
A
**DISCOURSE OF
CONSCIENCE.**

WHEREIN IS SET DOWNE THE
nature, properties, and differences thereof:
as also the way to get and keepe
a good Conscience.

The seventh Edition.



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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR WILLIAM PIRTAM KNIGHT, LORD
CHIEFE BARON OF HER MAIESTIES
Exchequer, Grace and Peace.



Ight Honourable, it cannot be unknowne to your selfe, or to any man of a daies experience, that it is thought a small matter to commit a sinne, or, lye in sins against a mans owne conscience. For many when they are tolde of their dutie in this point, reply and say, What, tell you me of Conscience? Conscience was hangd long agoe. But vlesse they take better heede, and preuent the danger by repentance, hangd conscience will renine and become both gibbet and hangman to them, either in this life, or the life to come. For Conscience is appointed of God to declare and put in execution

his iust iudgement against sinners: and as God cannot possibly be overcome of man, so neither can the iudgement of Conscience being the iudgement of God, be wholly extinguished. Indeede Satan for his part goes about by all meanes he can, to benumme the conscience: but all is nothing. For as the sicke man, when hee seemes to sleepe and take his rest, is inwardly full of troubles: so the benumbed and drouisie conscience wants not his secret pangs and terrors, and when it shall be roused by the iudgement of God, it waxeth cruell and fierce like a wilde beast. Againe, when a man sinnes against his conscience, as much as in him lyeth, he plungeth himselfe into the gulfe of desperation: for euery wound of the conscience, though the smart of it be little felt, is a deadly wound: and he that goes on to sinne against his conscience, stabbes and wounds it often in the same place: and all renewed wounds (as we know) are hardly or neuer cured. Thirdly, he that lyeth in sinnes against his conscience, cannot call vpon the name of God: for a guiltie conscience makes a man flie from God. And Christ saith, God heareth not sinners, vnderstanding by sinners such as goe on in their owne waies against conscience: and what can be more dolefull then to be barred of the inuocation of Gods name? Lastly, such persons after the last iudgement, shall haue not onely their bodies in torment, but the worme in their soule and conscience shall neuer die: and what will it profit a man to gaine the whole world by doing things against his owne conscience, and lose his owne soule?

Now, that men on this manner carelesse touching conscience, may see their folly and the great danger thereof, and come to amendment, I haue penned this small Treatise: and according to the ancient and landable custome, as also according to my long intended purpose, I now dedicate and present the same to your Lordship. The reasons which haue emboldened me to this enterpryse (all by-respects excluded) are these: Generall doctrine in points of religion is darke and obscure, and very hardly practised without the light of particular examples: and therefore the doctrine of conscience, by due right pertaines to a man of conscience; such an one as your Lordship is, who (others of like place not excepted) haue obtained this mercie at Gods hand to keepe faith and good conscience. Againe, considering that iustice and conscience haue alwaies bin friends: I am inducd to thinke that your Lordship being publicely set apart for the execution and maintenance of ciuill iustice, will approoue and accept a Treatise proponnding rules and precepts of conscience. Thus therefore craving pardon for my boldnesse, and hoping of your Lordships good acceptance, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace. 1596. Iune 14.

Your Lordships to command,

WILLIAM PERKINS.

A Treatise of Conscience.

CHAP. I.

What Conscience is.



Conscience is a part of the vnderstanding in all reasonable creatures, determining of their particular actions either with them or against them.

I say Conscience is a part of the vnderstanding, and I shew it thus: God in framing of the soule, placed in it two principal faculties, *Vnderstanding* and *Will*. Vnderstanding is that facultie in the soule, whereby we vse reason: and it is the more principall part seruing to rule and order the whole man: and therefore it is placed in the soule to be as the waggoner in the waggon. The will is another facultie whereby we doe will or nill any thing, that is, choose or refuse it. With the wil is ioyned sundry affections, as ioy, sorrow, loue, hatred, &c. whereby wee imbrace or eschew that which is good or euill. Now, conscience is not placed in the affections nor will, but in the vnderstanding: because the actions thereof stand in the vse of reason. Vnderstanding againe hath two parts. The first is that which stands in the view and contemplation of *truth* and *falsehood*: and goes no further. The second is that which stands in the view and consideration of euery particular action, to search whether it be *good* or *badde*. The first is called the *Theoricall*, the second the *practicall vnderstanding*. And vnder the latter is conscience to bee comprehended: because his proprietie is to iudge of the goodnesse or badnesse of things or actions done.

Againe, I say that Conscience is a part of the minde or vnderstanding, to shew that conscience is not a bare knowledge or iudgement of the vnderstanding (as *(b)* men commonly write) but a naturall power, faculty, or created qualitie, from whence knowledge and iudgement proceede as effects. This the Scriptures confirme, in that they ascribe sundrie workes & actions to conscience, as accusing, excusing, comforting, terrifying: which actions could not thence proceede, if conscience were no more but an action or acte of the minde. Indeede I grant, it may be taken for a kinde of actuall knowledge in the minde of man: but to speake properly, this knowledge must proceede of a power in the soule, the proprietie whereof is to take the principles and conclusions of the minde and apply them, and by applying either to accuse or excuse. This is the ground of all, and this I take to be conscience. If it be objected that conscience cannot be a naturall power, because it may be lost: I answer, if conscience be lost, it is onely in respect of the vse thereof, as reason is lost in the drun-

ken man, and not otherwise.

I adde, that the proper subiects of conscience are reasonable creatures, that is, men and Angels. Hereby conscience is excluded, first of all from bruit beasts: for though they haue life & sense, and in many things some shadowes of reason, yet because they want true reason, they want conscience also. Secondly, from God the creator, who being righteousnes it selfe, needeth not conscience, to order and gouerne his actions. And whereas *Peter* saith, *1. Pet. 2. 19.* that men must endure grieue wrongfully for conscience of God; his meaning is not to shew that God hath conscience, but that men are to suffer many wrongs, because their conscience bindeth them, in so doing to obey Gods will, which conscience directly respecteth.

And I say that conscience is in all reasonable creatures, that none might imagine that some men by nature haue conscience in them, some none at all. For as many men as there are, so many consciences there be: and euery particular man hath his owne particular conscience.

The proper end of conscience is, to determine of things done. And by this conscience is distinguished from all other gifts of the minde, as *intelligence*, *opinion*, *science*, *faith*, *prudence*. *Intelligence*, simply conceiues a thing to be or not to be: *opinion*, iudgeth a thing to bee probable or contingent: *science*, iudgeth to be certain and sure: *faith*, is a perswasion, whereby we beleuee things that are not: *prudence*, discerneth what is meete to be done, what to be left vndone, but *conscience* goes further yet then all these: for it determines or giues sentence of things done, by saying vnto vs, This was done, this was not done, this may be done, this may not be done; this was well done, this was ill done.

The things that conscience determines of, are a mans owne actions: his owne actions, I say. To be certain what another man hath said or done, it is commonly called knowledge: but for a man to be certain what he himselfe hath done or said, that is conscience. Again, conscience meddles not with generals, onely it deales in particular actions, and that not in some few, but in all.

The manner of consciences determination, is to set downe his iudgement either with the creature, or against it: I adde this clause, because conscience is of a diuine nature, and is a thing placed of God in the midst betweene him and man, as an arbitratour to giue sentence, and to pronounce either with man or against man vnto God. For otherwhiles, it consents and speakes with God against the man in whom it is placed: otherwhiles againe it consents with him, and speakes for him be-

fore the Lord. And hence comes one reason of the name of conscience. *Scire*, to know, is of one man alone by himselfe: and *conscire* is, when two at the least know some one secret thing either of them knowing it together with the other. Therefore the name *ovidens*, or *Conscientia*, Conscience, is that thing that combines two together, and makes them partners in the knowledge of one and the same secret. Now man and man, or man and Angel cannot be combined; because they cannot know the secret of any man vntlesse it be reuealed to them: it remains therefore that this combination is onely betweene man and God. God knowes perfectly al the doings of man, though they be neuer to hid and concealed: and man by a gift giuen him of God, knowes together with God, the same things of himselfe: and this gift is named Conscience.

CHAP. II.

Of the duties of Conscience.

THe proper actions or duties of conscience are two-fold: to giue testimony, or to giue iudgement, *Rom. 2. 15*.

Conscience giues testimony by determining that a thing was done, or it was not done, *Rom. 2. 15*. *Their conscience also bearing witness.* 2 *Cor. 1. 12*. *Our reuincing is the testimony of our conscience, that in, &c.*

Here we must consider three things: I. of what things conscience beares witness. II. in what manner. III. how long.

For the first, conscience beares witness of our thoughts, of our affections, of our outward actions.

That it beares witness of our secret thoughts, it appears by the solemne protestation which at sometime men vse; *In my conscience I neuer thought it*: whereby they signifie that they thinke some thing or they think it not, and that their consciences can tell what they thinke. Neither must this seeme strange. For there be two actions of the vnderstanding, the one is simply, which barely conceiueh or thinketh this or that: the other is a *reflecting* or doubting of the former, whereby a man conceiues or thinks with himselfe what he thinks. And this action properly pertaines to the conscience. The mind thinks a thought, now conscience goes beyond the mind, and knowes what the mind thinks, so as if a man would goe about to hide his sinfull thoughts from God, his conscience as it were another person within him, shall discouer all. By meanes of this second action, conscience may beare witness euen of thoughts, & from hence also it seemes to borrow his name, because conscience is a *science* or knowledge ioyned with another knowledge: for by it I conceiue and know what I know.

Again, conscience beares witness what the wils, and affections of men be in euery matter, *Rom. 9. 1*, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my Conscience bearing me witness by the holy Ghost,*

that I haue great heavines and continuall sorrow in my heart: for I could wish myselfe to bee separate from Christ for my brethren.

Lastly, it witnesseth what be mens actions, *Eccles. 7. 24*. *Oftentimes also thine heart knoweth, (that is, conscience witnesseth) that thou like-wise hast cursed others.*

The manner that conscience vseth in giuing testimony, stands in 2. things. First it obliues & takes notice of al things that we do: secondly, it doth inwardly and secretly with the heart, tell vs of them all. In this respect it may fitly be compared to a Notarie, or a Register that hath alwaies the penne in his hand, to note and record whatsoever is said or done: who also because he keeps the rolles and records of the court, can tell what hath bin said or done many hundred yeares past.

Touching the third point, How long conscience beares witness: it doth continually; not for a minute, or a day, or a moneth, or yeare, but for euer; when a man dies, conscience dieth not: when the body is rotten in the graue, conscience lieth & is safe and sound: & when we shall rise againe, conscience shall come with vs to the barre of Gods iudgement, either to accuse or excuse vs before God, *Rom. 2. 15, 16*. *Their conscience bearing witness at the day when God shall iudge the secrets of men by Iesus Christ.*

By this first dutie of conscience, wee are to learne three things. The first, that there is a God: and wee may be led to the sight of this euen by comon reason. For conscience beares witness of what? Of thy particular doings. But against whom or with whom doth it giue testimony? thou maiest feelee in thy heart that it doth it either with thee or against thee. And to whom is it a witness? to men or Angels? that cannot be, for they cannot heare the voice of conscience they cannot receiue consciences testimony, nay they cannot see what is in the heart of man. It remains therefore that there is a spirituall substance, most wise, most holy, most mighty, that sees all things, to whom conscience beares record, & that is God himselfe. Let Atheists barke against this as long as they will: they haue that in them that will conuince them of the truth of the Godhead, will they nill they, either in life or death.

Secondly we learne that God doth watch ouer all men by a speciall providence. The master of a prison is knowne by this to haue care ouer his prisoners, if hee send keepers with them to watch them and to bring them home againe in time conuenient: and so Gods care to man is manifest in this, that when he created man and placed him in the world, he gaue him conscience to bee his keeper, to follow him alwaies at his heeles, and to dogge him (as we say) and to prie into his actions, and to beare witness of them all.

Thirdly, hence we may obserue Gods goodness & loue to man. If he do any thing amisse, he sets his conscience first of all to tell him of it secretly: if the he amend, God forgives it: if

§. 1. Of the testimony of conscience.

Conscientia i. scientia cum alia scientia.

not, then afterward conscience must openly accuse him for it at the barre of Gods iudgement before all the Saints & Angels in heaven.

The second worke of conscience is to giue iudgement of thing done.

To giue iudgement is to determine, that a thing is wel done or ill done. Herein conscience is like to a iudge that holdeth an afsife, & takes notice of iudgements, and catcheth the most notorious malefactor that is, to hold vp his hand at the barre of his iudgement. Nay it is (as it were) a little God setting in the middle of mens hearts, arrainging them in this life as they shal be arraigned for their offences at the Tribunal seat of the euertling God in the day of iudgement. Wherefore the temporarie iudgement that is giuen by the conscience is nothing els but a beginning, or a fore-runner of the last iudgement.

Hence we are admonished to take speciall heed that nothing past lie heauie vpon vs, and that we charge not our conscience in the time to come with any matter. For if our conscience accuse vs, God will much more condemne vs, saith *S. Iohn. 1. Ioh. 3. 20.* because hee seeth all our actions most clearely, and iudgeth them more seuerely then conscience can. It shal bee good therefore for all men to labour that they may say with *Paul. 1. Cor. 4. 4. I know nothing by my selfe*, that they may stand before God without blame for euer.

Here we must consider two things: first, the cause that makes conscience giue iudgement: secondly, the manner how.

The cause is the binder of the conscience. The binder is that thing whatsoever, which hath power & authority ouer conscience to order it.

To bind, is to vrge, cause, and constrain it in euery action either to accuse for sinne, or to excuse for well doing: or to say, this may be done, or it may not be done.

That we may know what this phrase meaneth (*to be bound in conscience*) we must in mind consider conscience apart by it selfe from the binding power of Gods commandement. For then it hath liberty and is not bound either to accuse nor excuse, but is apt to doe either of them indifferently: but when the binding power is set once ouer the conscience, then in euery actio it must needs either accuse or excuse: euen as a man in a city or towne hauing his libertie, may goe vp and downe or not goe, where and when he will; but if his body be attached by the magistrate and imprisoned, then his former libertie is restrained, hee is bound and can goe vp and downe but within the prison, or some other allowed place.

The binder of conscience, is either proper or improper. Proper is that thing, which hath absolute and soueraigne power in it selfe to binde the conscience. And that is the word of God, written in the booke of the old and new Testament. Reason, I. He which is the Lord of conscience, by his word and lawes binds conscience: but God is the onely Lord of confi-

ence: because he once created it, and he alone gouernes it: and none but he knowes it: therefore his word & lawes only binde conscience properly. II. He which hath power to saue or destroy the soule for the keeping and breaking of his lawes, hath absolute power to bind the soule and conscience by the same lawes: but the first is true of God alone, *Iames 4. 12. There is one Law-giner which is able to saue & destroy. Eja. 32. 22. The Lord is our iudge, the Lord is our lawginer, the Lord is our king, and he will saue us.* Therefore the word of God alone by an absolute and soueraigne power binds conscience. Because this point is cleare of it selfe, further prooffe is needlesse.

Hence we are taught sundrie points of instruction. I. Such as are ignorant among vs must labour to get knowledge of Gods word, because it binds conscience. Neither will the plea of ignorance serue for excuse: because, whether we know Gods lawes or know them not, they still binde vs. And we are bound not only to do them, but whē we know them not, we are further bound not to bee ignorant of them, but to seeke to know them. If we had no more sinnes, our ignorance were sufficient to condemne vs. II. Gods word is to be obeyed, though wee should offend all men, yea lose all mens fauour, and suffer the greatest damage that may be, euen the losse of our liues. And the reason is at hand; because Gods word hath this prerogative to bridle, binde, and restrain the conscience. III. Whatsoeuer we enterprife or take in hand, we must first search whether God giue vs libertie in conscience, and warant to doe it. For if we do otherwise, conscience is bound presently to charge vs of sinne before God. Lastly, we doe here see how dangerous the case is of all Time-seruants that will liue as they list, and be of no certain religion till differences and dissentions therein be ended, and they haue the determination of a generall Councell: for whether these things come to passe or no, certes it is that they are bound in conscience to receiue and beleue the ancient, Prophetically, and Apostolicall doctrine touching the true worship of God, and the way to life euertlasting, which is the true religion. The same is to be said of al drowfie Protestants, and luke-warme gospellers, that vse religion not with that care and conscience they ought, but onely then and so farre forth as it serues for their turnes, commonly neglecting or despising the assemblies where the word is preached: & seldom frequenting the Lords table vnles it be at Easter. Like silly wretches they neither see nor feelee the constraining power, that Gods word hath in their consciences.

Gods word is either Law, or Gospel. The Law is a part of Gods word of things to be done, or to be left vndone. And it is three-fold; Morall, Iudiciall, Ceremoniall.

Morall law concerns duties of loue, partly to God and partly towards our neighbour: it is contained in the Decalogue or ten commandments,

S. 2. Of
conscience
iudgement,

S. 3. Of
the binding
of the
conscience.

S. 2. Of the
morall
binding.

dements; and it is the very law of nature written in all mens hearts (for substance, though not for the manner of propounding) in the creation of man: and therefore it bindes the consciences of al men at all times, even of blind and ignorant persons that neither know the most of it, nor care to know it. Yet here must be remembered three exceptions or cautions. I. When two commandements of the morall law are opposite in respect of vs; so as we cannot do them both at the same time; the lesser commandement giues place to the greater, and doth not binde or constraine for that instant. Example. I. God commands one thing, and the magistrate commands the flat contrarie; in this case which of these two commandements is to be obeyed, (b) Honor God, or, Honor the Magistrate? the answer is, that the latter must giue place to the former, and the former alone in this case must be obeyed: *Mat. 23. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God, Iudge yee.* II. The fourth commandement prescribes rest on the Sabbath day: now it fallies out that at the same time a whole towne is set on fire, and the sixth commandement requires our helpe in sauing our neighbours life and goods. Now of these two commandements which must be obeyed? for both cannot. The answer is, that the fourth commandement at this time is to giue place, & the sixth commandement alone bindes the conscience: so as then (if need should require) a man might labour all the day without offence to God. *Mat. 9. 13. I will haue mercy and not sacrifice.* And the rule must not bee omitted, That charitie towards our neighbour is subordinate to the loue of God, and therefore must giue place to it. For this cause the commandement concerning charitie must giue place to the commandement concerning loue to God: and when the case so falls out, we must either offend our neighbour or God, we must rather offend our neighbour than God.

III. Caution. When God giues some particular commandement to his people, therein dispending with some other commandement of the morall law, for that time it bindes not. For euen the morall commandement, must be conceived with this condition, *Except God command otherwise.* Example. I. The sixth commandement is, Thou shalt not kill: but God giues a particular commandement to *Abraham*; *Abraham* offer thy Son *Isaac* in sacrifice to me. And this latter commandement at that instant did bind *Abraham*; and he is therefore commended for his obedience to it. II And when God commanded the children of *Israel* to compass *Ierico* seuen daies, and therefore on the Sabbath; the fourth commandement prescribing the sanctifying of rest on the Sabbath, for that instant and in that action did not bind conscience.

III. Caution. One and the same commandement in some things bindes the conscience more straightly, & in doing some other things

lesse, *Gal. 6. 10. Doe good to all men, but especially to them which are of the household of faith.* Hence it ariseth, that though all finnes be mortall and deserue eternall death, yet all are not equall, but some more gricuous then other.

Iudiciall lawes of *Moses* are all such as prescribe order for the execution of iustice and iudgement in the common wealth. They were specially giuen by God, and directed to the *Iewes*; who for this very cause were bound in conscience to keepe them all: and if the common wealth of the *Iewes* were now standing in the old estate, no doubt they should continue still to bind as before.

But touching other nations and specially Christian Common wealths in these daies, the case is otherwise. Some are of opinion, that the whole iudiciall law is wholly abolished, and some againe run to the other extream, holding that iudiciall lawes bind Christians as straightly as *Iewes*: but no doubt they are both wide: and the safest course is to keepe the meane betwene both. Therefore the iudiciall lawes of *Moses* according to the substance and scope thereof must be distinguished in which respect they are of two sorts. Some of them are lawes of (c) particular equitie, some of (d) common equitie. Lawes of particular equitie, are such as prescribe iustice according to the particular estate and condition of the *Iewes* Common-wealth and to the circumstances thereof, time, place, persons, things, actions. Of this kind was the law, that the brother should raise vp seede to his brother, and many such like: and none of them bind vs, because they were framed and tempered to a particular people.

Iudiciall of common equitie, are such as are made according to the lawe or instinct of nature common to all men: & these in respect of their substance, binde the consciences not only of the *Iewes*, but also of the Gentiles: for they were not giuen to the *Iews*, as they were *Iewes*, that is, a people receiued into the covenant aboute all other nations, brought from *Egypt* to the land of *Canaan*, of whom the *Messias* according to the flesh was to come; but they were giuen to them as they were mortall men, subiect to the order and lawes of nature as all other nations are. Again, iudiciall lawes, so farre forth as they haue in them the generall or common equitie of the law of nature are morall; and therefore binding in conscience, as the morall law.

A Iudiciall law may be knowne to be a law of common equitie, if either of these two things be found in it. First, if wise men not onely among the *Iewes*, but also in other nations, haue by naturall reason and conscience iudged the same to be equal, iust, and necessary, and withall haue iustified their iudgement by enacting lawes for the common wealths, the same in substance with sundry of the iudiciall lawes giuen to the *Iewes*: And the Roman Emperors among the rest, haue done this most excellently, as wil appeare by conferring their laws

See §. Of
iudiciall
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c. Teris
particula-
ria
d. Teris
communia.

The morall law is vnchangeable in respect of that eternall iustice which it prescribeth; yet is it changeable as it is applied to some particular actions & cases, & in that respect it admits a dispensation, and no otherwise. b. 1. Com. c. 5. Com.

Gen. 22. 2.

Iosh. 6.

with the lawes of God. Secondly, a Iudiciall hath common equity, if it serue directly to expaine and confirme any of the ten precepts of the Decalogue: or, if it serue directly to maintaine and vphold any of the three estates, of the family, the Common-wealth, the Church. And whether this be or not it will appeare, if we do but consider the matter of the law, & the reasons or considerations vpon which the Lord was moued to giue the same vnto the Iewes. Now to make the point in hand more plaine, take an example or two. It is a Iudiciall law of God that murtherers should be put to death: now the question is, whether this law for substance bee the common equitie of nature binding the conscience of Christians or no? and the answer is, that without further doubting it is so. For first of all, this law hath bin, by common consent of wise law-giuers, enacted in many countries and kingdomes besides the Iewes. It was the law of the Egyptians, and^a old Grecians, of *Draco*, of *Numa*, and of many of the Romane Emperours. Secondly, this law serues directly to maintaine obedience to the sixth commandement: and the consideration vpon which the law was made is so weightie, that without it a common-wealth cannot stand. The murtherers blood must be shed (saith the Lord, *Numb. 35. 33, 34.*) *because the whole land is defiled with blood*, and remaineth vncleaned till his blood be shed. Again, it was a iudiciall law among the Iewes, that the adulterer and adulteresse should die the death: now let the question be whether this law concerne other nations, as being deriued from the common law of nature: and it seemes to be so. For first, wise men by the light of reason and naturall conscience haue iudged this punishment equall and iust. *Israh* before this iudiciall law was giuen by *Moses*, appointed *Tamar* his daughter in law to be burnt to death for playing the whoore. *Nebuchadnezzar* burnt *Echad* and *Zedechias* because they committed adulterie with their neighbours wiues. By *Draco*s law among the Grecians this sinne was death, and also by the law of the Romanes. Again, this law serues directly to maintaine necessary obedience to the seauenth commandement: and the considerations vpon which the law was giuen are perpetuall, and serue to vphold the common wealth, *Leuit. 20. 22.* *Ye (saith the Lord) shall keepe all my ordinances and my iudgements (the law of adulterie being one of them.)* Now marke the reasons, 1. *Left the land spue you out.* 2. *For the same sinnes I haue abhorred the nations.*

The Ceremoniall law is that which prescribeth rites and orders in the outward worship of God.

It must be considered in three times. The first, is the time before the comming and death of Christ: the second, the time of publishing the Gospel by the Apostles: the third, the time after the publishing of the Gospel.

In the first, it did binde the consciences of

the Iewes, and the obedience of it was the true worship of God: But it did not then binde the conscience of the Gentiles: for it was the partition wall betweene them and the Iewes. And it did continue to binde the Iewes till the very death and ascension of Christ. For then the hand-writing of ordinances which was against vs, was nailed on the crosse and cancelled. And when Christ saith, *that the Law and the Prophets endured till Iohn*, *Luk. 16. 16.* his meaning is not, the ceremoniall law ended then: but that things foretold by the Prophets, and obscurely prefigured by the ceremoniall law, began then more plainly to bee preached and made manifest.

The second time was from the ascension of Christ, till about the time of the destruction of the Temple and the Citie: in which, ceremonies ceased to binde conscience, and remained indifferent. Hereupon *Paul* circumcised *Timothy*: the Apostles after Christs ascension, as occasion was offered were present in the Temple, *Act. 3. 1.* And the Council of Ierusalem tendering the weaknes of some beleeuers, decreed that the Church for a time should abstaine from things strangled, and blood. And there was good reason of this, because the Church of the Iewes was not yet sufficiently conuicted, that an end was put to the ceremoniall law by the death of Christ.

In the third time, which was after the publishing of the Gospel, ceremonies of the Iewes Church became vnlawfull, and so shall continue to the worlds end.

By this it appeares, what a monstrous & miserable Religion the Church of Rome teacheth and maintaineth, which stands in ceremonies, partly heathenish, and partly Iewish.

As for the Gospel, I take it for that part of the word of God which promisseth righteousness and life euerlasting to all that beleue in Christ and withall commandeth this faith.

That we may the better know how the Gospel binds conscience, two points must be considered: one touching the persons bound, the other touching the manner of binding.

Persons are of two sorts: some bee called, some bee vncalled. Persons called are all such to whom God in his mercie hath offered the meanes of saluation & hath reuealed the Gospel in some measure more or lesse, by meanes either ordinary or extraordinary. All such I thinke are straightly bound in conscience to beleue and obey the Gospel. For that word of God whereby men shall bee iudged in the day of iudgement, must first of all binde their consciences in this life, considering absolution and condemnation is according to that which is done in this life: but by the Gospel, all men that haue bene called, shall be iudged as *Paul* saith, *Rom. 2. 16.* *God shall iudge the secrets of men by Iesus Christ, according to my Gospel.* And our Sauour Christ saith, *Ioh. 3. 18.* *He that beleueth not is already condemned.* It remaines therefore that the Gospel binds the consciences of such

a Eurip.
in Hecub.
b. Theor
dof. &
Archad.
1.3 C. de
Enil. au-
dien.

Gen. 28.
21.
Ier. 29.
23.
Iul. sect.
Item lex
Iulian.
publ. in-
dic.

Seft. 6.
Of the cere-
moniall law
binding.
August.
ep. 19. ad
Hieron.

Act. 16.3

Act. 15.
29.

5. Act. 7.
Of the
Gospel
binding.

men in this life. By this very point we are all put in mind not to content our selves with this, that we have a liking to the Gospel, and to believe it to be true (though many Protestants in these our daies think it sufficient both in life and death, if they hold that they are to be saved by faith alone in Christ without the merit of mans workes) but we must goe yet further, and enter into a practise of the doctrine of the Gospel as well as of the precepts of the morall law; knowing that the Gospel doth as well binde conscience as the law; and if it be not obeyed, will as well condemne.

Men vnalled, are such as neuer heard of Christ, by reason the Gospel was neuer reuealed vnto them, nor meanes of reuelation offered. That there haue bin such in former ages, I make manifest thus. The world since the creation may be distinguished into foure ages. The first, from the creation to the flood: the second, from the flood to the giuing of the Law: the third, from the giuing of the Law to the death of Christ: the fourth, from the death of Christ to the last iudgement. Now in the three former ages there was a distinction of the world into two sorts of men, whereof one was a people of God; the other no people. In the first age, in the families of *Seth, Noe, &c.* were the sonnes of God, in all other families the sonnes of men, *Gen. 6. 2.* In the second age were the sonnes of the flesh and the sonnes of the promise, *Rom. 9. 7.* In the third, Iewes and Gentiles: the Iewes being the Church of God, all nations beside no Church. But in the last age this distinction was taken away, when the Apostles had a commission giuen them that was neuer giuen before to any, namely, to goe teach not only the Iewes, but all nations. Now this distinction arose of this, that the Gospel was not reuealed to the world before the coming of Christ, as the Scriptures witness. The Prophet saith, *Esay 52. 14.* that *kings shall shut their mouthes at Christ, because that which had not bin told thē they shal see, & that which they had not heard shall they understand:* And *55. 5.* that *a nation that know him not shall run vnto him.* Paul saith to the Ephesians that in the former times they were without God, and without Christ, *strangers from the covenant, Eph. 2. 12.* And to the Athenians he saith, that the times before the coming of Christ, were times of ignorance, *Act. 17. 30.* And that it may not be thought that this ignorance was affected, Paul saith further, that God in times past suffered the Gentiles to walke in their owne wates, *Act. 14. 16.* and that the myserie of the Gospell was kept secret from the beginning of the world, and is now in the last age reuealed to the whole world, *Rom. 16. 25.* Some alledge that the Iews being the Church of God, had traffique with all nations; and by this meanes spread some little knowledge of the Messias through the whole world. I answer againe, that the conference & speech of Iewish merchants with forrainers was no sufficient means to publish the promises of saluation

by Christ to the whole world: first, because the Iewes for the most part haue alwaies bin more ready to receive any new and false religion then to teach their own: secondly, because the very Iewes themselves, though they were well acquainted with the ceremonies of their religion, yet the substance thereof, which was Christ figured by externall ceremonies, they knew not: and hereupon the Pharises when they made a Proselyte, they made him tenne times more the child of the diuell then themselves: Thirdly, because men are seldome or neuer suffered to professe or make any speech of their religion in forraigne countries. A gain, if it be alledged that the doctrine is set downe in the bookes of the old Testament, which men through the whole world might haue read, searched, and knowne if they would: I answer, that the keeping of the bookes of the old Testament, was committed to the Iewes alone. *Rom. 3. 2.* and therefore they were not giuen to the whole world, as also the Psalmist testifieth, *Psal. 147. 19. 20.* *He sheweth his word vnto Iacob, his statutes and his iudgements vnto Israel: he hath not dealt so with euery nation: neither haue they knowne his iudgements.*

Now touching such persons as haue not so much as heard of Christ, though they are apt and fit to be bound in conscience by the Gospel, in as much as they are the creatures of God; yet are they not indeed actually bound till such time as the Gospel bee reuealed, or at the least, meanes of reuelation offered. Reasons hereof may be these. I. Whatsoeuer doctrine or law doth binde conscience, must in some part be knowne by nature, or by grace, or by both; the vnderstanding must first of all conceiue, or at the least haue meanes of conceiuing, before conscience can constrain; because it bindeth by vertue of knowne conclusions in the minde. Therefore things that are altogether vnkowne and vnconceiued of the vnderstanding, doe not binde in conscience; now, the Gospel is altogether vnkowne and vnconceiued of many, as I haue already proceeded; and therefore it binds not them in conscience. II. Paul saith, *Rom. 2. 12.* *They which sinne without the law [written] shall be condemned without the law;* therefore they which sinne without the Gospel, shall be condemned without the Gospel: and such as shall be condemned without the Gospel after this life, were not bound by it in this life. *Augustine* the most iudiciall Diuine of all the ancient Fathers, vpon these words of Christ: *But now they haue no excuse for their sinne,* saith on this manner. *A doubt may be moued, whether they to whom Christ hath not come, neither hath spoken vnto them, haue an excuse for their sinnes. For if they haue it not, why is it said that these (namely the Iewes) haue no excuse because he came and spake to them? and if they haue it, whether it be that their punishment may be taken away quite, or in part lessened. To these demands, to my capacie as the Lord shall inable mee, I answer, That they to whom Christ*

Ioh. 16.
22.
August.
tract. 89.
in Ioh.

came not, neither hath spoken unto them, haue an excuse, not of euery sin, but of this sin, that they haue not beleene in Christ. Again, it remains to inquire whether these, who before Christ came in his Church to the Gentiles, and before they heard his Gospel, haue bin or are preuented by death, may use this excuse. Doubtlesse they may, but they shall not therefore escape damnation. For whosoever haue sinned without the law, shall perish without the law.

As for the reasons which some of the Schoole-men haue alleaded to the contrarie, they are answered by all (4) men of the same order, & I will briefly touch the principal. First it is objected, that the holy Ghost shall iudge the world of sin, because they haue not beleene in Christ, Iob. 16.9. I answer, that by the world we must not vnderstand all and euery man since the creation, but all nations and kingdomes in the last age of the world to whom the Gospel was reuealed. Thus hath Paul expounded this word, Rom. 11. 12. *The fall of them is the riches of the world, & the diminishing of the is the riches of the Gentiles.* v. 15. *The casting of them away is the reconciliation of the world.* Secondly, it is objected, that the law binds all men in conscience, though the greatest part of it be vnknown to them. Ans. The law was once given to Adam and imprinted in his heart in his first creation, and in him, as being the roote of all mankind, it was given to all men: and as when he sinned, all men sinned in him, so when he was enlightened all were enlightened in him, and consequently when his conscience was bound by the law, all were bound in him. And though this knowledge be lost by mans default, yet the bond remains still on Gods part. Now the case is otherwise with the Gospel, which was neuer written in mans nature, but was giuen after the fall and is aboue nature. Here a further reply is made, that the couenant made with Adam, *The seede of the woman shall bruiſe thy serpents head,* was also made with his seede which is all mankind, and was afterward continued with Abraham to all nations. I answer, againe, that Adam was a roote of mankind onely in respect of mans nature with the gifts and sins thereof: he was no roote in respect of grace which is aboue nature, but Christ the second Adam. And therefore when God gaue the promise vnto him, and faith to beleue the promise, he did not in him giue them both to all mankind; neither, if Adam had afterward fallen from faith in the Messias, should all mankind again haue fallen in him. Moreouer, that the promise of grace was not made to Adams seede vniuersally but indefinitely, it appeares; because when God did afterward renew the couenant, he restrained it to the family of Noe and Abraham, and in Abrahams family it was restrained to Isaac, In Isaac (saith the Lord) shall thy seede be called: yea in the tenour of the couenant there is a distinction made of the seede of the woman and the seede of the serpent; which seed of the serpent is a part of mankind, and it is excluded from

the couenant. And whereas the Lord promised to Abraham that in his seede all the nations of the earth should be blessed, the promise must not be vnderstood of all men in euery age, but of all nations in the last age of the world. And thus Paul hath cleared the text, Gal. 3. 8. *The Scripture fore-seeing that God would iustifie the Gentiles through faith* (which was done after Christs ascension) *preached before the Gospel to Abraham, In thee shall all nations be blessed.* Lastly, it may be objected, that if any man be ignorant of the doctrine of saluation by Christ, it is through his owne fault; it is true indeede that all ignorance of the doctrine of saluation comes through mans fault and sinne: but sin must be distinguished; it is either personall, or the sinne of mans nature. Now in them that neuer heard of Christ, their ignorance in this point proceeds not of any personall sinne in them, but onely from the sinne of mans nature, that is, the first sinne of Adam common to all mankind, which sin is punished when God leaues men wholly to themselves. Now many things there be in men proceeding from this sinne, which neuertheless are no sinnes, as the manifold miseries of this life: and so I take the ignorance of things aboue mans nature altogether vnruealed, to be no sin, but a punishment of originall sinne.

Thus much of the persons which are bound by the Gospel: now let vs see how farre forth they are bound by it.

God in the Gospel generally reueales two points vnto vs: the first, that there is perfect righteousness and life euerlasting to be obtained by Christ: the second, that the instrument to obtaine righteousness and life eternall is faith in Christ. Moreouer when this Gospel is dispensed and preached vnto vs: God reueales vnto vs two points more: the first, that he will make vs particularly to be partakers of true righteousness and life euerlasting by Christ: the second, that he will haue vs without doubting to beleue thus much of our selves. And for this cause euery man to whom the Gospel is reuealed, is bound to beleue his own election, iustification, sanctification, and glorification in, and by Christ. The reasons and grounds of this point out of the word of God are these: I. 1 Iob. 3. 23. *This is his commandement that we beleene in the name of his Son Iesus Christ, and loue one another as he gaue vs commandement.* Now to beleue in Christ, is not confusedly to beleue, that he is a Redeemer of mankind, but withall to beleue that he is my Sauour, and that I am elected, iustified, sanctified, & shall be glorified by him. This is granted of all men, yea of the Papists themselves, which otherwise are enemies of this doctrine. For Lumbard saith, *To beleue in God, is by beleueing to loue, and as it were to gointo God: by beleueing to cleaue vnto him and as it were to be incorporate into his members.* II. Paul, Gal. 2. 16. first of all propounds a generall sentence, *That a man is not iustified by the workes of the Law, but by the faith of Christ.*

1 Thom.
2. 2. q. 10.
ut. I.

Gen. 3.
15.

Lumb. 1.
3 dist. 23.

1 Ioh
3. 8.

Afterward he addes a speciall application, *Enen we (namely Iewes) haue beleened in Iesus Christ, that we might be iustified by the faith of Iesus Christ:* and in v. 20. he descends more specially to apply the Gospel to himselfe, *I line (saith he) by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loued me, and giuen himselfe for me.* And in this kinde of application there is nothing peculiar to Paul, for in this very action of his he auoucheth himselfe to bee an example vnto vs, *1. Tim. 1. 16. For this cause (saith he) was I receiued to mercie, that Iesus Christ should shew first on me all long suffering, vnto the ensample of them which shall in time to come beleene in him to eternall life.* Again, *Phil. 3. 8. he saith, I thinke all things but lesse, that I might win Christ, and might be found in him not hauing mine own right cōsnes, but that which is through the faith of Christ, that I may know him and the vertue of his resurrection:* and afterward he addeth, *v. 15. Let vs, as many as be perfect, be thus minded.* III. Whatsoeuer we pray for according to Gods wil, we are bound to beleuee that it shal be giuen vnto vs, *Mark. 11. 24. Whatsoeuer ye desire when ye pray, beleuee that ye shall haue it, and it shall be done vnto you.* But we pray for the pardon of our finnes, and for life euerlasting by Christ; and that according to the will of God: Therefore wee are bound in conscience to beleuee the pardon of our finnes, and life euerlasting. IV. If God should speake particularly to any man, and say vnto him, *Cornelius, or Peter, beleuee thou in Christ, and thou shalt be saued;* this commandement should binde him particularly. Now when the Minister lawfully called, in the name and stead of God publisheth the Gospell to the congregation, that is as much as if God himselfe had spoken to them particularly, calling each of them by their names, and promising vnto them life euerlasting in Christ. *2. Cor. 5. 20. We as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did befeech you through vs, pray you in Christs stead, that ye be reconciled to God.*

It may be, and is obiected, that if euery man be bound in conscience to beleuee his owne election & saluation by Christ, then some men are bound to beleuee that which is false, because some there be euen in the midst of the Church, which in the counsell of God were neuer chosen to saluation. I answer, that this reason were good; if men were bound absolutely to beleuee their saluation without further respect or condition: but the bond is conditionall, according to the tenour of the covenant of grace: for we are bound to beleuee in Christ, if we would come to life euerlasting, or if we would be in the fauour of God, or if wee would be good disciples & members of Christ. I answer againe, that whatsoeuer a man is bound to beleuee, is true; yet not alwaies in the euent, but true in the intention of God that bindeth. Now the commandement of beleueing and applying the Gospell, is by God giuen to all within the Church; but not in the same maner to all. It is giuen to the Elect, that

by beleueing they might indeed be saued; God enabling them to do that which he commands. To the rest, whom God in iustice will refuse, the same commandement is giuen not for the same cause, but to another end, that they might see how they could not beleuee, and by this meanes be bereft of all excuse in the day of iudgement. God doth not alwaies giue commandements simply that they might be done, but sometimes for other respects, that they might be means of triall, as the commandement giuen to *Abraham* of killing *Isaac*: again, that they might serue to keepe men at the least in outward obedience in this life, & stop their mouths before the tribunall seat of God.

In that we are bound in conscience on this maner to beleuee the promises of the Gospell, with an application of the benefits thereof to our selues, sundry necessary & profitable points of instruction may be learned. The first, that the Popish Doctors abolish a great part of the Gospell, when they teach that men are bound to beleuee the Gospell onely by a Catholike faith, which they make to be nothing else but a gift of God, or illumination of the minde, whereby assent is giuen to the word of God that it is true; and more specially that *Iesus is Christ*, that is, an al-sufficient Saviour of mankind. All which the damned spirits beleuee: whereas the Gospell for the comfort and saluation of mens soules, hath a further reach, namely, to enioyne men to beleuee that the promise of saluation is not only true in it selfe, but also in the very person of the beleuer, as appears evidently by the Sacraments, which are as it were a visible Gospell, in which Christ with all his benefits is offered and applied to the particular persons of men: to the end, no doubt, that they might beleuee the accomplishment of the promise in themselves.

Secondly, we learne that it is not presumption for any man to beleuee the remission of his owne finnes: for to doe the will of God to which we are bound, is not to presume: now it is the will of God to which hee hath bound vs in conscience, to beleuee the remission of our owne finnes: and therefore rather not to doe it, is presumptuous disobedience.

Thirdly, wee are here to marke and to remember with care, the foundation of the vnfalible certainty of mans saluation. For if man be bound in conscience first to giue assent to the Gospell, and secondly to apply it to himselfe by true faith; then without doubt a man by faith may bee certainly perswaded of his owne election and saluation in this life, without any extraordinary reuelation: Gods commandements being in this and the like cases possible. For commandements are either Legal, or Euangelicall: Legal, shew vs our default, but giue vs no remedie: and the perfect doing of them according to the intent of the Law-giner, by reason of mans weaknesse and through mans default, is impossible in this world. As for Euangelicall commandements,

they haue this priuiledge, that they may and can be performed according to the intent of the Law-giuer in this life: because with the commandment is ioyned the inward operation of the spirit in the elect, to enable them to effect the dutie commanded: and the will of God is not to require absolute perfection at our hands in the Gospel as in the Law, but rather to qualifie the rigour of the law by the satisfaction of a Mediatour in our stead; and of vs (we being in Christ) to accept the vpright wil and indeauour for the deed; as the will to repent, & the will to beleue, for repentance and true faith indeed. Now then, if things required in the Gospel, be both ordinarie and possible; then for a man to haue an infallible certenty of his owne saluation, is both ordinarie and possible. But more of this point afterward.

Lastly, all such persons as are troubled with doubtings, distrustings, vnbeleefe, despaire of Gods mercy, are to learn & consider that God by his word bindes them in conscience to beleue the pardon of their owne sinnes be they neuer so grievous or many, & to beleue their owne election or saluation wherof they doubt. Men that are but ciuill hauecare to auoid robbing and killing, because God giues commandements against stealing and killing: why then should not we much more strue against our manifold doubtings and distrustings of Gods loue in Christ, hauing a commandement of God that cals vpon vs & binds vs to do so.

Thus we see how Gods word bindes conscience: now conscience being thus bound, againe bindes the man in whom it is.

The bond of conscience is called *guiltinesse*. Guiltinesse is nothing else but a worke of the conscience, binding euery sinner to the punishment of euerlasting death, before God for this or that sinne.

Thus much of the proper binder of the conscience: now follows the improper.

The improper binder is that, which hath no power at all or vertue in it selfe to binde conscience: but doth it onely by the authority and vertue of Gods word, or some part therof. It is threefold, Humane laws, an Oath, a Promise.

Touching humane lawes, the speciall point to be considered is, In what maner they binde. That this may in part be cleared, I will stand a while to examine & confute the opinion, that the very pillars of the popish Church at this day maintaine; namely, that *Ciuill and Ecclesiasticall iurisdiction haue a coactiue power in the conscience, & that the lawes made thereby doe as truly & properly binde* (as they speake) *to mortall and veniall sinne, as Gods lawe it selfe*. The arguments which commonly they vse are these:

Argum. 1. *Deut. 17. 12. That man that will do presumptuously, and not obey the (a) authority of the Priest, or Iudge, shall die: and thou shalt take away euill from Israel.* Here (say they) the precepts of the high Priest are (b) *imperia*, not admonitions or exhortations, & they binde in conscience; otherwise the transgressors thereof should not

haue bin punished so severely. *Ans.* The intent of this law (as a very childe may perceiue) is to establish the authority & right of the highest appeals for all matters of controuersie in the *Synedrion* or great Court at Ierusalem. Therefore the words alleadged do not giue vnto the priest a soueraigne power of making lawes, but a power of giuing iudgemēt of controuersies, and that according to laws already made by God himself: from which iudgement there might be no appeale. Now this power of determining doth not constraine conscience, but the outward man to maintaine order and peace. For what reason is there, that that sentence, which might be either a gain-saying of Gods law, or a mistaking of it, should bind the conscience to a sinne? Again, not euery one that refused to subiect themselves to the sentence of this court, were straight way guilty of sinne, (for this did *Jeremy* the Prophet, and Christ our Sauour, when the Iewes condemned them for wicked persons) but he that presumptuously despised the sentence, & by consequent the authority it selfe, which was the ordinance of God, was guilty. Lastly, the severity of the punishment, which is temporall death, doth not argue any power in the Iudge of binding conscience: this they might haue learned of their owne *Doctor Gerson*, who holdeth, that they that binde any man to mortall sin, must bee able to punish him with answerable punishment, which is eternall death.

Argu. 2. *Mat. 16. 19. Whatsoeuer ye shall binde in earth, shall be bound in heauen.* Here (say they) to binde, is to make lawes constraining conscience, according to *Mat. 23. 4. They bind heauie burdens, and lay them on mens shoulders.* *Ans.* The soueraigne power of binding, & loosing, is not belonging to any creature, but is proper to Christ, who had the keyes of heauen and hell: he openeth & no man shutteth, he shutteth and no man openeth, *Reu. 3. 7.* As for the power of the Church, it is nothing but a ministration of seruice whereby men publish and pronounce that Christ bindeth or looseth. Again, this binding standes not in the power of making lawes, but in remitting and retaining of mens sins, as the words going before declare. *v. 18. If thy brother sin against thee, &c. and Christ shews his own meaning when he saith, Whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained, Job. 20. 23.* Having before in the person of Peter promised them his honour, in this forme of words, *Mat. 16. 19. I will giue vnto thee the keyes of the Kingdome of heauen, whatsoever thou shalt binde vpon earth, shall be bound in heauen.* This which I say is approved by consent of ancient Diuines. Aug. *Psal. 10. 1. I. Remission of sin* (saith he) *is loosing* therefore by the law of contraries, binding is to holde sinne vnpardoned. *Mat. vpon Mat. c. 18. Whom they binde on earth, that is* (saith he) *leauie vnryed of the knottes of their sinnes.* *Lumbar* the Popish master of sentences, *The Lord* (saith he) *hath giuen to Priests power of binding and loosing, that is,*

Iter. 26.
11. 15.

Lib. de
vita. Spi-
rit. sect. 4.

Lib. 4.
dist. 18.
cap. 4.

Sec. 8. of
humane
lawes
binding.

Imperia

Imperia
by cōman-
dements.

a on Mat.
18.
b vpr
Iob.

of making manifest that men are bound or loosed. Again, both Origen, (a) *Augustine* & (b) *Theophylact* attribute the power of binding to all Christians, and therefore they for their parts, neuer dreamed that the power of binding should be an authority to make lawes. Lastly, the place *Mat. 23. 4.* ouerturnes the argument, for there the Scribes and Pharisees are condemned, because they laid vpon mens shoulders the burthens of their traditions, as means of Gods worship & things binding conscience.

Argu. 3. *Act. 15. 28, 29.* It seems good vnto vs & the holy Ghost, to lay no more burden on you then these necessary things, that ye abstaine from things offered to idols, and blood, and that which is strangled, and fornication. Here (say they) the Apostles by the instinct of the holy Ghost make a new law not for this or that respect, but simply to binde the consciences of the Gentiles, that they might bee exercised in obedience. And this is proved, because the Apostles call this law a burden, and call the things prescribed, necessary: and *S. Luke* tearmes them, the Commandements of the Apostles: and *Chrysostome* calls the Epistle sent to the Church, *Imperium*, that is, a lordly charge. To this they adde the testimonie of *Tertulian*, *Origen*, *Augustine*.

Ans. Though all be graunted, that the law is a burden imposed, a precept of the Apostles, a charge: againe, that things required therein are necessarie: yet will it not follow by good consequence, that this law simply bindes conscience, because it was given with a reservation of Christian libertie, so as out of the case of scandal, that is, if no offence were giuen to the weake Iewes, it might freely be omitted. And that will appeare by these reasons: First of all *Peter* saith, that it is a tempting of God to impose vpon the Gentiles the yoke of Iewish ceremonies: he therefore must needs be contrarie to himselfe, if he intend to binde mens consciences to abstinence from that which is strangled, blood, and things offered to Idols. A reply is made, that this abstinence is prescribed, not by the ancient law of *Moses*, but by a new Ecclesiasticall or Apostolicall authority. I answer againe, that a Mosaicall ceremonie is still the same thing, though it be stablished by a new authoritie. And whereas *Christ* by his death put an end to the ceremoniall law, it is absurd to thinke that the Apostles by their authority reuiued some part of it againe, & bound mens consciences thereto. Secondly, the Church of God in all places suffered this commandement to cease, which the faithfull seruants of God would neuer haue done, if they had bene perswaded that this law had bound conscience simply. It is answered, that this law ceased not because the giuing of offence vnto the Iewes ceased, but because it ceased vniuersally: yea, but it could not haue ceased vniuersally, if it had bound conscience, specially considering it was propounded to the Church without any mention or limitation of time. Thirdly, *Paul* was present in this Council: and

knew the intent of the law very well, & therefore no doubt he did not in any of his Epistles gaine-say the same. This beeing graunted, it cannot bee, that this should binde conscience out of the case of offence, for he teacheth the Corinthians that things offered to Idols may be eaten, so be it the weake brother be not offended. Heere it is answered, that when *Paul* writ this 1. Epistle to the Corinthians, this commandement of the Apostles touching things strangled and blood was not come vnto them. Well to grant all this, which cannot be pronounced, let it be answered, why *Paul* did not now deliuer it, & why he deliuered a doctrine contrary to that which he had decreed at Ierusalem, which was that the Gentiles should absolutely abstaine from things offered to Idols. As for the testimonies of the fathers they are abused. Indeede *Tertulian* saith plainly, that Christians in his daies abstained from eating of blood, and he perswades men to continue in so doing, because he is of opinion (beeing indeede farre deceiued) that this very law of the Apostles must last to the end of the world: which conceit if the Papist hold not, what meane they to build vpon him? *Origen* saith, that this law was very necessary in his daies: and no maruell. For by Idolithytes he vnderstands not things that haue bin offered to Idols, & are afterward brought to priuate houses, or to the market, as other common meats: but he vnderstands things that remaine consecrated to idols, & are no-where else vsed but in their temples, which we grant with him must for euer be avoided as meanes & instruments of idolatry. Whereas the law of the Apostles speaks onely of the first kinde. As for things strangled and blood, he takes them to be the diuels food: and for this cause he approues abstinence from them. And whereas *Augustine* saith, that it is a good thing to abstaine from things offered to idols, though it be in necessity; he must be vnderstood of the first kinde of Idolithytes which are yet remaining in the Idol-temples still consecrated vnto them, and not of the second, of which the Apostles law (as I haue said) must be vnderstood.

Argu. 4. *Ioh. 21. 16.* *Christ* saith to *Peter*, Feed my sheepe: that is, as the word importeth feede and rule my sheepe. Ans. This feeding and ruling stands not in the making new lawes, but in teaching and gouerning the Church of God according to the doctrine which they had received fro *Christ*. And this action of feeding is ascribed to all Christians, *Reuel. 2. 27.* who cannot thereupon challenge a power of making lawes to the conscience.

Argu. 5. *Ioh. 20. 21.* As my father sent mee, so I send you: But *Christ* was sent of his father not onely with power of preaching and ministering the Sacraments, but also with authority of commanding and giuing iudgement. Ans. If this kinde of reasoning may stand, all the Apostles shall be made redeemers: for they were all sent as *Christ* was, and he was sent not

1. Cor.
8.9.

Apol. cap.
9.1. de
Pudicitia
Contra
Celsi lib. 8.

1.
2.

Epistol.
ad Publ.
colum.

only to preach the redemption of mankind, but also to effect and worke the same. If this be absurd, then it is a flat abusing of Scripture to gather from this saying of Christ, that the Apostles had power of binding conscience because he had so. It is true indeed that there is a similitude or analogie between the calling of Christ and his Apostles, but it wholly stands in these points: Christ was ordained to his office before all worlds, and so were the Apostles: Christ was called of his Father immediately, & so were they of Christ: Christ was sent to the whole world, and so were they: Christ received all power in heaven and earth as being necessary for a mediator; and they received an extraordinary authoritie from him with such a plentiful measure of the spirit as was necessary for the Apostolical function. Lastly, Christ was sent euen as hee was man to bee a teacher of the Iewes: and therefore he is called the minister of circumcision, *Rom. 15. 8.* and so the Apostles are sent by him to teach the Gentiles. Thus farre is the comparison to be enlarged, and no further. And that no man might imagine that some part of this resemblance standes in a power of binding conscience, Christ hath put a speciale exception, when he saith; Goe teach all nations, teaching them to obserue all things that I haue commanded you, and not commandments of your owne.

Argum. 6. *Rom. 13. 2.* Who soeuer resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God and they that resist shall receiue to themselves iudgement: and, 5. yet must bee subiect not onely for wrath, but also for conscience sake. *Ans.* Magistracie indecde is an ordinance of God to which we owe subiectiō, but how far subiectiō is due, there is the question. For body and goods and outward conuerſation, I grant all: but a subiectiō of conscience to mens lawes, I deny. And betweene these two there is a great difference: to be subiect to authority in conscience; and to be subiect to it for conscience, as will be manifest if we doe but consider the phraſe of the Apostle, the meaning whereof is, that we must performe obedience not only for anger, that is, for the auoiding of punishment, but also for the auoiding of sinne, and so by consequent for auoiding a breach in conscience. Now this breach is not properly made because mans law is neglected, but because Gods law is broken which ordaineth magistracie, & with all bindes mens consciences to obey their lawfull commandments. And the damnation that is due vnto men for resisting the ordinance of God comes not by the single breach of magistrates commandement, but by a transgression of Gods law which appointeth magistrates and their authority. To this answer Papists reple nothing that is of moment. Therefore I proceed.

Argum. 7. *1. Cor. 4. 21.* What will you? that I come vnto with a rodde, or in the spirit of meeknes? Now this rodde is a iudicial power of punishing of sinnes. *Ans.* For the regiment and protection of Gods Church, there bee two rods

A mentioned in Scripture: the rod of Christ, and the Apostolical rod. The rod of Christ is tearmed a *rod of iron*, or *the rod of his mouth*, & it signifies that absolute and soueraigne power which Christ hath ouer his creatures, whereby he is able to conuert and saue them, or to forsake and destroy them. And it is a peculiar priuiledge of this rodde to smite and wound the conscience. The Apostolical rod was a certaine extraordinarie power, whereby God enabled them to plague and punish rebellious offenders with grievous iudgements, not in their soules but in their bodies alone. With this rod *Paul* smote *Elmas* blind, and *Peter* smote *Ananias* and *Saphira* with bodily death. B And it may be that *Paul* by his power did giue vp the incestuous man, when he was excommunicate, to be vexed in his body and tormented by the diuel: but that by this rod the Apostles could smite conscience, it cannot be prooued.

Argum. 8. *1. Tim. 3. 2.* *Paul* made a law that none hauing two wiues should be ordained a Bishop: Now this law is positieue & Ecclesiasticall, and bindes conscience. *Ans.* *Paul* is not the maker of this law, but God himselfe, who ordained that in marriage not three but two alone should be one flesh: and that they which serue at the altar of the Lord, should be holy. And to grant that this law were a new law beside the written word of God, yet doth it not follow that *Paul* was the maker of it; because he vsed not to deliuer any doctrine to the Churches but which he receiued of the Lord.

Argum. 9. *Luk. 10. 16.* He which heareth you, heareth me. *Ans.* These words properly concerne the Apostles, and doe not in like manner belong to the Pastors and teachers of the Church. And the end of these words is not to confirme any Apostolical authority in making lawes to the conscience; but to signifie the priuiledge which he had vouchsafed them aboue all others, that he would so farre forth assit them with his spirit, that they should not erre or be deceiued in teaching and publishing the doctrine of saluation, though otherwise they were sinful men: according to *Mat. 10. 20.* It is not you that speak, but the spirit of your father which speaketh in you. And the promise to be led into all truth, was directed vnto them.

Argum. 10. *1. Cor. 11. 2.* I praise you that you keepe my commandments. *Ans.* *Paul* deliuered nothing of his owne concerning the substance of the doctrine of saluation and the worship of God, but that which hee receiued from Christ. The precepts here meant are nothing else but rules of decencie and comely order in the congregation: and though they were to be obeyed, yet *Pauls* meaning was not to bind any mans conscience therewith. For of greater matters he saith, *This I speake for your commoditie, and not to intangle you in a snare*, *1. Cor. 7. 35.*

Argum. 11. Councils of ancient Fathers when they command or forbid any thing, doe it with threatning of a curse to the offenders. *Answer.* The Church in former time vsed to

annexe vnto her Canons the curse *Anathema*, because things decreed by them were indeed, or at the least thought to be the will and word of God: and they had respect to the saying of *Paul*. If any teach otherwise, though he be an Angell from heauen, let him be accursed. Therefore Councels in this action were no more but instruments of God to curse those whom he first had accursed.

Argum. 12. An act indifferent if it be commanded, is made necessarie: and the keeping of it is the practise of vertue, therefore euery law bindes conscience to a sinne. *Ans.* An act it selfe indifferent, being commanded by mans law, it is not made simply necessary, for that is as much as Gods law doth or can doe, but only in some part, that is, so farre forth as the said act or action tends to maintaine and preserve the good end for which the law is made. And though the action bee in this regard necessary: yet doth it still remaine indifferent, as it is considered in it selfe out of the ende of the law: so as if peace, the common good, and comely order may bee maintained, and all offence auoided by any other meanes, the acte may be done or not done without sinne before God. For whereas God himselfe hath giuen liberty and freedome in the vse of things indifferent, the law of man doth not take away the same, but only moderate and order the ouercommon vse of it for the common good.

Argum. 13. The fast of Lent stands by a law & commandement of men: and this law binds conscience simply: for the ancient fathers haue called it a Tradition Apostolical, and make the keeping of it to be necessarie, and the not keeping of it a sinne, and punish the offenders with excommunication. *Ans.* It is plaine to him that wil not be obstinate, that lent fast was not commanded in the primitive Church, but was freely at mens pleasures, and in severall Churches diuersly both in regard of place or time, as also in respect of diueritie of meats. *Ierome* in his Epistle to Victor cited by *Eusebius* saith, *Some haue thought that they must fast one day, some two dayes, some more, some 40 houres day and night, which diuersitie of fasting commendeth the vnty of faith.* *Spiridon* a good man did eate flesh in lent, & caught his guest to do the same, & this he did vpon iudgement because he was perswaded out of Gods word, that to the clean all things were cleane. And *Eusebius* records, that *Montanus* the hericke was the first that prescribed solemne and set lawes for fasting. And whereas this fast is called an Apostolical tradition, it is no great matter, for it was the manner of the ancient Church in former times to tearme rites and orders Ecclesiastical not set down in the scriptures, Apostolical orders, that by this meanes they might commend them to the people: as *Ierome* testifieth; *Euery prouince* (saith he) *may thinke the constitutions of their Ancestors to be Apostolical lawes.* And whereas it is said to be a sin not to fast in Lent (as *Augustine* speaketh) it is not by reason of

any commandement binding conscience, for *Augustine* saith plainly, that neither Christ nor his Apostles appointed any set time of fasting: and *Chrysostome*; that Christ neuer commanded vs to follow his fast; but the true reason hereof is borrowed from the end. For the primitive Church vsed not the popish fast, which is to eate white-meat alone, but an abstinence from all meats, vsed specially to mortifie the flesh, & to prepare men before hand to a worthy receiuing of the Eucharist. And in regard of this good end was the offence. And whereas it is said, that ancient fathers taught a necessity of keeping this fast, euen *Hierome* whom they alleadged to this purpose, saith the contrary. For confuting the error of *Montanus* who had his set time of fast to bee kept of necessity, he saith, *We fast in lent according to the Apostles tradition as in a time meet for vs: & we do it not, as though it were not lawfull for vs to fast in the rest of the yeare except Pentecost: but it is one thing to do a thing of necessity, and another to offer a gift of free will.* Lastly, excommunication was for open contempt of this order taken vp in the Church, which was, that men should fast before Easter for their further humiliation & preparation to the Sacrament. So the 29. Canon of the Councill of Gangres must bee vnderstood. As for the Canons of the Apostles (so falsely called) and the 8. Council of Toledo, I much respect not what they say in this case.

Argum. 14. Gods authority bindes conscience: Magistrates authority is Gods authority: therefore Magistrates authority binds conscience properly. *Ans.* Gods authority may be taken two waies: first, for that soueraigne and absolute power which hee vseth ouer all his creatures: Secondly, for that finite and limited power which hee hath ordained that men should exercise ouer men. If the *minor*, namely, the Magistrates authority is Gods authority, be taken in the first sense, it is false: for the soueraigne power of God is incommunicable. If it be taken in the second sense, the proposition is false. For there be sundry authorities ordained of God, as the authoritie of the father ouer a childe, of the master ouer the seruant, the authoritie of the master ouer his scholler, which doe bind in conscience as the authoritie of Gods lawes doth.

By these arguments which I haue now answered, and by many other being but lightly skanned, it will appeare that necessarie obedience is to bee performed both to ciuill and Ecclesiastical iurisdiction; but that they haue a constraining power to binde conscience, and that properly as Gods lawes doe, it is not yet proueed, neither can be; as I will make manifest by other arguments.

Argum. 15. Hee that makes a law binding conscience to mortall sin, hath power, if not to saue, yet to destroy: because by sinne, which follows vpon the transgression of his law, comes death & damnation. But God is the only lawgiuer that hath this priuiledge; which is, after

Scem. d
Temp. 3
2. Epist.
86.
Chrysost.
on Math.
hom. 47

Hieron.
ad Mac.
cel de
Error.
Mont.

Euseb. lib
5. 26.
Sozom.
l. 7. cap.
19.

Euseb. 5.
cap. 18.

Hieron.
epist. 118.
ad Laic.

he hath giuen his law, vpon the breaking or keeping thereof, to saue or destroy, *1am. 4. 12.* There is one Law giuer that can saue or destroy. Therefore God alone makes lawes binding conscience properly, and no creature can doe the like. Answer is made that *S. James* speaks of the principall Law-giuer, that by his owne proper authoritie makes lawes, and doth in such manner saue and destroy, that hee neede not feare to be destroyed of any: and that hee speaks not of secundary law-giuers that are deputies of God, and make lawes in his name. I say againe, that this answer stands not with the text. For *S. James* speaks simply without distinction, limitation, or exception: and the effect of his reason is this. No man at all must slander his brother, because no man must bee iudge of the law: and no man can be iudge of the law, because no man can be a law-giuer to saue or destroy. Now then where bee those persons that shall make lawes to the soules of men, and binde them vnto punishment of mortall sinne; considering that God alone is the sauing and destroying Law-giuer?

Argum. 2. He that can make lawes as truly binding conscience as Gods lawes, can also prescriberules of Gods worship: because to binde the conscience, is nothing else but to cause it to excuse for things that are wel done, and therefore truly please God; and to accuse for sin, whereby God is dishonoured: but no man can prescribe rules of Gods worship; and humane lawes, as they are humane lawes, appoint not the seruice of God, *Esa. 29. 13.* *Their feare towards mee was taught by the precept of men. Mat. 15. 9* They worship me in vaine, teaching doctrine which are the commandements of men. Papists here make answer, that by lawes of men we must vnderstand such lawes as be vnlawfull or vnprofitable, being made without the authoritie of God, or instinct of his spirit. It is true indeede, that these commandements of men were vnlawfull: but the cause must be considered; they were vnlawfull not because they commanded that which was vnlawfull & against the will of God, but because things in themselves lawfull were commanded as parts of Gods worship. To wash the outward part of the cup or platter, & to wash hands before meat, are things in respect of ciuill vse very lawfull, and yet are these blamed by Christ, and no other reason can be rendered but this; that they were prescribed not as things indifferent or ciuill, but as matters pertaining to Gods worship. It is not against Gods word in some politicke regards to make distinctions of meates, and drinckes, and times; yet *Paul* calles these things, *doctrines of diuels*, because they were commanded as things wherein God should be worshipped.

Argum. 3. God hath now in the new Testament giuen a libertie to the conscience, where-by it is freed from all lawes of his owne whatsoever, excepting such lawes and doctrines as are necessary to saluation, *Col. 2. 20.* *If ye be dead*

A. with Christ, yee are free from the elements of the world, Gal. 5. 1. Stand ye in the libertie wherewith Christ hath freed you, and be not againe intangled with the yoke of bondage. Now, if humane lawes made after the grant of this libertie, bind conscience of themselves, then must they either take away the foresaid liberty, or diminish the same; but that they cannot doe: for that which is gaunted by an higher authoritie, namely, God himselfe, cannot be reuoked or repealed by the inferiour authoritie of any man. It is answered, that this freedome is onely from the bondage of sinne, from the curse of the morall law, from the ceremoniall and iudiciall law of *Moses*, and not from the lawes of our superiours. And I answer againe, that it is absurd to thinke that God giues vs libertie in conscience from any of his owne lawes, and yet will haue our consciences still to remaine in subiection to the lawes of sinfull men.

Argum. 4. Whosoever binds conscience, commands conscience. For the bond is made by a commandement vrging conscience to doe his dutie, which is to accuse or excuse for euill or well doing. Now Gods lawes command conscience in as much as they are spirituall, commanding body and spirit, with all the thoughts, wil, affections, desires, and faculties, & requiring obedience of them all, according to their kinde. As for the lawes of men, they want power to command conscience. Indeede if it were possible for our gouernours by law to command mens thoughts and affections, then also might they command conscience: but the first is not possible, for their lawes can reach no further then to the outward man, that is, to body and goods, with the speeches and deeds thereof: and the end of them all, is not to maintaine spirituall peace of conscience, which is betweene man and God, but only that externall and ciuill peace which is betweene man and man. And it were not meet that men should command conscience, which cannot see conscience, and iudge of all her actions, which appeare not outwardly, and whereof there be no witnesses, but God and the conscience of the doer. Lastly, men are not fit commanders of conscience, because they are no Lords of it, but God himselfe alone.

Argum. 5. Men in making lawes are subiect to ignorance and error: and therefore when they haue made a law (as neere as possibly they can) agreeable to the equitie of Gods law, yet can they not assure themselves and others, that they haue failed in no point or circumstance. Therefore it is against reason, that humane lawes being subiect to defects, faults, errors, and manifold imperfections, should truly bind conscience, as Gods lawes doe, which are the rule of righteousness. All gouernours in the world (by reason that to their old lawes, they are constrained to put restrictions, amplifications, and modifications of all kinds, with new readings and interpretations) vpon their daily experience see & acknowledge this to be true

which I say, fauing the Bishop of Rome (so fallſely tearmed) which perſuades himſelfe to haue when he is in his Conſistory, ſuch an inſallible aſſiſtance of the ſpirit, that he cannot poſſibly erre in iudgement.

Argum. 6. If mens lawes by inward vertue bind conſcience properly as Gods lawes, then our duty is to learne, ſtudy, & remember them as well as Gods lawes; yea Miniſters muſt bee diligent to preach them, as they are diligent in preaching the doctrine of the Goſpel: becauſe euery one of them bindes to mortall ſinne, as the Papiſts teach. But that they ſhould be taught and learned as Gods lawes, it is moſt abſurd in the iudgement of all men, Papiſts themſelues not excepted.

Argum. 7. Inferiour authoritie cannot bind the ſuperior: now the courts of men and their authoritie are vnder conſcience. For God in the heart of euery man hath erected a tribunall ſeat, and in his ſtead he hath placed neither Saint nor Angel, nor any other creature whatſoeuer, but conſcience it ſelfe, who therefore is the higheſt Iudge that is or can be vnder God; by whoſe direction alſo courts are kept, and lawes are made.

Thus much of the Popiſh opinion: by which it appeares that one of the principall notes of Antichriſt agrees fitly to the Pope of Rome. *Paul 2 Theſſ. 2.4.* makes it a ſpeciall propertie of Antichriſt to exalt himſelfe againſt or aboue all that is called God, or worſhipped. Now what doth the Pope elſe, when he takes vpon him authoritie to make ſuch laws as ſhal bind the conſcience, as properly and truly as Gods lawes? and what doth he elſe when hee aſcribes to himſelfe power to free mens conſciences from the bond of ſuch lawes of God, as are vchangeable? as may appeare in a Canon of the Council of Trent: the words are theſe. *If any ſhall ſay, that thoſe degrees of conſanguinitie that be expreſſed in Leuiticus, do only binder matrimony to be made, & break it being made, and that the Church cannot diſpenſe with ſome of them, or approoue that more degrees may binder or breake marriage, let him be accuſed.* O ſacrilegious impiety! conſidering the lawes of affinity & conſanguinity, *Leu. 18.* are not ceremoniall, or iudicial lawes peculiar to the Iewes, but the very lawes of nature, what is that Canon elſe, but a publique Proclamation to the world, that the Pope & Church of Rome do ſit as Lords, or rather idols in the hearts and conſciences of men? This will yet more fully appeare to any man, if we reade popiſh bookes of *practiſall* or *Cate. Diuinitie*, in which the common manner is, to binde conſcience where God looſeth it, and to looſe where he binds: but a declaration of this requires long time.

Now I come (as neere as poſſibly I can) to ſet downe the true manner, how mens lawes by the common iudgement of Diuines, may be ſaid to bind conſcience. That this point may be cleared, two things muſt be handled. By what means they bind, and how farre forth.

A Touching the meanes, I ſet downe this rule. *Whoſome laws of men, made of things indifferent, ſo far forth bind conſcience by vertue of the generall commandment of God, which ordaineth the Magiſtrates authoritie: that whoſoeuer ſhall wittingly and willingly, with a diſloyall minde, either break or omit ſuch lawes, is guilty of ſin before God.*

By *whoſome lawes*, I vnderſtand ſuch poſitive conſtitutions, as are not againſt the law of God, and withall tend to maintaine the peaceable eſtate and common good of men.

Furthermore, I adde this claue, *made of things indifferent*, to note the peculiar matter whereof humane lawes properly intreate: namely, ſuch things as are neither expreſſly commanded or forbidden by God.

B Now ſuch kinde of lawes haue no vertue or power in themſelues to conſtraine conſcience, but they binde onely by vertue of an higher commandment, *Let euery ſoule be ſubiect to the higher powers, Rom. 13.1.* or, *Honour father and mother, Exod. 20.12.* which commandments binde vs in conſcience to perſorme obedience to the good lawes of men. As *Peter ſaith, Submit your ſelues to euery humane ordinance for the Lord, 1 Pet. 2.13.* that is, *for conſcience of God*, as he ſaith afterward, *v. 19.* whereby he ſignifieth two things: firſt, that God hath ordained the authoritie of gouernours; ſecondly, that hee hath appointed in his word, and thereby bound men in conſcience to obey their gouernours lawfull commandments.

C If the caſe fall out otherwiſe, as commonly it doth, that humane lawes be not enacted of things indifferent, but of things that be good in themſelues, that is, commanded by God; then are they not *humane* properly, but *diuine* laws. Mens laws intreating of things that are *morally good*, & the parts of *Gods worſhip*, are the ſame with Gods lawes: & therefore bind conſcience, not becauſe they were enacted by men, but becauſe they were firſt made by God: men being no more but instruments and miniſters in his name to reuiue, renew, and to put in execution ſuch precepts and lawes as preſcribe the worſhip of God, ſtanding in the praſtiſe of true religion and vertue. Of this kinde are all poſitive lawes touching articles of faith, & the duties of the moral law. And the man that breaks ſuch lawes ſinnes two waies: firſt, becauſe he breakes that which is in conſcience a law of God: ſecondly, becauſe in diſobeying his lawfull Magiſtrate, he diſobeies the generall commandment of God, touching Magiſtracie.

D But if it ſhall fall out that mens lawes bee made of things that are euill, and forbidden by God, then is there no bond of conſcience at all but contrariwiſe men are bound in conſcience not to obey, *Alſ. 4. 19.* And hereupon the three children are commended for not obeying *Nabuchadnezzar*, when he gaue a particular commandment vnto them to fall downe and worſhip the golden image, *Dan. 3.28.*

Moreouer, in that mans law binds not, but by authoritie of Gods law, hence it followes,

that

Self, 24.
can, 3.

How mens
laws bind
conſcience.

that Gods law alone hath this priuiledge, that the breach of it should be a sinne. S. *Iohn* faith 1. *epist.* 3. 4. *Sinne is the anomie, or transgression of the law, vnderstanding Gods law.* When *Dauid* by adulterie and murder had offended many men, and that many waies, he faith, *Psal.* 51. 4. *Against thee, against thee I haue sinned, And Augustine* defined sin to be something said, done, or desired against the law of God. Some man may say, if this be so, belike the we may breake mens lawes without sin. I answer, that men in breaking humane lawes, both may & doe sin; but yet not simply, because they breake them, but because in breaking them, they doe also breake the law of God. The breach of a law must be considered two waies. First as it is a trespasse, hindrance, iniurie, damage; & in this respect it is committed against mens lawes: secondly, the breach of a law must be considered as it is a sin, and so it is only against Gods law, which appoints obedience to the Magistrate. The second point, namely, How farre forth mens lawes bind conscience, I explaine on this manner. It is all that the lawes of God doe or can do, to bind conscience simply & absolutely. Therefore humane lawes bind not simply of themselves, but so far forth as they are agreeable to Gods word, seruice for the comon good, stand with good orders, and hinder not the libertie of conscience. The necessitie of the law ariseth of the necessitie of the good end thereof. And as the end is good & profitable more or lesse, so is the law it selfe necessarie more or lesse. Mens lawes are like their testimonies, which neither prouoe nor disprouoe of themselves, but borrow all the strength which they haue to constraine, from the truth, wisdom, and fidelitie of them that beare witness.

Hence it followeth that a man may do any thing *beside humane lawes* & constitutions without breach of conscience. For if we shall omit the doing of any law, I. without hindrance of the end & particular considerations, for which the law was made: II. without offence giuing, as much as in vs lyeth: III. without contempt of him that made the law, we are not to be accused of sinne. Example. In time of warre, the Magistrate of the citie commands that no man shal open the gates: the end is, that the citie & euery member thereof may be in safetie. Now it failes out that certain citizens, being vpon occasion without the citie, are pursued by the enemy, and in danger of their liues. Hereupon some man without any more ado openeth the gate to reskue them. The question is, whether he hath sinned, or no. And the truth is, he hath not: because he did not hinder the end of the law, but rather further it, & that without scandall to men, or contempt to the Magistrate.

And this stands euen by the equitie of Gods word. God made a law, that the Priests onely should eate of the Shew-bread: now *Dauid* being no priest, did vpon vrgent occasion eate of it without sin. If this be true in Gods law, then it may also be true in the lawes of men,

that they may in some cases be omitted without sinne against God.

Neither must this seeme strange. For as there is a keeping of a law, and a breaking of the same; so there is a middle or meane action betweene them both, which is to doe a thing (a) *beside the law*, and that without sinne.

To proceede further, mens lawes be either Ciuill or Ecclesiasticall. Ciuill lawes, are for their substance determinations of necessary & profitable circumstances, tending to vphold and maintaine the commandements of the second table. More specially, they prescribe what is to be done, and what is to be left vndone, touching actions both ciuill and criminall, touching offices & bargaines of all sorts, &c. yea they conclude, inioyne, and command not onely such affaires as be of small importance, but also things & actions of great waight, tending to maintaine common peace, ciuill society, and the very state of the common wealth. Now such lawes bind so farre forth, that albeit they be omitted without any apparant scandall or contempt, yet the breach of them is a sin before God. Take this example. A subiect in this land, vpon pouerty, or vpon a couctous mind, against the good law of the land, coynes money, which after ward by a sleight of his wit, is cunningly conueyed abroad into the hands of men, and is not espied. Here is no euident offence giuen to any man, nor open contempt shewed to the law-giuer: and yet in this action he hath sinned, in that closely, otherwise then he ought to haue done, he hath hindred the good of the common wealth; and robbed the soueraigne Prince of his right.

Ecclesiasticall lawes, are certaine necessarie and profitable determinations of circumstances of the commandements of the first Table. I say here *circumstances*, because all doctrines pertaining to the foundation and good estate of the Church, as also the whole worship of God, are set downe and commanded in the written word of God, & cannot be prescribed and concluded otherwise by all the Churches in the world. As for the Creeds and Confessions of particular Churches, they are in substance Gods Word, and they binde not in conscience by any power the Church hath, but because they are the Word of God.

The lawes then which the Church in proper speech is said to make, are decrees concerning outward order and comelinesse in the administration of the word and Sacraments, in the meetings of the Congregation, &c. And such lawes made according to the generall rule of Gods word, (which requires that all things be done to edification, in comelinesse, for the auoyding of offence) are necessarie to be obserued, and the word of God binds all men to them, so farre forth as the keeping of them maintaines decent order, and prevents open offence. Yet if a law concerning some external rite or thing indifferent, be at sometime, or vpon some occasion omitted; no offence giuen,

Facere aliquid præter legem, non contra tam.

nor contempt shewed to Ecclesiastical authority, there is no breach made in the conscience, & that appears by the example before handled. The Apostles guided by the holy Ghost, made a decree for the avoyding of offence, necessarie to be obserued, namely, that the Gentiles should abstaine from things strangled & blood, & Idolithyes; and yet *Paul* out of the case of scandal & contempt, permits the Corinthians to do otherwise, 1 *Cor.* 8. & 9. which he wold not haue done, if to do otherwise out of the case of scandal & contempt, had bin sin.

Againe, lawes are either mixt or meere penall. Mixt, are such lawes as are of waightie matters, and are propounded in commanding or forbidding tearmes; and they according to the good intentio of the Law-giuer, bind men first of all to obedience, for the necessary good of humane societies: and secondly, to a punishment, if they obey not; that a supply may be made of the hindrance of the common good. In the breach of this kinde of lawes, though a man bee neuer so willing to suffer the punishment, yet that wil not discharge his conscience before God, when he offends. If a man coyne money with this minde, to be willing to die when he is conuicted, yet that will not free him from a sin in the action, because Gods law bindes vs not onely to subiection in bearing of punishment, but also to obedience of his bare commandement, it being lawfull, though he should set downe no punishment.

A law meere penall is that, which being made of matters of lesse importance, and not vttered precisely in commanding tearmes, doth onely declare and shew what is to be done, or conditionally require this or that with respect to the punishment, on this manner. If any person doe this or that, then he shall forfeit thus or thus. This kinde of law binds especially to the punishment, and that is the very intent of the Law-giuer, & he that is ready in omitting the law to pay the fine or punishment, is not to be charged with sinne before God: the penaltie being answerable to the losse that comes by the neglect of the law. Here a question may be demanded: whether a man that hath taken his oath to keepe all the lawes or orders of any towne or corporation, & yet afterwards omits the doing of some of them; be periured or no? The answer may be this, that the lawes of euery societie and corporation must be distinguished. Some are very weightie (as I haue said) being of the very foundation and state of the body; so as it cannot well stand without them: and whosoever wittingly and willingly breaks any of these (they being good and lawfull) cannot be freed from periurie. Againe, there be lawes of lesse importance, that tend onely to maintaine decent order and comelinesse in the societies of men; and they are of that nature, that the estate of the corporation or towne may stand without them: and whosoever vpon occasion omits the doing of any of these, is not therefore periured, so be it hee carry a loyall

A minde, and be content to pay the fine or penalty. For such kinde of order and constitutions require first of all obndience, and if that be omitted, they require a mulct or fine: which, if it be willingly payed, the law is satisfied.

Thus wee see how farre forth mens lawes bind conscience. The vse of this point is this: first, hence we learne that the immunitie of the Popish clergie, whereby they take themselves exempted from ciuill courts, and from ciuill authoritie in criminall causes, hath no warrant: because Gods commandements bind euery man whatsoeuer, to bee subiect to the Magistrate, *Rom.* 13. 1. *Let euery soule be subiect to the higher powers.* I I. Hence wee see also what notorious rebels those are, that beeing borne subiects of this land, yet choose rather to die then to acknowledge (as they are bound in conscience) the Kings Maiestie to bee supreme gouernor vnder God in all causes and ouer all persons. I I I. Lastly, we are taught hereby to be willing to giue subiection, obedience, reuerence, and all other duties to Magistrates, whether they bee superiour or inferior: yea with cheerefulnessse to pay taxes and subsidies, and all such lawfull charges as are appointed by them. *Giue to Cesar that which is Cessars, and to God that which is Gods. Giue to all men their duties: tribute to whom tribute: custome to whom custome* *Rom.* 13. 7.

Now followes the Oath; which is either assertory, or promissorie. Assertory, by which a man auoucheth that a thing was done or not done. Promissory, by which a man promisseth to doe a thing or not to doe it. Of both these I meane to speake: but specially of the second. And here two points must be considered, the first, by what meanes an oath bindeth; the second when it bindeth.

An oath bindeth by vertue of such particular commandments, as require keeping of oathes lawfully taken. *Numb.* 30. 3. *Whosoever sweareth an oath to bind his soule by a bond, he shall not breake his word, but shall doe according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.*

This being so, a question may be made whether the oath of Infidels bind conscience, and by what vertue, considering they neither know the Scriptures, nor the true God? *Ans.* They doe bind in conscience. For example: *Iacob* and *Laban* make a couenant confirmed by oath. *Iacob* sweares by the true God, *Laban* by the gods of *Nachor*, that is, by his idols: Now *Iacob*, though he approue not the forme of this oath, yet he accepts it for a ciuill bond of the couenant: and no doubt, though *Laban* beleueed not Gods word reuealed to the Patriarkes, yet he was bound in conscience to keepe his oath, euen by the law of nature: and though he knew not the true God, yet hee reputed the false God of *Nachor* to be the true God, *Gen.* 31. 53.

Againe, if a lawfull oath by vertue of Gods commandements binde conscience, then it must needs be that the Romane Church hath

Seet. 9.
Of an
oath
binding.

a Thus
saith
A
gust.
epil.
154. ad
Publico-
tam. &
Lum.
sent. 1. 3.
dist. 93.

Thom. 2.
2. q. 89.

longerred, in that she teacheth and main-
taineth that gouernors, as namely, the Pope and
other inferiour bishops, haue power to giue re-
laxations & dispensations, not only for oathes
vnlawfull (from which the word of God doth
sufficiently free vs, though they should neuer
giue absolution) but from a true & lawfull oath
made wittingly & willingly without error or
deceit, of a thing honest and possible; as when
the Pope frees the subiects of this land, as oc-
casion is offered, from their sworne allegiance
and loyaltie to which they are bound, not on-
ly by the law of nature, but also by a solemne
and particular oath to the Supremacie, which
none euer deemed vnlawfull, but such as carry
traitorous hearts. Now this cronnous diuinitie
would easily bee reuoked, if men did but con-
sider the nature of an oath, one part whereof
is inuocation, in which we pray vnto God,
first, that he would become a witnes vnto vs
that we speake the truth, and purpose not to
deceiue; secondly, if wee faile and breake our
promise, that he would take reuenge vpon vs;
& in both these petitions we finde our selues
immediately to God himselfe: and God a-
gaine, who is the ordainer of the oath, accepts
this bond and knites it by this command-
ment, til it be accomplished. Hence it follows,
that no creature can haue power to vntie the
bond of an oath, that is truly and lawfully an
oath, vnlesse we will exalt the creatures aboue
God himselfe. And the Iewish teachers gaue
better counsell, when they commanded the
people to *performe their oathes to the Lord*, for
the preventing of periurie, and our Sauour
Christ in that gaine-saies them not.

Math. 5.
33.

Next let vs consider the time when an oath
bindeth or bindeth not.

An oath bindeth then, when it is made of
things certaine and possible, in truth, iustice,
iudgement, for the glory of God, and the good
of our neighbour.

Quest. I. Whether doth an oath bind con-
science, if by keeping of it there follow losses
and hinderances? *Ans.* If it be of a thing that
is lawfull, and the damages be priuate to him
that sweareth, then doeth it binde conscience.
For example: A man makes a purchase of land
at the sea side: his bargain is confirmed onely
by oath: and it fallies out, that before he do en-
ter possession, the sea breakes in and drownes
a part of that purchase. Now hee is in consci-
ence to stand to his bargain, because the
thing is lawfull, and the damage is priuate, &
great reuerence must bee had of the name of
God which hath bin vsed in the bargain ma-
king. *Danid* makes it the proprietie of a good
man, to *swear to his owne hinderance, and not to
change*, *Psal. 15. 4.*

Quest. II. Whether the oath which a man
hath taken, being induced thereto by fraude
and guile, doth bind conscience? *Ans.* If it bee
still a thing lawfull, and bring nothing but
priuate losses, it is to be kept. When the Gibe-
onites had by a fraud brought *Iosua* to make a

league with them, & to binde it with an oath;
he and the Princes of the people answer them
thus: *We haue sworne vnto them by the Lord God
of Israel now therefore we may not touch them*, *Ios.
9. 19.* And 300. years after, when *Saul* slew cer-
taine of the Gibeonites against this oath, the
plague was vpon the people of Israel 3. years,
and was not laid til certaine persons of *Sauls*
family for a recompence were put to death, 2.
Sam. 21. 6. 9.

Quest. III. Whether an oath made by feare
or compulsion bind in conscience? For Exam-
ple: a theife disappointed of the bootie which
he looked for, binds the true man by solemne
oath, vpon paine of present death, to fetch and
deliuer vnto him some portion of money, as
100. or 200. crownes for the redeeming of his
life. Well, the oath is taken, and the question
is, whether it bind him or not to performe his
promise? An answer may be this: some a Pro-
testant diuines think it doth bind: some againe
thinke^b no: but I take it the safest course to
hold the meane betweene both, on this manner.
The oath seemes to binde, and is to be per-
formed: neither it is against the good of the com-
mon-wealth (for then it were vnlawfull) but it
is rather a furtherance, in that a member ther-
of is preferred: and the losses which follow
are onely priuate to the man, rather to be en-
dured then losse of life. Yet that a remedy may
be had of this priuate iniurie, and that a pub-
like mischiefe may be prevented, the partie is
to reueale the matter to the Magistrate, whose
office it is to punish robbers, and to order all
things according to equity, for the common
good. But if the case fall out, that the man tho-
rough exceeding feare, doe further sweare to
keepe silence, I see not how his oath may bee
kept, except he be sure that nothing will ensue
thereof, but a priuate damage to himselfe. For
otherwise, perpetuall silence seemes to be a se-
cret consenting to the robber, and an occasion
that others fall into the like danger and ha-
zard of their liues.

Againe, in fixe cases an oath binds nothing
at all. I. If it be made of a thing that is flat a-
gainst the word of God. For all the power of
binding which it hath, is by the word of God:
& therefore when it is against Gods wil, it hath
no power to constraîne. And it is an old recei-
ued rule, that an oath must not bee a bond of
iniquitie. Hereupon *Danid* when hee made a
rash oath to kill *Nabal* and all his household,
reioyced when he had occasion offered by *A.
bigail* to breake the same, 1 *Sam. 25. 32.* And
though he sweare to *Shemi*, that he would saue
his life, 2 *Sam. 19. 23.* yet afterward vpon bet-
ter consideration (as it may seeme) he coman-
ded his sonne *Salomon* to put him to death, as
one that had long agoe deserued the same, 1.
King. 2. 9. And *Herod* was farre deceiued, that
thought hee was bound by his oath to giue to
the damsell *Iohn Baptists* head in a platter,
Math. 14. 7. I. I. If it be against the good and
wholesome lawes of any kingdome or coun.

II. If it be against the good and
wholesome lawes of any kingdome or coun.

a Per.
Marcy.
Iass. 2.
loc. 13.
n. 21.
sclanct.
in Eth.
quast. de
iuram.
b Calv.
vpon
I. sal. 15.

trety, whereof a man is a member, it binde not at all: because on the contrary, Gods commandment binds vs to keep the good laws of me. III. If it be made by such persons as want sufficient reason & discretio, as yong childre, fools, mad men. For the conscience cannot indeede bee bound, where the vnderstanding cannot discern what is done. IV. If it be made of such as haue no power to bind themselves, it binde not: because it is made against the law of nature, which is, that he which is not in his owne power cannot bind himselfe. Hence it follows, that Papiests erre grossly when they teach, that a child may enter into any rule or order of religion, yea bind himselfe thereto by oath, & the oath to bee good, flat against his parents consent. Num. 30. 4. *If a woman vow vnto the Lord, bind her selfe by a bond, being in her fathers house in time of her youth, &c. v. 6. If her father disallow her the same day that he heareth all her vows & bonds, they shall not be of value.* And an ancient Councell decreed, that alchildren that vpon pretence of Gods worship should depart from their parents, and not doe them due reuerence, should be accused. Secondly, they erre, in that they teach that the promise made priuately by a childe in way of marriage, without and against consent of wife and carefull parents, binds them: whereas indeed, if this promise were further bound by an oath, it could not stand: because children vnder gouernment & tuition of parents, cannot giue themselves. V. It binde not if it bee made of a thing that is out of a mans power, as if a man sweare to his friend to giue him another mans goods. VI. If at the first it were lawfull and afterward by some means become either impossible or vnlawfull, it binds not conscience. For whe it becomes impossible, then we must safely thinke, that God from heauen frees a man from his oath. And when it begins to be vnlawfull, then it ceaseth to bind, because the binding vertue is onely in and from the word of God. For example: A king bindes himselfe by oath to a forraigne Christian Prince to find him men and money to defend his people against all enemies. This oath is lawfull. Well, afterward the Prince becomes a professed enemy to him, his religion, and people: and then the kings oath becoms vnlawfull & binds him not: because the word forbids there should be any league of amitie with Gods enemies: though there may be leagues of concord with them.

Seeing a lawfull oath must bind conscience, though a man be deceived, & great losses follow, it shews in how great reuerence we should haue Gods name, and with what care and consideration take an oath. And by this wee must be aduertised to take heed of customeable swearing in our common talke, whether our oaths be great or small. We must thinke of an oath as a part of Gods worship: nay, the H. Ghost often puts it for the whole worship of God: *Esai. 19. 18. In that day shall sine cities in the land of Egypt speake the language of Canaan, and shall sweare by the Lord of hosts, that is, acknowledge*

A and worship him. *Ier. 12. 16. If they will learne the waies of my people, to sweare by my name, The Lord liueth, then shall they be built in the midst of my people.* This serueth to shew vnto vs, that such as giue themselves to swearing, want religion & conscience: and that those families in which there is risensse of oathes, abandonall care of religion, and banish God out of their houses. And indeed it is a very hard thing for the common sweare to auoyd common periurie. If we see a man hold vp his hand at the barre of an earthly iudge, we pittie him, and are forrie for him: Oh then, why doe we not pittie blasphemers and common swearers? For with God they are no better then rebels, that hold vp their hands at the barre of his iudgement seat, as guiltie malefactours. *Exod. 20. 7. Augustine saith well, They that worship stocks & stones feare to sweare falsely by stones, and doe st thou not feare God that is preser, God that liueth, God that knoweth, God that taketh reuenge of offenders: but of bad custome, when thou art beleened, thou swearest when none requires it, thou swearest: and when men cannot abide it thou swearest.*

Thus much of an oath: now followes a promise, which is either to God, or man: the first is called a vow, the second a single promise.

A vow is taken three waies. First, generally for a promise of morall obedience: and this vow is first made in Baptisme, and continued in the Lords Supper, as in the spirituall exercises of inuocation and repentance. It is called of *Pet. 1. Epist. 3. 21. the stipulation which a good conscience makes to God.*

This kind of vow binds all and euery member of the Church of God. And the not keeping of it is the common sin of the world: for most men make not conscience to perform that which they haue promised to God in Baptisme: and therefore their Baptisme is become vnto them the sacrifice of fooles, *Eccles. 4. 17.* But considering we are bound in conscience by this vow, let vs hereafter indeanour to be as good as our word: and that shall be, when we begin to die to our sins, and rise to newnesse of life. There is no man almost but wil seeme to haue care to keep touch with men; what a shame is it then for vs not to keep couenant with God?

Again, a vow is taken for a promise of ceremoniall obedience, whereof read *Num. 6. & 30. Leuit. 27.* This vow is peculiar to the old testament, and did not bind all men, but only such as had peculiar occasion to vow: & therupō bound themselves: as the Nazarits & others.

Thirdly, a vow is taken for the performance of some outward and bodily exercises, taken vp of a mans own accord, as being things in a mans owne libertie, without any commandment of God: as the keeping of set times of fast, of praying or reading, the performance of set tasks, almes-giuing, abstinence from certaine meats and drinks, in the vse whereof, through our owne weaknesse, we feare any occasion of sinne. And this kinde of vow is more peculiar to the new Testament.

Qui sit
iuris non
est obli-
gare se
non po-
test.

Bellar. I.
2. de Mon
cap. 36.

Concil.
Gang. c.
16.

Serm. 30.
de verbis
Apol.

Self. 10.
Of a vow
binding.

In the making of it, that it may be warranted, foure things must be obserued: I. It must be agreeable to the word of God: II. It must not bee against a mans generall or particular calling. III. It must be in a mans power, and not against Christian libertie. IV. It must be so made and be so obserued without any opinion of merit or worship of God, to this end alone, that it may be a meanes to exercise and cherish repentance and inuocation, temperance, patience, and to shew forth thankfulness to God.

A vow thus made binds conscience by verue of Gods commandement. *Ecc. 5. 3. When thou hast vowed a vow to God, deferre not to pay it.*

And the vowe once made continues to bind so long as the thing is in force which was the occasion of the vowe. For example: A man desirous to practise sobriety and temperance, finds that drinking of wine is hurtfull vnto him: hereupon he vowes to God to drinke no wine: now this vow once made, binds him till the state of his body alter, and hee feels no inconuenience in wine: but then it ceaseth to binde any longer.

Quest. Whether Papists are bound in conscience to keepe the vowes of single life, and voluntarie pouertie which they make, or not?

Ans. No. The reasons hereof are these: I. Such vowes are flat against Gods commandement: *But if they cannot abstaine, let them marry: for it is better to marry then to burne.* 1 Cor. 7. 9.

This we warned you of, that if there were any that would not worke, they should not eate. 2 Thes. 3. 10.

II. They are not in the power of him that voweth: as for example, to promise perpetuall chastitie in single life. III. They abolish Christian liberty in the vse of the creatures and ordinances of God, as riches, and marriage, meate, drinke, apparel; making that necessitie which God left to our libertie. IV. They are made to this end that men may thereby merit life eternall, and worship God: whereas *Paul* saith. 1 Tim. 4. 8. *Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godlinesse is profitable for all things.* Therefore they are better broken then kept.

As for a single promise, it also binds a man according as he will to whom the promise is made; though he be an (a) hereticke or an infidel. As for the purpose of the minde, it binds not, but may vpon conuenient cause, be altered.

Yet we must remember that there are some cases, in which a promise made binds not. I. If it be against Gods word. One saith well, *In euill promises cut off thy faith. It is a wicked promise that cannot be performed without an offence.*

II. If he which makes it want reason or sufficient discretion. III. If he make the promise who cannot binde himselfe: as a childe vnder the government of his parents. IV. If a man be induced to make his promise by fraud and guile. V. If the promise being at the first lawfull, become afterward either impossible or volawfull.

And though men bee bound in conscience to keepe their promises: yet this hinders not but that there is and may be a good and lawfull vse of Indentures and obligations. For the bond of conscience is between man and God: but the bond of an obligation passeth onely between man and man. When *Abraham* bought a purchase of *Ephron* the Hittite, hee payed his money, and made it sure before witnesse. *Gen. 23. 17.*

Here wee must consider the generall sinne of this age, which is, to speake deceitfully euery one to his neighbour. It is a hard thing to finde a man that will stand to his word and lawfull promise. It is a rule of *Machiavel*, that a man may practise many things against his faith, against charitie, and humanitie, and religion: and that it is not necessary to haue these vertues, but to counterfeite and dissemble them. But let all such as feare God make conscience of their word, because they are bound so to doe: and hereby they shall resemble their heavenly Father who is true in all his promises; and they shall also bring forth a notable fruit of the spirit, *Gal. 5. 22.*

Hitherto I haue spoken of the cause that maketh conscience to giue iudgement. Now followeth the manner of iudgement.

Conscience giues iudgement in or by a kinde of reasoning or disputing, called a *practi call syllogisme*. *Romanes 2. 15. Their reasoning, (τὴν λογισμὸν) &c. accusing or excusing each other.*

In the making of this reason conscience hath two assistants: minde, and memorie.

The minde is the store-houise and keeper of all manner of rules and principles. It may be compared to a booke of law, in which are set downe the penall statutes of the land. The dutie of it is to preferre and present to the conscience rules of diuine law, whereby it is to giue iudgement.

Memorie serues to bring to minde the particular actions which a man hath done or not done, that conscience may determine of them.

Now conscience assisted by these twaine, proceeds in iudgement by a kinde of argumentation: an example whereof we may take from the conscience of a murtherer, thus:

Every murtherer is cursed, saith the minde:

Thou art a murtherer, saith conscience assisted by memorie:

Ergo, Thou art cursed, saith conscience, and so giueth her sentence.

To proceede: Conscience giues iudgement either of things past or things to come.

Of things past two waies, either by accusing and condemning, or by excusing and absolving. *Rom. 2. 15.*

To accuse is an action of conscience, giuing iudgement that this or that thing was euill done: & that still by reasoning on this manner:

Every murtherer is a sinner:

This thy action is murther:

Ergo, This thy action is a sinne.

To condemne is another action of the consci-

Sect. 12.
How conscience giues iudgement.

Minde tells what is law.

Memorie giues euidence.

Sect. 13.
How many waies conscience giues iudgement.

Sect. 11.
Of a single promise binding: Aug. quib. 205.

Sect. 1. 4.
Syno. quib.

ence joynd with the former, whereby it giueth iudgement that a man by this or that sinne hath deserued death on this manner.

Every murderer deserueth a double death.

Thou art a murderer :

Ergo, Thou hast deserued a double death.

These two actions are very forcible and terrible : for they are the *compunctions* and prickings that bee in the heart. *Ait. 2. 37.* they are the stripes, as it were, of any iron rod, where-with the heart of a man smiteth it selfe, *2 Sam. 24. 10.* And by reason of them, conscience is compared to a worme that neuer dieth, but alwaies lies gnawing and grubbling, and pulling at the heart of man, *Mark 9. 44.* and causeth more paine and anguish, then any disease in the world can doe.

The time when conscience performes these actions, is not before the sinne, or in the act of sinning, but especially after the sinne is done and past. Reason, I. Before a man sinneth, the diuill doth extenuate the fault and make sinne to be no sinne. II. Corrupt affections doe for a time foobline and ouercast iudgement, that it doth not see or at the least consider what is good or bad, till afterward.

Neither doth conscience accuse and condemn only for the time present, but also long after a thing is done. The consciences of *Ioseph* brethren accused them 22. yecies after they had sold him into Egypt, *Gen. 42. 21.*

The effect of the accusing and condemning conscience, is to stirre vp sundry passions and motions in the heart, but specially these fūe.

The first is *shame*, which is an affection of the heart, whereby a man is grieued and displeased with himselfe, that he hath done any euill, and this shame sheweth it selfe by the rising of the blood from the heart to the face.

Yet we must here remember that euen such as haue the pardon of their finnes, and are not guiltie, may be ashamed and blush, *Rom. 6. 21.* *What fruit had yee in those things, whereof now yee blush, or, be ashamed?* Yet for all this, euen those which are most guiltie, may be without all shame, *Ier. 6. 15.* *Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?* nay, nay, they were not ashamed, neither could they haue any shame, because they are growne to some great height in sinne. *Eph. 4. 18.*

The second passion is *sadnesse* and sorrow : commonly thought to be nothing else but *melancholy* : but betweene them twaine, there is great difference. Sorrow, that comes by melancholy ariseth only of that humour annoying the body : but this other sorrow ariseth of a mans finnes, for which his conscience accuseth him. Melancholy may be cured by physicke : this sorrow cannot be cured by any thing, but by the blood of Christ.

The third is *fear*, in causing whereof, conscience is very forcible. If a man had all the delights & pleasures that heart can wish, they cannot doe him any good if conscience bee guiltie. *Belshazzar* when he was in the middelt

A of all his delights, and saw the hand writing vpon the wall ; his countenance changed, his thoughts troubled him, his ioynts loosed, and his knees smote together, *Dan. 5. 6.* Yea the guiltie conscience will make a man afraid, if hee see but a worme peepe out of the ground : or a silly creature goe crosse his way ; or if hee fee but his owne shadow on a suddaine, or if he doe but forecast an euill with himselfe, *Pro. 28. 1.* *The wicked flyeth when no man pursueth him.*

Terrours of conscience, which are more vehement, cause other passions in the body, as exceeding heate, like that which is in the fit of an ague, the rising of the entrails towards the mouth, and swooning ; as experience hath often shewed. And the writer of the booke of *Wisdome* saith truly, cap. 17. 10. *It is a fearefull thing when malice is condemned by her owne testimony, and a conscience that is touched, doth neuer forecast cruell things. For feare is nothing else, but the betraying of the succours, that reason offereth, &c. They that did indure the (a) night that was intolerable, &c. sometimes are troubled with monstrous visions, and sometimes they swooned, as though their owne soules should betray them : for a sudden feare not looked for, came vpon them.*

The fourth is *desperation*, whereby a man through the vehement and constant accusation of his conscience comes to bee out of all hope of the pardon of his finnes. This made *Saul*, *Achitophel*, and *Iudas* to hang themselves ; this makes many in these daies to doe the like ; as appeareth by the declarations of such as haue bin preuented, when they were about to hang or drowne themselves, or to cut their owne throats.

The last is a *perturbation* or disquietnesse of the whole man : whereby all the powers and faculties of the whole man are forth of order. *Esa. 57. 20.* *The wicked is like the raging of the sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire & dirt.*

Thus much of the two first actions of conscience, which are to accuse and condemn : the second followeth to accuse and absolve.

The excuse, is an action of the conscience giuing iudgement that the thing is well done.

To absolve, is an action of the conscience giuing iudgement that a man is free and cleare from fault, and so from punishment.

From these two actions arise some speciall affections : I. *boldnesse* and confidence, *Pro. 28. 1.* *The righteous are bold as a lyon.* II. *joy* and reioicing, *2 Cor. 1. 12.* *Our reioicing is the testimony of my conscience, that in all simplicitie and godly purenesse I haue had my conuersation in the world.* Hence it is said, that a good conscience is a continual feast, *Prou. 15. 15.*

Hitherto I haue spoken how conscience giues iudgement of things done and past : now followeth her iudgement of things to be done.

Conscience giues iudgement of things to come, by foretelling, & (as it were) saying inwardly in the heart, that the thing may bee well done. Of this kinde of iudgement euery man may haue experience in himselfe, when

hee is about to enterprife any businesse either good or bad.

By this we may see the goodnes of God to all men. If a man being to make an vknowne journey, should finde one that would goe with him and shew him the way, and all the turnings thereof, hee could not but take it for a point of courtesie. Well, we are pilgrimes in this world, our life is our journey: God also hath appointed our conscience to be our companion and guide, to shew vs what course we may take, and what we may not.

And here it may be noted, that in all things to be done, conscience is of great force and beares a great stroke. For this is the beginning of a good worke, that the conscience first of all giues her iudgement truly, that the thing may be done, & is acceptable to God, *Rom. 14. 23. Whatsoever is not of faith, (that is, whatsoever is not done of a settled perswasion in iudgement and conscience out of Gods word, howsoever men iudge of it) is sinne.* Again, God regards not the outward pompe of the action, or the doer, but obedience, and especially the obedience of the heart: therefore vnlesse the conscience well informed first of all approve the thing to be good and agreeable to Gods will, it can be nothing else but a sinne. And he that shall doe a thing, because it is good in his owne eies, not knowing that God doth allow of it, preferres himselfe before God, and disobeyes, as the seruant that in his masters house will not doe his masters will but his owne will.

From this former rule arise three other: the first, *Whatsoever is done with a doubting conscience is a sinne.* For example: some beleeuers in the Primitiue Church held, that still after the ascension of Christ there remained a difference betwene meate and meate, and therefore it was a scruple to them to eate of sundry kinds of meates: now put the case, that by example they are drawne on to eate swines flesh; or some other thing which they thinke is forbidden; this done, there is no question but they haue sinned, as *Paul* prooueth, *Rom. 14. 14. I know and am perswaded through the Lord Iesus, that there is nothing vnclane of it selfe: but vnto him that iudgeth any thing vnclane, it is vnclane:* and *v. 23. He that doubteth, is condemned, if hee eate, because he eateth not of faith.*

The second, *Whatsoever thing is done in or with an erroneous conscience it is a sinne.* For example: in the primitiue Church diuers of the Gentiles held this error, that fornication was a thing indifferent, & therefore conscience told the that they might do it: and yet neuertheless fornication in the was a sin, because conscience erred in her iudgement, and euill remains euill, though conscience say the contrary a thousand times.

The third, *What is done (a) against conscience though it erre, and be deceived, it is sin in the doer.* Example. An Anabaptist holding it vtterly vnlawfull to sweare, is brought before a magistrate; and vrged either through feare or some like cause, takes an oath, and that against his

own conscience: now the question is, whether he hath sinned or no? *Ans.* He hath indeede sinned; not so much because he hath taken an oath, for that is the ordinance of God: but because he hath takē an oath in a bad māner, that is against his conscience, & therefore not in faith.

Thus it is manifest that conscience beares a great stroke in all things that are to be said or done. And hereby we are aduertised of many things. First, if a thing done without good direction of conscience, be a sinne, then much more that which is done without good direction of Gods word, is a flat sin: for without direction of Gods word, conscience can giue no good direction. And if God will hold that for a sinne which is done without direction of his word; then no doubt Gods word ministers sufficient direction for all actions whatsoever: so as if a man bee but to receiue a morsell of bread into his mouth, it can so farre forth direct him, that in doing of it, he shall be able to please God. If this were not true, mans case were most miserable. For then we should sin in manifold actions, & that without remedie. And here by the Word, I meane nothing but the Scriptures of the old and new Testament, which containe in themselves sufficient direction for all actions. As for the law of nature though it afford indeede some direction; yet it is corrupt, imperfect, vncertaine: & whatsoever is right and good therein, is contained in the written word of God. And as for the best vnwritten traditions, let all the Papiists in the world answere if they can, how I may in conscience be perswaded that they are the word of God. If they say that the ancient Fathers of the Primitiue Church auouch in their writings that they are Apostolicall traditions; I answer againe, how shall I know and be certaine in conscience that the Fathers subiect to error, in saying so, haue not erred?

Again, we learne hence, that a good intention is not sufficient to make a good worke, vnlesse withall conscience giue iudgement that God doth approve the action. This shewes the ignorance of our people that when as in their dealings they runne vpon a good meaning, then alwaies they thinke they doe well and please God.

Thirdly, hence it appeares that all things deuised by man for the worship of God, are flat sinnes; because conscience cannot say of them that they please God. *Esa. 29. 13. Mark. 7. 7.*

Lastly, wee learne here that ignorance of Gods will and word, is a dangerous thing, and makes the life of man to abound, yea to flow with a sea of offences against God. Men commonly thinke that if they keepe themselves from periurie, blasphemie, murther, theft, whoredome, al is wel with them: but the truth is, that so long as they liue in ignorance, they want right & true direction of conscience out of Gods word, and therefore their best actions are sins, euen their eating and drinking, their sleeping and waking, their buying and selling,

their speech and silence, yea their praying and serving of God. For they doe these actions either of custome, or example, or necessity, as beasts do, and not of faith: because they know not Gods will touching things to be done or left undone. The consideration of this point should make every man most careful to seeke for knowledge of Gods word, and daily to increase in it, that he may in all his affaires have Gods lawes to be the men of his counsell, *Psa. 119. 14.* that he may give heed to them as to the light shining in a darke place, *2 Pet. 1. 19.* that he may say with *Peter*, when Christ commanded him to Lanch forth into the deepe, and to cast forth his net: *Lord, we haue bene all night, and haue catched nothing: yet in thy word will I let downe my net.* *Luk. 5. 5.*

CHAP. III.

Of the kinds of conscience: and of conscience regenerate.

Conscience is either good or bad. Good conscience is that which rightly according to Gods word, excuseth & comforteth. For the excellencie, goodnes, and dignity of conscience, stands not in accusing, but in excusing. And by doing any sinne whatsoeuer to give any occasion to the conscience to accuse and condemne, is to wound it and to offend it. Thus *Paul* saith, that the Corinthians wounded the consciences of their weake brethren, when they vsed their libertie as an occasion of offence to them, *1 Cor. 8. 9. 12.* Again, he callet a good conscience, a conscience without offence, that is, which hath no stop or impediment to hinder it from excusing. *Act. 24. 19.*

Good conscience, is either good by creation or regeneration.

Good by creation was the conscience of *Adam*, which in the estate of innocency did only excuse & could not accuse him for any thing: though it may be, an aptnes to accuse was not wanting, if afterward an occasio should be offered. And hence we haue further direction to consider what a good conscience is, namely, such an one as by the order set downe in the creation, excuseth onely without accusing. Yea to excuse is a defect in true conscience, following after the first creation. For naturally there is an agreement & harmony between the parts and the whole: but if the conscience should naturally accuse, there should be a dissent and disagreement and diuision between the conscience and the man himselfe.

Regenerate conscience is that which being corrupt by nature, is renewed and purged by faith in the blood of Christ. For to the regenerating of the conscience, there is required a conuersion or change; because by nature all mens consciences since the fall are euill, and none are good but by grace. The instrument serving to make this change is faith: *Act. 15. 9.* *Faith purifieth the heart.* The meritorious cause is the blood of Christ. *Heb. 9. 14.* *How much more shall the blood of Christ, &c. purge our conscience from dead worke to serue the living God.*

The propertie of regenerate conscience is two-fold: Christian libertie, and certaintie of saluation. Because both these haue their place, not in the outward man, but in the spirit and conscience.

Christian libertie, is a spirituall and holy freedome purchased by Christ.

I say, it is spirituall, first, to put a difference betweene it and ciuill libertie, which stands in outward & bodily freedome and priuiledges: secondly, to confute the Iewes, that looke for earthly libertie by Christ; & the Anabaptists, who imagine a freedome from all authoritie of Magistrates in the kingdome of Christ.

Again, I say it is an holy freedome, to confute the Libertines, who thinke that by the death of Christ they haue libertie to liue as they list.

Lastly, I say it is purchased by Christ, to shew the authoritie thereof. *Gal. 5. 1.* *Stand fast in the libertie wherewith Christ hath made you free.* And to confute the Papists, whose doctrine in effect is thus much, that this libertie is procured indeed by Christ, and is continued partly by Christ, and partly by the man himselfe.

Christian libertie hath three parts.

The first is freedome from the iustification by the morall law. For he that is a member of Christ, is not bound in conscience to bring the perfect righteousnesse of the law in his owne person for his iustification before God.

Gal. 5. 1. with vers. 3.

Hence it followeth, that he that is a Christian, is likewise freed from the curse and condemnation of the law. *Rom. 8. 1.* *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.* *Gal. 3. 13.* *Christ hath redeemed vs from the curse of the law, when he was made a curse for vs.*

By this first part of Christian libertie, it appears that there cannot bee any iustification of a sinner by workes of grace before God. For he that will be iustified but by one worke, is debter to the whole law, *Gal. 3. 3.* but no man that is a member of Christ, is debter to the whole law; for his libertie is to be free in that point: therefore no man is iustified so much as by one worke of his owne.

The second part, is freedome from the rigour of the law, which exacteth perfect obedience, & condemneth all imperfection. *Rom. 6. 14.* *Sin hath no more dominion ouer you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* *1 Ioh. 5. 3.* *This is the loue of God, that wee keepe his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

Hence it followeth, that God will accept of our imperfect obedience, if it be sincere: yea he accepts the will, desire, and endeavour to obey for obedience it selfe, *Malac. 3. 17.* *And I will spare them as a man spareth his owne sonne that serueth him.*

The third part is, that the conscience is freed from the bond of the ceremoniall law. *Gal. 3. 25.* *But after that faith is come, we are no more under a schoolemaster.* *Eph. 2. 14, 15.* *& hath broken the stop of the partition wall, in abrogating*

See. 1.
Of Christian
libertie.

a In respect of the excellent estate in which man was created.

through

through his flesh, the law of commandments which standeth in ordinances, Col. 2. 14. And hath put out the hand-writing of ordinances, which was against us. ver. 16. Let no man therefore condemn you in meat and drinke, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new Moone, &c.

Hence it followeth, that all Christians may freely without scruple of conscience, vse all things indifferent, so it be; the manner of vsing them be good.

And first, when I say that all may vse them, I vnderstand a two-fold vse; naturall and spirituall.

The naturall vse, is either to releue our necessities, or for honest delight. Thus the Psalmist saith, that God giues not onely bread to strengthen the heart of man, but also wine to make glad the heart, & oyle to make the face to shine, *Psal. 104. 15.* and God hath put into his creatures infinite varieties of colours, flavours, tastes, and formes, to this end that men might take delight in them. Hence it follows, that Recreation is lawfull, and a part of Christian libertie, if it be well vsed. By Recreation, I vnderstand exercises and sports seruing to refresh either the body or the mind: & that they may be well vsed, two rules especially must be remembered. The first, that lawfull recreation stands onely in the vse of things indifferent. For if the things bee commanded by God, there is no sporting in them; or if they be forbidden, there is no vsing of them at all. Vpon this ground, sundry kinds of recreation are to be neglected. As I. the dauncing commonly vsed in these daies, in which men and women, young men and maides, all mixed together, dance to the sound of the instrument or voice in time & measure, with many wanton gestures, and that in solemn meetings after great feasts. This exercise cannot be numbred among things indifferent: for experience shewes, that it hath bene vsually either a fruit or a follower of great wickednes, as idolatry, fornication, drunkennes: hereupon, one well compared it to a * circle, whose center was the diuell. Again, if we must giue an account of euery idle word, then also of euery idle gesture and pace: and what account can be giuen of these paces back-ward and forward, of caprings, jumps, gambolds, turnings, with many other friskes of lightnes & vanitie, more befeeming goates and apes, of whom they are commonly vsed, then men? Whereas *Salomon* esteemed laughter as madness, he would (no doubt) haue condemned our common lasciuious dauncing much more for madness, laughter being but the least part of it. II. Dicing: which is precisely the casting of a lot, not to be vsed at our pleasures, but in matters of weight and importance. And of this kinde are all games, the ground wherof are not the sleight of mans wit, but lot alone. III. Playes and Enterludes, that stand in the representation of the vices and misdemeanour of the world. For if it bee not lawfull to name vices, vlesse it be in the

A way of dislike, *Eph. 5. 3.* much lesse is it warrantable to gesture and represent vice in the way of recreation and delight. The second rule is, that recreation must be sparing, moderate and lawfull vse of things indifferent, according to the rules following.

The spirituall vse is when we take occasion by the creatures to meditate & speake of heavenly things: as, vpon the sight of the vine & the branches thereof, to consider the mysticall coniunction between Christ & his Church: by the sight of the rain-bow, to think of the promise of God of not drowning the world by waters: and by any thing that befalls, to take occasion to consider in it the wisdom, goodness, iustice, mercy, prouidence of God, &c.

B I adde further, that things indifferent, as bondage, outward liberty, riches, pouerty, single estate, mariage, meat, drinke, apparel, buildings, may be vsed freely, because they are neither commanded by God nor forbidden: and in themselves considered, they may be vsed or not vsed without breach of conscience.

The right manner of vsing them, is to sanctifie them by the word and prayer, *1 Tim. 4. 3, 4.* and not onely some of them, but the vse of them all. Meate, drinke, and marriage are thus to be sanctified, as the place before noted declareth. *Paul* sanctified his iourney on this manner, *Act. 21. 5.* And the Iewes were commanded to dedicate their houses at the first entrance, *Deu. 20. 5.* By this dedication we may well vnderstand not onely the letting of the house, or the prouiding of a tenant, but also the sanctifying of it by inuocation of Gods name, that by his blessing, the place with the roomes thereof might serue for their benefit & comfort. And on this manner to bless our dwelling places when we first enter into the, is the best way that can be to preferue them from the casualties of fire within, & lightening from heauen, and from the annoyance and molestation of euill spirits, and other iudgements of God.

C Things indifferent are sanctified by Gods word, because it shewes what things we may vse, and what things we may not: and if wee may vse them, in what manner it is to be done. And to this purpose the Scripture affords foure rules.

D The first, that all things must bee done to Gods glory, *1 Cor. 10. 31.* Whether ye eate or drinke, or what soeuer ye do, do all to the glory of God. And that this may be performed, things indifferent must be vsed as signes and tables, in which we may shew forth the graces and vertues that God hath wrought in the heart. For example: we must so make our apparell both for matter and fashion, and so weare it, that it may in some sort set forth to the beholder our modestie, sobriety, frugalitie, humilitie, &c. that hereby he may be occasioned to say, behold a graue, sober, modest person: and so of the rest. And the common sinne of this time is, that meate, drinke, apparell, buildings are vsed as banners displayed to set forth to the

b In this page.

Tripudium est
circulus, cuius
di. uisus.

world, mans ryot, excesse, and pride of heart.

The second. Wee must suffer our selues lawfully to be limited and restrained in the ouer-much or ouer-common vse of things indifferent. I say the common vse, because it is not Gods will vterly and absolutely to barre vs of the vse of such things. Now the restrainers of our vse, are two; the first is the law of charitie. For as charitie giues place to piety; so Christian liberty in the vse of outward things, giues place to charitie. And the law of charity is, that we should not vse things indifferent to the hurt or offence of our brother, 1 Cor. 8. 13.

Quest. Whether may a man vse his libertie before such as are weake: and yet not perswaded of their libertie. *Ans.* Some are weake of simple ignorance, or because they haue bene decciued by the abuse of long custome: & yet are willing to be reformed. And before such we must abstaine; lest by example wee draw them to sinne, by giuing occasion to them of doing that whereof they doubt. Againe, some are weake vpon affected ignorance or of malice, and in the presence of such we neede not abstaine. Vpon this ground *Paul* who circumcised *Timothie* would not circumcise *Titus*.

The second restrainer, is the wholesome lawes of men, whether Ciuill or Ecclesiasticall. For howsoeuer things indifferent, after the law is once made of them, remaine still indifferent in themselves: yet obedience to the law is necessary, and that for conscience sake. *Act.* 15. 28.

The third. We must vse things indifferent so far forth as they shall further vs in godlinesse. For we ought to doe all things not only to the edification of others, but also of our owne selues. And therefore it is a flat abuse of Christian libertie, for men so to pamper their bodies with meate and drinke, that thereby they disable themselves to heare Gods word, to pray, to giue counsell, to doe the ordinary workes of their callings.

The fourth. Things indifferent must bee vsed within compasse of our callings, that is, according to our ability, degree, state, and condition of life. And it is a common abuse of this libertie in our daies, that the meane man will be in meate, drinke, apparell, building, as the Gentleman; the Gentleman as the Knight; the Knight as the Lord or Earle.

Now then things indifferent are sanctified to vs by the word, when our consciences are resolu'd out of the word that wee may vse them, so it bee in the manner before named, and according to the rules here set downe.

They are sanctified by prayer, when wee craue at Gods hands the right vse of them, and hauing obtained the same, giue him thanks therefore, *Coloss.* 3. 17. *Whatsoeuer ye doe in word or deede, doe all in the name of the Lord Iesus, giuing thanks to God the Father by him.*

Thus much of Christian libertie, by which we are admonished of sundry duties: I. to labour to become good members of Christ, of what estate or condition soeuer we be. The li-

bertie of the city of Rome made not only the Romanes borne, but euen the men of other countries seeke to be citizens thereof. *Act.* 22. 28. The Priuiledges of the Iewes in Persia made many become Iewes. *Heb.* 8. 17. O then much more should the spirituall libertie of conscience purchased by the blood of Christ, mooue vs to seeke for the kingdome of heauen, & that we might become good members thereof. II. Againe, by this we are taught to studie, learne, & loue the Scriptures, in which our liberties are recorded. We make account of our charters whereby wee hold our earthly liberties, yea we gladly read them & acquaint our selues with them; what a shame then will it be for vs, to make no more account of the word of God, that is the law of spirituall liberty? *1am.* 2. 12. I I I. Lastly, we are aduertised most heartily to obey & serue God according to his word, for that is the end of our libertie: the seruant doth all his businesse more cheerefully, in the hope and expectation he hath of libertie. Againe, our liberty most of all appears in our seruice and obedience; because the seruice of God is perfect freedom: as on the contrary in the disobedience of Gods commandements, stands our spirituall bondage.

The second propertie of conscience is an infallible certaintie of the pardon of sin and life euermlasting. That this point may be cleared, I will handle the question betweene vs and the Papists touching the certenty of saluation. And that I may proceede in order, we must distinguish the kinds of certenty. First of all certentie is either Vnfallible or Coniecturall: Vnfallible, wherein a man is neuer disappointed: Coniecturall, which is not so euident, because it is grounded only vpon likelihoods. The second all Papists grant, but the first they deny in the matter of saluation. Againe, certentie is either of faith, or experimental, which Papists call *moral*. Certentie of faith, is whereby any thing is certainly beleueed: and it is either generall or speciall. Generall certentie, is to beleue assuredly that the word of God is truth it selfe, and this both wee and Papists allow. Speciall certenty, is by faith to apply the promise of saluation to our selues, and to beleue without doubt, that remission of sinnes by Christ & life euermlasting belong vnto vs. This kind of certenty we hold and maintaine, and Papists with one consent deny it; acknowledging no assurance but by hope. *Moral* certenty, is that which proceeds from sanctification and good workes, as signes and tokens of true faith. This we both allow, yet with some difference. For they esteeme all certentie that comes by workes to be vnertain and often to decciue: but we doe otherwise, if the workes be done in vprightnesse of heart.

The question then is, whether a man in this life may ordinarily without reuelation, be vnfallibly certaine of his owne saluation, first of all & principally by faith, & then secondly, by such workes as are vnseparable companions

Seet. 2.
Of cer-
tainie of
saluation.

of faith. We hold this for a cleare and euident principle of the word of God, and cōtrariwise the Papiſts denie it wholly. I will therfore prooue the truth by ſome few arguments, and then answer the common obiections.

Arg. 1. That which the Spirit of God doth first of all testifie in the heart and conscience of any man, & then afterward fully confirme, is to be beleueed of the same mar. as vnfallibly certaine: but the Spirit of God first of all doth testifie to some men, namely true beleueers, that they are the sons of God: and afterward confirms the same vnto them. Therefore men are vnfallibly to beleuee their owne adoption. Now that the Spirit of God doth giue this testimonie to the conscience of man, the Scripture is more then plaine, *Rom. 8. 15. Ye haue receiued the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The same spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God.* Answer is made, that this testimony of the Spirit is giuen onely by an experiment or feeling of an inward delight or peace, which breeds in vs not an infallible but a coniecturall certainty. And I answer againe, that this exposition is flat against the text. For the Spirit of adoption is said here not to make vs to thinke or speake, but to cry *Abba, Father:* and crying to God as to a father argues courage, confidence, and boldnes. Again the same Spirit of adoption is opposed to the *spirit of bondage* causing feare: and therefore it must needs be a Spirit giuing assurance or liberty, & by that meanes driving away distrustful feares. And the end, no doubt, why the holy Ghost comes into the heart as a witness of adoption is, that the truth in this case hidden and therefore doubtfull, might be cleared and made manifest. If God himselfe haue appointed that a doubtfull truth among men, shall be confirmed and put out of doubt by the mouth of two or three witnesses, it is absurd to thinke that the testimonie of God himselfe knowing all things, & taking vpon him to be a witness, should be coniecturall. Saint Bernard had learned better diuinity, whē he said, *Who is iust, but he that being loned of God, returns lone to him againe? which is not done but by the Spirit of God* (4) *reuealing by faith vnto man the eternall purpose of God concerning his saluation in time to come: which reuelation vndoubtedly is nothing else but an infusion of spirituall grace: by which, whilest the deeds of the flesh are mortified, the man is prepared to the kingdome of God, receiuing withall, that whereby he may presume that he is loned, and lone again.*

Furthermore, that the Spirit of God doth not only perswade men of their adoption, but also confirme the same vnto thē, it is most manifest. Griene not the Spirit whereby ye are sealed vnto the day of redemption. And *1. v. 13. After ye beleueed, ye were sealed with the Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. 2. Cor. 1. 22. It is God that hath sealed vs, and giuen vs the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts.* Here the wordes of sealing & earnest, are to be considered. For things that passe to and fro among men though they bee

in question, yet when the scale is put to, they are made out of doubt: & therefore when God by his spirit is said to seale the promise in the heart of euery particular beleueer, it signifieth that he giues vnto them euident assurance that the promise of life belongs vnto them. And the giuing of earnest is an vnfallible token vnto him that receiueith it, that the bargain is ratified, and that he shall receiue the things agreed vpon. And it were a great dishonour vnto God, to thinke that the earnest of his own spirit giuen vnto vs, should be an euidence of eternall life, not vnfallible, but coniecturall.

Arg. 2. The faith of the elect, or fauing faith, is a certain perswasion, & a particular perswasion of remission of sin and life euertlasting. Touching the first of these twaine, namely, that faith is a certaine perswasion, yea that certainie is of the nature of faith, it appears by expresse testimonie of Scripture, *Mar. 14. 31. O thou of little faith, why hast thou doubted? and 21. v. 21. If ye haue faith, and doubt not. I am. 1. 6. Let him aske in faith, and wauer not: for he that wauereth is like a waue of the sea, tossed of the wind, & carried away. Rom. 4. 20. Neither did he doubt of the promise of God through unbeliefe, but was strengthened in faith. I will not stand longer on this point which is not denied of any.*

Touching the second part of my reason, that faith is a particular perswasion applying things beleueed: I prouoe it thus. The propertie of faith is to receiue the promise, *Gal. 3. 14.* and the thing promised, which is Christ with his spirit, *Ioh. 1. 12.* Now Christ is receiued by a particular application, as wil appeare, if we do but marke the end and vse of the ministry of the word, and of the Sacraments. For when God giues any blessing to man, it is to be receiued by man, as God giueth it. Now God giues Christ, or at the least offereth him, not generally to mankind, but to the feuerall and particular members of the Church. In the Lords Supper, as in euery Sacrament, there is a relation or analogie between the outward signes, and the things signified. The action of the minister giuing the bread and wine to the hands of particular comunicants, representeth Gods action in giuing Christ with his benefits to the same particular communicants. Again, the action of receiuing the bread and wine particularly, representeth another spirituall action of the beleueing heart, which applieth Christ vnto it selfe, for the pardon of sin and life euertlasting. Papiſts yeild not this: yet if they refuse to maintaine this analogy, they ouerturne the Sacrament, and dissent from Antiquitie. *Augustine* faith, *The body of Christ is ascended into heauen: some may answer, and say, How shall I hold him being absent? how shall I reach vnto mine hands to heauen, that I may lay hold of him sitting there? Send vnto thy faith, and thou hast laid hold of him.* And what is more common then another saying of his? *What meanest thou to prepare thy belly and teeb? Beleene and thou hast eaten.* Again, *Eph. 3. 12. Paul* faith, *By Christ wee haue*

Bernard. epist. 107.

a Marko in well.

Eph. 4. 30

August. tract. 50. on Ioh.

boldnesse and entrance with confidence by faith in him. In which words are set downe two notable effects and fruits of faith: boldnesse, and confidence. Boldnesse is, when a poore sinner dare come into the presence of God, not being terrified with the threatnings of the law, nor with the consideration of his owne unworthinesse, nor with the manifold assaults of the diuell; and it is more then certaintie of Gods fauour. Now whereas Papists answer, that this liberty of boldnes in coming vnto God, proceeds of a generall faith, they are farre wide. It is not possible that a general perswasion of the goodnes and truth of God, and of his mercie in Christ, should breed confidence and boldnesse in the heart of a guiltie sinner, and no example can be brought thereof. This generall faith concerning the articles of our beleefe, was no doubt in *Cain*, *Saul*, *Achitophel*, *Indas*, yea in the diuell himselfe: and yet they despaired, and some of them made away themselves: and the diuell for all his faith trembleth before God. Wherefore that faith which is the root of these excellent vertues, of boldnes and confidence, must needs be a speciall faith, that is, a large and plentiful perswasion of the pardon of a mans owne finnes, and of life euerlasting. Again, *Heb. 11. 1.* faith is called *hypostasis*, that is, a sustenance or subsistence of things hoped for: where faith in the matter of our saluation, and other like things, is made to go beyond hope: for hope waits for things to come, till they haue a being in the person hoping; but faith in present giues a subsisting or being vnto them. This can not be that generall faith (of Papists termed Catholike) for it comes short of hope, but it must needs be a speciall faith that makes vs vndoubtedly belecue our owne election, adoption, iustification, and saluation by Christ. And to this purpose haue some of the fathers said excellent well. *Augustine* faith, I demand of thee, O sinner, dost thou beleue Christ or no? thou saiest, I beleue. What beleuest thou? that he can freely forgive thee all thy finnes? Thou hast that which thou hast beleueed. *Ambr. on 1. Cor. 1.* Ambrose faith, This is a thing ordained of God, that he which beleueeth in Christ, should be saved without any worke, by faith alone freely receiuing remission of sins. And with *Ambr. 1* ioyne the testimonie of *Hesichius* vpon *Leuiticus*, who faith, God pitying mankind, who he saw it disabled for the fulfilling of the workes of the law, willed that man should be saved by grace, without the workes of the law. And grace proceeding of mercie is apprehended by faith alone without workes. Whereas in the two last testimonies, faith is opposed generally to all workes, and is withal said to apprehend and receiue, yea alone to apprehend and receiue grace and remission of finnes, they can not be vnderstood of a generall, but of a speciall applying faith. *Bernard* hath these wordes. If thou beleuest that thy finnes cannot be blotted out but by him against whom thou hast sinned, thou dost well; but goe yet further, and beleue that he pardoneth thy finnes. This is the testimonie which the holy

August.
de verbis
dom.
serm. 7.

Ambr. on
1. Cor. 1.

Hesich.
on Leuit.

Bernard.
serm. 1. de
Aununc.
Mariæ.

A Ghost giueth in our hearts, saying, Thy finnes are forgiven thee. For so the Apostle thinketh that a man is iustified freely by faith. Papists being much choked with this place, make answer, that *S. Bern.* doth not say, that we must beleue the pardon of our sins absolutely without respect of workes, but that he requires the condition of our conuersion and repentance, as signes whereby this perswasion is wrought. I answer againe, that he auoucheth plainly the generall faith, whereby the points of religion are beleueed, to be but a beginning or rudimēt of faith, and therefore not sufficient, vnlesse we go further, and apply the grace of God to our selues by faith, simply, without respect of any condition performed on mans part. Indeed I grant, that the truth of conuersion, & other workes, are by him mentioned afterward, but that was for this end, to shew how any man may haue a sensible and euident experience by workes, as fruits of the pardon of his owne finnes, & life euerlasting, which he beleueeth.

Arg. 3. *S. Iohn* penned his first epistle that he might shew vnto the Church of God a way how they might ordinarily and fully be assured of the loue of God, and of eternall life: and therefore he affordeth vs many pregnant testimonies for this purpose. *1. Ioh. 2. 3.* And by this we know that we haue knowne him, if we keep his commandments: and *v. 5.* Hee which keepeth his word, in him is the loue of God truly accomplished: by this we know that we are in him. chap. 3. *10.* By this are manifest the children of God, and the children of the diuel & *v. 19.* By this we know that we are of the truth, & before him we shall make our hearts confident. cha. 4. *13.* By this we know that we dwell in him, and he in vs, because hee hath giuen vs of his spirit. chap. 5. *2.* By this we know that we loue the sonnes of God, when wee loue God, and keepe his commandments. *v. 13.* I haue writtē these things vnto you which beleue in the name of the sonne of God, that ye may know that you haue life eternall. To these testimonies, first of all answer is made, that none of them doe necessarily imply a certainty of diuine faith; because we are said to know the things which we learn by coniectures. Behold a filly and poore shift. *S. Iohn* faith, chap. 1. *4.* These things we write vnto you that your ioy may be full. Now it is but an vncertain ioy that riseth by coniectural knowledge. Again, this knowledge brings forth confidence and bolanes euen before God. *c. 3. v. 19. 21.* and therefore it cannot but include an infallible certaintie. And to put it out of question that the knowledge here mentioned is the knowledge of diuine faith, or as infallible as it is or can be, it is added, cha. 4. *16.* And wee haue knowne and beleueed the loue which God hath toward vs. Secondly, it is answered, that all these speeches are generall, and not concerning particular men: but it is false: for when *S. Iohn* faith (we know) he speaks of himselfe, and includes the rest of the Church in the same condition with himself. Now he himselfe was fully assured of his owne saluation. For Christ a

little before his departure out of the world, did comfort all his disciples, partly by renewing the promise of life everlasting, and of the presence of his spirit vnto them; and partly by praying vnto the Father for their finall preferuation: so as they could not but be fully resolved of their happie estate, both in this life, and in the life to come.

Arg. 4. Abrahams faith was a full persuasione wherby he applied the promise vnto himselfe. *Rom. 4. 21.* And this faith of his is an example propounded vnto vs, according to which we are to beleue: & therefore he is called the father of the faithfull, *v. 16.* and Paul hauing set downe the nature & effects of this faith, faith, *It was written not only for him, but also for vs which beleue, v. 23.* It is objected, that Abrahams faith was not of saluation, but it concerned his issue in his old age, as Paul saith, *Rom. 4. 18.* Abrahams hope beleued that he should be the father of many nations: according to that which was spoken, *So shall thy seed be.* *Ans.* We must distinguish the object of faith, which is either principal or lesse principal. Principal, is alwaies Christ with his benefits: lesse principal are other lesse: & particular benefits obtained by Christ. As of Abrahams faith, the object lesse principall was a carnall seed or issue: and the principall object most of all respected, as the foundation of all other blessings, was the blessed seed Christ Iesus, *Gal. 3. 16.* To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. *He saith not, And to the seeds, as of many: but, and to thy seed, as of one, which is Christ.* and *v. 29.* If ye be Christs, then Abrahams seed. Thus it is plaine, that issue was neither promised nor desired, but with respect to Christ, who could not haue descended of Abraham, if he had bin wholly without seed.

Hauing thus alleadged some arguments for the truth, I come now to consider the objections of the Papists. *Obiect. 1.* Job being a righteous man wanted certainty of grace in himself, *Job. 9. 20.* If I would iustifie my selfe, mine owne mouth shall condemne me: if I would be perfect, hee shall iudge me wicked: though I were perfect, yet my soule shall not know it. Again, *v. 28.* I am afraid of all my workes, knowing that thou wilt not iudge me innocent. *Ans.* Balaad in the former chapter extolled the iustice of God: & Job in this cha. giues assent thereto, saying, *v. 2.* I know verily it is so: and he likewise spends the whole chapter in magnifying the iustice of God: and hauing propounded this end of his speech, hee doth not speak of himselfe, & of his owne estate simply, as it is considered in it selfe: but as hee esteemed himselfe, being compared with God, especially then when hee entred into a strait examination of his creature. And so must the speech be vnderstood, *If I were perfect, my soule should not know it,* that is, I will not acknowledge or stand vpon any righteousness of mine owne, when God shall enter into iudgement with me. And thus much the very elect Angels, being in possession of heauen, and therefore hauing more then assurance thereof, cannot but say,

A when they are compared with God. Again, the words according to the originall, are commonly of all, and so may well be translated thus: *Am I perfect? I know not my soule, I abhorre my life:* that is, if I thinke my selfe perfect, I haue no respect to mine owne soule: or thus, I am perfect in respect of you, and I know not my soule, and I abhorre my life, namely, in respect of mine owne vprightnesse. And the other place is thus to be translated, *I feare all my sorrowes,* and not all my workes: for this is flat against the Hebrew text, and Popish translators themselves follow it not.

Obiect. 2. *Eccles. 9. 1, 2.* Man knowes not whether he be worthy of loue or hatred. For all things are kept vncertaine till the time to come. *Ans.* First I say, the translation is not right: the words are thus in the Hebrew and the Seuentie: *No man knoweth loue or hatred, all things are before them.* As for these words (all things are kept vncertaine till the time to come) are thrust into the text by head and shoulders: and Hierome hath them not. Secondly, I answer, that the holy Ghost doth not deny simply the knowledge of Gods loue or hatred, as though there could bee no certaine assurance of it in this life. If we vnderstand the words thus, then the argument of the holy Ghost must be framed on this manner. If loue or hatred were to be knowne, then it must be knowne by the outward blessings of God: but it cannot be knowne by the outward blessings of God, for all things come alike to all: therefore loue and hatred cannot be knowne. The proposition is false. For loue may be knowne otherwaies then by outward benefits: and therefore the reason is not meet to be ascribed to the spirit of truth. Wherefore the true and proper sense of the words, is, that loue or hatred cannot be iudged or discerned by outward blessings of God. S. Bernard speakes of this text on this manner, that no man knowes loue or hatred, namely, by himselfe; yet that God giues most certaine testimonies thereof to men vpon earth. And *serm. 5. de Dedic.* his words are these: *Who knowes if he be worthy of loue or hatred? who knows the mind of the Lord? Here both faith and truth must needs helpe vs, that, that which is hidien in the heart of the Father, may be reuealed vnto vs by the spirit: and his spirit giuing testimony perswades our spirit, that we are the sonnes of God: and this perswasion is caused by his calling, and iustifying vs freely by faith.* And S. Hierome (though commonly abused to the contrary) saith no more, but that men cannot know loue or hatred by the present afflictions which they suffer, because they know not whether they suffer them for triall or punishment.

Obi. 3. *1. Cor. 4. 3, 4.* I iudge not my selfe, I know nothing by my selfe. Here Paul as not being priueto his owne estate, refuseth to giue any iudgement of his righteousness. *Ans.* It is manifest by the words of this epistle, that certain in Corinth, boldly more then wisely, censured the Apostles ministration, and with all disgraced

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it in respect of the ministry of other teachers. Therefore *Paul* in this chapter goes about to make an Apologie for it, speaking nothing of his owne person and the estate thereof before God, but onely of his ministerie and the excellencie thereof. And this is the iudgement of *Theodoret*, *Aquinas*, and *Lira* vpon this text. And when he saith, *I iudge not my self*, his meaning is, I take not vpon me to iudge of what value and price my ministerie is before God, in respect of the ministry of this or that man: but I leaue all to God. Here then *Paul* refuseth only to giue iudgement of the excellencie of his own ministerie, and in other causes he refuseth not to iudge himselfe; as when he saith, *I haue fought a good fight, I haue kept the faith, henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous iudge shall giue me*, 2 *Tim.* 4.8. And *Chrysostome* on this place saith, that *Paul* refused to iudge himselfe not simply, but onely for this end, that hee might restraîne others, and teach them modestie. And where *Paul* saith, *I know nothing by my selfe*, the speech is not general, but must be vnderstood of negligences and offences in the compasse of his ministerie. For he was prouie to himselfe, that in simplicity and godly purenesse, he had his conuersation in the world, 2 *Cor.* 1.12 & he knew this by himselfe, that nothing should seuer him from the love of God in *Christ*, *Rom.* 8.38.

Obiect. 4. That we may be iustified there is some what required in vs, namely, faith; & repentance: and where these are wanting, a man cannot be iustified. Now no man can be certaine by the certainty of faith, that he repents of his sins with all his heart, and that he hath such a faith, as God requires at our hands, considering there is no testimony in the word, of our faith and repentance in particular. Therefore no man can be certaine by certainty of faith, that his finnes are pardoned. *Ans.* It is not necessary that any man should be certaine by faith of his faith and repentance; because faith is onely of such things as are not present, whereas faith and repentance are truly present in all that truly beleue and repent, it shal be sufficient if a man may any way be vnfallibly certaine that he hath them. And though some men falsly perswade themselves that they beleue, yet he that hath true faith indeede, knows that he hath true faith; euen as certainly, as he that vnderstands, knowes that he vnderstands. *Paul* saith to the *Corinthians*, *Proue your selues whether ye be in the faith or no*, 2 *Cor.* 13.5. hereby giuing them to vnderstand, that al which beleue, haue the spirit of discerning, to know certainly that they doe beleue. Againe, he saith of himselfe, 2 *Tim.* 1.12. *I know whom I haue beleueed*. And *S. Iohn* saith, 1. epist. 3.24. *By this we know that hee dwels in vs, by the spirit which he hath giuen vs*; making no question of it, but that hee which hath the spirit, knowes that he hath the same. And testimonies of men are not wanting in this case. *Aug.* (a) *Euery one seeth faith to be in his owne heart, if*

he beleuees: if not, he seeth it to be wanting. Again, (b) *A beleuer seeth his owne faith, by which he answereth, that he beleueeth without doubte, and (c) he which loueth his brother, more knoweth the loue whereby hee loneth, then his brother whom hee loneth*. Againe, whereas it is said, that hauing faith; yet we know not whether it be sufficient or no: I answer that faith beeing without hypocrisie, is sufficient to saluation, though it be vnperfect. God more respects the truth of our faith, then the perfection thereof. And as the hand of the childe, or of the palse man, though it be feeble, is able to reach out it selfe, and receiue an almes of a Prince; so the faith that is but weake, is able to apprehend and receiue *Christ* with all his benefits.

Obiect. 5. *Prov.* 28.14. *Blessed is the man that feareth alwayes*, *Phil.* 2.12. *Work your saluation with feare and trembling*. *Ans.* There is a threefold feare, one of nature, the second of grace, the third of distrust. Feare of nature is that, whereby the nature of man is troubled with any thing that is hurtfull vnto it, and therefore auoideth it. Feare of grace, is that excellent gift which is called the beginning of wisdom, and it is a certain awe or reuerence vnto God, in whose presence we doe whatfoeuer we doe. Feare of distrust is, when men tremble at the iudgements of God for their finnes, because they haue no hope of mercy. Of these three, the first was good by creation, and therefore it was in our Saviour *Christ*; but since the fall it is defectiue. The third is a vice, called slavish feare. And the second is that which is commanded in these, and the like places of Scripture: the intent whereof, is to make vs circumspect and fearefull lest we should offend God by any sin, our owne weakenesse considered, and the imminent iudgements of God. And this kinde of feare, as also the first, may stand with certainty of faith, *Rom.* 11.20. *Thou standest by faith, be not high minded but feare*. *Psal.* 2.11. *Serue the Lord in feare, and reioyce in trembling*.

Ob. 6. Where there is no word, there is no faith. For faith and the word of God be relatives. But there is no word of God that faith to particular men, *Cornelius*, or *Peter*, or *Iohn*, thy finnes are pardoned, excepting a few persons; as *Mary Magdalen*, and the palse man, &c. Therefore there is no particular faith. *Ans.* Though there be no word set downe in Scripture, touching the saluation of this or that particular man, yet there is set downe that which is equiualent to a particular word, & as much in effect. For the promise of remission of sins and life euerlasting, is giuen with a commandement, that euery man^d apply the promise to himselfe, as I haue before prouoed: and this is altogether as much, as if euery mans particular name had bin put in the promise. I adde further, that the promises of the Gospel must be considered two waies, first, as they are generally set down in Scripture, without application to any person: secondly, as they are taught and published in the ministry of the word; the

b Epist.
112.
c lib. 8.
de Trin.
c. 8.

d Reade
Bernard
serm. de
Agnunt.

end whereof is to apply them to the persons A
of men, partly by preaching, and partly by administering the Sacraments of Baptisme, and the Lords Supper, which are seales of righteousness of faith. Now the promise applied, and (as I may say) particularized to the members of the Church, is by the vertue of Gods ordinance as much, as if God himselfe had given the promise particularly, and annexed mens names vnto it. It is further replied, that the promise of remission of sin is preached not simply, but vpon condition of mens faith and repentance, which indeede cannot be certainly knowne. I answer again (as I haue already proued) that he which truly beleueth & repēteth, knoweth that he doth certēly beleue & repēt.

Obiect. 7. To beleue the pardon of a mans owne sins, is none of the articles of faith, propounded in any Creed, either of the Apostles, or the Nicene fathers, or *Athanasius*, or any other Creed. *Ans.* This faith is contained vnder these words: *I beleue remission of sins*: & I proue it thus. These words are an article of Christian faith, & therefore they must in sense containe more then the diuel doth or can beleue; now the diuel beleueth thus much, that God giues remission of finnes to his Church. Christian men therefore must goe one step further, and beleue particularly the remission of their owne sins. Otherwise, if the Papists will haue the Catholike faith to beleue no more in this point, then the damned spirits beleue, let the take it to themselves. But they reply further, that if there were any such article of faith, then some persons must beleue, that they are iust, though they willingly commit mortall sinne, which is an euident falshood. *Ans.* He that beleues the pardon of his owne finnes by true faith, hath the spirit of God in him, and a constant purpose not to sin against God, & therefore if he sin, it is against his purpose, and without any full consent of will: & it is not he that doth it, but the sin that dwelleth in him. But if it so fall out, that the childe of God be overtaken with any actual sin, then his case standeth thus: he hath by his fall wounded his conscience, weakened his faith, bereaued himselfe of Gods fauour, as much as in him lieth: made himselfe guilty of a sinne, and worthy of damnation: & God for his part accordingly turnes the wonted signes of his fauour, into signes of anger and displeasure: and though it bee pardoned in the purpose of God, yet it is not actually pardoned, till the parric repent. Things standing thus, we teach not that men must beleue the pardon of their finnes, while they liue and lie in them; for that were flatly to teach falshood for truth: but our doctrine is, that such persons must first of all humble themselves, and say with the prodigall childe, that they haue sinned against God, and are not worthy to be called his children any more: and againe renue their decayed faith and repentance, that they may beleue (as before) their perfect reconciliation with God.

Obiect. 8. In respect of God, who is truth it selfe, we are to beleue the promise in particular: yet if we respect our owne vnworthines and indisposition, we are to feare and in some part to doubt. For the promise of remission of finnes, is not absolute, but depends vpon the condition of our works. Therefore our certainty is only coniectural. *Ans.* I answer, first that in respect of our owne vnworthinesse, we are not to doubt of our saluation, but to be cut off al doubt, yea do despaire before the iudgement seat of God. For they which are of the workes of the law, are vnder the curse, *Gal. 3. 10.* and *Paul* faith of his own workes of grace. *In this I am not iustificd. 1. Cor. 4. 4.* And *Dauid* being out of all doubt of his own deferred damnation, in regard of his owne vnworthinesse, faith freely, *Enter not into iudgement with thy seruant, O Lord, for no flesh shall be iustificd in thy sight.* Again, the consideration of an worthinesse in our selues, doth not hinder a resolution concerning Gods mercie in Christ. For true faith makes an entrance vnto God with boldnesse, (I say with boldnesse): then for those persons that are vnworthy in themselves. *Eph. 4. 12.* And *Abraham* (whose faith is to be followed of vs) did not vpon the consideration of his old & decayed body, rest himselfe with bare hope vpon a likelihood of the accomplishment of Gods promise, but he beleued *under hope, euen against hope. Ro. 4. 18.* Lastly, I answer, that the ground of the former obiection is erroneous; namely, that the promise of saluation depends vpon the cōdition of our works: because the Scripture faith, It is made & accomplished on mans part freely. I grant indeed, that to the promise there is annexed a condition of faith: yet faith must not here be considered as a worke, but as an instrument apprehending Christ with his benefits: and withall, repentance with the fruits thereof, are on our part required; yet no otherwise, but as they are necessary cōsequēts of faith, & the signes and documents thereof,

Obiect. 9. No man knowes al his sins: no man therefore can certainly know that all his sins are pardoned, and that he is accepted of God. *Ans.* The ground of this argument is false: namely, that a man cannot be assured of the pardon of his sins, if some of the be vknown. And to make this manifest, I will lay down a more certaine ground, which shall be this. As the case is in Repentance, so is it also in faith: but there may be true & sufficient repentance of vknowne finnes. God indeede requires a particular repentance for particular knowne finnes: but if they be hidden and vknowne, he accepts a generall repentance. An example whereof we haue in *Dauid*, *Psal. 19. 12.* *Who knowes, faith he, the errors of this life? then purge me from my secret finnes.* If it were not as I haue said, neither *Dauid*, nor any man else could be saved. For when *Dauid* repented greatly of his murder and adulterie, yet we find not that hee repented particularly of his polygamie: which in all likelihood, through the twinge

and custome of those times, was not then repaired to be any sin; specially in the person of a king: and yet because (as we know) he is certainly faied, this very sin is pardoned. Therefore when God pardons the knowne finnes of men, whereof they doe in particular repent, he doth withall pardon the rest that are vnkowne. And by this it appears, that the ignorance of some hidden finnes, after a man with diligence hath searched himselfe, cannot prejudice an vnfallible assurance of the pardon of them all, and of his owne saluation.

Obiect. 10. We pray for the pardon of our owne finnes, and therefore we are vncertain of pardon: the man which knowes that he hath pardon, neede not pray for it: I answer first, when we are taught by Christ to pray for the forgiveness of our debts, we are put in minde not to seeke the pardon of all our sins, whether past or present; but specially of our present and daily offences, whereby wee make our selues day by day guiltie, till such time as wee humble our selues, and repent of them. Secondly, by this petition we are taught, to aske the increase of our assurance; because, though God bestow endlesse mercie on vs, yet we are skant in receiuing of it: our hearts being like a narrow necked vessell, which being caft euen into the Ocean sea, receiveth in water only drop by drop.

Obiect. 11. No man can beleue his owne saluation, as he beleuees the articles of faith; therefore no man can beleue the pardon of his sins, and his saluation, by an infallible certainty. I answer, first, that euery one that looks for saluation by Christ, is bound in conscience as certainly to beleue his owne saluation, & adoption by Christ, as he beleuees the articles of faith. Because to the promise of life there is annexed a commandement to beleue & apply it. Secondly, this faith whereby we are to beleue our owne saluation, if we respect the true & proper nature thereof, is as certaine as that faith whereby we beleuee the articles of faith. Thirdly, as there be diuers ages in the life of man, so there be diuers degrees and measures of true faith. There is first of all a beginning or rudiment of faith, like the *smoking flaxe* and *bruised reed*, which Christ will neuer quench nor bruiſe. Again, there is *weake faith*, which beleueeth the promise truly, but yet it is perplexed with many doubtings. Lastly, there is *strong faith*, which hath overcome all doubtings, and is not only for nature certain (as the former is) but also large and plentiful perswasion of Gods mercie in Christ. Examples of this we haue in *Abraham*, *Dauid*, the *Martyrs*, & such like worthy men. Now by the second faith, men do as certainly beleue their adoption as the articles, but not so *firmlie* and fully. But by the last, remission of finnes is not onely as certainly, but also as fully beleueed, as an article of faith.

Obiect. 12. Ancient fathers, the lights of Gods Church, haue alwaies condemned this

vnfallible & speciall certainty of faith, which the Protestants hold & maintain. *Ans.* Though we build not the doctrine of our religion vpon the iudgements of men, yet we refuse not in this and other points, to be tried by the Fathers, whose writings well vnderstood, make more for vs then for the Popish religion. And their testimonies commonly alledged to confute the certainty of speciall faith, are much abused. I. Many of them serue to proue that a man cannot iudge and discern of euery particular motion and grace of his heart, of the increase of these graces: & the contrary disease, of speciall vices and wants; many whereof are hidden from the vnderstanding. *Theodoret* in his comment, *1. Cor. 4. I will not, faith he, free my selfe from sinne, but wait the sentence of God: for it often falls out, that men sinne of ignorance, & thinke that to be equal and iust, which the God of al sees to be oſherwise.* *Augustine* de verbis Dei, *serm. 23.* Per aduenture thou findest nothing in thy conscience: but he finds something that seeth better. And vpon *Psal. 41.* I know that the iustice of my God shall abide but what her mine shal or no, I know not: for the saying of the Apostle terrifieth me, *He which thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall.* Here hee speaks of his inward righteousnes, and that, as it is considered in it selfe, without the assistance of God. For he addes afterward, *Therefore because there is no stabilitie in me for my selfe, hereupon my soule is troubled for my selfe.* *Chrysostome*, homil. 87. on *Iohn. I am grieved, lest peradventure supposing my selfe to loue, I do not loue as before: when I seemed constant & courageous vnto my selfe, I was found but a dastard.* These and a thousand like testimonies prouoe nothing. For though a man cannot fully discern his heart, either in respect of euery one of his own sins, or in respect of euery grace; yet this hinders not, but that he may haue an vnfallible certainty of his saluation, and also a sufficient gift to discern his owne faith and repentance. II. Other places must be vnderstood of proud presumption & of a kind of securitie, in which men dreame of ease and libertie, without trouble or temptation. *August.* de corrept. & grat. cap. 13. *Who of all the company of the faithfull, as long as he liues in this mortall condition, can preſſe, that he is of the number of the predestinate? And, de bona perfeuer. cap. 22.* No man can be secure touching eternall life, till this life be ended. *Bernard* epist. 107. *Having now receiued the knowledge of himselfe in part, he may reioyce in hope: but not in security as yet.* *Hieron.* Dan. 4. *Let no man boldly promise to another the pardon of finnes.* III. Some places auouch, that a man cannot be sure of perseuerance to the end, without falles and decays in grace: all which we graunt. *August.* de ciuit. Dei. lib. 11. cap. 12. *Although the Saints be (a) certaine of the reward of their perseuerance, yet they are bound to be vncertain of their perseuerance in the practise and increase of righteousness vnto the end, except he be assured of it by some reuelation?* IV. Some places must be vnderstood

a Marke it well.

exception : & if it be done but to some alone, it is but counterfeit obedience : and he that is guiltie in one is guiltie in all.

As a regenerate conscience giues testimonie of our newe obedience; so doth it also by certaine sweete motions stirre men forward to performe the same. *Psal. 16. 7. My reines (that is, the mind and conscience enlightened by the spirit of God) teach me in the night season, Esai. 30. 21. And thine eares shall heare a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walke yee in it, when thou turnest to the right hand, and when thou turnest to the left.* Now this word is not onely the voice of Pastours & teachers in the open ministerie, but also the voice of renewed conscience inwardly by many secret cogitations snibbing them that are about to sin. A Christian man is not onely a Priest and a prophet, but also a spirituall king, even in this life; and the Lord in mercie hath vouchsafed him this honour, that his conscience renewed within him, shall bee his solicitor to put him in mind of all his affaires and duties which he is to performe to God; yea it is the controller to see all things kept in order in the heart, which is the temple and habitation of the holy Ghost.

The second office in conscience regenerate is to *excuse*, that is, to cleare and defend a man even before God against all his enemies both bodily and ghostly. *Psal. 7. 8. Judge thou me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine innocencie in me. Again. 26. 1, 2. Iudge me O Lord, for I have walked in mine innocencie, &c. Proue me, O Lord, and trie me: examine my reines & my heart.* That the conscience can doe this, it specially appears in the cōflict & combat made by it against the diuell, on this manner.

The diuell begins and disputes thus. Thou, O wretched man, art a most grieuous sinner: therefore thou art but a damned wretch. The conscience answereth and saith; I know that Christ hath made a satisfaction for my sins, and freed me from damnation. The diuell replyeth againe thus; Though Christ hath freed thee from death by his death; yet thou art quite barred from heauen, because thou neuer diddest fulfill the law. The conscience answereth, I know that Christ is my righteousnesse and hath fulfilled the law for me. Thirdly, the deuill replies and saith, Christ benefits belong not to thee, thou art but an hypocrite and wantest faith. Now whē a man is driuen to this strait, it is neither wit, nor learning, nor fauour, nor honour, that can repulse this tētation, but onely the poore conscience directed & sanctified by the spirit of God, which boldly & constantly answereth, *I know that I beleene.*

And though it be the office of the conscience after it is renewed principally to excuse, yet doth it also in part accuse. When *Dauid* had numbed the people, *his heart smote him, 2. Sam. 24. 10. Job* saith in his affliction that *God did write bitter things against him, and made him possess the finnes of his youth, Job. 13. 26.* The reason hereof is, because the whole man & the

verie conscience is onely in part regenerate, & therefore in some part remaines still corrupt.

Neither must it seeme strange that one and the same conscience should both accuse & excuse, because it doth it not in one and the same respect. It excuseth, in that it assureth a man that his person stands righteous before God, and that he hath an indeauour in the generall course of his life to please God: it accuseth him for his particular slips, and for the wants that be in his good actions.

If any shall demand why G O D doth not perfectly regenerate the conscience & cause it onely to excuse, the answer is this. God doth it for the preuenting of great mischief. When the Israelites came vnto the land of Canaan, the Cananites were not at the first wholly displaced. Why? *Moses* rendreth the reason; Lest wilde beasts come and inhabit some parts of the land that were dispeopled, and more annoy them then the Canaanites. In like manner God renews the conscience; but so as it shall still accuse when occasion serueth; for the preuenting of many dangerous finnes which like wild beasts would make hauocke of the soule.

Thus much of good conscience: now folowes euill conscience: and that is so called partly because it is defiled and corrupted by original sinne, and partly because it is euill, that is, troublesome and painefull in our sense and feeling as all forrowes, calamities, & miseries are called *euils*. And though conscience bee thus tearmed euill, yet hath it some respects of generall goodnesse, in as much as it is an instrument of the execution of diuine Iustice: because it serues to accuse them before God, which are iustly to be accused.

It hath spread it selfe ouer mankind as generally as original sin: and therefore it is to be found in all men that come of *Adam* by ordinary generation. The proprietie of it is, with all the power it hath, to accuse and condemne, and thereby to make a man afraid of the presence of God, and to cause him to flie from God as from an enemy. This the Lord signified whē he said to *Adam*, *Adam where art thou?* When *Peter* saw some little glimmering of the power and Maiestie of G O D in the great draught of fish, he fell on his knees and said to Christ, *Lord, goe from me, for I am a sinful man.*

Euill conscience is either *dead* or *stirring*. Dead conscience is that, which though it can doe nothing but accuse, yet commonly it lies quiet, accusing little or nothing at all.

The causes why conscience lyeth dead in all mē, either more or lesse, are many. I. Defect of reason or vnderstanding in crazed braines. II. Violence & strength of affections, which as a cloud do ouer-cast the minde, and as a gulfie of water swallow vp the iudgement and reason: and therefore hinder the conscience from accusing; for when reason cannot doe his part, then conscience doth nothing. For example: some one in his rage behaues himselfe like a madde man, and willingly commits any mis-

Exod. 23. 29.

See 4. Of euil conscience.

Gen. 3. 9.

Luk. 5. 8.

Dead conscience.

chiefe without any controulment of conscience: but when choler is down, he begins to be ashamed and troubled in himselfe, not alwaies by grace, but euen by the force of his naturall conscience, which when affection is calmed begins to stirre, as appeareth in the example of *Cain*. III. Ignorance of Gods will and errors in iudgement, cause the conscience to be quiet, when it ought to accuse. This we finde by experience in the death of obstinate hereticks, which suffer for their damnable opinions without checke of conscience.

Dead conscience hath two degrees. The first is the slumbering or the benumbed conscience; the second is the feared conscience.

The benumbed conscience is that, which doth not accuse a man for any sinne, vnlesse it bee grievous or capitall; and not alwaies for that but onely in the time of some grievous sicknesse or calamitie. *Iosephs* brethren were not much troubled in conscience for their villanie in selling their brother, till afterward when they were afflicted with famine and distressed in Egypt, *Gen.* 42. 21. This is the conscience that commonly reignes in the hearts of drouisie Protestants, of all carnall and luke-warme gospellers, and of such as are commonly rearmed ciuill honest men, whose apparant integritie wil not free them from guiltie consciences.

Such a conscience is to bee taken heede of, as beeing most dangerous. It is like a wilde beast, which so long as he lies a sleepe seemes very tame and gentle, and hurts no man: but when hee is roused, he then awakes and flies into a mans face, & offers to pul out his throat. And so it is the manner of a dead conscience, to lie still and quiet euen through the course of a mans life: and hereupon a man would thinke (as most doe) that it were a good conscience indeede: but when sicknesse or death approacheth, it beeing awak'd by the hand of God, begins to stand vpon his legges, and shewes his fierce eies, & offers to rend out euen the very throat of the soule. And heathen Poets knowing this right wel, haue compared euill conscience to Furies pursuing men with fire-brands.

The feared conscience is that, which doth not accuse for any sinne; no not for great sinnes. It is compared by *Paul*. 1. *Tim.* 4. 2. to the part of a mans bodie which is not onely bereft of sense, life, & motion by the gangrene, but also is burnt with a searing yron: & therefore must needes bee vtterly past all feeling.

This kind of conscience is not in all men, but in such persons as are become obstinate hereticks and notorious malefactors. And it is not in the by nature, but by an increase of the corruption of nature; & that by certaine steps and degrees. For naturally euery man hath in him blindness of minde, and obstinacie or frowardnes of heart, yet so, as with the blindness and ignorance of minde, are ioyned some remnantes of the light of nature, shewing vs what is good and euill. Now the heart of man beeing exceedingly obstinate & puerse, carieth him to comit sins euen against the light

of nature & common sense: by practise of such sins the light of nature is extinguished: & then commeth the *reprobate minde*, which iudgeth euill good, & good euill: after this follows the *feared conscience*, in which there is no feeling or remorse: & after this comes an exceeding greedines to all manner of sin, *Eph.* 4. 19. *Rom.* 1. 28.

Here it may be demanded, how mens consciences shall accuse them in the day of iudgement, if they be thus benumbed and feared in this life. *Ans.* It is said. *Rev.* 20. 12. that at the last iudgement all shall bee brought before Christ, & that the books then shall be opened; among these bookes no doubt conscience is one. Wherefore though a dead conscience in this life be as a closed or sealed booke (because it doth either litle or nothing accuse), yet after this life, it shal be as a booke laid open because God shall enlighten it, and so stirre it vp by his mighty power, that it shal be able to reueale & discover al the sins that a man euer committed.

Stirring conscience, is that which doth sensibly either accuse or excuse. And it hath foure differences.

The first, which accuseth a man for doing euill. This must needs be an euill conscience. Because to accuse is not a propertie that belongs to it by creation, but a defect that followeth after the fall. And if the conscience which truly accuseth a man for his sins, were a good conscience, then the worst man that is, might haue a good conscience; which cannot be.

When the accusation of the conscience is more forcible and violent, it is called a *wounded* or *troubled conscience*: which though of it selfe it be not good nor any grace of God; yet by the goodnesse of God it serueth often to be an occasion or preparatiō to grace; as a needle, that drawes the thread into the cloath, is some meanes whereby the cloath is sewed together.

The second, is that which accuseth for doing well. And it is to bee found in them that are giuen to idolatry and superstition. As in the Church of Rome: in which, because mens consciences are insnared & intangled with humane traditions, many are troubled for doing that which is good in it selfe, or at the least a thing indifferent. As for example: let a priest omit to say masse & to say his canonical houres, his conscience will accuse him therefore: though the omitting of the canonical houres & of the idolatours masse, be indeed by Gods word no sin.

The third, is the conscience which excuseth for doing that which is euill. This also is to be found in them that are giuen to Idolatry and superstition. And there is a particular example hereof, *Ioh.* 16. 2. *Tea the time shal come, that who soeuer killeth you, will thinke that he doth God good seruice*. Such is the conscience of Popish traitours in these daies, that are neuer touched at all, though they intend and enterprise horrible villanies, and be put to death therefore.

The fourth, is that which excuseth for well doing some times, and in some particular

actions

Conscience benumbed.

Stirring conscience

Feared conscience.

actions of carnall men. When *Abimelech* had taken *Sarah* from *Abraham*, God said vnto him in a dreame, *I know that thou diddest this with an upright minde*, *Gen. 20. 6.* This may be termed a good conscience, but is indeede otherwise. For though it doe truly excuse in one particular action, yet because the man in whom it is, may be vnregenerate and asyet out of Christ, and because it doth accuse in many other matters; therefore it is no good conscience. If all the vertues of naturall men are indeed but certaine beautiful sins, and their righteousnesse but a carnall righteousnesse; then the conscience also of a carnall man, though it excuse him for well doing, is but a carnall conscience.

CHAP. IIII.

Mans dutie touching conscience.

MAns dutie concerning conscience is two-fold. The first is, if we want good conscience about all things to labour to obtaine it: for it is not giuen by nature to any man, but comes by grace.

For the obtaining of good conscience, three things must bee procured; a preparation to good conscience; the applying of the remedie; the reformation of conscience.

In the preparatiō, four things are required. The first, is the knowledge of the law, and the particular commandements thereof, whereby we are taught what is good, what is bad; what may be done, and what may not be done.

The men of our daies, that they may haue the right knowledge of the law, must lay aside many erroneous and foolish opinions, which they hold flat against the true meaning of the law of God: otherwise they can neuer be able to discern betweene sin and no sinne. Their speciall & common opinions are these: I. That they can loue God with all their hearts, & their neighbors as themselves; that they feare God aboue all, and trust in him alone; & that they euer did so. II. That to rehearse the Lords prayer, the beleefe, and ten commandements, (without vnderstanding of the words, and without affectiō) is the true & whole worship of God. III. That a man may seeke to wizarde & sooth-sayers without offence, because God hath provided a salue for euery fore. IV. That to sweare by good things and in the way of truth, is not a sin. V. That a man going about his ordinary affaires at home or abroad on the Sabbath day, may as well serue God as they which heare all the sermons in the world. VI. That religion & the practise thereof, is nothing but an affected precisenesse: that couetousnes the roote of euill, is nothing but worldlinesse; that pride is nothing but a care of honesty and cleane lines: that single fornication is nothing but the trick of youth: that swearing and blaspheming argue the courageous minde of a braue gentleman. VII. That a man may doe with his own what he wil, & make as much of it as he can; Hence arise all the frauds and bad practises in trafficke betweene man and man.

The second thing required, is the knowledge of the indiciall sentence of the law, which resolutely pronounceth that a curie is due to man for euery sin, *Gal. 3. 10.* Very few are resofol of the truth of this point, and very few doe vnfaignedly beleue it, because mens minds are possessed with a contrarie opinion, that though they sinne against God, yet they shall escape death and damnation. *Dauid* saith, *The wicked man* (that is, euery mā naturally) *blesteth himselfe*, *Pf. 10. 3.* & he maketh a league with hell and death. *Esay 28. 15.* This appeareth also by experience. Let the ministers of the Gospell reprocue sin, and denounce Gods iudgements against it according to the rule of Gods word, yet men will not feare: stones will almost as soone mooue in the wals, and the pillars of our Churches, as the flintie hearts of men. And the reason hereof is, because their minds are forestalled with this absurd conceit, that they are not in danger of the wrath of God, though they offend. And the opinion of our common people is hereunto answerable, who thinke that if they haue a good meaning, and doe no man any hurt, God will haue them excused both in this life and in the day of iudgement.

The third, is a *iust and serious examination* of the conscience by the law, that wee may see what is our estate before God. And this is a dutie vpon which the Prophets stand very much. *Lā. 3. 40.* *Mans suffereth for his sin: let vs search and trie our hearts, and turne againe to the Lord.* *Zeph 2. 1.* *Famine your selues, say you, O nation, not worthy to be beloved.* In making examination wee must specially take notice of that which doth now lie or may hereafter lie vpon the conscience. And after due examination hath bin made, a man comes to a knowledge of his sin in particular, and of his wretched and miserable estate: whe one enters into his house at midnight, he finds or sees nothing out of order: but let him come in the day time when the Sun shineth, and then he shall espie many faults in the house, and the very moles that flie vp and downe: so let a man search his heart in the ignorance and blindness of his minde, hee will straightway thinke all is well; but let him once begin to search himselfe with the light & lanterne of the law, & he shall find many foule corners in his heart, & heaps of sins in his life.

The fourth, is a *sorrow* in respect of the punishment of sinne: arising of the three former actions. And though this sorrow be no grace, for it befalls as wel the wicked as the godly: yet may it be an occasion of grace, because by the apprehension of Gods anger, we come to the apprehension of his mercy. And it is better that conscience should grieue and wound vs and doe his worst against vs in this life, while remedy may be had, then after this life, when remedy is past.

Thus much of preparation: now followes the *remedy*, & the *applicatiō* of it. The *remedy* is nothing else but the blood or merits of Christ who specially in conscience felt the wrath

Mark. 14.
34.

Heb. 5. 7.

of God, as when he said, *My soule is heavy vnto death*; and his agony was not so much paine & torment in bodie, as the apprehension of the feare and anger of God in conscience: and when the holy Ghost saith, *That he offered vnto God prayers with strong cries, & was heard from heauen*, he directly notes the distresse & anguish of his most holy conscience for our sins. And as the blood of Christ is an all-sufficient remedie, so is it also the alone remedie of all sores and wounds of conscience. For nothing can stanch or stay the terrors of conscience, but the blood of the immaculate Lambe of God: nothing can satisfie the iudgement of the conscience, much lesse the most seuerer iudgement of God, but the onely satisfaction of Christ. In the application of the remedie, two things are required: the Gospel preached, and faith: the Gospel is the hand of God, that offereth grace to vs: & faith is our hand whereby we receiue it.

That we indeed by faith may receiue Christ with all his benefits, we must put in practise 2. lessons. The first is, vnfeinedly to humble our selues before God for all our wants, breaches, and wounds in conscience: which, being vnto vs a Paradise of God, by our default wee haue made as it were a little hell within vs. This humiliation is the beginning of all grace & religion: pride and good conscience can neuer goe together. And such as haue knowledge in religion and many other good gifts without humiliation, are but vnbridled, vnmortified, and vnreformed persons. This humiliation containeth in it two duties, the first is confession of our finnes, especially of those that lie vpon our consciences: wherewith must be ioyned the accusing and condemning of our selues: for then we put conscience out of office, and dispatch that labour before our God in this life, which conscience would performe to our eternall damnation after this life. The second dutie is Deprecation, which is a kind of prayer made with groanes and desires of heart, in which we intreat for nothing but for the pardon of our finnes, and that for Christs sake, till such time as the conscience be pacified.

To this humiliation standing on these two parts, excellent promises of grace and life cuerlasting are made. *Prou. 28. 13. He that hideth his finnes, shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy.* 1. *Iob 1. 9. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and iust to forgive vs our finnes: and to cleanse vs from all vnrightheousnes.* *Luk. 1. 53. He hath filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich empty away.* Which are also verified by experience in sundry examples. 2. *Sam. 12. 13. David said to Nathan, I haue sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin.* 2. *Chro. 33. 13. When Manasses was in tribulation he prayed to the Lord his God, and humbled himselfe greatly before the God of his fathers, & prayed vnto him: and God heard his prayer.* *Luk. 23. 42. And the thiefe said to Iesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Then Iesus said*

vnto him. Verily I say vnto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. By these and many other places it appeares, that when a man doth truly humble himselfe before God, he is at that instant reconciled to God, and hath the pardon of his sins in heauen: and shall afterward haue the assurance thereof in his owne conscience.

The second lesson is, when we are touched in conscience for our sins, not to yeeld to naturall doubtings and distrust; but to resist the same, & to indeauour by Gods grace to resolute our selues that the promises of saluatiō by Christ, belong to vs particularly: because to doe thus much, is the very commandment of God.

The third thing is, the *reformation of conscience*; which is, when it doth cease to accuse and terrifie, and begins to excuse & testifie vnto vs by the holy Ghost, that we are the children of God, and haue the pardon of our finnes. And this it will doe after that men haue seriously humbled themselves, and prayed earnestly and constantly with sighes and groanes of spirit for reconciliation with God in Christ. For then the Lord will send downe his spirit into the conscience by a sweete and heauenly testimony, to assure vs that we are at peace with God.

Thus wee see how good conscience is gotten: & because it is so pretious a iewell, I will all persons, that as yet neuer laboured to get good conscience, now to begin. Reasons to induce men there may be these: I. You seeke day & night from yeare to yeare for honours, riches, and pleasures, which ye must leaue behinde you: much more therefore ought you to seeke for renewed & reformed consciences, considering that conscience will be with you in this life, in death, at the last iudgement, and for euer. II. He that wants a conscience purged in the blood of Christ, can neuer haue any true and lasting comfort in this life. Suppose a man arrayed in cloath of tithue, set in a chaire of estate, before him a table furnished with all dainty prouision: his seruants, Monarches and Princes; his riches, the chiefest treasures and kingdomes in the world: but withall suppose one standing by, with a naked sword to cut his throat, or a wild beast ready euer and anon to pull him in peeces: now, what can we say of this mans estate, but that all his happineffe is nothing but woe and misery? And such is the estate of all men that abounding with riches, honours, and pleasures, carry about them an euil conscience, which is as a sword to slay the soule, or as a rauensome beast ready to sucke the blood of the soule, & to rend it in peeces. III. He which wants good conscience can doe nothing but sinne: his very eating and drinking, his sleeping & waking, and all he doth, turnes to sinne: the conscience must first be good, before the action can be good; if the roote be corrupt, the fruits are vnseruable. I V. An euil conscience is the greatest enemy a man can haue, because it doth execute all the parts of iudgement against him. It is the Lords sergeant: God neede not send out proccesse

Good conscience
a fruit of
faith.

by any of his creatures for man: the conscience within man will arrest him, and bring him before God. It is the Tylor to keepe man in prison in bolts and yrons, that he may bee forth comming at the day of Iudgement. It is the witnes to accuse him, the Iudge to condemne him, the hang-man to execute him, & the flashings of the fire of hell to torment him. Again, it makes a man to be an enemy to God; because it accuseth him to God, & makes him fly from God, as *Adam* did when he had sinned. Also it makes a man to be his owne enemy, in that it doth cause him to lay violent hands vpon himselfe, & become his owne hangman, or his own cut throat. And on the contrary, a good conscience is a mans best friend: when all men intreat him hardly, it will speake him faire and comfort him: it is a continuall feast, and a paradise vpon earth. V. The Scripture sheweth, that they which neuer seeke good conscience, haue terrible ends. For either they die blocks, as *Nabal* did; or they die desperate, as *Cain*, *Saul*, *Achitophel*, *Iudas*. VI. We must consider often the terrible day of iudgement, in which euery man must receiue according to his doings. And that we may then be absolved, the best way is to seeke for a good conscience; for if our conscience be euill, and condemne vs in this life, God will much more condemne vs. And whereas we must passe thorough three iudgements; the iudgement of men, the iudgement of our conscience, and the last iudgement of God: we shall neuer be strengthened against them, and cleared in them all, but by the seeking of a good conscience.

After that a man hath got good conscience, his second duty is to keepe it. And as in the governing the ship on the sea, the Pilot holding the helme in his hand, hath alwaies an eie to the compasse; so we likewise, in the ordering of our liues and conuersations, must alwaies haue a speciall regard to conscience.

That we may keepe good conscience, wee must doe two things; auoid the impediments thereof, and vse conuenient preferuations.

Impediments of good conscience, are either in vs or forth of vs. In vs, our owne sinnes and corruptions. When mens bodies lie dead in the earth, there breed certaine wormes in them, whereby they are consumed. For of the flesh come the wormes that consume the flesh: but vnlesse we take great heed, out of the sins and corruptions of our hearts, there will breed a worne a thousand fold more terrible, euen the *worme of conscience* that neuer dieth; which will in a lingring manner wast the conscience, the soule, and the whole man; because he shall be alwaies dying, and neuer dead. These sins are specially three; ignorance, vnmortified affections, worldly lusts.

Touching the first, namely ignorance, it is a great and vsuall impediment of good conscience. For when the mind erreth or misconceiueth, it doth misleade the conscience, & deceiue the whole man. The way to auoyd this impe-

dimēt is, to do our indeauour that we may daily increafe in the knowledge of the word of God, that it may dwell in vs plentifully: to this end we must pray with *Dauid*, that he would open our eies, that we might vnderstand the wonders of his law: and withall, we must daily searcho the Scriptures for vnderstanding, as men vse to searcho the mines of the earth for gold ore, *Prov.* 2.4. Lastly, we must labour for spirituall wisdom, that we might haue the right vse of Gods word in euery particular action: that being by it directed, we may discern what we may with good conscience do or leaue vndon.

The second impediment, is vntaied and vnmortified affections: which, if they haue their swing, as wild horses ouerturne the chariot with men and all, so they ouerturne and ouercarry the iudgement and conscience of man: and therefore when they beare rule, good conscience takes no place. Now to preuent the danger that comes hereby, this course must be followed. When we would haue a sword or a knife not to hurt our selues, or others, we turne the edge of it. And so, that we may preuent our affections from hurting & annoying the conscience, we must turne the course of them, by directing them from our neighbours to our selues and our own sins, or by inclining them to God and Christ. For example: choller and anger directs it selfe vpon euery occasion against our neighbour, and thereby greatly indammageth the conscience. Now, the course of it is turned when we begin to be displeased, and to be angry with our selues for our owne sinnes. Our loue set vpon the world is hurtfull to the conscience, but when we once begin to set our loue on God in Christ, and to loue the blood of Christ aboue all the world, then contrariwise it is a furtheraie of good conscience.

The third impediment, is worldly lusts, that is, the loue and exceeding desire of riches, honours, pleasure. Euery man is as *Adam*, his good conscience is his paradise; the forbidden fruit, is the strōg desire of these earthly things; the serpent is the old enemy the diuell: who if he may be suffered to intagle vs with the loue of the world, will straitway put vs out of our paradise, and barre vs from all good conscience. The remedie is to learne the lesson of *Paul*, *Phil.* 4. 12. which is, in euery estate in which God shall place vs, to be content, esteeming euermore the present condition the best for vs all. Now that this lesson may be learned, we must further labour to be resoluēd of Gods speciall providence toward vs, in euery case and condition of life: & when we haue so well profited in the schoole of Christ, that wee can see and acknowledge Gods providence and goodnesse, as well in sicknesse as in health, in pouertie as in wealth, in hunger as in fulnesse, in life as in death, we shall be very well content, whatsoeuer any way befalls vnto vs.

The preferuatues of good conscience are two, the first, is to preferue and cherish that sauing faith whereby we are perswaded of our

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reconciliation with God in Christ, for this is the root of good conscience, as hath bin shewed. Now this faith is cherished and confirmed by the daily exercise of inuocation and repentance: which be to humble our selues, to bewaile and confesse our finnes to God, to condemn our selues for them, to pray for pardon and strength against sinne, to praise God, and giue him thanks for his daily benefits. And by the vnfained and serious practise of these duties, repentance and faith are daily renewed and confirmed. The second preferuative, is the maintaining of the righteousness of a good conscience; which righteousness (as I haue said) is nothing else but a constant indeuor and desire to obey the will of God in all things. That this righteousness may be kept to the end, we must practise three rules. The first is, that we are to carrie in our hearts a purpose neuer to sinne against God in any thing; for where a purpose is of committing any sinne wittingly and willingly, there is neither good faith nor good conscience. The second is, to walke with God as *Enoch* did, *Gen. 5. 24.* which is, to order the whole course of our liues, as in the presence of God, desiring to approoue all our doings euer vnto him. Now this perswasion, that wherefoeuer we are, we doe stand in the presence of God, is a notable means to maintaine sincerity. *Gen. 17. 1. I am God all sufficient, walke before me & be perfect.* And the want of this, is the occasion of many offences: as *Abraham* said: *because I thought surely the feare of God is not in this place, they will slay me for my wifes sake, Gen. 20. 11.* The third rule is, carefully to walke in our particular callings, doing the duties thereof to the glory of God, to the good of the common wealth, and the edification of the Church: auoyding therein fraud, couetousnesse, and ambition, which cause men oftentimes to set their consciences on the tenters, and make them stretch like cheuerill.

Thus we see how good conscience may be preferred. Reasons to induce herunto are many. I. Gods strait commandment. *1. Tim. 1. 19. Keepe faith and good conscience.* And *Prou. 4. 23. Keepe thine heart with all diligence.* II. The good conscience is the most tender part of the soule; like to the apple of the eye; which being pierced by the least pin that may be, is not only blemished, but also looeth his sight. Therefore, as God doth to the eie, so must we deale with the conscience. God giues to the eie certaine lids of flesh, to defend and couer it from outward iniuries; and so must we vse means to auoyd whatsoever may offend or annoy conscience. III. Manifold benefits redound vnto vs in keeping good conscience. First so long as we haue care to keep it, we keep and enioy all other gifts of Gods spirit. Good conscience and the rest of Gods graces, are as a paire of turtle doves, when the one feedes, the other feedeth, whe the one likes not, the other likes not, whe the one dies, the other dies: so where good conscience is maintained, there are many other ex-

cellent gifts of God flourishing: & where conscience decays, they also decay. Again, good conscience giues alacrity vnto vs, & boldnesse in calling on Gods name. *1. Ioh. 3. 21. If our heart condemne vs not, wee haue boldnesse towards God.* Thirdly, it makes vs patient in afflictions, and comforts vs greatly: and when by reason of the grievousnesse of our affliction, we are constrained to kneele on both knees and take vp our crosse, regenerate conscience as a sweet companion, or like a good *Simon*, laies to his shoulder, & helpes to beare one end of it. Lastly, when none can comfort vs, it will be an amiable comforter, and a friend speaking sweetly vnto vs, in the very agony and pang of death.

B IV. Not to preferre the conscience without spot, is the way to desperation. It is the policie of the diuell, to vse means to cast the conscience into the sleepe of security, that hee may the more easily bring man to his owne destruction. For as diseases, if they be long neglected become incurable, so the conscience much and often wounded, admits little or no comfort. Neither will it alwaies boot a man, after many years, to say at the last cast, Lord be mercifull to me, I haue sinned. Though some be receiued to mercy in the time of death, yet farre more perish in desperation, that liue in their sins wittingly & willingly, against their owne conscience. *Pharaoh, Saul, and Iudas* cryed all *peccanti*, I haue sinned against God: yet *Pharaoh* is hardened more and more, and despaireth: *Saul* goeth on in his sinne and despaireth: *Iudas* made away himselfe. And no maruell, for the multitude of sins oppresse the conscience, and make the heart to overflow with such a measure of griefe, that it can fasten no affiance in the mercy of God. Lastly, they that shall neglect to keep good conscience, procure many hurts, and dangers, & iudgements of God to themselves. When a ship is on the sea, if it be not wel governed, or if there be a breach made into it, it drawes water, and sinkes: and so both men, and wares, and all in likelihood are cast away. Now we are all passengers; the world is an huge sea, through which we must passe: our ship is the conscience of euery man. *1. Tim. 1. 19. and 3. 12.* the wares are our religion and saluation, and al other gifts of God. Therefore it stands vs in hand to be alwaies at the helme, and to carry our ship with as euen a course as possibly we can, to the intended port of happiness, which is the saluation of our soules. But if so be it we grow careless & make breaches in the ship of conscience, suffering it to dash vpon the rocks of sin, it is a thousand to one, that we in the end shall cast away our selues and all we haue. And in the meane season as conscience decays, so proportionally all graces and goodnesse goe from vs: Gods commandments begin to be vile vnto vs; the knowledge thereof, as also faith, hope, and the inuocation of Gods name, decay. Experience sheweth that men of excellent gifts by vsing bad conscience, lose them all.