

# A TREATISE OF Mans Imaginations.

*SHEWING,*

His naturall evill thoughts.  
His want of good thoughts:  
The way to reforme them.

Matth. 12. verſe 33.

*Either make the tree good, and his fruit good, or elſe make the  
tree evill, and his fruit evill.*



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# TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFULL SIR THOMAS HOLCROFT KNIGHT, WITH THE VERTVOVS LADIE ELIZABETH HIS WIFE: Grace and Peace.



*Th*at waighty charge of Salomon (Right Worshipfull) to every sonne of wisdome, for the keeping of his heart with all watch and ward, may well persuade us, that some matters of great importance depend thereon: Among many (because my gates may not be great before so small a citie) I will solich one. There is a strange desire, not of earthly, but of spirituall powers, after the possession of mans heart. God saith, <sup>a</sup> My sonne give me thy heart; and to him indeed the right belongs: Yet through mans transgression Satan hath got such hold thereof, that unlesse it be by divine power, he will not be kept out; and though we heare not Satans voice, yet his dealing bewrayes his meaning, that above all things in man he desires the heart. Once he strove about a dead <sup>d</sup> mans body, but doubtlesse his purpose therein was to have set up an idoll for himselfe in the hearts of the living. But what is mans heart that it should be so desired? Surely in substance little, but for employment almost infinite: It is a Treasure<sup>e</sup> wherewith man bringeth all his actions, good or evil: it is a Temple, wherein is placed either the Arke of God, or Dragon for the devill. Yea it is a <sup>f</sup> Pallace wherein dwelleth, and a Throne whereon sitteth either Christ, or Satan, the <sup>g</sup> King of glory, or the <sup>h</sup> prince of darknesse: and <sup>i</sup> he that keeps possession will there exercise dominion. Neither may wee thinke that one heart will suffice both these; <sup>k</sup> No man can serve two masters: God will have all or none; <sup>l</sup> If any part be shared from him, in high displeasure hee leaves the rest, and so the whole falls to the devill. Now <sup>m</sup> thus the case standeth thus with mans heart, doth it not merely concern every one to know his owne estate in this behalfe; to wit, what kinde of treasury, whose Temple, whose Pallace and Throne his Heart is? that if all be well, he may joyce, and so keepe it for the Lord; if otherwise, then seeke redresse betime.

To this purpose serves this present Treatise: wherein is in a glasse may first be scene, the fearfull state of mans naturall heart, full fraught with evil thoughts, void of good consideration, and so most fit for Satan: then after doe these blessed meanes appeare, whereby mans naturall heart may bee reformed, to become the Temple of God, the seat of grace, and a <sup>n</sup> bed of spices for the welbeloved to feed upon. And these are points of that importance, that whosoever neglecteth them, may say farewell grace, and bid adieu to God himselfe: for in the heart, if at all in man, must these be seated.

Now the publishing herof being committed unto mee, I present the same unto your Worships, and under your protection desire to commend it to the Church of God. It would too much enlarge my gates to annexe the manifold reasons which move me to this choice on your behalfe; onely this I pray, (that seeing it is the first fruits of my labour in this kind wherein I had full power of free choice in my dedication) it may inwinne to you both, mine unfained hearts desire of that everlasting good I wish unto your soules: and also to stiffe in part my thankfull minde for your manifold favours to me, and mine who depend upon you.

Now God Almighty blesse your Worships, with your children and familie, according to your severall necessities of his mercy and goodnesse, for soule and body, in this life and for ever. Cambridge, August 25. 1606.

Your Worships in the Lord,

Thomas Pierfon.

a Prov 4.13.

b Prov 23. 36.

c See Act. 5. 31.  
Luke 22. 3.  
d of es body,  
luke 9.

e Matth. 11. 12.  
Hinc sunt boni,  
et peccandi ori-  
go. Hieron. ad  
Demetriad.

f Aug. in Psal.  
24. 8.  
g Plal. 24. 7.  
h Ephes 6. 2.


i Qui possidet  
ipsum peribit.  
ib. Aug.

k Matth. 6. 14.  
l Quia sit in  
pars aliquis Dis-  
bolis, discida  
Deum iratum,  
et possidet tu-  
tum Diabolus.  
August. in Job.  
The summe of  
this Treatise.  
m Cant. 6. 1.



# To the Reader.

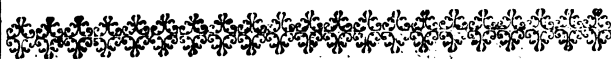
**N**ow (good Reader) that for my furtherance in the publishing of this Treatise, I had the Authors owne draught of the platforme of it, besides two perfect Copies of all his Sermons. I have for plainnesse sake divided it into Chapters and Sections: for the better effecting whereof, I was constrained to transpose two of the Vses, otherwise I doubt not, but every one that heard it preached, will judge mee to have dealt faithfully with the godly Author. The Lord prosper it to thy good.



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## Gen. 8. verse 21.

*And the Lord said in his heart, I will henceforth curse the earth no more for mans cause: for the imagination of mans heart is evil even from his youth.*

## CHAP. I.

The unfolding of the Text, by way of preparation to the Treatise.



**U**N the former part of this Chapter, *Moses* hath faithfully related the drying of the waters after the flood; and *Noahs* sacrificing unto God, with Gods acceptance thereof.

Now in this verse and the next, he recordeth such lawes and decrees as God made with *Noah* touching the restauration of nature perished by the flood; as well for the sparing of the creatures from such like destruction, as for the continuance of his providence in needfull times and seasons, meet for their future preservation. These words containe the first of these lawes: wherein we may observe three points; *Moses* his preface to this law; the law it selfe; and the reason thereof.

I. The preface; *And the Lord said in his heart.* These words must not be taken properly, for God hath not an heart as a man hath, neither speaketh he as a man doth; but hereby is meant, that God determined and set downe with himselfe this law and decree.

In this phrase of speech, note this one thing: If it had pleased him, God could have spoken to man by a voice, the hearing whereof would have confounded him: but as here we see, he doth abase himselfe, and as it were lay aside his honour and might, and speaketh unto us after the manner of men, even to the capacity of the most simple. Which reacheth us, that it is the good will and pleasure of God, that not onely the learned, but even the unlettered and most ignorant should know, and understand the holy Scriptures: for else he would never have penned them in a phrase and style that doth so well accord to the capacity of the simple.

II. Point. The decree it selfe: *I will henceforth curse the ground no more for mans cause.* This is the peremptory law of God touching the restauration of nature: wherein are contained two things: first, what God hath done: secondly, what God will not do hereafter. The thing that God hath done, is, the cursing of the earth: for he saith, *I will curse no more:* implying that he once cursed it.

In this observe, that God may truly be said to be a cause of curses, & to curse his crea-

tures: not onely for that he doth ordaine and decree all curses, but also because he inflicteth them upon the creatures: yet so as the same is alwaies most justly deserved by sin, before it bee inflicted of the Lord. And so must Gods cursing of the earth bee understood in this place, as a fruit of his wrath for the sin of man: accordingly God is said directly to create evil, *Isa. 45. 7.* because whatsoever afflictions, curses, and punishments are in the world, they are ordained and inflicted by God upon the creatures for the sin of man.

This plainly confuteth the common opinion of ignorant people, who hold that all good things, as peace, wealth, joy, and felicity come from God; but all evil, as affliction, calamity, curses, and judgements, come from the devill, and God only suffereth them. This is a most erroneous and blind conceit, which filleth many a soule with much anguish and impatience: for what comfort can he have in the time of trouble, that is perswaded it cometh wholly from the devill, and the hand of God is not therein? Wee therefore must learne to rectifie this opinion, and know that crosses and troubles come from God. This *David* knew well, and therefore when *Shimei* cursed him, and railed on him, he forbade *Abishai* to touch him, because (saith he) *2 Sam. 16. 10.* What if (or it may be) God hath bid him curse *David*? *Joseph* telleth his brethren who most treacherously sold him into Egypt, that the Lord sent him before them, *Gen. 45. 5.*

Secondly, here consider the impulsive cause that moved God to curse the earth by a flood, it was not in the earth, but in men: *I will henceforth curse the earth no more for man* that is, for mans finnes. In the new Testament there are two especiall finnes recorded for which God sent this curse: first, carnall security. They were choked with worldly cares, and crowned in earthly pleasures: In the dayes of *Noah*, they did eat, and drinke, marry, and give in marriage, *Matth. 24. 38.* Secondly, the contempt of the Gospel in the ministry of *Noah*, who preached an hundred and twenty yeares unto them, while the Ark was in building, but they were disobedient, as *S. Peter* saith, following their owne pleasures and delights. Whereby it appeares that these two finnes, Security, and contempt of the Gospel, are

are most grievous sinnes; for these brought destruction, not only upon all mankind, (*Adam* and his family excepted) but even upon all creatures that lived by breath.

Now looke as they sinnes were in this old world, even so are they rise in this last age according to the Prophecy of our Saviour Christ, *Luke 17. 26. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the sonne of man.* As this is the state of the whole world, so it is the state of this our Church; most men are drowned in the pleasures of this world, and choaked with the cares thereof: for howsoever they will heare the Gospell preached, yet few apply their hearts to believe the same, shewing forth the power thereof by repentance from dead workes, and amendment of life in new obedience. But we must know, that if these two sinnes brought a curse, even destruction upon the old world, then no doubt they will bring a fearful curse upon this age, though not by water, yet some other way that shall outrevaille the flood: and therefore we must lay these things so on our hearts, that unlesse we abandon lechurie, and worldly lusts, and withall doe appear and believe at the preaching of the Gospell, wee shall see Gods heavy curse will fall upon us, for if wee match the old world in sinne, wee must not looke to come behinde them in judgement.

The second thing in this decree is, what God will not doe hereafter: Namely, *curse the earth any more*: this must bee understood of that particular curse, which the Lord laid on the earth by waters, when he drowned the world: for the generall curses that were laid upon the ground, and on mankind for *Adams* sinne, remaine still, and shall not bee taken quite away till the end of the world: so that the meaning of this law is, that the Lord will no more drowne the whole earth for the sinne of man by a flood.

Here then wee see the cause why the sea being as raging and stirring as ever it was, doth notwithstanding keep it self within it bounds, and not overflow the world: and why the cloudes being as full of water, as ever they were, do not powre downe more floods upon the earth to destroy it. Surely it is by vertue of this particular law, and decree of God, wherunto the sea and cloudes become obedient, *I will henceforth curse the earth no more.* And here we have just occasiō to take knowledge and view of our own wretched & damnable estate, how wee are sold under sinne: for howsoever wee are created blessed, and happy, yet by our fall in *Adam* we are become far worse than any earthly creature; for each creature in his kind, as the Sunne, the Moone, & Starres, the Sea, and Clouds, and all other obey Gods commandment: but man of all creatures having lawes given him of God to keepe, rebelleth in breaking the same, and to him it is meate and drink, by nature to live in the transgression of Gods commandments.

A. Thus by comparing our selves with the brute creatures, wee may learne to humble our selves, and to be abashed, when wee see them which were made to serve us, to goe before us in obedience to the lawes of our Creator.

*1. 1. Point.* The reason of Gods decree, in these words, for the imagination of mans heart is evil, even from his youth. As the first, this reason may seeme very strange, that God should no more curse the earth: man, because the imagination of his heart is evil: Is all likelihood, God should have laid the contrary, *I will still curse the earth, because the imaginations of mans heart are evil*: for so he saith, *Chap. verse 5. 6.* that seeing all the imaginations of the thoughts of mans heart were only evil continually: therefore he would destroy the man from his womb, and from man to man; and every accepting thing: How can both these stand together? *1. 1. Point.* Thus: In the six chapter the Lord saith, hee will once destroy the world by waters, because of the wickedness of the: Imaginations of mans heart: and here he saith, he will not proceed to curse the earth againe and againe by the same punishment, because the imaginations of mans heart are evil, even from his youth: as if he should say, I have once drowned the world for the wickedness of mans imaginations: but if I should thus proceed to deale with man according to the wicked imagination of his heart, I must bring every yeare a new flood upon the earth, because I see the frame of mans heart is evil continually.

C. Here then observe, that God in the preservation of mankind, doth temper and moderate his justice by mercy: for if hee should deale according to mans deserts, hee should every day bring curses upon him: yea, so soone as a man is borne hee should bee destroyed: but God dealeth not so rigorously; hee minglith mercy with justice, whereby the whole frame of heaven and earth, the state of man and all societies doe stand: that which *Habakkuk* prayed for (*a*) *to justice, or wrath, remember mercy*, the Lord hath performed ever since the flood, yea, since the fall of *Adam*.

There be three great and weightie causes, which moved God to temper justice with mercy for the preservation of mankind; and other creatures: first, that hee by his might shew his patience and long suffering towards the vessels of wrath, (as the Apostle *(b)* speaketh,) that is, towards such as will not repent, that at the last day they may bee most justly condemned: Secondly, that there may be a company of men upon earth, which may worship God: for God hath speciall care of his owne glory among men, and therefore tempers justice with mercy in their preservation, that they might glorifie him. *1. 1. Point.* There is mercy, or pardon, which sheweth that there is mercy, that is, wheras (*c*) the Lord sheweth justice towards all men to hell suddenly, yet in mercy thou pardonest the sinnes of some, for this end, that they might worship

hab. 2. 1.

Rom. 9. 22.

thee: feare being put for worship and obedience. Thirdly, and principally that the elect and choſen of God might be gathered: for God in his eternall counsell and decrees hath appointed and ſet downe a certaine number of men, unto whom he will give eternall life, and for their cruſe doth hee ſpare the whole world from daily deſtruction: but when that number ſhall be accompliſhed, then ſhall heaven and earth go together, and the world ſhall be no more.

And here by the way, this third cauſe of the conſinuance of nature, muſt teach us our duty: to wit, that ſeeing it pleaſeth God in mercy to give us liberty to live a ſpace of time in this world, ſome twentie, ſome thirty, ſome forty or fifty yeares, and that for this end, that herein we might bee fitted for his kingdom, when we in the rigor of his juſtice he might have caſt us to hell in our mothers wombs, or ſo ſoone as wee were borne: we therefore muſt bee carefull not to deſpiſe this long ſuffering and patience of God, but rather labour in the feare of God, that it may become (c) *ſalvation to us*, by our conſcionable endeavour in all ſuch meanes unto the end, as he hath ſanctified for the working of the graces of life in the hearts of his children. And thus much for the reaſon in generall.

## CHAP. II.

### SECT. 1.

*The idleneſſe of mans naturall cogitations.*

THAT wee may the better perceive in this reaſon the eſtate of man in reſpect of his naturall Imaginations, the words are more particularly to be unfolded. For the Imaginations of mans heart, &c. The heart in Scripture is taken ſundry wayes: ſometimes for that fleſhy part of man in the middle of the body, which is the fountaine of vitall blood: ſometimes for the ſoule of man, ſometimes for the faculties of the ſoule: and ſometimes for the middle of any thing, as (a) *the heart of the ſea*, (c) *the heart of the earth*, that is, the middle thereof. Here it is taken for the underſtanding faculty of the ſoule, whereby man uſeth reaſon: which St. Paul calls (f) *the ſpirit of the minde*.

By Imaginations he meaneth the frame, or framing of the heart. And this is taken two wayes: of ſome, for the naturall diſpoſition of the underſtanding after the fall of man: of others, for that which the minde & underſtanding by thinking frameth, plotteth, and deviſeth; that is, for the effect thereof. We may take it both wayes, yet I rather approve the latter: for Chap. 6. 9. the Lord ſaith, Hee will overthrow all fleſh, and gives this reaſon, For the frame and thought of mans heart is evil continually. Where by thoughts, or Imaginations can nothing elſe be meant, but that which is deviſed and plotted in the thoughts of mans heart: ſo Salomon ſpeaking of an heart which God hateth, ſaith, It is framing or thinking thoughts of wicked counſels. Prov. 6. 18.

By mans heart, wee muſt not underſtand the heart of ſome particular perſons, as of thoſe that lived in the old world alone, but of men generally, man being put for whole kindekinde.

To wit, that is, it imagineth, & thinketh that which is againſt the law of God: From his childhood; that is, ſo ſoone as he beginneth to think, to reaſon or conceive of any thing, ſo ſoone doth hee imagine and conceive that which is evil: ſo that the whole meaning is this, The minde and underſtanding part of man is naturally ſo corrupt, that ſo ſoone as he can uſe reaſon, he doth nothing but imagine that which is wicked, and againſt the Law of God. The words thus explained, containe in them two maine points touching the frame of mans heart by nature. The firſt is,

*The Imaginations and counſels of every man is naturally evil.*

This appeareth not onely in this place, but elſewhere, Rom. 8. 7. The wiſedome of the fleſh is not an enemy, but omitteth againſt God. Again, ſuch as the fountaine is, ſuch are the ſtreames that flow thence; But our mind & underſtanding the fountaine of our thoughts, is by nature ſinfull. (g) To be impure, their minde and conſciences are diſiled: And againe; (h) Of our ſelves we are not able to think a good thought, and therefore the thoughts that come from thence, muſt needs alſo be corrupt: Mans Imagination ſtands in thoughts; the underſtanding deviſeth by thinking: And theſe thoughts of the Imagination are all naturally wicked: (i) From the heart (ſaith Chriſt) proceed evil thoughts: y and Salomon ſaith, The thoughts of the wicked (as all men are by nature) are an abomination to the Lord.

### SECT. 2.

*How the naturall thoughts of man may be knowne.*

Seeing that naturall Imagination is practiſed by evil thoughts, we muſt ſomething conſider of the naturall thoughts of man: And herein handle theſe two points: Firſt, whether the thoughts of man may bee known. Secondly, what the naturall thoughts of man be.

For the firſt there are two wayes to know mans thoughts: either directly without meanes, or indirectly by meanes. The firſt way is proper to God alone: for no creature in heaven or earth can immediately and directly know the thoughts of man, this Salomon confeſſeth in his notable prayer to God, 1 King. 8. 39. Thou only knoweſt the thoughts of all the children of men. Jerem. 17. 9. The heart is deceitfull and wicked above all things, who can know it? ver. 10. The Lord ſearch the heart, and try the reins.

The ſecond way to know mens thoughts is indirectly, and by meanes, which be three; by inſtinct from God, by revelation from the Scripture, and by ſignes. Firſt, by an extraordinary inſtinct, ſo did (k) Eliſha diſcover the king

c 1 Pet. 3. 15.

5 Tit. 1. 14.  
b 1 Cor. 14.

i Mat. 13. 19.

d Plal. 46. 2.

e Mat. 13. 44.

f Eph. 4. 23.

k 2 King. 6. 17.

of Syria counsell to the king of Israel: and by the same meanes, he told his servant (1) Gehazi what he did behind his backe, when he took gifts of Naaman the Assyrian. And so did (m) Peter tell Ananias and Sapphira of their false conveyances with the money that they took for their possession. And yet here we must understand, that when God revealed these secret thoughts to men, it was only in some things, at some times, and for some special causes, whereupon Nathan was faine to revoke his counsell, which hee gave to David for the building of the house of God, (n) when hee knew the will of God more perfectly. And so was Elias deceived, when he said, *hee was left alone, of all Israel that served God; for (o) God sold him; he had reserved seven thousand, that never bowed the knee to Baal*, which Elias knew not. Secondly, mens thoughts may be knowne by Revelation from Scriptures: for therein that spirit speaks evidently, which knows the frame of the heart: and hence it is, that in the ministry of this word, the thoughts of naturall men are made manifest. Thirdly, mens thoughts are knowne by signes, as speeches, & actions: thus Peter knew the (p) heart of Simon Magus; and Paul the heart of Elymus. And thus may any man know the thoughts of another, even as he may know the tree by his fruit, and the fountaine by his streame.

Besides these, there are two other meanes added, whereby to know mens thoughts: one by the Papists, and another by the Astrologians. The Papists say, the Saints in heaven know mens thoughts; not directly of themselves, but by reflection in the glasse of the Trinity. But this is a meer forgery of their own, which Isaiah never knew, saying thus of the Saints departed (q) *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel knoweth us not, but thou Lord art our redeemer*. And the Saints under the Altar cry, *How long Lord, how long, wilt thou not judge & avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* giving us to understand, that they are not so sharpe sighted, as by the glasse of the Trinity to see into the day of the last judgement, and therefore not into the thoughts of mens hearts. So that there are onely three wayes to know the thoughts of men; and so they may be knowne.

### CHAP. III.

Of mans naturall thoughts concerning God.

**H**AVING found that the thoughts of man may be knowne; wee come now to see what be the naturall cogitations of every sinfull man. Although they be almost infinite in themselves, yet they may be reduced to three heads: They either concerne God, or a mans neighbour, or else a mans owne selfe.

Of this thought: *There is no God.*

Touching God, there be in man 4. capitall evil thoughts. First, *That there is no God*: which as it is first in order, so it is the most notorious and vile damnable thought that can bee in a naturall man. And that this is one of the

thoughts of man naturally, appeareth by the expresse testimony of God himselfe, who knoweth the thoughts of man better than man doth; (r) *The wicked thinketh alwayes there is no God*. And againe; (s) *The foole hath said in his heart; there is no God.*

Touching this thought, observe these foure points: First, in whom it is: Secondly, how a man by thinking should deny God. Thirdly, what is the fruit of this thought: and fourthly, the examination of our hearts touching this thought.

For the first: we must not thinke that this wicked thought is onely in some notorious and hainous sinners: but it is in the corrupt mind & imagination of every man that cometh of Adam naturally, not one excepted, save Christ alone: so the foote of whom David (t) *speakes* must be taken, not for some speciall sinner; but for every man that lives uncalled, and without repentance, how civil soever his life be otherwaies: though some shame restraine his tongue from uttering it, yet by nature his corrupt heart is prone to thinke *there is no God*. This is made evident by Saint Paul, (u) who going about to prove that all men are sinners by nature, alleageth for his proofe divers testimonies of Scripture; and particularly out of these two Psalmes before cited: whereby he gives us to understand, that the foole there mentioned, must be understood of every naturall man. But it will be said, that it is ingrafted into mans nature to hold & thinke there is a God, and therefore every man doth nor deny God in heart. Answer. We must know that these two thoughts, *There is a God*, and *there is no God*, may be, & are both in one & the same heart: the same man, that by the light of nature thinketh there is a God, may by that corruption and darkenesse of minde that came by Adams fall, thinke there is no God: for two contraries being not in the highest degree, may be in one and the same subject: as light & darknesse in the same house: heate and cold in the same body.

11. Point. How doth a man by thinking deny God in his heart? Answer. Two waies, first, by turning the true God into an Idol of mans braine: secondly, by placing somewhat that is not God in the roome of the true God. For the first, the imagination of every man naturally, without further light from the word of God, doth turne the true God into an Idol: and therefore Paul saith of the Galatians, that before their vocation (x) *they did service to them which were no gods*: and of the Ephesians, that (y) *they were without God in the world*: even because they did not in their mindes conceive of God aright, and accordingly worship him, though the wiser sort among them did acknowledge one God the Creator of heaven and earth. And therefore David saith plainly, that (z) *all the gods of the Gentiles are idols, or vanities*: nay, as the Apostle saith, devils. 1 Corinth. 10. 20. *That which*

r Psal. 10. 4.  
s Psal. 14. 1.

t In whom this thought is.

u Psal. 14.  
Psal. 10.

x Rom. 3.

How a man by thinking denies God.

x Gal. 4. 8.

y Eph. 2. 12.

z Psal. 96. 5.

*the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice unto Devils, and not unto God.*

Now mans minde turneth the true God into an Idoll, by three notorious thoughts, which are the roote of many damnable finnes in this life; first, by thinking that *God is not present in all places*; whereby God is robbed of his attribute of *Omnipresence*: for the true God being infinite, must bee in all places; which when the heart of man denyeth, it imagineth God to be such a one as he is not, and to turne him into an Idoll. And that man naturally thinketh thus of God, the Scripture is plaine, *Iob 22. 12, 13.* wicked men are brought in speaking of God, as though hee were shut up in heaven, and had nothing to do in the world: *I am not God on high in the heaven? and behold the height of the starres how high they are. How should God know? can hee judge it? &c.* So the Psalmist expresseth the thoughts of the wicked in their practice of sinne, *God hideth away his face, and will never see: and the Lord shall not see, Psalm 94. 7.* yea, they who seeke the deepe to hide their counsell from the Lord, whose workes are in darknesse, say, *Who seeth us? who knoweth us? Is. 29. 15.* Secondly, by thinking there is *no providence of God*, whereby he ordereth and disposeth all things in the world particularly: That this is another naturall thought, the Psalmist shewes plainly, bringing in the wicked man saying thus of God, *God hath forgotten, hee hideth his face, and hee shall not see.* And the Prophet Zephany brings in the sinner speaking thus of God, that *he doth neither good nor evil.* Thirdly, by thinking there is *no justice in God*; this is done when men imagine with themselves, that albeit they proceed in the practice of sinne, yet God will not punish them according to the threatnings of his word. If we doubt whether such an imagination be in mans heart, read, *Deut. 29. 19, 20.* where *Moses* directly forbiddeth the people to say in their hearts, *I shall have peace though I walke in the stubbornness of my heares, this is that (g) blessing of a mans selfe in sinne, which David chargeth upon the covetous, and wicked.* Thus they linne that (h) *pursue away the evil day, and say, the evil shall not come.* Hereby God is robbed of his justice, and made a God of all mercy, such a one as will not punish sinne, and so indeed is made an idol of mans braine.

The second way whereby a man denieth God in thought, is, by placing in the roome of the true God, an idol of his owne braine: This men doe, by thinking some other thing beside the true God, to bee their chiefest good: thus voluptuous men make (i) *their belly their god*, and covetous men make (k) *riches their god*, by placing their felicity in pleasure, and in riches: for look what a man thinks to be the best thing in the world for him, that is his god, though it bee the Devill himselfe or any other creature. And for this cause is the Devill called *the god of the world*, because

A the men of this world judge their own courses, wherein they serve the Devill, the best thing in the world for them, yea, farre better than the service of God, and therefore give their hearts thereto: for affection followeth opinion, and that which a man affects most, hee must needs thinke best of: and therefore what a man affecteth most, that maketh heto become his god, so that judging other things beside the true God, to be best for him, hee must needs place them in the roome of the true God, and so in his imagination deny God.

III. Point. What is the fruit of this thought? for thereby we shall best judge, what a curst thing this is, to thinke there is no God:

The fruit of this thought.

B This thought bringeth forth the most notorious sins that can bee, even Atheisme it selfe, which is a sinne whereby men sundry wayes deny God: and it is twofold, either in practice, or in judgement.

Atheisme in practice is that sinne, whereby men deny God in their deeds, lives, and conversations: and so declare this thought. This is a most horrible sinne, and a huge burthen to the whole earth, and yet many that live in the bosome of the Church are foully tainted herewith. This Atheisme in practice hath 3. speciall branches: Hypocrisie, Epicurisme, & Witchcraft. Hypocrisie is a sin whereby men worship the true God, but yet in a false manner, giving unto God the outward action, and hold backe from him the true worship of the heart. Epicurisme is a sinne whereby men contemne God, and give themselves wholly to their pleasures, spending their time in eating, drinking, and other delights, & not seeking or fearing God: and this is the sin of the richer sort in this age. Witchcraft or magicke, is that sinne whereby men renounce the true God, and betake themselves to the side, counsell, and helpe of the Devill, either by himselfe, or in his instruments: this is a large sinne, and a great part of Atheisme, and many are tainted with this sinne, either because they are practitioners of witchcraft, or else do seeke helpe of such.

D Atheisme in judgement is that sin, whereby in opinion and perswasion of heart men deny God. And this likewise hath three degrees: first, when men hold, and accordingly worship the true God, Creator of heaven and earth, but yet so, as they conceive of, and worship him otherwise than he hath revealed himselfe in his word. To this first degree we must referre the three great religions of the Turke, of the Jew, and of the Papists: for as they stand at this day, they are three great parts of Atheisme.

The Turke worshippeth God the maker of heaven & earth, and likewise reverenceth Christ as man, acknowledging him to bee a Prophet, yea, a more worthy Prophet than his Mahomet: And yet his religion is Atheisme, for he conceiveth of God out of the Trinity

g Psalm 10.

Amos 9 10,  
b Amos 6. 3.

i Phil. 3. 19.  
k Col. 3. 9.

l Cor. 4. 4.



Trinity, and so worshipping nothing but an Idoll.

Against the Religion of the Jewes, at this day is a part of Atheisme: for howsoever they hold one God, and acknowledge the bookes of the old Testament for the Scriptures of God, yet they worship not that God in Christ, and so in stead of the true God, frame an idoll in their owne braine: for as Christ (e) saith, *Whoever denies the Son, the same hath not the Father*: so that they wanting Christ, and by consequent the Father also: indeed and truly have no God: but as Christ told the Samaritans (d) *They worship they know not what*.

Thirdly, the religion of the Papists: at this day is a part of Atheisme: we must indeed distinguish it from the two former: for in word they acknowledge the Trinity in unity, and unitie in Trinitie, and their doctrine of the union of Christs two natures in one person, is according to the Scripture: But yet if wee marke the drift and sequell of their doctrine in other points, we shall finde it to bee close Atheisme: as may be proved by two reasons: First, because the true God, who is the Creator of heaven and earth, is infinite in Justice, and mercy: but according to the doctrine of the Papists, God is not infinite in Justice, and mercy: and therefore to them is not the true God: for first, Gods Justice according to them, is not infinite: for they (e) teach, that a man by his own proper works of penance (which bee finite and imperfect) may truly satisfie God for the guilt of temporall punishment. Secondly, they make the mercy of God imperfect by (f) peeing up the same with mans merits in the worke of Redemption: for Gods mercy is either every way mercy, or no mercy, as Paul saith, (g) *If it be of grace, it is no more of works, or else were grace no more grace, and if it be of works, it is no more grace, or also were works no more works*. Secondly, the Christ of the Papists is a false Christ: this will appeare by plaine reason, out of their doctrine: for first, they spoile Christ of his true manhood by their doctrine of real presence, wherein they hold that Christs body is not on'y in heaven, but really and substantially in all places where the sacrifice of the Masse is offered, thus they make it omnipotent, and so quite take away the nature of a body. Secondly, they disgrade Christ from the three offices of his Mediatorship: first, from his *kingly office*, by (h) placing the Pope in his roome and stead, as his deputy in Christs presence: for they give power to the Pope to rule the Catholike Church, and to make lawes to binde mens consciences, which be things proper to Christ alone: wherein they doe as much as if they should take the crowne from Christs head, and set it on the Popes: for to claime regency in the presence of the lawfull Prince, is to proclaim rebellion against the Prince: for commission of vicegerency ceaseth, in

the presence of him that appointeth it: now Christ is alwayes present with his Church, *Mat. 28. 20*. And therefore the Pope by his claime, must needs thrust Christ out of his office. Secondly, from his *priestly office*, which consisteth in satisfaction, and intercession: Christs satisfaction they nullifie by (i) joyning therewith the satisfaction of mens works, for thereby they make it imperfect: And they rob him of his intercession, by (k) communicating the same to Saints; yea, they exalt the Virgin Mary farre above Christ in this work, for they pray her to *aske the Father, to command Christ her sonne, by the authority of a mother, to doe this, and thus for them*; and so make Christ her underling. Thirdly, from his *prophetical office*, by making the Pope the infallible judge of all controversies: vowing, that *they rather desire to know the ancient institution of Christs religion from the Popes mouth, then from holy writ*. Now thus robbing Christ of his offices, they make him a false Christ: and so wanting the Sonne, they cannot have the Father, for (l) *he that hath not the Son, hath not the Father*: and therefore popish religion wanting the Father and the Sonne, cannot be a true religion, but more coloured Atheisme in judgement.

The second degree of Atheisme in judgement, is when men place some Idoll in the roome of the true God, holding the same for their God; thus did the Gentiles lince worshipping the Sunne, the Moone, and the Stars, or other creatures.

The third degree is, when a man doth avouch, hold, and maintaine, that there is no God at all, this is the highest degree of Atheisme, and the most notorious sinne that can be, and all such persons as maintaine this cursed thought, are unworthy the common breath of men; for if that man shall die the death, and that worthily, who shall avouch his lawfull Prince to be no Prince, how much more ought he to dye the death, though he had a thousand lives, that shall affirme the true God, to be no god? Thus wee see the fruits of this evil thought, whereby the hynoufnefle of it doth plainly appeare.

IV. Point. The examination of our owne hearts, touching this thought, whether it may be found among us, or not: doubtlesse every one will labour to cleare himselfe hereof: And the reason wherewith many doe sooth up themselves, is this, because they never felt in themselves any such conceits as this, *that there is no God*. but we may easily deceive our selves herein, for a man cannot alwayes discern what be the thoughts of his own heart. There be in man two Kindes of cogitation, or as one may say, reasons: the first is a single cogitation, whereby a man simply thinketh, or knoweth, or judgeth this or that, and this is properly called the *minde*. The other is a reflex cogitation or reason, whereby a man judgeth that he knoweth or thinketh this or

i Rhem. on Rom. 8. 17. sect. 4.

k Rhem. on 2 Cor. 1. 11. sect. 1. In officio beate Marix.

In annot. sup. dist. 4. c. c. li. pa. p. Edit. Greg.

l John 2. 23.

Examination of this thought.

c1 John 2. 23.

d John 4. 21.

e Bellar. Lib. 7. de penit. c. 7.

f Rhem. on Rom. 8. 17. sect. 4.

g Rom. 11. 6.

h Rhem. on Ephes. 1. 22. sect. 5.

that, and it is commonly called *Conscience*. Now since *Adams* fall, the conscience is corrupt by originall sinne, as bee all other powers of mans soule: whence it comes to passe, that conscience cannot doe his duty in giving true testimony concerning mans imaginations: but a man may thinke evill, and yet his conscience not tell him: and therefore wee may not say, because we feele not these evill thoughts in us, therefore we have them not, or we are free from them.

But that wee may the better examine our hearts, wee must come to the signes whereby this evill thought is best discerned. *David* in the 14. *Psalm* setteth downe three signes here-of: first, (m) *A disordered life*: secondly, (n) *not calling on the name of God by prayer*: thirdly, (o) *contemning of them that put their trust in God*. Lookewhere these are to bee found, there is this evill thought, *That there is no God*. Now if we examine our selves by these signes we shall finde this wicked thought to bee amongst us: for first, many indeed are content to heare Gods word, but where is that man that reformeth his life according to that he heareth? Certain it is, as their conscience can winnele, few turne unto God unfeignedly, few doe break off their course in sinning. Now this unreformed life is an infallible token of this damnable thought.

Secondly, the exercise of prayer and invocation on the name of God, is rare among men: no doubt many a touched heart doth every day unfeignedly call on God for grace: but yet generally this is true; men go on from day to day, and from yeare to yeare, and never pray unto God for supply of grace. Indeed men pleade for themselves, that they use to pray: for they say the *Lords Prayer*, the *Credo*, and the *ten Commandments*: but wee must know; that with many, this practice is nothing but a vaine repetition of words: for prayer is an action of the heart, and not the labour of the tongue and lips onely: so to say the *Lords Prayer*, is not to pray, for the words thereof may be repeated with the heart of an Atheist.

And thirdly, the contempt of them that put their trust in God, is rife among us: for who is so much scorned and reproached, as he that maketh profession of religion? Now may that complaint be justly taken up by the servants of God, *Isa. 8. 18. Bebelde, I and the children whom the Lord hath given mee, are as signes and wonders. And, He that refrains from evill, makes himselfe a pray to the cvill tongue, Isa. 59. 15.* Yet let these scoffers know, what ever they be, that seeds of Atheisme doe possesse their soules.

To come yet more particularly to the trial of this thought in our selves: *whoever denyeth the presence of God, denieth God.* Now let the conscience answer, whether we be not afraid to sinne in the presence of many mortall men, and yet in the presence of God doe

make no bones thereof, so the eyes of men be turned from us. Now what is this, but either flatly to deny the presence of God, or at least to yeeld more feare and reverence to men, than we doe unto God? Again, what is the cause why men use oppression, and injustice, deceit, & lying in their worldly affairs? Is it not because this thought of Atheisme doth possesse their hearts, that God regards not these outward things? Durst men directly sin against God, in seeking these outward blessings for naturall life, if they did rightly relie upon Gods providence, knowing every good gift to come from his bountifull hand? Lastly, let thy conscience speake; doth not thy heart while thou goest on in sinne, say thus unto thee, *God is mercifull, I will hereafter repent, and so shall I escape punishment*? If a man doe well observe his owne heart, he shall finde therein this vile thought, which directly overturnes the infinite justice of God, making him a God all of mercy, when as indeed he is as well a God of justice as of mercy. By all which it is more than evident, that naturally this vile thought runs in mans heart, *There is no God.*

*Use.* Hereby then we must learne to see what vile, miserable, and wretched sinners wee are in our selves; though wee had no actual outward sinnes, yet this damnable thought maketh us accursed: If a man (p) *curses the King in his heart*, the sin is so great and hainous, that the *scribes of heaven shall disclose it*: How horrible then is this sinne, for a man in his thought to curse God, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? This therefore must humble us in our selves before the Lord.

Again, hereby we must bee admonished to use all good means whereby we may come to see, and know not onely the grosse actual sins of our lives, but especially this damnable thought of our hearts: few there bee that doe fee it, and therefore we must be earnest with our selves in searching our owne hearts, to finde out this and such like abominations that be in us. And thus much for the first evill thought.

#### Sec. 2.

*Of this thought: the word of God is foolishness.*

The second damnable thought of mans naturall heart concerning God, is this: *The word of God is foolishness*. This thought must principally be understood of the Gospel, as *S. Paul* declareth, saying, (q) *It hath pleased God by the foolishnesse of preaching to save them that beleeve*: where he calleth the Gospel of Christ foolishness, not that it was so indeed, but because the unconverted (r) *Corinthians*, and other *Greeks*, judged the preaching of Christ crucified, the most foolish thing in all the world. And in the next chapter hee saith, (s) *The naturall man, that is, he that is not Christianally called, perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: to wit, that a man must repent of his sinnes, and beleeve in Christ for the pardon*

3. Signes of this thought.

m. v. 3.

n. v. 4.

o. v. 6.

p. Ecc. 10. 12.

C

D

q. 1 Cor. 1. 18.

r. ver. 12.

s. 1 Cor. 12.

pardon of them, if hee would be saved; they are foolishnes unto him, *Nicodemus* answer to Christ maketh this plain, *Iohn 3. 4.* esteeming regeneration (without which, Christ said no man could enter in the kingdom of heaven) to be a mans resurre into his members wombe, and a birch from thence againe.

This wicked thought must be understood of the law of God also; the heart of man by nature judgeth the threatnings of the law to be untruths, and so foolishnesse: hence the Lord by *Moses* forbade the people when they heard the threatnings and curses of the law denounced against them, *(\*) To blesse themselves in their hearts; saying, We shall have peace:* hereupon he denounceth a woe to them that deride his judgements threatned, and say, *(†) Let him make speede, let him hasten his worke that wee may see it.* &c. As if they should say, we doe not beleeve that any such things shall come to passe: like to the mockers of whom *Peter* prophesieth, *(‡) Who walke after their lusts and say: Where is the promise of his coming?*

Now that this is a most damnable thought, may appeare by the cursed fruits thereof; for first, hence ariseth that devilish and carnall opinion of sundrie men, that thinke and hold religion to be but humane policie to keepe men in awe, and so use it as a politicke device to exercise mens braines to keepe them from sedition, trecherie, and rebellion: Secondly, hence springs all Apostacie, and departing from the faith. The Galarians were a worthy Church planted by the Apostle *Paul*, yet even in his time they began to fall away to another Gospell, which made him to marvell; and the reason was this, *(§) They were not contented with this simplicitie, which is in Christ*, but would joyne with him, the observation of legall ceremonies. The like wee may say of those famous Easterne Churches, as those seven Churches of *Asia*, planted by the Apostles, wherein the truth flourished for a while, but not long after the Apostles times they fell into many damnable heresies, as Arrianisme, and such like. Yea about sixe hundred yeares after Christ, they embraced the damnable religion of *Mahomet*. In the West parts also, were worthis, and famous Churches planted by the Apostles, and their successors, as in *Italie*, *France*, *Germanie*, *Spaine*, and *England*, who about the same time of sixe hundred yeares after Christ, fell to *Papisme*: which spread it selfe overall Europe and further (some few Churches of Greece excepted,) In which religion men abandon the Gospell of Christ, and betake themselves to another Gospell, by adjoyning to the truth of Christ, their owne devices: And this *Papisme*, hath reigned ever since till now of late, and so hath Apostacie taken place in those Churches which the Apostles planted; The cause whereof was in the wicked and sinfull heart of man, judging the Gospell foolishnes,

whereupon men were contented to yeeld themselves to any other religion, rather then to that simplicitie of truth, which is in Christ *Iesus*. Wee now in *England* by Gods speciall mercy, hold, and teach the word of God; but if God should alter our religion with the times; the greatest part of men among us wold forsake the truth, & cleave to any other religion, and that onely upon this ground, because they judge the Gospell foolishnes: Let any man among us broach an error, or heresie, and it shall have patrons at the first, bee it never so vile and absurd, and protectors afterward. When that brutish heretic of the family of *love*, tooke shipping in *Germany*, & arrived in *England* (though it be an opinion void of common sense) yet it had applause amongst us, and was received of many, and would have spread it selfe further, if the preaching of the word, with the care of the Magistrate had not suppressed it. And the reason hereof is this; mans minde by nature is full of darknesse; he cannot without Gods speciall grace perceive the things of God, and to he judgeth the Gospell foolishnes, and embraceth error, rather then the truth, yea, loveth darknes rather then the light, because his deeds are evil. *Iohn 3. 20.*

For the examination of our hearts touching this bad thought; After due triall wee shall find, that the minds of most among us are possessed herewith: for wee are indeed content to come into the assemblies where God is worshipped, and wee doe submit our selves to the ministry of the word to be taught and instructed: Therein we have our owne personall sinnes dispaied, and reproved, and withall very fearefull and terrible curses of the law denounced against us for the same, both judgements in this life, judgements in death, & also judgements eternall after this life: Now let the conscience answer, what is the cause when we heare these things, that we be not moved, why are not our hearts touched with griefe and sadnesse, when we heare Gods judgments due unto us for our sinnes daily denounced against us? Some indeed there be whose hearts tremble at the word, but small is that number. If a man runne through the streets, and cry fire, fire, our hearts are suddenly stricken with great feare: but the Minister of God may stand and cry, fire, fire, the fire of hell which is kindled by the breath of the Lord like a river of *brimstone*, as the Prophet speaketh, and yet mens hearts are nothing moved: what is the cause that we should be so affected with the burning of an old house by temporal fire, and be not afraid at the voyce of God, which proclaimeth unto us eternall burning with the fire of Gods wrath? Surely the cause is this, our hearts are forestalled with this false imagination, that the curses of the law are foolishnes, & that there be no such torments as the word denounceth, it will not sink into the heart of a naturall man that his sins are to hainous, and Gods judgements so terrible

Examination for this thought

(i) *Isa. 30. 31.*

(g) *Deut. 29. 19*

(†) *Isa. 5. 19*

(§) *1 Pet. 3. 4*  
Fruits of this thought.

1  
Machiavelism:

2  
Apostacie.

(h) *Gal. 1. 6*

D

against them, as the word maketh them : And till such time as this damnable thought bee taken away, mens hearts will never bee touched with the threatnings of the law, this is a barre to stoppe the way to all such passions as the law would worke.

Againe, when the Minister of God speaketh of the pardon of sinne, and of eternall life by Christ, who hath his heart melting for joy in regard of this salvation ? Though men be called upon to come into the kingdome of heaven, yet few strive to enter in : though we be daily exhorted to repent, yet few turne to the Lord : all which bee branches of the Gospell ; but men beleve them not, because their hearts bee filled with this damnable thought, *The Gospell of Christ is foolishnesse* : When the Itraelites were restored from captivity in Babylon, it was as (b) *a dreame unto them* : now if that temporall deliverance seemed a dreame, what a dreame will this spirituall deliverance from the captivity of hell and death, to the libertie of the sonnes of GOD in grace and glory, seeme to be ? And indeed to a naturall man it seemes foolishnesse that God should become man, and that Christ by death should free men from death, and by suffering the curle of the law, should take away the same from us, and by his righteousness should iustifie us unto life, all which notwithstanding be points of the Gospell. This also is the cause why after long teaching there is little turning, or faithfull obedience yeelede unto the Gospell ; neither will it bee better with men, while this evill thought abideth in them.

*Ufe. 1.* It this be a truth, that *every naturall man thinketh the word of God to bee foolishnesse*, then we must learne this lesson of the Apostle, \* *Hee that seemes to bee wise in this world, must become a foole, that he may bee wise*, that is, he must reject his owne naturall reason, and stoppe up the eyes of his naturall minde, like a blinde man, and suffer himselfe wholly to bee guided by Gods Spirit in the things of God, that thereby he may be made wise unto salvation.

Secondly, we must hereby learne to make earnest prayer unto God \* for the opening of our eyes, that we may be able to understand the Gospell of Christ, and know the right meaning of that word of salvation : for of our selves we can never understand it, unless the Lord instruct us by his Spirit ; (d) *No man cometh unto mee*, saith Christ, that is, beleeveth, except it be given him of my Father : But (e) *every one that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto mee*. Thus much of this second evill thought.

### SECT. 3.

*Of this thought, I will not obey Gods word.*

From the former ariseth another most vile thought, in the heart of every naturall man, as a branch of the same ; namely, because the word of God is foolishnesse, *Therefore I will*

*not performe obedience thereunto*. That this is the naturall thought of mans. *Iob* teacheth plainly, for hee bringeth in the wicked (that is, every sinner) saying thus to God, (f) *Depart from me, wee will not seeke the knowledge of thy wayes*.

This the wicked man saith, not with his mouth, for none is so farre past all shame, that dares thus blasphemously speake against God ; but thus he saith in his heart, his affections take it ; when hee purposeth with himselfe, to cast off the yoke of God, and to live after his owne lusts : and therefore they say further, (g) *Who is the Almighty that wee should serve him ?* as if one should say, It is a disgrace to mee to abase my selfe to serve God ; I will not doe it. The Prophet *Jeremy* bringeth in, the Lord saying thus to his people, (h) *Stand in the waies, and behold, and aske for the old way which is the good way, and walke therein, and ye shall finde rest for your soules* : but in the same place the Iewes answer, *We will not walke in thy waies*. Shall wee thinke that they durst thus impudently answer the Lord with open mouthes ? No surely, But the Prophet in these words setteth downe the purpose of their hearts, who hardened the same obstinately against the word, when they were exhorted to repentance and obedience before the Lord.

Our Saviour Christ compareth himselfe to a Noble man that goeth into a farre country ; now when he is gone, the citizens of his country send messengers after him to tell him, (i) *That they wil not have him to raigne over them*. Which thought it be properly to be understood of the nation of the Iewes, who did indeed say so to our Saviour Christ, yet it may also bee extended to all impenitent sinners, who say in their hearts ; Christ shall not raigne over us : for so long as a man is uncalled, hee carieth a purpose to live in sin, some in this sinne, and some in that, and so doing, saith in his heart, *God shall not be my God, I will not submit my selfe unto his lawes*. Christ shall not raigne over me. This is plaine and manifest by mens behaviour, when they are reproved for their sinnes. Tell the covetous man of his avarice, he sweares of his blasphemy, and the drunkard of his drunkenesse, &c. will hee humble himselfe in conscience of his sinne ? Nothing lesse : but his heart will (well againe ther, as his fury and impatience will soone bewray, and the reason is, because hee never thinketh of his owne estate ; how by creation hee oweth homage unto God, as to his Creator : for his purpose is to goe on in sinne, and when hee is reproved for the same, his desire is crossed ; which he cannot abide, and therefore rageth ; shewing thereby manifestly, that in his heart he saith, *He will not obey Gods commandments*.

For the examination of our hearts touching this thought : whether did wee ever thinke thus without selves, *I will not obey Gods commandments* ? Doubtlesse every man will answer for himselfe, that hee abhorres this thought.

(f) *Iob. 41. 14.*

(g) *verse. 15.*

(h) *Ier. 6. 18.*

(i) *Luke. 19. 14.*

(b) *Psal. 126. 1.*

\* *1 Cor. 3. 18.*

\* *Psal. 119. 18.*

(d) *Iohn. 6. 36.*

(e) *verse. 45.*

Examination  
for this  
thought.

thought. And yet after just triall it will appear, that generally this thought is rife among us for though we heare the word, and receive the Sacraments the pledges of our salvation, and will be counted the members of Christ, yet what is the cause that there is so little knowledge of God, and obedience to his word? And why doe men in their callings shew forth so small love, so little mercy, justice, & good conscience? The truth is, that though some have these things in them in some measure, yet the body of our people is generally void of these good vertues, and fruits of the spirit: hee that hath but halfe an eye may see it: for where is that religious keeping of the Sabbath that should bee where is that serious performing of worshippe unto God which ought to be? All which argue, that the heart is corrupt and deceivable, and saith indeed to God, *I will not obey thy word, Lord depart from me.* What man almost is there that saith with himselfe, *Oh miserable man, what have I done?*

*The Use.* By this wicked imagination wee may see how hard a thing it is truly & soundly to convert a sinner unto God, and how easily a man may deceive his owne soule, & beguile the world by hypocrisie: for a man by long exercise in the word may have a great measure of knowledge, and withall good wit, and memorie, and with them utterance, and by a common gift of the spirit, be able to teach the word truly, and to conceive prayer to good purpose, and withall have a cankered heart towards God, poysoned with this damnable thought, *I will not obey the word of God:* for every man that hath inwardly in him a purpose to live, though but in one sinne, his heart is not upright with God, neither bee Gods graces, as faith, and repentance sound in his heart: for true repentance is a purpose, and resolution to leave all sinne, and to please God in all things.

#### Seet. 4.

*Of this thought; It is a vaine thing to worship God.*

The third wicked imagination, of mans heart concerning God is this: *It is a vaine thing to worship God.* This Job sheweth to bee true: in the wicked man saying, *(a) What profit shall I have if I pray unto God? we must not thinke that hee said thus with his mouth, but in his heart: And the Prophet Malachie bringeth in the Jewes saying, (b) It is a vaine thing to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his commandment, and that we walked humbly before the Lord of hosts? Yea righteous David, a man after Gods owne heart, was overtaken with this evill thought, when hee said, (c) Certainly I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in Innocencie: whereby it is plaine, that this is a naturall evill thought in every man.*

Yet here we must remember, that this evill thought comes not into the minde of man at

all times, but only at such time, when occasion is offered, as namely when a man is called on to the service of God, which upon some occasion he is desirous to omit: Then will his minde range about for libertie from Gods service, and so will hee bethinke himselfe of the wicked mans estate who never served God, and yet is in better case outwardly then the godly man is: And hereupon hee begins to say in his heart, doubtlesse *It is a vaine thing to serve God.*

For the examination of our hearts touching this thought, after just triall it will be found among us, as the state of all sorts of families will declare. Among the poorer sort you shall see men labour from morning to evening, and take great paines to provide for the world, but in the meane time where is the worship and service of God? where is prayer and thanksgiving, morning and evening? Surely it is neglected, and the reason is, because they thinke thus in their heart, *So that I may have provision for the world, it is no matter whether I serve God or not.* Come to the rich mans house, & there you shall see them spend their time in eating, drinking, gaming, and such delights, but the worship of God is not regarded, for thus they thinke with themselves, *If they may have their pleasure, all is well.* Come and reason with ordinary men, and exhort them to use the meanes of salvation, and shew forth love unto religion sincerely: their answer is, *They will doe as they have done, and as their forefathers did before them, they trust their soules are as good to Godward as the best:* And for ought they see, none are wotier then those that have so much preaching, and therefore they hope to bee saved, though they doe not follow it so much. And this also cometh from this evill thought, *It is in vaine to serve God.* Marke also in those places where the Gospell is preached, if any man seeme to make more conscience of sinne, and of serving God then other, they are made a by-word and a mocking stocke, and their profession is turned to their reproach: which argues plainly that mans thought is this, *It is a vaine thing to serve God.* Nay, take a view of the whole world, and you shall see every where men give themselves to will-worship. No nation is so barbarous as to denie unto God all worship, but doe they give unto him that which he commandeth in his word? Nothing liſſe: It is either the meere invention of men, or altogether stained therewith: This is most evident with the Turke, the Jew, and the Papist: yea our common sort of Protestants have their wil-worship: for generally they content themselves with the mumbling over the words of the Creede; the Lords Prayer, the ten Commandements, perswading themselves that by the bare rehearsal of the words, they have sufficiently served God. Now would we know the cause herof, as also why men are so slacke and cold in prayer, so

Examination  
for this thought

carelesse, and unreverent in hearing Gods word? Surely it is nothing but this vile Imagination bewitching our soules, that it is a *vaine thing to serve God*; This quencherh the spirit, and hindreth all good motions that be in our hearts.

SECT 5.

*Of mans thoughts of distrust.*

The fourth evill thought concerning God, is, a *thought of distrust*, thus framed in the minde, *God doth not regard me; God wil not helpe mee; God will not bee mercifull unto mee*: This thought made entrance unto the fall of our first parents: for first *Eve* looked upon the fruit, and saw that it was beautifull, and then entered into her heart a thought of distrust, after this manner; It may be it is not true which God hath said to us concerning this fruit, and it may be God regardeth us not as we thinke he doth, in that he denieth us this fruit; hereupon her will and her affections were caried to the breaking of Gods commandement, and so the sinned by disobedience, and *Adam* also sinned. When the people of *Israel* murmured in the wilderness (a) *Moses* sinned a sinne, for hee was debarred entrance into the land of *Canaan*: Now what was *Moses* sinne? for both hee and *Aaron* (b) *prayed to the Lord, and chocked the people, saying, Hear ye rebells, &c. And at Gods commandement hee brought water out of the rocke*. Surely his sinne was secret, even inward unbelieve and distrust in Gods promise, for when hee smote the rocke, hee might thinke thus with himselfe, It may be that God will not now give water out of the rocke; and this seemes the more probable, because he went beyond his commission in smiting thrice upon the rocke, when God bad him onely to *speake* (c) unto it. This evill thought takes hold of religious *David* also: (d) *I said in mine heart, I am cast out of thy fight, as though hee should say, Hertofore I have found favour with God, but now in mine adversitie I am utterly rejected: Againe* (e) *I said in my feare, all men are liars: that is, when feare of death tooke hold of mee, then I thought that Samuel lied unto mee, when hee said I should come to the kingdome over Israel*. The children of *Israel* did often bewray this thought of distrust, when they were pinched with hunger, and famine in the wilderness, they say, (f) *Can God provide a table for us in the wilderness? Can hee give bread, and fleshe for his people? As if they should say, we thinke hee cannot, nor will not: Yea the Apostle Peter* was not free from this thought, for when *Christ* walking on the waters, commanded *Peter* to come unto him, hee came out boldly, & walked towards *Jesus*, but when (g) *He saw a mightie winde, he began to sink*: whence came this? Surely from a thought of distrust which he had in his heart, to this effect, *It may be God will not support me in this way walking*: and that this or some such thought was in his heart, appeareth by *Christ*s answer to him, saying,

(h) *Ob thou of little faith, why diddest thou doubt? By all which it is evident that this is a naturall thought in the minde of man, which at sometime troubleth the most righteous man that is.*

Now touching this thought of distrust, two things are to bee scanned: first, the time when it takerh place in mans minde; and secondly, the danger of it. For the time, This thought doth not alwaies take place in the minde of man, but onely in the time of some danger, affliction, and temptation, and especially in the time of sickness, and in the pangs of death. Thus in his grievous affliction was righteous *Iob* troubled with this thought of distrust: for then he complained, that *God did hate him and gnash upon him with his teeth, and as his enemy, sharpened his eyes against him; yea, that* (k) *hee made him as his buttie, and made to shoot at. And David* in a grievous trouble of minde, thus complained: (l) *Will the Lord absent himselfe for ever? And will hee shew no more favour? Is his mercy cleane gone for ever? Doth his promise faile for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be mercifull? &c.* Whereby appeareth, that in his affliction he was greatly troubled with this distrustfull thought; and there is no man living, but when trouble & affliction comes, hee shall feelee in himselfe these thoughts of distrust. Indeed while peace & ease continue, presumptuous thoughts possesse the minde; but when the daies of peace be gone, & troublesome times approach, then presumptuous thought give place, and thoughts of distrust come in their roome and stead.

II. Point, The danger of these thoughts of distrust is very great, as the fruits thereof declare, for hence arise, first, all horrors, and terrors of conscience, all feares, and astonishments of the heart: For when the minde saith (though falsly) *God doth not regard me, God will not save mee*, then the trembling heart is full of horror and dread. Secondly, hence cometh desperation it selfe, whereby men confidently avouch that God hath forsaken them, and cast them off, and that there is no hope of life, but present death, remaining for them: this thought troubleth the minde of the wicked, and of the repentant person also: for desperation is nothing but the strength of this thought of distrust. Thirdly, this weakeneth the foundation of our salvation, which standeth in the certaintie of Gods promises; for this thought of distrust denieth credit to Gods promises, and maketh them uncertaine: Among al other evil thoughts this doth most directly hinder salvation, for it is flat against faith, as water is to fire: for true faith makes a man say with good conscience, (m) *Christ died & shed his blood for me, God the Father will be mercifull unto mee, and save mee*: But this distrustfull thought catch a man to say the cleane contrarie, *Christ died not for mee: God will not save mee*: so that where this thought prevailleth, true faith is nor, neither can take place.

The time of this thought.

(k) verse. 12.

(l) Psal. 77. 7.

Fruits of this thought.

(m) Gal. 3. 10.

(a) Num. 20. 12.

(b) verse 6.

(c) verse. 8.

(d) Psal. 1. 21.

(e) Psal. 36. 12.

(f) Psal. 78. 19. 20.

(g) Mat. 14. 30.

Use. Considering the danger of this distrustfull thought is so great, wee must be admonished in the feare of God to use all good meanes, while the dayes of peace doe last, that it take no place with us in the day of trouble and temptation: The meanes to repress it are the preaching of the word, and the Sacraments of Baptisme and the Lords Supper.

For the first; the word of God preached is a speciall meanes ordained of God, for the true applying of Gods promises of mercy to our owne soules; and therefore a most soveraigne remedie against this thought of distrust; for when the promises of mercy in Christ, are offered unto Gods people in the preaching of the word by a lawfull Minister, it is as much as if Christ himselfe in his owne person should speake unto them, by vertue of Gods ordinance. If God from heaven should say to any man, mercy belongeth to thee, he would believe: if God say to *Cornelius*, believe thou, and my mercy belongs to thee, *Cornelius* will believe; if he say to *Peter*, believe thou, and my mercy belongs to thee, *Peter* will believe: and if he say to *Mary Magdalen*, she will believe. Lo here, when the Minister of God, out of Gods word, saith to any man, believe thou, and repent: thou, and Gods mercy belongs unto thee: it is as much as if the Lord should call him by name particularly, and say unto him, believe thou, and repent, and my mercy belongs unto thee: yea it is all one as if God himselfe should say, *I am thy Father and thou art my child*, if thou wilt repent, and believe.

The second meanes, which is also very effectfull to cutt off this thought of distrust, is Baptisme. If any earthly prince give a pardon to any man, and put the mans name in the pardon, and his owne broad seale unto it, the man will never doubt of his pardon, but believe it. Behold, in Baptisme God entrench covenant with miserable wretched man, and herein makes promise of life unto him: yea he puts the mans name in the covenant, sealing the same with his owne seale: and therefore the partie baptized, must believe against this thought.

The third means, is the Lord Supper rightly administrated and received: for therein the bread and wine given to the hand of every communicant by the Minister, are particular pledges & tokens unto them of speciall mercy in Christ. These are the meanes which we must use with all good confidence in the dayes of peace, that when troubles come, this thought of distrust may not prevaile against us. And thus much of mans naturall evill thoughts against God. Many other might be added hereunto, but these being the principally, I omit the rest.

## CHAP. IV.

Of mans naturall thoughts against his neighbour.

NOW wee come to the evill thoughts of mans naturall heart against his neigh-

bour. And to finde them out wee must have recourse to the second Table of the morall law, which was penned with respect to (a) the corrupt estate of man, forbidding that which mans corrupt heart thinketh naturally against his neighbour, for every commandment thereof is spirituall, forbidding not onely the wicked actions, evill words, & gestures, but all corrupt affections, yea all evill imaginations of man against man.

The thoughts of man against his neighbour be of two sorts; either without consent, or with consent. Thoughts without consent, are the very first evill motions of the minde which a man conceiveth against his neighbour, to which the will never giveth consent, and these are forbidden in the tenth commandment, *Thou shalt not lust*.

Thoughts with consent of will are such as a man conceiving in his minde, doth with all desire, or purpose in his heart to practise: and these are forbidden in the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments; by reason whereof they may fitly be reduced to five heads. They are either thoughts of dishonour, against the fifth commandment; or thoughts of murder, against the sixth; or thoughts of adultery against the seventh; or thoughts of theft against the eighth; or thoughts of disgrace, against the ninth commandment.

## SECT. I.

Of thoughts of dishonour.

First, a thought of dishonour is any thought that tendeth to the contempt and abusing of the person of our neighbour, in respect of himselfe. And it is then conceived in our minds, when we thinke thus of all other men besides our selves: *Such and such a man, is farre inferiour unto me, a base & contemptible fellow in regard of me*. Example hereof wee have in the Pharisee, a man strict in profession, and zealous in his religion, who cometh to the Temple to pray with the Publican: now marke what he saith, (b) *Oh God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, or as this Publican*. Which words proceed from such a proud thought as this, *Lord I thank thee, all other men are farre inferiour unto mee: I doe farre surpass the common sort: this Publican is a base fellow, and no bodie to me*. If any shall imagine that this thought is not in every man, but in some few proud persons, I answer, it is by nature in every person living without grace: and therefore Saint Paul giveth this commandment, *That (c) every man in meeknesse should esteeme others better than himselfe*, giving us to understand, that by nature all men thinke best of themselves, and esteeme others farre worse than themselves.

The use. If this thought of dishonour be in all mens hearts, then behold what a pallace of all Sathanicall and damnable pride the heart of man is naturally: it is like unto the table of *Adam-bezek*, at which hee sat in a chaire of estate, and made others, even kings,

Gal. 3. 19.

b Luk. 18. 11.

c Phil. 2. 3.

judg. 1. 7.

to eate meate like dogs under his feet, with their thumbs cut off: such an one is every man by nature, he lifeth up himselfe, saying, *I am the man, and treadeth his brother under his feet, as no body unto him.* And this is the cause of much strife & hurt in all humane societies: this causeth many iarrs, much scorning, and great contempt among men in word and deed.

Now that we may reforme this thought in us, wee must learne to say as *Iob* did after he had bin afflicted, and came to see his finnes:

(c) *Behold I am vile:* and with *Abraham*, (d) *I am but dust and ashes:* and with *David*, *I am a worme, and no man*, *Psalm. 11. 6.* yea with *Paul*, (e) *Wee must labour so far our miserie by reason of sinne,* and that will helpe to pull downe the pride of our hearts.

### Seet 2.

#### Of murdering thoughts.

The second evill thought of man against his neighbour with content, is a thought of *Murder, or of any thing that tendeth thereto.* Of this wee have particular examples in Scripture, *Deut. 15. 9.* The Lord forbiddeth the Jewes to have this murdering thought in their hearts: *I will not relieve the poore, I will not doe good unto them;* giving us to understand, that this was the common thought of the Jewes: or else he wold not have forbidden it: yea the Lord doth there set out this thought by two signes, first, *an evill eye,* when a man turnes his countenance from the poore, or looketh on them without compassion: secondly, *unmercifull dealing,* when a man will not helpe the poore by gift, according to his abilitie. And because all actions proceede from thoughts, the heart being the fountaine of our deedes, hence it appeareth, that this murdering thought against the poore, is rife in this age: for where is the man that doth pittie the poore, and doth good to them according to his abilitie? nay, the Lords complaint against the Jewes may be fitly applied to our times, in regard of eruelty and oppression: *The spoile of the poore is in your housestoves have ye to doe, that ye beate my People to pieces, and grinde the faces of the poore!* *Isa. 3. 14. 15.*

The second example of a murdering thought, is concerning Gods Church, and it is this, *I will doe some spite or hurt to them that worship God.* For prooffe hereof, read *Psalm. 74. 8.* *David* bringeth in the Babylonians, Edomites, &c. saying thus one to another against Gods people the Jewes: *Let us destroy them altogether, and Psalm. 83. 4. Let us cut them off from being a people. And let the name of Israel bee no more in remembrance.* Now as this was their thought, so is it the thought of all men naturally, for looke how generall the hatred of man is, so generall is the purpose of mischief against those that professe religion: for all

men by nature are haters of Gods Church, and people, so *Christ* saith to his disciples, (1) *Ye shall be hated of all nations for my names sake:* Yea who so ever killeth you shall thinke that hee doth God good service, and therefore this thought of doing mischief is as generall, even in the minde of every man by nature. This further appeareth by the continuall persecution, that hath ever beene raised against Gods poore Church, since the beginning of the world: It began at *Abel*, soone after the giving of the covenant of grace to our first parents, and hath continued to this day, and shall abide unto the end: so that if carnall men could looke into their owne hearts, they should there behold this murdering thought against Gods people. This murdering thought cometh from another wicked imagination set downe by *S. Peter*: who bringeth in the wicked of this world, (e) *Thinking it a strange thing, that Gods children doe not, as they doe, and runne not with them unto all excesses of riot: living in drunkennes, fornication, and such other abominations:* for this cause doe they conceive hatred, and so will continue, till God give them grace to repent. If any shall say this thought is not generall, for *Nabuchadnezzar* (h) an heathen man formed favour to *Daniel*, and highly advanced him: I answer, it is true he did so, but that was a worke of Gods speciall providence, who procured him favour, and disposed the Kings heart to affect him: as hee did also the heart of the chiefe

(i) *Eunuch*. Otherwise *Nabuchadnezzar* naturally did nothing but intend mischief against Gods Church, as his rage against the three children did evidently bewray, *Dan. 3. 19.* A third exaple of this murdering thought I adde, which every Minister of Gods word may observe by daily experience, and that is this, when mens faults are particularly rebuked in the ministerie of the word, and the quick, as it were touched, by applying the word to the conscience, then will the heart of a naturall man, thus conceive of the Minister that reproveth sinne: *This man meaneth me, hee hath some spite, and malice against me, that he thus reproveth my particular faults,* when as the Minister knew them not to be his personall finnes: but it is the power of the word that ransaketh the sinfull heart: this is the fault of all carnall hearers, who will heare quietly till their faults be rebuked, but then they thinke maliciously of the preacher, thus *Hered* dealt with *Iohn Baptist*, he heard him gladly for a while, *Marke. 6. 20.* but when he was rebuked for his brother *Philips* wife, then he cast *Iohn* in prison. *Luk. 3. 19. 20.* And if conscience might bee judge, many an hearer would be found to have an *Hered*s heart towards Gods Minister.

### Seet 3.

#### Of thoughts of Adultery, theft, and disgrace.

The third thought of man touching his neigh-

(c) *Iob. 39. 37.*  
(d) *Gen. 18. 27.*

(e) *Rom. 7. 24.*

(f) *Mat. 24. 10.*  
*Iohn. 16. 3.*

(g) *1. Pet. 4. 3.*

(h) *Dan. 1. 19.*

(i) *Dan. 1. 19.*



neighbour, is the thought of *Adultery*; which is the thought with consent to any unchastitie. Such a thought had *Judah*, concerning *Tamar* his daughter in law, when he judged her an whore, and desired to be with her, *Gen. 38. 15. 16.* And with such thoughts was *Amnon* heart so vexed, that hee fell sicke for his sister *Tamar*, *2. Sam. 13. 2.* This makes a man an Adulterer in heart before God, though actually he commit not the fact, *Mat. 5. 28.*

The fourth is the thought of *Theft*, which is the thought with consent of beguiling or wronging another in his goods or substance. This is that *Imagining of inquiry, and working of wickdnesse upon their beds, in coveting of fields, against which Misal pronounceth a wee*, *Mic. 2. 1.* And this thought also possesseth their hearts, that with the wicked *Israelites*. With the time were come, wherein they might make the *Ephraim*, and the *Shockell great*, *Amos 8. 5.* that is, lessen the measure, and inhance the price, and falsifie the weights by deceit.

The fifth evil thought, is a thought of *disgrace*, which some way tendeth to the reproach, and debasing of our neighbours good name, as, when a thing is well done, to think and judge it to be ill done, or when a thing is amisse, to judge it worse than it is: Thus *Eli* thought disgracefully of *Hannah*, deeming her to be drunk, saying, *1 Sam. 1. 13. 14. Put away thy drunkennesse*, when shee prayed devoutly from a troubled soule to the Lord, *v. 15.* Thus *Eliab*, *David*, eldest brother, thought disgracefully of *David*, when he shewed himselfe willing to encounter with *Goliath* that reviled the Host of the living God, saying, *1 Sam. 17. 28. I know the pride and make of thine heart, that thou art come to see the battell*: when as indeed the Spirit of God put that motion into his heart, to take away the shame from *Israel*, as the happy event declared plainly. So when our Saviour *Christ* spake most comfortably to the sicke of the pallee, saying, *Mat. 9. 2. Be of good comfort, thy finnes are forgiven thee*; then the cursed hearts of the wicked *Pharisees* thought thus in themselves, *This man blasphemeth, v. 4.* And when the gift of the holy Ghost was sent upon the Apostles, causing them to speake strange tongues, to the great admiration of men of divers nations, then some of the malicious Jewes thought they were drunk, saying, scoffingly, *Act. 2. 13. They were full of new wine.* And this thought of disgrace is in every man naturally, bringing forth continually the fruits of disgrace, as *Envy, Strife, Emulations, Dissensions, and Debates*: for love thinketh not evil; but naturally true love is wanting in all men: and therefore they cannot but thinke evil of others.

Wee see the five evil thoughts of mans naturall heart against his neighbour, touching which, two things are yet further to be scanned, to wit, when these evil thoughts do arise in the minde, and in whom they are. For the first: it is true, that they do not at all times

arise in mens mindes, but then only when occasion is given: for mans heart is like tinder or dry wood, which burnes not of it selfe, but so soone as fire is put to it, then presently it kindleth. when you come to talke with a naturall man, it may be for the present, he thinketh not to lie, but give him occasion to lie, and then he soone bebinke himselfe thereof, and will not spare to utter it, if it may make for his advantage. And the like we may say of Malice, Adultery, Theft, Disgrace, or any other sinne against our neighbour: Doe but minister occasion thereabout to the naturall heart of man, and he thinketh of them, and without Gods grace restraining, or renewing him, will bring forth the same in action.

The second point. In whom are all these evil thoughts? Answer. In all men naturally without exception, till they bee renewed by Gods speciall grace: Yea, the truth is, these thoughts doe every where abound, for looke what men doe practice, that first of all they thinke, for the thought is the beginning of every action: But in the world all finnes against the second Table doe abound, as the practice of Dishonour, of Murther, Adultery, Thefts, and Disgraces: and therefore these evil thoughts from whence these actions come, must needs be common.

Yfe. By this we may see what a huge masse of corruption the naturall heart of man is, without Gods speciall grace: for thoughts of dishonour make a mans heart a pallee of pride, like the table of *Adonibezek*: Also thoughts of cruelty make mans heart a slaughter-house: Thoughts of Adultery make it a most filthy stewes: Thoughts of Theft make it to become a den of theeves, wherein all manner of fraud, and bad dealing is plotted & devised: and lastly, thoughts of Disgrace make it a fountaine of backbiting, debate, slander, and reviling: And therefore howsoever the outward life may be ordered civilly, yet without Gods grace mans heart is most vile: and those that pleade their good nature, and good meaning are here confuted, for naturally the heart thunks all evil against his neighbour.

## CHAP. V.

Of mans naturall thoughts concerning himselfe.

Sec. 1.

Mans proud thoughts of his owne excellency.

The third kinde of mans naturall evil thoughts, are such as concerne himselfe, and they are principally foure.

The first may be fully termed a thought of pride, whereby every man naturally thinkes himselfe most excellent, and farre to exceede

all other men whatsoever: thus the Prophet *Ezra* brings in Babylon speaking in her heart, that is, thinking, *I will ascend into heaven, and exalt my throne above or beside the stars of God,* as if she should thinke with her selfe, *I am far more excellent thā any other whatsoever, & therefore I am to be exalted from the earth to heaven, and to be marched with God himselfe.* And the Prophet *Zephany* brings in Ninive speaking thus in her heart, *(a) I am, and there is none beside me.* And so the proud Pharisee in his private & secret prayer to God, saith, *(b) I thank thee Lord, that I am not as other men,* meaning that he is more excellent. And the whore of Babylon *(c)* is brought in saying of her selfe, *(d) As it is a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no mourning.* All which places shew this to be the nature of man, to exalt himselfe in his owne heart, above all others. If any shall say, hereby no more can bee proved, but that this thought is in some proud and insolent persons: I adde therefore, that as our first Parents in the beginning did learne that proud lesson of the devill, *Ye shall be as gods:* so wee being in their loynes when they sinned, and descending from them by ordinary generation, doe together with our nature receive that corruption from them; whereby wee thinke thus proudly of our selves, that *wee farre excell others, and are as little gods on earth, in respect of others.* Indeed the most will say for themselves, we doe abhorre this proud thought, neither did we ever finde it to bee in us: But we must know, that the lesse wee discern it in our selves, the more it reigneth in our hearts; and the more we discern, and bewaile it, the lesse place it taketh in us.

Now touching this thought of pride, two things must be observed: the *danger*, and the *highest degree* of it. For the *danger* of this thought; The outward affecting of strange fashions in apparel is a wonderfull pride; But the most vile and wretched pride of all, is that spiritual pride of the heart, whereby a man despiseth all other, in regard of himselfe, and thinketh himselfe farre better than any. This I manifest by sundry reasons: as first, from the fruits of this inward pride, for hence doe flow many damnable sinnes in mens lives and conversations: as first, *Ambition*, whereby men are not content with that estate, wherewith God hath blessed them: but doe seeke by all means to be advanced to higher dignitie and estate. Secondly, *Presumption*, whereby men dare enterprize things beyond their calling, and above their power, taking upon them more than they are able to doe. Thirdly, *boasting*, whereby a man speaketh of himselfe more than is seemely, and extollet himselfe above his desert. Fourthly, *Hypocrisie*, when a man pretendeth hee hath that grace and religion, which indeed hee hath not, or else maketh shew of more grace than is truly in him. Fifthly, *Obstinacy*, when a man per-

sisteth in an error, and will not yeild to the truth, though it bee manifested unto him. Sixtly, *Contention*, whereby men strive one against another in word or deed, without relenting. And lastly, *Affiliation of Novelties*, especially in outward attire, for when a man conceives so highly of himselfe, then will he thinke no manner of attire good enough to beautifie, and adorne his body; and so begins to devile, and affect strange and foreign attire.

Secondly, the *danger* hercot appeareth hence, that where this thought of pride reigneth, (as it doth in all men naturally) there the spirit of grace dwelleth not: *Mary* in her song saith well, *Luke 1. 58. God scattereth the Imaginations of the proud:* that is, of those which have this conceit of their owne excellency above others: and *Saint James, Iam. 4. 6. God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble:* yea, thus saith he that is high and excellent, *Isa. 57. 15. Pleaseth he that inhabiteth eternitie, whose name is the holy One: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble: But he that lifteth up himselfe, his mind is not right in him, Hab. 2. 4.*

Thirdly, such is the danger of this sinne; that when all other sinnes die in a man, this thought of pride dyeth not: nay, when other sinnes are mortified, and Gods graces come in stead thereof, yet this will then revive, and make the graces of God matter wherof to worke, as when an ignorant person attaines to some knowledge, this pride will take occasion from that gift of God, to puffe up the heart: yea, when a man in true humility of heart, shall renounce the actions of pride, yet then will pride bee working, for this is a fruit of pride, to thinke well of ourselves, because we are not proud.

*I. I. Point.* The *highest degree* of this pride is, when a man thinketh himselfe to be equall with God. This is a most notorious, nay, an abominable height of pride, and yet the truth is, some men have come herunto. Thus the king of *Babel* thought of himselfe, when he said in his heart, *Esa. 14. 14. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, and will be like the most high.* It may seeme strange that men should thinke thus of themselves; but we must know, that men may doe it two wayes: first, when they think they have power of themselves, whereby they are able to match or countervail the power of God: so thought *Nebuchadnezzar*, when hee said, *Dan. 2. 15. Who is that God, that can deliver you out of my hand?* Such a thought had proud *Pharao* in his heart, when he said to *Moses*, & *Aaron*, *Exod. 5. 2. Who is the Lord, that I should heare his voice, and let Israel go?* Secondly, when they take to themselves Gods honour, and thinke it to be due to them: Thus did *Herod*, when by silence hee approved the blasphemous voyce of the people, who cried un-

The height of this thought.

Esa. 14. 13.

a Zeph. 2. 15.

b Luke 18. 11.

c The heretical Church of Rome.

d Rev. 18. 7.

The danger of this thought.

Fruits of inward pride.

to him, the voice of God, and not of man. And thus Antichrist sitting in the Temple of God, 2. Thess. 2. 4. Exalts himselfe above all that is called God, or worshipped. Now that man of sin, is the Pope of Rome; for howsoever in word he humble himselfe, and call himselfe the servant of servants; yet indeed through the pride of his heart, hee siteth as God: taking unto himselfe that honor which is proper to God: for he claimeth power to prescribe new rules of Gods worship, to forgive sinnes, to make lawes to binde the conscience properly, yea; to open and shut heaven, and to dispose at his pleasure of earthly kingdoms; he taketh upon him, to dispense with the morall law, and with Apostolicall constitutions: all which belong to God alone, and none dare claime them to belong unto him, but hee that matcheth himselfe with God; and this is the highest degree of pride.

*The 2<sup>de</sup>.* By this every man may see what hee is of himselfe, what a cursed and proud nature he carrieth about with him: for every man naturally when occasi<sup>o</sup>n is offered, thinks highly of himselfe, and basely of others in regard of himselfe. Let us therefore take notice of this Satanicall pride that is in our nature, and strive against it, for who would not bee ashamed to say with the proud Pharisee, *I thank thee Lord, I am not as other men, &c.* or with the arrogant Jewes, *Stand apart, touch me not, I am holier than thou.* Isa. 65. 5.

SECT. 2.

*Mans thought of his owne righteousness.*

The second evill thought concerning a mans selfe, is this, *I am sufficiently righteous, and I need no repentance.* That this is the thought of every man naturally, appeareth by the Lords commandement to the people of Iserael, forbidding them to say in their hearts, when they were placed in the promised land, *that for their owne righteousness, the Lord brought them into this land to possess it.* Deut. 9. 4. Whereby hee gives us to understand two things: First, that as the Jewes said there, so every man thinkes himselfe to be righteous: And secondly, hee thinkes, that God doth give his blessings unto him for his owne righteousness: for the Lord useth not to forbid such a thought as men naturally have not in them: so in like manner when *Jeremy* rebuked the people for their sinnes, they said, *Jer. 2. 35. They were unbelieve and guileless, they had not sinned.* And the Church of Laodicea saith thus of her selfe, *Rev. 3. 17. I am rich and need nothing:* that is, I abound in spirituall graces. This is the thought of the proud Pharisee, who trusts in himself, *that he is just.* Luk. 18. 9, 10. and therefore braggeth unto God, that he is not such and such, but he doth this and that, no father he gives almes, praises others, &c. and in private comes his heart saith thus, *I am righteous, I need no repentance:* yet of such Christ saith, when he saith, *Mat. 23. 12. Hee came into the world to call to repentance, but sinners to repentance.* And again, *Luk. 15. 7. I say unto you,*

*that joy shall be in heaven for one sinner that converteth, more than for ninety & nine just men which need no amendment of life:* where we must observe, that Christ meant not, that there are indeed some so righteous, that they need no amendment; but he speaks according to the opinion which some have of themselves; to wit, that they are righteous, and need no repentance; by all which it is more than manifest, that this is a naturall thought of a man concerning himselfe.

This evill thought reigneth in our age and time, as all the former doe: for come to an ignorant man, that hath not bene instructed in religion, reason with him touching his estate, and aske him; whether he can keepeth the law of God, or not? he will answer, he can; he loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himselfe: Aske him how he looks to be saved; his answer is, by his own righteousness, and for his owne goodnesse. If due examination were made, this would be found to be the thought of many that live in the Church among us: and there is none by nature free from this thought.

Hereby then we may see, that the thoughts of every man, be he whome he will, are plaine Papistry, for Popery is naturall: One chiefe pillar and ground thereof is justification, and salvation by works; which opinion every man brings with him from his mothers wombe. And so it is in the point of merit, men naturally thinke they receive the good things which they have from God, for their owne righteousness.

Secondly, hence it appeareth, that it is a matter of great difficulty, to bring a man thoroughly to renounce his owne righteousness, and stand only and heartily to embrace true religion, and the righteousness of Christ by faith. This is no lesse than the change of nature; and yet this must every man doe, that will be saved, hee must become new in himselfe, that he may beall in Christ Jesus: which is as impossible to nature, as to change water into fire, and therefore men have neede to beware how they pass off the time, & neglect the meanes in which GOD sheweth his power in working this change in the hearts of his Elect.

Thirdly, hence we see the evident cause of that preposterous course of the world, which most men take in spending their lives, and strength, some for riches, others for honours and pleasures; and in the meane while they can spare no time for religion, to seeke Gods favour in Christ, and the graces of the Spirit: it may be they will afford a good word unto religion, but yet they regard it not in respect of other things: And this is the behaviour not of some few, but of all sorts and degrees of men naturally. Now the cause hereof is this cursed evill thought, whereby men persuade themselves, *They be righteous, and need no repentance,* and till this thought

Examination for this thought.

be rooted out of mans heart, hee will never value the word and religion of God according to the worth thereof, so as with the good *Merchant, he wil part with al that he hath, rather than he wil be frustrate of this pearle, Mat. 13.45,46.* Indeed men use to pleade thus for themselves: We confesse our selves to be sinners, and therefore we cannot thinke such a wicked thought, *that we need no repentance*: But we must know, that both these may well stand together, in the wicked heart of man: he may confesse himselfe to be a sinner, and yet thinke that he is righteous: for is not this the common practice, to make great finnes little finnes, and little finnes no finnes? Doe not men cloathe vice in vertues robe, and turne out vertue in the rotten ragges of vice? Is not drunkennesse counted good fellowship, and kinde neighbourhoo? Is not wearing made the token of a brave minde, and pride counted decency, and fornication but a trick of youth, and coverousnes esteemed good thrift, and carefulnes? On the other side, is not the more sincere profession of religion termed precisenes, Puritanisme, Hypocritie, and such like? doth not hee that refraineth the common finnes of the time, make himselfe a prey to the mouthes of the ungodly? Now where these things are, though the mouth say, *I am a sinner*: yet the heart thinketh *I am righteous*, and so it is apparent this thought is common among us.

### SECT. 3.

*Mans thought of security in the day of peace.*

The third evill thought concerning a mans self, is, *a thought of security*: in the time of peace and prosperity, men say thus in their hearts, *I am free from all Gods judgements, I am in no danger of hell, death, or condemnation*, but sure enough of salvation. It may be thought, that none is so bewitched of the devil, as to have this conceit of himselfe, but the Scripture is most plaine in the prooffe hereof, *Psal. 10. 6. The wicked man (such as is every man by nature, as we shewed before) saith in his heart, I shall never be moved, nor be in danger. And the Prophet Isaiah brings in wicked men, saying, Isa. 28. 15. We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement: which must not be understood as done indeed (for death and hell will make league with none,) but only in mens wicked imagination, perswading themselves, that they be in no danger of hell, or of the grave: for so much the next words import, that, though a scourge runne over and passe thorough, yet it shall not come at us: yea, righteous David was overtaken herewith: for in his perispany he said in his heart, *Psal. 90. 6. I shall never be moved; much more then is the thought of every naturall man, so say with the rich foole, upon the increase of outward blessings, Luke 12. 19. Soule, soule, take thine ease, thou hast enough, nothing can hurt thee.**

The 7<sup>th</sup>. By this we may come to the knowledge of a thing which falleth out in all ages,

worth our diligent observation. It hath pleased God from time to time, to send his Prophets and Ministers to call his people to repentance: thus did *Esaie, Jeremy, Joel, Amos, & the rest; yea, the Lord himselfe (as Zephany saith, Zeph. 3. 5.) riseth every morning, and bringeth his judgements to light*, which should turne men from their finnes, *he saileth not, and yet the wicked will not learne to be ashamed.*

To come to our own times: it hath pleased God to stirre up many worthy Ministers unto us, who spend their time, and strength, in labouring to bring men to repentance, & salvation, but yet who is he almost that turneth from his finnes? yea, the Lord himselfe, as in former times, so now doth preach from heaven by his judgements, as famine, plague, &c. and yet by lamentable experience, we see that the body of our people remains secure, they are *settled on their lees, Jer. 48. 11. frozen in their dregs, Zeph. 1. 12.* no man stirrs up himselfe to say, *What have I done?* *Jer. 3. 6.* Now the cause hereof is nothing else, but this cursed thought of security, whereby a man saith thus in his heart, *I am free from Gods judgements.* Reade *Mat. 24. 37. As it was in the dayes of Noah (saith our Saviour Christ) so shall it be in the dayes of the coming of the Sonne of man: they did eate, drinke, marry wives, and give in marriage, and knew nothing till Noah entered into the Arke, and the flood came and tooke them all away. Question.* How could it be that they should know nothing, seeing Noah had preached unto them of the flood, an hundred and twenty yeares before? *Answer.* Surely it was as if they had knowne nothing, for they would not beleve him, it would not sink into their heads, much lesse settle in their hearts, that God would destroy all the world by water: and so may it be said of these times, *we know nothing*, though we be called to repentance by the ministerie of the word, yet we wil not repent, & though we heare of Gods judgements, we thinke our selves free from them, and will not beleve til the breesome of his wrath sweep us all away, as the flood did the old world.

Wherefore to redresse among us this damnable thought of security, let us consider our grievous sins in particular, and let before our eyes the curse of God, both temporall judgements, and eternall death due unto us for the same. It is the applying of Gods heavy wrath that must make us shake off this secure thought, which the rather we must do, though it be grievous to the flesh, and as a pang unto death in a naturall man, because till this thought be removed, the saving graces of Gods spirit wil not take rooting in our hearts.

SECT. 4.

*Mans saith thought in time of distresse.*

The 4. and last evill thought of mans heart touching himselfe, is this, *In time of miserie he saith, His crosses are greater and worse than indeed they are: So Job complains in his affliction, that (b) his griefe and misery was heavier*

Remede.

than the sand of the sea shore. And the Church in great afflictions calls thus to passengers (i) *Behold; and see if there bee any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me: and that it is the thought of every mans heart naturally, appeareth by experience: for let a man be in distress outwardly, or else touched in conscience for his sins, when you shall labour to minister comfort unto him according to Gods word: he will answer, that never any was in like case to him, so grievously tormented and afflicted as he is. And indeed it is the property of mans naturall heart, to esteeme little crosses to be exceeding great, yea oftentimes to deeme that to be a crosse, which is none at all, the reason is, the want of judgement rightly to discern the state of their affliction, and the want of strength to support it as it is: (k) For if thou be faint in the day of adversitie, thy strength is small.*

For the remedy of this evil thought, first we must seek to rectifie the Imagination, by bringing the minde to a right conceit of the affliction: this is a speciall course to be observed in dealing with them that bee oppressed with any distress: for a strong conceit of a mans owne misery doth many times more hurt, than the misery it selfe: therefore be sure the judgment be well informed, and then the cure is halfe wrought. This done, the partie afflicted may wel consider the desert of sinne, in the endless torments of the damned, which the Lord preventeth in his children by temporall chastisements in this life: (l) *For when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world: And so labouring to be humbled for sinne, and to lay hold on Gods mercy in Christ, through whom all things, even afflictions worke together for the best, no doubt he will bee able to say, (m) I will beare the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him: And (n) why art thou cast down, oh my soule, why art thou so disquieted within me: wait on God, for I will yet give him thanks: he is my present helpe, and my God. Thus much of mans evil thoughts concerning himselfe.*

CHAP. VI.

Of the want of good thoughts in every man naturally.

SECT. 1.

Good thoughts about temporall things be much wanting.

**H**AVING spoken of mans naturall evil thoughts concerning God, his neighbor, and himselfe; we come to the second point to be observed in the text, to wit, *That there is a want of good thoughts & consideration in every man naturally,* for the Lord here saith, *his thoughts are evil from his youth,* and Chap. 6. v. 5. *They are onely every day now looke where: evil is onely, and continually, there good must needs be wanting altogether.*

**A** This want must be considered either in respect of temporall; or of Spirituall things. By temporall things I mean such worldly affaires and actions, as concerne mans naturall life; wherein though good consideration bee not quite away, yet we must know, that the same is corrupt, and very weak and imperfect, even as reason is, and there is much want in every man in this behalfe. *There is one alone* (saith (a) Salomon) *and there is not a second: which bath neither (sune nor brother, yet there is no end of his travell, neither can his eye be satisfied with riches; neither doth he thinke for whom doe I travell?* here behold a notable example of this want of good consideration about earthly things: that a man should spend both his wit and strength in heaping up riches, and knows not to whom hee shall leave them. But wee need not be inquisitive for examples: for we may daily observe in our selves and others, apparent want of good consideration in these worldly affaires: which must not seeme strange unto vs, seeing that reason it selfe, the ground of consideration is greatly blemished through the corruption of nature; about these earthly things.

SECT. 2.

Good thoughts in matters spirituall, be altogether wanting.

In things spirituall, which concerne the kingdome of God, there is in our nature an absolute want of good consideration, herein of our selves we have no good thoughts: *We are not of our selves* (saith (b) P) *sufficient to thinke any thing, that is, any good thing, as of our selves:* The whole body of the Gospell is therefore called a *mystery*, because the things therein contained and revealed are such, as (c) *never came into mans heart to thinke.* This want we may observe specially in 4. things: 1. in respect of Gods presence & providence, 2. of Gods judgements, 3. of our owne sinnes; 4. of our duty to God.

First, man by nature doth not thinke of, or consider Gods presence and providence to behold and remember all his wayes; in thought, word, and deed: hereof the Lord complains against Ephraim and Samaria, saying, they have dealt falsly, and they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: And the same is the state of every naturall man, being left to himselfe; for all by nature are equally corrupt with original sinne, and so are destitute of this good thought: which yet may appeare the more plaine by this, that naturally mans heart is possessed of the cleane contrary: to wit, *God shall not see, God will not regard,* as hath beene shewed before. And indeed it is a worke of grace to have the heart rightly affected with this thought, *God beholds all my wayes, he considers and remembers every thing I doe:* flesh and blood cannot attaine unto it.

Secondly, a man by nature doth not consider or thinke of the Indgements of God; of temporall, &

R r 3

Eccl. 4. 8.

The first good thought wanting.

b 2 Cor. 3. 5.

2 Hof. 7. 1. 2.

c 1 Cor. 2. 9.

Pag. 460.

The second good thought wanting.

eternall due unto sin. This thought was wanting in the men of the old world, though *Noah* preached unto them an 120. years of the general deluge, yet the consideration of it took no place in their hearts; & therefore it is said, *Mat. 24. 38, 39. They know nothing till the flood came and took them all away* from the want of this thought it came to passe, that *Lot's sonnes in law thought their father had but mocked, when he told them that God would destroy Sodom, Gen. 19. 14.* Hence it was that the *Rich* soules blessed himselfe in his heart, saying, *Luk. 12. 19. Soules, soules, take thine ease, & never be thought himselfe of any danger, till it was said unto him, O soules, this night will they fetch away thy soule, v. 20* And shall we thinke this thought is wanting at this day, seeing Christ hath said, *Matth. 24. 37. As it was in the dayes of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the sonne of man.*

Thirdly, a man naturally doth never betinke himselfe of his owne sinnes; he hath no purpose of heart seriously to examine his life past, or to repent of such sinnes as he findeth in him: This appeares by the Lords owne complaint against the Jewes, who were so farre from turning from their sinnes, that not one would say in his heart, *Ier. 3. 6. What have I done?* nay when they had committed most forthright Idollary, *Isa. 44. 16, 17, 19, 20. In making an idol god of one part of a tree, with the other part whereof they had roasted their meate, & warmed themselves, yet they considered not this in their hearts, neither had they knowledge or understanding to say, I have burnt halfe of it in the fire, I have baked bread upon the coales thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: & shall I make the residue thereof an abomination?*

Fourthly, a naturall man doth not consider what duty and service he owes to God: his minde is wholly bent to his owne waies, but the Lords talent lies hid in the ground wrapped up in a napkin, *Mat. 25. 18.* Hereof the Lord complaines against the Jewes, *Ier. 5. 24. That they say not in their hearts, let us feare the Lord our God:* hence it was that the *scribbs* virgins, *Mat. 25. 38.* did contempe themselves with the blaspheming lampe of an outward profession, and never be thought themselves of that oyle of grace, which God required in all these, that would enter with Christ into his bridechamber, till it was too late; and the slight serving of God at this day, declares the generall want of this consideration.

SECT. 3.

*The fruits of this want of good thoughts.*  
Hence further we must know, that this want of good consideration is a grievous evil, and a mother sinne, from whence, as from a fountaine, the issues of corruptions and transgressions, both of heart and life, do issue forth: first, hereby we are disabled from yielding unto God that obedience of heart, which his law requires: for how can we love the Lord with all our thought and minde, and our neighbour as our selves, *Luk. 10. 27.* as God commandeth, when as naturally our hearts are void of all good

thoughts towards God, & towards our neighbours? Again, whence comes sinning with an high hand, when men sinne, and will sinne? whence comes it, that men blesse themselves in their sins, & flatter themselves in their own eyes, while they go on in sinne, but from want of consideration of Gods presence, & of Gods judgements? This *Abraham* knew well, and therefore said of the people of Gerar, *Gen. 20. 11. Because they wanted the feare of God, that is, al consideration of Gods presence, & of Gods judgements, therefore they would kill him for his wifes sake.* Whence also comes that sensuality, whereby men addict themselves wholly to the profits, pleasures & honors of this world, never minding heaven or hell, but from want of consideration of their duty to God? If men did use to call themselves to account for their sinnes, or did set before their eyes the judgements of God due unto them, it could not be that there should bee such want of contrition towards God, or of compassion towards their brethren, as every where abounds. And the like might be said of many other capitall sins, all which proceed from the want of good consideration. Where by the way we may observe, that our common people doe farre deceive themselves in this persuasion of themselves, *That by nature they have good hearts, and good meaning.* If you charge them with the sins of their lives, they will straightway pleade their good intention; and say, though they sometime faile in action, yet they meane well alwayes. But the truth is, naturally *well meaning, and good consideration,* in spirituall things is altogether wanting. And therefore while men doe (sooth up) themselves in their good meaning, they deceive their owne hearts through ignorance of their naturall estate: and they must know, that they can never come unto Christ; that they might have life, till they bee quite gone out of themselves, in regard of such conceits.

## CHAP. VII. ment to and

*The use of the former doctrine.*

SECT. 1.

*That the Scripture is the word of God.*

HAVING seene what evil thoughts be in every man naturally, and what good thoughts be wanting in him, it follows now to make some use of this doctrine concerning mans naturall imaginations, which is the first use that shall be against him, who thinketh the Scripture to be mere policy, or wisdom by man to keepethen in awe. But we are to know, that the holy Scripture is no device of man, but the very word of the everliving God, which hath beene the rule of the former doctrine: The Scripture is the prin cipall

The third good thought wanting.

The fourth good thought wanting.

all, that all the imaginations of every naturall man are evil, & that continually. Now it doth not onely affirme this in general, but declares it also in particular for elsewhere it sheweth what those particular evil thoughts be, which the naturall minde of man frameth concerning God, his neighbour, and himselfe. Again, the same Scripture saith in general, *The good thoughts and considerations, are naturally wanting in every man; & elsewhere it declareth in particular what those good thoughts be which enter not into the minde of a naturall man: both these have bin plainly shewed out of the word of God, Now hereupon it doth necessarily follow, that the Scripture is the word of God: for let the coming Arithmetick shew whence it is that the Scripture doth declare mans thoughts, hee cannot say, of man; for no man knoweth the thoughts of another; nay hee cannot finde out his owne thoughts: neither can he ascribe it to any Angell good or bad; for the minde of man is hid from them; they know not mans thoughts. It remaineth therefore, that as God alone is the searcher, of the hearts, so that scripture which declareth unto man what be his thoughts, is the only word of the same God: Indeed God used man for his instrument, in the penning and delivery of the Scripture, but hee himselfe by his Spirit is the sole author thereof.*

Sol. 2.

*That man hath no free will to good by nature.*

The second use shall bee against the Papists, who ascribe to mans will a naturall power to that which is truly good, as by it selfe to co-work with Gods grace in the first act of mans conversion. But the charge of evil here laid upon the frame of mans naturall heart by God himselfe; doth teach us otherwise: for looke how farr the frame of the minde, which is the principall part of the soule, is corrupt for thoughts & imaginations so farr is the will, the inferior part of the soule, corrupt in willing: But the minde is naturally so corrupt that it cannot thinke a good thought, and therefore awfully the will by nature is so corrupt, that it cannot will that which is truly good: as it be said, that man hath liberty of will in humane actions and in civil duties: Answer. He hath, but not such actions proceeding from a corrupt fountain, are fittes in over-natural: many howe ever for the matter of the works they may be called good, being such as God himselfe ordained.

Of the third use concerning and suppressing the third use shall bee for admonition un-

to them, to whom is committed the education of youth, as Parents, Masters, Tutors, &c. that seeing the imaginations of mans heart are evil from the youth, therefore they must all joyne hand in hand betime to stop up, or at least to lessen this corrupt fountain. Parents must sow the seedes of grace into the minds of their young children, that if it were possible, even at their mothers breast they might be nourished in the faith. Thus deale Lou and Eunice with their young Timothy: for Paul saith, *(a) He learned the holy Scriptures from his mother and his grandmother.* Then as their children grow in defecation and use of reason, they must bee *(b) nurtured in religion, and have the grounds thereof by often repetition driven into their hearts: for this is the best means to free their minds, though not altogether from naturall imaginations, yet from the force and power thereof: for (c) solis is bound to the heart of a child, but the rodde of teaching, that is, instruction with correction, will drive it away from him: yea, when as the (d) child free at libertie makes his mother ashamed, yet will: (e) the sonne that is well instructed, give his father rest, and yield delight unto his soule.* Further, where Parents leave, there Masters and Tutors must take hold, building up that good foundation which is laid to their hand, that by them also the stream of mans naturall imaginations, may bee stopped: yea, though parents should neglect this duty towards their owne children, as too many doe at this day, yet each godly Master, if he desire to have Gods Church in his house, must instruct his family, as *(f) Abraham* did, and labour for circumcission of heart both to his children and servants: even as *(g) Abraham* did circumcise not onely those that were borne in his family, but also those that were bought for money. Both Parents and Masters are careful to prevent diseases, and to breake off sicknesses at the beginning in their children and servants, which by the continuance might bring bodily death, oh then how careful ought they to be, to stoppe betime the course of naturall imaginations, in them, which without the speciall grace of God, will bring eternal condemnation both to soule and bodie? And the rather must this course be taken in youth, and that betime, because custome, whether in good or evil, is a second nature: *(h) Yt each a child in the first of his life, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* But, *(i) can the blacke Negro change his kind, or the leopard his spots? then why the ass the good that is accustomed to doe evil? therein the vices of the naturall are like the diseases of the body, by longer continuance they grow more incurable. Yet altho that nature and these diseases, either for their own sake, or for the publick good, must bee by prayer to God for the satisfaction of their minds from the evil corruption, least being left unto themselves, they become vaine in their imaginations. David a man according*

(a) 2 Tim. 3.15.

(b) Eph. 6.4.

(c) Prov. 22.3.

(d) Prov. 26.

(e) Ibid. 27.

(f) Gen. 18.9.

(g) Gen. 17.13.

(h) Prov. 22.3.

(i) Jer. 13.23.

to Gods owne heart, prayed at least ten times in one (c) Psalm for the teaching of God in the understanding of his law : Oh then what great cause have we so to doe? whose (c) minds are naturally set in evil works; being blind in the things of God (c) not able to perceive them: but on the contrary, wholly prone to invent and to embrace that which is evil.

## Sect. 4.

## Of repentance for evil thoughts.

The fourth and last use shall be for practice to every child of God : for if the Imaginations of mans heart bee evil from his youth, then there must bee repentance for secret thoughts which never come into action, yea though we never give consent of will thereto. When Iosel proclaimed a fast, and called the people to humiliation, he bids them (d) *Renue their hearts, and not their garments* : and Peter said to Simon Magus, (e) *Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, that if it bee possible, the thoughts of thy heart may bee forgiven thee* : both which places doe plainly shew, that true repentance is not outward in change of speech or attire, but inward in change of the thoughts of the minde, and affections of the heart. And hence it is that Paul prayeth for the Thessalonians, (f) *That they may be sanctified throughout in soule, & body, & spirit*, that is, in the mind, where is the framing of the thoughts. Now if sanctification bee required in the minde, then must there bee repentance of the sinnes that are therein. This dutie the Lord himselfe vouchsafeth to teach, and therefore we must make conscience to learne and practice it, if wee would bee truly turned to the Lord, And to move us hereunto, consider the reasons following.

First, the curse of God, even the pangs and torments of the damned, both in this life and after death, are due to the person of man for his wicked thoughts : for *curst is every one* (saith (g) Moses) *that continueth not in all things that are written in the law to doe them* : so that he which breaketh the law but once, and that in thought onely, is accursed, because hee hath not done all things that are written therein. Now wicked thoughts are a breach of the law: for Solomon saith, (h) *Doe they not erre that imagine evil* : and againe, *The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord* : yea, the want of good thoughts is a breach of the law: for Christ (i) saith, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy thoughts, and therefore wicked thoughts must needs deserve this curse*. The fall of the devils was most painful and irrecoverable, and (though it be not certain) yet most Divines agree in this, that their fall was first in thoughts, and therefore wicked thoughts are deadly evils. Also, to shew the wickedness of evil thoughts, God hath set this brand upon them, since the fall

of Adam, that by them not onely mans bodie, but also his minde and memorie, are farre sooner confounded then by outward accidents; this was not so by creation; and therefore it is the heave curse of God upon them.

Secondly, these wicked thoughts bee the roote and beginning of all evil in gesture, word and deed; there cannot bee an action before there be a thought : for this is the order wherby our actions are produced; first, the minde thinketh; then that thought delighteth the affection, and from that commeth consent of will; after consent of will, commeth execution of the action, after execution commeth trade and custome by often practice : and upon custome (if the worke be evil) commeth the curse, which is eternall death. How great a cause therefore have we to repent us of the wicked imaginations of our hearts ? The old world indeed was drowned for their actual abominations, but no doubt, the Lord had great respect in that judgement to their wicked thoughts, which were the roote of all; and therefore he mentioneth them as a cause of the flood. Gen. 6. 5.

In this repentance three things are required; first, a due examination of our hearts concerning these imaginations, which we may take by the knowledge of those points before handed, of mans naturall thoughts concerning God, his neighbour, and himselfe: And to further us herein we must remember that all the evil thoughts before mentioned be in us naturally: so as if we be left to ourselves, when occasion is offered, wee will conceive them in our minds, as that there is no God, that the word of God is foolishness, &c. Again, we must heare Gods word preached attentively, and apply not onely our outward senses, but our minds also thereto; that so it may enter into our hearts, for the word of God, working in the heart, will discover unto a man what be his thoughts: *This word* (saith the holy (j) Ghost) *is mightie in operation, and sharper then any two edged sword, it entereth through even to the dividing asunder of the soule and the spirit, the joynt and the marrow, and to understander of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. At the preaching of this word the secret of the heart of an infidel is discovered : *As all prophesie* (saith (k) Paul) *and there come in an infidel, or one unlearned, beare rebuke of all men, and judged of all, and so are the secrets of his heart made manifest*, when upon be fallen : *Down, and worshippeth God saying plainly, God is in the midst of them indeed*. Secondly, after examination, we must pray for the pardon of our evil thoughts: A plaine commaundment of this duty Peter gives to Simon Magus, (l) *Pray to God* (saith he) *that the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee* : And undoubtedly hee that hath not grace to pray for the pardon of his evil thoughts, hath not true repentance in his heart. Thirdly, we must seeke to reforme our mind of evil thoughts, this is a further matter then

2. Reason.

Order of producing actions.

1. Examination of evil thoughts.

Heb. 4. 12.

1 Cor. 14. 25.

2. Prayer for pardon of the.

1 A 8. 32.

3. Reformation of evil thoughts.

a Plal. 119.

b Col. 3. 21.

c 1 Cor. 2. 14.

d Isai. 64. 3.

e A 8. 3. 22.

f 1 Thess. 5. 23.

1. Reason.

g Deut. 27. 26.

h Prov. 9. 32.  
& Prov. 15. 26.

i Mark. 12. 30.



then reformation of life : And it is expressly commanded by the holy Ghost, *Ephes. 4. 23. Be ye renewed in the spirit of your minds*, that is, in the most inward and secret part of your soules, even where the thoughts and imaginations are framed and conceived. This duty must bee remembered : for Christian religion consisteth not in outward shewes & behaviour, (though thereby we may give comfortable testimonie of Gods inward graces) but it stands principally in the minde, and in the heart, which must therefore bee reformed with the powers and faculties thereof.

## CHAP. VIII.

*Rules for the reformation of our evil thoughts.*

## Sect. 1.

*Our thoughts must be brought into obedience to God.*

For the reformation of our thoughts, sundry rules must be observed: first, *That we bring all our thoughts unto the obedience of God.* Every man will grant that words and actions, must be in subjection, but I say further, every thought in the mind must be conceived in obedience to God, and no other waies: *Salomon saith: Prov. 20. 18. Establish thy thoughts by counsell*, which may admit this meaning, that a man must not conceive a thought in his minde, unless he have counsell and warrant from the word of God so to thinke : And *S. Paul saith, 2 Cor. 10. 5. The weapons of our warfare* (speaking of the preaching of the Gospel) *are not carnall, but mighty through God to throw down holds, casting downe the imaginations, and every thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivitie every thought to the obedience of Christ*: giving us to understand, that those who submit themselves to the ministration of the word, must bee of this minde, not onely to be conformable thereunto in word and action, but in every thought of their minde, even those must bow the knee to Christ: howsoever with such we say thoughts are free, yet with God it is not so. And indeed hee which hath effectually received the grace of Christ, will endeavour to yeeld obedience as well in thoughts, as in word and action: *Whatsoever things are true*, (saith *Paul*) *Phil. 4. 8. Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, pure, & desirable to love, whatsoever things be of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise*, hee saith not onely *these* (\*) *those things, but thinking on these things*, where the commandment is plaine, that a mans thoughts must be *holy, pure, just, and of such things as are true, worthy, and of good report*, that so they may be conceived in obedience to God.

## Sect. 2.

*Of the guarding of our hearts.*

The second rule for the reformation of our thoughts, is given by *Salomon* (<sup>b</sup>) *Keep or counter-guaid thy heart above all, watch and ward*: that is, guard and keepe thy heart more then any thing that is watched or guarded; whether citie, house, treasure, or such like: and the reason adjoynted sheweth the necessity of the rule, *for out of it come the issues of life*.

In the right guarding of the heart, three duties must be performed: first, we must covenant with our outward senses, resolving fully with our selves by Gods grace that none of them shall be the instruments, the beginning or occasion of any sinne in heart, or life. This covenant (<sup>c</sup>) *Iob made with his eyes, not to looke upon a maide, to lust after her*: And *David prayed the Lord to direct and keepe his eyes from beholding vanities: Psalm. 119. 37.* Now looke how these holy men dealt with their eyes, so must we proportionably deale for all the outward senses of our body, binding them all, after their example, from being the meanes of provocation to any sinne. This dutie is most necessarie, for the outward senses bee the doores & windowes of the soule, and unlesse good care be had thereto, the devill will enter in by them, and fill the soule with all corruption.

Secondly, we must observe our evill thoughts, and at their first arising, stoppe and restrain them, not suffering them to take any place in our hearts: this is a speciall meane to preserve and guard the heart, for from the thoughts proceed all bad desires, corrupt affections, evill words & actions: the mind must first conceive before the will can desire, or the affections be delighted, or the members of the body practice any thing, so that whosoever is of a loose life, and bad behaviour, it cometh from the prophanenes of his heart in evill thoughts: neither can it bee hoped that any man should reforme his life, that will not guard his heart, and keepe his mind from wicked imaginations: the devill cannot worke his will upon mans affections, or prevaille over mans will, but by thoughts, and therefore it is necessary, that the first motion of evill in the minde be restrained at the beginning.

Thirdly, we must with all care cherish and maintain every good motion of Gods Spirit that is caused in us by the ministry of the word, or by the advice of Gods children: for these are the sparkes and flames of grace, which *Paul* meaneth when he saith, *1 Thes. 5. 19. Quench not the spirit*.

## Sect. 3.

*Of the elevation of the heart to God.*

Thirdly, for the reformation of our thoughts

1. Rule.  
b Pro. 4. 23.

3. Things in the guarding of the heart.

c Iob. 31. 1.

3. Rule.

we must often use *elevation* of minde & heart to heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of his Father. Thus did David, *Psal. 25. 1. Unostee, O Lord, will I lift up my soule*: And Paul, saying of himselfe, and other Christians, *Phil. 3. 20. That they had their conversation in heaven*, signifieth thus much, that not onely their studies and meditations, but also their dealings in the world were heavenly. Saint James bids us, *draw neere to God, Jam. 4. 8*: Now which way should a poore wretch here below, draw neere to God, but by lifting up his heart to the throne of grace in heaven, that so God in mercy may draw neere unto him by grace? The Lord hath instituted in his Church the use of his last Supper, wherein the giving and receiving of bread & wine doth represent and seale up unto us our communion and participation of the body and blood of Christ given for our redemption: Now the principall action on our behalfe therein required, is this *Elevation of the hearts unto God*, as well for the contemplation of Gods infinite mercy in Christ, and of Christs endlesse love to us, as for the application of his merits to our owne soules by the hand of faith, as also for the spirituall resignation of our selves in soules and bodies, by way of thankfulness to him that hath redeemed us. Further, touching this *Elevation* wee must remember, that it ought to bee our continuall and ordinarie action unto God: for as it is with him that keeps a clocke, unless he doe every day, wind up the waight, which are alwaies going downward, the clock will staid, so it fareth with us, our hearts are ever drawing towards the earth, and the things here below, by reason of that *body of sinne*, which hangeth on so fast, and presseth downe; *Hebr. 12. 1.* and therefore wee must endeavour by Gods grace continually to lift them up to heaven: The Apostle bids us, *Pray continually, 1 Thess. 5. 17.* not that we should doe nothing else but pray, but his meaning is, that we should everie day so oft as occasion is offered, lift up our hearts unto God. But of all other, there bee three especiall times, wherein wee must use this heavenly *Elevation*: first, in the morning, by prayer, thanksgiving, or both, before the cogitations of any earthly affaires come into our mindes, that so wee may give unto God, the first fruits of our thoughts every day. Secondly, in the evening before wee lay downe our bodies to rest, for who knoweth when he layeth downe himselfe to sleepe, whether ever he shall rise againe alive? Thirdly, at any other time of the day, when we receive any blessing from God, corporall, or spirituall, as doe feele our selves to stand in need of any of his gifts, or graces: for seeing every good gift comes from him, is it not reason wee should give this glory to his name: to lift up our hearts to his throne of grace, whensoever we receive or expect the same from his bountifull hand?

## SECT. 4.

Of the assurance of our particular reconciliation with God.

Fourthly, for the reformation of our thoughts, we must labour to be assured in our hearts by Gods Spirit, of our particular reconciliation with God in Christ. This is that knowledge of the love of God which passeth knowledge, for which Paul, *Eph. 3. 14, 19. Bowed his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the behalfe of the Ephesians*: in regard herof Paul esteemed all things losse, yea, to be droesse and dung, *Phillip. 3. 8*. Now when this assurance is settled in our hearts, it will purifie not onely the affections, but also the first motions and thoughts of our mindes: *Hee hath in himselfe this hope* (saith Saint (a) Iohn) *pergeth himselfe, as Gods is pure*. For when a man shall be truly perswaded in his heart, that of a vile sinner, even the child of wrath, he is made the childe of God, and a vessell of honour acceptable to God, enjoying his love and favour in Christ, then will he reason thus with himselfe: hath God of his endlesse mercy vouchsafed to receive me into his grace and favour, that otherwayes should have beene a firebrand of hell for evermore? oh then, how should I suffer my minde, my will, and affections to bee any longer the instruments of sinne, whereby I shall displease so gracious a God; and cast my selfe out of his love and favour? nay, but I will employ my soule, which he hath redeemed with all the powers and faculties thereof, as weapons of righteonsitie for the advancement of his glory.

## SECT. 5.

Of spirituall consideration.

Lastly, if we would reforme our thoughts, we must give our selves to spirituall consideration or meditation. By *Spiritual consideration* I mean, any action of the minde renewed and sanctified, whereby it doth seriously thinke on those things which may further salvation: This consideration I call *spirituall*, to distinguish it from carnally plotting care; whereby naturall men, though themselves wise and provident for the things of this life, though in the matters of God which concerne salvation, they bee blinde and ignorant. Also I added in this definition of a true *renewed and sanctified*, because the carnall man doth not use the things of the Father of God, as *Cor. 2. 14*, they seeme foolishness unto him, and therefore hee cannot give his minde unto them.

Now to excellencie of this rule, we plain-ly apprehend a spirituall practice of it in the Prophet Davids former and more usual with him, than spirituall and heavenly meditation: for he saith, *Psalm. 138. 1. O Lord I have heard thee in thy wayes: and (c) continually on Gods word*. Now sancti-

4. Rule.

a 1 Iohn 3.

5. Rule.

b Psal. 119. 105  
c Psal. 119. 105  
d Psal. 119. 105

sanctifying this duty by prayer, as it is plaine he did continually, *Pfal 119. 14. Let the meditation of my heart, O Lord, be acceptable in thy sight; hence it came to passe that he professed, Psal. 119. 113. An heaured unto vaine iurmitions,* which are the proper effects of an unreformed mind; and on the contrary, by this godly praſice, *Pfal. 119. 99. He got more understanding than his teachers:* yea, he attained to this excellent state of a renewed minde, that *his reimes*, whereby hee meanes the most secret part of his soule, *taught him in the night season, Psal. 116. 7.* And in reason wee may perceive the truth hereof, for seeing contraries do mutually expell one another, what can bee more effectually to purge the mind of evil thoughts, than to exercise the same with spirituall considerations? for when through the blessing of God, these shall take place, the other must needs be gone: in regard whereof it shall not be amisse somewhat to insift in the handling of them.

CHAP. IX.

*Of spirituall considerations concerning God.*

SECT. 1.

*Of the consideration of Gods presence.*

**S**pirituall considerations serving for the reformation of our thoughts, doe either concerne God, or our selves. That which concerneth God containeth many branches, but I will insift in foure especially. First, touching *Gods presence*, whereby a man doth think and so resolue himselfe, that whersoever he is, he stands before God, and that all his thoughts, words, and deeds, are naked in Gods sight. *Dauids* heart was filled with this consideration, when hee penned the 139. Psalm, for that whole Psalm is from the beginning to the end; serveth to expresse this holy cogitation of Gods presence: the like impresson must wee labour to have in our hearts touching Gods presence: for it is the most notable meanes, to cleanse the heart from evil thoughts, to restrain the will and affections from wicked delights, and to keepe in order the whole man, causing him to stand in awe of Gods commandements. *David* saith, *Psal. 119. 9. The feare of the Lord is cleane;* meaning thereby, that that man which hath the feare of God in his heart, arising from this consideration of Gods presence, hath a cleane and pure heart. This consideration also is a notable meanes of comfort in the time of trouble and danger: hence *David* saith, *Psal. 137. 4. Though I walke through the valley of the shadow of death, I will feare none evil: for the Lord is with me:* and hence it was, that, *Psal. 136. He would not be afraid for sinne thou, and of the people that should rise up against him.*

SECT. 2.

*The consideration of Gods judgements.*

The second consideration touching God, is, *of his judgements*, not onely those which were done of olde, and are recorded in the Scripture, or other histories, but even his least judgements which we behold or heare to fall upon Kingdomes, Townes, particular houles and persons, must we carefully lay unto our hearts. Of the want hereof the Lord complaineth among his people, saying, *Jer. 2. 21. The whole land lyeth waste, because no man setteth his mind on it:* giving us to understand, that the neglect of due consideration of Gods judgement, brought desolation to the whole land, and therefore the want thereof is a maine and grievous sinne, bringing further judgements with it.

GOD hath sundry times sent his judgements among us, generally by plague, and famine; and particularly on sundry families, & persons; but who regardeth them? Wherefore unlesse we will double Gods judgements upon us, let us remember our duty, and seriously thinke upon them. And that this consideration may be profitable unto us, we must doe three things, first, we must carefully observe, make, and remember them: *Psal. 119. 52. I remember thy judgement of old, O Lord.* The Lords people were much wanting therein, as *Pf. 78. 11, 42.* Secondly, we must apply them to our owne persons in particular, so as the thought thereof may make us afraid, though they befall others. When *Habakkuk* 3. 16. in a vision saw the judgements of God which were to come upon the Chaldeans, the consideration thereof was so powerfull with him, that it *made him tremble and quake:* In a family, when the father beareth his servant, the child feareth; and when one child is beate, then all the rest cry: even so when God our Father powreth downe his judgements, though upon the heathen, yet we must feare; but when any of his children are afflicted, it must stike sore to our hearts. Thirdly, wee must make use of Gods judgements, that light upon others, by applying them to our selves. When certaine men brought newes to our Saviour Christ of an heavy judgement upon some *Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne sacrifices, Luke 13. 1, 2, 3.* immediately our Saviour labours to bring them that told him, to make use thereof for their owne good, saying, that thereby they ought to be moved to repentance; for they that were slaine, were no greater sinners than the rest: and therefore except they who told that newes did amend their lives, they should also perishe. So that whensoever wee see or heare of any judgement of GOD upon others, we must thereby be moved to repent: and thus doing, wee shall come to a right

right consideration of Gods Judgements.

A

## Sect. 3.

*The consideration of Gods word.*

The third consideration concerning God, is of his word. David maketh it the property of a blessed man *Psal. 1. 2. so meditate in the law of God day and night; that it was his meditation continually: Psal. 119. 97. yea, oftentimes hee promiseth to (a) meditate in Gods precepts, to (b) delight in Gods statutes. This is (c) Maries praise that she kept her heart sundry things which Iesus spake. And so ought every child of God, high or low, daily and continually to meditate in the word of God. But, alas, this duty is little knowne, and lesse practised: men are so farre from meditating in Gods word, that they are ignorant of it. Among many families you shall scarce finde the booke of God: and such as have it, for the most part, do little use it. The statutes of the land are by very many searched out diligently, but in the meane time the statutes of the Lord are little regarded: oh that men knew the sweet comfort of the Scriptures. *Rom. 15. 4.* then certainly they would account their meditation therein, *Jer. 15. 16. The joy and rejoycing of their heart.**

Now the right consideration of Gods word consists in three things: first, we must observe the true sense and meaning of that which we heare, or read. Secondly, we must marke what experience wee have had of the truth of the word in our owne person; as in the exercises of Repentance, and Invocation of Gods name, and in all our Temptations: this is a speciall point in this meditation, without which the former is nothing. Thirdly, we must consider how farre forth we have beene answerable to Gods word in obedience, and wherein wee have beene defective by transgressions. Again, in the word of God, there bee both commandments, and promises: The consideration of Gods commandment, is a notable meane to direct, and moderate, not onely our words, and deeds, but also our secret thoughts and desires: for if before we think, before we will, or speak any thing, we would first consider that God commands us to thinke, to will, and speake thus and thus, this would mightily stay, and suppress in us all corrupt thoughts and desires, all evill words and actions. The promises of God likewise duly considered would greatly further us in good thoughts: for to them that thinke on good things, shall bee mercy and truth, *Prov. 14. 22.* The cause then why many that know the will of God, so much faile in particular obedience, is because that with their knowledge they doe not joyne this serious consideration of Gods commandments, and promises, and apply the same to their occasions.

## Sect. 4.

*The consideration of Gods workes.*

The fourth consideration concerning God, is of his workes: for as David saith, *Psal. 11. 2. The workes of the Lord are great, and ought to be sought out of all that love him.* This consideration bindeth us to enquire, and search what be the workes of God toward us, his worke of creation, his providence, preservation, with all other his workes of mercy and justice in us; and upon us; whether ordinary, or extraordinary: The Prophet *Ezay* denounceth a wee against those that had the Harpe, and Violl, Timbrell and Pipe, and wine in their feasts, and regarded not the worke of God, nor considered the worke of his hands; *Isai. 5. 11, 12.* whereby we may see, that the neglect hereof, is a grievous sinne, and yet it is the common sinne of this age.

Now for the better performance of this duty we must thus proceed: first, wee must consider our creation, how the Lord gave us being, when we were nothing, and how hee made us reasonable creatures, and not brute beasts; yea, he created us in his owne Image, when as he might, if it had so pleased him, have made us Toades and Serpents. Secondly, wee must consider his good providence over us, how he hath preserved our life from time to time, and saved us from many dangers. And his great patience must not be forgotten, how he hath spared us from the righteous judgements of our sins: he might have cast us into hell in our mothers wombe, or so soone as wee were borne for our originall sinne, but he hath given us a large time of repentance. Here also we must consider his exceeding favour in the time and place of our birth, and life: hee might have suffered us to have beene borne among Infidels: but behold we were borne in the bosome of Gods Church: he might have deprived us of the meanes of our salvation, his holy word and Sacraments, but in his tender mercy hee hath vouchsafed them unto us, to bring our soules to life. He might have hardened our hearts against his feare, *Isa 63. 17.* And blinded our eyes against his light, *Rom 11. 8.* but yet hee hath enlightened our minds to know his truth, and softened our hearts, causing us to cry unto him for the pardon of our sinnes: he might have given us up to a reprobate sense, *Romans 1. 28.* when we swarved from his testimonies, and regarded not the knowledge of his will: but loe, as a loving Father he hath often chastened us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holinesse, *Heb. 12. 10.* Hee might have left us comfortlesse under the reproach of the wicked, but he hath vouchsafed us his Spirit, for our everlasting Comforter. Thus must we duly consider of all these wonderfull workes of God towards us, and not like the men of

this

a Verse 15.  
b Verse 16.  
c Luk. 8. 31.

this world, thinke on nothing but pastimes, A honours, and commodities; This will bee a notable meanes to keepe our hearts from evil thoughts: for whose heart will not relent towards his God, that so many wayes hath tasted of his bounty towards him? yea, this consideration will be an exceeding stay and comfort to our soules in the day of trouble, and distresse: So Salomon saith, *Eccles. 7. 19. 16. Behold the works of God, and in the day of affliction consider: A naturall man cannot away with trouble, if sorrowes increase upon him, he is ready to make away himselfe, which comes of this, that hee cannot consider the workes of God, for he that can rightly meditate on Gods goodnesse towards him in all his workes, shall be able with patience to support his soule under the greatest crosse. A practice hereof we may see in David, who being in a most grievous temptation, so as hee cryed out, Psal. 77. 8. Is the Lords mercy cleane gone? hath he forgotten to be mercifull? &c. did yet recover himselfe by the consideration of Gods former workes of mercy, and of his wonders of old, wherof hee had experience in his owne person, verse 11, 12.*

## CHAP. X.

*Of spirituell considerations which concerne our selves.*

## Sect. 1.

*The consideration of our owne personall finnes.*

THE considerations which respect our selves, are sixe: First, we must consider our owne personall finnes as well the corruptions of our hearts, as the actual transgressions of our lives. This was Davids practice, *Psal. 119. 59. I considered my wayes* (saith he) *and turned my feet into thy testimonies.* The Isues likewise in their great affliction, stirred up themselves to this duty, saying one to another, *Lam. 3. 40. Come let us search, and try our wayes, and turne againe unto the Lord.*

In this consideration of our finnes, we must do three things: First, seriously to call to minde in what manner we have sinned; whether of ignorance, or of knowledge, of weakness through infirmity, or of wilfulness through presumption. Secondly, we must duly weigh the greatnesse of our particular finnes, even of the least of them, remembering this, that by every sinne we commit, Gods infinite majesty is displeased, and his justice violated. Thirdly, we must consider the number of our finnes; which wee shall neereſt attaine unto by searching our our thoughts, our wills, and affections, our words, and actions, all which being diligently observed, will make us cry out, that they be in number

as the haire of our head, and the sands by the sea shore. *Quest.* But what if a man have truly repented him of his finnes, must he still use this consideration of them? *Ans.* Yes verily, although hee be assured of the pardon of them: so did David after Nathan told him thy finnes are forgiven; hee penned the *Psalm*, and when hee was high in Gods favour, he prayed still for the pardon of the sins of his youth, *Psal. 25. 7.* For howsoever God in mercy put our sins out of his remembrance, upon our true repentance, yet we must never put them out of our remembrance, so long as we live in this world, because the consideration of them, though they be pardoned, is a notable meanes both to move us to renew our repentance, and also to make us watchfull against sinne in time to come.

## Sect. 2.

*Of mans misery through his finnes.*

Secondly, we must consider the misery into which every one is plunged by nature through Adams fall, and his owne sins. This was Iobs meditation, saying *Iob 14. 1. Man that is borne of a woman, hath but a short time to live, hee is full of misery: and so goeth on most notably, describing the misery of man: yea, this was Salomons consideration in the whole booke of Ecclesiastes, from the beginning to the end.*

Now that this consideration may take place in our hearts, we must enter into a particular view of this our naturall misery: the principall branches wherof beeth these: first, a separation from all fellowship with God: for as *I say* saith, *Isa. 59. 2. Our finnes have separated betweene God and us: and this is the speciall part of mans misery.* Secondly, *societas* and fellowship with the dimmed spirits, the devill and his angels, standing in this, that man by nature beareth the image of the devill, and withall performeth service unto him in the practice of lying, injustice, crueltie, and all manner of sinne. Thirdly, *all manner of calamities in this life*, as ignominie in good name, paines and diseases in the bodie, losses, and dammages in friends, and in all temporall blessings whatsoever. Fourthly, *The burrow of a guilty conscience*, which is in it selfe the beginning of hell torments: for it is our accuser unto God, our ludge to give sentence against us, and the very hang-man of our soules to condemne us eternally. Fifthly, *The second death*, which is the full apprehension of the eternall fury of the wrath of God, both in body and soule eternally. This consideration must be often used of every man, to move him to repentance, and it is very effectuall thereunto: for if we doe but consider how a man for the paine of one tooth, will be so grieved, that he could wish with all his heart to be out of the world, that his paine were ended: oh then, how great shall we thinke the

Mans naturall misery branched out.

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apprehension of the full wrath of God to bee feazing not upon one little member onely, but upon the whole man, both body & soule, and that for ever? No tongue can expresse, nay, no heart can conceive the greatnesse of this terrour, and therefore it must be an occasion both to begin, and increase true repentance in us daily.

## Sect. 3.

*Of our owne particular temptations.*

**T**Hirdly, we must consider our *owne particular temptations* wherewith we are most assaulted through the malice of Satan, & our owne corruption. *Be sober and watch (saith Peter, 1 Pet. 5. 8) for your adversary the devill goeth about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom hee may devour.* This was Pauls practice towards the inescapable man, whom hee had enjoyed to be excommunicate, for after hee gave direction that hee should bee received into the Church againe, *left hee were swallowed up of over much heavinesse, and so Saiban should circumvent them (saith hee, 2 Cor. 2. 7, & 11.) wee are not ignorant of his enterprises.* If forraigne enemies should seeke the invasion of our land, not onely our Magistrates, but every ordinary man, well affected to his Country, would thinke himselfe what coast were the weakest, that thither present defence might be sent, to keepe out the enemies; even so, seeing the devill doth assault us daily, we must enter into serious consideration of our thoughts, wils, and affections, and see in what part we be most weak, and in what inclination Satan may most easily prevail against us, which we shall best espy by observing the finnes of our lives; and this will make us arme our selves against him by Gods grace, even in the weakest parts, that he breake not into our hearts, to the ruine of our soules.

This consideration concerneth all men, not onely the disolute and fittill, but even those that have received most grace. It were infinite to goe through all the temptations of Satan: consider this one for all, whereby hee kills many a soule; Through the whole course of mens lives, he labourerth to fill their hearts with carnall security, and to bring them to neglect the ordinary meanes of salvation; This done, hee seekes to keepe them in this estate all their life long: but in the end he takes another course; for when death approacheth, then hee seekes to strike their mindes with oblivion of Gods mercies, and to fill their soules with terrours in regard of their finnes, and of Gods judgements due unto them; that so bereaving them of all hope of mercy, hee may bring them to finall despair. Wee therefore being fore-warned of his deadly fraud, must seriously thinke our selves of this temptation, and cast with our

An ordinary, and yet most dangerous temptation.

selves every day how to avoid it. This wee shall doe if wee shake off carnall security, and negligence in the meanes of our salvation: and provide betimes for the assurance of Gods love and favour, that when death shall come, we may be free from the terrour of an evill conscience, and have strong hope and consolation in Christ Iesus.

## Sect. 4.

*Of our particular end.*

**F**ourthly, wee must consider our *particular end*. The Lord complaines of the want hereof in his owne people: *Oh that they were wise, then would they consider this; they would consider their latter end, Deut. 32. 29.* In this consideration three points must be observed: *First*, that the time of death is uncertaine, no man knoweth when he must die: *secondly*, that the place is uncertaine, no man knows where he must die: *thirdly*, that the manner of his death is uncertaine, none knoweth by what death he shall glorifie God; and therefore that we may not deceive our selves, we must think that most fearefull and grievous ends may befall us, in regard of the bodily paine and torment, even then when wee little feare or suspect any such thing. This consideration will bee a notable meanes to stirre up our hearts, either to begin, or renew our repentance; when wicked *Ahab* heard of his fearefull end, he was humbled, *1 King. 21. 17.* and the *Ninevites* being told of their sudden destruction, repented in sack-cloth and ashes, and turned to the Lord, *Jon. 3. 5. 6.*

## Sect. 5.

*Of our strait account at the last day.*

**I**fily, wee must often consider with our selves, & that most seriously, *of that straight account and reckoning of all our thoughts, words, and actions, which we must make unto God at the last day of judgement.* This is the principall consideration of all, and the want hereof a fearefull sinne, arguing great negligence, ignorance, blindness of minde, and hardnesse of heart: if a traveller come into an Inne, having but one penny in his purse, and call for all manner of dainty fare and provision, spending sumptuously, will not all men judge him void of all consideration, sith hee hath nothing to pay, when his account is to bee made? Lo, this, or worse is most mens case, who in this life pursue their profits and pleasures, with all eagernes, they care not how, never regarding the reckoning which they must make unto God, at his terrible day of accounts with all the world: and therefore though the former considerations will not, yet let this take place in our hearts, to move

move us to a daily fore-hand reckoning with God in the practice of true repentance, and to imploy the good gifts and blessing we receive from God, like good servants, unto the best advantage of his glory, that when this account is to be made, wee may give it with joy, and not with feare. And that this consideration is effectuell to this purpose, *Salomon* teacheth in using it as his farewell with dissolute youth, with whom otherwayes he hath little hope to prevaile, saying, *Ecccl. 11.9. Rejoyce thou yong man, take thy pleasure in thy youth; yet know, that for all this thou must come to judgement.* But how powerfull it is with Gods child, we may see in *Paul*, *Act. 24. 10.* who professeth of himselfe, that in regard of this account, he indeavoured to have alway a cleare conscience towards God, and towards men.

### SECT. 6.

#### Of our present estate towards God.

Lastly, wee must seriously consider of our present estate towards God; whether we be in the state of sinne, or in the state of grace; whether we belong to the kingdome of darknesse, or be true members of the kingdome of Christ: it is not enough to be in the Church, but wee must be sure we be of the Church; for many Wolves & Goates be in Gods fold; *They went out from us.* (saith *S. Iohn*, *1 Ioh. 2. 19.*) but they were not of us: and therefore *Paul* adviseth to this consideration, saying, *2 Cor. 13. 5. Prove your selves, whether you be in the faith or not.* The want hereof was the fearfull sinne of the foolish virgins, *Matth. 25. 3.* who contented them-

selves with a shew of religion, having the blazing lamps of outward profession; and laboured not for that oyle of true grace, which might enlighten their soules to the fruition of Gods glory: yea, this is the common sinne of this age, men blesse themselves in their good meaning, saying they hope well, and doe not thoroughly search, whether they bee true members of Gods Church or not: Now if after triall it appeare, that true faith and repentance bee wanting in us, which are the scales of adoption in Gods children, then with all good conscience, we must use the means appointed of God, to obtaine these graces for our assurance, the comfort hercof will bee so precious unto our soules, that we shall abhorre to admit such wicked imaginations into our minds, as any way tend to deprive vs of it.

These are the considerations which respect our selves; whereunto if we give our mindes in a constant course, as also to the former which concerne the Lord, observing withall the rules before prescribed, through Gods blessing upon our indeavor, we shall undoubtedly finde by good experience, *That evil thoughts shall not prevaile against us:* but being reformed in our cogitations, we shall send out of our mindes, as from a cleansed fountaine, such streames of good words and workes, through the whole course of our lives, as shall redound to the glory of our God, the good of our brethren, and the consolation of our owne soules, through Iesus Christ our Lord, to whom with the father, and the holy Ghost, bee praise in his Church for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.