ in us, we wil count it a Gift from Jesus Christ, Christ doth give it, and this (by the way) would be a special Evidence of true Grace in the heart, the soul that shall count Gods waies Priviledges as well as Duties, surely hath true Grace, truly they are ealie then, if they be Priviledges as well as Duties, that is the second.

Evidence 3

Thirdly: And the third Evidence is this, The Yoke of Christ is eatie, and his Burden is light; for there is no gracious heart but would rather come under any Yoke, any Burden in the world, than willingly to cast off any Yoke and Burden of Jesus Christ, name what Yoke you will, what Burden you will, rather than a gracious heart will be from under Christs Burden, and Christs Yoke, O! saith he, let me come under that Yoke, and that Burden.

Yea further, If God doth put any Yoke, any Burden of affliction upon one that is Gracious, if that Yoke and Burden of affliction may but bring his neck more under the Yoke of Christ than before, and bring him more under Christs Burden than before, a gracious heart doth think it well worth the bearing, thinks himself fully recompensed in the bearing of any Yoke if it may any way further him to come under the Yoke of Christ more; as thus, before I had a wanton Spirit, and I could not get my self to put my neck under the Yoke of Christ, to be quiet as I ought to have been; Well, but now the Lord Christ hath laid the Yoke of affliction upon me, and that hath in some measure subdued my heart, so that I can come and put the Yoke of Christ upon me better, O! blessed be God that ever I had the Yoke of affliction upon me, that now brings me under the yoke of Christ more, Canst thou say so, blessed be God for this affliction: Surely then the Yoke of Christ is easie, that a heart is willing to bear any Yoke that may but further it to the bearing of the Yoke of Christ, that is the third.

Evidence

Evidence 4.

Fourthly : It is an easie Yoke certainly, for it is Christs Yoke, it must needs be easie, because it is Christs; and that upon these two grounds.

First : Christ himself is Gentle, and Sweet, and Lovely; Christ himself hath no Rigidness, no Sourness in him towards People, as you heard at large when we opened the Meekness and Lowliness of Christ, now if Christ be meek and lowly, he loves no bitterness and rigidness. If I had to deal with a man that I were sure had all the Meekness, and all the Love and all the Gentleness in him of all the men in the world that ever lived, put all their Meekness, and Gentleness, and Sweetness together into one man, and I were sure I should never have any Yoke upon me but what that man should lay upon me, truly, I would never fear any rigidness. One man hath Meekness and Gentleness, I but he hath Rigidness too, and another man hath one drop, and another another drop, I but put all these into one, and surely that man hath a great deal of Meekness, now Jesus Christ hath all in him, and if it be his Yoke, then it must needs be easie.

And Secondly : Consider what was the end of Christs coming into the world, the end of Jesus Christs coming into the world was this, he saw poor wretched man, that he was under a Burden of sin and misery, and he was content to come and take their natures upon him, and deliver their souls from pain, and trouble, and misery, he came not into the world to impose Iron Yokes, but he came into the world to bring the mercy of the Father, to bring the treasure of the riches of the Father into the world, and was anointed by the Father to that end, that he might open Prison doors to Captives, and

and that he might powr oyle upon them, to supple souls that was his end, saith he, I came not into the world to condemne it, but to save it that I might bring the mercy of my father into the world, that I might open the passages of the infinite mercy of my Father that by your sin was shut up, though there was an infinite ocean of mercy in my Father, yet not one drop could issue out from him, therefore I came to open the sluices, as it were, and let them out upon you, and if there be any other end, it is rather by accident then that which Christ aymed at, but that Christ aymed at was, to open the sluices of the infinite mercy of God upon man. Now if this were the end of Christs comming into the world, then certainly those that are deare to him, and that he was willing to lay down his life for, they shal find nothing from him but gentleness, he will lay no yoke or burden upon them but what is very easy, and very light therefore it must needs be easy, because it is Christs, that is a fourth Evidence

Evidence, 2.

Fifthly, It must needs be easy and light, for there was never any in the world that put his neck under this Yoke, (especially if you take it for the yoke of obedience) never any put his neck under this yoke that would have his neck out again, that would wish Christs yoke otherwise then it is, for his active obedience and they would have the passive too, but in the conclusion they would never repent them that ever they were under it, but especially for the former, there was never Godly Christians when they were themselves, and did consider of things, except it were in time of temptation, but take them at that time when they are themselves, I say, there was never any that could wish their neck out of Christs yoke

yoke, that could with the yoke of Christ easier then it is, they would be freed from nothing that Christ requires when they are themselves and understand things. It is true, Ignorantly, and when they do not understand things, and in time of temptation, then they may do otherwise, but take a Christian, and let him be himself, and let him consider and understand the thing, and there was never any that could with his neck out of the yoke, or with it easier then it is. It is true, a gracious heart may be weary of himself, because he cannot bear the yoke of Christ as he would do, but he is never weary of Christs yoke, he may be weary of the corruptions of his heart that hinder him from bearing the yoke as he should do, but he would not have the yoke less then it is, Take one that is Godly, though he be weak, you will say, it is true, they that are strong wil not wish it less, but those that are weak they may well consider it thus, a gracious heart he would be glad to have more strength to go under Christs yoke more comfortably, but he would not have Christs yoke less, that is, there is no duty that Christ requires of a gracious heart that it would be freed from, I appeal to you that are gracious hearts that one duty that Christ requires of you then you are your selves, that you would be freed from, Look through the whole book of God, why on shall find it so of the Saints. And here is a manifest difference now between an Hypocrite, and a gracious man, an Hypocrite would fain do this duty, but not that, and omit this, but not that; but a gracious heart saith, Lord, I am not willing only to do what thou requirest of me, but Lord, what thou shalt requirest of me, I would chuse it, if I had my choice, but I leave that till I come further, only I will show that it is easy, because no gracious heart that will ever take up any other yoke, but

saith, let me alwaies be here, surely it must needs be easy then, that is a fifth Evidence.

Evidence, 6

And the Sixth and Last Evidence is this, it is taken from the experience of the Saints, and that is as great a demonstration as any thing, that which I have found experimentally, that I find so; it is taken from the experience of the Saints, there is none that are truly Graciously though they may be afflicted with temptation, especially when they are grown in the waies of Christianity, but they have some experience of it, perhaps at first they find it somewhat hard to get their necks under, but afterwards, they will say, well, I never found that rest, that ease, that quiet upon my soul, as since I got my neck fully under the yoke of Christ, since I brought my self to resign my self fully & wholly to the ways of Jesus Christ, I bless God I have had great ease and rest. Just as it is with your ships, if your ship stick fast in the Sands and water, the Waves come and beat against your ship, and it is ready to break, but now if it is got off from the Sands, and wholly upon the Water, then away it goes, and you may hold a cup of wine in your hands and it goes away with ease, so it is with a Godly heart, when he is part in Gods waies, and part in the mudd, and doth not fully give up himself to Gods waies, then he findes trouble, and his Conscience flies in his Face, and he cannot sleep quietly; but let the Soul fully resign it self to Christ to be guided by him, Oh the unspeakable joy that there is in this. Harkens may talk, and have witty discourses about tranquillity of mind, but only the true Christian can have the true tranquillity of mind; never could the soul say till now, my soul re-

turne unto thy rest, let there be never such commotions in the world, and troubles and stirs in the World, yet I can retire to God, and I can bless my self in God, and bless God in what I enjoy, when I can say as in the presence of God to my soul, O my Soul, return to thy rest, I never had such rest and quiet in any waies as I find in these. Surely these Six things do evidence the truth, that his yoke is easy, and his burden light.



CHAP. CXXXVI.

The Second Particular mentioned, Chap. 13. Is opened in two differences between a Carnal heart, and a Gracious Soul, in the waies of God. 1. The Hypocrite finds ease in the waies of God and Sin both. 2. The Hypocrite hath some ease, because he mistakes the Yoke of Christ, contenting himself with the outward forme of Godliness, but the cleavers ease comes from the power of it.

BUT now many carnal hearts, they think it easie: Gracious hearts may think this point at first hearing very strange, but carnal hearts they think, I, we like this point wel enough, for men keep such a do, and make the waies of God so difficult, to go on in a faire way, that is easy, but to be put to so much trouble and pains, there must be such praying, and humbling, and such strict keeping of the Sabbaths, this is that disturbs, now because civil men, they find ease as well as carnal hearts, that will be the next thing, for Indeed, I was loth to speak so much of the easiness of the waies of Christ without shewing the difference between the rest, and ease of a carnal heart or an Hypocrite. and a true Gracious

heart, an Hypocrite and a carnal heart ~~that find no~~
ease and rest at all though a gracious heart ~~that~~

Wherefore the differences between that ease which
a carnal heart finds, and that which a gracious heart
finds in Gods ways they are many.

First of al, a carnal heart finds ease in Christs
yoke and ease in the yoke of sin both, they find ease
in both yokes, when they have a temptation to sin,
that is comfortable to them, when it is
suitable to their own ends to their own
waies, when they come to performe duty
and come to the Church, and sometimes pray, and
receive Sacraments, and the like, they think they
find a great deal of ease there, they are content
with both, now it is quite otherwise with a gracious
heart, a gracious heart finds ease in the yoke of
Christ, but there is nothing more burdensome to a
gracious heart then the yoke of sin, the yoke of
Christ is such an ease as cannot stand with ease un-
der the yoke of any sin, but the yoke of sin it is
burdensome and intollerable unto the heart that
hath true ease in the yoke of Jesus Christ. Yea,
and the more ease any gracious heart hath in bear-
ing the yoke of Christ, the more intollerable is the
burden that such a heart hath when it is under the
yoke of sin; if at any time sin doth prevail with
one that is come under subjection to Jesus Christ, O!
how greivous is that sin, and therefore greivous, be-
cause such a soul knows what the difference is be-
tween the yoke of Christ, and the yoke of sin, there-
fore it is greivous, It is not only greivous, because
it brings terror to the soul through fear of judgment
and fear of hell, but it is greivous, because the soul
knows a difference between the yoke of Christ and
the yoke of sin. As now, if a man hath been ac-
quainted with a service to some Noble man or

Prince, and hath a great deale of Honor and respect, and gained very much, and afterwards this man should come to be a slave in the Gallies, Oh, how burdensom would this be to him upon this ground, because he once knew a better service, he knew what it was to serve such a Prince, that was a gracious Prince, and loved him and delighted in him, and required nothing of him but that that was very suitable to him, now if such a one comes to the Gally, it will be very greivous. Truly thus it is, a true Gracious heart, that hath been acquainted with the yoke of Christ, if at any time he is overcome with any corruption, with any sin, he is like one in the Gally, Oh, this soul considers, I am in a different way from what I was wont to be, I was wont to be in the service of Jesus Christ, and my heart had soul satisfying contentments while I was there, but O what a difference is there in this work? here is a base drudgery in comparison of what I was wont to have, Oh, the sweet communion I had with Jesus Christ while my heart kept close to him, but now, now I am raking in kennells, and rowing in Gallies, Oh! *wretched man that I am, who shal deliver me from this burden.* now this is a wide, a broad difference, between the easiness of the yoke of Christ to one and to the other, one finds a great deal of ease in the yoke, but the other finds all one, if he goes amongst company that are vaine, and sleight, and prophane, and when he comes to hear the word to read or receive the Sacrament, almost all one; and indeed, if there be any difference, his greatest ease is in that of sin; he hath ease in the duties of religion, in performing duties, but his greatest ease is in the other way; I but now, the ease of a Saint is such as cannot stand with the ease of sin, a child of God can beare the yoke of Christ with ease, but he cannot beare the yoke of sin, it is death to

him to beare the yoke of sin, that is the First

Secondly, Another difference is this, a carnall heart may have some ease in duties of religion, in the yoke of Christ, but it is because he mistakes the yoke of Christ, it is because he doth not know the yoke of Christ, he thinks that the yoke of Christ is only some external duties that Christ requires, or to keep from some grosse sins, and now and then to say his prayers, and now and then to read a chapter, and come to Church, and to receive Sacraments, he thinks this is all that Christ requires of him, what needs any more to do then this? May not I go to Heaven as well with this, as with keeping so much a do as others do? and he thinks here is the yoke of Christ, and this is fine and easy indeed. If this were the way that would bring to Heaven, it were a very easy matter to go to Heaven, that is, for a man to keep from a gross foul sin, that would make him odious in the place where he lives, and for him only to come from his house, and sit an hour or two and heare a Sermon, and come at Easter and other times and receive the Sacrament, this is the easiest thing in the world, who would not go to Heaven if this were all: But now, if thou wert acquainted with the spiritualness of holy duties that Jesus Christ requires, with the power of Godliness that there is in holy duties that Christ requires in the word, mortification of thy Lust, and the keeping of thy thoughts, and of thy heart holy and spiritual he requires that thou shouldest serve the Lord thy God withal thy heart and all thy might, if thou knewest (I say) the spiritualness of holy duties, and the power of Godliness that is in holy duties, then it would be an intolerable burden to thee, it

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would be very grievous to a carnall heart to put it self under the spirituall acts of Religion; to put it self under the outward acts of Religion that is easie, but to put it self upon the inward acts of Religion, they would find that to be somewhat indeed. For one that hath learned a Prayer, to go and say it over, and read it in a Book: What an easie matter is that part of Religion? for a man in the morning and evening, to go and turn over two or three Leaves, and shake himself and go away, and then there is Religion for all that day. But now if you would set your selves to the power of Godliness in Prayer, that is, when you come to Prayer, to meditate what an Infinite, and Glorious, and eternall God you have to deal withall in Prayer, I am now coming to tender up that high respect that I owe to the infinite God, that which the Creature owes to an infinite Creator, now I am coming to open my Soul to God, to search out all the corruptions of my heart, and I am now coming to bewail them in the presence of the infinite God, and to set my self before the Lord, as in my self a condemned Creature before an infinite Judge. I am coming now to plead with God for my life; for my Soul, for my eternall estate, I am now coming to engage my Soul to God, that as ever I expect mercy in the day of Christ, so I am willing to give up my self to God, here is some power of Godliness in this, now I would have you put your selves to this divine ease, the more a Gracious heart doth this, the more ease he hath in Prayer, as I will appeal to you; Take a carnall heart, such a one thinks he must pray, and so he comes in the morning, and speaks a few words, such words as he was wont to do, and such words as may be he hath heard other men speak when he joyns with others in prayer, and he hears some expressions in prayer
from

from them, and he gets them, and comes in the morning and speaks them, and perhaps gets into his Closet, and barely speaks them over, now if it be one that hath true Grace, alas, he is in a troublesome condition all the day after, if he find not the power of Godliness in it, such a one hath no quiet in his Spirit all the day after, Why? because there hath not been the power of Godliness in his Duty, and therefore he is troubled all the day long. But now, let such a one come to Prayer to purpose in the morning, and stir up the life and power of Godliness in Prayer, worshipping God as a God, Oh! the ease and quiet that such a one hath all the day, he can go on in his work, and can sing at his work: So that the ease of a Gracious heart, comes from the power of Godliness in a Duty, and from the spiritualness that is in a Duty: but the ease of a carnall heart comes from the formality of a Duty, as because the Duty is formall, and he thinks that it is the Yoke of Christ and this is pretty well, it is easie indeed, to have no other Yoke than this, to worship God in a few words, and not to have the power of Godliness in the Duty. And so we might instance in the hearing of the word, you come to the word barely, you rise out of your bed, and come and sit here an hour, that is easie enough, but now if you come to the word with preparation, and think now I am going into the presence of God, to hear what God hath to say to my Soul this morning, Oh, my Soul, what is it that is in thee amiss? What is it that thou wouldest fain have the word come close unto, to help thee against? What is the speciall corruption thou wouldest have the word to mortifie in thee? If now you set your selves before you come to the word, to examin your hearts, and when you are there, to attend to the word as that which is your life, upon which your eternall

estate depends, and so to sanctifie the name of God in his word, and not to dare to cast off any truth, knowing that your Soul may lie upon that very truth, and to drink in the word of God in every thing that is revealed according to Gods mind, this will be a very hard thing, you will complain' of almost an intolerable Burden. But now a gracious heart finds more ease, when it Sanctifies God in the power of Godliness in hearing the word, than in a formall Duty. Alas! when such a one comes in a formall way, and goes away and gets nothing, such a one is troubled at such a Sermon, it brings more Burden and grief to such a heart, to come to the word and not find profit by the word, than any other thing can do, almost nothing can be more difficult than this. You find no difference, you come to the word and you get nothing, and you go away with as much comfort as at other times, it is as easie to you; but now a Gracious heart cannot find ease except he finds Christ in the Duty, but you can find ease in holy Duties though you never find Jesus Christ in holy Duties; I appeal to you, if this thing God would be pleased to settle upon the hearts of Men and Women, it might be a very great settlement to their hearts, you perform holy Duties, What is the ease in holy Duties? meerly the performance of the Duty, but now if your ease were that which is the ease of a true Gracious heart, it comes from the meeting with Jesus Christ in holy Duties.

And so for the Sabbath, how easie is it to keep the Sabbath, to do as the most, it is easie, Why? Because you do not now work in your calling as other daies you do, and you put on your best Cloaths, and come and meet with your Neighbors, and so you come to Church and home again, and have better fare at your Tables than other daies, and

sometimes walk up and down the Fields, this is easie: But now the Saints find the ease of the Sabbath to be this; that whereas upon the week day I am busied about other things, and so have not that immediate Communion with Jesus Christ as at other times, now upon the Sabbath my Soul comes to enjoy more immediate communion with Jesus Christ, when I awake, I am put upon it more to mind spirituall things, to prepare my heart for him, And now this whole day is dedicated for my converse with Jesus Christ, and it is no more to me but the very Type and forerunner of that eternall Sabbath that I hope to enjoy in the highest Heavens hereafter, and so it is easie to me. Now methinks, whatever trouble I have in the week time in my business in my calling, the Sabbath day that refresheth me again and makes me fit for my calling, and my heart that was so perplexed with outward crosses, and with the troubles of the world, that did so dead and dull my Spirit, the Sabbath quickens me again and adds new strength again, for I have found Christ refreshing my Soul? Now is there not a wide difference between the ease of a carnall heart and a Gracious heart in holy Duties? The one meerey mistakes the Yoke of Christ.

And so for the Sacrament, It is an easie thing for a man to come in his best Cloaths, and take a piece of Bread and a cup of Wine, but he knows not what is the power of Godliness in such a holy Duty, he thinks that the outward coming to the Sacrament makes amends for all, though he hath been a wicked carnall wretch the week before, now if he comes to the Sacrament, the meer performing the Duty, that makes amends, though there be no preparation before, no spiritualness in the Sacrament, no discerning of the Body of Jesus Christ, and the Mysteries of Jesus Christ, no closing of his heart with

Jesus Christ in the Sacrament, no engaging his Soul to God, no renewing his Covenant with God as he comes to receive the Seal of Gods Covenant with him, no such things. But now a Gracious heart cannot find ease in taking the Sacrament, except it find Christ, the ease it hath in the Sacrament, it is in preparing the Soul for communion with Jesus Christ, it is in the exercise of Faith and repentance, the more Faith is exercised, and the more Repentance exercised, the more the heart is broken in the Sacrament, the more ease a man hath, and the more he gets his heart engaged to God in the Sacrament, and the more he hath renewed his Covenant, the more ease he hath. I, when a man can go to the Sacrament and do this. O! this is a good day indeed. And indeed this I am speaking upon, is a great point of Religion for the helping of you to know the frame & disposition of your hearts, & how things stand between God and your Souls, as any thing I know; What it is in holy Duties that brings in this ease to your Souls, whether it be the bare externall performance of them, or the spirituall performance of them, is the power of Godliness in them? Then holy Duties for the matter of them cannot satisfy your heart, except you find your hearts sanctified by them, and Gods name sanctified in them, that is the second note of difference, betwene the ease a carnall heart finds in the waies of God, and the ease a gracious heart finds.

CHAP.



CHAP. CXXXVII.

Containeth a third and fourth Difference between the ease of a Hypocrite, and true Believer in the waies of God. For, 1. They are easie even to the Corruptions of a Hypocrite. 2. He takes up the waies God partially.

Thirdly : Another Difference is this : The ease of a carnall heart finds, it may not only stand with the ease under the Yoke of sin to the Flesh, but the truth is, even the Duties of Religion are easie to their corruptions, to their very corruptions, not only may stand with their corrupt waies, but are easie to the very corruption it self, to the very sinfull distemper of their hearts, this is a very evil and vile ease, for to perform holy Duties so, as to be easie to the very flesh, to the fleshly part, Indeed, the Yoke of Christ is easie unto the Saints, but it is not easie unto the flesh, I mean to the corrupt part, it is not easie to that, I but the waies of Religion to carnall hearts is easie to their very corruption, to their corrupt part.

For, First : There is agreement enough between any Duty they perform and their secret sins, they can perform holy Duties and keep their sins both together, and this now they find very easie. There is nothing in holy Duties that is against their sin, yea, there is something in holy Duties that makes for their sins, I do not say holy Duties in their own nature makes for their sins, but their performing of them makes for their sins, makes them the more quiet in their sins. As thus, It makes more for

their sins, and they have more quiet in them upon two Reasons.

As first by this means sometimes their corruption and sin is hidden, as you that have many Servants that are naught and vile, they will be very forward in good things, and go to Sermons, and Prayer and the like, that they might hide much of their sin, that they might not be suspected to be such and such, therefore they perform Duties of Religion; and now these Duties must needs be very easie to them: And so it is with many Hypocrites that go beyond civill men, and the Duties of Religion that they perform, are more than civill men do, they will not only come to Church, but seem to be affected, not only be exercised in the ordinary Duties, but in extraordinary, Fasting and Prayer, not only come to hear the word, but repeat it in their Families afterwards, not only pray here, but pray in their Families, and Closets, yet so, as to cover their corruption, to cover their very filthiness, now these Duties are very easie.

Or Secondly, which is a more close way, Because it satisfies their Consciences, their Consciences would not be at quiet except they did something, a Man and Woman that walks in a carnall way, that hath a vile Spirit, a sensuall spirit in his constant way and course, if such a one should not do some good thing, having some enlightning of mind, his Conscience being somewhat awakened and stirred, he could not be at quiet if he did not now and then pray, and now and then come to hear the word, and desire Sacraments, his Conscience would fly in his face, and would not be at quiet, now having many secret corruptions that he is loth to part with, he is content to do something, to take a Book, and read a Chapter, and go into his Clo-

set, and pray in his Family, and will not neglect the word, but come to hear the word all the Lords day, come twice, and thrice to hear the word, now all these things are very good, and they are to be encouraged in them, but now examin I beseech you, whether all the good and comfort that you find is not only this, that by these things your Consciences are quieted, and so you go on more easie in some sinfull way, because of this, you can with the more ease let out your heart unto the world, you can with more ease take liberty to some haunt of evil that you are conscious of, some secret sin, you can take the more liberty, because you have been exercised in holy Duties at another time. I beseech you examine your heart in this, there is a great deal of secret corruption in this, & it is not very rare, not an extraordinary thing that I am speaking of, but I fear it is an ordinary thing that I am speaking of, that many people take the more liberty in some secret haunt of evil, because they have been exercised in holy Duties at other times, they have been at fasting and prayer and perhaps their hearts have been stirred in Fasting & Prayer, but now what use make they of this? it is that they may be more sluggish at other times, this is a cursed ease, an ease that may stand not only with your corruptions, but an ease to your corruptions, make you to go on in the way of sin more quietly, What a horrid sin is this? For a Man & Woman to make no other use of the Ordinances of Jesus Christ than this, to this end, that he may go on more quietly in the waies of sin, now this is an abhorring thing to a gracious heart, a gracious heart finds ease in the way of Duty, but it is more easie, because it strikes at their corruptions, and mortifies their corruptions, Oh! blessed be God for his Ordinances, for before I came to be exercised in them, and had power and life in the

use of them, I had ease in my sin, but since the time I set my self to follow God indeed in his Ordinances, and have had communion with God in his Ordinances, I thank God I can have no ease in my sin, that though my corruptions sometimes overcome me, yet by the performance of holy Duties I find it makes my corruptions more burdensome to me, and God that knows my heart knows this, it is my desire that I may never find ease in any sinfull way, and I love all the waies of God better, because they will not let me be at quiet in the waies of sin. And this is the reason that you that come to the word of God, many times, you hear many things that you like well, and you love them wel, but because they disquiet your corruptions, and you cannot have quiet in your sinfull way, therefore you sit at home, and you wil not come to hear the word. Oh, many men, they would love Sermons, and love to hear such a man, but only for this one thing, that they wil not let them be at quiet, they cannot go on so quietly in some sinfull way which their hearts hanker after, and therefore those Sermons that do not disquiet them in this kind, Oh, they love them exceedingly; it is that I have observed; you shall have many Women, ignorant People and others, when they come to hear a Sermon that hath a great deal of Latin, and quaint Expressions in it, Oh, how they commend this, and what an excellent Sermon was this? and what an excellent Man was this? It may be said of those Sermons, as Bradford said of the Mass, The Mass doth not bite, therefore you love it; and so men used to love the common Prayer, alas, it did not bite, they would come, and stand, and hear a man read out of a Book a while; this did not bite, whereas a Prayer that comes from the Heart, and searcheth into mens hearts, that stirs their corruptions, and therefore they do not love it. And so it is in regard of the

word, let the word come to search the heart, and comeneer, to divide between the marrow and the bones, to come into the secret of the hearts of men and women then for the soul to love the word so much the more, and to say Oh! this is the word of God that gives ease to my soul, I find more ease by such a ministry then I find by any ministry, this is the ease of a Gracious heart: but a corrupt heart will have ease only in that way that is most subservant to his own lusts That is the third difference.

Fourthly, Another difference is this, The ease that a corrupt heart hath in the waies of God, it is that ease that he hath in taking up the waies of God but by holiness, it is in partial obedience, it is but in part of the yoke of Christ, it is not in all the yoke of Christ he can take up some part, some pieces of the yoke of Christ but if you come to urge him to take up all the ways of God then he crys out, what must we make Conscience of all our thoughts, of all our words, and all our actions? must we answer for every action before the judgment seat of Christ? Oh! this he counts to be hard & greivous to him, he could be content with something, but to take up the full yoke, and all the yoke of Jesus Christ, that he thinks an intollerable burden; that he must have the scripture, the word of God to be the rule of all his actions, that is somewhat hard: But now a gracious heart finds the greatest ease when he comes up unto all Gods commands, It is true, indeed saith he, I cannot come to that pitch as to obey them perfectly but yet my heart is so far brought off as to subject my self to all the commands of God if at sometimes he yields to some, and then at other times unto others, that brings more trouble to his spirit, but now when he can find his heart submitting to all the precepts of God, then he finds most rest, all the waies of wisdom are pleasant. A Child of God finds

no any thing in the waies of God that is not easy, and the more it comes to an universal obedience in every thing, the more ease it hath when indeed it doth but begin to make some enterance upon Gods waies, and takes up some duties and not all, then it finds trouble, but when it comes to take up all, and comes to yeild universal obedience, then it finds ease. Now examin your hearts in this you find it may be some ease in the waies of religion, O! but it is but partial obedience, you take this, and leave that, observe this, a partial obedience, is an easy obedience to a carnal heart, but an universal obedience is the most easy obedience to any Gracious heart.



CHAP. CXXXVIII.

Containing Six differences more of the former Points.
 5. A Carnal heart can take up and lay down duties when he will. 6. He hath ease in the remissness of his Spirit. 7. His ease is all alike. 8. The more ease he hath the more sluggish he is. 9. He hath but one principle in the heart that affect him both in the waies of God, and the waies of the world. 10. His ease comes from the performance of duties in his own Strength.

Truly, Another is this, A carnal heart finds ease from the liberty of taking up and laying down the duty: it is easy because he can take it up and lay it down when he will, if a beast have a yoke what he can shift the collar when he wil it is easy, when he can put in his head when he will, and slip out his head when he please, this is no grievousness to the beast so it is with carnal hearts, the waies of

God are easy to them, why? because sometimes they can take up duties, and sometimes lay them down, when they are in a good mood, then they can take up duties, and read, and pray, and the like if any thing vex and trouble them. then they can lay them down again; and sometimes when they list they can come and hear Sermons, and when they list they can go into bad company, go into the Tavern, and the like; but now a gracious heart finds the greatest ease when it can be constant in the waies of God, when I can bring my heart to this, that there is an evenness and proportion between what I do at one time, and what I do at another time, there is the greatest ease to a gracious heart; and indeed, there can be no true comfort in any holy duty where the heart is not constant, the constancy and the evenness of spirit, and the proportion that there is between one thing and another, is that that makes the waies of God easy unto the Saints. As in going in any way or common path, if a man have one ledge long and another short, or if the way be uneven, sometimes plain, sometimes rugged, sometimes down hill, and sometimes uphill, that is hard to a man in his walking; and so it is with the work of a Christian, that that makes it difficult is this, Oh, I cannot find my heart in a constant evenness, were my heart so, then I should find ease, but that which makes it most difficult, it is the unevenness of my heart, on the contrary, put now a carnal heart to this, to a constancy in any duty or work for God, O! it will cry out of weariness in Gods waies, perhaps he will be content to be a while in holy duties, to hear a short Sermon, and go away again, but to spend the whole Sabbath, that is wearisome to him; Nay perhaps he could be content to keep one Sabbath, but to keep Sabbath after Sabbath, that is burdnesome to him, and perhaps he could be con-

tent to pray one morning in his family, but to pray every morning, and every night, and to go on from morning to morning, and from day to day, and from week to week, and from yeare to yeare, Oh ! this is wearisom, truly, we have no reason to grudge God any service all our daies, but thus it is with a carnal heart.

Sixtly, The ease that a carnal heart hath, it is in his remissness in duty, in the remissness of his spirit, in his moderation that he pleads for, there lyes his ease, but for the other, the extension of duty, that he pleads not for; you shal have a carnal heart plead for holy duties, but with moderation, we must be moderate, and if we do somthing that God requires, though we be not so hot and fiery as others, I hope it is wel enough, doth not vertue consist in the middle way ? As I like not the profaneness of some men, that are Swearers, and drunkards, & whoremongers on the one side, so I do not like your precise men on the other side, so that his ease lyes in the remissness, in the lukewarmness of his spirit in holy duties. But now the ease of a gracious heart lyes in the exactness of his spirit, to come to the very top of holy duties. It is with a gracious heart, as it is with many fowls, you shall have many fowls that fly, when they are low, they flutter, and it is a trouble to them to get on high, but when they are aloft, then it is no trouble to them ; so it is with a gracious heart, to get up his heart, is some trouble to him, but now when he hath got up his heart, then he is in his element, there he can fly swiftly, when he hath got up into the highest region, there he gets the most ease. It is quite otherwise with a carnal heart, when he pleads for moderation, this vertue of moderation that he pleads for, it is not a middle of participation, the middle in which vertu consists ; it is not a middle that doth participate of a degree of both the contraries, but a denying of the extreame of both, as the true vertue of liberality consists not between prodigality

and covetousness, but denies the extreames, of both, it will have nothing to do with either of both the extreames, but that which a carnal heart calls for in moderation, is the mixture of both extreames together, and so makes up a religion of the mixture, as thus, there is open profaneness, that is one kind of extrem, and there is deadness of spirit the other way, that that is opposite unto the open profaneness in wickedness of many people that of drunkenness, and uncleanness and the like they will none of this, And then there is the Strictness of power and life in the waies of God in the other way; that that is in their hearts is a deadness of spirit, there is a mixture, there is some profaneness of heart, though they would have somewhat of religion too, of that which is the hypocrisy not the power of religion, there is hypocrisy and profaneness, those are the two extreames, he will not be a profane man in the grossness of it, nor will he be strict in the waies of God in the exactness of them, but mix them both, he will not be only profane, and only have a shew in religion, but he will retain some profaneness of heart; that is, though he will not be drunk & profane, yet he will retain an inward profaneness of heart, that is, when he comes to perform holy duties, he counts them but as common things, the blood of Jesus Christ, he counts it as a common thing and so he hath a profaneness of heart when he comes to perform holy duties, and yet he will not be profane neither, and so he will have a mixture of both, and this makes up a civil man, and yet the civil man will cry out for both he thinks he is not an hypocrite, and he thinks he is not profane, but he is a middle man, a mixture of a profane person and a strict person, he is between both. But now a gracious heart equally opposeth profaneness and hypocrisy, so that the right moderation, is such a moderation as is a middle between two evils and partakes of none, the ease of a carnal heart lyes in his moderation of holy duties, and therefore

therefore those duties that would lift up the heart high, those are troublesome unto him. As now, you shall find in some beasts, a horse that is a jade and tired, will go pretty well in some smooth way, but if he come to the least rising of a hill, Oh, how hard is it for such a beast to draw? and how ready is he to stand still? perhaps, when the way is down hill he will draw, but at no rising or up-hill, now it is otherwise with a horse of mettle, you shall find no difference between one way & another, nay, he will go better up-hill then down hill: So it is with Carnal hearts perhaps in some kind of things that may be suitable to them, and are smooth they may go apace, but in that that raiseth his spirit, that that is uphill, Oh, that is difficult, but now a Godly heart, is lively, and spiritual, and joyful, and finds most quiet and ease when he riseth highest.

Seventhly, A carnal heart, the ease that it hath in Gods waies, it is all a like aswel one time as at another time, it is not so with the Saints, they have ease, but they do not find it all alike when indeed they can be constant in Gods waies, then they find constant ease, but because sometimes they find corruption prevail then indeed the waies of God are difficult, more difficult then at other times, when they find a temptation that overcomes their hearts, they find a great deal of difficulty before they can get it off, but this will discover many men to be naught, when you find your corruptions prevail, you can have as much ease as at other times, As suppose you have been the last week drunk, or have been committing uncleanness, or have been in Company, and you can come to the Sacrament on the Lords day, and joyne with the Minister when at prayer, you can come and put on your Sunday clothes (as you call them) and sit at the word, and it is as easy to you

as any other thing, surely, now thy heart is but carnal, wert thou spiritual, if thy heart were conscious of some sin committed the week before when thou wert in company, Oh! when thou comest to the word, thou wouldest find the word as a dagger struck to thy soul, thou wouldest find the presence of God terrible to thee, in prayer, and in the word and Sacrament: but canst thou give way to thy sin in the week time, and God knows that thou hast not been humbled before the Lords day, and yet canst thou come and joyn in prayer, and the word, and Sacrament with ease, this is a sign of a carnal heart, that thou art not acquainted with God or any of his waies: but it is otherwise with a gracious heart, he hath ease, the presence of God is comfortable unto him so long as he can keep his reckoning even between God and his Soul, but if he should give way to sin, and draw the power of the devil upon him when he comes into the presence of God, he finds the presence of God terrible unto him.

Eighthly, Another Difference between the ease of a carnal heart, and a gracious, heart is this: In the effect of it there are other manner of effects that are produced by the ease of a Gracious heart, than of any carnall heart: As thus, A carnall heart, the more ease he hath, the more sluggish he is, and the more barren he is; but a gracious heart, the more ease it hath in Gods waies, the more fruitfull it is. As we say of States and Kingdomes, that peace in States and Kingdomes brings plenty, and so it doth, we have had experience of it, so peace in the Conscience of one that is Gracious makes him plentiful in all good works, a heart that is truly Godly, is never so fruitfull in the waies of God, as when he hath the most ease and rest in Gods waies; but now take a carnall heart, if his Conscience be

troubled, Oh, then he will set upon holy Duties, but if he be at ease and quiet, he grows more barren, and more sluggish, by how much the more ease he hath. I do not know any one thing, to help you better to examin your own hearts in a great case of Conscience than this: How do I know when I have peace and quiet, whether it comes from presumption, or from true Faith? I bleſs God, I have hope of Gods mercy, and ſo I have quiet in my Conscience, well, but now here is the caſe of Conscience, whether is this quiet that I have in my Conscience from the hope I have of Gods mercy, from presumption in me, or from true Faith? It concerns every one to get this caſe of Conscience answered. Now I know no greater help for the answering this caſe of Conscience, than this one thing that I have ſpoken of. Haſt thou quiet and eaſe? and haſt thou hope of Gods mercy? and doth that bring thee quiet? if it be but presumption, it makes thee ſecure, it makes thee barren, and sluggish: but on the other ſide, if thou haſt eaſe and quiet in thy Spirit, and thou findeſt, that the more that eaſe and quiet increaſeth, the more fruitfull thou art in all good works, it makes thee the more active and ſtirring in all good works, this is a ſign that it comes from Faith; as you heard before, a gracious heart hath the more activenes in it the more eaſe it hath, now as his activenes in goodneſs cauſeth eaſineſs in his heart, ſo the eaſineſs in his heart cauſeth activenes in goodneſs, there is a mutuallneſs in theſe two, and indeed this latter is the more facile for people to examin themſelves by, perhaps every one cannot get up to that activenes of heart, but now hath it this power upon your hearts, that you are more fruitfull than before? This is the caſe of a gracious heart, if it doth ſo.

Ninthly, And then the ease that a carnall heart hath in the waies of God is from hence, because he hath but only one principle in his heart, when he is in the waies of God, and when he is in the waies of the world, he is acted but by the same principle in both, there is not a contrary principle in his heart, one that carries him one way, and another that carries him another way: but the ease of a gracious heart, is this, that he finds a stronger principle, that overcomes a contrary principle of corruption in him, there lies his ease, a carnall heart goes on and performes Duties, and hath not divers principles in his heart to cary him this way or that way, but hath only one principle, a carnal principle that carries him on to serve his own ends, [and sometimes he can serve his ends in one thing, & sometimes in another thing, but one that is Godly find ease from hence, from the power of Gods Grace that doth overcome his corruption, I find a stirring in my heart, but I thank God I can get the victory, the ease of a Godly heart comes from the victory that it gets, but it is not so with a carnall heart, your civill men do not find ease from their victory, because what they do is not suitable to them, but a Godly man finds that there is a principle of Grace that opposeth the principle of lust and corruption, and therefore can say since I set my heart towards God and his waies, I have found more corruption than before stirring, but I thank God I have got victory over them, I find a conquest gotten over the corruption that is stirring in my Soul, and that is my ease, another man, he finds no corruption stirring in his heart, and therefore no marvell if he find ease, but now a Godly man finds a contrary principle to that which is good stirring in his heart, and then finds Gods Grace coming in upon his heart to help him against that corruption, and this brings

Tenthly, And then the last is this, That the ease the one hath comes from this, that all that he doth he preformes in his own strength, and he doth not see any need of any further strength than that which he hath in himself, to enable him to perform Duties, and so he finds ease: As a man finds his Trade to be easie if he trades with his own stock, and hath nothing but his own stock to trade with, and trades in no higher things then what himself can reach unto, whereas another man, that must have the stocks of other men to trade with, finds a great deal more trouble that sees his trade requires more stock than his own. It is so with a Gracious heart, he sets upon duty so, as needs he finds he more stock than his own, his trade is beyond his own strength: but now a Godly heart when he comes to want strength, he fetcheth strength from Christ, he fetcheth strength from the Covenant of Grace he fetcheth strength from the Promise, and when he hath got strength from Christ, from the Covenant of Grace, from the Promise Oh, now he finds rest and ease in his Duty, and you shall see the reason of it in the next Point, why the Sants finds difficulties, many times they will think to be trading with their own strength, and their own stocks, whenas the things they trade about is beyond their own strength, but now when they can look higher and see a fulness in Jesus Christ, in the Mediator of the new Covenant, and of his fulness we must receive Grace for Grace, and fetcheth strength from this, Oh! then here is quiet and ease, when the Soul comes to trade with another stock. Observe this, you will find it as certain as can be, all those that are meer civill People, that find it so easie to go on in the waies of God, they were never sensible of any need they have of any more strength than their own, whereas the Yoke of Christ is heavier than any,

any naturall strength is able to bear, and therefore if you find ease, in that you have strength of your own to perform it, Certainly, it is not the Yoke of Christ. But now, when you find your own strength too short, when you go to perform any Duty, and find a great deal of difficulty, you can go to Christ, and to the Covenant of Grace, and to the Promise, and there fetch in strength, you have ease and quiet. Oh, that you were acquainted with this Myſtery of Godlineſs, that when you go out to perform Duties, and you find them difficult and hard, that then you can go out to Christ, and the Covenant of Grace, and the Promise, and fetch strength from them to perform Duties, this is the ease of a Godly heart, when it finds ease in Gods waies after this manner; and all you that are acquainted with this Myſtery of Godlineſs, know that whatsoever ease you have found hitherto, it is not the ease of a Gracious heart, but rather of a carnal heart.



CHAP. CXXXIX.

Divers Objections answered. The easineſs of the waies of Christ; which is the third particular mentioned in Chap. 139.

QUEST.

BUT do we not find that Christ hath said in his word, that the way to Heaven is difficult, and the Gate to Heaven is strait and narrow? and do

we not find Preachers ordinarily speaking so, that the way to Heaven is difficult and strait? according to what is in Scripture, yea, do we not find that the People of God themselves complain, that there is a great deal of difficulty in the wales of God? and do they not oftentimes complain of the hardness of them? Yea, and what though some things may be easie, yet some others are very hard. As, you will say, to the Discipline of Christ in his Church: Is that easie? Is not that hard? and what will you say to the sufferings that Christ requires of his people, Doth it not seem very hard?

Answe. Now to clear the point from all these difficulties, either what Christ saith of the straitness of the way to Heaven, or what the Saints of God find, or what may be said in regard of the Discipline of Christ in his Church. or what in regard of the suffering that Christ requires, notwithstanding all these, yet we hope we shall make it cleer, that yet his yoke is easie, and his burden is light, and further we are to shew how it comes to be easie and light.

But first to cleer the Point from all these difficulties.

First. That of Christ. That the way to Heaven is a strait way, a very strait way, there must be crowding, and taking a great deal of pains.

It is true, It is strait, it is a very strait way to men that are but naturall, that are not his Disciples, it must needs be a strait in their apprehensions, in the esteem of the world the way that Christ doth propound to come to Heaven must needs I say be very strait, and a very difficult way in the esteem of the men of the world, and that upon these grounds.

1. They do not know wherein the true spirituall excellencies of the waies of Christ doth consist, they do not understand what the excellency of Christs waies are.

2. The things that are required are unsuitable to them, they are not suitable to what there is in their spirits, and to put a man upon a work that is no way suitable to his spirit must needs be difficult, must needs be tedious, it is not suitable to them; Yea, it is contrary to them, contrary to the spirits of those that are natural, cross unto the grain, they go quite contrary to their own spirits, when they venture upon doing what is required in the waies of God.

3. They are weak, and have not the strength that should carry them on in the waies of God, indeed it must needs be difficult, to think to do that which is supernatural & have nothing but a natural strength, it must needs be hard to nature that hath nothing but weakness, it must needs be hard to the men of the world, for they have a great many prejudices against the waies of Christ, they must denie themselves in many things that are as dear to themselves as their very Souls, and their lives, and they have nothing to make up their comforts, they must denie their comforts, and have nothing to make up their comforts, this must needs be difficult and hard, and so many grounds might be shewn, that the way to Heaven is hard to the men of the world, a hard thing for them to enter upon the way to Heaven, and so it is sweet to them in their esteem.

Quest. But for then it is necessary unto the Saints, even to the very Disciples of Christ, Do not they find difficulties in the waies of God?

Ans. Now for ~~the~~ answering of that, to shew how the waies of ~~the~~ are easie, notwithstanding what even those that are the people of God find in them, and notwithstanding all their complaints, those that are Godly, they say, they find much difficulty in the waies of Religion.

1. It may be the difficulty thou speakest of, it is but in opinion rather than reality, it is but an imaginary difficulty, when thou lookest upon a Duty a great way off: Oh! thou thinkest it is very hard, but when thou comest to it, thou dost not find it so hard: I appeal to those that are acquainted with the waies of God, Hath it not been so with you, that things have seemed to be hard and difficult a great way off, but when you have come unto them, & ventured upon them, you have not found them so? It is just in this case for all the world, like as it was with the women that we read of in *Mark* 16. that went to the Sepulchre of Christ, as they were going at verse 3. O! they were very solicitous about the Stone that was rouled upon the Sepulchre, *Who shall roul away the Stone*, but now when they came to the Sepulchre the Stone was rouled away. So it is here when there are many Duties to be done, it may be you cry out; Oh, it is very hard, and how shall we be able to do such a thing? such a poor weak body as I am, how shall I be able to do it? but when you come to the Duty you do not find it so, I suppose there are many, that at first thought it a very difficult Duty to keep a watch over their heart, and to pray in their Families and Closets, and to keep close to God, but when they have come to the thing, sometimes when you have had no heart to pray, when you have thoughts to go to prayer, and you have thought it impossible for you to make any work of it, but when you have come to it, you

have found it before you have done to be a very sweet and comfortable Duty. You have found a stone hardness of heart, and indisposition to the Duty before you have come to the Duty, but when you have come to the work, you have found the stone rouled away, and the work not so hard. As we read of Peter in Acts 12. 10. When he was coming out of the City and those with him. *When they came to the Iron Gate it was open.* It may be if they had known there had been such an Iron Gate to pass through, they might have been troubled, Oh, how shall we get through, but when they came there, the Iron Gate was open, so that the difficulty is before we come to make tryall, rather than when we make tryal.

2. But you will say, It is reall, not in opinion, but reall. I but it is so but at the entrance, at the beginning, and it may be the greatest difficulty is but to get the neck into the collar, to get the yoke upon the neck, there lies the great difficulty, when once you are in the yoke, then you will find it easie, the greatest difficulty many find in the waies of Religion it is their first entrance, because they have not been accustomed to such things. You shall have many times some kinds of Bullocks that come into their yoke, there is more stir to get their necks in, to get their yokes upon their necks, then there is for them to bear it afterwards: So there is with many men and women a great deal of stir. and a great deal of do to get their necks under Christs yoke, to come under the burden of the yoke of Christ, but were they come in, they would not find it so difficult. Sometimes indeed, the work of God in converting of a Soul, comes to it so, as the Soul finds a great deal of difficulty: The Ministry of John by way of preparation comes in a terrible way, to make smooth the rough paths, and level the lofty

hills; comes in a fiery way to prepare them, many times it is very terrible, and they find a great deal of difficulty, much trouble of conscience, and terrour at first, I but this is but to get thy neck into the yoke, this is not the difficulty of Christs yoke, but it is the bringing thee under the yoke of Christ, therefore let not those that God is beginning to stir them in awakning their Consciences, be offended because they find difficulty, because they find the waies of God terrible to them, and conscience terrible to them, and they find the flashes of Hell upon their spirits, be not offended because thou hast more trouble now then before, it is but in getting that untuly spirit of thine under the yoke of Christ, if oncethy spirit be subdued to Jesus Christ, and brought under his yoke, thou wilt not find it so terrible and it may be the more terrour thou hast now the more sweetness and comfort thou wilt find afterwards.

Thirdly, Thou complaineest of difficulty that thou findest in Gods waies, do not therefore complaine of the yoke of Christ, it may be it is from the distemper of thine own heart, not from Christs yoke; we know that a light yoke to one that hath a fore neck, seemes to be very grievous, but the fault is not in the yoke, but in the soreness of the neck, if the neck were sound, and made whol, the yoke would seem light, so it is with many that profess religion, and it may be have true grace, they find the yoke very hard to them, and they complain of the yoke, and think that which Christ requires of them is grievous to them, but truly it is the distemper of thy heart, and the unsoundness of thy spirit that makes it so, if so be thy heart were but healed, if thy heart were but sound, thou wouldest not find any such difficulty in any way of Christ. In 2 Tim. 1. 7. There the spirit of power, of love and

and of a sound mind are joynd together, where there is a sound mind a sound spirit, there will be power, there will be strength, there will be love and sweetness, but where the mind and the heart is unsound, and distempered, there you will find a great deal of difficulty in the yoke of Christ, so that I say, where you find the yoke of Christ difficult, do not complain of that so much, as of your own heart, and labor to heal your own soul, and then it will not be so difficult, and that is the third answer I would give to the Godly that yet find difficulty in the waies of religion, it is not because of the yoke, but it is because you are not enough under the yoke, that is the difficulty, if your hearts were under it more then it is, it would not be so difficult, and this expression may serve to enlighten us into the fourth answer which is this.

Fourthly, the yoke of Christ may seem to be hard but it is because of the disordered carriage of thy spirit when thou art under it, not only from a distempered heart, that thy heart hath distempers, and habitual corruptions, but now when thou art doing a duty thou dost behave thy self in a disorderly way in the performance of the duty, the disorderly behavior of thy heart in the performance of duty. As now we know it is with some Bullocke, some creatures that are unruly, when they are in the yoke they keep such a stir, and riggle this way and that way, and they are so unquiet when they are under the yoke, that they toil and trouble themselves abundantly more then another that can carry the yoke quietly, that goes on quietly with his yoke so it is with many Christians when they are in the performance of duty, if they cannot do it as they would, they do so vex and fret, and are so disquieted in their spirits, and so tumultuous in their spi-

rits, and are ready to cast it off, Conscience will keep it on, and they are ready to cast it off, there is such a disorderliness of spirit, and such tumultuousness of spirit, this makes duties difficult, whereas now, when thou art in performance of duties if thou couldst be under the yoke of Christ with a calme, quiet Spirit, and carry it in a meek way, Oh! the sweetness that thou wouldest find there, how many times shall you have many people, that when they go to prayer, if they cannot pray as they would do, then they vex and fret, and are ready to think to pray no more, and why should they pray any more? they are so disturbed in the duty, they think it is better to cast it off, and they begin to have hard thoughts of the duty, and so their spirits are all in a distemper and disorderly working presently, and there is the difficulty. Whereas another, though he cannot do what he would, yet he hath an humble dispose to God, and thinkes I will try another time, may be God may come in another time, still I love the duty, the law is good, the duty is just and good, and though through the untowardness of my spirit I cannot do it now, yet I hope God will come at another time, I will do my duty, and leave it to God to come in when he pleaseth; as you heard before, when the Bullock or the Ass that beares the yoke, if he goes on quietly, his yoke is not so grievous, but if he stings, this way and that way, and turnes to this side and that side, every way, he makes his yoke grievous to him, and so it is with many Christians, it is the disorderly carriage of people under this yoke that makes it so difficult.

Fifthly Thou complainest and sayest this yoke is hard, consider that the casting off the yoke off would be a great deal harder, and therefore there is no cause to complain, can a man in a rational way complain

complain of a yoke to be hard, whenas the casting of the yoke off would be a harder thing then the bearing of it? therefore the Hebrew word that signifies sin, signifies also labor and trouble, there is more trouble if thou shouldest cast off the yoke, thou wouldest find more distress of spirit, and more difficulty in casting off the yoke, then to be under the yoke. It is true; those that be carnal, and wicked; do not find it so, but if thou hast Grace, if thou shouldest cast off the duty because of the difficulty thou wouldest find it more difficult to be without the duty, then to perform it. As I will instance to your own experiences, you find sometimes that your hearts are loth to come off to prayer in a morning, or if you do pray, you do it sleightly, now do not you find your hearts off the hooks all the day long after, have not you more trouble all the day long when your conscience tells you that you should go and seek God and pray, I but other things are more easy, and that is a hard thing, and therefore you neglect it, now do not you find it more difficult to be without prayer in a morning, then is in all the labour of prayer? compare one day with another, and see which is the easyest. The yoke of Christ that was upon David, might be somewhat hard to the flesh but the casting off the yoke broke his bones, therefore in Psal. 51. He cries to God, to restore to him the joy of his Salvation and to beale those Bones of his that were broken, That the Bones that thou hast broken may rejoyce, that expression the Prophet hath, Psalm, 51. verl. 8. Make me to bear joy and Gladness, that the Bones that thou hast broken may rejoyce, so that it broke the very Bones of David, the casting off the yoke of Christ, the trouble that David felt in his heart, it was such a burden to him as broke his bones, now when did ever any duty that David performed break his bones? though

it might a little paine his flesh, and be a little burdenſom to his flesh, yet it was not that which broke his bones, the caſting off the yoke of Chriſt is a greater burden, and more troubleſom to a gracious heart then to keep it on.

Sixthly. Thou complainest of difficulty in duty, in Chriſts yoke, may be it is not the yoke of Chriſt that is upon thee, that is ſo heavy upon thee, if thou examineſt it again, perhaps thou ſhalt find it is not Chriſts yoke that is upon thee.

1. May be it is a yoke that thou haſt taken upon thy ſelf, perhaps ſomthing that thou haſt put upon thy ſelf that Chriſt never required of thee, then it may be grievous to thee, if we will put that upon our ſelves that Chriſt never required, as Papiſts do that put that upon themſelves that Chriſt never required, who required theſe things at your hands? It may be ſome men have put ſomthing upon you that Chriſt never required of thee, it may be thou putteſt upon thy ſelf a duty at this time, that is not the duty of this time, but is the duty of ſome other time, when thou wilt enjoyne thy ſelf to do ſuch a duty that is not the duty of this time, but the duty of another time, then it may be troubleſom, as many poor Chriſtians are peſtered this way, when God would have them do ſuch a duty, conſcience puts them upon another duty, God calls them to a duty of their calling, but conſcience puts them upon prayer, now that is not the duty, it may be of this time, and this is the way of Satan, of the Devil, to weary them, and tire them, by putting them upon duty unſeaſonably, when he cannot by temptation hinder them from duty, then he labors to weary and tire them, by putting them unſeaſonably upon duty, As I have known ſome, they could not be at

their work a quarter of an hour, but suddenly they must leave all and go to prayer; and they thought it was the motion of Gods Spirit, and the dictates of conscience, and they thought they must not neglect it, and so made their lives uncomfortable upon that ground; whereas the Spirit of God puts people upon duty seasonably, every thing in its right order, and right way, and in its due time, it will put you upon prayer in a fit time, and put you upon duties of your calling in a fit time, and when it comes unseasonably to disquiet you, it is rather a suggestion of Satan to disquiet you, then to make you to obey Christs yoke.

2. May be it is not the yoke of Christ, but merely the yoke of the Law, as thus, though it may be the same thing that Christ would have you do, yet you may have it laid upon you in a legal way, to drive you merely out of fear of the wrath of God, and damnation, and so it may be as a scourge to force you to it, and so to look upon every duty as if your eternal estate depended upon it, as if you were to be cast or saved by the meer performance of your duty, this is rather the yoke of the Law then the yoke of Jesus Christ, to be put and hurried upon duty, as if your eternal estate did depend upon your duty, and you were to be cast in your eternal estate by that rather then any thing, here is the yoke of the Law, not the yoke of Christ, Christ puts you upon duty for the honor of God; yet so, as the hazard of your eternal estate is over, and thou art not to be cast upon the performance of the duty this way or that way, that if thou failest thou wert to be cast for ever to everlasting destruction upon thy failing, he doth not bring you before God as before a severe and revenging judge, but puts you upon service, as a Child is put upon doing service by a Father, now

it is a great deal easier for a child to do service to a father, then for a slave to do service to one that hath him in bondage, that will be continually lashing him; and beating him black and blue; so indeed the yoke of the Law (which we are to speak of afterwards when we come to speak of the easiness of Christs yoke) that is grievous; and many Christians they do their duties much by this legal way, and so it is rather *Moses yoke*, than the yoke of Jesus Christ, and so it comes to be hard; whereas when thou comest to understand what the yoke of Christ is, and what the duties are that are required by Jesus Christ, and so to take them from him by a covenant of Grace, for so they are required, there is no duty in the Moral Law, but is required of you in the Gospel, and in a stronger bond then ever it was required upon the first Covenant, but in another way, coming unto it in another way in Christ, and through the hand of the mediator Jesus Christ, for it comes to be a great deal more easy; and when duties are taken up in an evangelical way, then they are easy; but so long as you take them up in a legal way, then they come to be very grievous, that is the Sixth Answer.

Seventhly, Another answer is this, that difficulty that you find, it is not the Yoke of Christ, if you consider, That now Corruption is more Stirred then ever it was before, the difficulty is in the discovery of corruption, & in the Stirring of your corruption more then before, so that your Corruption through this, by means of the yoke of Christ comes to be more stirred then formerly it was: As thus now (sometimes I think, I have given you this Similitude) if there be a few embers of fire that is covered under the ashes; while no body medles with those embers, the ashes lye Still, but if you

come to blow up these ashes, the ashes fly up and down: So it is with the Soul that hath Grace, while corruption lies still all is at quiet, but when Grace comes and stirs corruption, that makes a trouble, you come now to see your sins more, and to oppose them more. As when a Physician comes to give Physick, the stirring of the humor makes the Party more sick, should the Patient complain of the Physician and say, this Physick makes me more sick, & I will take no more of his Physick? if the Physick did not make thee more sick, it would do thee no good. And so when thou comest to the practice of Religion, if Grace do not stir thy corruptions, it will not cure thy corruptions, thou comest to be sensible of thy sin more than ever, & thou art ready to think that it is the yoke of Christ that troubles thee, but it is the sight and the further sence of thy sin that makes thee thus, and thou hast cause to bless God for this trouble, there is nothing more ordinary than for Christians that are not wel experienced in the waies of God to think thus, that they are worse than ever, they never had such thoughts, they never were troubled with such blasphemous thoughts in Prayer, they never found such stirrings of corruption in their hearts as now they have, and they think they are declined, and they are further off from God and eternal life than before, because they see more evil in themselves, & find more stirring of corruption than before, be not discouraged by this, it is the stirring of thy corruption though the thing in it self is evil, yet it is a good sign, it is a sign the word of God is working in thee, and God stirreth in thee, therefore do not complain of the word of Christ, that it makes thee worse, but it is a meer accidental cause of the stirring of thy corruption, and it will do thee good at the latter end.

Eighthly : Another Answer is this, The yoke of Christ is hard, but to what ? It is hard to flesh and blood, it is hard to the unregenerate part, it is hard unto that that should endure hardnes, it is fit that flesh & blood should endure hardship, & there is no cause to complain that it is hard to them, to flesh & blood, w^o to thee if so be the waies of God should prove easie to flesh and blood, it is a sign that it is the true yoke of Christ, because it is hard to flesh and blood, it is hard to that we should beat down, it is hard to that that is our enemy, Is there any cause to complain that such a thing is very difficult, hard and grievous unto our enemy ? unto one that we should beat down ? Now it should be the care of a Christian, to beat down flesh and blood as long as we live, and therefore that that is most hard unto flesh and blood, that they should rejoyce in, if they find it to be so, Should any one complain, if the City should have Rebels and Traitors that should rise in the City, to have Bolts and Fetters cast upon them ? Is not this an ease to a City ? Doth a Kingdom or City suffer by this, because Iron Bolts and Fetters are upon Traitors, Rebels, and Malefactors ? What greater Traitors, Rebels, and Malefactors are there against Jesus Christ, our happiness, and everlasting good, that ariseth up in rebellion against Jesus Christ, than flesh and blood ? and if Iron Bolts and Fetters be upon them which we should seek to subdue and crush, why should we complain of hardnes there ? Wouldst thou have ease to flesh and blood, that is a cursed ease, But now is not the yoke of Christ easie to the regenerate part in me ? In my flesh (saith *Paul*) there is no good, but the regenerate part finds an ease in the waies of Christ, and they are very sweet, and very comfortable to the Soul.

Ninthly : Thou complainest of difficulty, it may

be it is because thou hast not learned the former lessons, Learn of me (saith Christ) for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your Souls, for my yoke is easie and my burden is light. Art thou tute that thou hast learned of Jesus Christ these two lessons that you have heard so much of heretofore, Meekness and Humility? Have you meek spirits, quiet spirits? Have you humble spirits, lowly spirits? Angry flesh will not endure any great burden, if you touch angry flesh, Oh, it is a burden to it, and so proud flesh, a swoln Leg, and swoln Arm, and Shoulder, and Neck, if the Neck be swoln it cannot bear a yoke: So the proud flesh in thee it is that that makes the yoke of Christ so grievous, and burdensom to thee. But now if thou hast learned throughly these two Lessons, of Meekness of Spirit, and Lowliness of heart, Oh, how easie is every thing that Jesus Christ requires to a meek and lowly spirit? If once thou gettest thy heart down, the bladder pricked, to be low in thine own eyes, and thy heart low, then every thing will be easie that Christ requires, thou complaineest that they are difficult, but it is because of pride.

Lastly, Another Answer is this: Though there be some kind of difficulty in the waies of God, and the Saints find it so, yet there is more delight than there is trouble, and more ease than pain, and compare one with another, and take all together, and then it may be said to be rather easie than any way burdensome, and light than any way heavy. As I will expresse it by this similitude, a sick mans cloaths, the cloaths that a sick man hath upon him, may be they are somewhat burdensom, a man that is weak, to put on the cloaths that he was wont to weare, he feels it a burden, a paine, I but he finds more good by his cloaths then the burden comes to, his cloaths keep him from catching cold, and keeps him warm
from

from the air, and so he finds the benefit of his cloaths more to him than the burden of his cloaths come to: So though there may be some burden, some kind of trouble in the waies of God to one that is sanctified, being but in part sanctified here, yet there is more delight, and more ease, and more good that he doth find in the waies of God than there is trouble, and therefore put all together, and then the yoke of Christ is easie, and his burden light, these severall considerations will satisfie against all the difficulties that any of the Saints do find in Christs yoke.



CHAP. CXL.

Sheweth the Reasons of the Discipline and Government of Christ, and Objections against the same are answered.

WELL, this we cannot but be convinced of, that the Duties of Religion and the waies of Godliness (all things considered) they are easie, But what will you say to the other two: The waies of God indeed and Religion, and walking in the waies of God we must needs acknowledg to be easie, but there is two other things, as the Discipline of Jesus Christ, and the sufferings that Jesus calls us unto. How will that be made out to be easie to us? Now I verily beleeve, that Jesus Christ had an aim at these two, as well as to any other, to let them know what Discipline and Government he would have his people come under in the times of the Gospel, and indeed we cannot be the Disciples of Jesus Christ as we ought, except we be willing to put our necks under the yoke of the Discipline of Jesus Christ.

The easiness of the Government of Christ.

Christ, the Government of Christ as it is in his Church; we must not think it sufficient merely that we profess Religion, and profess Godliness, that we keep from the sins of the world, that we walk close with God in our Families, but Christ requires likewise that we should come and submit our selves to what Government he appoints in his Church, and that is a part of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, as well as his ruling in our hearts, indeed, that is the principall work of Christ, in ruling in our hearts, but Christ hath a Kingly power in ruling in his Church, the main yoke is inward, but there is an outward yoke too, for Christ would not have men live as they list, in a disorderly way, but it is the mind of Jesus Christ, that all his Saints, though some in one place, and some in another, should joyn together in exercising such Ordinances as he hath appointed, in the externall governing of his Church, and yet so, that all these are very easie to a spiritual heart, though it may seem very difficult to a carnal heart, for I should wrong the Text, and not be faithfull if I should not give you what I verily beleieve is the scope of the Text; I say this yoke is the order of Christ in his Church, if it be neglected by people, it is a great dishonor unto Jesus Christ, and hinders them exceedingly in the waies of Religion, and though it be very hard to carnal hearts, it is very easie to spiritual hearts. I am verily perswaded, that one of the greatest things that causeth so much malignity in this Kingdome at this day, it is the fearing of the yoke of Christ, men are afraid of the government of Christ in his Church, they are afraid they shall not have that liberty for their lusts and wickedness as formerly, but that there shall be yokes to restrain and keep them from those loose waies that formerly they lived in, and you may see plainly it is so. who are they that thinke with the

malignant party that have such spirits, but such as have loose spirits? they are those that live very loosely, & others that have meer civility, and know little of the power of Godliness, they are afraid of this, and Oh, how is it said by most, we will not have this man reign over us? they even said they will break his bonds asunder, and cast away his cords, that is the controverlie that it is come to at this very day, and that Prophecy in *Psalms* 2. seems to be fulfilled at this day, at verse 2. *The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the Rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us, he that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision, Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion, for al this I wil set my King upon my holy hill: Certainly, Christ is not set up as King as he ought to be, whatever profession we make, except we be willing to come in, & put our necks under the yoke of Christ, and Oh, what a heavy burden and yoke it is? For instance, That Men and Women should not make a meer verbal profession, and say, I beleieve, and I hope to be saved by Christ, but should give an account of their Faith, and give an account of some work of God upon their hearts, that God hath called them out of the world, certainly, that is one thing that Christ doth require in his peoples joyning together, to set up the Ordinances as they ought to be, that they should have some knowledge one of another, knowledge of some work of the Holy Ghost upon their hearts. You will say, that is secret. I but though the Holy Ghost worketh in secret, yet certainly, this may some way or other appear, we cannot know it certainly, for there may be many Hypocrites (no question) in*

the Church of God, and it is a very vain cavil for men to say, can the Church of God be without Hypocrites? that is taken indeed for granted, and nobody in the world denies it, I but there must be that in the judgment of Charity, so as by the judgment of Charity we may see so far as we are able to see, that the Holy Ghost hath been working upon the Soul of this Man and Woman, and hath called them out of the world, this is the first thing in coming under the yoke of Christ in his Church. Now how hard is this to carnal hearts? the very mentioning of it, is enough to make a mutiny in many places, What! have we lived all this while, and must we now come to give account of our faith? But now it is an easy thing to a gracious heart, what is more easy to a Gracious Heart, then to speak of the work of God upon his Heart, & to give Glory to Jesus Christ in manifesting the work of God in calling him out of the world, and bringing him out of the Kingdom of darkness, and translating him into the Kingdom of his dear Son? the manifestation of this is exceeding delightful to a gracious Heart. And whereas many think, that some will lay a greater yoke upon them by coming in, and submitting to the government of Christ in his Church, they say, they will make them to enter into a solemn Covenant before they will admit them. I confess, were it so, that this were urged as a thing necessary, that they should not come in and joy in the ordinances of Christ, without an explicit solemn Covenant, then I cannot but acknowledge it were a yoke that I think Christ never laid upon his Church, not an explicit solemn Covenant, to urge it as necessary, that they cannot come and joy in the ordinances without it, and as for my part, I know not any that urge it as necessary, though it is used it is true, because it is the way of manife-

fitting themselves one way or another, and some way they would have for the manifestation of the grace of God, and of their willingness to joyn with them in all the Ordinances of Christ, so far as is revealed to them, and I know no other way that is urged than this, but to manifest the Grace of God upon their hearts, the work of God upon them.

And for the matter of Covenant, only to profess a willingness to joyn with such a Society of People in all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, so far as they know, suppose I should not be convinced of this particular Ordinance, or the other particular Ordinance, if there be a willingness to walk in the Ordinances of Christ so far as I know, this is the uttermost that is required, and for the other it is only for edification, but for necessity, I know none that do require it. Now what an easie Yoke is this? that one should come to be partaker of all the privileges of the Gospel, and all the Ordinances that Jesus Christ hath entrusted his Church with, and this is all that we must come, and profess our willingness to walk with all the People of God in all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, so far as is revealed to them, is there not an easiness in this to a Gracious heart, Certainly, this that is complained of hath no great difficulty in it.

Object. I but you wil say, There is more difficulty than this, It is required that every one should watch over another, a narrow watching over one another in their waies, and observing one another, and this is true, a carnal heart cannot do it, we were wont to have a loose kind of way, that we lived in a Church communion one with another, and never knew one another, perhaps never saw one anothers face in all your lives, but when you came to the Sacrament, and whatever evil you

had heard of one another, you never minded their reformation,

Ans. Now it is true, That in the way of the Gospel, when the Saints are joyned together in that way, they must and ought to watch over one another, And what great burden is this to a Gracious heart? to a carnal heart it is true, all the waies of God are burdensome, but to a Gracious heart it is an ease, that there shall not only be my own care, and the Grace of God in me to watch over me, but I shall have the use of all the Graces in the all Saints of God to watch over me, And is here any hurt in this? It is an honor that God puts upon thee, that he gives not only his Angels charge over thee, but all his Saints a charge over thee likewise. A Prince hath a great Guard for the safety of his Person, and that is the honor of a Prince, he cannot go alone so as others do, but must go with a Guard: Now as the Prince in an outward way, so the Saints in a spirituall way, they are dear to Jesus Christ, and therefore they shall never go up and down, but they shall have their Angels to have charge over them, But what have they charge over them for? it is as the Scripture saith, that they should not dash their foot against a stone, they have charge over your Bodies in a more peculiar way, and the Saints have charge over you in a more spirituall way: now that you shall have Angels to watch over your Bodies, and I make no question but they keep Satan off from hurting of you; and then you shall have the Saints of God with whom you shall live eternally in Heaven, and they shall watch over you for your spirituall good, and so they shall communicate all their Graces, and Gifts, and they are bound in Conscience, so to do, and this is a great ease to a Gracious Heart.

Object. I. but you will say: there is another difficulty, if so be we fall at any time, then we must give pub-
like

lick Satisfaction, if we fall into that which gives
 ,ublick offence there must be publick Satisfaction
 given, for private offence we must give private Satis-
 faction, and Oh ! this is a heavy Iron yoke to a
 carnal heart, if we should come to such a reforma-
 tion as we desire, Oh ! what a burdensom thing
 would every carnal heart think it ? let me look now
 to my walking, I cannot do as I was wont before
 time, let me be never so vile, do what I will, I could
 give a Proctor a little mony, or an Archdeacon, or
 a Commissary, or the like, and then let the Minister
 and the Congregation do what they dare, Oh ! this
 is fine and easy to a wicked and corrupt heart. But
 now to come to this, that whatever you are, Rich
 or Poor, if you fall into scandalous sins, it is not
 making freinds this way or that way, or to a Mini-
 ster, no, but you must come and make publick con-
 fession, & give publick Satisfaction, and this is a yoke
 that is hard to a carnal heart, but to a gracious heart
 it is easie. What difficulty to a gracious heart is this ?
 I have publickly dishonoured the name of God, and
 now I come publickly to repaire the name of God
 that I by my sins have darkned, and done hurt unto,
 I come now to repaire it openly, nay, what ease
 canst thou have rill that be done ? certainly, if thy
 heart be thoroughly humbled for the sins of thy soul,
 wherein thou hast sinned publickly against God ; if
 thou hast sinned secretly, then Christ requires not
 publick Satisfaction, but if thou hast sinned publick-
 ly, what more due is it to thy heart if Gracious then
 this ? [Oh !] that I might publickly repaire the honor
 of God, that hath publickly been dishonored by
 my sin ; how canst thou sleep, or die before thou
 hast done this ? I cannot possibly see how such a man
 or woman can die quietly, and go out of the world
 quiet, except they have had some opportunity to
 repaire the honor of God publickly, as they have
 sinned.

finned publicly, and therefore this is not a way of punishment and penance for thy sin, but a restoring of the honor of God that thou hast impaired, and this is that that is no burden unto a Gracious heart, the sin indeed is a burden, the sin is a shame; it is a shame to me that I should ever dishonor the blessed God, that hope to receive such great satisfaction from God, it is fit that I should come and repair the honor of this God, Oh! this is the honor of a Christian, and therefore I beseech you have no hard thoughts of the waies of Jesus Christ in his Church.

And consider yet further, for the easiness of it, that Christ gives a charge to all his Saints, that if thou be humbled and givest Satisfaction, that they should restore thee with all meekness, and Gentleness, and if there should be any one that should insult over thee, and any way deride and scorne thee certainly, Jesus Christ will reckon with such a one for that, and there is no sin that goes more against the Spirit of Jesus Christ, then for any one to insult over those that come in the trouble of their spirits to repair the honor of God that they have impaired by their sins. Christ requires that every one should mourn with thee, as thou art sorrowfull and lamentest over thy sin, so they should have their hearts melt for thy sins, and should endeavor to have their hearts sensible of thy sins as thou art, and and they that are acquainted with the waies of Christ in his Church, they have found it so, they have found all the Congregation aswell to fall a lamenting and bursting out in tears aswel as chy self, thou bursting out in teares for thy sins, and thy praying and seeking unto God that he would forgive thy sins, and al the congregation doch this, now is not this better, then that one should go on to rangle in his sin, is it not better that he should

come into a Congregation, and give glory to God and lament it before him, and all the Congregation lament, and they all send up their sighes and groans for pardoning of this offender, and restoring of him, and for the lifting up the light of Gods countenance upon him, if your heart were humble, you would find it a great deale of ease; for the truth is, you cannot expect to have ease before you have done this, those that have offended, though they have gone in their closets and sought God, yet have had no rest but upon this, now God doth usually grant abundance of ease, peace, and joy in Christ, that it is a thousand times more ease to their spirits, then for them to go on in their sin, and let their sin ranckle.

And further, Christ in the government of his Church will not have any officer over you but whom he appoints; indeed in a Civil State, they may appoint taskmasters, and what officers they please, but now in a Church State, Christ appoints every officer, and therefore all that rabble of Commissaries, Archdeacons, Deans, and Deanes and Chapters is gone away, for there ought to be none such, and it is a great ease unto the Church of God to bee rid of them.

And again, you are to have none forced upon you, but what you your selves shall yield unto, they cannot in a domineering way say, you shall have such a Minister. It was enough before that if a wench in an Alehouse, or an Hostler should have an uncle die, and leave them to be his heire, and an Adverson belonged to him, this Wench that lives in an alehouse, or an Hostler, Should have power to send any fellow that he will, if he can give account of his creed in Latin, to send one a
hundreds

hundred miles, or one that they never saw in all their lives, and they to whom he was sent, must take this man to have charge over their souls, to depend upon this man for dispensation of all the ordinances of Jesus Christ as long as they live together, here was a burden. But now the way of Christ is, that there should be none that should take the Charge of Souls to dispence the ordinances of Christ, but such as the people themselves shall choose to themselves, that they shal be satisfyed in before, and that they are faithful, and that they are fit by the gifts and graces of the spirit of God to take charge over their souls, and to dispence the ordinances of Christ in a right way, is not this now a great deal of ease?

And further, what a great deal of ease is in the waies of Christ in his Church, when the officer is such as Christ appoints and you approve?

And further, when they are there, they have no liberty to make any new law, but just as Jesus Christ hath made, they cannot obtrude any thing upon you to beleve and do, but they must shew that Jesus Christ would have you to beleve and do the same: Now in Civil states, it is otherwise, there you may be required to do things that you cannot find directly in the word, if it be a thing that the officer thinks reasonable to be done, if it be not contrary to the word, it is enough, if it be a thing rational, that may suite with the publick good of a Country, or Kingdom, it is enough: but now, when it comes to the Church, the Church officers, it is not enough for them that there is nothing in the word against it, but they must have it out of Gods word, and this is a greatease, that I shall have nothing imposed upon me. but what Jesus Christ would have me to have, and to do many other particulars might be shewed

for the opening of the yoke of Christ, differing from the yoke of the Civil State.

Yea, And Christ requires nothing to be done in his Church, but what he would have a Reason given for it, but if a Prelate did but sit at his Table amongst his Cups, and write but a line or two, what a disturbance was there thereby, unto many thousand Congregations? he never came to them himself, but meerly he commands, and they must do it. But now the commands of Christ are otherwise, whatever is required of them from Christ, they may require a Reason of it, they are to be satisfied themselves in the Reason of the thing, and how Christ requires it before they submit unto it. Indeed, I am not bound in a Civil State to satisfie my self in all they do, but I may think that they understand more of the Civil good than I do, but it is not so in a Church state, the meanest in a Congregation is not to say, the Ministers and Officers they know more than I, and therefore though I see no Reason to the contrary, I will submit: Now Christ hath such a tender care over every one of his members, that whatever they do they must know it themselves, they must do it in Faith, they must know how this comes out of the word, and they must do it then in Faith, now what an ease is this? and if men did know this, how readily would they come under the government of Jesus Christ? it is as great an Argument of the carnality of the hearts of men, that they having been under the yoke of Antichrist, and now they have some inkling of the yoke of Christ, that they cry out of it, and say, they had rather be in the former way; just as the Children of *Israel*, they desired to go back into *Egypt* again, and they liked not their deliverance, but would fain have gone back to their bondage again; and hath there not been the same murmurings in the hearts of men, that they would willingly return to their former bondage? Oh, it were just with God that we should return back again to *Egypt*, to our former condition,

and wo unto us if we should come to this, to return unto our former condition again : But for any of you that desire to fear the Lord, and keep your Consciences cleer, and that walk in the way of eternall life, I appeal to your Consciences, what is there that I have named to you that would not be easie in your spirits? What difficulty would there be in the waies of Christ in the Church? Truly, I have told you the main difficulties, and I have dealt plainly with you in this thing, the chief difficulties in all the outcry in the world about the waies of Christ in his Church I have told you. Now is there any Gracious heart, (if I should single out any Gracious heart) that would count this a difficulty? & truly, we should not only think it easie, but we should pray for the government of Christ, for his government is better than the government of Antichrist. We must know that if we be those that profess Christ, we have certainly need of all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, and they are not instituted in vain, and therefore if you have not been sensible of them heretofore, Labor to be sensible now, for if you did understand your selves, you would see a need of them, and those that have had them, they have found this yoke of Christ to be very easie, and the other yoke to be a very heavy yoke unto them.



CHAP. CXL.

Of the easiness of the Yoke of Afflictions for the Name of Christ.

VWE are now to proceed unto another thing, and that is, The sufferings about those things that Christ requires: though to do those things that

Christ requires may seem to be easie, yet to bear and suffer those heavy things that we read that Christians did suffer in former times when they came under the yoke of Christ, and which we are like to suffer in the cause of Christ, now especially, if the Lord should let the Adversary prevail over us, we may come to suffer those things that would be very hard, whereas if we had liberty of Conscience as others have, that we could go any way this way or that way, so as may serve our own turn, and be suitable to our own ends, we might avoid a great deal of suffering, but now when we come under the yoke of Jesus Christ, we must keep on in the right way, we must keep on in the way of suffering, whatever sufferings come we must not decline the waies of Christ in the word.

Now for Answer unto this: The Scripture doth not judge it so hard a thing to suffer for Christ as thou seemest to judge it to be, see what the Scripture judgeth it to be, St. Paul speaking of his sufferings that he endured, in 2 Cor. 12. 10. *Therefore I take pleasure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecution, in Distresses for Christs sake*, the word is in the Original, *I am well pleased*, here I take pleasure, I am well pleased in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions, in Distresses, I am well pleased in them all: Certainly, that that a man hath a good pleasure to, that he can be well pleased with, that is easie, a man must needs have ease in a thing that he is well pleased in, now the Apostle professeth that he is well pleased in that which he suffered for Christ, and we are never like to be called to suffer so great things as he suffered.

And as the Scripture sets out sufferings as those things that a man may be well pleased in, so likewise we may rejoyce in them. That place in Luke 6. 23. there our Lord Christ would have his Disciples when they

The Yoke of affliction for Christ easie.

net with hardship, to rejoyce in it, *Rejoyce* (saith he) *in that day*, yea, to rejoyce exceedingly; that is the hird degree, rejoyce, and leap for joy: when is this? it is when they shal be separated from their company, and they shal be reproached for Christs sake, yet rejoyce saith he, and leap for joy. Yea, the Scripture sets out our sufferings for Christ, our suffering that we meet withal any way in the waies of Christ, as that wherein above al things we may rejoyce, there is wel pleasing, there is joy, and exceeding joy, even to leaping, yea, and there is al kind of joy, all joy; so the Apostle in *James* 1. 2. *My Brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; and among other temptations, these are great ones, the temptations of sufferings, count it al joy. Yea, and lastly, there is the glorying in them: so in *Rom.* 3. 5. *We glory in tribulations*: surely then there is not such difficulty in suffering for Christ, if there be wel pleasing, and joy, and exceeding joy, and all joy, and glorying: Thus the Scripture sets out our sufferings for Christ.

And so I might give you the examples of abundance of Martyrs, that found a great deal of ease in their sufferings for Christ, the example of *James Bainbam*, in the Book of Martyrs, when they kindled the fire under his feet, saith he, me thinks you strew *Damask Roses* under my feet, truly, there is sweetness enough in the *Roses* that are strewed under ones feet, that ones feet go upon. And so *Basil* speaking of a Martyr, he saith, that he did account the Prison that he was in, as a pleasant Garden, & the several kinds of Tortures that he was put unto, as several sorts of sweet flowers in the Garden, so delightful were they to him. And *Luther* reports of one *Agaba* a young Virgin, that when she went to martyrdom she went as if she went to Marriage, & to a Banquet. And the story of *Mr. Sanders*, that excellent Martyr is famous, when he came to suffer, he found such an issuing and going of his heart into all the Members of his body, and from all the members of his body,

to his heart again, an intercourse as it were in a bodily way. And it were endless to name you the particulars, and to shew wherein even the easiness of suffering for Christ appears, but I shal not do this at large, some of you may see that in your hands of *Moses*, counting it grater riches to suffer for Christ than to enjoy all the treasures of Egypt, and a man counts not his riches a burden: Now this is the judgment of *Moses* that had the Spirit of God in him, that whereas he might have had any riches that might have been enjoyed in all the land of Egypt, yet he accounts the sufferings with the People of God greater Riches than all the Treasures of Egypt. Oh! there is the highest improvement of our sufferings for Christ as can be, somewhat higher improvement of our sufferings than Angels are called unto, Angels are not called to such high improvement of their abilities for God, as when a Christian suffers for Christ, there they do confess with a glorious Voice. Saith an Ancient concerning the Martyrs in the primitive times. We do abundance of service in a little time then, and never have the Saints such a Spirit of glory resting upon them, as in the time of suffering, they are under most glorious promises in those times, and have more glorious comforts in those times, than at other times; and so in such respects, and divers others that might be mentioned, there is a great deal of ease and contentment in their sufferings for Jesus Christ. I was in prison til I got into prison for Christ, saith one Martyr. And many professed that they never knew the difference, between the comforts of the world, and the comforts of God, so much as then when they suffered. Saith *Ignatius*, when the wild beasts crusht his bones between their teeth, Now I begin to be a Christian. And another profest he had rather be a Martyr than work miracles; and therefore there is no such difficulty or heavy burden in suffering for Christ as ye are afraid of. Many poor Christians, when they hear what things

called to suffer such things, I should never go through them: Be not discouraged, the more sensible thou art of thy weakness, the better: Poor women and children that have been afraid to suffer as well as you, when they have come to suffer, it hath been given to them to suffer, a mighty presence hath come from Jesus Christ upon them, and it hath been easie to them; indeed the thing that is difficult to one that is weak, is easie to one that is strong: Now when you come to suffer for Christ, there comes in a great deal of strength from Christ, and therein you will find ease; for certainly, Christ never calls us to do hard things, but he will give us strength proportionable; and then that which appeared more difficult, will appear more easie than before.

CHAP.



CHAP. CXLII.

What the things are that makes the waies of Christ easie (which is the fourth point in Chap. 139.) opened in five particulars. 1. They are such as a gracious Soul wil impose upon himself. 2. He comes freely off to them. 3. The waies of Christ are even, and not contrary one to another. 4. They bring Strength with them. 5. In them all there is good Success. 6. In them a gracious heart is alwaies receiving his wages. 7. He hath all the passages of Gods providence to help him. 8. They bring ease to the Conscience. 9. They free the Soul from cares. 10. They make all other things easie.

BUT now we are to proceed to a further thing to shew you what there is in the way of Christ that makes it easie, which wil be a further manifestation of the ease that there is in the waies of Christ that it is so, that hath been shewed you before: but now that it must needs be so, and how it comes to be so, how it comes to pass that the waies of Christ should have such ease to a gracious heart, Certainly, there is a great many Grounds for it.

First: They are such waies as have much in them, that if a gracious heart were put to it freely, that he may either impose them upon himself or not, he would rather impose them upon himself than otherwise, supposing him to be himself; that is, his mind enlightened and his heart in a good frame, he would take them upon himself, and certainly

What makes the waies of Christ easie.

ainly, this is no hard thing, that if a man were left to his liberty he will take it upon himself rather than not. Let any Christian lay this to his heart and consider what way of Jesus Christ he would be without, every gracious heart is a Law to himself, that Law is not a very hard Law that a man would make to himself, so the scripture saith of the Godly that they are *a Law to themselves*, a Godly heart chooseth the waies of Christ, not as one chooseth the less evil of the two, so you may say he may chuse them as the less evil, for he may be put to chuse, I but I say, if he were left free & not put to it of necessity, if there were neither Hel nor Heaven, I do not know any thing in the waies of Jesus Christ, and dare challenge any one to tel me, that if there were no Hel or Heaven that any thing is in the waies of Christ but he would choose them: What is there that Christ requires of any Soul, but without any such consideration such a heart would chuse? Would not he go rather according to the rules of equity and righteousness than iniquity and injustice? Is it not better to walk according to the rules of right reason, than to walk in irrational waies? But then a Believer one that hath Faith, acts from a Principle above Reason, a Principle that is supernatural, and look as one that is a rational creature, would chuse those things that have the most agreement with the rules of right reason, so one that hath a higher principle a divine Principle, he would chuse that that is according to the Principles of Divinity, according to the Divinity (as I may so say) that he hath in his heart; Yea, Afflictions, when we bring our hearts to Gods will, have no great burden in them, but are easie, but they are not so easie as Gods waies are for Afflictions, though they come to be easie, yet they are such, as if a Godly heart were put to it, he would, and he ought rather to choose to be without them. Here is the diff-

cence between Afflictions and Duties, that if God would set a gracious heart free, he should choose rather to be without afflictions though it is true, in regard of the good that God brings about in them, so they are good, but in themselves they are evil, and so a Godly man should rather desire to be without them but now, for the duties of religion & Godliness, there we are not to desire & wish to be without them, or that they were otherwise then they are, A gracious heart is not to wish any command of Jesus Christ to be otherwise then it is, and when at any time you find such a rising in your hearts, as to wish that such a thing were not a duty, know, that now temptation doth and corruption stirs. You may not do it perhaps, but you may have a corruption stir so far, as to wish it were otherwise, certainly, this is a great temptation, when the heart in a right frame, it would not wish any thing in the waies of Christ otherwise then they are, if he were left to himself, he would himself choose them. That is the first.

Secondly When he hath chose them, this makes them easy because they are such waies as himself comes easily on unto, what a man comes freely on unto that is easy, and all the people of God are a willing people *Psal. 110.* Now when he comes freely on, perhaps, you will say, a man may come freely on to anything, yet when he is come on, he may find more difficulty then he thought of. Therefore in the second place they are easy in this respect, because they are suitable unto the temper and disposition of a gracious heart, such a one finds the waies of Christ very suitable and agreeable to him. Now *nilis Simi' gaudet*, every like thing doth rejoyce that which is like, a Godly heart finds the countenance (as I may so speak) of the Lord Jesus Christ written in his own heart, that as it was in his first creation, there the Law of God, the Mor-

and that that we have written in scripture, it is but as it were an extract and counterpaine of what was written in the heart of man in the first creation, now by sin a great part of it is blotted out, but now when the soul comes to Jesus Christ, then Christ writes again the Law of God in the heart of the sinner, writes it faire out againe, & writes the Law as it comes to be Evangelical, in an evangelical way, for so it is, the Gospel comprehends all that holyness that was in the Law before, the same holyness that was in the Law, the Gospel that takes it in, and makes it more compleat, and raiseth it up higher, and makes it more spiritual, and hath more of God in it, and doth shew us how to enjoy God in a higher, better, and fuller way, that the Law of the Gospel is written in the heart of beleivers as the Morrall Law was in the heart of Adam at first was, when he was made, and the Law of the Gospel takes in the holiness of Gods Law, and adds a further spiritualness, and shews a higher way of enjoyment of God then before was, when man at first was created, now therefore it must needs be easy in that respect It is easy for a fish to swim in the water, and it is easy for a bird to fly in the aire, for it is their own element, so the waies of the Gospel are the proper element of a true godly, & gracious heart. And as we say, *nulum corpus grave in suo loco*, no element is heavy in his own proper place. It is true, the waies of Godlyness is a heavy burden to a carnal heart, Why? because he is not in his element, when he is in holy duties, and sanctifying the Sabbath, he is not in his element, when he is in wicked company, drinking, and Swearing, then he is in his element, but now that which is your elements is but sand to a Godly heart, and that is the reason that you think that such Godly people are dumpeish, and heavy, and Melancholy, because they are not merry as you are, it is because of your compa-

amongst company that they can converse withall,
and talk of Godlyness, and shewing and discover-
ing one anothers hearts, and telling the experie-
nces of Gods working in their hearts one to another,
and so breathing graces one upon another, and pray-
ing one with another, then they can be as merry,
and be as delightful in such things as you can be a-
mongst your companions. swearing, rioting, and
he like, you think it is impossible they should be so,
but it is so, that is their proper element, as the other
your element, and therefore it is as easy for a Saint
to go on in the waies of religion, as for a fish to swim
in the water, so farre as the regenerate part prevails,
all Satisfaction flows from a suitableness between
the faculty and the object, now the waies of God
are the most suitable things to a gracious heart that
can be, therefore there is a great deal of ease in
them, there is nothing required in them but he
desires it in his heart before it is required. It is said in
Prov. 18. 2. Of a fool, that he doth not receive
the way of Wisdom, the instruction of Wisdom, it is in
our books, a fool hath not delight in understand-
ing, but that his heart may discover it self, but I
did translate in the old vulgar Latin, that a
fool receives not understanding, receives not what
you say to him, except those things that are in his
heart be spoken, except you speak to him such
things as are in his heart, so they turn it, and so it
trues in this, speak to any man any thing, if there
be not a principle in his heart, to close with the
thing that you speak, he will not easily receive it,
therefore a fool will not receive that which you
say to him of, because it is not suitable to his
heart. But now a Godly man, when you speak of
the things of God, and what the waies of Christ
are, such a man receives them, because you speak
him that that is in his heart, it is in his heart be-

fore, you speak to his heart, and he finds somewhat in his heart that comes presently to close with it, which makes it easy, there is in his heart such a principle, as upon mentioning any thing of the waies of Christ, he closeth with it, and takes hold upon it, there being the same thing in his heart, for though there be an object seen, except there be something in the eye suitable to the object to close with it, there would be no sight, so the heart of a Christian makes the waies of God easy, and readily imbraceth them, because there is something in the heart that is like to Gods waies, and therefore it is ready to receive and close with them. As now if you bring fire to a stick that hath some fire in it, as soon as ever you bring the fire, the fire that was in the stick before, will come out to the other fire that you bring neare to it, and will joyne together and so grow into a flame. If you bring a candle that hath some fire remaining upon it unto a fire, it lights presently, so it is with the heart of a Godly man, a gracious heart sets before him the excellency of the waies of God, now there is a holy principle, a principle of holiness in the heart that comes out unto what is said in the word of the waies of God, and so closeth with them: I, these are the things that I find in my heart; now these things must needs be easy, because they are the very element of a gracious heart, and they are suitable to his heart, there is a fitness to chuse, That is the Second.

Thirdly, Another thing that makes them easy is this, The waies of Christ, there is an evenness in them, there is a proportion in all the waies of Jesus Christ, there is not one thing contrary unto another, but every thing helps one another, and so they come to be easy. You know in other things, when

you are going in any path where there lyes things, to interrupt you, there lyes a great deal of Difficulty in your going, but when the way is so laid, as that there is no one thing in it but helps to another, if you take one step that helps you to another, and that step helps you to another, and so there is such an evenness and proportion as one helps to another. If you be drawing a thing that one link helps another, and one lets into another, this makes it easy, when every action of a mans work is such, as the first makes the second easy, and the second the third, and the third the fourth, that work must needs be easy; so in all the waies of Jesus Christ, one duty lets in another; and this is the difference between one that is truly acquainted with the waies of religion, and an Hypocrite, the one, when he sets upon one duty, that one duty so tires him, that he hath no mind to another, but now a godly heart, one duty doth but let him in another, by performing one duty, he is fitted to another duty, and this is a sign you performe duty in a right way, when it is thus with you, it is true, the outward man may be tired, but yet the heart is in a better frame to performe duty the next time, one duty is an inlet into another, and helps on the other, that is a Third.

Fourthly, The waies of Christ they are easy, because they bring strength with them, and encrease strength, certainly, that work must needs be an easy work that a man gets strength by his work, and the more he works the more strength he gets. It is true, great works come to be difficult, because you do not only not get strength, but you spend strength, but now the waies of religion, the more you work, the more strength you have, and the more work you do, the more strength comes in. It

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is true, the natural strength may be spent, I but there is inward strength comes in & encreaseth, and is supplied by Jesus Christ; the Body that carries the Soul, I but the Soul is no burden to the Body, the Soul supports the Body, and enables the body to move and makes it lighter, if the Soul were gone, the body would be a heavy lump, heavier than when the soul lives in it, so such a kind of burden is the waies of Religion to a gracious soul, no other burden than the soul is to the body, when the soul is there, it is no burden, but it rather helps the Body, it makes the Body lighter and so when any work of Grace is added more than before, the burden comes to be lighter, and easier. In *Prov. 10. 29. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright*, their very way is strength, surely then their way is easie, that which is strength, cannot be a hard way, now the way of the Lord is strength to the upright, an Hypocrite indeed, if he wil meddle with the way of God, he is tired, as those in *Malachi*, What a weariness is the waies of God to them? I but it is to an Hypocrite, but the way of the Lord is strength to the upright. A man that hath a carnal heart, he is tired presently, you that complain for want of strength, and you have no heart to set about Duties of Religion, because you say you are weak, the more ye set about these Duties, the more strength you shall have. There is many a Man and Woman, that praies away their strength in prayer, and strengthens their sin in prayer, and I shewed you, how to carnal hearts their very duties may be easie to their sins, but now a gracious heart doth not pray away his strength, but he shall have more strength in his Soul for the present, and he shall see it afterwards. You wil say, How shall I know that? for my body is weary and tired, if you get but a little time to refresh your body with sleep, or the

like, when you come to prayer again, you will have more strength to the Duty, there was more strength in your Spirit then when you were in the Duty, onely your natural strength d'd fail, and therefore do as much as you can in holy Duties, do not fear tediousness in them, you will do more than you did before. That is the fourth thing that makes them to be easie, because they beget strength.

Fifthly : They must needs be easie, because that in all the waies of Religion there is ever more good success, a gracious heart evermore finds success in the waies of Godliness, now that way that a man alwaies hath success in, is very easie to him, you count that work very easie work that alwaies thrives in your hand, and that you may certainly, know that it wil succeed before you go about it. If a man go about a work, and he is uncertain in the success, and he thinks ; I may take a great deal of pains, but I know not how I shall speed, Oh, that is tedious, I but now, when he goes out to the work of the Lord, where he knows he shal never fail of success, this work is very easie to him, In the first Psalm it is said, that a *Godly man prospers in every thing that he doth*, whatever he doth shal prosper, it is true, we may set upon outward things and not have success, but there was never any gracious action since the beginning of the world but had success, here is the difference between your outward imployment, and your gracious imployment, your earthly and your spiritual imployment in one, though we work never so well according to the Rules of our Art, yet there wil not be success in what we do alwaies, but now let us perform any holy Duty, we shal never lose any action, though we may not see it, yet we shal certainly prosper in it, and therefore there is a great deal of ease.

Sixthly : A great deal of ease must needs be in Gods waies, because that a gracious heart is continually receiving his wages in all his work : Now that is a very easie work, ye shall not need be working all the day and receive no wages at night, but a Godly man is receiving his wages continually while he is working. In 1 *Pet. 9. Receiving the end of your Faith, the Salvation of your Souls,* Receiving the end of your Faith, he doth not say, that ye shall hereafter receive the end of your Faith, but ye are now receiving, every moment in every Duty ye perform, you are receiving the end of your Faith, there is no holy action but there is somewhat of the Glory of Heaven in it, and the Soul doth receive somewhat of the Glory of Heaven in every holy action, so that he shall not need to stay for Heaven hereafter, that indeed were enough one would think to make any of the waies of God easie, the beleiving the Glory we shall hereafter have in Heaven, it were enough to make any journey easie, that we shall have a Crown at the end of it, but it is not so with the Saints, they have not ease because they know that they shall have Glory hereafter, but they have a Heaven while they are doing their holy Duties, therefore are easie in regard of their end, as many things may be easie in regard of that that comes afterwards, and so may be good in regard of the good which is to come, but the actions of Religion are part of the happiness, and of the Glory of the Soul, and if we were well principled in this, it would be a great means to help us to go on with a great deal of ease in the duties of Religion : That it is the happiness and Glory of our Souls, and the perfection of holiness is our highest end, the Angels have no higher end than the perfection of Holiness. In *Hosea 10. ver. 11. Ephraim is a Heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the*

Corn, Ephraim counted that an easy worke to tread out the corne, the meaning is this, the Cattel in those times, some were used to plow the ground, and others to tread out the corn, Now those that were plowing, they were abroad in the fields, and indured the stormes, and all the while eate nothing til they come home, and then they eate, But now those cattel that were treading out the corne, all the while they were treading out the corne, and working, they were feeding upon the corn, now saith God, Ephraim is a tender delicate thing. he doth not love to go all the day to his work, and receive his wages at night, but he loves to tread out the corn, he loves to receive his wages continually in his work. Thus it is with a Godly heart he is upon the receiving hand continually and his work is but as the treading out of the corn, rather then plowing. That is the Sixth.

Seventhly, The waies of God must needs be easy because let a man set upon the waies of Godliness, and every thing in the world shall help him, no passage of Gods providence but shall help him, no creature but shall help him, no ordinance but shall help him, nay those things that seem to go quire contrary they Shal help him; now it is easy to go when all things help one, when wind and Tide help you. I but you will say, may be we may meet with a contrary wind, I but when that contrary wind shal help you, as I have seen some that have made use of a contray wind, So it is with Godly people, all all good things help and encourage them, and ill things are turned by God to be helpful to them, and to be good so them. Yea, many have found help in the waies of God, by the strongest temptation that they have met withall in their very faces, Yea, sometimes that God turns

their sins, their stepping out of the way to be helps unto them, their very falls, as a man when he stumbles in his way, it makes him go the slower, you will put your Horse out upon his stumbling, and make him go the faster, God turns the worst things of all to the People of God to help them in their way, so that by Grace now, we do not only help our selves so, as to keep off the hinderances to other things, we do not overcome the world (as sometimes I have said) thus to keep our selves from being hurt by it, but to make all things usefull and serviceable to our graces, and that is the excellency of a Christian, that he can by grace make all things in the world serviceable to his grace, that is the glory of grace, it shews that grace is of a royall breed indeed, that it can bring all things to be serviceable to its end, therefore the waies of God are easie, because all things are helpfull to the encouragement of a Child of God in those waies.

And further, If a man were going in a way, and there were many stones lay in the way, it would be rough going, and uneasie, but were they laid in that fashion that they should be laid in a slough, in such a place that it should help me to step over such a slough then it would be more easie: Now here is the difference between wicked and Godly men, God in his just judgment laies stumbling blocks in the plainest waies of Godliness, so as to hinder wicked men in waies that are good, to the wicked I say, wicked men, they meet with stumbling blocks in plain waies, in waies that are the best waies; but now God is pleased to lay stumbling blocks in the waies of sin to the Godly, to hinder them from going on in the waies of sin, he takes all the stumbling blocks that were before in the waies of sin, and laies them in their way to Heaven. As now if there be divers

paths to go to a place, those that would give marks to others that they might not go out of the way, they dig a ditch or lay somewhat in the way, perhaps some boughs of Trees or the like, to keep them off that they may go in the right way, So when the Lord sees any thing that lies in the waies of his people that may occasion stumbling to them, he takes them away, and laies them in such a place that may keep them from going out of their way, and if there be any slough, he takes the stones, and laies them to help them over the slough, and therefore the waies of God must needs be easie.

Eighthly, They must needs be easie, because they bring so much ease to the Conscience, they bring abundance of ease to the Conscience of a man or woman; When hath any man or woman ease to their consciences, but when they have gone in the waies of Religion? though before they had throbs of conscience, and terrors of conscience, an angry conscience. Thou couldest never lie down to sleep, but thy conscience was as it were a hard stone to thy head, and as pricks in thy side, but now when thou art got into the waies of Religion, thou canst lie down in the bosome of a reconciled Father in peace, and thy conscience very easie, and thy soul easie, thou feelest no more of the throbs of conscience that thou wast wont to feel, the waies of God bring ease to thy conscience. Many of you love your estates, because you can have means coming in when you are old, and you can sit in a Chair, and can have maintenance brought in unto you, Oh, but if that be good, what is it to have quiet and ease in your consciences, which only the yoke of Jesus Christ brings in? and therefore the waies of Jesus Christ are easie.

Ninthly: The waies of Christ are easie, because they bring ease and freedome from al cares, al your troubles and cares, all your carking cares you have hereby ease from under them, come once under the yoke of Christ, and then you have nothing to do but to make known your requests to God, you need not care what shal become of you, either for the present or for eternity, if you be once got into the yoke of Christ. Do not mistake me, to think that if once you come to profess religion you need take care for nothing, No, But I say, from al carking cares, and troublesome cares, you may be delivered from them as soon as ever you come into the waies of Christ; many Christians have it at the first, and if not at first, yet if you continue in them, you may come to have so much satisfaction in them, that any carking care that may cause trouble to your souls, in regard of your outward or inward, your present or eternal estate, all will be gone, for whatever you would take care for to help you, it is taken care for you there. *Luther* hath such an expression I remember, A Christian may keep a perpetual Sabbath all his life, and all the week long, any thing that you would have to help you otherwise, God himself will take care for you that you shal have it in himself, you shal have all in himself. We have a place in *Isaiah* for the encouragement of the people of God, in *Isa. 30. 7.* *For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose, therefore have I cryed concerning this: their strength is to sit still.* Here they did depend much upon the Egyptians for help, I but saith God, you need not trouble your selves about this: the Egyptians to help, *Their strength is to sit still.* The word *Strength* here in the Original is *Egypt*, their *Egypt is to sit still*, as in another place, in *Isaiah 51. 9.* *Awake, Awake, put on strength, O Arm of the Lord, awake as in the ancient daies, in*

the Generations of old, Art thou not it that cut Rahab, and wounded the Dragon, Rahab, that by most Interpreters is used as a word that comes of Egypt, and so in some other. Scriptures the word *Rahab* comes of *Egypt*, and so in this place too, The Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose, therefore have I cried concerning this, their *Rahab*, or their *Egypt is to sit still*, that is, look what help others would have from *Egypt*, you need not care how *Egypt* shall come to help you, you shall sit still, you shall have help in me in your sitting still, you shall have an *Egypt*, all the strength you should have in *Egypt* you shall have in me, Be quiet and sit still, and whatever strength you think may be otherwaies, I will supply in my self, O! the holy security that there is in the waies of God, and if there be a holy security in those waies, there must needs be abundance of ease in them.

Tenthly. There is abundance of ease in the waies of Christ in this respect, because they make other things easie, that which will make other things easie, that must needs be easie, as thus, The waies of Christ will make hard things easie, afflictions easie, for afflictions come to let out thy sin, and thy corruption: And is there not a great deal of ease in that? When a man hath a sore and there is a great deal of corruption in that sore, if one come and prick the sore, and the corruption comes out, there is a great deal of ease: So here, afflictions to Gods people, they are but as that which comes to prick their corruptions, and to let out their sins, and their corruptions, and that gives ease to the soul, A mans calling is easie to him if he have grace, the going on in ones calling in a gracious manner is easie, and the going about any thing that a man sets himself a-

bout

about it is easie, O! with what abundance of sweetness doth Godly Men and Women go about their business more then those that have corrupt hearts? You shall have many that have wicked and corrupt hearts, go about their business with such fretting and vexing, if any thing fall amiss they are so vexed: I but now, one that is Godly sets about his business in obedience to God, and commits all to God, and leaves the success to God, and so he is at ease. A Servant now, if he have not grace in his or her heart, if the Master or Mistress do not please them, they go about their works, and fret and vex themselves. But now those that have grace, and know that they are in the way that Christ would have them, and that they obey Christ, and serve Christ in that way, they can find abundance of ease, for I am serving Christ in this work, though the work is a low work, a poor work, yet I am about Christs work, I am serving Jesus Christ, and so they go about it with ease. And thus the waies of Religion make every thing easie, our lives easie, and our death easie, our passage out of this world will be easie too.

But there are two or three things more to be added; the yoke of Christ is easie in regard of the yoke of the Law, therefore saith Christ in the Text, *Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easie*, the yoke and bondage you were under in respect of the Law, that was a burden, but my yoke is easie. And it is easie in respect of Antichrist, that was spoken prophetically indeed, but now we may open the yoke of Christ in respect to that. But then compare it with the yoke of sin, then it is easie too, the yoke of Christ not only in regard of all the former yokes, but if you compare it with the yoke of the Law, the yoke of sin, and the yoke

yoke of Antichrist, their yokes are far harder than the yokes of Jesus Christ. I confesse I need not spend much time upon those two of the yoke of the Law, and the yoke of sin, somewhat I would speak of either of them, to open the difference between the yokes in them, and the yoke of Christ, though there hath been a great deal said in opening of the Text, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest*, there we spake of the rest from the Law, and the rest from the burden of sin, only I shal in this but a little compare the difference between the burden that there is in the yoke of the Law, and the yoke of Christ, and see which is easiest, and so compare the yoke of sin with the yoke of Christ, and then you shal see when I have set them both together, that one is a great deal easier than the other.



CHAP. CXLIII.

The Yoke of Christ easier than the Yoke of the Law :
 For, 1. *The Ceremoniall Law required abstinence from the comfort of the Creature.* 2. *Its Service was chargeable.* 3. *The Ceremonies were beggarly Rudiments.*

THE waies of Christ are easie.

First: In regard of the yoke of the Law.
 Secondly: In regard of the yoke and burden of sin.

For the easiness of Christs waies, in comparison of

of the yoke of the Law, you know what the Scripture saith, in *Acts* 15. 10. That the Law it was a Yoke, *which our Fathers nor we were neither able to bear.* Even the Ceremonial Law, the way of Christ is easie in respect of that.

For First : The Ceremonial part of the Law required abstaining from the comforts of the Creature, the People of the Jews in the times of the Law were forbidden the use of many Creatures that we have a great deal of use of now ; this is one ease that we have by Jesus Christ, that we are to make use of all the Creatures, we need make no question for Conscience sake of the use of any Creature, in the world, that is somewhat easier than to be restrained from this Creature and the other Creature.

And then, Secondly : We have a great deal of ease in respect of the Jews that were under the burden of the Ceremonial Law, because that their service it self was very chargeable to their outward estates, their Sacrifices that they did offer up to God, How chargeable was it ? What a great part of the estates of men did go forth, partly in the maintenance of their Levites ? There is a great deal of murmuring now for a little Money for maintenance of Ministers, but there if the account be summed up, the maintenance of the Levites was a great part of their estates, not barely the tenth of their Sacrifices. They had their Cities, divers, forty or more Cities that were theirs for their possession. And many things might be shewed that way, the mighty charge that they were at for the service of God several waies, not Tithes only, but Cities and the like ; now God hath in a great part eased us of these things that he required, of the People of the Jews, there is nothing now required but what is in moral equity ; what is in common reason due to the Labor

rer for his work, only somewhat is due by that Scripture, *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn*, so that all the maintenance now for the work of God is due in a way of common reason, but there was other things required in the service of God in the times of the Jews, and that is an ease that is very suitable to many men, to have ease that way from their outward service, yet certainly, the Lord (as we shall hear more by and by) requires of us more service other waies.

And then Thirdly, In the ceremoniall Law, there the very service of God had a kind of burden in it, for there were so many external performances, that the Holy Ghost calls them beggarly Rudiments, so many outward ceremonies, outward things, that were a burden to the outward man, and they were mean things, and childish things, in comparison of the Gospel, they are called by the Apostle *Beggarly Rudiments*. And truly, one would think, that when we shall read such a Scripture as that, that shall call the ceremonies of the Law beggarly rudiments, that were the ceremonies appointed by God himself, and yet when they came to be abrogated they were called but beggarly rudiments, one would admire how it is possible that any one that professeth Christianity, should come and conform themselves to so many ceremonies as they have done, to such beggarly rudiments; certainly, these must needs be beggarly rudiments much more, and what a strange pass were we brought into, that we should count such things the great Ornaments of Gods service, whenas God did not require them but at that time, and that they are so vitified by God now. But inventions are never required by God, and therefore they are to be accounted more vile, and

it is a great mercy, to be delivered from the bondage of the outward ceremonies of the Law, though such things as were once appointed by God, to spend so many daies as they did from their outward business, this is somewhat, Surely, if it were in mans power to appoint ceremonies, and make daies holy as many did undertake heretofore, we had been brought into a greater bondage than ever the Jews were under the Law, but Christ would have ease in the outward administration of his worship.

And then likewise, though God hath appointed some outward things, yet very few, for the outward part of his worship, What a few things are appointed by Jesus Christ? whereas in the times of the Law, there were multitudes of external things, yea, and how easie are they that Christ hath appointed for the outward part of his worship; whereas in the times of the Law it was hard, as circumcision, what a hard thing was it to have the foreskin of the flesh cut off? and you know it made them sore, when the men of *Sichem* were circumcised, they were so sore, that two or three men were able to destroy a whole City, now Christ hath required no such hardness of us.

And truly that may be one thing that may make us much doubt of the waies of many that put people upon such vvaies, as in the Winter time to go into Rivers, and venture their healths & lives as they do, certainly, Christ requires no such thing; if Christ did require such a thing, I dare appeale to any to give me any one place in the old Testament where there is a harder commandment than that, if that were a commandment then Christs yoke in that one thing is harder than any one thing that Christ required of the Jews, no one Duty so difficult to the outward man as that thing is, now certainly the yoke of Christ, as he himself saith, it is but easie, it is not

hard to the outward man in such external services, Christ did not change one Ordinance from another to make it harder, there is no Ordinance that Christ did change from the Law to the Gospel to make it harder, and there is no mercy that is allowed in the times of the Law, but is allowed in the times of the Gospel.

And further, That is another Argument that is very perswative to the Beleever and his children, for if God should deny this condition to the children in the times of the Gospel that was in the times of the Law, it would make the Gospel to be harder than the Law, and the truth is, the denying such a mercy to Beleevers children would be a harder yoke to Beleevers, a greater burden to them than all the ceremonies were to the Jewvs in the times of the Law. As suppose this, if a Beleever should plead thus, Lord, there vvas a time vwhen thou didst not only receive me into Covenant, but receive my child too, and give my child the seal of the Covenant likewise, and there vvas a time that I had such a priviledg, that not only I, but my child vvas in a different condition from the Heathen, the Heathen round about me vvas not in such a condition as I vvas in, in regard of my posterity, and I counted this a great mercy, but Lord, since the time I vvas converted, and imbraced Christian Religion, and since the time that Jesus Christ is come, as suppose a Jevv should speak thus, one that vvas a Jevv before Christs time, and should live til Christ came, and should plead thus, Lord, hast thou brought a greater burden on me since Christ came than I had before Christ came, for before Christ came I had such a liberty that vvas as dear to me as my life, that I would not be vvithout for all the vvorld, that I should not only have my self, but my

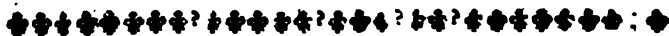
child separated from the world, and be in covenant with thee, and under the Seal of thy Grace, but Lord, since Christs coming into the world and since I embraced religion, though I may come and take the seales, though I may be in covenant with thee, yet now my child may not, there is no difference between my child and the child of a heathen, Lord is there no difference between this and the times of the Law? thou sayest, thy yoke is easy, and thy burden is light, but here is a great burden upon me, that I have not that benefit that heretofore I had, certainly, my brethren, Christ did not come into the world to lessen the Grace of God: you will say, they were in a worse condition then this, but how are they in a better? as for the covenant of Grace in Jesus Christ, that certainly a Jew had, they were saved by the same way that we are, namely by believing in Jesus Christ, now those that were beleevers, and did understand Jesus Christ, they had the same benefit by Jesus Christ that we have, I but if their children now should not have the same benefit that they had, I say then Christ hath brought a greater yoke upon beleevers in the times of the Gospel, then was upon beleevers in the times of the Law, and this is contrary to what Christ saith, my Yoke is easy, and my Burden light. Methinks, I wonder that any men that are Beleevers, that have children of their own, that should drinke in that opinion; for certainly, it cannot but be a greater Yoke upon them, and if they should think there were no difference between their children and the children of heathen, they should count it a great Yoke, and they should think it better for them if they had lived in the times of the Law, and before Christ came into the world, for then they had benefit for their children. Now we are delivered from the Yoke of the ceremonial Law that required hard things, and we
are

The Yoke of Christ easier then the Law.

are not brought into a worse condition, you cannot be in a worse condition saith Christ in coming unto me then you were in the times of the Law.

But especially the Morral law, that was a great burden, a great yoke; as looked upon in the Covenant of works: now for that I shal not need to speak much, because I have opened it in the invitation of Christ, *Come unto me, al ye that are weary and heavy laden*, and there I shewed unto you the burden of the Law, and from that, saith Christ, I will give you rest. I shewed how Christ delivers from the burden of the Law, Certainly, the Gospel then is a great ease, to mention to you but two or three particulars in this, then I shewd you there how it required absolute, impossible things, impossible unto us now, not impossible unto *Adam*, not impossible to that power that *Adam* had at first, but impossible to us. Now it requires absolute perfection in every thing, it doth not admit of any repentance, no nor of any endeavour, not to accept of it, the Law accepts of no endeavour, except he continue in every thing, he accepts of no repentance. But now, saith Christ, my yoke is easy, I require nothing of you but what is easy; the Law doth not accept of endeavour, but I will accept of endeavour, if there be a will I will accept of it; if there be repentance I will accept of it, the Law would not do it, lea a sinner weep his heart out, the Law would not accept of it; after you have sinned, the Law binds you over to an eternal curse, and had not Jesus Christ come into the world, you had been bound over to an eternal curse for ever, and that is the reason that the Angels cannot be saved; and therefore saith Christ, take heed of this yoke, this is a heavy burden, that there should be no mediating, nothing should be accepted; but saith Christ, I will bring

bring you an easier yoke, it is not so when you come to beleeve in mee, now your endeavours shall be accepted, and though you be imperfect, yet if you be upright, it shall be accepted.



CHAP. CXLIV.

The Yoke of Christ easier then the Yoke of Sin, and Antichrist.

WELL, the next is the Yoke of Sin, the Yoke of Christ is farr easier then that, sin is the greatest slavery in the World, it makes a man or woman a slave to the worst of Creatures that ever was made; to the Devil himself, to be a slave to sin it is to be a slave to the Devil, we have many bills sent up to us, to pray for those that are taken captives in *Argire*, it may be there are some of you here that have been taken slaves there, and you count that a miserable Yoke, when you are made slaves to the Turke, you thought your freinds that were at home were happy that had their liberty to go up and down. Now Oh! you that ever felt that Yoke, or that have heard the doleful complaint of that Yoke by your freinds, that you would by that be sensible of the slavery to sin, and to the Devil: is it not better to be in slavery to any men in the world then to the Devil? When you go abroad you must needs go into the Alehouses, to drink, and to be amongst company, and abuse your bodies to drunkenness, and uncleanness, and you have eyes full of adultery that cannot cease to sin, and you will excuse your selves, and say, you cannot do otherwise, then you are slaves, and are taken captive by the Devil to do according to his will, that Text you have for

The Yoke of Christ easier then the Yoke of sin.

it in 2 Tim. 2. And the last, That they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, that are taken captive by him at his will. When a man is taken captive, he cannot do his own will, he cannot go whither he will, but he must go whither his master will have him, and he cannot do what work he wil, but he must do what his Master will have him. So you cannot do what you would, but you must do what the Devil would have you to do, sin is a slavery to the Devil. But now the obedience of the Gospel, is that that brings the soul to be a subject to Jesus Christ your King, so that here is the difference between the Devills service, and Christs, that in the one, your work is a base slavery, and in the other, it is an honorable service, Christ requires no base slavery of his subjects, it were better to do any slavery and drudgery to Jesus Christ, then to do any work for the Devil, the Devil requires nothing but drudgery, and Christ requires nothing but honorable service, and therefore the Yoke of Jesus Christ is easier then the Yoke of sin; yea, the Yoke of sin, hath a great deal of contradiction in it, there are cross commands, they serve divers lusts, one lust would have them do one thing, and another would have them do another: but now in the service of Christ there is a blessed agreement between them, in the service of sin there is nothing but contradiction, but in the service of Christ there is nothing but comly order, and therefore his service is a great deal easier then the service of sin, and the truth is, if so be you did but know both of them you would say as much. We cannot compare two things together, to know which is heavier then the other, except we understand both of them, you that are beleevvers, and are got under the Yoke of Christ, yet through temptation you are brought to some service of sin, now though sin do not reign

over you, yet you are brought under the service of sin in a great measure, but now if you would compare when you keep closest to Christ, and the waies of holiness, whether you do not find more ease to your spirit, then when you have liberty to sin. You think it is fine to go abroad, and be merry with your friends, and abuse your selves, you think this is a fine thing, I but when you come home your hearts ake upon it, and your bodies are worse two or three daies after, O! but when you walk with God in a holy manner, and walk with God in your calling, and pray morning and evening, and walk close with God, and ever and anon have ejaculations to God, and have the face of God shining upon you, and so when you go to rest, and lie down in the bosom of a reconciled Father, to have for your pillow the bosom of a reconciled Father, & eat your food as that which comes from the fruit of your labor, and the blessing of God, and sitting with your yoke fellow blessing God for those good things he grants unto you, and looking upon your children as the blessings of God unto you, and seeing the grace of God in them, and in all these things expecting, that after a while you shall be taken from the world, that you shall never sin more, nor sorrow more, nor never be troubled more, nor never tempted more, when you shall see the face of God, and enjoy his presence everlastingly, Is not here a better life than to be under the bondage and drudgery of the Devil? to swear, and rail, and vex, and fret, and contend one with another, Is not here a great deal more ease? Certainly, if you will make triall, you shall find abundance of ease, and it is a good means to draw the heart of any one to repentance, when they hear, O! what a difference is there between my state now, and that whereas I walked close with God? What a deal of vexation and trouble

trouble have I now ? whereas when I kept close with God, how much better was it then with me then it is now ? one day then was better then ten thousand worlds now, If I should live a thousand years, to live one day as I did before when I walked close with God, O ! this is far better, and the thoughts of this makes them to returne to God, and say with them in *Hosea*, let me returne again, for then it was better with me then now, thus for the yoke of sin.

And then to name one thing more, the yoke of Christ is easier then the yoke of Antichrist, for so Christ speaks not only for what is for the present, but what is afterwards, and this scripture is an exhortation to us now, aswell as to the Disciples in Christs Time, now, saith Christ, it is easier then the yoke of Antichrist, he saith so to you, now suppose Christ were here in this time among you, and should say, take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy, and my burden light ; you have heard somewhat of the yoke of Antichrist, my yoke is easier, you will say, what is the yoke of Antichrist ? I opened it a little in Christs discipline, and you shall see it here in the yoke of Antichrist.

First. Take my yoke upon you, and I require you to be under no kind of government, but what you shal appoint your own officers, Antichrist he will appoint his officers ; but Christ he allows you to chuse your own officers.

And Secondly, No law that you shal be under for your spiritual estate, as a Church, that which is properly ecclesiastical and spiritual, no law but what I appoint in my word, I will not give liberty to men to make what laws they will make, no law enjoyed for your spiritual estate but what I appoint : if there be a company of men and women that meet in a congregati-

on, and meet not only as Christians, but as men and women, there is somewhat common to them as men and women, and there indeed the lawes of men may take hold of them, in those actions that are but humane and civill, but now in those things that are properly ecclesiastial and spiritual, that concerns the spiritual man, such things as I must expect for spiritual efficacy upon my Soul, to work upon my heart, to draw me to God, or to bring God to me, in these things I am under no law but the law of Jesus Christ, no men in the world have power, no not Church officers, nor civil officers, neither Magistrates, nor Ministers, have any power to put any Law upon a church in regard of the spiritual estate of it, in regard of any spiritual ordinance, but such as are in the word of God. Christ is the great Law-giver, and hath made them already, and they are to look that those Lawes be kept, but they are to make no new ones, there is no new act, no new Statute, for the ordering of men in their spiritual estate. Those things that are properly spiritual, to work upon the inward man, that concernes the worship of God, to draw their hearts to Christ, or Christ to them, to work upon their hearts, there can be no new act, no new Law made by Magistrates, or any church officers in the world, but only such as you find in the Scripture. now this is a great ease to a Christian, to think, Lord thou tenderest my Soul so much, that none can command any thing but what thou hast set down in the word, and what thou hast commanded: indeed Lawyers are to shew men the Lawes of the state, and Ministers are bound to shew the people if there be any Law, and to teach it the church, but there is no law that Ministers are bound to open but only the commands of Jesus Christ, they may be made use of as men, as publick men, and as opportunity serves be helpful in the civil State, but as Ministers, they have nothing to do but to open the

Laws of Jesus Christ: and this is a great ease, whereas this is the bondage of Antichrist, he will make laws to bind conscience, and so though a man should keep all Gods laws, yet he may be damned to eternity by breaking his laws, and therefore he makes it a bondage in this regard, that a man should be not only in danger of eternal damnation by disobedience to Christs laws, but a thousand laws that he never knows. And that is the second ease of the yoke of Christ, that there shall be no Laws to govern the Church but the laws of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly: The difference between the yoke of Antichrist and the yoke of Christ is this: Antichrist requires submision to his laws by violence & compulsion, and you must do them whether you understand them or not, you must understand them by a Prison else, that which shal befall you is imprisonment, and banishment, by inflicting corporal punishment upon you, he wil force you that way to come to beleeve, if you cannot come to beleeve this to be a truth, that is the way to make you to beleeve it, imprisonment, and banishment, and mulcts upon your estate, and corporal punishments upon your bodies; but Christ takes no such course, and gives no such commission, to inforce to beleeve things by such a way as this, but his waies are gentle, & meek waies, saith he, come unto me, & learn of me, for I am meek & lowly, & take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easie; and it is easie in this, that what I require of you to beleeve, I do not use violent and compulsive waies and means to bring you to beleeve, No, but the way that I would have my people use, it is instruction and information, it is the shewing of them the truth, and answering their Objections that they have against this way. it is gently to lead them, and not compel-

ling of them to beleieve, that if a man cannot beleieve such a truth they shall be compelled to it, certainly, to use violence and to compel such a man, is not the way of Jesus Christ. Indeed for some outward waies to be used to keep men from doing hurt to others, that is another thing, from doing that which may do mischief to another man: But for a violent compelling of a man, meerly to alter his judgment, though he will keep it to himself, and live quietly, yet to compel him to subscribe to such Articles that he cannot submit unto, certainly, Christ would not have any such yoke, to have a compulsoy way, to make men beleieve that which they cannot see any reason for, but Christ would first have the soul be convinced of the thing before he beleieves it, and it is a mighty ease, if we did understand it, we would think it to be worth al the trouble we have been under since these wars began, to be delivered from what the Prelatical, Antichristian men did determin, that they would put upon all those that should have any office or exercise any Gift in the Church of God, they would force them, either to beleieve what they say to be true, or otherwise not to live among them, yea, all people were brought unto it, though they did not understand it. As thus, many people were brought under this bondage, Suppose any of you were complained of by a Parator in their Court, well, when you were once complained of, if you had not appeared, then presently excommunicated, if they had got any advantage over you, wel, if once they got you under the censure of their Court, you could not get off for your lives without taking an Oath, and in that Oath you must acknowledg such things, as I dare say not one in five hundred understood what it was, and yet you must acknowledg subjection to them; Now what an intolerable bondage

dage was this? and if you did not, you were undone for your outward estates, they would force it by violence, saith Christ, my yoke is otherwise, Oh, what a bondage were we in, and yet not sensible of it? and did we understand it, we would not so murmur and complain of some trouble that we meet withal, and we would cry to God that we might never come under such a bondage again, in such a violent way, to be forced to such an Oath, and to beleeve such and such things to be true, though otherwise we lived quietly and peaceably, yet not to be suffered so to live, except we would change our judgments, certainly, this is an intollerable burden. And would you know what is Antichristianism, and what not? It is in this, that herein the Yoke of Antichrist is an Iron Yoke, that it will have a violent, Base, Forced believe, and forced alteration of a mans judgment, that if he were but meerly a man, he must suffer all the torments in the world rather then come to alter his judgment before he be convinced of it: Certainly, if a man have but reason, the Reason of a man, the spirit of a man, if one should come and say, you must beleeve this to be true, he would say, I but I must understand first that it is true, Certainly, he would be torne in pieces with wild Horses, rather then alter his judgment before he be convinced of it, but for a man to come and say, you must beleeve this to be true, and he say, I but I do not beleeve it to be true, no, then you must be made to beleeve it by imprisonment, and Banishment, and confiscation of your goods, and the like, Oh what a bondage is this? And this is the bondage of Antichrist.

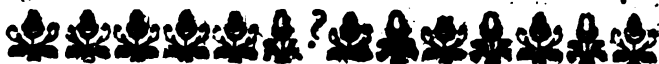
And then there is another thing in the yoke of Antichrist, and that is, not to accept of repentance, of any general repentance and mourning, except

there be a reforming of the particular thing wherein they iudgmen to be amiss, which is contrary to the yoke of Christ. Saith Christ, you must do what you are convinced of to be true, what you see to be my will, but now, because of your weakness, you cannot perhaps understand it to be my will, this is your sin, well but I wil accept of a general repentance, that if I see your Heart upright, and sincere and you mourne, not only for your sins of knowledge, but sins of ignorance, although you should die and reforme none of this all your life, I will pardon and accept you. But now mark how the yoke of Antichrist is, Antichrist requires such things to be done, Well, but I cannot do them, I cannot see Reason why I should do them, Well, he will never remit no punishment, he will inflict punishment, and never remit any til you revoke your judgment; you may say, well, though I cannot beleeve I will live quietly, and wait, and use all the means I can to convince me that this is the right way, and if I cannot, I will live quietly with you, that will not serve the turne, Nay, but if you do not see it, you must lie under this punishment til you come to revoke your Error, and profess and practice the contrary, Thus Antichrist layes more weight upon his lawes, then Christ doth upon his, for Christ saith thus, there is such a Law I require of you, it is true, if you do not do it, or understand it, it is your sin, but because of your weakness I wil accept of a general repentance, you repent of all the sins you do know, there you repent in general for sins of ignorance, and though you should not reforme all your daies, I will accept of it, but now when you come to their Court, there would be no help for you, except you promise the contrary thing that you did before, you must come and reforme, and amend, and do the thing that before

you did not do, or else never be absolved by them, but Christ will absolve you, though you should never come to do the thing that he would have you to do, if there be a willingness of heart to inquire into his mind, and a willingness to do so far as you know. Now what a deal of difference is here? Though you do not reforme the outward action, yet if your heart be upright, I will pardon your offences, come to me, saith Christ, for my Yoke is easier then the yoke of the Law, then the Yoke of sin, and then the yoke of Antichrist, Oh how just were it for us to be brought under the Yoke of Antichrist indeed, that are not willing to be brought under the Yoke of Jesus Christ, it is a great argument indeed, that we are under the Yoke of sin, when we are not willing to be under the yoke of Christ. In *Exodus*, 12: 25: You shall read there of the Passover, which was to put them in mind of the bondage that they were in spiritually, it was to put them in mind to bless God for the deliverance from that bondage now, Saith the Lord there, *It shall come to pass, when ye be come to the Land which the Lord will give you according as he hath promised, that he shall keep this Service.* Now the word that is Translated Service, it is the same word in the Original that is used when they were in Service under Pharaoh, in the first of *Exodus*, 7: 14. *They made the Israelites serve in all manner of Service.* Now when they were delivered, saith God you shall keep this Service, as if the Lord should say. Oh, this is a great deal better Service, then the Service you were in under Pharaoh, you shall keep this Service! Oh, if you did but think of the difference between the Service of Antichrist, and the Service of Christ, it would be a very strong motive to perswade us to this Service rather then the former. And so the Scripture you shall find comparing the Service of sin,

The Yoke of Christ easier

and the Service of Christ together, it is said of sin, that the service of sin it is a hard service, sin hath a great deal of hardness in it. In *Prov. 13. 15. The way of transgressors is hard*, That you may annex to the former, about the way of Antichrist, and yet it is strange to think, how men had rather be under any yoke then the yoke of Jesus Christ. Therefore the Apostle saith, in *2 Cor. 11. 20. Ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the Face*, If the false teachers did any thing against you, whatever they did to you, you suffered it, though they would exalt themselves over you, bring you to bondage, make themselves Lords of your faith, you would suffer them, but you will not suffer me; and this is usual with men, to suffer any kind of bondage from false teachers, rather then from the ministers of Jesus Christ, men will complain of any Service under Jesus Christ, rather then they will be under the yoke of Jesus Christ. If you were under a great bondage in the Prelatical Courts you cannot but know that if a minister would be a slave to the Bishop, he might enslave all his parish: As now, any people in the country, if he would be gracious with the commissary, he would bring any gentleman into slavery to attend upon him as he pleased, and yet how willing are many rather to be under that bondage, then any other whatsoever, and men are loath for to come under this, though we shew it to be Canonical out of Scripture, this shewes the perverseness of mens spirits.



CHAP. CXLV.

Eight Consequences from the former Doctrin,

1. *The world is mistaken about the service of Christ,* 2. *A great sin to reject Christ.* 3. *Bless God for this easie Yoke,* 4. *Bring not an evil report upon the waies of Christ,* 5. *Christ will expect much Service, it being so easie.* 6. *Make not the Yoke of Christ hard.* 7. *We should give up our Selves to Christ.* 8. *It is an accursed thing to be an apostat.*

COME we now to the First, for I have two things yet to do, having opened in what respects the yoke of Christ is easie, there is, First, The Consequences and Corollaries to be drawn from all this that hath been said by way of Use. And Secondly, To shew how you may make the yoke of Jesus Christ easie to you, what it is that facilitates it.

Consequence, 1.

For the Consequences hence. First, Certainly, That mistake of the world about the service of Jesus Christ is rotten, how many men will rather venture all the hardship of eternal misery, of Hell fire, then come under the yoke of Christ for the present in this world: Certainly, This is a dreadful thing, for a man to have hard thoughts, not only without Reason, but such hard thoughts, as when both are laid together, either thou must come under the yoke of Jesus Christ, or perish eternally, and endure all

the hardship of eternal fire hereafter in hell; Well, saith a carnal heart, rather then I wil endure the crossing of my sin, I wil venture the other, I hope the other will not be, but I will venture it, now what a dreadful thing is this, that you will venture this. I will grant, you are not convinced of it, but you hear this out of the word often threatned; and you cannot but acknowledg it is a great venture, that you venture all the wrath of God, and the curse of the Law, and all that that God threatens in the word, that will pursue those that do perish. Now this is a hard venture, now you venture all this rather then you will come under the yoke of Jesus Christ. Oh, what a mistake is this? What excuse can ye have for your selves that run upon such a mistake as this is? That that hath been delivered to you shews the great aggravation of this sin.

Consequence, 2.

And that may be a Second Particular, a great aggravation of the wickedness of mens hearts, and of their lives, saith the Lord in his word, I have sent my Son into the World, to bring my mercy and goodness and love unto you, and he is come for to deliver you from a heavy yoke, and to lay an easie yoke upon you, and to bring you to Heaven that way, but now you refuse and reject him, and will rather endure more Hardship in your refusing of him, and in damning your Souls then in subjecting to him, and saving your Souls eternally. Oh, it will be a dreadful aggravation of mens sins at the great day; what a dishonor do men put upon Jesus Christ, whenas they by their actions do as much as if they should say, Oh, the yoke that Christ will put upon mens Necks is intolerable, we cannot bear it, I will

I will rather be under the yoke of sin, and under the yoke of the Devil, and under the yoke of Antichrist, then under the Yoke of Jesus Christ, whereas the truth is, Jesus Christ is come into the world to bring such a way of Sweetness, and Love, and Mercy, and Ease unto us, as if all the Angels in Heaven, and men in the world, had set all their Wisdomes on work from the beginning of the world, to find out a way to bring us to Heaven, they could not have found out such a way as this, and yet this way to be refused, Oh the aggravation of men at that day! And the truth is, that which I have delivered to you out of this Text, if you shall yet continue under the yoke of your sins, and be bond-slaves to the Devil in your wicked courses, these things shall another day rise up in Judgment to stop your Mouths, when this shall be brought against you, did not you live in such a Town? And such a place; And where you heard such a Text opened to you, that if you would come to Jesus Christ his yoke was easie, and his burden was light, and that the way of Jesus Christ brought such sweetness, and love, and mercy? And yet you refused it, and you would chuse rather to be a bond-slave to my enemy the Devil; then come under the yoke of my son; Oh, How will this aggravate your sin another day! I beseech you, let not what we speak unto you, be an aggravation of your sin, the Reason why I have been so long upon this Text was, to take away the stumbling blocks that men laid in the waies of Christ, and to draw your hearts to the Love of the waies of Jesus Christ, But now, if you should reject the waies of Christ, and continue under the yoke and bondage of sin after all, this will be the fruit of the Sermons that they will be called over again at the day of judgment, to make your yoke and burden heavier when you are

under the wrath of God to all eternity. And that may be a second use of this Point.

Consequence, 3.

Thirdly, If the Yoke of Christ be thus easie, and his Burden light, then you that are the people of God, that are come under this yoke, and have felt the easiness of this yoke, bless the Lord for it, and bless your selves for what ease you find in the waies of Jesus Christ. Think but thus with your selfe, there are others indeed, they have a strange conceit of the waies of Jesus Christ, and think them hard, and indeed, if their natures be not changed, they will be hard unto them, but blessed be God I find them otherwise, when I began to turn my face to Jesus Christ, my Father or Mother called me Fool, and said, you will have no comfort, and my Uncle and kindred, they told me that my comfort would all be gone, but blessed be God I did not harken to them, but I find them otherwise, I do not find that these things bring me into any such bondage, but blessed be God I never had that comfort that now I have, Nay, I have that sweetness, ease, and comfort, that I cannot but think, that if all the men in the world did seek now and feel that comfort that I feel, they would be in Love with the waies of God. I hope there are many that can think with themselves, did but all my kindred, and my friends, Yea, did but all the world feel that sweetness, ease, and comfort, that I feel in the waies of Christ, they would be in love with them. If you can speak so, Oh, blessed be God for this easie yoke of Christ. There might have been required a hard yoke, if Christ should say, Well, I endured a hard yoke for you, I came from the Bosome of my Father, and came under the curse of the Law for you, and if you

will be delivered, you must have a heavy yoke upon you too, if Christ should have required, that we should have been tied unto a Stake, and endured the fire and have been held unto it, and saved at last, yet we had cause to fall down and bless God for ever for this: but Christ requires no such thing, Christ reveals not only Salvation at last, but he reveals a fair way, he paves our way with Gold, so that we go through *Canaan* unto *Canaan*, not through the wilderness. It is true, before we came under the yoke of Christ fully, there was some trouble, but take it in respect of the inward man, I say, their way to a Heavenly *Canaan* is through *Canaan*, here in this world they have a *Canaan* that flows with Milk and Honey. It is true, the Jews were in a servile way, and God would not bring them into *Canaan* but through the Wilderness, and it is true, in outward view there is a great deal of trouble to come to you but in regard of the inward man, there is a spiritual *Canaan* to bring us to the Heavenly *Canaan*, and the Saints they may suck Milk and Honey continually, if they do not hinder themselves all the way they are going to the Land of *Canaan*; the Lord hath appointed them to suck sweetness and honey out of the Promise of the Gospel all the way they go: while the wicked have nothing but Swill and Dogs meat, to suck, and to feed upon. And here is the difference between a Godly man, and a wicked man, an ungodly man or woman is appointed for execution, and he lives upon the basket, in the meantime, he hath nothing to maintain him, as a Prisoner he lives upon the basket, this is his life in comparison of a Godly mans life, he is going on to execution even in this world: now between the greatest Prince that is, and what the Saints have in this world, there is this difference, the one is appointed an execution, and lives upon the basket to maintain him.

Consequences from the easiness

him till the day of execution, and the other is going to immortality, to receive a Kingdom, to live upon the greatest dainties that Jesus Christ brought from the bosom of his Father, from the Riches and Glory of his Father, here in this world he hath that that sweetens his life, and hath his food, in some respects better than the food of the Angels, he feeds upon Manna that comes from Heaven, though he be in the Wilderness of this world. Oh, blest God and Jesus Christ that hath made such a way for thee to Heaven, and love these waies of Christ, and speak well of them, and labor to promote them and all that ever you can, and live so, as you may not bring an ill report upon the waies of Christ, that others may not be deterred from the waies of Jesus Christ by your lives.

Consequence 4th

And that may be another Use, if the waies of Christ be so ealie, then do not bring an ill report upon them, Do not lead such discontented, fullen, dejected lives, especially you that have carnal Husbands, carnal Wives, carnal Parents, carnal Masters, and Mistresses, they look upon you, what you do now, and if they see, that since you began to go to Sermons, and to make more profession of Religion, that your lives are more filled with discomfort, and vexing and fretting, and discouragement than before, What will they say? What waies are these? Who would come into these waies? they make them mad, and make them fools, and unfit them for any business, Oh, this is a shame to the waies of Christ, though it is true, now thou seest more cause of humiliation than before, but for all this know, that this is not legal humiliation, but evangelical humiliation, and there is sweetness in that bitter

of sin if thou understandest it in an evangelical way, and though thou shouldest mourn for thy sin, yet thou shouldest carry thy self with that gentleness, and humility, and meekness in thy spirit, thou shouldst discover that sweetness of heart, and cheerfulness, and activeness in your callings, going about your business better than ever before, that they may say, surely, the way of Christ is easie, and so others may be in love with them; but if others shall see you to be more high, and lofty in your spirits, more proud, more disdainings, more neglective in your callings, and more cross in your carriage than before, then they will be kept off from those waies.

Consequence 5.

Again if the waies of Christ be so easie, certainly, Jesus Christ will expect a great deal of service from you because he gives you much ease, a man that walkes at liberty, he may walk apace, a Porter that hath a great burden upon him, whilst that that burden is upon him he cannot go so fast, if one should come and say to him Why do not you go faster? he would answer, if you had such a burden upon you as I have; you would go as softly as I do. A cart that hath a great load upon it, cannot go apace, so here hath Jesus Christ laid no weight upon you in his waies, then let us run the waies of Gods commandments. "Believers in the time of the Law, they had Shackles, they had a weight, a burden upon them, and therefore no marvel we do not read of so much holiness, and spiritualness, in the waies of the Godly in the times of the Law generally, because, I say, their yoke was heavy, and therefore they did drudge very slowly on, but now, when Jesus Christ is come into the world, and hath

Consequences from the easiness

taken our yoke from us, certainly, Christ expects that we should now go on freely in his waies, and abound in the work of the Lord, and do more than they did in the times of the Law. Read the Book of the *Psalms*, and see the sweetness of *David's* spirit, had *David* had the Epistles of *Paul*, and had known all of Christ, and heard so much of the Gospel opened to him, How would he have said, O! how sweet is thy Law? and if his heart was enlarged, he could run the waies of Gods commandments, I but *David*, he was under the burden of the ceremonial Law, for it is not that which is revealed in the Gospel, certainly, he had not the knowledg of the Gospel, the things revealed there, though he had a more then ordinary measure of knowledg, and if he walked so freely, and cheerfully in the waies of Christ, certainly, we should do much more Service for the Lord, now the yoke is taken from us, as the ceremonial Law in respect of charge, we are freed from a great deal of charge that they were at, therefore we should be more free when God requires it of us. And they spent so much time in outward things, in meer outward things, then shall we grudge God our time in spiritual communion or grudge God time in our Families, a quarter of an hour to Worship God in our Families morning and evening? In the Law, they spent abundance of time in the Service of God, it may be you think it much to rise and come to hear the Word, they were faine to go long journies to Worship at *Jerusalem*, wherever they lived in the country, to go to *Jerusalem* to worship, and yet their worship was but an external thing, and in the greater part but bodily labor, when they went thus to worship, they had not the Mysteries of the Gospel opened to them as you have to recompence your labor, therefore I say, be more abundant in the service of God. We have a notable

a notable Scripture for this, in *Acts* 9. 31. of the state of the Church, when once they had ease and rest, marke what came of it: *Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied.* Here is the fruit of their rest. The ease of a secure heart, is that that makes it more barren in Gods waies, but now the Church had rest through all *Judea*. What then? then they walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and were multiplied; and doth God give rest unto your Soul, and peace to you? then walk in the fear of the Lord, and be edified, and built up more and more, and multiply the service of God more and more, there is a promise, that the people of God should be fat and well liking in the times of the Gospel, and flourish in the Courts of the Lord. There is two things that causeth Fatness, the one is much Feeding, the other is a great deal of rest and ease. when men feed much, and then have a great deal of ease, this causeth fatness, if there be either want of food, or if there be never so much food, yet if a great deal of labor, it keeps them from fatness; but when there is ease, and food, that causeth bodily fatness. Now Christ expects in the times of the Gospel, that all Christians should be fat, and well liking, that they should not be lean in their souls, Why? for,

1. They have as plentiful food as ever was since the world began, never had they better diet and more full diet, and wholesome diet than now. And
2. He hath revealed likewise the blessed ease of the Gospel, there was never a time wherein the Mystery of the Gospel was so much revealed to make the waies of Christ so easie as now; there is a revealing indeed of the waies of the Gospel to be easie sensu-

ally, and loose, but wo to those that are thus at ease, but I say, there is a revealing of the Gospel and the waies of Christ to be easie spiritually. Certainly, formerly many went to Heaven more hardlier than we, not only in respect of suffering, but in respect of horror of sin, the spirit of bondage, there were scarce any brought to Jesus Christ, but were brought with abundance of horror, and had much of the spirit of bondage upon them, and God did recompence them afterwards abundantly, and we find this, that it is true, that many true Christians, never knew so much horror of conscience, and are very holy and spiritual, and have ease in their coming to, and living with Christ, but we find many very loose and vain that never had the bondage of sin, if God would humble them for their sins more, and make them sensible of sin, they would not be so frothy and carnal as they are. Wel, but though some do abuse the free Grace of God in Christ, yet others do not, now you that have so much ease in the waies of Christ, and also have so much food, surely Christ expects you should be fat and wel-liking, and that you should do much service for him.

Consequence 6.

And another Use is this. If Christ accounts his waies easie, let not men make them hard, take heed how you make the waies of Christ harder than Christ makes them, though it is true, you cannot make them hard, I but, you do what you can to make them hard, as thus; you have an Apprentice, or a Child, or a Friend, or a Kinsman, that is looking after the waies of Christ, Do not you do what you can to make the waies Christ hard to them? you scorn at them, and scoff at them, and rail at them,

and smite them, and take all advantage you can against them, you do what you can to vex their spirits, and to make Christs waies hard to them. Saith Christ, I came into the world to that end to bring souls to me, to carry them on comfortably to Heaven, but here is a Wretch, so soon as any one looks towards Heaven, he doth what he can to make his life uncomfortable, a child that you respected before, and lived sweetly with you before, now you do what you can to make them live worse lives than formerly they lived, and so the Wife of your bosom, or your Husband, and the like; and thus you do what you can to draw them off from the waies of Christ, and if they would come off from those waies, then you would do what you can to make their lives more comfortable, O! Wretch, Wretch that thou art to cross the waies of Christ, thou doest in this thing but act the part of the Devil, for what doth the Devil? the Devil will make his waies as easie as he can, and the waies of Christ to be as hard as he can, and that is the reason that many young Christians are troubled with more temptations now than before, because the Devil sees they are getting away from him, and he doth what he can to make their getting away to be troublesome as can be. As a Jaylor, when the Jaylor hath a Prisoner, if he be in Prison he takes no notice, but if he be a plotting how to get out of the Prison, then he comes and laies fetters upon him; So when men are in the Dungeon of the Devil, and the Devil hath them fast, then he is at quiet with them, but when they come to enquire after the waies of Heaven, and labor to get out of their bondage, then the Devil comes with Darts, and Suggestions, to make their lives uncomfortable, and the Devil doth, so do wicked men.

Consequence, 7.

But then another use from hence is this, To exhort people to come in to the waies of God, labor to get over the Stumbling Stone, the Devil and the world hath deluded thee, but now say, God forbid that I should any longer stand it out, Oh ! now I come, now I will put my neck under the yoke of Jesus Christ, I will come and be the servant of Christ, you that are servants, you have been commended to live in such a service, with such a master or mistress, but there hath come another servant and told you, that they are very hard, and you will never live comfortably there. But now if you have another; that comes and tells you, that it is meer envy, that the other puts you off out of ill will, and that certainly if you can be but one in such a family you will live a happy life, you will find so much peace, love, and kindness, and as fair dealing as ever any servant had in any family in the world ; Now upon this, if you should be taken off, would it not grieve you ? truly, it is thus in the waies of Christ, you have had (perhaps) good thoughts of the waies of Christ, I but some, it may be, hath put it into your head, that you will live but a melancholy and dumpish life in them, but now, you have heard out of the word, that you shall live the most comfortable life in the world, and therefore, O I now resolve to give up your names to God before this night, go into the presence of God, and there profess your selves that you will be his servants for ever, and bind your selves unto him, say, Lord, reveale what thou hast to enioyne me, and here I am professing to be thine.

Consequence. 8.

And again, If the waies of Christ be so easy, then we

may see from hence what a cursed thing it is to be an Apostate, for one to begin to put on into the waies of Jesus Christ, and then break off again, O! thou bringest a disgrace and dishonor upon the waies of Jesus Christ, as though they were such hard waies. You shal have many say, well, I was a puritan once, and I was wont to be praying and fasting with them, but it was such a burden to me, that it was impossible for me to bear it, Oh! thou hadst a base carnal heart, and dost thou leave the waies of Christ upon such grounds? know, that a time shal come, that thou shalt be cast off with eternal abhorring, and those that thou seekest to put off from the waies of God, shall rise up in judgment against thee; it is the usual manner of Apostates to put off others from the waies of God, because they leave the waies of Christ themselves, therefore they labor that others may leave them too. As a wicked servant, that hath behaved himself wickedly in a family, and the Master and Mistris put him off, then he railes, and brings up an ill report all he can, upon the Master and Mistris, saying, there is no living with them, and if they heare of any inclining to live in the family, they cry out against them why? because they are put off? so here Apostates behave themselves wickedly, and Christ casts them off as unsavory Salt and Filth, and when they are once out, then they find their spirits filled with guilt in their consciences, and then they raile against the waies of Christ, what is the reason that the Devil doth so much labor to bring off men from God? because he is cast off himself, he was once an Angel, and he being cast off from God himself, it troubles him that any should be brought on to the waies of God, but if there be any such here, Oh, that this text might convince them that they should returne againe and say, I will returne unto the waies of Christ againe, for then it was better with me then it is now.

And then the Last thing is to speak especially to young ones, those that complain of hardness in the waies of Christ for the present, and feel their work very difficult, that say, Oh, that I could find what you say is in the waies of Jesus Christ, that I could find them so, what a happy life should I live? Now be convinced there is such a way, what should be done to facilitate and make easy this way. Now what rules we should observe to make the waies of Christ easy, that we may go on with ease, sweetness, and comfort in them, is the next thing I shal come unto.



CHAP. CXLVI.

The meanes to make the waies of Christ easy to our selves. 1. Our obedience must be evangelical. 2. Keep the heart in a readines to every duty. 3. Get the heart in love to the duty. 4. Loose not your encouragements. 5. Continue not in the guilt of any Sin. 6. Order the duties of your condition. 7. Leave the Success wholly to God. 8. Bind not your self to what Christ doth not. 9. Lay hold upon all opportunities. 10. Preserve all experiences. 11. Beware of disturbing passions. 12. Entertain communion with the Saints. 13. Exercise much faith. 14. Get strength of Grace.

THe last thing that I intend in this point is, To shew how we may come to facilitate the waies of Godliness to our selves, that is, how we may come to live so under the yoke of Christ, as to make it easy unto our selves, for certainly, though Christs yoke be easy, yet many people of God find more difficulty in Gods waies, when they need, there is an art, a skill, a mystery of Godliness.

Godlyness, which if you come to hit on right, you may carry on the work of Godliness with power, and yet with a great deal of ease and sweetness. As you know a workman that is skillful in his trade indeed, and can handle his tools well, and is exercised in it, he carries on his work with ease, it goes on before him delightfully whereas an unskilful young workman, that cannot tell how to handle his tools, he will keep a bungling and stir, and tires himself, and doth not carry his work on with ease, and doth but a little work, and doth it not well neither, those Workmen that do their work well, with most ease, they do the most work. Now for those rules to be observed, that may help us to make the waies of Christ easy to us, they are these.

1. Be sure that all your obedience be evangelical obedience, when you are tendering up any service to God let it be (I say) an evangelical service ; you will say, what is the meaning of an evangelical work, or evangelical obedience, or service ? certainly, the want of the knowledg of Christ, is the chiefe thing that makes the waies of God difficult to Godly people, their obedience is legal, not evangelical. I have already, in the former part of the invitation of Christ, shewed much of the difficulty that there is in legal obedience, I will give you but the heads of some four or five things for evangelical obedience, and shew what it is, or what ease there is in evangelical obedience, in comparison of the other.

First, Evangelical obedience, is an obedience that the child renders up unto the father, when you come to do any work, do not look upon God as a severe Judge, passing judgment, and condemning of you, But look upon God as a father, and all your obedience to be nothing but the obedience of a child to his father, this will make it easy ; it is a greater ease for a child to obey his father when he knows that he is a loving and ten-

der father, then for a gally slave to obey him that hath the power over him.

Secondly, Evangelical obedience, is to know that the Gospel accepts of uprightness, where there is not perfection, many Christians are exceedingly troubled in the duties of religion, and they are very difficult to them, because they think, that God being an infinite, Holy God, he looks for absolute perfection from them in their duties, and if there be any imperfection in their duties, they think they shall not be accepted, but now Evangelical obedience, accepts of uprightness, when there is not perfection, if there be uprightness this is accepted, of God.

Thirdly, Evangelical obedience, the Duties of the Gospel, hath ever a promise going along with them, whatever the Gospel requires, it joyns a promise to it, as it is in the body, there is an Artery that goes along together with the Veins in the body, that carries the blood, and the Spirits through the body, we must look upon every Duty as having a promise joyned to it, and this will make our obedience easie, evermore joyn promises unto commands.

Fourthly, Evangelical obedience, it bears the heart upon the strength of Jesus Christ, upon Christs strength, to look up to him; when we go to Duty, not to be tiring our selves, and think to carry it out by main strength of our own, but to look up to him, and bear our selves upon Christ, upon his strength.

Fifthly, Evangelical obedience, it is not an obedience upon which our eternal life depends, we are not to look upon what we do, as any part of the Covenant of eternal life, as that which our eternal

life depends, not as a covenant of works upon which eternal life depends: but the safety of our Souls and eternal life is in another way, and all that which we do is rather in way of thankfulness unto God for the mercy that God hath granted to us, and the eternal life that Christ hath purchased for us already; this is Evangelical obedience, now if our obedience and Duties were after this manner performed, they would be very easie; if we would but do thus, this it is to obey evangelically. If we could come as children to obey our Father, and know, that the uprightness of our hearts is accepted, and to look upon every Commandment as having a promise annexed to it, and to bear our selves upon the strength of Christ, and to look upon every Duty only as a testimony of our thankfulness to God for eternal life purchased for us, rather then a part of the Covenant of eternal life: Now this obedience hath a great deale of ease in it. But because we have spoken largely heretofore about the difficulty of the burden of the Law, and of the rest of the Soul from under it, it shal be sufficient to name it at this time, but if we would have ease in the waies of Christ, we must performe all our obedience in an Evangelical way, and I will add this one thing to it.

As our obedience, so our humiliation for want of obedience must be evangelical, for many Christians, may find their obedience somewhat easy to them, I but, when they do not obey, then the sorrow for their sin that is grievous, their humiliation that is a burden to their Spirits, sin lyes upon them as a burden, I but, we should be humbled for our sins in an evangelical way, as well as performe duty, in an evangelical way. Now evangelical humiliation, it is a sorrow for sin, not that we might purchase par-
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don for that sorrow, as we must not perform a duty to think to purchase Heaven, neither must we sorrow for sin to think to satisfy for sin, and to purchase pardon for our sin, but our very sorrow for sin must have a sweetness from Christ in it, it must be out of love, our very mourning must be a fruit of love, and not come from the fear of being destroyed eternally for such sins, that is legal sorrow, I have sinned against God, and therefore am afraid that God will destroy me eternally, and therefore I am sorry, No, but I have sinned against the Lord, a gracious, and a merciful Father, and the Lord yet hath made a Covenant with me, that he will not take advantage of my sin, that he will not destroy me, and therefore my soul mourns and laments the rather for my sin, that I have sinned so much against the grace of the Gospel as I have done: Sorrow evangelically, and then your sorrow will have more sweetness in it then all the joy that the men of the world have, when all their Corn and Wine and Oyl is increased, not only when God lifts up the light of his countenance, but even the very sorrow of your heart for sin may have more sweetness in it, then all the men of the world have, when their Corn and Wine and Oyl increaseth. Many Christians have much bitterness in their sorrow, but certainly, Evangelical sorrow, the tears of it is Rose water, that hath a great deal of sweetness, it is sweet both unto God, and sweet unto the soul, even while the soul is sorrowing, there is sweetness in the heart, and this is the difference between legal terror, and Evangelical sorrow, the one hath nothing but bitterness and gall in it, and the other nothing but sweetness. That is the first thing.

Secondly, Another way to facilitate and make easie that we do is this, Labor to keep our hearts in
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a constant readines and preparation to every duty ; Duties are very hard because we fall upon them unprepared, we are not in a readines continually unto every good work, you know when you are set about any work, and if you have many things to prepare, and to look for, when you should go about your work, it will go off but heavily, and it will be more troublesom, but now, when every thing is prepared in a readines, then how soon and how easie doth the work go on ? when you are going to Sea, there is making a great deal of preparation aforehand, now when the Ship is rigged and trimmed & every thing ready, then you are at an instant able to put off, and set sail, and go away, when all things are ready, you go off with ease. If you would entertain Guests, if they come upon you suddenly, and you have nothing ready, what a deal of stir is in the house ? what running up and down this way and that way, but now, if things be ready when they come, they are entertained with a great deal of delight, and all things in the house are in order, and things go off very easily, and there is no trouble in it. Truly, thus it should be with a Christian, he should not only perform duties now and then, but his life should be a constant walking with God, so that he should be alwaies in readines for every duty that God requires of him, & so it comes to be easie. As now for the duty of Prayer, you should keep your hearts in a praying frame continually, and then prayer would be easie, it would be an easie thing for you to pour forth your souls to God, when you keep your hearts in a praying frame all the day long. It may be when you go to prayer, you find a great deal of trouble within you, your thoughts wander, and your affections are dead and dul, and you rise up discouraged : But what is the reason, you do not keep your heart all the day

Means to make the Yoke of Christ easie.

long in a praying frame, in a heavenly temper and frame in the day time, and therefore when you come to pray at night, there is no readines in your hearts to the duty, but you are altogether indisposed to it. And so to come unto the Sacrament, you find it a great labor and toyl to prepare for the Sacrament as you should, I speak of those that make conscience of preparation, many times they find it a mighty toyl, a hard work; I, but Christians should keep themselves alwaies in a Sacramental disposition, a Sacramental frame, alwaies having their spirits favoring of the meditation of the death of Jesus Christ, that nothing should be more familiar to a Christians Soul than the meditation of the death of Christ, and of discerning the Lords Body, and the Covenant of grace, and giving it self likewise to God in a Covenant of grace, this should be continually, and then if you should receive the Sacrament every day, you might be fit for it, or every week, you would be fit for it. Now People think it a great matter, and make a great deal of do about receiving of it often, whereas the truth is, the Saints of God, they should be in as great a readines to receive the Sacrament, as to hear the word, or to pray, and that would be a mighty ease unto them, therefore if things were as they should, certainly, it would be more convenient to have it more ordinary and constant, every Lords day the Sacrament. The Christians in the primitive times would receive it every day in the year, and they kept their heart in readines to such kind of duties, let it be whar work it wil be. You should be patient in affliction, if affliction come upon you and your heart is not in a readines to alter your condition, Oh! it wil be a grievous burden to exercise patience, it wil be a hard thing for you; now you should keep your hearts ready for every condition, that

that is the true work of grace in the Soul, to keep the soul in a constant bent Godward and that Soul wil do things very easily. Sometimes you have much ado with your children when strangers come, to keep them in good order, the reason is, you neglect them at other times, and that is the reason that they trouble you when strangers come; but keep them in a good order at all times, and then you will have them right at those times; So it is with the heart, keep the heart prepared and ready to every good work, and then every work wil be easie.

Object. But you wil say, *That is a great deal of toyl and labor, to keep our hearts alwaies bent, and ready to good works.*

To that I answer, at first it may be some labor and toyl, but those that have once got their hearts into a readines, find it not so hard, but have a great deal of ease, As now it is a great deale of toyl for one that neglects his accounts, he is not ready, but his accounts are intangled, if he be called to give a perfect account, it is a great deal of toyl to him, but now let a man get over the difficulty, and make all his accounts cleer, now for him every day to keep his Books streight and cleer, this wil not be so great a trouble. This is the difference between one Christian and another for all the world, one that shall rake his pleasure all the week long, and ride this way and the other way, and neglects his Books, and but one day in the week will look them over, he wil have a great deal of trouble, and it wil break his head somtimes, when he hath multitude of business. But now the other Merchant, looks into his Books every day, spends half an hour, or a quarter of an hour every day, and he goes on with a great deal of cheerfulness: So it is with

with many Christians, they think on the Lords day they must have their hearts in a good frame and temper, but all the week they have no thoughts of God, and of the word, and now when the Sabbath comes, or Sacrament and holy duties come, they are burdensome to them; whereas another that keeps his heart in a holy frame, he rejoiceth in the Sabbath, for he hath had a Sabbath day frame of heart all the week long. *Luther* saith, a Christian life should be a perpetuall Sabbath. And that is the second means to facilitate every good work.

3. Another is this, Labor to inflame your hearts with love unto the Duty, Do not do duties because you must do them, but use all the means that you can for to kindle in you a love unto the duty, never satisfie your selves with this, I see I must do duty, Conscience puts me upon duty, therefore I must do it, so it may be burdensom but labor to use all arguments you can to make you in love with the duty. A Schollar that is in love with his Book, will not cry when he goes to the School, and especially if he delight in it, and be in love with his Master, there is many that are put to go to School, that dare not go, Oh, their Father will be angry, and their Master will be severe, if they should not learn, and so they learn but with much ado, they had rather do any thing in the world than go to School, neither love their Books, nor love their Master, and so seldom come to any eminence of learning. Love takes away all difficulty, love is ashamed to complain of difficulty at any time, as now take a man that loves recreation, that loves that kind of sport of hunting or hawking, if he love it, he will be running in the dirt all the day long, though it be a hot day, run over hedg and ditch, whereas now if such a man had not a love to such a thing, but were enjoined

Means to make the Yoke of Christ easie.

ned to such a thing, that you must all the day from morning to night eate not a bit of bread, but all the day long run after dogges over hedg and ditch, and through waters, it would take away the love that such a one should have in his sports, and what a miserable bondage would this be? so it is in the waies of God, let there be love to the waies of God then whatever difficulty, there may seem to be in them, it is taken away presently, love to the person of Jesus Christ will take away the difficulty of the waies of Christ; you know when *Jacob* loved *Rachel*, he cared not how long he served for her, the hard nights were not hard to him, Love God, and love Christ, and then his waies will not be difficult.

4. Another rule is this, do not loose your encouragements, that that you have had from what good God doth bestow upon you, and inable you to do, take heed of loosing that encouragement, many Christians are altogether looking upon what they ought to do, what God requires of them to do, and because they have had not yet attained unto what they ought to do, and what is required of them to do, therefore they find no encouragement from what the Lord hath already bestowed upon them what the Lord hath already inabled them to do, they wholly neglect that, and never think of it they think of what they want, and what they should have, and what they should do, and so they are labouring to get what they should have, and to do what they should do, but for what God hath inabled them to do already, or what God hath given them already, that they do not think of, and for want of those encouragements, they make their endeavours for the getting of more to be burdensome to them; but now, when we are endeavouring to do

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more

more we should go on in the strength of this incouragement, Oh, blessed be God for any little. You shal have Christians thinking of what they should do, and therefore they think all the grace they have is nothing, Oh! say they, that which I have done what is it? It is true, if we were looked upon in the way of the Covenant of works it is nothing, but in the way of the Covenant of Grace, it is a great deal: now that will be a great ease to your souls, labour to get more, and do more for God, but stil carry along with you the incouragement of what God hath done for you, when you pray for any grace, bless God for any grace you have: Take notice of al the incouragement that God doth give you, and that will help you to go on in any further work that God calls you unto, and the want of this makes the lives of many Christians to be very greivous and burdensome unto them, because they neglect those incouragements they might have from what God hath inabled them to do, and from what God hath done already for them.

5. Take heed of lying in the guilt of any sin, I meane, though in respect of God the guilt is taken away from beleevvers, but of lying so in any sin, as not to cleer up all between God and your soul for the discharge of it, of having any thing not cleered up in your own consciences, take heed of lying in any sin unrepented of, that is my meaning, every sin that a man commits, excepting those daily incursions and infirmities of the Saints, which they cannot while they are here in the flesh be altogether without, but every other sin, it is as a thorne, at least a thorn in the foot, every sin that a man hath committed by strength of temptation, it is a thorn in the foot, and if it be a greater sin it is a gash in his flesh.

Now a man that hath a thorn in his foot, he cannot go very fast, but especially, if he have a gash in his flesh: when thou hast been overcome with a great sin, thou hast given a great gash unto thy soul, and other sins, the sin of thy passion, and the sin of thy giving liberty to thy thoughts, may be as a thorn to thy foot, to make thy way very hard unto thee. No marvel though thou complaine the way is hard, it is not the hardness of thy path, but the tenderneſs of thy foote that makes thee to think the way hard; therefore let every Christian, if he would go on with ease in the waies of religion, as soon as ever a thorn is got into the conscience, Oh! get it out presently, do not let it lye and fret in the flesh, Oh! if we would as soon as we had committed sin get it out of the conscience presently, then repentance would not be so difficult, and you would find your heart at a mighty deal of ease. When a man goes with pain, and hee looks upon his foote, and pulls the thorn out, he goes with ease then. As the beast, when you go in the way, and your beast halts and shuffles, you will have him searched, if you cannot see it your selfe, then when you come to the next Smith, you have him searched; so, do you find the waies of God difficult, that you cannot go the pace you were wont to go, search your hearts see whether there be not a stone in your hearts, or some gravel, see if there be any particular sin that you know to be a sin, and particularly repent of that, and that will make the way of God easy to you, the often renewing of repentance will make the way of God easy.

6. Labor by wisdom to order the duties of your condition, that is thus, Labor for wisdom to know what is fuitable to your condition, and order the duties about that condition: many think, Oh! if I

were in such a place as such a one is, I would doe thus and thus, but you should look upon the duties of your present condition, what is the condition that I am now in? I am a servant, what is my duty in that condition? not what is the duty of a governor. And so in a single estate, what is the duty of this condition? not what is the duty of a married Condition, and so in a Married Condition, what is the duty of that? And so when you are in affliction, what is your duty at that time? or if so be that God call you to humiliation, you should mind the duty of humiliation, And when God calls you to rejoycing you should know the duty of that time. Some when God calls them to rejoycing, they think they must be humbled, and when they are called to be humbled, they think they should rejoyce, and when they are called to believing, then they will be poring upon their corruptions, and when God calls them to searching of their hearts, they have thoughts of matter of joy. Now wisdom to suite our duty to our condition, and to apply our duty to that condition, is a great ease to the soul. Now many times we are thinking of a duty at one time, that is not the duty of that time, may be when one is sick, Oh! they are many times troubled that they cannot go to heare the word, and meere with Gods people, and spend so much time in prayer, and meditation, and reading as they were wont to do, and upon this they trouble themselves, now this is not the duty of your condition, the duty of your condition at that time is to sanctify Gods name in your affliction and to quiet your heart under the hand of God and the duty of your condition is not to go to heare sermons now, but to think of what you have heard heretofore, the duty of your condition now is not to spend so much time in your closet in prayer as when you were in

health, and you are troubled for the want of this, we often trouble our selves about those duties that are not the duties of our present condition, and that makes them difficult, now wisdom in ordering our duties will much help to facilitate them.

7. Another Rule is this, In the performance of duties, you should ease your selves of the care of the success of what you do, about success, or discouragement for want of success; nothing makes our lives more troublesome, and our work more difficult than our carking care about success, I will do this and this, but I am afraid I shall not have success, or if I have success, not such as I desire, but now, if you would perform duties in a gracious manner, look to the duty perform that, and cast the care wholly upon God, it is enough for me to do what is required of me as a creature to do, and let God himself take care of that that belongs to him, and that is the success. I told you, in the opening of the ease, that there is certain success, and yet we might trouble our selves in carking about success; now if we can go on in performance of duty, and never be troubled about success, it will be exceeding easie, but Christians find sometimes that though they have been diligent in performance of duty, yet they do not find success, they find nothing comes of it, and this troubles them, & this makes them go heavily to the duty at another time, I but observe that whatever duty you perform, if you do not find present success you must not conclude that there will be no success, the carking about the success in things, makes the work extraordinary difficult, now if we could bring our hearts to this, Lord, I am where thou wouldst have me, and doing what thou wouldst have me, and as for the success that belongs not to my work but to thy self, I walk according to that that is thy will, and as for success I will leave that to thy self.

8. Another rule is this, do not tye your selves to what Christ doth not tie you unto; there are many Christians, bring upon themselves many snares that way, by tying themselves to that which Christ doth not tie them to, tying themselves to such a time of prayer, to spend so much time in such a duty, we must take heed of laying a yoke upon our selves, do not put a yoke upon Christs yoke. It is a great question to many, and its to me a question, whether in the Gospel there is required any Vows at all, to vow any thing that is not a duty before we have vowed it, indeed to strengthen our selves to do what God requires, as *David, I have sworn to keep thy righteous Laws*, we may engage our selves that way, but properly in the Law it was a free will Offering, but for a Vow now, I do not find that the Gospel hath any such thing, for men to bind themselves to that that they were not bound to before by the word. Indeed whatever we are bound to by the word, that we are to engage our selves to the utmost, but now to bind our selves to any thing else, as that we will as long as we live keep such a day, this will prove to be a snare to you, God requires it not, it may be that day that you would observe for one duty, God may require it for another duty, may be you will keep a day of fast for such a great deliverance, for such a great mercy, certainly, it may prove a snare unto you, God may call you to another duty on that day, to the duty of thanksgiving. Many will vow to keep such a day, and when they have vowed it, they know not how to go back. And so many will vow they will do so much every morning, and so much that day; this may bring a snare upon you labor to do all what you can for Christ all the day long, consider your duties, and lay the word upon you, but to put upon your selves that which Christ

puts you not upon, it is that that makes the duties of Religion very tedious, and many have done it that way, not foreseeing the inconveniences that may come upon it, and yet they dare not go back. Therefore I would rather advise Christians, to take heed of such things as those are, but to walk in the way of Christ according to that the Lord requires for the present, and not to bring themselves into a snare, and so they shal make the way of God more easie.

9. Another Rule is this, Take all advantages, take all opportunities and advantages, all the gales of Gods Spirit, do not neglect the opportunities you have, the neglect of opportunities may bring us to woful difficulties, As in voyages, if a Marriner neglect the opportunity of the gale of wind, it is a difficult voyage, and then he cries out, I may thank my self for all this, had I taken such an opportunity, such a wind, then I had been freed from this hardship that now I meet withall: So it is with a Christian, many times the spirit of God comes with a gracious gale, and gives them opportunity to go on with cheerfulness in the waies of God, hadst thou taken the opportunity, the gale of the spirit, Oh, what a deal of trouble mightest thou have avoided? Those that are watchful for al opportunities find the waies of God easie. It was the speech of *Alexander*, because he carried things so easie as he did, & in a little time conquered al the world, when it was asked him, how he could do so great things, and carry on things with so great ease? his answer was, by neglecting nothing, he meant, by neglecting no advantage. There are many men, that when God helps them a little, they carry the work on with ease, but then they do not follow on their work, and so they bring themselves into streights. As

now we cry out of these wars, what a great deal of trouble they put the Nation to, and one main thing is, for want of taking advantages, and following advantages, We say sometimes, Oh, if such a victory had been followed, such a victory that we had at *Brainford*, and *York*, and other places we might have delivered our selves from abundance of trouble, and tediousness of war; but when God gives advantages and we do not follow them, no marvel that we find trouble: So it is with many Christians, you find many troubles in Religion, Oh, it is because you do not follow your advantages, if you had ever since you were young, and ever since God revealed himself to you, followed the gale of Gods spirit, your old age might have been spent in nothing but gales of joy, comfort, and the like, but now no marvel you act with so much difficulty in the waies of God.

10. Another Rule is this, Preserve all your experiences that you have had of the goodness of Gods waies, when your hearts have been most enlarged, and you have walked most close with God, and God hath come in to your soul: Preserve those experiences, keep them by, that they may help you against an ill day, it may there be may be a time a coming, that you may be in spirituall desertion and that may be grievous to you, but if you had kept the experiences you had of God when your heart kept close to God, it would much help you, & sweeten your hearts, to think of the daies of old. As *David* when he was in desertion, he would many times be thinking of the daies of old: So if Christians would be very careful to observe and lay up all the experiences that they have of God and his waies, the sweet and good of them, it would mightily facilitate them in holy duties, and be a

continual

continuall Cordial to them, and put spirits into them, to make them go on with ease in any duty God requires of them.

11. Another Rule is this, Take heed in any duty of disturbing passion, the disturbance of passion puts people out of frame, that they are fit for nothing when they are passionate, passionate with God, passionate with men, because they cannot have what they would have, fling up all. As Children, that when they cannot have their desires, fling away all, this makes every thing hard, but if you could but keep your selves in a constant quietness, you should have every condition and every duty delightful but I have spoken of that (you know) of the evil effects of it, and of meekness, & the gracious effects of that, but I bring it only now as a rule, that you may present all these rules together. As now suppose a company that are in a Boat, and there cometh a strong wind and tosseth the Boat, you shall have some silly people, that wil be shrieking out, and mightily troubled, and through their passion will be rising up in the Boat, and be ready to tumble down all through their passionate carriage in the Boat, whereas those that have skil, wil sit stil, and be quiet, and give up themselves to the stream, and that is the best way to come with the greatest ease, you make the Boatmans labor so much the more difficult, by your unquietness in the Boat; So certainly, you make the work of God more difficult when your hearts are unquiet. Let the thing be what it wil, you wil say, Oh, no bodies condition is so as mine, Certainly, your unquietness wil not help you, you wil not come the sooner to your landing place, if people toss from one side of the Boat to the other, and be unruly in their carriage, they wil not come the sooner to their landing place, the
quieter

quieter they sit in the Boat, the sooner they will come to land. So it is in a Christians course, he must not think to come to have his desires satisfied by his froward carriage, to be angry with God or man, or the means, that they do not work as they would have them, but the quieter they sit, and give up themselves to God, the sooner they come to their desires.

12. Another Rule is this, Communion with the Saints, spirituall Communion, Heavenly Communion, not frothy Communion, but a spiritual holy gracious communion with the Saints, wil facilitate the waies of God very much, the experience of this is very much, I do not know how it comes to pass, but certainly, now there is a great deal less communion between Gods people than formerly the times have been, when some that have been alone, have bin striving and tugging, and could not get their hearts into any good frame, they have come but into the company of Gods people, & laid their experiences together, and warmed themselves together, and then they have gone away, and they have thought nothing too hard that God should require of them to do or to suffer, they would go into their closets and pour out their hearts, if there were trouble in the Family, between Wife and Husband, in regard of passion, when they have been amongst Gods people, they could carry themselves in a gracious manner, Oh! communion, much communion with the Saints of God, it is that that facilitates the waies of Religion. We know in travelling, if a man be travelling a journey all alone especially if he have wind and weather against him, his way is tedious to him, very hard and grievous, and he is tired in his journey: but now, if he travel and have good company, and good discourse, and is joyfull, and

and cheerful when he is going, his journey is nothing, when he comes to the Inn, he saith, I thank God, I am not weary at al, Why is it so? the journey is long, I but the company is good, the discourse is good, and that makes it easie: So it is in our journey to Heaven, we complain of tediousness in our journey, Why is it? because we love to be alone. As many that are of a dumpish disposition, loving alwaies to be alone, there is a time indeed that people should be alone, & they have sweet refreshings from God that way, but there is a time to have Society with the Saints, and it is an ordinance appointed by God for the facilitating of Gods waies, while we are passing in the wilderness in our way to Heaven, and therefore make Conscience of that, to have Communion with the people of God, to spiritualize your Communion, and make what use you can of them to help you in your Christian course.

13. Another Rule is this, Exercise much Faith, Faith doch facilitate every action as Unbelief makes every thing difficult, let a man be put upon any duty if he have an unbelieving heart, it is difficult, Why? because before he comes to it, he saith, I shal never go through with it, and therefore comes heavily to it, all the while his unbelief prevails, his work goes heavily on, but let a man come to a work, and come to purpose, A man of confidence, and of spirit, he saith, let me take such a thing, another man he is toying & laboring, and he saith, I shal never bring it to any thing, but now another man, that is of a lively construction, saith he, let me come to it, and he carries it on with ease; and the truth is, when Christians see Gods call to any work, they should not pore upon the difficulty, but exercise Faith, and come

with courage to the duty, and God will carry you through, God that calls me to a work, he will give me strength in the work, and therefore let me go to the work as if I were carried through it already, go on with confidence and resolution; and take heed of Unbelief, up and be doing, and the Lord will be with you, so do you say to your souls when you are discouraged in the work, Oh, such and such have miscarried, and how shall so weak a soul as I do? Well, up and be doing, and the Lord will be with you.

14. Lastly, Do not satisfy your selves that you have grace, but labor to have strength of grace, that is easie to a strong man that is hard to a weak, now Christians should not satisfy themselves with Gods grace, God hath begun grace in thee, you will say, he that hath the least dram of grace, it will carry him to Heaven, I but it is a great deal of grace that must make the waies of Religion easie and delightful to thee: Therefore look into the word, and when thou dost exercise Faith, or make use of any Ordinance, Do it for the encrease of grace, for strengthening thy self, strengthen those weak things that are in thee, that thou maist go on steadily in the waies of Religion, and know to that end, that though thou beest never so weak, yet there is strength enough to be had. Look into the word of God, and you shall find there, that there is a most glorious strength that is possibly to be attained unto by Christians, in *Epbes. 1. 18, 19.* that place that we have often made use of, *What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward which beleeve, according to the working of his mighty power.* Mark this Text, it is not only meant of the greatness of Gods power in working Faith in us, but the greatness of his power toward us who do now beleeve, God doth put forth power, greatness of power, and exceeding

exceeding greatness of mighty power, and the same that he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at the right hand of God. Thou mai'st come to have by the exercise of Faith, the power of God put forth, his almighty power to give thee Faith, so now by the exercise of Faith, thou mai'st have the power of God, the greatness of his Power the mighty power of God, and the exceeding greatness of the mighty power of God, and the same that God put forth when he raised Christ from the dead, & set him at the right hand of the Father. Thou sai'st, thou hast a dead heart, but wilt not the power of God that raised Christ from the dead raise thy heart, exercise Faith, Lord, I go about such a business, it is difficult because of the hardness of my heart, But Lord, wilt not the power that raised Christ from the Grave, raise my dead heart. And so, Lord I have a heart sunk down to the things of the world, I but Lord hast thou not promised to put forth the same power into the hearts of thy people, that set Jesus Christ at thy right hand? Wilt not that power raise up my heart to Heaven, and give me an heavenly heart? Now here is, strengthening of thy Faith from the word of God, and that strength that the Scripture holds forth, that God himself will put forth into the heart of his people upon the exercise of Faith. And so in *Ephes. 3. 16.* *That he will grant unto you, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man,* what a heap of expressions are here! therefore I put you upon this; not to content your selves with weak grace, for there is abundance of strength, not only the strength in Christ, but the strength that is conveyed into the heart by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, it is one thing for Christ himself to look upon you, as having a fulness of all strength in him, and for

Christ to come and assist you. As now a man that hath a weak Child, he may come with his hand and enable the Child to do that which he could not do, but the strength that I speak of now is, as when one that was a Child before is made a strong man, and hath Marrow put into his Bones, and Blood into his Veins; so this strength is such a strength, that is the Riches of his Glory, according to the inward man, Mark, First, Here is strength. Secondly, Here is strength in the inward man, strength in the outward man is not so much as the inward man. Thirdly, Here is strengthened with might. Fourthly, This strength is by the Spirit, now the Scripture useth that word *Spirit* to express strength by. *Their Horses are not Spirit, but Flesh.* And then again, It is by the Spirit of God. And then it is according to the Riches of the Spirit of God, such strength and such might, and the Spirit of God in the inward man, such as shall shew forth the riches of Gods Spirit, and then Lastly, The riches of his Glory: So that the Saints may come to have in them such strength in the inward man, with such might by the Spirit of God, and according to the riches of God, and the riches of his Glory; you must not satisfie your selves til you find such a work of Gods grace in you, as may manifest the riches of the glory of Gods power. Now Christians, Do you work so, as by your strength in the waies of Religion, you do manifest the riches of the Glory of Gods power? If you do, then certainly the waies of Religion will be easie to you, And then another Scripture, which is to shew you that there is a great deal of strength to be had to enable you to go on, is that in the 1. of the *Collossians* and ver. 11. *Strengthened with all might, through his glorious power, unto all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness,*

here is strengthened with might, strengthened with all might, and this according to Gods power, and according to his glorious power; and unto all patience, and long suffering, with joyfulness; mark, when we come to have strength from God, that is, when we come to the hardest things, to exercise patience, then we have patience and all patience, and joyfulness, and giving thanks to the Father and nothing but thankfulness and joyfulness, though our condition be such as needs patience. Now these rules being put together, they may make the way of Christ easy, you may run the waies of Gods commandments, and go leaping to Heaven, and certainly, the more easy, and the more sweet they be unto you, the more sweet will they be to others, and you will bring a better report upon the waies of religion, and make the waies of God amiable and lovely unto others. We consider what hath been sayed in this text, Many truths you cannot but acknowledge that they nearly concerne you, now know, that God will require this text at our hands; this invitation of Christ, *come to me, al ye that are weary & heavy laden, & I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you, and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden light.* The truth is, the same and the very marrow of the Gospel is in this invitation of Christ, and therefore I have laboured, to shew you as fully as I could, what the spirit of God doth intend in this invitation, and to lay before you all those truths that are here, and have laboured to work them upon your hearts, hoping that the impression of divers things that have been delivered from this scripture, in the invitation of Christ, are upon your spirits, and shall remaine in many of your souls, even to the day of Christ, so that Jesus Christ when he shall come again with another invitation

and say, come, come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, I say, Christ will look upon you, having the impression of this invitation upon your hearts. And certainly, Christ when he shall come to judgment, when poor souls shall bring this impression upon their hearts, he will entertain them with a great deal of cheerfulness, and he will give them another invitation, Christ saith now, come, come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy, and my burden light, doth this invitation prevaile? hath these arguments prevailed with your spirits? and do you keep the impression of these upon your spirits? can you if Jesus Christ were to come to judgment, shew the impressions of these invitations upon your hearts, and say Lord, thou hast invited us, and many arguments hath been used to draw us unto thee, and our spirits are come to thee? and behold now the impressions of those truths upon our hearts. Oh! if you shall be able at the day of judgment to shew the impressions of these truths upon your hearts, you will be happy, and then you shall have the other invitation, come ye blessed of my father, that will come fully upon you, the remembrance of the work of this invitation upon you, Oh! how sweet will it be to you? And for others that shall live wickedly when they shall come to that day, when Christ shall invite others unto him, come ye blessed of my father when they shall remember, that there was a time when we heard a blessed sweet invitation of Christ opened to us in the Ministry of the word, we heard Christ calling, Come, come, and professing that his yoke was easy and his burden light, and yet we followed after our lusts, and wicked sinful lusts and wicked sinful waies, and now we heare that the Saints that did come upon his invitation, that

they shal be blessed for ever, but Christ will not call us to him, we would not have his yoke upon us then, and therefore now we must be cast off, and have the iron yoke of the wrath, and vengeance, and curse of eternal displeasure upon us, Now the Lord perswade you to take those easy yokes of Christ upon you for the present, rather then Gods eternal wrath and displeasure should come to be your portion hereafter.

E I N I S.