

A godly and learned
E X P O S I T I O N
O R
C O M M E N T A R I E
V P O N
T H E T H R E E F I R S T C H A P T E R S O F
t h e R E V E L A T I O N .

Preached in C A M B R I D G E by that reverend and judicious
Divine, M^r. WILLIAM PERKINS, ANN. DOM. 1595. published
for the benefit of Gods Church by ROBERT HILL,
Bachelour of Divinitie.

The third Edition,

Revised and enlarged after a more perfect Copy, at the request of M^r. PERKINS
Executors, by THOMAS PIERSON Preacher of Gods Word.

Hereunto is prefixed an Analysis of the Vision in
these three Chapters.

PROV. 13. 9. and PROV. 4. 18.

*The light of the righteous rejoiceth by increase, shining more and more unto the perfect day: But the
candle of the wicked shall be put out.*



L O N D O N ,
Printed by I O H N H A V I L A N D .
1 6 3 1 .



TO
THE RIGHT
WORSHIPFULL
AND VERTVOVS LADY,
 THE LADY
Elizabeth Mountagu
 OF
 HERMINGTON in North-Hamptonshire,
Grace and peace.



INST cause there was (Right Worshipfull) as well in respect of the Reverend Author, whose rest is now in glory, as also of the godly Reader, whose good herein claimes speciall stroke; that some refining hand should recommend unto the Church of God, a more perfect copie of this godly exposition, than the first Edition herof did afford: & yet no cause I find, why your worthy Children, who no doubt for the Authors sake, did more gratefully accept former dedication, should by me be deprived of their right: Nay, rather as they in heart (I am perswaded) did highly honour the Author for his double labour in Christs Vineyard; so I doe rejoyce this recompence is returned for their love, That with this worke, their memory with posterity shall long indure. And sith my paines herein yeelds me this right, to make choyce of some, to whom I also may commend the patronage herof; I doe presume to present the same unto your Ladyship. If this be any kindnesse on my behalfe, I confesse it is farre short of your deserts, and of my desire: some others (I know) may challenge me herein, as unmindefull of their love; yet because God may offer me opportunity hereafter, to give them good content this way, I will intreat their patience for this time, that I may joyne the Mother with the Children in this worke of love, to afford tuition to these godly labours of the dead. It fits you best (good Madam) in sundry respects; for neither will your children complaine of your admission into the society of their right, nor you esteeme the lesser hereof, because of their claime hereto by former possession. They are your owne, and yow theirs; this comes unto you all, as unto one, accounting your united to we farre greater safety: and looke what grace it findes by your protection, like grace it yeelds by many a good instruction. Salomon saith, "Good understanding maketh acceptable (meaning to such as feare God, for fooles^b hate knowledge) how welcome then will this be unto you, who^c have said unto Wisdome, thou art my sister, and doe esteeme the words of her mouth,

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mouth, ⁴ The joy and rejoycing of your hearts; *fish herein you shall finde on every leafe, some pleasant fruit of the tree of life: a taste whereof I will here set before you, that you may judge the better of the store. When the Disciples hearts were full of griefe for Christs departure then at hand, Philip said unto him in the name of all, ⁵ Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth. See ⁶ here, behold and you shall see, not the Father alone, but with the Father the Spirit of grace, and with them both, the ⁷ Sonne of God, so lively described to your view, that you may truly say of this knowledge, (God) ⁸ anctifying it unto your soule. ⁹ It is eternall life. When Christ would hearten his Disciples for the great worke of their ministry, he doth it by the promise of his presence, saying, ¹⁰ Behold, I am with you alway. The evidence and fruit whereof, you shall ¹¹ hereby so well perceive, that hereupon I trust, both you and many more will learne to say with David in temptation, ¹² I have set the Lord before mee alway; for he is at my right hand, therefore I shall not slide: And with Ieremy in affliction, ¹³ The Lord is with me like a mighty Giant, therefore my persecutors shall bee overthrowne, and shall not prevvaile. What shall I say more? It would be too long to speake of the dignity of Christs Church and ministerie here handled at large: and to instance in particulars, thorow the seven Epistles to these seven Churches of Asia: only this, in the Preface of each Epistle, learne what Christ is in himselfe and to his Church; in the Matter, behold the state of every Church, and see what Christ approveth, and what his soule detesteth; in the Conclusion, see his bounty towards his children, and the duty of all to him againe. The handling of these things will much delight your Christian heart: for beside the ¹⁴ Plaine evidence of the Spirit, in opening the Text, which is best pleasing unto God, and most profitable to his Church (wherein this godly Author had a speciall grace) the application is so fit and pertinent to our times, that I had wel nigh said, Hee did foresee what wee now behold; and hath foretold what we for our lukewarmnesse and decay in love, may justly feare: ¹⁵ Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Hold fast that which you have, be faithfull unto the death, and the Lord will give you the crowne of life. ¹⁶ For God is not unrighteous that he should forget your workes and labour of love, which you have shewed toward his name, in that you have ministred unto the Saints, and yet doe minister. Nowe the God of hope ¹⁷ fill you with all joy and peace in believing, and increase your joy by the constant walking ¹⁸ of your children in the truth: yea, the same Lord, ¹⁹ make all grace so to abound towards you all, that alwaies having all-sufficiency in all things, you may abound in every good worke, ²⁰ which is by Iesus Christ, unto the praise and glorie of God; unto whose gracious protection both now and ever I humbly commend your Ladiship, with your godly family. London, December 10. 1606.*

Your Ladiships to command.

Thomas Pierson.

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFULL SIR EDWARD MOVN-

TAGY, Sir Walter Mountagu, Sir Henry Mountagu, and

Sir Charles Mountagu, Knights, M. James Mountagu, Doctor of Divinity, Deane of his Majesties Chappell, and M. Sidney Mountagu, Esquire, the Lady Susan Sandys, and the Ladie Theodolia Capell, children of that right worthy and religious Sir Edward

Mountagu of Bowghion in the Countie of North-Hampton Knight, and of the Ladie:

Elizabeth his worthy Wife, Sister to the Right Honourable Sir John

Harington Baron of Exton, and Father to the vertuous

Lady the Countesse of Bedford,

Grace and Peace.



Right Worshipfull, as the Patriarch *Jacob* had ^a twelve sonnes; so Christ the *Messiah* had ^b twelve Disciples: but as *Ioseph* was beloved above ^c all those sonnes, so *Iohn* was beloved above ^d all the Disciples. *Ioseph* was apparelled better than the rest, and *Iohn* was inspired farre better than the rest. ^e Had it not bene for *Ioseph* Egypt had wanted her food temporall; and had it not bene for *Iohn*, the Church had wanted her food eternall. ^f The future state of Egypt was revealed to *Ioseph*, and the future estate of the

Church was revealed to *Iohn*. The one ^g was exiled, because his father loved him; and the other exiled, because his master loved him. The place of his exile was into the ^h I-land of Pathmos, being before by *Trajan* put into a vessell of scalding oyle. But that God who shewed his visions to ⁱ *Abraham* in the mount, to ^j *Jacob* in the field, to ^k *Ioseph* in the stocks, to ^l *Moses* in Midian, to ^m *Jeremy* in the prison, to ⁿ *Daniel* in Babylon, and to the Apostle *Peter* ^o in the house of a Tanner, even hee sheweth his visions to *Iohn* in his exile.

He is not bound to persons, hee can advance whom he list; he is not bounden to place, hee can reveale where he list. For persons, hee can preferre ^p *Abel* before *Cain*, ^q *Jacob* before *Esau*, ^r *David* before *Eliab*, ^s *Matthias* before *Iudas*. Hee can make ^t *Moses* a Courrier, ^u *Iob* a Potentate, ^v *Samuel* a Iudge, ^w *David* a King, ^x *Salomon* a Sovereigne, ^y *Elisba* a plow-man, ^z *Amos* a neat-herd, ^{aa} *Ieremy* a Priest, ^{ab} *Daniel* a Prince, *Isaiah* of the blood Royall, ^{ac} *Matthias* a Publican, ^{ad} *Peter* a Fisher, and ^{ae} *Paul* a Tent-maker, to be penners and preachers of the word of God. For place, as no time can prescribe against the King of a nation, so no place can prescribe against this King of all nations: ^{af} *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and the spirit worketh where it listeth.*

It pleased Christ, who is called in this Revelation, that ^{ag} *faithfull witnesse*, that first begotten of the dead, ^{ah} that Prince of the Kings of the earth, ^{ai} *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and last, ^{aj} he that hath the Keyes of hell and of death, ^{ak} which hath that sharpe sword, ^{al} his eyes like fire, his ^{am} feet like brasse, ^{an} the seven Spirits of God, the seven Starres in his hand, ^{ao} the key of David, who is called here ^{ap} *Amen*, the beginning of the creatures of God; and in *Daniel*, he that ^{aq} revealeth secrets, it pleased this Christ to reveale secrets to *Iohn*. Not by dreams, as to ^{ar} *Jacob*; or apparition, as to ^{as} *Moses*; or by voyce, as to ^{at} *Adam*; but partly by vision, and partly by voyce, as he did when he turned ^{au} *Saul* into *Paul*. This *Iohn* was *Tempus à Latere*, that Embassadour who leaned on his Lords breast. Hee writeth Christs history, and there hee sheweth his love unto Christ: hee writeth the Churches historie, there Christ sheweth his love unto her; especially in this, that hee will do nothing, which hee doth not reveale to his ^{av} servant this Prophet. For the Church in histime, we may see how it stood, in the three first Chapters; and what condition it should have for the time to come, it is plainly set downe in the rest of this booke. If we respect the generall estate of the Church, after *Iohn* had described the

a Gen. 22.13.

b Mat. 10.1.

c Gen. 37.3.

d Ioh. 1.1.

e Gen. 22.13.

f Gen. 37.3.

g Gen. 22.13.

h Rev. 1.9.

i Gen. 22.13.

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Authors of this Revelation, which are God the Father, chap. 4. and Christ his Sonne, chap. 5. he cometh to the workes of God, which are predictions, chap. 6. obsignations, chap. 7. indignations, chap. 8, 9. Predictions of things to come, obsignations of such as must be saved, and indignation on things to be destroyed. And for the more particular estate of the Church, having (chap. 10.) shewed his warrant to write, hee cometh to her actions: first, in her Prophets; secondly, in her body. In her Prophets, their fighting, falling, rising, chap. 11. In her body, comparing her to a woman clothed with the Sunne, chap. 12. and describing her by her combats, conquests, triumphs: her combats defensive, chap. 13. and offensive in Christ by words, chap. 14. threatnings, chap. 15. and judgements, chap. 16. her victories gotten against that ¹ whore, chap. 17. and 18. the ² Beast, chap. 19. and the ³ Dragon, chap. 20. And all that glory which she shall have in the Kingdome of God, is under the type of Ierusalem most comfortably set downe, chap. 21, 22.

The things in this Booke were (I grant) very darke to them that lived in the daies of *Iohn*, as the Prophecie of *Daniel* was to them who lived in the time of *Daniel*. But as that Prophecie being fulfilled, we can now tell what was foretold in it; so many things being fulfilled which were foretold in this booke, we may easily see what is meant by it: and the posterity to come shall better understand this booke than we doe, because it may be all things are not yet fulfilled. Neither is this booke like the cities of the ⁴ *Anakims*; or the ⁵ *tree of knowledge*, which may not be reached to: for ⁶ *Blessed is hee that readeth the words of this booke*. But to come to these three Chapters written by *Iohn* surnamed the Divine, and expounded by one, a most worthy Divine. The first Chapter is a Proeme or Preface to the booke: the two latter are Epistles dedicating this booke. The dedication is made to ⁷ seven severall Churches, and by name to the Ministers which are called *Angels*. In the Word of God, Ministers have many excellent titles given them, (though now they are scarcely graced with titles) they are called ⁸ *Prophets*, ⁹ *Seers*, ¹⁰ *Remembrancers*, ¹¹ *Trumpets*, ¹² *Washmen*, ¹³ *Husbandmen*, ¹⁴ *Stewards*, ¹⁵ *Maidens*, ¹⁶ *Fishers*, ¹⁷ *Leaders*, ¹⁸ *Elders*, ¹⁹ *Salt*, ²⁰ *Starrs*, ²¹ *Angels*, and ²² *Shepherds*: *Prophets* to teach, *Seers* to foretell, *Remembrancers* to put in minde, *Trumpets* to sound, *Washmen* to admonish, *Husbandmen* to plow up, *Stewards* to distribute, *Maidens* to keepe pure the doctrine of truth, *Fishers* to catch men, *Leaders* to goe before, *Elders* to governe, *Salt* to season, *Starrs* to give light, *Angels* to declare, and *Shepherds* to feed; to feed (I say) soundly by doctrine, liberally by charity, and religiously by life. By doctrine: for *Sacerdos sine doctrina, est nixus sine vellis*, a Priest without knowledge is a Ship without saile. By liberality: ²³ for *Nihil habet homo adeo divinum quam benefacere*, Man is in nothing more like God, than in doing good. By life: *Cajus vita despicitur, ejus oratio contemnitur*: his words are not esteemed, whose life is not approved. And that it may be said of them as it was of *Origen*, *Quis habuit verbum, islem habuit vitam*, as his words were, so were his workes. They must not be barren like Mount ²⁴ *Gilboah*, but ²⁵ *weaned as Samuel* was, before they be offered unto the Lord. They must be pure water, if they will cleanse others, and more than whetstones if they will sharpen others. They must be in ²⁶ integrity *Abrahams*, in meeknesse ²⁷ *Moses*, in knowledge *Aarons*, in paines *Pauls*, ²⁸ and in praying *Samuels*: and remember, that as *Augustine* said, *Manus pauperum sunt gazaphylacium Christi*, The hands of the poore are the treasury of Christ. I need not speake much of the duty of a Minister, for every one will teach him his duty, that will not be ranged within any duty himselfe.

These Churches were then like ²⁹ *Dauids* Worthies, excellent above all the Churches of the world: but because they lost their first ³⁰ love, were not ³¹ faithfull to the death, maintained ³² the doctrine of *Balaam*, ³³ suffered women to teach, ³⁴ bare a name onely to live, ³⁵ had but a little strength, ³⁶ were neither hot nor cold, and ³⁷ repented not as they should have done, of all their sinnes, they are reprehended by *Iohn*, threatened by Christ, and the *Candlesticke* of the Gospell is now taken away from them: *Iam seges est ubi Treja fuit*: Now *Mahomet* togeth, where *Messiah* did raigne. Are they reprehended? let us hearken: are they threatened? let us feare: are they fallen? let us labour to continue. From *Iohns* reprehension we see, That (as one saie) *hereof our Elders have complained, hereof doe we complain, and hereof they which live after us will complain, that men wax worse*; and live

not according to the doctrine of Gods Word, From Christs threatenings we see, that God is mercifull, ^a who first *offereth peace* before hee fight against us, that wee being fore-warned, might be fore-armed. And by the wofull downfall of these seven Churches, let ^a us that stand take heed that we fall not; for if God spared not the ^a old world who despised Noah, the Sodomites who vexed Lot, ^a Ierusalem which abused the Prophets, ^a Colossa, Hierapolis, and Laodicea who rejected Paul, and these Asian Churches who did not grow in righteousness as they did in riches, how shall we escape, ^a if we neglect ^a so great salvation? and for this cause these Sermons are most worthy to be considered of in this present age. O then let us now ^a consider this season: ^a *redeeme the opportunitie, ^b nor harden our hearts,* but regard the time of our present visitation. As the day openeth and shureth with the Sunne, so salvation openeth and shureth with the Gospell, ^a *Whilst it is called to day, let us heare his voice:* ^a *He that laboureth in Summer is the sonne of wisdom, but he that sleepech in harvest is the sonne of confusion.*

All things in the world doe take their time, the bird to build her nest, the husbandman to sow his seed, the *Mariner* to goe to Sea, the *Gardiner* to set his trees, the sick patient to take physicke, the *Cooke* to season meats, and the *Dresser* of the Vineyard to gather his fruit. It will be too late to build in Summer, to sow in Harvest, to goe to Sea when the Ship is launched, to transplant Trees when they are old, to take Physicke when we are dying, to season Meats when they are unfavoury, and when Winter is come to gather fruit. The ^a five foolish Virgins came too late, *Dives* ^b in hell repenteth too late, the time present is only ours. Is the fig-tree fruitlesse? it shall heare that sentence, ^a *Neuer fruit grow on thee any more.* ^a *Get thee thine righteousness before thou come to judgement: use Physicke before thou be sicke, and whilst thou maist yet sune, shew thy conversion,* as the wise man exhorteth every man. But alas, whereunto shal I liken this generation? We are like the *Ephesians*, we have ^a lost our first love; or the *Laodiceans*, we are ^a neither hot nor cold: or the *twilight*, neither day nor night: or the *Autumne*, neither faire nor foule: or one sicke of an Ague, one day well, another ill: or a man in a *Lethargie*, neither alive nor dead: or *Hermaphroditus*, neither male nor female: or to those creatures called *Amphibia*, which live in water or on land: or the *Lionesse*, which the oftner she breedeth, the fewer cubs she beareth: or the *Marriner*, who is only good in a storme; or the *Marigold*, that shureth and openeth with the Sun: or the *Mermaid*, which are halfe flesh and halfe fish. I would to God we were either hot or cold: that as the hottest regions bring forth sweetest spices, so most zealous people might be most fruitfull in good workes: that as the Sun in the Heaven is swiftest at her setting, so the sons of God might be best at their ending. But is it so? no: the more we are taught, the more ignorant are many; and the older we are, the colder in Religion. We have indeed many of us, as it was said of *Aristogiton*; *Martem*, or rather *religionem in lingua*, religion in tongue; but when triall is made of us, every ^a *Pharisee* can elpy our halting, and then with ^b *Archilocus* we thinke it better, *clypeum abijcere, quam interire*, even to cast off all Religion, than to vndergoe the least disgrace for Religion.

^a The *Moone* desiring to be apparelled as the rest of the Planets, answer was made her, That her divers changes could admit no kinde of habit: and we desiring to be attired with the robes of Christians, it is to be feared, that since we tread ^a *not the Moone under our feet*, we shall never be cloathed as the Church was, with the ^a *Sunne*. ^a *Who is wise, and he shall understand these things; and prudent, and he shall know them.* Let us therefore labour to ^a *grow in grace*, to abound in knowledge, to be full of good workes, and to overcome all the underminers of our future salvation. Then shall wee ^a *eat of the tree of life*, not be hurt of the second death, taste of the bidden *Manna*, have power over nations, be cloathed in white, made pillars in Gods Temple, and sit with *Christ Iesus* in the throne of his Father. And though the ^a *sonne of Ithal* cannot make us Captaines of thousands, yet that *Sonne of David* will ^a make us the founnes of God. That wee may doe so, wee must believe the Gospell, put on *Christ Iesus*, and be renewed by *repentance*. The first is necessary, the second comely, the third profitable. To come to the first; it is necessary we should believe: for he that ^a *believeth not, is condemned already*, hee is condemned in the counsell of God, in the ministerie of the word, and in his owne conscience, and he shall be condemned

Deut. 10. 12.

1 Cor. 10. 11.

2 Pet. 2.

Mat. 23. 18.

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condemned in the day of judgement; for ¹ *the wrath of God abideth upon him*. The more I consider the fruits of faith, the more I see the necessity of faith. Through ² *it we are saved*, ³ *by it we are justified*, ⁴ *in it we live*. We are saved from Satan, justified before God, and live in the Church. In the Church? nay, by it we live in Heaven: for ⁵ *He that believeth in the Son of God, hath everlasting life*. Faith is that which ⁶ *purifieth the heart*, maketh the whole man to ⁷ *walk in the waies of Gods Commandements*, ⁸ *giveth entrance to grace*, ⁹ *access to God in prayer*, ¹⁰ *made the Elders well reported of*, and each Christian to ¹¹ *stand in the profession of Christ*. It is that ¹² *hand* by which we must apprehend Christ: ¹³ *that shield* by which we resist all the fiery darts of the Devil: and that ¹⁴ *means* by which we doe good to others. ¹⁵ *By faith we receive the spirit*, ¹⁶ *are members of Christ*, ¹⁷ *we are risen with him*, ¹⁸ *he dwelleth in our hearts*, ¹⁹ *we feed on him continually*, ²⁰ *resist Satan*, ²¹ *are the children of God*, ²² *and the Word which we heare becommeth profitable*. And what shall I say? faith is of such a quality, that it ²³ *unitteth us to Christ*, ²⁴ *maketh us certaine of our salvation*, ²⁵ *bold in our profession*, ministrerh ²⁶ *true joy*, ²⁷ *giveth temporall blessings*, ²⁸ *sanctifieth our gifts*, and maketh us refuse the ²⁹ *pleasures* of this present world. In a word, no sinne can condemn him who hath this true faith, and no vertue can save him who wanteth it.

To come to the second, which is Christ, the object of faith. The most comely garment that ever we can wear, is to be covered with the ³⁰ *robes of Christs righteousness*: ³¹ *Iacob was blessed by Esaus garments*; and we are blessed by *Christs* garments. What we see thorow a greene glasse seemeth all to be greene: and what God seeth through *Christ*, it is all amiable. We must put on this apparell, not as the Church in the *Canticles*: ³² *I have put off my clothes, how shall I put them on againe*? nor as a gowne that wee cast off when we come to our home; but we must so put him on, that we never put him off againe. Wee must put him on by imputation, imitation, infusion, and profession: by *imputation* of his righteousness, *imitation* of his vertues, *infusion* of his Spirit, and *profession* of his name. Thus we must labour to get *Christ*: for what though a man could command the earth with *Alexander*, the ³³ *Sea* with *Moses*, the ³⁴ *fire* with *Elijah*, and the ³⁵ *Sunne* with *Ishuah*? What though he were as rich as ³⁶ *Salomon*, as wise as ³⁷ *Achitophel*, as strong as ³⁸ *Sampson*, as swift as ³⁹ *Ahimaaz*, as beautiful as ⁴⁰ *Abraham*, as fortunate as ⁴¹ *Metellus*, and descended as ⁴² *Paul* was, of the blood royall of Princes? yet having not Christ, he hath nothing. Yea, say a man had the abstinence of *Aristides*, the innocency of *Phocion*, the holiness of *Socrates*, the almshouse-deeds of *Cimon*, the moderation of *Camilus*, the honesty, justice, and faithfulness of both *Cases*; all these out of *Christ*, were but ⁴³ *splendida peccata*, and to be esteemed as ⁴⁴ *dung*, in regard of *Christ*. For have him, and have all things; want him, and want all things; he is in, at, and after death *advantage*. I come to the last: it is profitable to repent: for if we ⁴⁵ *turne* to the Lord, he will turne to us: and that we may turne, consider his ⁴⁶ *mercies* in forgiving, his ⁴⁷ *benefits* in giving, his ⁴⁸ *patience* in forbearing, and his ⁴⁹ *judgements* in punishing: The ⁵⁰ *Word* preached, ⁵¹ *sinnes* committed, and that ⁵² *few* shall be saved: the ⁵³ *shortness* of life, the ⁵⁴ *uncertainty* of life, and ⁵⁵ *the certainty* of death: the ⁵⁶ *joies* of ⁵⁷ *Heaven*, the ⁵⁸ *torments* of Hell, the ⁵⁹ *comfort* of the Elect, and that else we can have no ⁶⁰ *comfort* in death; ⁶¹ *pray* we cannot, unless we repent; and ⁶² *perish* we shall, unless we repent; but blessed shall we be if we doe repent. But *manum de tabula, Magister adeo*: this discourse following will teach us these things: and it am I bold to present unto your Worshipps, *Iohn* sent his Revelation to many Churches; and I present his Epistles to many worthy personages; and to whom may I better present them than to you, *Iohn* was a Disciple full of love, and you are brethren full of love. The Preacher of these *Letters* was well knowne to many, but to none better than to many of you, especially to those who were in my time worthy members of that most worthy ⁶³ *College* with him. And the rather I doe it, that times to come may rejoyce in the Lord, that from one honourable root have issued so many profitable branches to the Church. You are six brethren as pillars of your house, there were three sisters as fruitfull Vines of the same; one is not, but is with the Lord, and her I knew a Lady of admirable vertues: the other two are, and long may they be so. You are all brethren, by *nature* of one venter, *nation* of one country, *grace* of one spirit, *affection* of one heart, *fortune* in great favour, and of one hope by your holy behaviour. And concerning ⁶⁴ *brotherly love*, I need not write unto you:

you:

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you : for you are taught of God to love one another. Your ^b *Scilicet* at his death need not to teach you concord, by giving each of you a sheaf of Arrows, which cannot well be broken whilst they are conjoynd : for you by your amity make yourselves invincible. If ^c *Chilo* the Lacedemonian died for joy to see one sonne crowned at *Olympus*, and ^d *Diogenes Rhodius* did the like, when his three children gat the garland at a wrestling : and ^e *Jacob* so joyced to heare of his sonne *Joseph*, to be advanced greatly in the Kingdom of *Egypt*; how might this happy Father of yours rejoyce, to see at one time one sonne sitting as high *Sheriffe* of the shire, another preaching before the Iudges of the Assize, and the third pleading as Counsellor at the bar, and all the rest of great expectation in the Kingdome? Thus wise ^f *Sons are a joy to their Parents*, and all may behold ^g *how good and comely a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity*. Aristotle could say, that Parents were not blessed, unless they were after their death blessed in their children. And surely it is no small part of a Fathers blessednesse, to see his children like to flourish when he is gone. Nay, of all monuments that Parents can leave behind them, there is none (as one saith) like to a vertuous sonne. But all Parents are not to be blessed. ^h *Adams* two sonnes could not agree in one field; ⁱ *Abrahams* in one house; ^k *Isaacs* in one wombe; ^l *Dauids* in one Palace, nor ^m *brethren* in the division of an inheritance. And though concord amongst brethren (especially such as divide the inheritance) be very rare, yet doe you even in this, most comfortably agree. You are not as *Simcon* and *Levi*, *Romulus* and *Rhemus*, *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, *Atreus* and *Thyestes*, *Æta* and *Perseus* : but as *Caster* and *Pollux*, *David* and *Jonathan*; *Joseph* and *Benjamin*; and (as a true friend is described to bee) ⁿ *one soule in two bodies*. It seemeth that as *Agrippa* the brother of *Augustus* was beholding to *Salust* for that one sentence, *Small things increase by concord, but perish through discord*: so you have all learned the same lesson, as being perswaded, that as the members of a body being once dismembred, they cannot possibly be joynd againe; so if naturall brethren be once unnaturally disjoynd, no glue will conjoyne them fast againe. It were infinite to shew examples of brotherly love and hatred, and ^o others have eased me of this paines. Now that good God, who hath brought you from one root, placed you in one country, advanced you to like credit, and given you one heart, give you also one inheritance in the Kingdome of Heaven. Thus, right Worshipfull, I am bold to speake unto you, and the world knoweth I speake the truth, and the Lord knoweth I desire not to flatter. Goe on therefore I beseech you, continue in love, be settled in the truth, and labour to honour him who thus honoureth you. Be not carried away with the shew ^p of this world, but thinke Religion the best nobilitie, and that ^q as *Prudentius* saith,

Generosa Christi secta nobilitat vires,

Cui quisquis servit, ille verè est nobilis.

He noble is that comes of Christ his race :

Who serves this Lord, he surely is not base.

And this made *Theodosius*, more to thanke God that he was a Christian, than a King; considering that he must lose the one, he could not lose the other. Now as to one of you I am bounden in particular; and by him, being a Minister, the despised Ministry is not a little graced : so for him I pray, that he may be an ^a *Abraham* to our *Abimelech*, a ^b *Nathan* to our *David*, a ^c *Iehjada* to our *Ioshab*, an ^d *Ebedmelech* to *Jeremiah*, an ^e *Elisba* to the widow of this Prophet deceased, a light in the Court, and a trumpet in the Church, and that ^f *Abshurero* may long hold out his golden Scepter unto him : that by his means, ^g *great men may not want such as will tell them the truth* : no ^h *curbly Alexander* accounted a sonne of *Isupiter*, and that no man be more respected than a good ⁱ *Pastor*; and that he may ever remember that saying of wise *Solomon*, ^k *Hee that loveth parenesse of heart, for the grace of his lips, the King shall be his friend*. His *Cyrus* will not be spoken to, *verbis bisimis*, in filken words; to his *Alexander* he need not speake *hæc, hæc, hæc*, either sweet words, or no words. For if one *Antiochus* might be surnamed *Holy*, and another good Prince called the *Good King* : much more may he, whose religious knowledge surpasseth all the Princes that have bene of this Nation; and whose humility is such, that he will have his sonne to remember, that ^l *hee differeth not in stuffe, but in use from the rest of the people, and that by Gods ordinance*. I am the bolder for that one, to make

b Which had
sightly sonnes.
Plot.

c Theate.
Philol. p. 194.
d Arist. Gel. 3.
Noct. 1.
e Gen. 45. 20.

f Prov. 10. 1.
g Psal. 133. 1.
h Job. 1. 3.

i Gen. 4.
j Gen. 21. 9.
k Gen. 45.
l Præsum. gratia
notum.
m Ki. 6. 1.
n Job. 1. 2, 13.

o Plutarch. in
Agrippa. 1. 1.
p Plutarch. in
Agrippa. 1. 1.
q Prudentius
in
Crispino.

r See Frenc. Acc.
dem. p. 542. 543.

s Prudentius
in
Crispino.
t Prudentius
in
Crispino.

u Hist. Eccles.
M. D. 1. 1. 1.
v D. 1. 1. 1.

w Gen. 10.
x 2 Sam. 11.
y King. 1. 1.
z 1. 1. 1.

a 1. 1. 1.
b 1. 1. 1.
c 1. 1. 1.

d 1. 1. 1.
e 1. 1. 1.

f 1. 1. 1.
g 1. 1. 1.

h 1. 1. 1.
i 1. 1. 1.

j 1. 1. 1.
k 1. 1. 1.

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make choice of all in the Dedication of this booke : no man knew, loved, converted with, and respected this *Author* more than he. He resorted to him in his health, visited him in sicknesse, and preached a learned Sermon for him at his death. Concerning this *Author*, as he said of *Carthage*, I had rather be silent, than say little : and his worthy labours doe speake enough for him ; byname, that his *Posthume*, dedicated to his excellent Majesty, by an excellent *Divine*. In a word therefore, whatsoever this man did, he desired to profit others by it ; hee thought (as it is written *of Bernard* in his life) that he was not his owne man, but deputed to the service of others. He was never idle, but as *Jerome* reporteth of *Ambrose*, and *Bernard* of himselfe, hee did either *reade*, or *meditate*, or *pray*, or *conferre*, or *counsell*, or *comfort*, or *write*, or *preach*. And thus (as the *Embleme* is of a faithfull Teacher) he like a wax candle, in giving light to others, in short time extinguihed himselfe. Yet in this short time of his, what Art was he not master of ? what vertue was he not endowed with ? He was a compleat *Divine*, and hath his blessings in the Church, that no mans writings are read of all sorts, and in all Countries, with greater grace and profit than his. He was peaceable in the Church, patient of wrongs, and free from ambition. For as *Jerome* said of *Neptian*, *Aurum calcans, schedulas confectabatur* ; hee regarded not his purse, but followed his booke : and as *Bernard* said, he lived *interra auti sine auro*, in a Kingdome of gold without gold. An excellent gift he had to *define* properly, *divide* exactly, *dispose* subtilly, *answer* directly, *speake* pithily, and *write* judiciously : and how he preached, if these *Sermons* doe give a testimony, what witness had they who often heard him themselves ? I have published of his now two Discourses, and I onely did it, that these his labours might not perishe : I have no benefit by them, but exceeding great paines. And since I understand that his other labours are in the hands of his friends, to make benefit for his children, I will ease my selfe of the like labour, and be a meanes that they may have the benefit of the future impression of this booke : the which, how faithfully I have published, I appeale to the godly and indifferent Reader, and I hope no honest minded man will be hired to calumniate it. Thus as one desirous to be *serviceable* in my calling, *profitable* to the Church, not *forgetfull* of my friend, and to testifie the happinesse of your house, which was in your Fathers time, and is now (as it is said of *Aurelian* the Emperours) *Refertapais, & Ecclesia Dei*, replenished with the godly, and a Church of God : and withall, to leave a monument of my duty unto you all, I have as you see, published this Exposition of seven Epistles under your eight names, nothing doubting but it will be as welcome to you, as by your countenance it may be profitable to the Church. The God of Heaven give you all that blessing of blessings, which (if *Jerome* say true) few men have, that you my *transire à deliciis ad deliciis*, goe on from grace to grace, and bee a long time happy in this life, and for ever happy in the life to come. *London* : Saint *Martins* in the fields, from my worshipfull friend Master *Oldisworths* house, by which family (as *Paul* was by the house of *Onesiphorus*) in the time of this late (and I wish I may say) the last visitation, I have received no small refreshing.

March 12. 1654.

Your worships to command,

Robert Hill:

Fellow of S. Johns College in Cambridge.



To the Godly and Christian Reader,
Grace and Peace.



*Am not ignorant (good Reader) how ungratefull a thing it is to deale by way of cen-
sure or reformation, in these things wherein others have gone before: and many
times for the smart that followeth, doe men bestrow their owne fingers. Yet the
warrant of a good calling will breed peace in his conscience, that herein shall ende-
avour the observance of these rules of Love, to wit, ^a Judge the best of that which
is done; and ^b refferre his owne paines to the glory of God in the good of others:*

*Hereto I aime in this third Edition of this booke. For my calling to this worke,
when mine accusers stand forth, the executors of the dead shall answer for my discharge. And for mine
endeavour to doe good; the small gaine of this revised worke, was truly returned to the right owners
thercof: If thou therefore returne glory to God, for good received to thy soule, in this behalfe I have
my desire. Here only rests the doubt, how this third Edition should not be prejudiciall to his good esti-
mation that published the former: I answer, well enough: For I hope he intended ^c the glory of God in
the good of his Church, and the credit of the reverend Author of this worke. Now if any addition bee
brought hitherunto, his intent is furthered, and wherein then can he be grieved? If one man should
help poore Orphans to some lands or living, he would not thinke himselfe wronged by another, that should
enlarge their just claimes, or settle their possession in a better tenure: so I trust it faileth in this worke;
where thou shalt finde upon thy diligent view, in some doubtfull ^d things the Authors meaning truly
cleared, his method rectified, many repetitions omitted, and the matter (specially towards the latter end)
somewhat enlarged. If any thing be dissonant to the Authors judgement in his live-worke (which I
hope thou shalt not perceive) rather charge the fault on me through ignorance, or misunderstanding,
than entertaine in thy heart the least conceit of wavering levitie in so godly, learned, and judicious a*

*Divine, who hath so well deserved of thy love, if thou love the truth. Thus craving thy favo-
rable acceptance of my helping hand to doe thee good, I end with him, That is the
beginning and the end: Let him that hath an eare heare what
the Spirit saith unto the Churches.*

^a 1 Cor. 13. 5.
Love thinketh not
evil.
^b It seeketh not
her own things.

^c See his Preface
towards the end.

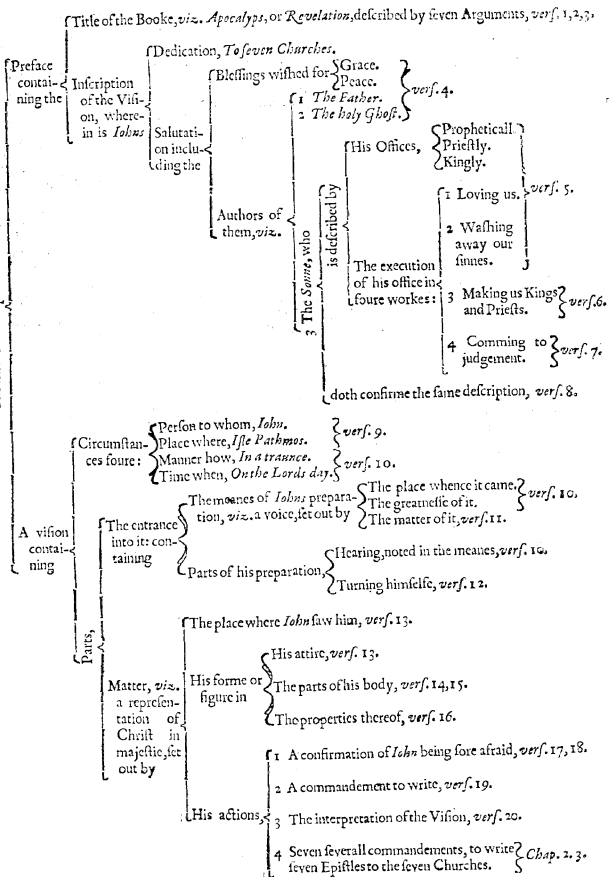
^d As touching
the Images of the
Trinitie pgs. 52.
col. 1.

Thine in him, who is the Lord of all,

Thomas Pierston.

A GENERAL ANALYSIS OF the Vision shewed to *John*.

The three first Chapters consist of 4



A
GODLY AND
 LEARNED EXPOSITION OF
 the three first Chapters of the
REVELATION.

REVELAT. I. I.

The Revelation of Iesus Christ, which God gave unto him; to shew unto his servants things which must shortly be done: which he sent, and shewed by his Angell unto his servant Iohn.



Efore wee come to the words, wherein is contained singular matter fit for this time and age, this question must be handled; Whether this Booke of the *Revelation* be Canonically Scripture?

For some have heretofore, as also in our time, called the authority of it in question. But wee are without all doubt, to resolve our selves that it is Canonically Scripture, of equall authority with the rest of Gods Booke. Our reasons be these: First, the doctrine contained in this Booke is Apostolicall, as any shall perceive which seriously reads the same. Secondly, the stile of this booke is Apostolicall; that is, plaine, simple, and easie, if we consider that the matter thereof is Prophetically. Thirdly, this booke hath beene approved and received for Canonically by the common consent of Gods Church in all ages since the daies of *Iohn*, and was never refused of any whole Church, but onely of some private men. Fourthly, the things foretold in this booke, come to passe as they were foretold: as among the rest (in one for all) may appear by the Prophecies of the two beasts; whereof one came out of the Sea, the other out of the earth, Chapter 13. the one prefigured the Roman Empire, the other the Hereticall Apostolicall Church of Rome: both which in all things are come to passe in these latter ages, answerable to the Prophecies.

The contrary reasons brought to improve the authority of this booke are of no moment. 1. *Reason*, *Iohn* nameth himselfe sundry times in this booke; whereas in penning the Gospell, hee did not once mention his owne name, though hee had just occasion so to doe: therefore it was not penned by Saint *Iohn*, but by some other, and published afterward in *Iohns* name.

Answer. The reason is not good: for there is great difference betweene an Historie and a Prophecies. The Gospell of *Iohn* is an historie of Christ: now there is no necessary reason why one man penning the historie of another, should name himselfe. But this Booke of the Revelation is a Prophecies; in penning whereof it is more requisite the Prophet should put to his owne name: so did the former Prophets. *Jeremie* mentioneth his name in his Booke at least an hundred times; so doth *Isai* and *Daniel* almost in every Chapter. Then seeing they doe it so often, it is no marvell if Saint *Iohn* doe repeat his name five sundry times in this whole Booke.

2 They object, that his stile in this Booke is not the same with that he used in the penning of the Gospell. *Answer*. The difference of the stile ariseth from the difference of the matter, seeing there he writes an Historie, here he pens a Prophecies. Again, hee writes not his owne words, but those which he received from Christ by particular revelation.

3 They say, this booke hath beene rejected

in diyers ages as not Canonically. *As for*, It cannot be proved that it was ever refused of any whole Church, but of some particular men. Now the disallowing of any private man cannot make a whole booke to bee rejected: for then the Epistles to the Hebrewes, of *James*, and of *Iohn*, should not be Canonically; which yet be received of all Churches for the pure Word of God.

Now come to the words, *The Revelation of Iesus Christ, which God gave unto him, &c.* These three first Chapters consist of two parts: A Preface and a Vision. The Preface is an entrance to the Vision, contained in the beginning of the first Chapter, from the first verse to the ninth. The Vision it self is set downe in the rest of these three Chapters. The Preface hath two parts: First, the title of the booke: Secondly, the inscription thereof. The title in the three first verses. The inscription from the fourth to the ninth verse. The title in these words, *The Revelation of Iesus Christ, &c. A Revelation* is nothing else but a manifestation, or discovery of things secret in regard of men for the common good of the Church: and so this word is taken in this place.

Revelations from God in Scripture were shewed three waies: First, by dreames: secondly, by vision: thirdly, by created voice of God face to face, as we may see, Num. 12.6,8. Now this was not by dreame, nor by vision or voice alone, but is a mixt Revelation, received partly by Vision, and partly by voice uttered in the vision from the Lord.

In the three first verses, this Revelation is described by seven arguments: first, by the author: secondly, the end: thirdly, the persons to whom it was directed: fourthly, the matter: fifthly, the instruments: sixthly, the manner of delivering it: seventhly, the fruit of the Revelation. First, the Author is *Iesus Christ*: It comes from him, and it is called his Revelation in these respects: First, not to exclude the Father, and the holy Ghost, but to shew the speciall office of Christ, the second person in Trinitie; which is, to reveale, to publish, and to manifest the will of God the Father to his Church: and for this cause he is called the ^a Angell of the Covenant, the ^b doctor of the Church, the ^c wisdom of the Father, and the ^d Word of God.

Secondly, it is called the Revelation of Iesus Christ, to teach us to put difference between this and all Satanicall Revelations: For as God hath his true Revelations, so Satan (who herein may be called Gods ape) hath his counterfeit visions, and delivers them in shew like to Gods, but they differ much: First, the devils Revelations bee for the most part ambiguous, doubtfull, and uncertaine in speech and phrase, so as a man cannot tell which way to take them: But the Revelations which come from Christ, the Author of truth, who knoweth all things and the reasons of them, are certaine and in plaine termes delivered. Secondly, the Devil

sheweth his Visions to none but to the wicked and bad men that bee his instruments: But the Lord chuseth the godly which feare his name, and to them he revealeth his secrets, as to *Iohn* in this place. Thirdly, the Devils revelations evermore tend to set up and uphold heresie, wickednesse, Apostacy, and Idolatry, Deut. 18. 1, 2. but these that come from God serve to erect and maintaine truth, according to godlinesse; even pure Apostolical doctrine, and the sincere worship of God.

Thirdly, it is called the Revelation of Christ, to shew unto us his speciall kingly office in heaven: for being ascended and exalted to the throne of Majestie, he sitteth at the right hand of his Father, farre above all principallitie and power, might and domination; and there doth direct, rule, and governe his Church upon earth according to the good pleasure of his will: for all these visions serve to direct his Church in their obedience to his command.

Whereas Christ Iesus is Author of this Revelation, and after his ascension and exaltation, gives the same unto his Church; we may observe his constant care over his Church in this last age of the world. Before his incarnation, even from the beginning, he gave unto his people such doctrine of faith and manners, as was needfull for their salvation; and still from time to time revealed such prophecies of things to come as was meet for them to know.

And now behold the continuance, or rather the increase of this his care in the new Testament: for beside the perfection of the former prophecies, and the full manifestation of his blessed will by his Evangelists and Apostles, for all things needfull to bee believed and done unto eternall life: Lo, here is added the Revelation of this worthy Prophecie concerning things to come, for the great and good comfort of his children to the end of the world.

Which God gave unto him. These words bee added to shew how this became the Revelation of Christ: namely, by the gift of God, that is, of God the Father the first person in Trinitie; for this is a rule to be observed, *That where the title God, in any sentence of Scripture is opposed to Christ, there is importeth the first person the Father*: though this be also true, That sundrie times in Scripture, the Father alone is called God, without any addition of the other persons; because he is the first in regard of order, and the fountaine of the deity; for the sonne receiveth the god-head by communication from the Father, and the holy Ghost receiveth it from them both; but the Father hath his god-head of himselfe, and receiveth it not by communication from any other.

Here some will say, this seemes strange, that any thing should be given to Christ, seeing hee is God, and hath all things of himselfe. *Ans.* Wee must conceive of Christ two waies; first, as God: secondly, as Mediatour and head of the Church. As Christ is God, the Fa-

Vse.

^a Mat. 13. 17.
^b Mat. 23. 34.
^c 1 Cor. 1. 24.
^d Ioh. 1.

ther giveth him nothing: for so he is of himselfe the same with the Father, and hath all things belonging unto him that the Father hath (excepting personall properties) and is no way inferiour to the Father, neither receiveth any thing from him, but giveth all things, as well as the Father doth. But yet as Christ is Mediator, he is not God simply, but God incarnate, or God made man; and so is said to receive of his Father, (in respect of his manhood) as himselfe confesseth, *All power is given to mee*, Mat. 28. 18. And *Paul* saith, *God gave him a name above all names*, Phil. 2. 9. *He received of his Father the promise of the holy Ghost*, saith *Saint Peter*, Act. 2. 33. And, *God made him both Lord and Christ*, ver. 36. and so God gave him this Revelation in this place.

If it be said, this makes Christ inferiour to his Father: for the receiver is usually inferiour to the giver. *Ans.* As Christ is God, he is equall with the Father; but as he is Mediator, God incarnate, and made man, he is inferiour; and receiveth of him. So much himselfe confesseth, *My father which gave them me, is greater than all*, Joh. 10. 29. And in the same respect, *Paul* calleth God the Father, *The head of Christ*, 1 Cor. 11. 6. And as Christ now sitteth at the right hand of his Father, being Mediator and ruler of his Church, he is inferiour to his Father, and receiveth his Kingdome from his Father, which he must give up at the last day, 1 Cor. 15. 24.

And here wee must consider in what manner God gives his Revelation to his Sonne. First, therefore Christ Jesus as he is Mediator, is made Lord of this Revelation; so as he may say, it is his owne right and royalty, being a part of that Law, whereby his Church is now governed, whereof he is Lord and King. Again, this Revelation was revealed unto Christ as hee is man, before it was ever knowne to any creature, man, or Angell, by reason of the union of his manhood with the Godhead.

In this which hath bene said, wee may observe, that this Booke of the Revelation is Christ his right, and belongeth unto him as his owne royalty and privilege. For as the Lawes in any Kingdome belong to the Prince thereof, and are called his lawes alone, and no mans else: So this booke, being a part of that law whereby Christ governeth his Church, is his royalty alone; for God gave it him, and he hath by his Angell sent it to his Church. And that which is here said of this Booke, must be understood proportionally of all other bookes of holy Scripture; Christ is made Lord of all, and they are all of them his royalties and possessions. And from hence will follow necessarily: first, That no man in the world hath authority about this Booke, or any other part of Canonickall Scripture: Indeed, Monarchs and Princes have great authority and preeminence in their dominions over all persons, and over all causes of men: but in the Church, they with all others owe homage unto Christ: there he hath

A the Canonickall Scriptures to be his lawes, whereunto every one must subject himselfe. The dispensation of the word, and the administration of the Sacraments, be his royall ordinances, over which none may dare to claime rule or authority: for so should the Scriptures have been given unto them for their prerogatives, as they were unto Christ; but God gave them unto him alone, and he disposed thereof, as pleased him. And therefore the Pope in taking upon him to dispense with the word, and to ungle the Sacraments, doth herein step into the roome of Christ, and so declare himselfe to bee that man of sinne, by seeking to rob him of that Princely royalty which belongs to him alone.

B Secondly, that the soveraigne power and authority of expounding Scripture, belongeth to Christ alone, and to none other with him. True it is, that man hath a ministry committed unto him, by vertue whereof hee may expound Scripture by Scripture: but men have no power of themselves, to determine of the proper sense of Scripture. And therefore the Popish practice, in giving to the Church absolute authority, to determine of the sense of Scripture, of themselves without Scripture, is flat robbery against Christ: for therein they give unto men that soveraigne power which is proper to Christ.

C Thirdly, herein we observe the excellencie of this booke, and of the whole Scripture of God: for all of it is the gift of the Father to the Sonne, and of the Sonne unto his Church. The like cannot bee said of any writings of men whatsoever, be they never so excellent: herein the Scriptures surpass them all. Whereby wee are taught, to esteeme more reverently of the Scriptures of God, than of all the writings of men in the world. Here then behold the sinne of this age, which more delighteth to speake and heare the sayings of men, in the publike ministry, than the glorious word of the ever-living God. Whereas the writings of men be full of darkness, of error and deceit: but the word of God is most holy and pure, and every way perfect, proceeding wholly from the Father of lights, unto his beloved Sonne, who hath faithfully dispensed the same for the good of his Church.

D To shew his servants the things that must shortly be done. These words contain the second, third, and fourth Arguments, whereby this Revelation is described, viz. the end of it, the persons to whom it must be shewed, and the matter which it containeth.

Arg. II. The end of this Revelation is, To shew, that is, to make knowne, and manifest things so come for the good of the whole Church. Whence we may observe, that the Papists erre exceedingly in debarring lay people (as they call them) from the reading of the Scripture: for the end of this booke is, To make manifest to Gods servants things so come. And who are Gods servants? Are the Clergie onely and not lay people

ple also? God forbid; the lay man is Christ his servant, as well as one of the Clergie. And therefore it is Gods will, that hee should learne to know and understand this booke, like one of his servants. And here consider, that if this booke of Scripture, which is hard and difficult, must be learned of the lay man, then much more must hee search into all other bookes of God, which be more plaine and easie, as the histories of the Gospell, Epistles, &c.

Arg. II. The persons to whom it must bee shewed; viz. *The servants of Christ*. This Revelation was not given of God for all men indifferently, but for all his servants; that is, such as alone as repent of their finnes, and truly beleeve in Christ for the pardon of them, and shew forth the same by new obedience. So he teacheth elsewhere; *The secret of the Lord is with them that feare him, and his covenant to give them understanding.* Psa. 125. 1. 4. *I the Lord will reve. to his secret to his servants the Prophets,* Amos 3. 7. And, *God will not keepe backe from Abraham, the thing he was to doe unto Sodome and Gomorrah, because I knew Abraham would doe his will, and teach his family after him.* Gen. 18. 17, 19. The consideration whereof should admonish us not to content our selves with the bare hearing of the Word, and outward participation of the Sacraments: but to labour principally to become Gods servants, and to shew the same by the practice of that which wee heare. Hereby shall wee receive instruction from the Lord, and grow in knowledge daily more and more: our understanding shall more easily conceive the will of God, for they that will doe the will of his Father, shall know his doctrine, Joh. 7. 17. Here then is the cause why most hearers after long teaching profit little, but remaine as blind and ignorant as ever they were, even their owne impiety; they live in their finnes, and labour not to become Gods servants.

Secondly, in this argument we may observe, that *Christ Iesus is true God*: for here he is made the head of the Church; every true beleever is his servant, and he his Lord: the Angels of the Churches be his Angels, as after wee shall see: which prerogative none can have, but hee that is true and very God.

Thirdly, in this argument are those confuted which hold that God would have all to be saved, and calls all men without exception. For if he called all effectually, then hee would offer the meanes to all: to wit, his holy word, that so they might be called to the state of grace. This he doth not: for as wee see, this booke is given not to all, but to his servants; and that which is said of this booke, is true of the whole Scripture. *The Lord shewes his Word,* (saith David) *not to all the world, but to Iacob*; that is, his people with whom he made a covenant, Psal. 147. 19, 20.

The fourth argument whereby this Revelation is described, is the matter thereof, viz. *things that must shortly be done*; that is, things to

come. Whereby in generall wee may observe a difference of this booke from the rest of holy Scripture, which treats of things present, and past; this being a prophetic of things to come.

The matter of this booke is described by two Arguments: first, by the necessity of these things to come, *They must be done*: secondly, by the circumstance of time when, *shortly or quickly*.

For the necessity of these things, they bee such, as *must needs be done*. So speaketh the holy Ghost elsewhere of sundry things to come: of offences, *It must needs be that offences should come.* Matth. 18. 7. of heresies: *There must bee heresies in the Church,* 1 Cor. 11. 19. and of afflictions: *Through manifold afflictions wee must enter into the kingdom of heaven,* Acts 14. 22. And, *They that will live godly in Christ Iesus, must suffer persecutions,* 2 Tim. 3. 12.

From whence I gather, that things which come to passe concerning Gods Church, and the enemies thereof, doe come to passe necessarily. This doctrine must be wel observed: for though it be the truth of God, yet the reason of man will not agree unto it: for some will say, If all things come to passe necessarily, then in their actions and proceedings men have no freewill: for necessity and liberty of will cannot stand together. *Ans.* They may; indeed constraint and mans free will cannot stand together, but mans will and unchangeable necessity may well accord: As I shew thus; In God there is a most absolute freedome of will, yet hee doth many things of necessity: as he willeth that which is good necessarily, (for he cannot possibly will that which is evil) and yet he willeth the same most freely. So Christ died necessarily; he could not but die, if we consider the counsell of God, and yet he died most freely; *For he laid downe his life of himselfe, and no man tooke it from him.* Joh. 10. 18.

It will be said againe, if things come to passe by necessity, then it is in vaine to use any meanes for the effecting of them; for Gods will must be done, doe we what we will. *Ans.* This is mans corrupt reason: these men must consider, that as God hath appointed what things must come to passe, so he hath appointed the meanes how they shall be effected: and seeing the Lord hath appointed as well the meanes as the end, wee should by this necessity rather bee induced to use the meanes, than any way moved to neglect the same. To make this more plaine, wee must know there is a double necessity: one is *absolute*, another in *part*. I call that *absolute necessity*, which cannot be otherwise possibly: as that God liveth, and cannot die, is omnipotent, infinite, &c. Necessity in *part* is, when any thing done is necessary onely, because it depends on necessary causes: as fire to burne is necessary, in regard of that order which God hath set in nature by creation; yet this necessity is not absolute: for fire would not burne, if God should please to change that order set in nature, as he did when the three children were cast into the

the hot fire oven, Dan. 3. 27. Now, whereas we say, *Things to come must necessarily be done*, it must be understood of necessity in part, and not absolute: for in themselves they be changeable and contingent, and necessary onely in regard of Gods decree appointing them, which is unchangeable: in regard whereof all things to come are necessary. And yet we may not think, that the unchangeableness of Gods decree doth take away freedom from mans will: it onely inclines the same to one part: and so disposeth, that man should freely will that to be, which God eternally hath decreed.

The second thing whereby the matter of this booke is set out unto us, is the circumstance of time, when these things must be done; *Shortly*, must bee well observed: and howsoever some things foretold, were not to be done till many hundred yeares after, which space of time might seeme very long, yet in two respects it is but short: First, in regard of God, *to whom a thousand yeares are but as one day*, 1 Pet. 3. 8. Secondly, in regard of men, to whom a hundred or two hundred yeares seeme but a short time when once they be expired, though before they seemed long.

This circumstance of time is set downe for two causes: First, to terrifie all carnall and carelesse men: for this booke foretelleth judgements, plagues, and destruction, for the enemies of Gods Church, which must shortly come upon them; which is a thing worthy our careful consideration in this seene age of the world, wherein men blesse themselves in their sinnes, without feare of Gods judgement, and say they shall have peace, though they walke after the stubburness of their owne hearts, putting farre from them the evill day; saying, spare thy leife, this shall not come unto thee. But shall the Lion rore, and the beasts not tremble? Yet the Lord threatneth his judgements, but men will not repent. Well, let us consider this, whether we be young or old, high or low, that Gods judgements are shortly to come; and let this bee a motive to raise us out of the sleepe of sinne, and of security. That which *Peter* said of false teachers, is also true of all impenitent sinners, unless they prevent the same by speedy and untainted repentance: *Their judgement long agoe is not farre off, and their damnation sleepeth not*, 2 Pet. 2. 1.

Secondly, this circumstance of time serveth greatly to comfort the servants of Christ, and to furnish them all with patience, and long suffering under any adversity, or distresse that may befall them in body or minde, or both. Indeed, many are brought to impatience and distrust by afflictions and crosses: But the child of God in such a case, must call to minde what the holy Ghost hath here set downe concerning the prophecies of this booke, which foretell deliverance for Gods Church, and for every member thereof: namely, *That they must shortly be brought to passe: yet a very little while, and he*

that cometh (for their deliverance) *will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10. 27.

Thus much for the matter of this Revelation: now follow the Instruments whereby the Lord doth convey the same unto his Church, which is the fifth argument whereby hee is described, in these words, *Which he sent, and shewed by his Angell to his servant Iohn*. Where two points must be observed, first, the action of Christ, which is the ground of their employment; secondly, the persons unployed therein as his instruments. For the first: *Christ sent and shewed this Revelation*. This action of Christ is noted by the holy Ghost for two speciall causes; first, to shew that *S. Iohn* did not pen and publish this booke rashly, but by calling and warrant from Christ. This teacheth us what must be our behaviour in all our actions, whatsoever wee take in hand: we must looke we have warrant from God for the doing of the same, by vertue of our calling; and without this we should not dare to enterprise any thing.

If this duty were practised, there would bee more confidence of the service and worship of God, and more care of just dealing, with men, than there is in the affaires of this life.

Secondly, this action of Christ is noted, to get more reverent acceptance, and greater authority to this booke: for which cause also it was sent by an holy Angell. If an earthly Prince should write his letter to his subject, and withall send it by one of his guard, no doubt the subject would receive it most reverently. Behold, this booke is the Epistle and letter of *Iesus Christ*, sent by his Angell for the benefit of his Church. What reverence therefore, and acceptance ought this to find? surely, a thousand fold more with every one, than the writing of any earthly Prince whatsoever.

The second point to be observed, is the persons whom Christ imployeth about this Revelation; and they be two: An holy Angell, and *S. Iohn*. For the first, it hath pleased God in all ages to use the ministry of Angels, as a means whereby he would convey the knowledge of his will unto his Church. The Law in mount Sinai was given to *Moses* by the ministry of an Angell, Act. 7. 38. Gal. 3. 19. And *Daniel* received the exposition of sundry dreames and visions by an Angell, Dan. 8. 19. and 9. 21. and 10. 14. And the seven visions which containe the substance of this booke, were shewed to *Iohn* by an holy Angell. But here wee must take heed, that we doe not like the Papists, ground here-upon the invocation of Angels, because they be about us, and bring unto us particular messages from the Lord: for before we may pray unto them, we must have from God a particular commandement to doe, and also a promise to be heard in that wee aske, or else our prayer is not offaith: but the whole Scripture affords no word of command, or promise for any such action, and therefore wee cannot doe it without sinne.

The second instrument here employed by Christ, is *Iohn*. This *Iohn* was sonne to *Zebede-*
us, and to kinsman to Christ; a blessed Apostle
 and Evangelist, which penned one of the Gos-
 pels, and the three Epistles which beare his
 name. This was that Disciple whom Jesus lov-
 ed. And to procure the more credit and reve-
 rence to this booke, he describeth himselfe by
 two arguments: First, by a property, calling
 himselfe *Christ his servant*: Secondly, by an ef-
 fect, or action, *in bearing record to Gods word*:
 vers. 2.

For the first, note that *Iohn* doth not call him-
 selfe that Disciple whom Jesus loved, nor the
 kinsman of Christ, which he might have done,
 being allied unto him, (for *Iohns* mother was sis-
 ter to *Ioseph* Christs supposed father, and cousin
 german to the virgin *Mary*;) *Iohn* had learn-
 ed of Christ himselfe, *that the hearers, and do-*
ers of the will of his father, were esteemed more
deere and nere unto him, than any bond of out-
ward alliance could possibly make them, Mat. 12.
 50. Luk. 11. 28. But he calls himselfe *Christs ser-*
vant, having yeelded up himselfe to doe his
 will: for herein stands the dignity of a Christi-
 an, to doe service unto Christ. The blessed Vir-
 gin had never found such favour with God, to
 have become Christs mother, if she had not with-
 all become Christs servant: She bare him in her
 heart by faith, as well as in her wombe by con-
 ception, or else shee had never beene saved by
 him. Hence we learne, that outward dignities,
 as bloud-royall, noble parentage, and such like,
 will nothing further a mans salvation: hee that
 would be acceptable unto Christ, must become
 his servant, by beleeving his word, and doing
 his will, having cast off the old man, which is
 corrupt, and put on the new man, which after
 God is created in righteousness and true holi-
 nesse. So *Paul* saith, *Circumcision is nothing, and*
uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the com-
mandments of God. 1 Cor. 7. 19. and, *henceforth*
be as I no man after the flesh, but if any man
bein Christ, hee is a new creature, 2 Cor. 5.
 16, 17.

Againe, consider in what regard *Iohn* is here
 called a servant of Christ: not onely for that he
 beleved in Christ, and obeyed his will, as all
 true Christians doe; but more specially because
 he was an Apostle, and did service unto Christ
 in the worke of his ministry, which was his
 particular calling. So *Paul* writing to the Ro-
 mans, calleth himselfe an Apostle and servant
 of Christ, Cap. 1. 1. And hee tendereth a reason
 thereof, vers. 9. Because he did service unto him
 in preaching the Gospell. Hence we are taught,
 that we must not onely shew our selves Christs
 servants, in our generall calling of Christianity,
 but especially in our particular callings and of-
 fices, after the example of Christs blessed Apo-
 stles. It is a good thing to professe service unto
 Christ, by hearing his word, receiving his Sa-
 craments, and keeping his Sabbaths: but unless
 therewithall wee shew the power of godlinesse

in our particular callings, our outward profes-
 sion is flat hypocrisie. This Magistrates, Mini-
 sters, husband, wife, parents, children, masters,
 servants, buyer, seller, and every one in his law-
 full calling should carefully observe: for unless
 in the particular duties of their speciall callings,
 (as the Magistrate in the duties of a Magistrate,
 &c.) they doe service unto Christ, their pub-
 like duties in religion shall never commend
 them unto God be it never so glorious, Mic.
 6. 6, 7, 8.

v. 2 Which bare record of the word of God, and of the testimonie of Iesus Christ, and of the things that he saw.

Here is the second argument whereby *Iohn*
 describeth himselfe; namely, by this action, or
 effect, *in bearing record to the word of God*: for
 partly by writing the Gospell, and partly by
 preaching, hee bare witness, and testified that
 the word of God was true. And because the
 word of God hath divers parts, the Law and
 the Gospell, he shewes in the next words, that
 he meanes especially the Gospell, adding, *and of*
the testimonie of Iesus Christ, that is, of those
 things which Jesus said and did. And that no
 man might call into question the truth of his
 testimony, he professeth himselfe to have beene
 an eye-witness of all those things whereof he bare
 record, saying, *and of all those things which hee*
saw. And here he allegeth his testimony to the
 Gospell, to prove himselfe a faithfull pen-man
 of this booke, that so it might have more reve-
 rence: for he which was faithfull in penning the
 Gospell of Christ, the same is also faithfull in
 penning this prophetic of the Church.

In this testimony wee may observe, that the
 doctrine of Gods word is an infallible marke
 whereby to know the true Prophet of God,
 and also to distinguish him from all false Pro-
 phets. God foretold his people, that *false pro-*
phets should come among them for their trial,
 Deut. 13. But how shall they discern them? Sure-
 ly by their doctrine: for though they shew
 wonders, yet if their doctrine tend to draw men
 from the true God to idolatry, they are false
 prophets, and should dye. When our Saviour
 Christ was asked, *By what authority hee did*
those things, Luk. 20. 2, he approved his autho-
 rity by the testimony of *Iohn*, (who bare witness
 of him, Joh. 1. 15) and confirmed the calling of
Iohn, by the truth of his doctrine, which (them-
 selves being witnesses) was from heaven, Luk.
 20. vers. 4, 5.

Hereby then we see the error of the Papi-
 sts, who teach, That the onely note of a true Pro-
 phet, is to confirme his doctrine by a miracle,
 and that he which cannot doe so, is a false pro-
 phet. But this note of difference is not true: for
 false prophets may confirme their lying vanities
 by signes and wonders, as we may see, Deut. 13.

And so doth Antichrist, 2 Thess. 3.9.

The sixth argument by which this Revelation is described, is the order and manner of propounding it: to the Church, and it stands in foure degrees: First, *God the Father giveth it to Christ the mediator, and head of the Church.* Secondly, *Christ giveth it to an Angell.* Thirdly, *the Angell conveys it to Iohn the Apostle.* Fourthly, *Iohn directed and assisted by the holy Ghost, delivereth it to the Churches.*

Now as this particular booke was, so no doubt all other holy Scriptures were conveyed to the Church: from whence we may observe; First, the constant love of God to his children, by this his speciall care in propounding and delivering his will and word to his Church.

Secondly, that this booke, and so all other parts of holy Scripture, are in their kinde most perfect and excellent.

Thirdly, that the Church of Rome blasphemeth in calling the written word of God a *dead letter, and dumbe Iudge, matching generall Councils with it for authorities*; and teaching, *that the universall consent of the Church is above Scripture for interpretation, and gives life and sense thereto; which otherwise of its selfe were but an incke letter and dumbe word.*

v. 3 Blessed are they which reade, and they that heare the words of this prophecie, and keepe those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Here is the seventh and last argument whereby this Revelation is described, to wit, the fruit, effect, and the profit which comes of it, even *true happinesse.* This prophecie concerneth the present and future state of the Church: the reading and hearing whereof, joyned with careful keeping, bringeth with it *true blessednesse*, that is, fellowship with God, and life everlasting.

In this Argument we may observe; First, the end of this booke, and so of all other books of Scripture, viz. *to bring men to happinesse, to fellowship with God, and life everlasting.* These things were written (saith S. Iohn) *that ye might believe that Iesus is the Christ, and so believing might have eternall life.* Joh. 20. 31. Again, *he declared to them the word of Christ, that by it they might have fellowship with God the Father, and with his sonne Iesus Christ,* 1 Ioh. 1. 3. In which fellowship is true happinesse. Christ himselfe saith, *Search the Scriptures, for in them you thinke to have eternall life.* Joh. 5. 39. And in this they differ from all other bookes and writings of men; for mens writings be penned either by the light of nature, and so be erroneous, and misse the end of true happinesse: or

else they be penned by them which have direction from the word, and so all the truth they have, leading to true happinesse, is borrowed hence; when as the Scriptures of themselves doe directly guide men thither.

From the consideration of this blessed end of holy Scripture, we may observe, first, That the opinion and practice of the Church of Rome is damnable, who barre the people of God from reading and hearing the Scriptures in their vulgar tongue. For in depriving them of this meane (as much as in them lyeth) they barre them of their salvation, and they doe directly crosse the purpose of S. Iohn, who doth therefore pronounce him blessed, that shall heare and reade this booke, with conscience to keepe and obey it, that hee might allure and draw all men to doe it with delight.

Secondly, wee are hereby admonished with all care and diligence to reade and meditate in Gods word. That place before named is most excellent, *Search the Scripture.* Joh. 5. 39. even as we would search for gold, or some precious thing which we would faine finde (so the word imports.) And he addeth the reason; *For in them you thinke to have eternall life.* The same is willdomes counsell, Prov. 2.4.

But some will say, I cannot reade, I was never brought up in learning, and therefore I cannot search. S. Iohn cuts off this excuse in the next words, saying, *Blessed is hee also which heareth the words of this prophecy.* As if he should say, though he cannot reade, yecif he heare, and keepe it, he is blessed. Here then is the duty of those which cannot reade the Scriptures, they must procure others to reade unto them, and by hearing and keeping, they shall be blessed.

Thirdly, by this scope and end of Scriptures, wee must learne to carry in minde this plaine difference betweene the bookes of God, and writings of men: Gods word bringeth a man which keeps it, to happinesse; but mans writings of themselves cannot doe so, unless they have light from the word of God. If this distinction were imprinted in our hearts, wee should not bee so delighted as many are, to heare or speake the words of God mixed with the words of finall men, specially in the public ministry. In former times the Lord forbade his owne people *to sow their field with mingled seed, or to make them garments of divers things, as of unnen and woollen.* Levit. 19. 19. And no doubt the same God doth mislike, that the pure seed of his word should be mingled with the sayings of erroneous and finall men, when the same is sowne upon the furrowes of mens hearts.

Secondly, in this seventh Argument we may observe the right manner and way of hearing and reading the Scriptures: a point worthy all serious consideration. It stands in two things: First, we must set downe with our selves a certaine end, why we reade, and heare the Scrip-

tures, which is, that wee may attaine to true happinesse standing in fellowship with God, and life everlasting. This end must be the motive to induce us to heare, and reade the word of God; and when this takes place in our hearts, it will be of force to make us read, and heare with care and conscience, which becometh Gods word. Secondly, wee must keepe in minde the things we read, or heare; so saith the text; *And keepeth the things which are written* which word imports, that by diligent observation we should lay them up in our hearts. This is a weighty duty, and seriously commended unto us of God: *Bind up the testimony, seal up the law among my Disciples*, *Isay. 8. 16.* And *Mary* is therefore commended; *because she kept in her heart the words of Iesus*, *Luke 2. 19. 51.* It was *David* practised; *have hid thy saying in my heart*, *Psal. 119. 11.* And heere tendeth Christs encouragement, pronouncing them rather blessed *which heare the Word and keep it than those which bare Christ, and gave him sucke*, *Luke 11. 27, 28.* And *Iames* calleth it the *ingraved Word*, *Iam. 1. 21.* because it should abide in our hearts like a Siens in a stocke, and never bee removed, but there grow, and fructifie unto life eternall.

Now because this is a point of great difficulty, and the want hereof the cause of so little profiting after much hearing and reading; I will therefore shew how (by Gods grace) in hearing and reading the word of God, a man may keepe the same in memory.

First, a man must learne the grounds or elements of religion, commonly called the Catechisme, for they are the foundation of all knowledge: without which a man shall never understand the Scripture to his comfort, nor keepe the same in memory. The Apostle saith, the Hebrewes were *dull of hearing* the deepe things of God in Christ, *because they had not well learned the first principles of the Word*, *Heb. 5. 11, 12.* This all ignorant persons should well observe, specially the aged, that they may finde in themselves the cause of their ignorance and dullnesse, even want of knowledge in the Catechisme. They thinke it a disgrace to bee brought unto it now they are old: but if they would not be ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth, they must lay in themselves this good beginning, and learne the principles of religion.

Secondly, we must not rush upon Gods holy ordinance, but before we either come to heare, or reade, with reverence prepare our selves thereto. Most men at this day use to prepare themselves before they come to the Lords table, and so they ought to doe before they come to heare the Word: for God ordained both for this end, to bee means to bring men to true happinesse: they differ onely in this, that the Sacraments are the visible, and the Scriptures the audible word of God. At the giving of the law, *The people that must heare it, were*

sanctified three dayes before, *Exod. 19.* And when they did offer sacrifice, offered the Pasche- over, both Priests and people, most be sanctified: and the same thing for substance, must we performe before we come to heare the word of God. This preparation standeth in two things: First, wee must put out of our hearts all by-thoughts, all delights, and cares of worldly affairs, and set our hearts (as *Exra* did) *to seek the law of the Lord*, *Exra 7. 10.* Secondly, wee must make our earnest prayers to God, that hee would open our eyes, that we may see his will soften our hearts, and make our cares attentive, as *Lydia* was; and also give us grace to embrace his word, and keepe it: For Christ is the only Doctor of the heart by his Spirit, without whose inward reaching wee can never learne unto salvation.

Thirdly, when we are about the holy exercise of Gods word, the frame of our heart should be thus disposed:

I. It must be an *humble heart*: for the Lord resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble, *Jam. 4. 6.* *Them that be meek, will he guide in judgement, and teach the humble his way*, *Plal. 25. 9.* A proud heart is so stuffed with self-love, that there is no roome for the word of God to lodge in. But the heart that is lowly in it selfe, through the conscience of sinne, that is the heart in which the Lord by his graces will take up his abode, *Isay 57. 15.*

II. It must be an *honest heart*: such as hath no manner of purpose to live in any one sinne whatsoever, but (though it feele corruption in it selfe) is resolved to please God in all the wayes of his commandments, and that continually: such an heart have the good hearers, resembled by the good ground, *Luke 8. 15.* As on the contrary, that is a wicked heart, which resolveth to cherish, though it be but any one sinne whatsoever.

III. It must be a *believing heart*. The old Jewes heard the Word, but it profited them not, because *they mingled it not with faith in their hearts*, *Heb. 4. 2.* where hee compares the heart to a vessel, in which there must bee both the Word, and faith: these two must bee mingled together, and then it will bee a Word of power, of life, and salvation. Therefore when wee heare the threatnings of the Law, or the promises of the Gospell, we must labour to resolve our hearts of the truth thereof. But incredulity, whereby men except against the Word, as not pertaining unto them, is the mother of forgetfulness. *The old world knew nothing of the flood, because they did not believe*, *Mat. 24. 39.*

IV. It must be an *hearing heart*, such as is pliable to the Word: *Sacrifice and burnt offerings* (saith *David*) *thou wouldst not, but mine eares hast thou prepared*, *Psa. 110. 6.* As if he should say, beside those bodily eares which thou hast given me by creation, thou hast bored new eares in my heart, so as I can by thy grace at-

tear, and listen to thy Word. And when God
saith, *Seeke ye my face*, this hearing heart will
answer, *I seeke thy face, O Lord, Psal. 27. 8. 9.*

Fourthly, asist wee have heard or read the
Word, we must become doers of the same, even in
the duties of our vocation. Wee see every man
more skillfull in the workes of his owne trade,
by reason of his daily exercise therein: even so
the constant practice of Gods word will make
us expert in it, and cause us to keepe it in per-
fect memory. And these are the right meanes
to become good hearers and readers of the
word of God.

Thirdly, this benediction pronounced upon
them that heare, read and keepe the prophecies
of this booke, serves to induce every childe of
God (as much as in him lyeth) to keepe in me-
mory the whole word of God, but specially
these prophecies of things to come, that con-
cerne the state of the Church; for therefore did
God reveale them, that they might be remem-
bered. When the Angell had told *Daniel* the
state of the Church, from his time to the com-
ming of Christ; he bids him, *Shut up the words,*
and seale the booke, till the end of the time, Dan.
12. 4. meaning, that hee for his owne comfort
should hide them in his heart. And Christ saith
to his Disciples, *When ye see the abomination of*
desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet: see
him that standeth, consider it, Mat. 24. 15. *Behold*
I have told you before; meaning things to come,
verse 25. shewing, That hee would have his
children to marke, and remember those weigh-
ty things that are foretold, concerning the
state of the Church.

For the time is at hand. Here is a reason of
the former benediction: for seeing the time of
the accomplishing of this prophesie is at hand,
and must shortly be fulfilled, therefore those
be blessed which read and keepe the same in
memory. And it is an answer to a secret ob-
jection; for they might have said, we need not
to read or remember this prophesie, seeing it
shall not be fulfilled in our daies; but he addeth,
The time is at hand; wherein they must be ful-
filled, and therefore it must be marked. These
words for substance were in the first verse;
where it is said, *The Revelation was of things*
that must shortly be done. And her they be re-
peated againe. Whereby hee would teach us,
That these prophecies containe weighty matter,
to be deeply considered, and earnestly thought
on. And *S. Iohn* repeats the same for two causes:
First, to awake the members of the Church out
of the sleepe of security, and make them stand
upon their watch continually: for though they
cannot fall into the dead sleepe of sinne, yet the
slumber of security may overtake them: the
wise virgins slumber, as well as the foolish,
Matth. 25. 5. and the spouse of Christ, the true
Church, considereth, that the sleepe, though her
heart waketh, Cant. 5. 2.

Secondly, to confirme and hearten the
Church, and all true members of Christ, a-

gainst the afflictions to come: for hence is the
common saying true, *He that is forewarned, is*
fore-armed.

Now in these words (*The time is at hand*),
Christ would teach us to observe, That what-
soever thing may befall the members of Christ
in this life, whether afflictions, temptations,
death, or the last judgement it selfe, all wil come
shortly. This consideration ought to take place
in our hearts, being of great use in our lives: as
to stay us from many finnes, so to move us to
doe all things with good conscience. And the
want hereof is the cause of much evil: *The bad*
servant boasts his fellows, because he thinks his
master doth deserve his coming, Mat. 24. 48,
49. *The old world went on in sinne, never regard-*
ing Noahs prophesie, and knew nothing till
the flood came and swept them all away, Mat. 24.
39. We should lay these to our hearts, and
alwayes thinke with *Paul*, *the Lord is at hand*:
The rather, because we have had the Gospel, and
peace, with all temporal blessings these eight
and thirty yeares: now the state of the Church
is interchangeable, one while peace, and then
trouble: so as it is like, this peaceable state will
not long continue, but wee must be tried. And
the time of our triall is at hand, for whatsoever
must befall the Church, will come shortly. We
must therefore prepare for trouble, and so wee
shall finde it the lesse grievous.

Phil. 4. 5.

v. 4 *Iohn to the seven*
Churches which are in Asia,
Grace be with you, and Peace
from him, which is, and which
was, and which is to come, and
from the seven spirits which are
before his throne.

Here beginneth the second part of the Pre-
face, to wit, the inscription of this vision, and it
hath two branches: First, a dedication, in these
words: *Iohn to the seven Churches which are*
in Asia. Secondly, a salutation, in the next
words: *Grace be with you, and peace,* &c. to the
9. verse. In the dedication, observe first, the pe-
nman that dedicated this booke: secondly, the
parties to whom it is sent. For the first, the pe-
nman is *Iohn*, who here againe repeats his name,
to shew and certifie every reader of this booke,
that he was without all doubt the true penman
of the holy Ghost, in writing this Revelation.
But though he repeats his name, yet hee doth
not adde any titles of honour, or commendati-
on, as he did in the first verse. Wherein he gives
us a true pattenne of modesty and humilitie,
which is never to speake in our owne cause to
our owne praise, but onely in cases of necessity,
when Gods glory may be advanced, and the
credit of our particular callings maintained.

Thi

This *Paul* practised, who often humbles himselfe, and calls himselfe *the least of all the Apostles*; yea, *the chief of all sinners*: yet when the credit of his Apostleship came into question, then he sets out himselfe, shewing he was a true Apostle, one of the chiefs, and above those which did fallie call themselves so, as we may finde in both of his Epistles to the Corinthians.

Secondly, the persons to whom hee wrote were *the seven Churches in Asia*: concerning them note two things: first, hee writes to Churches; secondly, to the Churches in Asia. For the first: why writes he to the Churches, rather than to the Church, seeing there is but one onely Catholike Church? *Ans.* The Church may be considered divers wayes; first, as it is the whole company of the elect, and so it is but one: secondly, as the same is parted into severall branches and companies, one part being in one Countrey, and another part in some other. Wherein also every severall congregation, professing the Gospell, is a particular Church. And so there may be many Churches, all of them being members of one Catholike Church: As the Sea is onely one, yet it consisteth of many parts, which taking their names of the Countreys whereto they adjoyne, are called so many particular Seas: as the English Sea, the Spanish Sea, French, Italian, Scottish Seas, &c. And of particular Churches must *Ioh.* be understood in this place.

Now *Iohn* chuseth rather to write to Churches, than to particular men: First, because the matter of this booke, concerneth the Church, being a Propheticall History, touching the state of the Church to the end. Secondly, because particular Churches, which bee true members of the Catholike Church, are the pillars and ground of truth, 1 Tim. 3. 15. And the Church is so called, not that her authority is above the Word: but first, because it is the treasure-house wherein the Scriptures are preserved from age to age, against the rage of Gods enemies. Secondly, because the Church gives testimony to the truth of Gods word. And thirdly, because it publisheth the truth of Gods word by vertue of that ordinary ministry which God hath ordained therein.

Secondly, in the dedication of this booke, among all particular Churches God directeth him to make choice of those seven in Asia; no doubt for speciall cause; First, because they were then most famous Churches, as the chapters following, and the Histories of the Church doe plainly shew. Secondly, that the calling of the Gentiles to the light of the Gospell, which long before had bene foretold, might be more evident: for here the Jewes are passed by, and the Gentiles first into.

Lastly, wee may here observe, That *S. Iohn* knew no prerogative of the Church of Rome above other Churches: for if it were the mother-Church, whereon all other Churches

should depend, as the Papist would have it; I would know of them why *Iohn* passed by it in the dedication of this booke, which containeth matter needfull for all Churches to know.

Grace be with you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. Here begins *Iohns* salutation of the seven Churches. Salutations be of two sorts, *Civill*, and *Religious*. *Civill* is that which men use ordinarily one to another, wishing health, welfare and such like. *Religious* is that which is peculiar and proper unto the Church, comprehending in it a benediction also. And such is this here used by *S. Iohn*. It may also be called *Apostolical*: because it is so usual with them in their Epistles. And they used it the rather, because it is correspondent to their ministry: which stood in two things; first, in *preaching*, which is the ministry of grace and reconciliation, the things here desired; secondly, in *prayer*, whereto belonged the duty of benediction, to pronounce a blessing upon the people: as did the Priests in their ministrations under the Law, Num. 6. 23. and our Saviour Christ with his Apostles, when they preached the Gospell; and as every Minister should doe to his whole congregation, before they depart. And this is also included in this salutation: for hereby they blessed those Churches to whom they did write.

But to come to the words, which be most excellent, and containe in them the summe of the Gospell. *Grace* in Scripture signifieth two things: first, Gods favour; secondly, some gift of God freely bestowed. Now here by *Grace* is meant not any particular gift of God, but the gracious favour and good will of God, wherby he accepts of some in Christ for his owne: for it is here opposed to peace, a gift of grace, and therefore cannot signifie the same thing.

Now marke, *S. Iohn* in this salutation begins with grace; because it is the foundation of all happinesse and of all Gods blessings: whatsoever we are, and all that we have, is of grace, our election, redemption, vocation, justification, and sanctification; our faith and repentance, and our preservation in them, both proceed from this fountaine of Gods free grace. It is the beginning, and the end of all; yea, it is all in all in the matter of our salvation: first, wee must have this, and then we may looke for all other blessings.

And Peace. Peace is taken sundry wayes in the Scripture; first, for welfare and good success in things of this world by Gods blessing. Exod. 18. 7. *Moses and Iethro* saluting, aske each other of their peace, that is, of his welfare; and so it is partly taken in this place. Secondly, for that unity and blessed concord which is in the kingdome of God, among Gods children: and so it is especially taken here. And in this sense it hath six parts, every one whereof is a most worthy blessing.

The first, is peace with God: which is, when

wee stand in the favour of God, reconciled to him in Christ Jesus, Rom. 5. 1. Secondly, peace with Gods Angels, for they guard such as be in Gods favour, and carry them as a nurse doth her child in her armes, *That they hurt not their feet at any stone*, Psal. 91. 11. and they rejoyce at our good estate. The third, is *peace with a mans selfe*, when his conscience will not accuse him, but excuse and cleare him, being washed in the blood of Christ: This is that *Peace of God, which passeth all understanding*, Phil. 4. 7. The fourth is, *peace with Gods Church*, notably prefigured by the peaceable habitation of wilde beasts and tame together, *as the Lion and the Calfs, the Wolfe and the Lambe, the child and the Cockatrice*, &c. Ilay. 11. 6. and plainly to be seene among the beleivers, Acts 4. 32. *Who were all of one mind and heart*. The fifth is, peace with the enemies of Gods Church, so farre as it is for the good of the Church, and the glory of God. So *Ioseph had peace in Pharaohs court*: so *Daniel had peace in the court of Nebuchadnezzar*: for when the three children were cast into the oven, we must not thinke that he did revolt unto idolatry, or hide himselfe: but being in favour in the court obtained privilege to bee excused. The sixth is, *Peace with all the creatures of God*: with the beasts of the field, fowles of the ayre, and fishes of the sea. This the Lord promisseth in the covenant that he will make for them with all his creatures, Hosea 2. 18. yea, *The child of God shall tread upon the Lion and the Serpent, and they shall not hurt him*, Psal. 91. 13. And this his peace stands herein, That by Gods blessed providence he shall find helpe and comfort from all Gods creatures.

In this place, whether we take peace for outward welfare, or for the concord of Gods Church, yet it is placed after grace, because it followeth as a fruit thereof: First, a man must bee in Gods favour, and then come all the blessings of peace unto him. This then is the meaning, *Grace be with you, and peace*: That is, I with you the favour of God in Christ, with peace, the blessed fruit thereof, even all outward welfare, and especially the concord of Gods Church, having peace with God, with his holy Angels, with his Church, with our owne hearts, with your enemies (as farre as may be for Gods glory) and with all his creatures.

Whereas S. Iohn wisheth grace unto the Churches in the first place; he would teach us, That the favour of God is to be sought for above all things; for the Apostles practice must bee our precept. So did David: *Many say, who will shew us any good: But Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me*, Psal. 4. 6. As if hee should say, Let the most of the world seeke what they will, as riches, pleasures, &c. yet my desires of thy love and favour above all, And oftentimes he calleth *God his portion, his rocke, and castle of defence, the thing that hee longeth for*; to shew, that all his joy was in

A Gods favour. And to it should be with us: but we little practise this, because wee bring from our cradles naturall presumption, which persuades us that wee bee in the favour and love of God. But we must cast off this false persuasion and take a new course; and labour first, to see that wee be out of Gods favour, lest sleepe, prodigall children in our selves, yea, the very firebrands of hell: and this, to see our owne want of grace, is the first step to grace. Secondly, feeling this want and misery in our selves, we must earnestly desire, and in our soules hunger and thirst after the love and favour of God in Christ, above all earthly things. Thirdly, we must by the hand of true faith lay hold upon the grace and mercy of God in Christ, propounded in the promises of the Gospell, and apply them to our selves particularly.

Secondly, after grace he wisheth unto them *Peace*: where note, the true order of seeking for the blessings of this life: we must not begin with welfare and prosperity, but our first and chiefest care must be, to obtaine the grace and favour of God. So Christ bids us, first, to seeke the Kingdome of God and his righteousness: for when we are in Gods Kingdome of grace reconciled to him in Christ, then all things needfull shall bee ministred to us, Matthew 6. 33.

This discovers the bad practice of most men every where, who in seeking the blessings of God, begin at the wong end. They will toile themselves in their callings to get wealth, honour, pleasures, and preferments; but the favour of God in Christ is not regarded: which notwithstanding is the true and right foundation of all outward welfare.

Here some will say, if God give me wealth, honour, and reputation, then he loves mee; for these be signes thereof. I answer, These bee no sure tokens of his favour in Christ, for those that be his enemies may enjoy them all, as Job 21. 7. to the 14. This David perceived, *how the wicked might flourish in their outward prosperitie, having more than heart could wish*, Psal. 37. 3. 7. *And yet they stood but in slippery places*. And therefore let no man herewith deceive himselfe: he that wanteth Gods favour in Christ, is but a cursed wretch, and a firebrand of hell, though he had all the world for outward things at his command. For all earthly things severed from Gods speciall grace, are but an heape of miseries. The wicked mans peace is *no peace*, saith the Lord, Ilay 48. 22. And the man that hath Gods grace in Christ, though he want all worldly benefits, yet he hath more than all the world without it: for hereby alone he is truly blessed and happy.

From him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. Here is set downe the first cause and author of these two, *Grace and Peace*, to wit, *God himselfe*, distinguished into three persons, *the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost*. The

Father

Father is noted in these words, *Which is, and which was, and which is to come.* The holy Ghost in these, *And from the seven spirits which are before his throne.* The Sonne in the fifth verse, *And from Iesus Christ, which is a faithfull witness, and first begotten of the dead, and Lord over the Kings of the earth: unto him that loved us, and washed us from our finnes in his owne blood, &c.*

Saint *Iohn* in the first place describes the Father by a distribution, which expresseth the true nature of God in these words, *Which is, was, and is to come.* In which he alludes to that, Exodus 3. 14, 15, where *Moses* demands of God, If the people should aske who sent him, what he should answer? The Lord bids him say, *Elioh, Iehovah hath sent me:* which two names serve to one end, namely, to expresse the nature of God. They are translated, *I am, and the Lord:* but these English words doe not fully expresse their signification. Yet *S. Iohn* expounds them here, making *Elioh* to signifie *him which is, which was, and is to come.* Which words of *Iohn* also in the original be more full in sense than our English tongue can well expresse. And yet they may be thus explained: *Grace and Peace be from him which is in himselfe, and of himselfe, a most perfect and absolute substance; which was a most perfect substance, and which is to come, a most absolute, perfect, simple substance and essence.* In these words are touched sundry weighty points:

First, touching the nature of God, namely, That God is a most absolute perfect substance and essence, which hath his being in himselfe, of himselfe, and from none other. *Paul* saith, *An Idols is nothing.* 1 Cor. 8. 4. that is nothing subsisting in nature, but a mere fond device of mans braine: But the true God is an essence subsisting, and that of himselfe alone perfectly; and herein differeth from all Idols and false gods.

Secondly, hereby wee see a difference betweene God and all his creatures. Every creature is a substance, as *Angels and Men:* likewise mans body and soule are substances: yet none of these have being of themselves, but from God, and of God. And yet we must not conceive, that the creatures are parts of God; though they have their substances and being of him; for then each creature should be God: for the communication of the divine substance cannot be without the divine nature: but Gods substance is indivisible, and incommunicable to the creature. My meaning then is, that God made the creatures out of himselfe of that matter which he created by his Word; and preserveth them being made. Which by the way, should teach us to returne our bodies and soules by obedience unto God, in lieu of thankfulness, endeavouring his glory all the daies of our life.

Thirdly, hence we learne, that the Lord is *Eternall* every way, without beginning or en-

ding: for it is he *which is, which was, and which is to come.* Angels and the soules of men, they be eternall; but not every way: though they be eternall in that they shall never die, yet had they a beginning. Secondly, they are eternall, not absolutely, but by participation; for God made them eternall: but the Lord is most absolutely of infinite eternall.

Fourthly note, he saith not from him which shall be, but from him which is to come, that is, to judgement: to give us to understand, That this eternall God is also a Judge of all his creatures, especially men and Angels. A point of speciall use, to move us to walke before God with all good conscience. If any shall flatter himselfe, thinking he shall be dead before that day come: I answer, it may be so. What then? thinkest thou thereby to escape his judgement? No verily: for this God commeth to judge thee particularly by death, and thereby to reserve thee to the judgement of the great day. Oh, that we would seriously thinke on this; it would bee a means to move us to repentance, by breaking off the course of sinne, and endeavouring to keepe a good conscience in all things, Acts 24. 16. And so shall we be ready to meet him at his coming, whether by death or judgement.

And from the seven spirits which are before his throne. These words commonly are expounded of seven Angels of God which stand before the throne, and minister unto him. But it cannot be meant of them: first, because *Grace and Peace* is here said to proceed from these seven spirits; but it cannot come from the holy Angels, which attend to minister before the Lord. Secondly, in this verse, which is a benediction, or a salutation of *Iohn* to the Church, the seven spirits are set before *Iesus Christ*, the second person of the Trinitie; but there is no reason nor respect, for which the Angels should be placed before Christ. The words are rather thus to be expounded, *And from the seven spirits, &c.* that is, from the holy Ghost. This Exposition is most agreeable to all the circumstances of the Text; and the holy Ghost may be called by the name of the *seven spirits* for two causes: First, because though hee be onely one in substance, yet he is *seven*, that is, manifold in regard of gifts and operations which proceed from him. Secondly, Saint *Iohn* here speaketh of the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost, as he saw them in vision: (for here he setteth downe one vision which hee saw) now he beheld the holy Ghost in forme of seven lights in a vision, Revel. 4. 5.

Which are before his throne. This he speaks by comparison taken from earthly Kings: which sitting in their thrones, doe there shew their glory and majestic. So Saint *Iohn* saw in vision God the Father sitting in his throne, and Christ at his right hand; and before the throne the holy Ghost. Which manner of appearance proveth not, that the holy Ghost is inferior to the

the Father and to the Sonne: but hereby is expressed the office of the holy Ghost: which is to be sent from the Father, and from the Sonne, to the Church, to enlighten the members thereof.

This then is the meaning of the words; *And from the seven spirits which are before the throne*: that is, Grace and peace be with you from the holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Father, and of the Sonne, who from them both is sent unto the Church, to enlighten, to sanctifie, and to governe the members thereof.

Vge.

First, hence we learne, that the holy Ghost is God: for looke from whom commeth grace and peace, that same is very God; but here grace and peace proceed from the holy Ghost; and therefore he is very God.

Secondly, we learne, that we may and ought to direct our prayers to the holy Ghost: for by whom grace and peace is given, to him we may direct our prayers: but grace and peace are given by the holy Ghost; therefore we may pray to him for them. This is the rather to be observed, because there be some which doubt whether we may pray to the holy Ghost: but they may as wel doubt whether he be God. They say we have no example hereof in Scripture. *Ans.* It is not true: for in this benediction *John* prayeth to the holy Ghost, saying, *Grace be with you, and peace from God the Father, &c.* For in substance it is as much as if he had said thus; *Thy grace and peace, O Father; and thy grace and peace, O holy Ghost; and thine, O Sonne, be with thy Church.*

Thirdly, in this description of the holy Ghost, by standing before the throne of the Father, we may observe, That the holy Ghost is a person subsisting, and not a quality. Some heretikes that acknowledge the God-head of the Father, denied the God-head of the Sonne, and of the holy Ghost: and concerning the holy Ghost, have held, That he is nothing but the vertue and qualitie of the Father. But this is most false: for as the Father is a substance sitting upon the throne; so wee see the Holy Ghost is a substance standing before the throne.

Fourthly, here we learne that the holy Ghost is a distinct person from the Father, and from the Sonne: for hee sitteth not in the throne, as doth the Father, nor sitteth at the Fathers right hand, as doth the Sonne: but standeth before the throne apart from them both.

v. 5. *And from Jesus Christ, which is a faithfull Witnesse, and first begotten of the dead, and Lord over the Kings of the earth: unto him that loved us, and washed us from our*

sinnes in his owne blood.

That is, grace and peace from Jesus Christ. Where Christ Jesus is joynd with the Father, and the holy Ghost, in bestowing grace and peace on his Church. Here some may aske, Why is Christ the second person in Trinitie, placed after the holy Ghost, the third person?

Ans. For two causes: First, in regard of his office: for Christ is to be considered two waies: first, as he is the sonne of the Father: secondly, as he is the Mediatour of the Church. As he is the Sonne of the Father, he is the second person in the Trinitie, and so before the holy Ghost in order. But as he is Mediatour, so he is after the holy Ghost: *1st John 6. 1. The first of the*

Lord is upon mee, hee hath sent mee to preach. Where Christ confesseth himselfe to be sent by the holy Ghost, as he is Mediatour, and in that respect he is set after him. Secondly, he is placed after the holy Ghost for the fitter progresse of the historie: for the manner of them which pen the Scriptures is, to set them in the last place, of whom they mane to speake most; as *Matth. 1.* the Evangelist setting downe the genealogie of Christ from *Abraham*, (though among them all was none so excellent as Christ) yet placeth him the last, because he intended to goe on with the history of his life and death. So *John* placeth Christ the last, because he purposed to make a large description of the person and office of Christ; which he could not so fitly have brought in, if hee had placed him before the holy Ghost.

From this fifth verse till the ninth, he describes Christ at large: First, by his offices; secondly, by the execution thereof. His offices are three: first, his Propheticall office, in these words; *Which is that faithfull witnesse.* Secondly, his Priestly office; *The first begotten of the dead.* Thirdly, his Kingly office; *And that Prince of the Kings of the earth.*

The execution of all his offices is particularly set downe in the words following, *To him that loved us, and washed us from our finnes,* and so forth to the ninth verse.

Touching his offices. In his Propheticall office we may note three things: First, he is a *witnesse*; secondly, a *faithfull witnesse*; thirdly, *that faithfull witnesse.* First, *he is a witnesse.* *John 5. 4. I gave him to be a witnesse to the nations.* By his witness-bearing is signified two duties of his Prophetical office: first, to reveale the will of his Father to his Church: secondly, to certifie the Church of the certainty of the same: and in these two stands his whole office Propheticall.

For the first, to reveale his Fathers will to the Church immediately, is his office as he is a Prophet: *for none hath seene God, but he which came from the bosome of the Father, and he hath declared him.* *John 1. 18.* Now Christ declares the Father, by making known his will: and that he hath done not only in his own person, while he lived on earth, but from the beginning by

all the Prophets, and so will doe to the end by all true Preachers; for in the Church the Father doth all things by the Sonne. When the Lord rained fire on Sodome, Gen. 19. 24. there *Iehovah* the Father rained downe by *Iehovah* the Son. So when the Covenant was made to our first Parents, it was made in Christ the promised seed. It was renewed to Noah, Abraham, and the Patriarchs, from the Father by the Sonne: for that *Iehovah* which appeared to Moses in the bush, Exod. 3. is by S. Paul called Christ, 1 Corinth. 10. The Prophets and the Apostles wrote as they were inspired by Christ, they were but his instruments to speake and write that he put into them by the holy Ghost. The matter, and the stile, and phrase of the Scripture, all came from Christ. Nay, when any particular man comes to understand the Scripture, this is by the working of Christ, hee opens his eyes. He gave the Disciples understanding as they went to Emaus, to understand the Scriptures.

The second duty of Christs Propheticall office is, to certifie men in conscience of the truth of his Fathers will. This certificate is two-fold; generall or particular: generall, when hee certifieth men in conscience, That the word written or spoken by man is the Word of God, neither nature nor learning can doe this, but it is proper to Christs Propheticall office. And for this he saith to his Disciples, *He will send them the comforter, which shall lead them into all truth*: that is, reveale Gods will unto them, and assure their heart that the same is true. Unto this assurance two things are required: the outward meanes, which is the Word it selfe: and an inward cause, which is the principall, to wit, the operation of the holy Spirit.

By this doctrine three points are resolved: First, this demand of the Papists, How a man can come to know, that the Scriptures read and taught, be the Word of God? *Ans.* We must here have recourse to this faithfull witness, and desue of him his Spirit, whereby the mind must be enlightened, and made able to discern the things of God: for no naturall man can doe it of himselfe. Secondly, we must have Christs testimony of Scripture in the Scriptures themselves: for in them hee setteth downe his testimony of the Scriptures.

But some will say, if Christs testimonie of Scripture be set downe in the Scriptures, why doe not all men know this testimonie, and receive it? I answer, the shining of the Sunne before a mans face is not sufficient to cause him to see, unless he have in his eyes the gift and sense of seeing; Even so, it is not enough for a man to have in Gods Word the testimonie of Christ, that Scripture is Scripture; but withall hee must have in himselfe the light of the Spirit, revealing that testimonie to his conscience: and then in reading or hearing the Scripture, in marking the manner and stile, the majestic and power thereof, he shall be able to see in every sentence

the testimonie of Christ, assuring his conscience that the same is undoubtedly the Word of God.

A second doubt resolved by this doctrine is this, *How can a man know the true Religion*, seeing the Turke, Papist, Jew, and Protestant have their severall Religions, and die in them? I answer, We must have recourse to Christ, this faithfull witness: and looke whereto hee gives his testimonie, that we must hold for true Religion. Now the Scriptures be as a letter sent from heaven to the Church, wherein Christ hath set downe his owne testimonie of the true Religion; which in tryall shall be found to be the Religion of the Protestant, and not the religion of the Jew, Turke, or Papist.

A third doubt to be resolved by this Doctrine is, *How to know the particular truth in matters of religion, when as sundry men professing the same religion be of divers opinions.* *Ans.* Still we must have recourse to this faithfull witness and Prophet of the Church, hee is the Judge of all controversies in Religion, and in the Scriptures, if we marke them we shall see his judgement. *Quest.* But if there be divers opinions about Scripture it selfe, and every one give a severall sense unto it, who must then be Judge? *Ans.* In this diversity of opinions, yea, of the Scriptures themselves, we must still have recourse to Christ, and that in the Scriptures alone: for although there were a thousand diverse expositions of one place; yet by the circumstance thereof, conferring it with other like places of Scripture, a man shall be able to finde out the true sense: for Christ in Scripture expoundeth himselfe.

The particular certificate of Christ belongeth also to his Propheticall office: and that is, to assure men in their consciences, that the promises of the Gospell, with all the benefits therein contained, as Justification, Sanctification, and life eternall, which in the Word bee generally expounded, doe belong unto them particularly: as to Peter, Iohn, &c. And this assurance (as the former) is principally wrought by the Word, not barely read, but preached, for therein by the inward work of the Spirit, the generall promises be particularly applied. This Paul imports, saying, Yee have the Spirit of adoption, which testifies with our spirit we be the sonnes of God, Rom. 8. 15, 16.

Hence we learne, that the doctrine of the Church of Rome, and of all others, which hold, That men cannot be assured of their salvation by faith, is wicked and damnable: for hereby they cut off a part of Christs propheticall office, wherein the dignity thereof doth consist, that is, to assure a man particularly of the truth of Gods promises unto himselfe. And in this hee differs from all other Prophets and Apostles which be witnesses: for they can witness onely outwardly to the care; but hee can speake and testifie to the conscience. Neither can any of them certifie any man particularly

ticularly, though their Ministry tend to that end.

Secondly, observe Christ is not only a witnesse, but a *faithfull witnesse*: and so hee is for these causes; First, because hee testifies not his owne will, but *his which sent him; namely, his Father*, Joh. 8. 26. Secondly, hee testifies all his Fathers will, neither adding thereto, nor detracting from it, Joh. 17. 4. Thirdly, because hee teacheth his Fathers will sincerely, in the same manner which he received it, not altering, changing, or depraving any part thereof: *As my Father taught me, so I speak these things*, Joh. 8. 28.

Thirdly, Christ is called that *faithfull witnesse*, to distinguish him from all other witnessers. The Lord hath sundry faithfull witnessers: as the Prophets, Apostles, the Church, nay the *Sunne and Moone*, Psalm. 89. 37. but Christ alone is that faithfull witnesse: First, because his witnesse is *authenticall*, sufficient of it selfe, and needs no other confirmation. The testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, is not of it selfe authenticall and certaine, but as it consents with Christs witnesse, and proceedeth from his Spirit. Secondly, hee is that witnesse, because he is the Lord of that house, whereto hee gives witnesse, namely the Church; but the Apostles and Prophets are but servants there, Hebr. 3. 5, 6. Thirdly, Christ his witnesse is inward: It speaks directly to the conscience, and there gives undoubted assurance: but the witnesse of men, as of the Prophets and Apostles is outward only; it comes to the eares, it never binds and assures the conscience of it selfe. And thus we see why he is called here, *that faithfull witnesse*.

For, whereas Christ the Doctor and Prophet of the Church, is called that faithfull witnesse, wee learne, That all Ministers of the Gospell ought to be faithfull witnessers: For every Minister of the Gospell, when he preacheth Gods word, is in the roome of Christ, and speaketh that unto the Church, which Christ would speake. That they may be faithfull witnessers, sundry things are required at their hands: First, they must deliver the testimony of Christ above all other things, and before all testimonies of man in the office of their ministry. This was meat and drinke to Christ, to *teach his Fathers will*. Eleazer Abrahams eldest servant, shewed his fidelitie, in that hee would not eat or drinke till hee had done his *Masters message*, Genes. 24. 33. Much more ought the Ministers of Christ to have speciall care of that weighty message committed unto them. Secondly, they must testifie all the will of God concerning matters of salvation, as faith, obedience, and a godly life: among men, we count him a faithfull witnesse, which testifies all the truth, and no more but the truth: So should it be with all Ministers, that be Gods witnessers to his Church. Herein *Paul* cleared himselfe, That he was free from *all mens blame*, seeing he

delivered the whole wil of God in matters necessary for salvation, and kept nothing backe. Thirdly, he must neither adde unto, nor take away, much lesse in any case deprave the word of God. And this is the true marke of a faithfull witnesse: For false Prophets teach some truth, but withall they adde something of their owne, or detract from Gods truth, something that they ought not. In the Church of Rome a man may heare things concerning morall vertues, handled soundly; but come to justification, and thereto they adde the merit of mens workes: and so they deale with faith, and repentance, matters of salvation: they take away one part, and adde another to the Scriptures: they hold the Creed in word, yet in deed they deny the same, as by their doctrine may appeare; and so shew themselves false witnessers. Fourthly, a faithfull witnesse must deliver the testimony of Christ in that spiritual manner which best becometh the majesty of God, and which hee best approveth; that is, in a plaine, easie, and familiar kinde of speech, that the conscience of the sinner may be touched, and the understanding of the simple may be edified. When the Word is otherwise delivered, as in the enticing words of mans wisdom, or for ostentation of wit, or much reading, though nothing be said but the truth; yet hee that so dispenseth it, is an unfaithfull witnesse, because hee corrupteth the Word by his vaine delivery. And this is the sin of this age in many ministers, who teach the truth indeed, but yet in such sort, as it may appeare, they seeke themselves, and not Gods glory, respecting little the edification of the simple, to themselves may be famous for wit, eloquence and learning. But these men make *merchandise of the Word*, like to huxiers, that by starching, blowing, and spicing, set a glosse upon their ware, to make seeme that which it is not: which is a grievous sinne, and such as will banish the Gospell out of our Land, unless it be reformed.

Secondly, this title of Christ, *That faithfull witnesse*, doth discover unto us the damnable practice of men in the sinne of unbelief: for Christ this faithfull witnesse hath given testimony to his word which is preached, that the same is true. And therefore they that believe it not, doe make Christ a false witnesse, and a liar, than which, what can be more horrible? and yet this is the common sinne of this age. For when the law is applied, who is afraid? and when the Gospell is preached, *Yet who beleeve our report?* Gods Ministers may say with the little children, *Wee have piped unto you, but you have not danced; wee have mourned unto you, but you have not wept*. This deadnesse of heart, whereby men are not moved with the Word preached unto them, is an evident argument of this fearfull unbelief, whereby they make Christ a false witnesse. This therefore should move us to consider

1 Joh. 1. 14.

Thence.

1 Joh. 4. 34.

Act 10. 25. 19.

Iohn 5. 16.

in our selves, the heinousnesse of this sinne, that so wee may strive against it, and labour to give free passage to the Word into our hearts, trembling at the Law, and rejoycing in the Gospell, that so each part thereof may have his perfect worke in us : For which end also wee may consider, That amongst those which shall have their portion in the burning Lake, unbelievers are set in the first ranke, Revelat. 21.8.

Thirdly, seeing Christ Jesus is that faithfull witnesse, which giveth testimony to mens consciences in particular of their salvation ; wee learne, That every one which professeth himselfe to repent, is bound in conscience to beleeve that the promises of the Gospell, and the benefits thereof, as Election, Redemption, Justification, Sanctification, and Salvation, belong to him particularly. And though this be against all humane sense and reason, yet seeing we have a faithfull witnesse, avouching the same, we must submit our selves unto his testimony : for by unbelieve wee greatly dishonour our witnesse-bearer, by denying truth unto his record. Here then wee see, it is no presumption (as the Papists say) to beleeve our election and salvation in particular : nay, it is an horrible sinne in every one that repenteth, not to beleeve it ; seeing Christ, a most faithfull witnesse, testifies the same to our consciences by his holy Spirit. Hereto also serve the Sacraments instituted by God, to seale up unto every worthy receiver, Christ and all his benefits. The Ministers giving of the Bread and Wine to them that truly repent, is as much as if Christ should say, Beleeve thou, and life eternall belongs to thee.

And the first begotten of the dead. In these words is contained the second office of Christ, namely, his *Priesthood* : the principall actions whereof stand in dying, in rising againe from the dead, and making intercession for us. And here Saint *Iohn* alludeth to the estate of the families among the Jewes, comparing Christ to the first borne : for as among them, hee which was first borne, and eldest of the family, had many privileges and preheminences above his brethren ; as Lordship, right of the Priesthood, and double portion, &c. so Christ hee hath his privileges ; yea, even Christ crucified, hee hath his prerogatives among the dead, above all that are dead. So *Paul* expounding this title, calleth him *the first borne, and beginning of the dead, that hee might have in all things the preheminance*, Col. 1.18.

The privileges of Christ dead, and buried amongst all the dead, are two : first, That he was the first that ever rose from death to life, and so to glory. Some indeed have risen before Christ from naturall death to naturall life, as *Lazarus*, but it was to die againe. And *Moses* and *Elias* assumed their bodies in the Mount with Christ in his transfiguration : But yet they laid them downe againe to the former misery of corrupti-

on for a time. But Christ Jesus rose from death to life eternall, never to die againe : and his resurrection was the first step into his glory. Secondly, that by his owne power he raised up himselfe, and by vertue of his Godhead, quickned his man-hood : the most godly man that is, or ever was, cannot doe so : but all the Saints of God are raised from death by vertue of Christs resurrection, through that mysticall union which is betwene Christ the head, and all his members ; by means whereof, the power of Christ his Godhead, which raised up his man-hood, is conveyed to all his members in their resurrection from death to life. And therefore is Christ called, *the first fruits of them that sleep* : because as the first fruits of corne which was offered to God, did sanctifie the whole croppe ; so Christ his resurrection did make acceptable unto God, the resurrection of all his members.

In this title is comprised a notable comfort for all Gods children against the immoderate feare of death. If *Iohn* had said, *Christ is the first borne of the living*, it had beene a great comfort : for then had he shewed, that the living Saints on earth were children in Gods family, having Christ for their eldest brother : but calling him the first begotten of the dead, here is a further comfort : the Lord sheweth hereby, what speciall regard he hath to the faithfull that be dead : for even then, when they be dead, they continue members of his family, and have Christ Jesus dead and buried, reckoned amongst them for their eldest brother. In regard whereof Christ hath a double right among the dead : first, of a King, secondly, of a Priest. The right of a King hee hath, to command his members to rise againe, and to enter into glory after him. The right of a Priest, whereby hee offered up himselfe in death a sacrifice acceptable to God for the sanctifying of the death of all his members : for by his death, hee tooke away the sting of death, and hath made unto them a sweet sleepe in the grave, as in a bed of downe, out of which they shall one day rise to eternall life and glory.

And Prince of the Kings of the earth. Here is the third title given to Christ, wherein his kingly office is expressed. Hee is called a *Prince of the Kings of the earth*, in two respects : First, as hee is God, the sonne of God, equall with the Father, and so is King together with the Father and the holy Ghost, governing all things with them by the same divine power, in heaven, in earth, and in hell. Secondly, as he is Mediator and Redeemer, God and Man, in two natures. In this respect hee saith of himselfe, *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth*, Mat. 28.18. And *Paul* saith, *God gave him a name above every name, at which every knee should bow*, even as hee is Mediator. And in this second respect hee is called, *A Prince of the Kings of the earth* in this place. Now Christ being a King, must needs have a Kingdom, which

1 Cor. 13.

Phil. 2.9, 10.

is not of this world, standing in the might and policy of a man, as earthly kingdomes doe; but it is spirituall, directly concerning the hearts and consciences of men, where he ruleth by his Lawes. And this is his privilege, which cannot be given to any creature, man or Angell, to rule and raigne spirituallly in the heart and conscience. This spirituall Kingdome of Christ is exercised, not by dint of sword, or force of armes, but by his holy word, through the work of the spirit: for he is a King, which carrieth his scepter in his mouth, even his Word, I say 11.4. *That is the rod of his power, by which he rules the heart and conscience, even in the midst of his enemies.* Psal. 110. 2.

Now Christ is here intituled, *Prince of the Kings of the earth*, in two respects: First, because hee (and hee alone) as Mediator, can give lawes to binde the consciences of men; yea, of the greatest Monarch in the world. Secondly, because hee hath soveraigne power over all Kings and Potentates, as well as over others, to save, and to destroy: for not only hath he power to make a law to bind their consciences; but also if they keepe it, to save them; if they breake his law, he hath power to destroy them, be they what they may be. *He hath the keyes of heaven and of hell, to open, and to shut at his pleasure.* Rev. 2. 7. Hee can, if hee will lead them to life, and save them: or else leave them to their owne minde, and to destroy them. Hence arise sundry instructions:

First, seeing our Saviour Christ is a Prince of the greatest Monarchs of the world, and is farre above them; wee must then with all feare and trembling, reverence his Majesty. Great is that reverence which men yeld to earthly Princes: oh then, what reverence should wee performe to him, which is Prince and Lord of all the Kings of the earth? Wee cannot conceive what honour wee owe unto him, which is advanced in the throne of all Majesty. And this our reverence wee must shew, by hearing his word, with *trembling and believing hearts*, as *Esay* saith, Chapter 66. 2. Wee must not dare to thinke, or speake of Christ, without great reverence: *At his name every knee must bow*: that is, at the consideration of the great Majestie whereto he is now exalted, every heart, even of the greatest Monarchs, should be touched with submission, awe, and reverence. If this tooke place in mens hearts, the name of Christ would not bee so prophaned and blasphemed as it is; in jesting sports, in cursing and swearing, whereby men tollie it like a ball, without all reverence to so great a Prince, as is the King of Kings.

Secondly, seeing hee is a King of Kings, wee must give him absolute obedience. Princes on earth must bee obeyed, so farre as they command in Christ, but he must be obeyed without exception, not onely absolutely and perpetually in all his commandments, but most willingly & freely (as it is said) *his people come freely in*

the day of assembling. Psal. 110. 3. Men will say they beleeve in Christ, as hee is their Saviour; but that is not enough, they must obey him also as hee is the King of Princes. Many perwade themselves: they have a good faith in Christ their Saviour, which little regard obedience to him, as their King and Lord. But they deceive themselves: for none can have Christ for their Saviour, which have him not for their Lord and master: neither doth that man beleeve in Christ, which will not strive to doe his will. And this our obedience must be shewed, in performing those duties which we heare, and learne out of his holy Word.

Thirdly, seeing Christ is King of Kings, all Princes must doe him service: for they be all inferior and subject to him, Psal. 72. 11. This is the counsell of the holy Ghost; *Be wise now O yee Kings, bee learned yee Judges of the earth: kisse the Son, & that is, inwardly reverence, and outwardly obey him.* This their homage must be shewed, in all the affaires of their kingdomes; they must frame their lawes after the lawes of Christ Jesus; they must shew mercie, exercise judgement, keepe Courts, Assizes; begin, end, and continue warre according to his commandments. And so in every thing, the direction of Christ should be their guide, as it was to *David*, *thy lawes, O Lord, have been my Counsellors.* Psal. 119. 24.

Fourthly, if Christ be soveraigne King, then all earthly Princes are bound to plant, and establish in their Kingdomes the religion of Christ, else how can they shew themselves his loyall subjects? Many imagine, that earthly Princes may admit unto their subjects any religion, for the peace of the civil State: but this is against the equity of Gods word in this place: for wherein can earthly Princes doe homage unto Christ, if they maintaine not his religion? And their duty in this behalfe is signified plainly in the parable of the marriage. For when they that were bidden did not come, the King sent forth *his servants* (which may be understood of the Christian Magistrates) *to compell men to come to the marriage*: for that is the Magistrates duty, in respect of the outward profession of true religion.

Fifthly, seeing Christ alone is Prince of the Kings of the earth: hence we learne, that Kings on earth in their dominions, are soveraigne governours over all persons, and in all causes next under Christ: he is King of Kings absolutely, and they are under him alote, and have no other head but him. Whereby we see the presumption and arrogancy of the Pope and sea of Rome in claiming Supremacie above all Kings and Princes in the whole Church upon earth. This is a device of the Devill, and high treason against Christ: for hereby hee is robbed of his royall prerogative, to be the only Prince of the Kings of the earth.

Lastly, seeing Christ is King of all Kings, we must not be discouraged, when wee bee called

to ſuffer any affliction for his truth : let the tyrants of the earth rage and bend their force to hurt us, yet wee have a King above them all for whom we ſuffer: he is their King, he can ſtay and bridle them, and if he pleaſe, confound and bruite them in peeces. They cannot doe any thing, but that which he permits; for hee *rules in the miſſi of all his enemies*, *Pla. 110.2.* he can break them in peeces like a potters veſſel. Thus much of the offices of Chriſt.

The ſecond part of Chriſts deſcription is by the execution of his offices, which conſiſts in four works: The firſt contained in theſe words *Unto him which loved us* : the ſecond in theſe, *which waſhed us in his blood* : the other two, in the two ver. which follow, *viz. 6. and 7.* For the firſt, *which loved us*, that is, *Iohn* and the Churches of *Asia*, and by proportion, all other Churches, being parts of the true Church. The love of Chriſt hath three degrees: the firſt is a general love, whereby he loves all his creatures, approving the ſame to bee good, as they are his by creation. The ſecond is the love of mankind, in that hee was content to become a Redeemer for mankind after their fall, and not for any other creature; no not for the Angels, which fell as well as man: who therefore remaine without all hope of ſalvation. The third and principall, is that whereby hee loves his elect and choſen children; which is, *that ſpeciall favour, whereby he accepts of them to life everlaſting*. This third degree hath two parts : firſt, it is taken for his purpoſe to love : as when he ſaith, *I have loved Jacob, and hated Eſau*, *Rom. 9.13.* Secondly, for the act of loving; which is the declaration of his purpoſe by ſpirituall benefits: *1 Joh. 3.1. Behold, what ſingular love God hath ſhewed unto us, that we ſhould be called the ſonnes of God*: noting the declaration of his love in the gift of adoption. So in this verſe, by the love of Chriſt unto his Church, is meant the actuall declaration of his ſpeciall favour, in accepting them for his children, and beſtowing many ſingular bleſſings upon them.

Whereas *Saint Iohn* placeth this in the firſt place of all the benefits of Chriſt, *That he loved us*; he would teach us, That this ſpeciall love is the very ground of mans redemption; which excludeth all fore-ſcene faith and works from being motives of mans election in Gods eternal counſels, and ſo proportionally, all fore-ſcene ſinnes, from being motives in God of mans reprobation.

It may be objected. The love of God as alſo of man, reſpects a thing as it is good : firſt, the thing muſt bee good, and then it is loved: and ſo in mans redemption, God firſt foreſees their goodneſſe, and therefore chuſeth them. *Anſw.* There is great difference betweene the love of the creature, and of the Creator. The love of the creature follows the goodneſſe of a thing : becauſe hee ſeeth it is good, therefore hee loves it. But God the Creator firſt loves the creature before it be good : and hence it comes, that it is

A good, becauſe he loves it.

Secondly, whereas *Saint Iohn* and all the Churches of *Asia*, as other true Churches doe belevee, and are aſſured that Chriſt loves them (for that *S. Iohn* taketh for granted) this ſhould move all men to have this care, to labour above all things to bee rooted and grounded in the love of God, ſeeing hee placeth that in the firſt place. This is a principall thing, wherein the Apoſtle would have the Ephelians rooted and grounded: and therefore praith, *That with all Saints they may be able to comprehend, what is the breadth and length, depth and height thereof*, *Ephes. 2.17,18,19.* This we doe when wee are aſſured in heart and conſcience, by the working of Gods ſpirit, that he loves us in Chriſt. So that he which denies unto us the aſſurance of Gods love in Chriſt, takes away the very ground of our ſalvation.

Now that wee may have this aſſurance of Gods love, wee muſt in all good duties to God and man draw neere to God with our hearts, keeping a good conſcience in all things, and then will God draw neere to us. *If any man love me* (ſaith Chriſt) *he wil keep my words, and then my Father will love him, and we wil come in unto him, and dwell with him* : *Joh. 14.23.* meaning by the holy Ghoſt; which ſhall ſhed this love into our hearts, *Roman. 5.5.* cauſing us to increaſe in the feeling thereof, as we grow in faith and obedience towards him.

And hath waſhed us from our ſins in his blood. Here is the ſecond benefite and action of Chriſt to his Church. Where firſt of all the very phraſe *hath waſhed us*, doth import the very ſinnes of men are as filthy ſpots in their ſoules : and that himſelfe and this Church of God were touched with a ſerious conſideration of their vilenefſe, by reaſon of their ſinnes : for waſhing preſuppoſeth former filthineſſe and pollution. Thus did *David* moſt ſenſibly feele his owne filthineſſe, and ſee his miſerable eſtate, when he deſired the Lord to waſh him thorowly : confeſſing thereby, that his ſoule and body were ſo ſoulely ſtained, and polluted with ſinne, that once waſhing was not enough : but faith hee, Waſh me againe, and againe, rince, bathe, and ſwill me in the blood of Chriſt, till I be purged and cleaſed from all my ſinnes. And this ſame affection ſhould bee in every one of us; wee ſhould labour that our hearts may bee touched with a lively ſenſe of our vile eſtate by reaſon of our ſinnes, which make both body and ſoule moſt ugly and filthy in Gods ſight : and that the ſtaine hereof is ſo deeply ſet in our ſoules, that wee can never bee cleaſed, but by the waſhing of Chriſt his owne hand, and that in his owne hearts blood : yea, that one waſhing will not ſerve, but wee muſt be rince and bathed therein. For untill ſuch time as this conſideration doe in ſome meaſure take place in our hearts, it is not poſſible that wee ſhould loath ſinne as wee ought : or come to this comfortable aſſurance of Gods love,

love, that hee hath washed away our finnes in his blood: for this humility in our finnes by reason of our finnes, is the beginning of all true grace and comfort. Now this worke of Christ in washing us from our finnes, doth comprehend a double benefit.

First, the remission of our finnes, whereby the guilt and punishment due to them is taken away. Secondly, the mortification of sinne, whereby the corruption of sinne is removed and abolished. And we must observe, that *S. Iohn* propounds this benefit generally without limitation, saying, *Which washed us from our finnes*. That is, from all our finnes; to give us to understand, that if any beleve truly in Christ, he hath pardon of all his finnes without any restraint or limitation, either of number or qualitie, bee they never so many, or never so great.

By his blood. How can blood wash away filthinesse? nay, it rather defiles a man. *Ans.* This washing stands not in the substance of Christs blood, but in the merit thereof: for that substance of blood which was shed, is lost, and we know not what is become of it, whatsoever the *Papists* say: but the merit thereof remaineth still. And Christs blood deserves to purge away sinne, rather than any other mans blood, as of *Peter, Iohn, &c.* because his blood was the blood of God, (not of the God-head) but of him who was both God and man. For the man-hood of Christ was received into the union of the second person. And so it may be called the blood of God, as *Paul* saith, *God redeemed his Church by his blood*, that is Christ, God incarnate. And so it being the blood of him, that is God, is more meritorious than the blood of any creature whatsoever. Besides Christ was appointed by God to be a publike person in the worke of Redemption, and in his death and passion hee stood in the roome and stead of all his elect; so as when his blood was shed, their blood was shed, because it was shed for them. But the blood of any other private men cannot answer for any beside themselves, because it is shed onely for themselves. Then damnable is the doctrine of the *Papists*, who hold the blood of Martyrs, can merit for others, being applied unto them: for seeing they be but private men, and suffered in their owne persons only, they cannot profit any other thereby.

By blood we must understand the passion of Christ, a part for the whole, and withall his fulfilling of the Law upon the crosse: for in his suffering he fulfilled the law, & in fulfilling the law he suffered. These two cannot bee severed, save only in thought. And to this word contains the whole obedience of Christ, whereby hee procured the remission and mortification of our sins. Here then wee see two notable benefits of Christ unto his Church, his love, and the washing away of finnes: which *Saint Iohn* sets down to move the Churches with reverence and diligence to reade, and delight in this booke. All of

As will say, we receive the love of us, and hath pardoned our finnes in Christ: why then doe we not shew our love againe to him, by hearing and reading his worke, set downe in this, or any other Booke of Scripture, and by yeelding answerable obedience thereto? why then doe we not offer up our selves, soules, and bodies, to serve him, as the *Apottle* requires, *Roman. 12. 1.* by way of recompence for his mercies and love shedd out unto us? But alas, that is more common which is most shamefull, to turne Gods grace into wantonnesse: for when men say God loves them, and hath washed away their finnes, yet they rebell against him: when as these two benefits are here recorded to bee inducements of continuall love, and obedience to his holy word.

v. 6 And made us Kings and Priests to God even his father: to him bee glorie and dominion for evermore, Amen.

In these words is set downe the third worke and benefit of Christ, bestowed on his Church, and on every true member thereof. For the better understanding whereof, wee must consider in them foure points: First, the dignity and excellency of all true members of Christ, *They are Kings and Priests*. Secondly, when they be made Kings and Priests in this life, noted by the phrase of speech, *hath made*: Wherein hee speaketh of the Church on earth, and useth a word that signifieth the time past. Thirdly, the manner how they become Kings and Priests; they are not so borne, but Christ hath made them such. Fourthly, to whom they be made such, *to God even the Father*.

For the first. The dignity of all true beleev-ers hath two heads; first, *They be kings*, secondly, *Priests*. They are called Kings, not in regard of an earthly kingdome, for usually the condition of most beleev-ers on earth is base and contemptible: but in regard of a spirituall kingdome, the Kingdome of Heaven, whereto the Lord gives them right, title and interest, in, and by *Iesus Christ*. So our Saviour Christ speaketh to his Disciples: *Feare not little flocks, it is your Fathers will to give you the kingdome*. And againe, *Behold I give unto you a kingdome*. Now the faithfull are Kings in these respects; first, because by Christ, they be Lords and Conquerors of all these enemies, sinne, Satan, the world, death, hell, and their owne flesh. Secondly, because in, and by Christ, they are partakers of the glory of Christs Kingdome and salvation: for they receive of Christ grace for grace, and so answerably glory for glory, and felicity for felicity. Thirdly, because they be made Lords of all things in heaven and earth (except good Angels, and the Church.) *All things are yours*, whether

Act. 10. 12.

1 Ioh. 3. 1.

whether it be Paul, or Asaph, or Ephraim, or the world, or life, or death, whether things present, or to come, even all are yours, and are Christ.

Quest. But if Christ be King, and all his members Kings, how doe they differ? *Ans.* In two points: First, Christ is the Sonne of God by nature, and so a King by nature, having the right of the Kingdome of heaven by inheritance; but the members of Christ are Sonnes of God by adoption in his sonne, so that our right to that kingdome is not by nature, but by grace. Secondly, Christ is an universall King over the Angels in heaven, the Church on earth, and all other creatures wheresoever; his regiment is absolute in the hearts and consciences of men, and hee can by his word binde all things: but true beleevers be not universall Kings, for they have no superiority above good Angels, and the Church. Neither are they absolute Kings as hee is, nor of themselves; but by Christ Jesus, and as they participate with Christ in his kingdome.

The second part of the dignitie of true beleevers stands in this, That they be Priests consecrated and set apart by Christ, to the worship and service of God here in this life in spirit and truth, and in the life to come, to serve and praise him eternally. Christ he is a Priest, so are all his members; but yet there is difference. First, Christ he is an eternall and reall Priest of the new Testament, which offers up a true, reall, and externall propitiatory sacrifice to God the Father for the finnes of mankind. As for beleevers, they are not reall and externall Priests, but spirituall, offering up spirituall sacrifice unto God. As when any member of Christ gives an Almes, hee offers a sacrifice to God, not a corporall sacrifice, though the thing given be a bodily substance: but it is every way spirituall: for to offer a reall outward sacrifice in the new Testament, is proper to Christ. Again our Saviour Christ he is a perfect Priest, and offers up a perfect sacrifice, but wee being imperfect, doe offer up imperfect sacrifices, tainted, and blemished with sinne; yet accepted as perfect, for the worthinesse of Christs sacrifice.

The second point to bee considered, is the time when beleevers are made Kings & Priests; namely, *in this life*. For as in the entrance into an earthly kingdome there bee degrees: First, to have good right and title to it; secondly, to get possession of it, which is more than title onely; and yet if a mans title be good, though he want possession, he may be called a King: So is it with Gods children, they have the right given them of the kingdome of heaven in this life, and in that respect are Kings. Further in the possession of a kingdome there be two degrees: first, the entrance upon some part: secondly, the full and perfect enjoying of all. Now every true beleever begins to enter possession of the kingdome of heaven in this life: for it stands ⁱⁿ righteousness, joy, and peace: and they which have these things in their hearts, have the king-

dome of God began in them in this life. But the full fruition and perfect possession of this kingdome, is reserved to be given at the end of this life, and at the day of judgement. And as true beleevers be *Kings* in this world, so likewise be they *Priests*, in offering spirituall sacrifice to God, and dedicating and consecrating themselves to his service all the dayes of their life.

The third point is, the manner how true beleevers become kings and priests: they are not such by nature, neither doth this dignitie come by descent in the blood or birth-right, or by any other privilege they have from man, but onely from Christ Jesus, who by divine calling makes them spirituall Kings and Priests, like as under the law, by solemne election and ordination, some were made earthly kings and priests. Now in this calling of Christ, two things concur: First, Christ giveth his members right to his owne kingdome and priest-hood: yet not so that they can execute the regiment sustained by Christ, or performe the office of his Priesthood; but because they have right in part to these offices, and the benefit of them both redoundeth to them wholly. And this right they have, is brought to passe in the covenant of the Gospell: wherein they are bound to beleeve in God through Christ: and God is bound againe to give unto them Christ with all his benefits: among which, these two must be accounted: for indeed, every thing which belongs to Christ as hee is mediator, is conveyed in some sort to every true beleever. Secondly, in this divine calling, Christ endues all his members with gifts and graces, whereby they are enabled for the duties of spirituall Kings and Priests unto God. For as Christ is anointed, so are all his members. So the Psalmist speaking of Christ saith, *Hee is anointed with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellows*, Psal. 45. 7. Therefore his fellows (that is, beleevers) are anointed with the same oyle, though in lesse measure. And Saint John saith; *Ye have received the anointing*, 1 John 2. 27. Yea, God himselfe chargeth wicked men *not to touch his anointed*, Psal. 105. 31. meaning not onely Patriarchs, Kings and Prophets, but all true beleevers, who are then anointed, when they are indued with the gifts of the same spirit, in some measure, wherewith Christ in his manhood was filled above measure.

The fourth point: To whom hath hee made them Kings and Priests? *Ans.* To God, even the Father. This is added for speciall cause, to prevent that carnall liberty which mans nature might claime from this spirituall royalty: for men might say, If all beleevers bee Kings, then may they live as they list: but their words (unto God) doe shew, that the right of their kingdome, with the offices of their priesthood, are all bee referred to the honour and praise of God, unto whom they are made Kings and Priests.

Lastly, he addeth, *Even his Father*, by way of exposition, to shew more particularly to which of the persons they are first of all made Kings and Priests: for the title God, must not here be taken absolutely for the divine name, but with restraint to the first person, the Father: unto whom all true believers are made kings and priests in the first place, and from the Father to the Sonne, and from them both to the holy Ghost. And the first person in Trinitie is here named above the rest, not as being above them in degree of honour, for so they be equal: but because he is the first in order, and the fountaine of the Godhead, which is conveyed from him to the Sonne, and from them both to the holy Ghost.

Thus much for the meaning of the words: Now follow sundry uses, from the consideration of these two dignities of believers. And first, their kingly dignitie affordeth matter both of instruction and consolation.

Instruct. I. Whereas all true believers are made true kings in this life; hereby every one that professeth Christian religion is taught, to carry himselfe as an enemy to all those that are of the kingdome of darknesse; as namely, to sinne and Sathan, to the flesh and the world, even thorow the whole course of his life: for by calling every Christian hath title to the kingdome of heaven. What affinity then can wee have with those that bee both enemies of this kingdome, and of Christ himselfe, that made us kings? Now that we may so carry our selves, as enemies, wee must doe these three things; First, have care to keepe guard, and defend our selves as kings against all our enemies, sine, Sathan, our owne flesh, and the inticements of the world. As kings protect their kingdomes, so must we labour to keep our soules & bodies, and every facultie and part of them, our wils, affections, thoughts and inclinations, from the power of sin: *He which is borne of God, keepeth himselfe* (as with watch and ward) *that the evil one touch him not by the assaults of sinne*, 1 Joh. 5. 18. Secondly, we must make warre continually against Sathan, sinne, our owne flesh, against all our spirituall enemies, and all the inticements of the world: we must make no truce with them, because they will never be reconciled unto us, so long as we have interest unto the kingdome of heaven; and if we yeeld to them, wee lose our kingly dignitie, and become their vassals, and bondslaves. Thirdly, we must labour to kill and destroy these our enemies as much as possibly we can, by that power we have from Christ our head, and like valiant kings seek to have the bloud of these enemies, and them day to day thrive to vanquish Sathan, his power and might, to overcome the world, and to weaken our owne corruption.

Instruct. II. If in this life we be kings, then must wee become Lords over our selves, and keepe in subjection unto God our wils and affections, and the secret thoughts and inclina-

tions of our soules. We must not looke for rule over earthly kingdomes; but herein stands our kingdome in this world. That wee can subdue our corrupt affections, and keepe our bodies and soules in obedience unto God. If a man were Prince over the whole earth, and yet could not rule himselfe, he were but a poore Prince, nay, he were no Prince indeed. But though a man have not so much as a foot of ground in this world, and yet can rule and master himselfe, his thoughts and affections, this man is a valiant prince, and one whom Christ hath consecrate to be king in heaven.

Instruct. III. Seeing we be kings, we must doe the dutie of Judges: for to him that is a king, belongeth soveraigne judgement. In the day of judgement, the *Saints shall judge the world, and Angels also*: but wee must be Judges in this world. And yet here wee can neither judgements or Angels, but we must be our owne Judges. Wherefore, as Judges summon, arraigne, condemne, &c. so must we examine our selves, call our selves to account, and as guilty persons accuse and condemne our selves for our finnes: acknowledging wee bee worthy to be cast into eternall damnation with the Devill and his Angels: and withall plead for pardon, and approach to the throne of grace, and forgiveness in Christ: and in this wee shew our selves upright spirituall Judges, and by this means we shall bee free from the judgement to come.

Instruct. IIII. If we be kings by Christ, we must carry our selves as Kings courageously, and constantly in the afflictions and miseries which wee shall suffer for Christs sake. For herein among the rest, stands the royaltie of a king, that hee beares with a valour and courage all the troubles which befall him. Hence it is, that S. Peter exhorts us to rejoyce in afflictions, *because wee are partakers of Christs sufferings*, 1 Pet. 4. 13. and so are made conformable unto him that was consecrate the Prince of our salvation through afflictions, H. b. 2. 10.

Instruct. V. Seeing wee bee spirituall kings, wee must above all things labour and seeke to have our part in the kingdome of Christ, and in his righteousnesse. A Christian must not have his heart glewed & fast tied unto the things of this world, it is against his calling; but he must so use this world, as though hee used it not. If a king should lay downe his crowne, and goe and become a shepherd, or of some manuall trade, all men would marvell at it: So it fareth with them that professe themselves to be Christians, and yet bend their wits and endeavours wholly for these worldly things: they doe as it were cast aside their kingly crowne, and abase themselves to slavish bondage. But wee must ever after have our hearts fixed in heaven, striving to come to our inheritance there.

Instruct. VI. Seeing all the true members of Christ be kings and princes; this should be an inducement to all backward persons to love
and

1 Cor. 6. 2, 3

and embrace true religion. In these carelesse dayes Religion is accounted pricentious, and the profession thereof made matter of reproach. But this ought not to be so, seeing that by it we come to have right and interest unto the kingdom of heaven, and to the Lord of all creatures. And why should wee not esteeme the Gospell preached as a most precious jewell, seeing that we which are vassals of Sathan, and firebrands of hell (as all men are by nature) become thereby the members of Christ, yea kings & princes to God? Yea verily, the consideration of this should make the Ministers of the Gospell to joy in their callings; and to take all paines to preach the Word, seeing by it men become of vassals of Satan, the true members of Christ, and heires of the kingdome of heaven. In this world it is counted great honour to consecrate and establish one in an earthly kingdome. What a blessed and honourable thing then is this, to consecrate spirituall Kings for the Kingdome of heaven? And this is done, when by the Word preached, men are converted and brought to unfeigned repentance for their sinnes, and to true faith in Christ Jesus.

Thus much for the duties. Now follow the consolations to every true beleever onely. It is an heauey crosse, which breeds much anguish to the soule, to be in povertie and contempt among men; yet herein may the childe of God stay his heart, and lessen his griefe, by considering that even in this state of miserie, he is a King unto God; though hee seeme base to the world: yet it appeareth not what he shall bee, for he is heire to the kingdome of heaven. If a man bee in sicknesse, he must consider it is but Gods messenger, to call him out of this world to the full possession of the joyes of his kingdome. If he be in trouble of minde, having his owne conscience tormented fearfully by Satan with his sinnes: yet he must not despaire, the Lord will give him an happy issue: he must remember he is a King, and therefore shall one day have full conquest over sinne, Sathan, and his owne corruption, yea, over all his enemies whatsoeuer, if he be in the heat of persecution tormented and tossed from post to pillar, which flesh & blood cannot brooke; yet then he must consider his calling to be a spirituall king, whose property it is in the most violent afflictions, even unto death it selfe (as *Paul* saith) *to be more than conquerour*, Rom. 8.37. Lastly, in the very pang of death, when nature must needs bee dissolved, soule and bodie separated, then must the childe of God remember, that he is a King in Christ, and this will stay his heart against the feare of death; for herein shall he see that by death, as thorow a strait passage, hee shall enter into full possession of his kingdome. And thus much in that we are kings.

From the second dignitie of beleevers, which is to bee Priests unto God, wee are likewise taught sundry duties:

First, *to teach and instruct one another*. It was

A the office of the Priest under the Law to teach the people the will of God: *The Priests lips should preserve knowledge*, Mal. 2.7. And now under the Gospell not onely the Minister, but every true beleever is a spirituall Priest, and therefore ought to *teach and admonish one another*, Col. 3.16. When the Lord saith, *Touche not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harme*, Psal. 105.15, he calleth all his faithfull by the name of Prophets, because they ought to have the knowledge of his will, and be able also in due time, and upon just occasion to teach the same unto others, that so the Gospell of Christ may flourish. And as this dutie belongs to all men; so especially to governours, as Parents and Masters, they must shew themselves priests to their charges. *Abraham* did it, Gen. 18. *David* did it, Prov. 4. And *Bathsheba* did it, Prov. 31. All must doe it, that desire a holy generation to succeed after them. Wee teach them other things, why not religion?

Secondly, seeing wee bee Priests, wee must pray unfeignedly, not onely for our selves, but ² *for all men*, especially the members of Christ. The Priest in the old Testament must pray and make request, not onely for himselfe, but for the people also. And herein stands the praise of a Christian, to pray for his brethren. Hence it is that *Paul* saith, *Pray for all the Saints, and for me*; Ephes. 6.18. *Moses* is highly commended for this dutie, especially when he prayed for the *Israelites*, and stood before the Lord in the gap, to turne away his wrath, Exod. 32. *Elias* for his power in prayer and prophetic, is called the *chariot and horseman of Israel*, 2 Kin. 2.12. And this is recorded for the praise of *Hezekias*, That when the people were unprepared at the eating of the Pascheover, *Hee prayed to the Lord for mercie, and was heard*, 2 Chron. 30.18. And so when we finde any commended in Scripture for his gift in prayer, it is not so much for that he prayed diligently for himselfe, as for the whole Church of God.

Thirdly, being Priests wee must offer spirituall sacrifice unto God, that is, dedicate our selves, our soules and bodies, and all that is in us, our wit, learning, knowledge, and every gift of bodie or minde to Gods service. That we may doe all this to his glorie, wee must looke that every thing wee take in hand have his beginning from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, and be directed to a good end, so Gods glorie principally, and the good of others, whom it may concerne.

Fourthly, we must be full of blessings. The Priests in the old Testament, Numb. 6. used to blesse the people: so must we if we be Christians, because we are spirituall Priests. We must take heed of all cursed speaking, of slandering and backbiting, of swearing and forswearing: and give our selves to blessed and gracious speeches to all men, and of all men, friends or foes, Rom. 12.14.

Fifthly, wee must seeke to have God for our

* Tim. 2.2.

Rom. 16.29.

* Deut 10.9.
Psalm 119.57.

portion: The Levites had no portion in the Land of Canaan, but the tenths onely, ^a *The Lord was their portion.* So wee being Priests to God, must bee content with any estate in this world, for God is our portion. Wee must not seeke too much after any inheritance on earth, for then we cary not our selves like priests unto God. The favour of God in Christ must be the thing we long for, and therein must we rejoyce.

To him bee glorie and dominion for evermore, Amen. These words are a thanksgiving to God for the former benefits of Christ bestowed on his Church; Which *S. Iohn* putteth in before he have ended his record of the gracious works of Christ for his Church, as it were interrupting himselfe, for the great desire he had to the glorie of God. Whereby we are taught, that the consideration of Gods benefits towards us, specially such as concerne the kingdome of heaven, should stirre up our hearts to give continuall praise and glorie to God. This was *Dauids* affection, when he felt in his soule the pardon of his finnes, and therefore he breaks out into this thanksgiving: *My soule praise thou the Lord, and forgive: not all his benefits.* Psalm. 103. 1. And so did *Paul*, after the blessed memorie of Gods mercie in his vocation, 1 Tim. 1. 17.

Secondly, in this example of *Iohn* wee may learne, what is the true forme of giving thanks to God, namely, to ascribe unto him all power, glorie, and absolute dominion for evermore. But alas, it is too too manifest, that our corrupt nature will not doe this, but taking from God his due, bestoweth it on creatures, yea, on our owne selves. It is a matter of grace to know what is due to God, and to ascribe the same unto him, and therefore we are charged to *give unto the Lord glory and power*, which in the next words he calls *the glory of his name*, Psal. 96. 7, 8. So Christ he teacheth us to ascribe all power, glorie, might, and dominion to God, when we say in the Lords prayer, *For thine is the kingdome, the power and glorie*: that is, The kingdome of heaven is thine: all power in heaven and earth is thine, and therefore all glorie is thine; and from our hearts we doe ascribe the same unto thee.

Lastly, *S. Iohn* addeth, *Amen*, that is, *so bee it.* Let all glorie and dominion bee given to Christ; which is the same hee sayd before. Whereby he doth testifie his fervent affection, and strength of desire, after the glorie of Christ, else hee would not have doubled his thanksgiving. And so it should bee with us, wee should not freeze in our thanksgiving for Gods benefits, but labour to have our hearts and tongues to double the same, that thereby we may testifie our fervent and earnest desire after his praise and glorie.

v. 7 *Behold, he commeth with clouds, and every eye shall*

A see him: yea, even they which pierced him thorow: and all kindreds of the earth shall waiyle before him, Even so, Amen.

These words are a declaration of the fourth action of our Saviour Christ towards his Church; and that is, his second comming to iudgement, to judge both quicke and dead. Wherein we are to consider sundry points: first, this note of attention, *Behold*: secondly, the action of Christs comming it selfe, *He commeth*: thirdly, the manner how, *with clouds*: amplified by the manifestation thereof, *Every eye shall see him, even they that pierced him*: fourthly, the effect of his comming: *All tribes of the earth shall waiyle*: Fifthly, the conclusion of this narration, with two notes of asseveration, *Even so, Amen*, to confirme the second comming of Christ to all people.

I. Point, *Behold*. First, *S. Iohn* beginneth this narration with a note of attention. The Spirit of God is accustomed, when anything is of speciall weight, and worth our careful marking, to prefix before it this note of attention; *Behold*, or such like. Hence then we are taught this speciall dutie, namely, often and every day earnestly and seriously to bebinke our selves of the second comming of Christ to iudgement. This consideration is a matter of great use, for it is a notable meanes to begin and continue the conversion of a sinner unto God. When the Scribes and Pharisees, obstinate enemies, came to the Baptisme of *S. Iohn*, hee used this as a meanes to make them to turne and beleve in Christ, saying, *Oh generation of vipers, who hath forewarned you that you should flie from the vengeance to come?* Matth. 3. 7. So *Peter* useth this same argument, to bring the Jewes to repentance: exhorting them to *turne that their sins might be put away, when the day of refreshing*, (that is) *the day of iudgement should come*, Act. 3. 19. *Paul* perswades the Athenians to repentance, *Because there is a day appointed in which the Lord will iudge the world by Iesue Christ*, Acts 17. 30, 31.

Secondly, this note of attention serves to strike our hearts with a feare and reverence of Christ Iesus: for it gives us warning that hee shal come to be our Judge. Wee are touched with awe and reverence toward earthly Magistrates, when wee consider that they have authority to attach, apprehend, and to bring us to their courts and assises: How much more should this worke in us a reverend awe towards Christ, when we consider, That one day we must all be brought before his tribunall seat, and there be judged of him.

11. Point. The comming of Christ himselfe, *He comes*: that is, Christ locally descendeth fro the

the highest heaven, in his manhood, to that part of this world, where the clouds be, there to give judgement upon all mankind, quicke and dead. Here make in what manner *John* propounds his comming: the faith not, he shall come, but in the present time, *hee commeth*. Whereby hee would teach us: First, that this found comming of Christ is as certain, as if it were now present. Secondly, that it is not long to, or far off, but will be quickly. Thirdly, that our dutie is, to consider of the comming of Christ as of a thing present. This Saint *John* learned, and so should we by his example, for it is a matter of great use. For hence we are taught, to desire and doe that every day, which we would desire and doe in the day of judgement; and blessed is he that attaineth hereunto.

Now that we may come to the practice of this dutie, we must daily consider of the comming of Christ, not as a thing to be delayed or farre off, but as a thing present. We must every day call our selves to reckoning and account, and perswade our selves this may be the last day; and so shall we carry our selves every day, as we would in the last day. Now we would wish at the day of judgement, that we did repent and beleve in Christ: and therefore every day of our life, before the last judgement come, we ought to repent and beleve in Christ. If this dutie were practised, we should finde lesse corruption, and more grace in our hearts, and lesse sinne, and more obedience in our lives every day than other: but grace is wanting, and sinne abounds, because this meditation takes no place in our hearts. Againe, in that he saith, *He commeth*, meaning in respect of his manhood; hence wee gather, he is absent from us, in regard of bodily presence; and the heavens must containe him until the day of judgement: But if Christ were alwaies bodily present in the Sacrament, he could not be said to come, but onely to manifest himselfe, being before present. And therefore the opinion of those which hold the bread to be really Christs body, to be in or about the bread of the Sacrament, is most false and frivolous, flat against that article of our faith, whereby wee hold, That he comes from heaven, onely at the last day, in regard of his manhood.

III. Point. The manner of Christs comming, in two things: First, *that he comes with clouds*: Secondly, *that his comming is open, and visible to every eye*.

First, *with clouds*. Here S. *John* speaketh after the manner of the Prophets, who to set our God in his majestie and glorie, say, *hee comes with clouds, rides on the wings of the wind*: as though hee had said, hee comes in exceeding majestie and glorie. These words are added to make a distinction betwene the first and second comming of Christ. His first comming was in humilitie, borne of a poore virgin, entertained in a stable of an Inn: but his second comming is with glorie, majestie, and domini-

on in the clouds. And the reason is, because he came first to be a redeemer, and a Saviour by his suffering; and therefore came in the state of a servant. But his second comming is to bee a Judge of all men, yea, of his enemies; and therefore hee commeth with all might, majestie and glorie, to shew himselfe king and Lord of all.

The uses of this his second comming, are set downe in the 97. Psalm. to make the verie mountaines to tremble, to confound the wicked and ungodly, and to comfort the godly in that day.

Secondly, for his open appearance; *Everie eye shall see him*, hee shall come in majestie and glorie: not secretly, but in visible shew to all the world. All men shall see him with their own eyes: All I say, which were since the world began to his comming.

In these words hee toucheth three points: First, hee taketh it here for granted, that every man shall rise from death to life, though their death were never so strange, or never so long before. Secondly, that all men being raised againe, shall have life, and motion, and their senses restored to them, as before they died. Thirdly, that all men, none excepted, shall come and stand before the tribunall seat of Christ, and there be judged of him in the clouds.

The consideration whereof is, First, an exceeding comfort to Gods children, in that they being dead and rotten in their graves, shall rise, and receive their life and motion, and see Christ their Saviour, and Judge of all men. If a man when hee layeth him downe to sleepe, should bee told, that when he rose, he should see his dead father and mother; or his dearest friends, whom he saw not of long before; this would be a notable comfort to him, that now he should enjoy them againe: but how farre greater comfort shall this yeeld to all the godly, who have been dead and rotten in the grave. That they shall bee raised up, and not onely meet with godly friends, but enjoy Christ Jesus the sonne of God, which is the friend of friends; who shall give them not onely life and motion, but eternall life with his owne majestie. This was *Jobs* comfort, that though hee died, yet hee beleeveth hee should see his redeemer with his eyes. And this should be our comfort against the feare of death, and last judgement.

Secondly, this is a terror to the wicked, and to all impenitent sinners, that they shall (will they, nill they) bee brought to the barre of Christs judgement seat, and there looke on him who is their Judge, whom they have in their life contemned and despised. And this consideration may seeme to move them to repentance, which have not begun to repent, and to labour to become the members of Christ; as also to increase and further repentance in them, who have by Gods grace begun the same. It may be some doe thinke when they die, all is done,

done, and there is no further account to follow; but though we lie rotten in our graves a thousand, or two thousand yeares; yet we shall rise, and looke upon our Judge with our owne eyes. And if wee have not in our life time repented, we shall heare him with our owne eares, giving the dreadfull sentence against us, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire*: and therefore it is best for us in this day of grace to prevent this danger, and now repent and beleve in Christ, that then we may rise with joy, and stand with boldnesse before Christ Jesus. No doubt if we were perswaded that we should thus appeare, it would move us to repent.

Thirdly, *Everie eye shall see him*: that is, all men with their owne eyes shall looke on him. Hence it may be gathered, that those who wanted their sight in this life, shall have it then restored. It is granted of all Divines, that the Elect shall have all their senses and other defects restored, wherein they were wanting in this life: And it may also be added, that the wicked shall then have some of their senses restored, if they wanted the same in this life; as hearing, and seeing at the least: for the deafe shall heare, and the blinde shall see this Judge. And this can be no glorie to them, seeing it is to increase their misery: for the more senses they have, the more punishment they shall feele, because by sense we apprehend misery.

Even those which pierced him. Here is added a further evidence of Christs manifestation of his coming, and that for three causes: First, to shew that no power, or wisdom in the world, can free any one from his appearance. For if any could escape, in all likelihood it would be those Jewes and Gentiles, who prevailed most against Christ, and put him to death. But none of those can escape his judgement: for even they which pierced him, they shall see this Judge, and also be summoned before his Majestic. For though they had power to kill him, yet none of them shall then have power, to absent themselves from before his barre of judgement at the last day.

Secondly, to shew the ease of all wicked men: namely, that such woe and misery shall befall them, as they never once thought of. The Jewes and Gentiles which crucified Christ, never dreamed of this; that he whom they then put to a temporall death, should one day be a Judge, and condemne them to eternall death, unless they had repented.

Thirdly, to shew the rufull and wofull estate of all impenitent sinners: they shall rise to judgement, and have their greatest enemy their Judge, who will shew rigour upon them, and justice without all mercie: for this piercing of Christ is meant not only of the Jewes, which put him to death, but of all ungodly persons: because all such doe by their sins, as with swords and speares, wound him at the heart, as the souldiers did. Impenitent sinners be as the Jewes which crucified Christ, as *Judas* which betrayed

him, and as the souldiers which goared his side: and unless they now repent, they shall one day be judged as his enemies.

Even they which pierced him. Out of these words some gather, that the bodie of Christ hath still the wounds and skarres which were given him at his death; the print of the nailes in his hands and feet, and that these shall be seene in him at the last day: adding withall, that it is no blemish to Christ to have these, but rather an increase of his glorie, but this cannot be gathered hence: for though it be said, *They shall see him whom they pierced*; yet it followeth not, that they shall see him as hee was pierced: what though they see the person, whom they wounded, shall they therefore see his wounds? Many shall see Kings and Queenes whom they crowned in this world, but it followeth not, that therefore they shall weare their crownes. So we shall see our fathers and mothers, but not as fathers and mothers.

IV. Point. The fruit and effect of his coming, especially in the wicked, in these words; *And all tribes of the earth shall wail before him*. Where *S. Iohn* speakes of the whole world, according to the condition of the land of Canaan: for onely that part of the world was divided into tribes. And in like case, our Saviour Christ setteth out the judgement of the whole world, according to the state and manner of judging the visible Church, *Matth. 25*. So that his meaning is, that they which repented not, of what nation soever, of what state, or condition soever they had beene, shall wail, and mourne at that day. And he addes a reason of this their mourning, in these words, *for him, before him, or over him*: that is, they shall wail, and lament with exceeding lamentation, because they beleevd not his word, but contemned him and his doctrine, and therefore now they want all helpe to free them from the punishment of their unbeleeve, and contempt of the Gospell: for this time is the onely time of grace and mercie: afterwards there is no worke nor invocation, that can alter mans estate.

Here then we are admonished, first, that in this world we labour above all things to be reconciled to God in Christ, to get our finnes pardoned, to beleve and embrace his holy Word; and unless we attaine hereunto in this life, we shall wail eternally: for when the last day is come, there is no hope of helpe, no way to escape, no time of grace to repent. Remember the foolish virgins, that sought for oyle, when it was too late, and knocked when the doores were shut, *Matth. 25*. But if by Gods mercy we can in this life get his love and favour in Christ, then shall we enjoy the same eternally: yea, at this dreadfull day to all the wicked, we shall lift up our heads, & our hearts when we shall see Christ coming to our full redemption: all teares shall be wiped from our eyes, while the wicked shall crie and howle, woe and alas

is admon.

for evermore. The Devill knowing the worth of this admonition, will labour by all meanes to keepe it from our hearts. But this shall bee our wisdom, being to sue for grace, and so shal we defeat Satan, & prevent eternal wailing.

Secondly, here see what an evil conscience is: It lieth asleepe here while a man lives, and never troubleth him, and so it may doe in death also: but in the last day, when he shall see his Judge with his eyes, then it will stirre, it will torment him, it will attach, accuse, and condemne him, it will lay to his charge all his sins, his contempt of Christ and his Word, his unbelief in the time of grace; and then it will breake his heart, being as good as a thousand witnesses to condemne him.

This should cause all men to labour to get a good conscience, washed and purged in the blood of Christ, which will not suffer us to lie in any one sinne; and upon our repentance will assure us we be in the favour of God: Which if it doe in this life, then it will never make us to waite at the last day; but it will excuse us, and make us looke up to our Redeemer, and to rejoyce in him. But take heed when thy conscience lieth asleepe, and accusest not for thy sins, no nor at death; that is an evil conscience which will awake at the day of judgement, to torment and condemne thee.

V. Point. The meanes whereby hee confirmeth the certaintie of the same comming of Christ: that is, by a double note of asseveration: *Even so, Amen*. One of these is taken from the Greeks, *Even so*: the second from the Hebrewes, *Amen*: being both as much as *Amen, Amen*; or *verily, verily*. In which phrase S. Iohn teacheth us, how to confirme the things we avouch. There be three wayes, whereby a thing may be avouched: First, by a simple and bare affirmation, or negation: Secondly, by an earnest asseveration: thirdly, by an oath. Now S. Iohn useth these two notes of assuring in this weightie matter of Christs second comming, saying, *He cometh, even so, Amen*: that is, certainly, and without all doubt it is so. Hereby teaching us, first, that an asseveration must not be used, but onely when the matter is of great weight and moment. Here then wee see; that wretched is their practice, who use to bind every word with an oath: which is a degree above this asseveration. Yea, they also are here justly reproved, who in their ordinarie communication, have ever in their mouth some weighty asseveration. Our Saviour often useth these words of asseveration, yet onely in matters of weight and moment, and when the hearers were to be moved to greater attention, and their hearts were to be more fully settled in some truth of great importance.

Secondly, by these asseverations Iohn would teach us to hold againt the practice of atheitts, that the comming of Christ is most certaine and undoubted. Which thing we should more seriously observe; because in our corrupt nature,

A there is bred this false perswasion, That either we shall not be summoned to judgement, or els that Christs comming is farre off: like to the evil servant, who saith, *My Master deferres his comming*: which evil servant by nature is every one of us.

Thirdly, hereby Iohn gives us to understand, one speciall note & marke of the child of God: namely, to desire and long after unfainedly the second comming of Christ to judgement: for as these words bee an asseveration, so withall they containe a most earnest desire, *Even so, Amen*: as if he should say by way of answer to the proclaiming of his comming, *Lord grant it bee so: yea Lord, let it bee so*. Hence it is that S. Paul describes all those, who must receive the crown of righteousness, by this propertie, that they love *his appearing*, 2 Tim. 4.8. As for the ungodly, it is not in with them, (they being not justified nor sanctified, and so not reconciled to God in Christ,) cannot love this appearing. Nay they could wish withall their hearts there were no hell, nor last judgement. And by this one note we may well judge of our estates; for if from our hearts we desire and long for this second comming to judgement, and wish hee would come quickly, then it is a certaine token and signe we be reconciled to God in Christ, and shall receive the crowne of righteousness. But if as yet we feele not this longing and hungering desire in us, then wee must suspect our selves, and labour every day to feele it: for it is the desire of the Saints to say, *How long Lord*. And with Iohn, *even so, Amen*.

Rev. 22. 20.

Rev. 6. 10.

v. 8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, even the Almighty.*

After S. Iohn had described Christ at large, in the former verses: he bringeth him speaking of himselfe by a figure, as may appeare by this clause (*saith the Lord*.)

The end and scope of these words in this verse, is to confirme that which was before spoken of Christ, being a prooffe and reason thereof, after this manner to be conceived. He which is the beginning and the end of all, &c. hee is sufficient to be a King, Priest and Prophet to the Church, and is both able and willing to bestow on them all blessings which serve for their good. The first part of this argument is omitted, the second part is contained in this eighth verse: But *I am the beginning and the end; and therefore I am sufficient*.

In this eighth verse are three points concerning Christ: First, *hee is the beginning and the end*. Secondly, *he is, was, and is to come*. Thirdly, *he is Almighty*. For the first: that Christ is the beginning and end, S. Iohn expresseth by

a comparison taken from the Græcke alphabet; and it standeth thus; As in the *A, B, C*, of the Grecians, *Alpha* is the first letter, and therefore the beginning of all the letters; and *Omega* is the last, and therefore the end of all the letters: So saith Christ *I am the beginning of all things that are, and the end of all things.* The first part of this similitude, in these words, *I am Alpha, and Omega*; that is, *I am as Alpha, and Omega.* The second part in these words, *I be beginning, and the end.*

From this, and such like manner of speaking, the Papists gather, that it is lawfull to worship God in a strange language: And that the Scriptures are to be read and delivered to the people in an unknowne tongue. But their collection is frivolous: For though the unlearned Englishman know not what *Alpha* and *Omega* is, yet the Churches to whom this was written, being Grecians, knew generally what was meant hereby.

Again, though the spirit of God speak here and there a strange word or phrase, yet we may not follow that practice in the whole service and worship of God, whereby neither the word nor prayer, should be understood of the people as the Papists doe.

I am the beginning. Christ is said to be the beginning for two causes: First, because he was the very first of all things: there was nothing before him, hee had a being when all creatures were not; then was he the same that he is now; and for this saith *S. Iohn, c. 1. 1. In the beginning was the word,* that is, the Sonne of God; he had his being and subsisting, when all other creatures wanted it, and began to be.

This proveth the eternitie of Christ, because hee hath his being before any creature; hee was a substance and essence begotten of the Father before all worlds, not created as other creatures are, or made of any other.

Secondly, he is called the beginning, because hee giveth a beginning to all creatures: For all things which were created, and had a being, were created by him, and had their being from him. So saith the Apostle, *All things are from him, Col. 1. 16.* And hence we learne, that when we go about any businesse in word or deed, we must begin it with invocation in the name of Christ: for Christ he gives the beginning, and proceeding to all things. And without his help, we cannot have in any thing good successe.

Secondly, the same Christ is the end of all things, and that for two causes: first, because he is the last of all things, and after him is nothing in subsisting, and being: for all creatures, if they were left to themselves, would come to nothing. And whereas some creatures be eternall, it is not of themselves, but by him, and from him which is the end. But though they all should come to nothing, yet Christ would remaine the same he was for ever, namely, the eternall Sonne, and Word of the Father. This then should make us with full purpose of heart

to cleave unto Christ in all things, if we would enjoy eternall happinesse: for without him is nothing but changi g; and unless we have our stabilitie from him, we cannot but come to an end.

Secondly, he is the end; because all things in heaven and earth were made to serve him: *For him were all things created, Col. 1. 16.* that is, to serve for his glory and praise.

The second thing here said of Christ is this, *which is, was, and is to come.* These words were expounded in the 4. verse, where the very same are affirmed of the Father. The meaning is, that Christ is in present a perfect substance and essence, or being, subsisting in, by, and from himselfe, and such a substance hee was in time past, from all eternity, and such as shall continue in time to come for evermore.

Hence wee learne three things: First, that the second person in the Trinity is consubstantiall with the father, that is, of one and the same substance and nature with him. The reason is, because there can bee but one onely substance or essence, which hath being in, and by it selfe, and from it selfe alone; neither can we conceive how there should be two, or more, but onely one; as there cannot bee two eternals, or two infinites, two omnipotents and absolute Lords, which have nothing one of another. Now in the 4. verse it is said of the Father, *That hee is a substance of himselfe, in himselfe, and from himselfe alone.* And here the selfe same thing is said of the second person, the sonne. And therefore hee is of the very same substance with the Father: for though they be distinct persons in the Godhead, yet they have but one and the same substance, one and the same divine nature, and Godhead.

Secondly, hence we may gather, that Christ is God of himselfe; because as the Father is, was, and shall be; So the Sonne is, was, and shall be; and that in the same respects; So that as the Father is God of himselfe, and from none other, so the Sonne is God of himselfe, and from none other. Indeed as hee is the Sonne, the second person, so hee is of the Father, and hath his being from him by eternall generation: but as he is God, he is consubstantiall with the Father, and coequall with him, and hath his essence of, and in him alone. And the same is to be affirmed of the holy Ghost; as hee is the third person, hee proceeds from the Father and the Sonne, but as hee is God, hee is of himselfe, and from none other.

Thirdly, hence we learn, that Christ is coeternall with the father, being everlasting as the father is, and every way coequall, having the same attributes of the Godhead that the Father hath.

The third point touching Christ is, that hee is the Almighty. There is in God, and so in Christ, a double power: first, a Potentiall; secondly, an actual power. Potentiall is that, whereby he can doe many things, more than ever hee did, or will doe: as hee could raise all the dead

Abraham of the stones, but he would not: hee could have delivered Christ from death, but he would not. Now Christs omnipotency is not to bee understood of his potentiall power here principally, but rather of his actuall power, whereby hee bringeth to passe without let and impediment whatsoever he decreeth, willeth, or promisseth.

From this omnipotency of Christ, ariseth a double comfort to his Church: first, that whatsoever he hath promised in his Gospel, is yea, and Amen: that is, shall be brought to passe effectually without stop and let, as assuredly as he promised it. Now Christ hath promised in his Gospel to all penitent sinners, remission of finnes, mortification, justification, and life everlasting: every one whereof, shall in due time be done to every true beleever, which is a singular comfort to them: for all men and Angels cannot give one of these to any one man; but Christ hee is omnipotent, and hee both can and will effect them all to his elect.

The second comfort; that Christ both can and will give his Church sufficient security and protection through all the miseries of this life: he can defend and guard her against all the fury and malice of Satan, and all her enemies: hee is above them, and can bridle their might, when and how he pleaseth.

Hence also, that Christ is Almighty, wee are taught two duties: First, under the crosse and in tribulation, to humble our selves under his mighty hand: for it is he which correcteth us, who is Almighty, able to doe what he list, and more than he will; resistance and repining will doe us no good. Secondly, this should move us to performe hearty obedience unto Christ in all things: both in our generall and particular calling to walke uprightly before him: for hee is Almighty, and seeth whether we walke sincerely before him or not; if we doe not, he is able to punish us. By this Argument God perswadeth *Abraham* to walke uprightly before him, because he is Almighty, able to correct and destroy those which refuse to obey him, Gen. 17. 1.

v. 9 *Ifohn, even your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdome, and patience of Iesus Christ, was in the Isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the witnessing of Iesus Christ.*

Hitherto wee have intreated of the Preface of this booke, containing the title and inscription thereof. Now from this ninth verse, to the end of the third Chapter, is contained one of those seven visions which were shewed unto *Iohn*, and are set downe in this booke. In this

A first vision two things are to be noted: first, the circumstances: secondly, the parts thereof. The circumstances in the ninth and tenth verses: the parts, from thence to the end of the 3. Chapter.

The circumstances of this vision are foure, first, the person to whom this vision was shewed, namely, *Iohn*: The second, the place where, at *Patmos*: The third, the manner how it was propounded; It was delivered unto him being ravished in the spirit: The fourth the time when, on the Lords day.

For the first *Iohn* is the person to whom this vision befall, who doth therefore name himselfe to shew, that it was given him of the Lord; for as the Lord hath his visions and revelations, (as hath beene said) so the devill hath his: but they may bee distinguished by the persons to whom they be given. God giveth his visions not to all men, but unto those which are most fit for them; such as be most holymen for life, endued with exceeding gifts of God, as knowledge, wisdom, continency, zeale, piety, and religion. So in the old Testament, he delivered not them to all, but to his servants the Prophets, men of singular gifts and graces, and of exceeding holinesse and piety. Indeed the Lord revealed some particular things by wicked men, as by *Balaam* and *Caiphas*, but they never knew what those things meant which were shewed unto them. It is a property belonging to the servants of God, to receive a vision, and to know the same to their comfort. And for both these was *Iohn* thoroughly qualified; he was a man of exceeding holinesse of life, (for Christ loved him) and of singular and rare gifts, full of zeale, love, and piety, and also had the knowledge of this vision made known unto him: but the devill maketh no such choice; his visions befall men which are Heretikes, wicked notorious sinners, who have no such rare and speciall gifts as the other have; so that wee must esteeme of this, as a singular gift of God to his owne Apostle S. *Iohn*.

Now *Iohn* having named himselfe to be the receiver of this vision: for the greater credit hereof, hee describes himselfe by two modest termes: First, *A brother*: secondly, *A companion*. First, hee calls himselfe *their brother*: that is, of them who by faith were all members of the mysticall body of Christ. For the Church of God is a family, wherof God the Father is head and householder, Iesus Christ is the elder brother, and all beleevers are fellow-brethren, in and by Christ, being by faith the adopted sons of God, members of that family, and brethren each to other.

By this title, (*your brother*) first he setteth out his humility, and great modesty. For hee was a man at that time above all men which lived, in regard of his gifts and holinesse of life: hee was the last Apostle, and had the Apostolicall authority, being a most zealous and constant professor, yet he calleth himselfe a brother to all true beleevers, and maketh himselfe but

equal

quall with them, though they were farre inferior to him. And to should we esteeme better of our brethren than of our selves, and make our selves inferior to them.

Secondly, by this title we see he had his heart full of brotherly love, to all the members of the Church of Christ; he loved them as brethren. So we are bound to love all men even our enemies, as they bee of the same flesh with us: but those that be of the same faith and religion with us, to these especially should we shew our love and affection. So *Paul* saith to the Christian Romans, *Be affectioned to love one another with brotherly love, Rom. 12. 10.* And great reason: for beleivers are linked each to other with the nearest bond: they have the same Father, which is God, the same Redeemer, the same faith, hope, baptism, and the same benefit by Jesus Christ his death and obedience.

But this duty is not practised: there bee that call themselves brethren, who (as *Isay* saith) *hate them that tremble at the word, and mocke them even for the profession of the same religion, whereby they think to be saved.* If any seem to make more conscience of their wayes than others, they are reviled and hated for the name of Christ; which ought not to bee, for among all true Christians should be brotherly love.

The second title, *Companion, or Copartner* in three things: in tribulations, in the Kingdome, and in the patience of Christ. Hee calls himselfe *Copartner* with them in tribulations, for two causes: First, because at that time when he wrote this vision, the whole Church was in tribulation and persecution, under that cruell tyrant *Domitian*, about fourscore or an hundred years after Christ, who banished *John* into Patmos: where he was not unmindefull of the afflictions of the Church, whereof he was a member: and therefore calls himselfe a partner with them in affliction.

By which hee sheweth, what is the state of Gods Church in this world, namely, to be under the crosse: and the members thereof must not bee companions of peace and ease, but copartners in affliction and tribulation. And therefore Christ teacheth those which will bee his Disciples, these lessons: First, to deny themselves, to take up his crosse daily, and to follow him. And because of this estate, the Church in this world is called the *Militant Church*, being in continuall fight against the devill, and his instruments. The consideration whereof is of speciall use: first, we in this land have had peace and quietnesse for many yeares without persecution, which we must acknowledge for a speciall blessing vouchsafed to us for this end; that now in the time of peace we might prepare our selves against the day of triall. For seeing the estate of the Church is to bee under afflictions; wee are all in duty bound to wait continually when God will call us to suffer for his sake. No man can define the time, or the manner of our triall: but yet that it will come, wee must re-

A solve, because of the usual estate of the Church. God hath for a long time sent forth labourers into his harvest, whereby no doubt many sheaves are gathered into the Lords barnes. Now after this long gathering, there will come a day of fanning: The Lord will take into his hand the fan of affliction, and put it into his arme, and thereby trie the chaffe from the wheat. It stands us therefore in hand to prepare our selves in this time of peace, that wee may bee found good come in the Lords sieve, and not chaffe, which must bee cast into unquenchable fire.

Secondly, hee calls himselfe their *copartner in affliction*; because his pitifull heart was moved with the bowels of compassion, to wards all his fellow-members; when hee remembered their persecution and affliction under the cruell tyrant *Domitian*. And the same affection should bee in every one of us towards the poore afflicted servants of Christ: seeing they be our fellow-members, we should have a fellow-feeling with them, weeping with them that weepe, and shew our compassion in pitying them. If the foot bee pricked, the head shoores, the eye beholds and looks on it, the finger puls it out, the hand applies the plaster, the other foot is ready to runne for helpe, the tongue to aske for counsell, and all the members are ready to afford their naturall helpe in pitie and fellow-feeling: so when any members of the Church suffer affliction, bee pricked with persecution for Christs sake; then should we as members of the same body, be ready to doe all the help we can to them, especially in shewing our fellow-feeling with them.

The second thing wherein hee is this copartner is, in the *kingdome of Christ*; that is, the kingdome of heaven. Where observe, that hee placeth fellowship in affliction, before companionship in the kingdome: to give us to understand, that through afflictions and crosses for Christs sake, is the ready way to this kingdome. It is that way which is beaten and troden by the Prophets, Apostles, and the Saints of God: as the Apostle saith, *Through many tribulations wee must enter into heaven.* And this momentary affliction causeth to us an infinite weight of glory; not by deserving it, but by shewing the plaine way thither. Whereby wee are taught, not to thinke it hard when trials doe befall us, but rather to count it a good thing, yea, exceeding great gladnesse, when any affliction doth befall us for Christs sake: for hereby we are brought like wandering sheepe into that beaten path which leadeth to heaven. Nay wee must rather marvel when we proteste the Gospel, and have no affliction; then we may feare wee be out of the way, seeing the Lord afflicts every child which is his owne.

Thirdly, he is *Copartner in patience*; which he addeth, because it is a most worthy vertue, whereby wee are made able to persevere in affliction till we come to heaven. Afflictions are

12. 66.5.

A. 9. 14. 31.
2 Cor. 4. 27.

1. Tim. 3. 2.

Heb. 1. 3.

the beaten way, heaven is our joyfull end, patience is the meane to make us goe on till wee come thither: *Whatsoever things are written, are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort in the Scriptures might have hope.* Rom. 15. 4. Where true hope to come to heaven is obtained by patience, which maketh a beleever to goe on in suffering, till hee come to life eternall. There is much fruit in the good ground, but not brought forth without patience; and the true beleever is saved by hope in this world, yet cannot come to heaven without patience, Jam. 5. for thereby hee must possesse his soule.

Now because men will say, patience is a hard matter, and so are discouraged from seeking for it: therefore to set an edge on their desire, he addes, *It is the patience of Christ*: and it is so called, either because hee commands it, or because it is his gift, and cometh from the Spirit of Christ; or chiefly because he himselfe suffereth in his members, and as their misery and suffering is his, so is their patience. The consideration whereof is a singular motive to induce every child of God to patience, in bearing the crosse for Christs sake: for they have Christ their fellow-sufferer, he takes part with them, and puts under his shoulder: Who would not then bee content to suffer with patience? And thus much of the branches of his fellowship severally.

Now consider them jointly, and they contain a notable description of the communion of Saints, which is a speciall Article of our faith, standing in three things: in tribulation, in the Kingdome of heaven, and in patience. And marke well, that this communion begins in tribulation, therein we must be partners, and that with patience, before we come to have fellowship in the Kingdome of Heaven. That man therefore that hath afflictions laid on him, must beare them patiently; and when the members of Christ are under the crosse, he must in tender compassion be touched with their miseries: and when he doth truly feele in his heart this Christian patience and compassion, then may he assure himselfe he is entred into this communion, and shall undoubtedly with all Saints bee partaker of the joyes of heaven. But if patience and compassion be wanting, we perswade our selves in vaine of this communion: and therefore let us strive against impatience, and against the deadnesse and hardnesse of our hearts; that we may neither murmur against God in our owne afflictions, nor yet want compassion towards our brethren, that any where suffer affliction for the name of Christ. Thus much for the circumstance of the person.

Was in the Isle called Patmos. In these words is the second circumstance, namely, the place where this vision was given to John. This Patmos is one of those Ilands, which the Geographers call *Sperades*, lying in the West part of Asia the lesse, neere to the Churches to whom

At John writ, and by the Sea commonly called the Aegean sea. This Island was a small, base and poore Island, little or never a whit inhabited.

Saint John had his vision, not at Jerusalem, at Antioch, or Rome, but in Patmos, a base, poore, and little inhabited Island. By this we see, that in the new Testament there is no respect of one place above another, in regard of Gods presence, and our fellowship with him: he doth as well manifest himselfe to John by this vision in Patmos, as to other his Prophets and Apostles in Jerusalem the holy City. In the old Testament there was difference of place in regard of Gods solemne worship and presence; as the Lord shewed his presence, and tyed his worship especially to his Tabernacle and Temple at Jerusalem. This Daniel sheweth by his gesture in prayer: for being in captivity, when he prayed in his chamber, *He opened his window*, which was toward the Temple at Jerusalem, and turned his face thitherward. But now in the new Testament, that difference of place is abolished in respect of Gods worship. And therefore Paul willeth, *That men pray every where, lifting up pure hands unto God*: and so for all the duties of religion we must thinke the like.

I. Then away with Popish Pilgrimage to Churches and Chappels of Saints, or to their reliques. This is meer superstition: for God is present every where, and a man that will worship God in spirit and truth, may have fellowship with him in one place as well as another.

II. Also this may serve to correct a false conceit which many have of our Churches and Chappels: for when they come to a dwelling house, they thinke it not their duty, there to humble themselves, to kneele downe, and call upon God; but if they come into a Church or chappell never so often, upon ordinary affaires, they fall downe to prayer. The reason is, because they thinke these places be more holy, and God more present there, and they shall sooner be heard in them than in their common houses: which is untrue: for in the new Testament, all such diversity of place is abolished in regard of Gods service and presence: the dwelling house is as holy as the Church. Indeed Churches must be maintained, because in them the people may more orderly and conveniently meet together to serve God publicly, in the word and prayer: for which time all due reverence must be observed in them: but wee must not thinke that they are more holy than other places.

More particularly, in this circumstance of place note two things: First, by what meanes *S. John* came thither: secondly, to what end, and for what cause. The meanes was banishment by the Emperour *Domitian*: the cause was for the word of God.

For the first, he came and abode in Patmos, being banished thither for the Gospels sake. In this his banishment consider many excellent things:

things: first, *S. John* was a most worthy Apostle, endued with rare gifts, a singular maintainer of the gospel, and a famous founder of the Church of God, and chiefe pillar thereof in those dayes when hee wrot this booke : and for this cause hated of the cruell persecuter *Domitian*, and of the Romans. And yet observe, That whereas other true Christians were put to the sword, *S. John* is not, but escapeth by banishment. The cause of this was Gods speciall providence, by which hee reserved him for the benefit of the Church, that he might receive this Revelation, and commit it to writing, for the perpetuall good of all his children. And so though *Domitian* was a cruell Tyrant, and wanted no malice towards *John*, yet hee could not kill him; God overruled him, that he did but banish him, and that into such an Island, wherein he might quietly receive these visions, and pen the same for the good of the Church. By this we see the great care and providence of God over his Church, that hee doth bridle and over-rule the cruell mindes and might of bloodie persecutors; that they cannot for their hearts doe any thing, but that which serveth for Gods glory, and the good of his Church, though they intend the contrary. For *Domitian* intended onely the hurt of *John*, yet see, by his banishment into that Isle, hee had fit place to receive these visions for the good of the Church. So in the death of *Christ*, the Jewes and Gentiles, and all the people banded themselves together, to put *Christ* to death, and the devill hee laboured to stirre them to practise their intended malice. Yet the overruling power of God, who bringeth light out of darknesse, directeth and ordereth this their malice and wicked practice to the most excellent worke that ever was, even the redemption of mankind. So *Iosephs* brethren intended no such deliverance as God wrought by him, in selling their brother. This consideration should comfort all Gods children in the time of any outward distresse, even the remembrance of Gods overruling hand.

Secondly, in that *John* went into banishment, when it was so appointed, wee learne, That when we are oppressed and persecuted by tyrants for *Christs* sake, wee must not make resistance, or offer violence, but suffer all injuries with patience: for as one saith truly, *The Christians weapons in persecution, are only prayers and teares*. And Saint *John* often in this booke addeth this conclusion, after the foretelling of persecution, *Here is the patience of Saints*, shewing that patience must be the complete armour against all our bloody enemies.

Thurdly, here also observe, That *John* came into this Island; not of his owne accord, as chusing a solitary life to bee the most happy state of perfection, but by violence and constraint. For if hee had come into it voluntarily, being little or not inhabited, hee could not have done the duty of his Apostleship in preaching the Gospel, and laying the foundations of the

A Church. This then consisteth the Monkish life, which is no life of holy perfection, (as Papists call it) but of glorious superstition and flat impiety before God: for hereby they forsake their callings, and utterly disable themselves to doe those duties which God requirith of them in Church, common-wealth, or family.

Fourthly, whereas *John* being banished, received his visions in a barren and bare desolate place: wee see, that these which honour God shall bee honoured of God, even then when men seeke most to disgrace them: For what greater disgrace could they have put upon *John*, than to banish him into so base an Island; yet because it was for Gods glory, even there doth the Lord appeare unto him, and honour him much in revealing unto him these visions. So when *Ioseph* was sold of his brethren, and most dishonoured of them; then did God exalt him most of all. The same may be said of *Daniel* in Babylon, whom God did most advance when his enemies sought his greatest ruine: and the same is true of all Gods children, Them which honour God, will hee honour.

B II. Point. The cause for which he came into this Isle, is expressly set downe, for the word of God: that is, because he was a publisher and preacher of the word of God: for the performance of which duty hee was banished. By which wee may note, That all naturall men (as *Domitian*, and his Court, and all the Gentiles, without Gods speciall calling) doe beare a deadly hatred towards Gods word. For Saint *John* was a most worthy Apostle, a famous man for gifts, a singular Preacher of the Word of God; yet is hated, nay, banished, not for his owne cause, but for the Word of God. This hatred hath appeared in the heathen Emperors by their bloody persecutions against the Preachers and professors of this Word: and yet though men hate it naturally, the same Word winneth them, and taketh place in their hearts for their conversion, and causeth them to love it: so as successively it hath bene spread over all the world. Which shews against the Atheist, That the Word taught by the Prophets and Apostles, is indeed the true word of God, not the invention of man: for mans word being hated, cannot win unto it him which hateth it: but the Word of God prevaleth by grace in the hearts of these who hate it by nature, which it could not do, unless there were in it some divine power.

Again, seeing *John* was banished for Gods word, all ministers are to cast their accounts, and make this reckoning, that they may and must suffer trouble and persecution, yea, sometime banishment it selfe, for the Gospels sake, if they will be faithful. For that which befall the principall founders and chiefe builders of the Church, cannot bee avoided of them which are ordinary Ministers, if they will be faithful. *Christ* acquainteth his Disciples with this, telling them, *That they are even accused, when* Luke 6. 6. *they are*

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showe themselves well of them. Let none therefore thinke it strange at this day, if for well doing they heare and receive evil: nay, let them feare the curse, when all men persecute them.

And for the witnessing of Iesus Christ. Here John doth note more specially the cause of his banishment, to wit, for testifying the History and doctrine of the Gospel, the summe whereof is this, That Iesus Christ the sonne of Mary, is the sonne of God, and redeemer of all that beleeve in him to the justification of life. This testimony S. John puts downe, to give us to understand what part of Gods word that is, which is most hated of the world: and for the preaching whereof Gods Ministers are persecuted and banished, to wit, the Gospel of Iesus Christ especially: for the law is in part naturall, but the Gospel is supernaturall, and to mans reason absurd; for the preaching whereof, men in all ages have bene persecuted. The reason hereof is this, God in the beginning made a covenant with man, promising, *That the seed of the woman should breake the Serpents head*: Now that Gospel is that glad tidings, wherein is declared, that this promised seed is come, who hath indeed bruised the head of the Serpent. Hereupon the devill maligneth the Gospel above all parts of Gods word, and accordingly hath laboured by all meanes to suppress the same, partly by persecution, as he did in the first three hundred yeares after Christ; and partly by bringing into the Church damnable heresies, which did destroy the Gospel by depraving the natures and offices of Christ, when by outward violence hee could not prevail.

Now seeing the Devill and his instruments doe thus hate the Gospel, and labour to extinguish it; wee on the contrary must labour to know, and to beleeve, to love, and embrace the Gospel, that so wee may uphold and maintaine the same.

vers. 10 *And I was ravi-
shed in the spirit on the Lords
day, and heard bebinde mee a
great voice, as it had bene of a
Trumpet.*

In this tenth verse are set downe the third and fourth circumstances of this vision. The third is the manner of receiving and giving this revelation to John, namely, *in a trance*. The fourth is the time when it was given, *on the Lords day*.

Touching the manner, it is noted in these words, *I was in the spirit*; That is, I was by the mighty and extraordinary worke of the Spirit of God cast into a trance. That this is to bee so expounded, appeareth by comparing this phrase with the like in the whole prophetic of Ezekiel, who useth to say, *I was in the Spirit*,

when hee expresseth and significth that he was cast into a trance, and therein received some vision by the Spirit.

To understand this the better, consider two things: first, what a trance is: secondly, the end of it. First, *A trance is an extraordinary worke or action of Gods Spirit*. Wee must not thinke that traunces come from the vertue of the starres, nor from the constitution of mans body, or by the strength of imagination, as some have fondly thought: but they are wrought by the holy Ghost. Secondly it is not every worke of the holy Ghost, but an extraordinary worke, above the order of nature. It is also powerfull and mighty, wherein the whole man, both in body and minde is altered: which Saint John here expresseth, saying, *I was in the Spirit*. This extraordinary worke of the Spirit consisteth in two actions: one upon the bodie, the other upon the minde. First, in procuring a trance, the Spirit of God casteth the body of man into a dead sleepe: whereby all the senses, both inward and outward, are benumbed: so Gen. 15. 12. When God renewed his covenant with Abraham, hee casteth him into a heavy sleepe: that is, into a trance, wherein all his senses were benumbed: only his mind was waking. The action of the holy Ghost on the minde is, to draw it from fellowship with the body, and all the senses, to have a neerer fellowship with God, that so the Spirit of God may enlighten it with divine light, that it may understand the things which are revealed to it: as we may see in other extasies and traunces of the Prophets and Apostles. As in that of Peter, when hee saw the visions of the beasts cleane and unclean. And thus wee see what a trance is, namely, *an extraordinary powerfull worke of the spirit upon the whole man, casting the bodie into a dead sleepe, and making the minde fit to receive the things which are revealed unto it of the Lord*.

II. Point. The end of traunces. God for two causes revealeth his will in traunces unto his servants, as to John in this place: First, that they might know, that the things revealed were not invented of themselves, but given of God. John herein had no use of his bodily senses, he neither heard, saw, nor felt, but they were all sleepe. And therefore the vision must needs be from God, and the glory thereof wholly his.

Secondly, and chiefly that the things revealed might take the deeper impression in the understanding: for the minde being freed from fellowship with the body, and not hindered by any phantasies of the senses, (they being all sleepe, and quiet) doth then most lively, and sensibly apprehend and retaine the impression of things revealed. Here then wee see the great care of God, that his servants might thoroughly understand, certainly beleeve, and constantly keepe in memory the things hee delivered unto them. The like care he shewed in revealing his will to all the former Prophets; hee would not

• AG. 19. 11.

What a trance is

15

have

have their mindes troubled with the fellowship of the bodie, nor hindred of the senses inward or outward; but wholly taken up for the service of his spirit. And there is good reason of this, for if they must faithfully teach Gods will to others, to make them know and understand to beleeve and remember the same: is it not necessary that they themselves should thoroughly understand, soundly beleeve, and firmly keepe in memorie whatsoever God revealeth?

This dealing of the Lord for this end with his holy Prophets, teacheth us, that the ordinarie ministers of the Gospell at this day ought to employ themselves with all care and diligence, that they may thoroughly understand the will of God in his Word; and withall beleeve it soundly, and remember it carefully. We must not now looke for traunces and visions, as they had, but we must use continuall studie in the Word, which is the ordinarie meanes to come unto this knowledge. This dutie concerneth all students in divinitie, and all others which desire a good understanding in the Word of God. And for their furtherance herein, they must have principall care to search into the text of Scripture thoroughly: thereby shall they best conceive the proper meaning of the holy Ghost, and with greater facility keepe the same in memorie. For one saith truly, That every good minister should bee a good Text-man. Whereby is defcried a common fault of many students: who rather employ themselves in the ancient writings of men, than in the Word of God: nay, many spend their best time, in the base writings of wicked and hereticall Monks and Friars. It cannot be denied, but many of the fathers were worthy members of Gods Church: but if the fountaine be left, the ministration will soone be tainted with the filthy puddles of mens inventions.

Again, in this dealing of God with *Iohn*, we may observe the truth of Christs saying, *to him that hath, it shall be given*. For though *Iohn* was indued with rare knowledge, and singular gifts, yet the Lord addeth more knowledge to his former. The Lord found him faithfull in the duties of an Apostle: and therefore revealeth the knowledge of many secrets unto him in most full manner: even so it is in Gods Church at this day: all that have care to know the will of God, and doe it; though their knowledge bee small at the first, yet the Lord will helpe them, and adde daily to their knowledge. And the cause why many heare the word of God, & profit not, but wax worse, or stand at a stay, is, because they labour not to have their knowledge increased, by putting in practice that which they know: for if they did, then to him which hath, should more be added, and hee should have abundance. As on the contrarie, when wee be negligent to heare or know, and to obey the will of God: wee have a spirit indeed sent upon us, yet not Gods spirit, but the

spirit of slumber, of blindness and ignorance, *so that wee see, and see not, heare, and understand not*, *Ilay 6. 9.*

On the Lords day. In these words is the fourth circumstance, namely, the time when this vision was shewed to *S. Iohn*. This day which is here called the Lords day, among the Jewes was the first day of the week, called by us Sunday. It is called the Lords day for two causes: First, because on this day *Christ* rose from death to life: for *Christ* was buried the even of the Jewes Sabbath, which is our Friday; and hee rested in the grave their whole Sabbath, which is our Saturday; and rose the first day of the weeke early in the morning, which is our Sunday.

Secondly, the first day of the weeke (according to the Jewes account) came in stead of the Jewes Sabbath, and was ordained a day of rest for the new Testament; and sanctified for the solemn worship of the Lord. And for this cause especially it is called the *Lords day*, the manifestation whereof (as some thinke) *Iohn* chiefly intended in this title. And touching this time, for our better understanding, let us consider three points: First, who changed the Jewes Sabbath; secondly, for what cause; thirdly, whether the Church hath now in the New Testament, power to change the Sabbath day wee now celebrate, to any other day of the weeke.

For the first; it is commonly thought that the Jewes Sabbath was changed into this *Lords day* by Christian Emperours, long after the ascension of *Christ*. But it is more consonant to the tenour of the New Testament, to hold, that *Christ* himselfe was the author of this change. My reasons are these: First, that which the Apostles delivered and enjoined the Church, that they received from *Christ*, either by voice or instinct; for they delivered nothing of their owne head: But the Apostles delivered, and enjoined this Sabbath to the church, to be kept as a day of holy rest to the Lord, as appeareth, *1 Corinth. 16. 1.* where *Paul* ordained in the Churches of Galatia and Corinth, *The first collection for the poore should be on the first day of the weeke*: This hee left not to the choyce of the Church, but appointed it by authoritie Apostolicall from *Christ*.

Now the day of the collecting for the poore, (as appeareth in the histories of the Church) was the Sabbath day, when the people were assembled for Gods service. For this was the custome of the Church for many yeares after *Christ*. First, to have the Word preached, and the Sacraments administered, then to gather for the poore: and for this cause in the writings of the Church, the Lords supper is called a sacrifice, an oblation, and the masse: not a reall sacrifice as the Papists use it; but spirituall, because therewith was joynd collection for the poore, which was a spirituall oblation, not to the Lord, but to the Church, for the releefe of the

the poore: and it was called the masse, because the collected reliefe thereat was sent to the poore Saints abroad. A second reason is this: The Apostles themselves kept this day for the Sabbath of the new Testament, Acts 20. 7. And it cannot bee proved that they observed any other day for an holy rest to the Lord after Christs ascension, save onely in one case, when they came into the assemblies of the Jewes, who would keepe none other but the old Sabbath of the law. A third reason is, Joh. 20. 19. 26. *The same day whereon Christ rose from the death, being the first day of the weeke, he appeared to his Disciples, being gathered together, and taught them many things, which concerned the government of his Church. And eight dayes after being the first day of the weeke, hee appeared unto them for the same end. Now it is more than likely, that Christ in his owne person gave them an example to celebrate and keepe that day, wherein he rose againe, for a Sabbath of the new Testament.*

II. Point. The Sabbath of the Jewes was changed for two causes: First, to maintaine the libertie of the Church of the new Testament, whereof this was a great part, that they were freed from the ceremonies of the Jewes; For when this day was changed, the Church was no more tied to the Jewes Sabbath, neither had any such regard of dayes and times.

Secondly, that there might bee a more fit time for the memorie of the worke of mans redemption: For God in the old Testament appointed the seventh day to be a day of rest to remember the first creation: So in the new Testament it stands with reason there should bee a day to celebrate this worke of redemption; which is a wonderfull creation; wherein (as I say faith, *ere made a new heaven and a new earth,* Chapter 66. And whereby men become new creatures, 2 Cor. 5. 17. Nay this redemption is a more glorious worke than the creation; for in that creation Adam was the head, but in this redemption Christ Jesus is our head. By the first creation we received a temporall life; but by redemption we receive life eternall. In the creation, Adam was espoused to Eve, but in the worke of redemption every Christian is espoused to Christ Jesus. By creation Adam had an earthly Paradise: in this redemption we have an heavenly kingdome. In the creation, Gods power and wisdom did principally appeare: in this redemption with power and wisdom hee shewed mercie and justice: Justice in Christs passion, and mercie in our forgiveness. By creation he made man of nothing, but by redemption hee made him of worse than nothing, and better than hee was. Therefore seeing this worke of our redemption is farre passing the creation; it was meet a day should be set apart for the memory thereof: Now no day could be more fit than the first day of the weeke, in which Christ rose againe: whereby he confirmed the work of our

A redemption: for he died for our sinnes, and rose againe for our justification, Rom. 4. 25.

III. Point. whether may the Church of the new Testament, change this Sabbath day to any other day of the weeke, as to tuesday, wednesday, &c. *Ans.* The Church hath no such power, for time is the Lords, and the disposing thereof is in his hands. Therefore Christ faith to his Disciples, *It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath kept in his owne hands,* Act. 7. 6. As if he should say, The Father hath kept times and seasons, in his owne power: and therefore it is not for you to know them. Now if that were a good reason, as no doubt it was, then is this also found and good. If God have the disposing of times in his hands, then it belongeth not to the Church to dispose of them: but God hath the disposing of all times in his hands: ergo. And it may be otherwise hence gathered thus: If that which is lesse belong not to the Church, then that which is more doth not: but the knowledge of time and seasons which God hath in his power, belongeth not to the Church, which is lesse than the disposing of times and seasons: And therefore the Church hath not power to dispose of them: and so by consequent may not alter the Sabbath day. *Obje.* In the old Testament the Jewes appointed festivall dayes: as the feast of Dedication, which Christ kept holy, Joh. 10. 22. instituted by the Maccabees, in token of thankfulness for their deliverance: and for restoring of religion and the Temple which Antiochus had pulled downe. And also Mordecai instituted the feast Purim, which was celebrated of the Jewes afterwards.

Now if they had power to make holy dayes, then they might alter the Sabbath day: and so may the Church in the new Testament. *Ans.* These feasts of the Jewes were no Sabbaths set wholly apart for the solemn worship of God: but were onely dayes of the solemnity appointed by the Church in token of joy and thankfulness for the repairing of the Temple, and deliverance of Gods people: And were onely celebrated as they served to put the people in mind of these outward benefits. So that whereas some hold that the Church hath power to alter the Sabbath day; or to make two more Sabbath daies in a weeke, if it were convenient: it hath no ground in Gods Word. For that authoritie which doth alter this day, must not be lesse than Apostolicall. And thus we see why this day was called the Lords day.

Now if the first day of the weeke be the Lords day, set apart for his honour in the memorie of so great redemption, then here are three sorts of men reproved: First, those that make the Lords day a day of vain pleasure and delight. This is the manner of all sorts of men, but especially of the younger sort and servants, who spend this day in carnall rejoycing, in riot, gaming, and wantonnesse, never thinking of the worship of God, which is then to be performed.

1 Macc. 4.

Ezr. 3. 17.

Vj.

formed. But these sin greatly against the Lord : for hereby they pervert the end of the Lords day : it should be kept holy and glorious to the Lord, but they turne it to the worship and service of the Devill.

The second sort here approved, are those which love more civillitie than the former; but yet they thinke they may doe what they will on the Lords day; as to take their journeyes thereon, and imploy themselves in their ordinary affaires; perswading themselves they may serve God with as good an heart when they are alone about their businesse, as they doe who goe to the Church. But these men sinne grievously against the fourth commandment; for hereby they make that their own day which is the Lords.

A third sort here reproved, though not so bad as the former, are those, who thinke it needfull to serve God at those ordinarie times of the Sabbath, which the lawes of the Land injoyne unto men, and therefore they will come duly to morning and evening prayer, thinking that they are not bound beside to heare the Word of God preached, and that all the rest of the day they may do what they will pertaining either to their profit or pleasure. Of this sort are our ignorant people, and a great number every where. But they sin grievously against God, for the Sabbath day is called the *Lords day*, because it is wholly consecrated to his worship, but they part stakes with the Lord, and give him but a part of his owne day, and that the lesse, taking the rest unto themselves, which they mispend upon their lusts. Now as these vices must be abhorred, so on the contrarie, wee must with all conscience keepe the Lords Sabbath holy according to the fourth Commandment. And therefore wee must thereon cease from all workes of sinne, and from the workes of our callings; and sanctifie this day wholly, by applying it all to the honour and worship of God. And here wee must remember, that there is a double sanctification of the Sabbath, publike, and private. Publike, when men assemble themselves together publicly, to heare Gods Word for the increase of faith and knowledge: and to call on Gods name for further graces; as also to give him thanks for his mercies, and to receive his sacraments. Private, when men in their private places imploy themselves in holy duties of prayer, reading, meditation upon Gods Word and Workes; whereby God is honoured, and their soules edified; and both these must be performed to the Lord every Sabbath day of every man. For wee may not abridge God of that time, wherein glorie should bee given to his name. If the officers should take our servants in the weeke day from our private businesse, and imploy them in publike affaires, we would thinke much at it, though it were for the common good. And shall we not thinke that God will take himselfe dishonoured of us,

A when we shall take either whole or part of his holiday, and imploy it in our busines? A maine cause why many profit little by the publike ministerie, is want of private sanctification of this day. Therefore we must learne to sanctifie the Sabbath of the Lord, for else we shall never increase in faith, knowledge, or obedience as wee should: for the begetting and increase whereof this day hath bene set apart, and sanctified from the beginning.

Objection. 2. Why did the Lord shew this vision unto *Iohn* rather on this day than any other? *Ans.* Though *Iohn* were absent from the Church in regard of bodily presence, yet hee was present in spirit with all the faithfull, and therefore no doubt in this day he gave himselfe to prayer, and other duties which he could performe for the glorie of God in that solitarie place. Now it is the Lords manner when his servants are thus humbled, then to come and reveale himselfe unto them in speciall manner. So hee did unto *Daniel*, Dan. 9. and to *Cornelius*, Act. 10. And to *Peter* praying alone in the house top, Act. 10. 11. And so doubtlesse finding *Iohn* thus imployed this Lords day, hee revealed his will unto him touching the state of the Church to the end of the world.

Hence we learne sundry instructions: First, whereas *Iohn* being in a solitarie Island kept the Sabbath; we may observe, that all persons who are severed from the assemblies of the Church; as the prisoners, and those which are sicke of a dead palsey, or other great diseases; as mariners though they bee in the midst of the sea, should keepe holy the Lords Sabbath by performing such duties as God requirith; as prayer, confession of finnes, and thanksgiving; whereby God may bee glorified, though they cannot come to the publike ministerie of the Word.

Secondly, in that *Iohn* received his vision on the Lords day, when he gave himselfe to prayer and holy duties: Hence ariseth a consideration to Gods Church, that *God draweth neere to them that draw neere to him*, as James 4. 8. And let us humble our selves and draw neere to the Lord by prayer and thanksgiving; and the Lord in mercie will shew himselfe sundry wayes, and draw neere unto us.

The cause why men have so little taste of Gods mercie and love toward them, is because they doe not draw neere unto him, by doing those duties which he requireth at their hands. For when men draw backe from God, is it not good reason he should draw backe from them?

This therefore must stirre up our hearts, and move us to come often to God by prayer and thanksgiving: For by use in these duties shall we get acquaintance with the Lord. Thus much of the circumstance of this vision.

And I heard behinde mee a great voyce, as it had bene a trumpet. First, here followeth the parts of the vision, which are two; The beginning

ning or entrance into it, in this eleventh verse, and part of the twelfth. Secondly, the matter and substance thereof, from the twelfth verse to the end of the third chapter.

The entrance into the vision is a preparation whereby the Lord maketh *John* more fit to apprehend and receive the things revealed. In which preparation we must observe, first, the means: secondly, the parts thereof. The means whereby God prepareth him, is a voice: *And I heard a voice.* The like manner of preparation hath God used in former times: When he intended to make with *Adam* the covenant of reconciliation in the seed of the woman: First, he prepared him by a voice speaking unto him before he appeared, and by his voice caused him to flee for feare. Then having rebuked him for his sinnes, he made with him this covenant of grace, Gen. 3.

And in Mount Sinai before the Lord gave the Law, he first came downe in thundring and lightning, and with the sound of a trumpet to terrifie the people: and then he uttered his law to *Moses* and to his people. So when the Lord would instruct *Samuel* touching the house of *Eli*, hee awoke him by a voice againe, and againe: and then spake plainly unto him. And in all visions usually, and generally the Lord useth to prepare his servants by voices, by signes and words, that they might bee more fit to receive such things as he revealed.

This dealing of God with *John*, in preparing him to the worthy receiving of this vision, teacheth us, that we much more should be prepared to heare and receive the will of God; for we come farre short of those excellent gifts of God which were in *John*, who yet must be prepared.

Our coming to heare Gods Word, is to learne the same for the increase of knowledge: faith, and obedience. Now the Word of God is hard, and we dull to learne; we must therefore by all good means prepare our selves, that our minds and hearts may be fit to receive the same with profit. The cause of so little profit after long hearing, is want of preparation: but hereof wee have intreated already upon the third verse.

The voice is here set out unto us three waies: First, by the place whence it came: Secondly, by the qualitie of it: Thirdly, by the matter and substance which it contained. For the place: it was uttered from *behind him*: which the Lord observed to stirre up more attention in *John*; for usually men do more carefully marke those things which come on a sudden behinde them, than those which are spoken or done directly before their face.

Secondly, for the qualitie of it, this voice was great; as is expressed further by a similitude, *Like the sound of a Trumpet*: that is, full of majesticke and power. Which also God added unto it, to further attention in *John*. For if it had beene an ordinarie voice, or small, he would

A not so much have regarded it: but being so sudden, so great and full of majesticke, it could not but make him verie attentive.

Now seeing Christ is so careful to prepare *Johns* minde with attention and diligence to receive the things which should be told him: this teacheth us, that when we come to heare Gods Word, we must use all means of attention; for if it were needfull to *John*, then it is farre more necessarie for us, who are farre inferior to him in all gifts of understanding and memorie. And here also is another cause of small profit and little liking of Gods Word, namely, want of attention in the heart. Wee must therefore like godly *Lydia*, Act. 16. stirre up our dull and heavie spirits, and with all diligence marke the things we heare. And here we must take heed of two enemies to attention: the first are by-thoughts: as when the bodie indeed is present, but the minde wandreth from the word, and is wholly possessed with thoughts of pleasure, or other worldly affaires: For these be thornes in the ground of our hearts, which choake the good seed of the Word. Many will complaine, they cannot marke and remember that which is taught: now the cause is in themselves, their wandering thoughts, which hinder both understanding and memory: for the mind conceiving other matters, cannot observe how one point dependeth upon another, much lesse remember them afterward.

The second enemy to attention, is dullnesse and heavinesse in bodie and soule: a common fault in many hearers, which sheweth it selfe by drowinesse and sleepeinesse in the time of preaching, when they ought to stirre up their bodies and hearts to all attention. If a man should bee dull and heavie when his Prince is speaking unto him of some weighty matter that is for his good, it would be taken for a part of contempt and disloyaltie towards his majesty. What disloyaltie then is this unto the King of kings, that we should be dull and heavie, when himselfe vouchsafeth to speake unto us out of the Word, the mysteries of our salvation? And surely, among other things this drowinesse is one cause of small profit, by the ministerie of the Word. And therefore, if we would increase in knowledge, and in the gifts of grace unto salvation, we must prepare our selves before we come, and in hearing cast off all dullnesse of flesh and spirit, and with all might stirre up our selves to attentive hearing: so shall the word be blessed unto us; other wise our hearing shall turne to our deeper condemnation.

V. II Saying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and that which thou seest write in a booke, and send it unto the seven Churches which*

Exod. 19. and 10.

1 Sam. 3.

are in *Asia*: unto *Ephesus*, and unto *Smyrna*, and unto *Pergamus*, and unto *Thyatira*, and unto *Sardis*, and unto *Philadelphia*, and unto *Laodicea*.

These words containe the third description of this voice, whereby *Iohns* heart was prepared, touching the substance and matter which was uttered: which consisteth in two things: The first is a testimonie, in these words; *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*. The second, a commandement in the words following: *That which thou seest, write, and send, &c.*

I. Touching the testimonie, the substance thereof is set downe in the eighth verse, where the words were handled, and the meaning shewed. They doe serve directly, to prove the Godhead and eternitie of Christ, which Christ himselfe doth here avouch, to give unto *Iohn*, and unto the Church full assurance, that the things now uttered and delivered, were from God: for saying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*; is as much as if he had said; *I which speake unto thee am God, and therefore the things I deliver, are from God*.

In this testimonie, note Gods speciall care in regard of his truth: he doth not content himselfe with revealing his will unto his Church; but more specially his care is, to certifie the Church of the truth thereof, that it is indeed from God. This hath been Gods care from the beginning. When *Peter* received a vision from God, withall Gods Spirit assured him that the things revealed therein were certaine and sure: And so when Christ preached the will of his Father among men, he did withall work strange miracles, to confirme and seale up the truth of his doctrine, that it was from God.

This speciall care of God over his Church, doth first confute the Papists opinion touching Scripture. They hold the Scripture to be certaine in it selfe, but not unto man till the Church give testimonie thereunto. But this is false: for God ever had this care over his Church, not only to reveale his will unto them, but also to use meanes for the assurance of their consciences, that that which was revealed was his undoubted and perfect will. And therefore the Word of God is certaine, and ever was, not onely in it selfe, but to the consciences of beleevers, and that without the testimonie of the Church; and so should be, though the testimonie of the Church should never come thereunto.

Secondly, hereby are confuted many carnall men, who will be of no religion; because (say they) there is no certainty in the matters of religion: mens opinions therein are so divers, that so many men, so many mindes almost, and no

man can tell who speakes the truth. *Ans.* It may be that men in sundry matters hold sundry private opinions: yet in the Church of God, all the true members of Christ hold the same opinions touching the foundation of religion. But let it be granted, That all men on earth were of divers opinions touching matters of religion, should religion therefore be uncertaine? God forbid. For religion is certaine unto men, by the meanes that God hath appointed to certifie the conscience of the truth thereof; and thereby might men come to the truth and certaintie of religion taught by the Prophets and Apostles, though all men in the world were of divers opinions touching the same. Thus much of the Testimonie.

II. Point. The commandement given to *Iohn* in these words; *That which thou seest write in a booke, and send it to the seven Churches which are in Asia*. This commandement hath two parts: First, *to write the things seene in a booke*: secondly, *to send the booke to the seven Churches here named*. And both these must *Iohn* doe, being now disabled by his exile to preach these things unto them personally, for these causes: First, that these Churches might be edified in the faith, and strengthened in these most grievous times of persecution. Secondly, that they might become keepers of this booke for the good of others: for the Church of God is the pillar of truth; not onely for that it doth publish Gods truth, but also because it keepeth it, and giveth testimony thereunto.

In this commandement note sundry things: First, that the Word of God, written and penned by the hand of man, is a notable helpe to the Church of God, and a worthy meanes to edifie the same, else Christ would never have commanded *Iohn* to have written these visions, and sent them to the Churches. Which serveth to confute the blind Papists, which say the word written is but an *inkie letter*, and a *use of wax*; because the sense thereof may be turned every way as man will. This also confuteth the Anabaptists, which so much magnifie their Revelation, and make no account of the word written. If the Lord had thought it best, he would have taught these Churches by Revelation: but they must learne by the word written.

Secondly, that the reading of Gods Word either publicly or privately, is an ordinance of God: for the Lord commanding *Iohn* to write this booke, and send it to the Churches, hereby implyeth, that they must read the same as they did other books of Scripture. The preaching of the Word is indeed the most worthy instrument for the founding and confirming of Gods Church, whereby ordinarily justifying faith is wrought in the heart: and yet reading must have his due reverence, as a meanes to confirme and increase true knowledge, faith, and repentance where it is begun.

Thirdly, here note that a man may be under the crosse, and in persecution, and yet remaine in the speciall favour of God: for this banishment into such a desert place, was unto *Iohn* a grievous crosse; and yet the Lord vouchsafed thereto reveale himselfe unto him, and to make him the penman of this booke. Which honour he vouchsafeth not to all, but to them that are most deare unto him. Which thing each one should observe: for our nature is so corrupt, that when wee are under the crosse, it would perswade us, we are cast out of the love and favour of God.

In the end of the verse, the seven Churches Ephesus, Smyrna, &c. therest are named. Which 7. places, were 7. famous cities in *Asia*, wherein were planted the most famous churches that were in those parts, and for their excellency are they named. And thus much for the meanes of *Iohns* preparation; now follow the parts thereof, which are two, first is hearing, folded up with the former meanes: *And I heard a voice*: second is, *Turning of himselfe* to see the partie that spake unto him, in these words;

v. 12 Then I turned backe to see the voice which spake with me: and when I was turned, I saw seven golden Candlesticks.

That is, so soone as I heard this sudden and mightie voice, I turned my selfe to see who it was that uttered the same. In this behaviour of *Iohn* we are to learne our dutie: so to dispose our hearts towards God in the receiving of his word, as *Iohn* disposed himselfe towards Christ in the receiving of this vision. So soone as the voice spake, *Iohn* hearkened; and because the sound thereof came behind him, he turned himselfe to looke on him that uttered it. Even so must we doe; we are by nature strangers with God, slow to heare when he speaketh, and ready to turne our hearts from God, when wee heare. Therefore when God speaketh unto us in the ministerie of his Word, we must hearken. And though we be going another way, yet we must turne our selves from our evill wayes, and incline our hearts to his voice, that wee may have fellowship with him. *S. Iohn* had not seene this marvellous vision, unlesse hee had turned himselfe to behold him that spake. No more shall we at any time feele true fellowship with the Lord, unlesse we turne our hearts unto his Word, and that betimes, while he speaketh unto us in the ministerie thereof.

Thus much for the first part of the vision, viz. the entrance thereunto. The second part is the matter and substance of the vision, containing a most worthy representation of Christ in his Majestie, as he is the Prophet, King, and Priest of this Church: set downe at large by a descrip-

tion of Christ, continuing from this twelfth verse, unto the end of the third chapter; where *Iohn* sheweth what he received of Christ, partly by hearing, and partly by seeing. And first he beginneth his description of Christ, as hee saw him represented in vision: and so describeth him by two arguments: First, by the place where he saw him; secondly, by his forme and figure wherein he appeared.

I. For the place. *Iohn* saw him in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. These seven golden candlesticks here seene, are seven Churches of *Asia*: the particular Churches of God, being compared to candlesticks, as Christ expoundeth himselfe, ver. 20. Now the particular congregations of Gods Church be called candlesticks, for that resemblance which is betwene them. For as the candlesticks serve to beare up, and hold forth the light that is set therein: so the particular Churches of God on earth, they beare up and shew forth the light of the Gospell unto the whole world, partly in the ministerie of the word, and partly in the profession of the faith of Christ.

From hence sundry things are to be learned: first observe, that the Churches are rather called *candlesticks*, than *candles*; To give us to understand, that they have no light of themselves, or from themselves, but onely are Gods instruments to beare up and hold forth the light in the ministry of the Word, and profession of the faith: for Christ Jesus is the only true lamp and candle, that giveth light to the heart and conscience by his holy Spirit in his Word.

Secondly, hence every one that professeth himselfe to be a true member of Gods Church, must learne his dutie, which is earnestly to labour to become a shining and burning candle. Indeed this principally concerns the Ministers of the Church: and therefore *Iohn Baptist* is called a burning and a shining light, *Joh. 5. 35.* but yet it must also be verified of every member thereof, as *S. Paul* commandeth; *Shine* (saith he) *as lights in the world, in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation: holding forth the doctrine of life*, that is, the Gospell. *Quest.* How shall every member of the Church become a burning light? *Ans.* First, he must have his minde enlightened in the knowledge of Gods will and Word, and then as a candlestick, hold our and send forth the beams thereof to others, partly by teaching within the compasse of his calling, and partly by example of an honest and blamelesse life and conversation. Thus we should doe, if wee would bee answerable to our profession. And to induce us hereunto, let us observe the reasons following:

First, it is Gods Commandement, *Shine as lights* (saith *S. Paul*) *in the world*, *Philip. 2. 15.* And *walk as children of the light*, *Ephes. 5. 8.* Secondly, consider the fruit hereof, which is wonderful great; for by godly instructio in our places, & by answerable obedience in our lives, we win many to the Lord: shewing forth such

Phil. 2. 15, 16.

lights.

lights, whereby others may walke in this dark world to the kingdom of heaven, which is a most blessed light. In the winter season, men thinke they doe others a great pleasure, if in the night they hang forth a light to guide passengers a little way in an earthly walke. What a blessed thing then is this, that a man should alwaies hold forth that light which shall guide a fainefull wicked wretch to leave the wayes of death, and to walke in the paths of righteousness to eternall life? But on the contrary, when men live in Gods Church like candles put out, by reason of the blindness of their mindes, and the badnesse of their lives; hence cometh great hurt and danger to others with whom they live: for they lead others that depend upon them to the pit of destruction, especially, they who know the will of God, and yet make not conscience to shew forth the same by good example of a godly life. For as in an haven towne, if any man in the night time doe remove the sea-marke which guideth the ships in the right channell, he doth as much as in himselfe to cast away all the ships that are coming neere the shore, by causing them to run on rocks and sands: even so they that should give light in the Church, if they give either no light, or false light to such as depend upon them, who are sayling in the sea of this sinfull world, hereby they leade and direct them to a wrong haven, and instead of heaven, bring their soules to eternall perdition; which must terrifie us from ignorance and evil works, and make us labour to shine as lights in this world, by good instruction and godly conversation. Third reason: Consider the fearefull judgements of God, against such as live in his Church as members thereof, and yet give no light: they doe incur the fearefull wrath of Christ. In the Temple, the keeping of the lamps and lights belonged to the Priests, and therefore he had his snuffers, and other instruments to trimme the same; which notably figured the duty of Christ in the Church of the new Testament: for he is our high Priest, who looketh to every light in the Sanctuary, that is, to every member of his Church, who ought to shine as a lampe; and when they burne but dimly and darke, he hath his snuffers to trimme them, and make them give a better light, both by godly life, and good instruction. But when he hath snuffed them againe and againe, if still they doe burne darke and dimme, and give either no light, or else a false light, then surely he will either cast them out of the Temple, or else tread them under his feet. Wee grant this liberty to every governour, when he hath light up candles for his family, if any of them will not burne clearly, hee may snuffe it: if that will not serve, hee may cast it into the fire, and set another in its place. And shall we deny to *Christ Iesus* the like authority in his church, which is his house, over men and women, who ought to shine as lights? God forbid. The Minister therefore in this

place, and every other Christian in the compass of his calling, must labour to be a shining candle, both for knowledge and godly life before all the world, that so he may escape Gods fearefull judgements. In common reason wee ought to carry our selves as shining lights before others. It is an usual thing in the winter time to hang forth lights for the guiding of mens bodies life from place to place. Now if wee have such care over their bodies, wee ought to have much more over body and soule both: that by the light of grace in us, sinners and wicked men may bee guided in the darke and dangerous way of this world, to the Kingdome of heaven.

Here then all ignorant persons and loose livers, who abound in every place; must bee admonished to reforme themselves, and labour to become lights in Gods Church. They stand as candles, but they are extinct and give no light to others. Ignorant persons therefore must cast off their ignorance, and labour for knowledge; and wicked livers must reforme their loosenesse of life, and become obedient to the Word of truth, that so they may shine unto others. If a man have a candle set up in his family, and shall assay to light it, and snuffe it once or twice, and cannot get it burne, then in displeasure hee will trample it under his feet, or cast it into the fire: Even so, *Christ Iesus* seeking to enlighten the mindes of these ignorant persons, and to reforme the lives of these loose livers by the Ministry of the Word; when he shall perceive that they refuse the light, and will not be reformed, undoubtedly in fury of his wrath, he will at length plucke them from their places, and stamp them to powder, and cast them into hell. Many be ignorant in every place, and more be prophane, and small is the number of good shining lights: but wee must remember our duty, and walke worthy in our calling. If wee hold forth the light of knowledge and obedance, we shall shine as the firmament in the world to come, Dan. 12. 3.

Golden candlesticks. The Churches of God are not base candlesticks, but candlesticks made of gold. There bee two causes of this resemblance: First, because gold is the most excellent of all metals: so Gods Churches here on earth, are the most excellent of all societies. The companies and societies of men in families, townes, and kingdomes, and in other common affaires of this life, be the ordinance of God, and good in their kinde; but yet the society of Saints in the Church of God, doth farre surpass them all, and that in these respects; First, because in Gods Church salvation may bee obtained; but in other societies as they are societies, though sundrie benefits arise from them, yet salvation is not to be had in them, unless they bee either particular Churches, or members thereof. Secondly, the Church of God is the end of all other societies: and they are all ordained to preserve and cherish the Church, which

PSAL. 5.

is the society of the Saints. Thirdly, the Church beautifies all other societies: the principall dignitie of any towne, household, or kingdome is this, that they are either Churches of God, or true members thereof.

From this prehelminence of the Church wee are taught, above all things to labour to become true members of this society. Men have great care to become members of incorporations and townes of greatest privileges; but few there bee that seeke for the privileges of Gods Church: And commonly those that seeke most for privileges in chiefe townes, have the least care to become the true members of Gods Church, which is a wretched practise, and ought not to be among us, seeing the Church hath privileges farre above all other societies.

Secondly, hence wee are taught above all things, to have care to preserve the society of the Church of God. True it is, the Minister and Magistrate must have chiefe care thereof, and yet every man in his place must doe his best endeavour hereunto, because it is the most principall society.

Thirdly, in that Gods Church is the most excellent society, giving honour to all others; wee are taught within the compasse of our callings, as much as we can, to bring all other societies unto this. Those that are masters of families, must labour to bring every one in their family to bee good members of the Church: And so in civill societies, men of government must labour that the members of the civill bodie, become also members of Christs body. Thus governours of kingdomes should labour that the parts of their dominions may be particular Churches of God. And there is good reason of this duty; because all other societies without this, are companions of men in the darke, sitting in the shadow of death, being spiritually blind, and without all sound comfort in their soules. Secondly, the Church is compared to a candlestick of gold, because of all societies among men, it is most precious and deare unto God: and therefore it is resembled to a *seale on Christs heart, and a signet on his arme*: yea, it is as deare unto him as the *apple of his eye*, *Zac. 2. 8. The church is the Queen that stands on Christs right hand in a vesture of gold. Pla. 45. 9.* yea, that which surpasseth all, *Christ redeemed the Church unto himselfe by his owne blood*. Oh then how deare and precious is she in his sight! And hereby also we are taught the same instructions that did arise from the former prehelminence; namely, to have speciall care of Gods Church to preserve the same, and to labour to become our selves, and to bring others to bee members thereof. And thus much of the title of the Church.

Now it is added, that *Christ the Messiah is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*; whereby is signified: first, that Christ is present with his Church at all times: and secondly, that being present, he hath care to gather his Church: and

being gathered, to preserve the same against the gates of hell, and all other enemies.

From hence wee learne sundry things: First, that the supremacy of the Church of Rome, wherein one is made head of the militant church is needlesse: for Christ is present alway with his Church, having speciall care to gather, guide, and preserve the same; and he needeth no Vicar generall to supply his room: for in the presence of the Prince, all commissions of vicegerency doe cease; though Christ had granted this supremacy to any, yet so long as Christ is present, their commission must cease; and it is as great pride, and greater, for any to presume to be head of all Churches in Christs presence, as for a man to sit Vicegerent in the presence of the Prince.

Secondly, seeing Christ is alwayes present with his Church, we are taught to walke with God, and before God, as *Enoch* did, *Gen. 5. 21.* Which dutie stands in these points: First, whatsoever we say, or take in hand, we must doe it as in the presence of Christ. Secondly, wee must continually depend upon Christs providence, who is ever present with his Church, providing all things for the good of his Church, and of every member thereof. Thirdly, wee must doe all our actions as looking for approbation at the hands of Christ: for which end we must take direction for the same out of his word. The practise of this duty is most excellent: for by walking with God, wee shall be enabled to many good duties, as namely, live unblameably in this wicked world, making conscience of all sinne, and approving our selves both to God and man in heart and life. And thus much for the place where *John* saw Christ.

The second argument whereby *John* describeth Christ, is his figure, or forme, in these words, *One like the sonne of man*. Some thinke that these words are a description of some Angel, not of Christ, because hee is said to be *like the sonne of man*, not the *sonne of man himselfe*; but they are deceived. For he which is here described, is before called the *first* and the *last*, it is he which was dead, and is alive; which cannot agree to any but to Christ. Now the words may more significantly bee translated thus, *One like to a sonne of man*: for if it bee translated *that sonne of man*, then Christ must needs bee the resemblance: for so he is called, *Act. 7. 56.* But here Christ is said to bee like to a *sonne of man*, by the usuall phrase of the old Testament: whereby is meant that hee is like unto a man. And Christ is not here called a man, but is said to be like unto a man, because he appeared unto *John* not in his true Man-hood, which was then in heaven, but in the likeness of his man-hood. And note this, that as Christ here appeared to *John* in this vision, so did he alwayes appear after his ascension. *Stephen* indeed saw his true manhood, but it was in heaven: and *Paul* heard his voice when he was converted: and saw the Lord, *1 Cor. 9. 5.* But no man can prove that

em. 5. 6.

A. 1. 1. 6.

ver. 1. 6.



A. 2. 7.

A. 2. 8.

that Christ appeared unto him in his true manhood, unless it were in heaven. And in all these visions John saw not his true manhood, but a resemblance thereof. Now Christ appeared thus for speciall consideration. For man is too much addicted to his bodily presence; this was the fault of his owne friends and Disciples. Therefore Christ would hereby teach us, not to seeke for his bodily presence, but rather to lift up our hearts to heaven, and therefore seeke to have fellowship with him by faith. For this cause hee said to *Mary* after his resurrection, *Touch me not, I am not yet ascended to my Father,* John 20. 17. This *Paul* had learned, *Though we had knowne Christ* (saith hee) *after the flesh, yet hence-forth know we him no more,* 2 Corin. 5. 15. Now if Christ after his ascension never appeared in his true manhood, it teacheth us, that the defence of Christs reall presence in the Sacrament is needlesse. For if Gods Church have spirituall fellowship with Christ by faith, it is sufficient. Again, whereas Christ appeareth in the shape and forme of man after his ascension, the Papists gather, that we may make images of Christ, and so answerably of the Father, and of the holy Ghost, in those formes wherein they appeared: as of the holy Ghost in the form of a dove; and of the father in the likenesse of an old man. *Ans.* It is not unlawfull to make, or to have an image of Christs manhood, so that it bee out of religious use, (though it be doubtfull whether any now have a true picture thereof:) but if it be to represent whole Christ, God and man, or be used to remember Christ thereby, or to worship Christ therein, it is an idoll. As for the formes of an old man, or of a dove, they may be made for the manifestation of the history of the Bible, when it is painted or pictured: but then we must conceive, that these formes are no images of the Father, Sonne, or holy Ghost, but onely representations of such visible appearances, as sometimes were signes and pledges of the presence of those persons. But now to abstract those formes apart from the History, and to make them images of any person in the Trinity, is flat against the second Commandement; which doth generally forbid all images of God, not accepting those verie shapes, in which himselfe tooke liberty to testifie his presence for some time. And there being no exception against Gods commandement, it is in vaine to seeke shifts and excuses for a thing forbidden, specially considering wee may not meddle with God, above our commission from God.

Clothed with a garment downe to his feet: Here Christ is further denoted by his attire. The first part whereof is, *A long garment reaching to his feet.* The causes why hee is appeared may be these: First, to signifie that hee is the high Priest of the new Testament, and so continueth, doing the offices of the high Priest for his Church after his ascension, in presenting the merit of his owne onely sacrifice, and making

A intercession to God the father for them. For the long garment was one of them, wherewith the high Priest was clothed in his amistration under the Law.

Secondly, to signifie that hee is the *Prince of peace*: for the long garment, not onely in the Church of God, but among the heathen, hath beene alwayes a note of peace: and so Christ is called, Isa. 9. 6.

Thirdly, to shew that hee had in his breast the treasures of the wisdom of the Father, and the spirit of consell. For this long robe alwayes pertained to them that excelled in consell and wisdom: and so Christ is described, Isa. 11. 2. Now in this example of Christ, we may learne a duty touching our attire; namely, that the outward garment of the body, should be suitable to the good things that ought to bee in the heart: as to our wisdom, knowledge, feare of Gods name, to our sobriety, modesty, temperance, humility, and all other vertues whatsoever. Wee must not onely in speech and action, as in hearing Gods word, and receiving the Sacraments, shew ourselves to be shining lights; but even by the gesture and attire of our body, both for matter and forme, shew forth the grace of our hearts. But miserable are these times, wherein mens attire is futable, not to the graces of God that should bee in their hearts, but to the common corruption of the times. For such it is generally, whereby as farre off (though hee never had acquaintance with the partie) a man may see the vanity and lightnesse of his minde, the pride and folly of his heart that weareth it.

The second part of Christs attire is this: *Girded about the paps with a golden girdle.* It is hanged not loose about him, but was girded close to his body: whereby is signified, that hee is a Mediator, every way ready prepared to doe the office of a Mediatour for his Church: for in all ages, the girding of the attire to the bodie, hath beene a signe of care and diligence in the businesse they have in hand; and the contrary not girding, a signe of carelesse, and negligence therein. When Christ was here on earth, he was most pious to all penitent sinners, he rejected no such that came unto him, but regarded them farre more than the Scribes and Pharisees, that were the learned men among the Jewes. And since his ascension hee hath not lost off his care and diligence, but is alwayes ready, doing all such duties which may appertaine to their salvation.

The consideration whereof, is a matter of excellent comfort unto all such as have any sparke of grace. First, hereby wee learne, that when we truly humble our selves, Christ is ready to receive our prayers, and in all our troubles and temptations ready to relieve, to comfort, and deliver us; & in our death ready to receive our soules; yea, at all times prepared to do whatsoever may further our salvation. He is not like to *Pharaohs* butler, who promised to re-

Col. 2. 11. 12.

Luk. 11. 35. 36.

Matt. 3. 16. 7. 28.

De Deo a filio Dei.

member Joseph while he was in prison with him, but forgot him quite when he was advanced to honour againe. But hee is alwayes mindefull of us and ever ready to doe all the workes of a mediator for us. Whence we are taught answerably, to have our loynes girded, as Christ commaundeth, Luke 12. 35. being ever ready to doe all duties that concerne Christianity: as to call on Gods name, and to praise God, to practise faith, repentance, and obedience; fit to die, and fit to live: never suffering ourselves to bee unfit for any thing that concerns our salvation, but at all times to stand upon our watch, that whensoever God shall call, we may be ready to enter into the kingdome of heaven. But alas, the case with most men goeth farre otherwise: they fit themselves for the world at all times; but few seeke to prepare themselves for the Kingdome of heaventill death doe come.

This ought not to be: it is a treacherous part in any subject, to bee unprepared for the service of his Prince, and yet ever ready to receive a common enemy. And it is no lesse treason against God, to foresew our preparation for the Lord, by fitting ourselves for the world.

Further, he is said to be girded; not about the loynes, but about the paps and breast. Whereby some say, (and not unfitly) is signified, that there is no defect, or aberration in any motion or affection in our Saviour Christ, but every thought and inclination of his heart, is kept in order by the fulnesse of the spirit, which dwelleth in him bodily.

v. 14. His head and haire were white as white wooll, and as snow: and his eyes were as a flame of fire.

In the third place, John here describes Christ by the parts of his body. The whitenesse of his head and haire, signifieth the eternitie of Christ. For howsoever as hee is man, hee had a beginning, yet in regard of his Godhead he is eternal, and therefore is called, *The ancient of daies*, Dan. 7. and is said to have been in the beginning, Joh. 1. that is, to have had a being before all other things had their beginning.

In this resemblance of his eternitie, by head and haire as white as wooll and snow, hee giveth us to understand, an honour and prerogative in the aged man, whereby he excelleth the younger sort: to wit, the hoarenesse and whitenesse of his haire: for which cause in the word of God it is set forth by most worthy comparisons as by the white *Almond tree*, Eccles. 12. 5. and by a glorious *silver crowne*, not made by man, but by the hand of God set upon his head. And herein doth this excellency of the aged consist, that they beare the Image of Gods eternitie before all that are of younger yeares. From whence all younger men are taught to reverence the aged, by rising up before them: acknow-

ledging thereby the preheminance of the hoar-head.

Again, hereby the aged are taught to carry themselves answerable to their estate and condition: they ought to excell all their younger men in knowledge, wisdom, and experience of good things: 1 Joh. 2. 13. *I write unto you Fathers, (that is aged men; who by reason of yeares are fathers) because you have knowne him who is everlasting.*

Also they must be holy, as he that is eternal is holy, whose eternitie they shew forth: And therefore *Salomon* saith; The white head is a crowne of glory when it is found in the way of righteousness: that is, in one that walketh in the way of righteousness, Prov. 16. 31. for his white haire signifieth, that he hath spent much time and care about good duties. But it is no ornament, unless it bee joined with holinesse of hart and life. Which I say, because many younger men excell the aged in the knowledge of God, and other vertues, which is a shame to the gray-headed; for as they goe before others in yeares; so they ought to excell in piety, knowledge, and all vertues. Ignorance and loosenesse of life is a foule vice in any; but in him that beares the silver crowne, intolerable. For how can they looke for reverence from the younger, when as they be far inferiour to them in gifts of grace? It is no excuse for old men to say, Their wits are not so ripe as young mens are, and their memories faile them. Their aged ignorance argueth, that they spent the time of their youth loosely and prophanely. For they that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall bring forth fruit in their age, Psal. 62. 1, 3, 14. A plant is young, and therefore hee that would weare the crowne of glory in his age, must receive the sap of grace in the house of God while he is young.

And his eyes were as a flame of fire: Here John proceedeth in describing the parts of Christs body. In the handling whereof, it is hard for any to set downe certainly, what the holy Ghost intendeth in every particular. It shall be sufficient for us to follow that interpretation which is most probable, and best agreeing with the tenour of Gods word.

In this description of Christs eyes, are signified to us two things: First, that Christ the mediator and redeemer of his Church, is of most quick, sharpe, and piercing sight, so as he beholdeth all things that are done upon the earth: yea, hee seeth into the very secret thoughts of mens hearts: rather can the eyes of his Godhead more easily pierce, than fire can doe into the substance of bodily things. And there is great necessity it should bee so: for being head and governour of his Church, hee must behold their severall estates, and see the malice and practices of Satan, and other enemies against them.

Now in that Christ our Saviour hath this piercing sight, we are taught to have care, not only

onely of our words and actions, but also of the very secret thoughts, purposes and desires of our hearts : for the piercing eye of Christ seeth them all, therefore we must be sure they be well ordered. In the courts of men, thoughts and inward motions beare no action ; but with God it is otherwise. Christ Jesus hath a fry eye, that seeth into all our thoughts, and there hee holdeth a Court of judgement. Therefore wee must keepe a godly watch over all the imaginations of our hearts, that they may be approved of Christ, lest for them wee be judged and condemned.

Secondly, this teacheth us in matters of religion to be that in deed, which wee seeme to be in profession. For though we may deceive men, which know not our hearts, yet wee cannot deceive Christ : For by his fry eyes hee seeth whatsoever is in us. And yet the common practice of the world is here to be reproved, who termeth them hypocrites that take upon them any profession for the name and religion of Christ. But herein men goe beyond their calling : it belongeth onely unto the piercing eye of Christ, to judge and looke at mens hypocrisy of heart.

Secondly, by these fry eyes is signified, That Christ is full of anger, wrath, and judgement against all sinners, ready to take vengeance on all those that will not yeeld subjection unto him by turning from their sinnes, and beleving in him : for Christ as he is a Saviour, so is he a judge ; and therefore in the parable he saith, *Those mine enemies that would not that I should rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before mee.* The consideration hereof serveth to awake many an one out of the sleepe of sinne. This age is miserable, if we regard the practice of faith and repentance which God requireth ; for men live in ignorance without knowledge, they goe on in looselee of life without reformation ; which is both scandalous unto men, and odious unto God : not one of an hundred turneth to God at the preaching of his word, renewing his waies by daily repentance. But unto many it is meat and drinke to goe on in those sins wherein their hearts delight. But let these men consider, that Christ is a righteous Judge, beholding his enemies with fierce and fry eyes, alwayes ready to take vengeance on them that doe not repent : and therefore they must in time consider their estate, for if they persevere in their evil wayes as they have begun, the truth is, hee still beholderh them with his fry eyes, and though in his great patience he spare them for a time, yet at length he will put in practice the execution of his judgement, and slay them for enemies ; as it is in the Parable, Luke 19. 27. Let them remember what a fearefull thing it is to fall into the hands of God, if his wrath bee kindled never so little, Psal. 112.

ver. 15 And his feet like

unto fine brasse, burning as in a furnace, and his voyce as the sound of many waters.

The word in the originall signifieth Brasse that shineth, which for substance is pure and durable, a very choyce and excellent kinde of brasse. And hereunto Christs feet are compared, to signifie unto us his invincible power, whereby he is able not only to encounter with sinne, Satan, and death, but also that he hath already entred combat with them, and hath bruised the heads of these his enemies. Yea, hereby is signified, that hee hath not onely done these things in his owne person, but also will doe the same in all his members, by his invincible power, unto the end of the world. Which is a matter of exceeding great comfort to Gods Church and people, never to bee forgotten. If any man be exercised in any grievous temptation of Satan, he must not be astonished and confounded therewith : but remember, that Christ our Saviour hath the brazen feet, wherewith he hath bruised the head of the Serpent, and will (if hee seeke unto him unfaindely) bruse in him the Serpents head : so by experience shall wee finde the benefit of his brazen feet.

If any bee oppressed with the corruption of his nature, whether it be in thoughts or affections ; let him come unto Christ Jesus, lay open his wants before him, shew his sinnes, and make knowne the strength thereof unto him, and withall cry unto him for helpe : and hee shall finde by joyfull experience, though they were never so many or mighty. That the power of Christ in him, will vanquish and subdue them all.

Again, doth any feare the terrours of death (as all men doe by nature) let him consider, that Christ hath his feet of brasse, wherewith hee did encounter with death upon the crosse : and not content with that, went downe with him into his owne denne, and there did bruse his head, and subdue his power. Indeed if death were to encounter with us in his full strength, it were a matter of feare : but considering that Christ hath bruised his head, this must stay our hearts against overmuch dread. And as it serveth to minister comfort to the godly, so it is a matter of all terror and woe unto those that live impenitent : for Christ hath feet of brasse to bruse the head of all his enemies, and such are all those which goe on in sin : unlesse they turne, destruction will bee their end. Let every one therefore looke unto his soule, that hath led a course in any sinne. Let him forsake his old master Sathan, and the workes of darkness, and turne unfaindely to Jesus Christ in the practice of faith and true repentance, and by all obedience in the duties of his callings. For howsoever the patience of God may stay for a time the execution of his justice & wrath, yet in the end they shall feele by wofull experience.

rience the destroying power of these his brazen feet.

Burning as in a furnace. Feet ascribed to God and men in Scripture, doe oft-times betoken their wayes: So hereby *Christ's* feet wee may understand his workes and wayes. And whereas they are said to *burne as in a furnace*; thereby is signified the perfection thereof. All the counsels of God, with the execution thereof in the creation and government of the world, with all his workes therein, are all most holy and pure, like fine brasse purged in the furnace. Psal. 18. 30. *The wayes of God are uncorrupt, yea, hee is holy in all his wayes.*

The consideration whereof, must teach us to conceive and speake reverently of all the workes of God, even of those most secret and strange judgements, whereof wee cannot comprehend a reason. Yet because they proceed from God, wee must acknowledge them pure and just. In sundry points of religion there is a learned ignorance, whereof this is not the least: to hold our selves content, and to reverence the workes of *Christ*, though wee see no reason thereof; nay, though to us they seeme against all reason: for all the wayes of God are uncorrupt. Though the blinde eye of man cannot discern the light of the Sunne, yet the Sunne is full of light: so though our blinde eyes cannot behold the purity of Gods workes, yet they are all done in justice and equitie, yea, they are justice it selfe: for his will is the rule of justice. And wee must not thinke that God doth a thing because it is good and right, but therefore is the thing good and right, because God willeth and worketh it. Example hereof wee have in Gods word: *God commanded Abimelech to deliver Sarah to Abraham, or else hee will destroy him and his house.* In mans reason this might seeme unjust: for why should *Abimelechs* servants be punished for their masters fault? So *Achan* sinneth, and all the host of Israel is punished. *David* committed Adultery, and the *chilae* which hee begat dieth. *David* numbred the people: but all the people are smitten with the plague, 2 Sam. 24. All these to mans reason may seeme unquall: yet being the workes of God, wee are with all reverence to judge them most just and holy. Again, the Scripture sheweth plainly, that God in his eternall counsell hath decreed to save some, and to reject others: and his reason moving him thereto, is not any thing foreseen in them, but his will and pleasure alone. This in mans reason seemeth to be cruelty towards some: and therefore sundry men disclaime this doctrine, as charging God with injustice and tyranny. But herein they greatly offend: for it is the manifest truth of God in his word, and therefore ought with reverence to be acknowledged, though wee see no reason thereof: For *who art thou, oh man, that pleadest against God?* Rom. 9. 20.

And his voice as the sound of many waters. The voice of *Christ* is resembled to the found

of many waters for two causes. First, to signifie the loudnesse and greatnesse of it: the found wherof hath beene heard throw all the world in the Ministry of the Gospell. Secondly, to shew the power and efficacie thereof in the cares of his creatures: for such power it is of, that when the creatures were not, *Hee but spake the word and they were made*, Hebr. 12. 3. This powerfull voice of *Christ*, brought *Lazarus* out of the grave after hee had bene dead foure dayes, bound hand and foot. And by this voice of *Christ* shall they that have been dead six thousand yeares before, bee raised up to life: *The house shall come, in the which all that are in the graves shall heare his voyce, and shall come forth to judgement.* Joh. 5. 28, 29.

Hereby then wee may see the great security and the deadnesse of mens hearts in this age. For though the powerfull word of *Christ* bee daily sounded into the cares of many; yet it entereth not into their hearts. They live securely in their sinnes, though they be daily exhorted to repentance. But shall dead *Lazarus* start out of his grave, when *Christ* saith, *Lazarus come forth*? Nay, shall they that were consumed to dust many thousand yeares before, at the hearing of *Christ's* voyce, rise out of their graves? And shall wee which live in body, be no whit affected with it in our soules? Oh, fearefull death in sinne! And yet this is that state of all those that will not bee moved to leave their sinnes by the ministry of the Word. It may be the outward ear receiveth the sound, but the dead heart receiveth no instruction. Wee must therefore apply our hearts to this powerfull voyce of *Christ*; and leave the sinnes wherein wee have lyeu dead, that so the quickening power herof unto salvation may appeare in us.

v. 16 *And hee had in his right hand seven starres: and out of his mouth went a sharpe two edged sword: And his face shone as the Sunne shineth in his strength.*

Here *Iohn* proceedeth further, to set out the parts of *Christ's* body, and the properties thereof. By *seven Stars* wee are to understand *seven Angels*: that is, (as *Christ* expounded them, verse 20.) the seven Ministers of the seven Churches of Asia. And they are called starres for these causes: First, starres give light to men on earth: And so the Ministers ought to give spirituall light to them that live in the Church, both by doctrine, and by an unblameable conversation. Secondly, starres have their continuall abode in heaven, and defend not unto the earth: So Ministers above all others ought to have their conversation in heaven. This indeed

* Joh. 11. 43, 44.

Psal. 111. 7.

* Gen. 22.

b Joh. 7.
c 1 Sam. 12. 18.

Rom. 9.

is the dutie of every Christian: but especially of the Minister, in regard of his calling. And this heavenly conversation hee must expresse: first, by seeking the conversion of his owne soule; and then the conversion of others, that they may have an eternall mansion in heaven. Thirdly, they are called *starrs*, because (if they be faithfull) they shall be honoured of God, and made to *shine as the starrs for ever and ever*, Dan. 12. 3.

It is added, *that they are in Christs right hand*. Whereby is signified that to him belongeth the regiment, and government, and the whole disposition of the ministerie for matters that concerne the Church. From whence arise sundry instructions:

1. That it is Christ who giveth to his Church ministers which preach the Gospell. For hee *ascended upon high, and gave gifts unto men, some to be Apostles, some Prophets, and Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers for the gathering together of the Saints, and for the worke of the Ministry, and for the edification of the body of Christ*. And for this cause we ought to pray daily unto Christ, *that he would thrust forth labourers into his harvest*: that the remnant of Gods elect may bee gathered, and so wee see an end of these miserable daies wherein we live.

Secondly, in that Christ holdeth them in his right hand, we may gather that Christ giveth protection and defence unto his ministers, when they are faithfull and walke in their calling according to his will: which is a matter to be considered of all that are called into this office: For they have sundry occasions of discouragement; as the negligence and backwardnesse of their people: the slanders and mockings of the enemies: But this protection of Christ must comfort them against them all; seeing they are in Christs right hand, they must goe on with all godly boldnesse.

Thirdly, this sheweth the dignitie of this calling. Indeed it is despised and reputed base in the world; and hereby many are driven from it. But let the wicked judge what they will: Behold Christ honoureth it, for his faithfull ministers are not onely present before him, which were no small thing: but he holdeth them in his right hand, than which, what greater glorie can bee done unto them? This must be an inducement unto all those that are indued with gifts fit for this calling, to effect the same.

Lastly, every Minister of the Gospell must hereby learne to be faithfull in his calling, and holy in his conversation: for by vertue of his calling he is placed in Christs right hand. Now shall we thinke that Christ will long beare in his right hand any that are unfaithfull, or prophane? Nay he will take them out of his right hand, and put them under his feet of brasse, and there grind him to powder: For as they are honoured above others by their place, so shall their confusion be the greater, unlesse they bee

faithfull. This we may see in *Isaiah and Habakkuk*. Levit. 10. 1. and *Habakkuk and Pharaoh*, 1 Sam. 3. 13. And in the same respect ought all the people of God to be careful to their wayes: for by their calling of Christianitie they bee members of Christ. Now if they be not faithfull and answerable to their profession, he will surely deale with them, as with unfaithfull ministers, put them under his feet of brasse, and confound them for ever. They must therefore make conscience of all sinne, and become not hearers only, but doers of his will; so that Christ protect them in this life, and save them eternally.

And out of his mouth went a sharpe two edged sword. This sword that came out of his mouth, is nothing else but the doctrine of the Law and the Gospell, uttered and propounded in the writings and ministerie of the Prophets and Apostles: Hebr. 4. 12. *The Word of God is lively, mighty in operation, and sharper than any two edged sword*. And it is thereto compared, because as a sword with a double edge cutteth sharply into the flesh, and pierceth deeply into the bones, even to the very marrow: so the doctrine of the Law and the Gospell cutteth sharply, and pierceth deeply into the very marrow of the heart of every man, to the dividing of the thought and the spirit. This two edged sword, the Word of God, hath a twofold operation: One upon the wicked: Another in the elect. It woundeth the wicked at the very heart with a deadly wound, and thereby brings them to eternall death: *May 11. 4. Christ shall slay the wicked with the breath of his lips*: that is, with his word, which is this two edged sword. Herewith shall he consume Antichrist, 2 Thel. 2. 8. *visit Levia. han*, and slay the dragon; that is, the greatest enemies of his Church, *May 27. verse 1.*

Here consider how the Word of God should kill an impenitent sinner. There bee three degrees of spirituall death: First in this life, where an impenitent sinner receiveth his deadly wound: The second at the end of this life, when the bodie is laid in the grave, but the soule goeth to the torments of the damned: The third at the end of the world, when body and soule together goe to hell eternally. Now a sinner receiveth in this life his deadly wound after this manner: Christ in the giving thereof hath a threefold worke in the heart by the ministerie of his Word, which is the two edged sword. First, hereby he revealeth unto him his finnes, as hypocrisie, pride, and rebellion of heart, with all other his horrible and damnable transgressions against the first and second table: 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. *When all prophesie, and there cometh in one unlearned, he is reproved of all the Prophets by the Word* judge him, and thereby lay open unto him the secret finnes of his heart, with the finnes of his life. Secondly, Christ hereby revealeth unto him his indignation and wrath, which is the curse of the law due

due unto him. In which regard the law is called *a killing letter*, shewing no mercy, but only thundering out the fierce wrath of God upon transgressors. Thirdly, hereby Christ awaketh his guiltie conscience, sharpeneth the sting thereof, and terrifieth him at the hearing of his Word. Thus wicked *Felix* trembled when hee heard *Paul* preach ^b of repentance, righteousness, and the judgement to come. So when king *Belshazzar* law the palme of the hand, writing things against him upon the wall, his countenance was changed, his thoughts troubled him, his joynts were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. And all these are wrought in the wicked without apprehension of mercy, or reformation of life. It may please God to recover one that is thus wounded; but while he is in this estate, he hath received a deadly wound, and without unfeigned repentance, is already in the first step towards eternall death: for these horrors of conscience, severed from the apprehension of Gods mercy in Christ, are no grace, but the flashes of hell fire, and the beginning of eternall woe. And thus we see how Christ by his word woundeth his enemies.

Hence we are to learne sundry duties. First, how to carrie our selves towards them that after they have heard the Word preached unto them, will rage and storme against it, and the preachers thereof, because it touched them. We must not despise or maligne them, but rather be moved with compassion towards them. For this their behaviour is a token they are wounded with the sword of Christ at the very heart, and therefore their ragings are nothing but singlings before death eternall, unless the Lord in mercy recover them of this deadly wound.

II. Hereby we are let to see and know the lamentable state of the greatest number in those congregations where the word hath long been preached; for we shall finde by lamentable experience, that in those places few come to true knowledge, repentance, and obedience; but most remaine ignorant and impenitent: now this their condition is most fearefull. A terrible judgement of God is upon them: for when men have long heard Gods Word, and are not thereby bettered, for knowledge in minde, and obedience of life; they are thereby wounded unto death.

This two edged sword hath alwayes his worke: it either cutteth unto life by working repentance and other graces of salvation; or woundeth unto death them that receive it not.

Wee must therefore lament the case of such persons, as remaine ignorant and impenitent under the ministerie of the Word, for they are as yet dead men for ought we know, howsoever they may make a faire shew by their civill honesty. If any man should come into a field, & there behold many thousands slaughtered, and gushing out blood, some in the head, some in

the side, &c. this sight would make his heart to bleed. Well, this is true in Gods Church, though it be not seene with bodily eyes, the most men are wounded with this twoed of Gods Word, and lie piteously wallowing in the blood of their soules, while they continue in ignorance, in security and want of repentance.

III. This must admonish us all to labour earnestly to have further things wrought in us, than a knowledge of our finnes, an apprehension of wrath, or horror of conscience: namely, true faith and repentance, and sound reformation of life: for without this, we have nothing in us but the deadly wounds of Christs enemies. And thus much for the worke of the Word upon the wicked.

The second worke of this two edged sword is in Gods elect; in them it hath sundry works, all which tend to their subjection. First, it woundeth to the quick the corruption of their nature. This is one special cause why it is called a two edged sword, because it entereth deeply into the heart of Gods children, and giveth their corruption such a deadly blow, as it shall never recover againe: It killeth not the person, as it doth in the wicked: but quickeneth the soule, it woundeth his corruption. *Paul ministered the Gospel, & that the offerings up of the Gentiles might be acceptable.* Where resembling Gods Church to a sacrifice, he giveth us to understand, that every true Christian must be slaine, though not in body and soule, yet in regard of sinful motions, corrupt affections, and rebellious actions, by this two edged sword of the spirit. And this is his conversion whereby the root of corruption is flocked up.

Secondly, after conversion, this two edged sword serveth to cut off and pare away the remnant of unbeliefe, doubting, suspicie, anger, and other sins that be in the elect: *every branch* (saith Christ) *that bringeth forth fruit in me, my Father the husbandman pruneth, so make it bring forth more fruit.*

Thirdly, it serveth to keepe Gods children in awe and subjection unto him. In this vision, Christ standeth in his Church, holding up the scepter of his kingdom, which he beareth in his mouth for this end, that though his enemies will not be brought in subjection unto him, yet his owne children might hereby be kept in awe of him. He therefore that will not at the lifting up of the two edged sword tremble and feare before Christ, is but a rebellious subject: If there be bawling in humane societies, let the Magistrate but shew himselfe with the sword of justice, and straightway every one is quiet; if any resist, he is taken for a rebell. Now shall this be affected in civil policie, and not be true in Christs spirituall government? unless therefore we will shew our selves rebels against Christ, let us cease from sin, and tremble before him, seeing he holdeth out unto us the scepter of his Word.

Fourthly, this sword serveth notably for our

* Rom. 15. 16.

John 15.

defence and victorie in all temptations: *Epi. 6. 17. The sword of the spirit, the Word of God, is one peece of the compleat armour of a Christian.* Herewith did *Christ* vanquish *Sathan*, *Mat. 4.* And thus we see how the Word of God is a two edged sword, in regard of the elect.

Hence we are taught, that when wee have the doctrine of the Law and of the Gospell preached unto us, wee must with all reverence heare and receive the same. Men will heare it while it is taught generally, but if it once touch their particular faults, then they cannot brooke it. But wee must suffer it to ranke our hearts, and be glad thereof: for by this meanes our corruption is wounded, and sinne slaine in us; our soules are converted unto God, and shall be saved. If any man were diseased with a Fistula, or any other dangerous fore, hee would willingly suffer the surgeon to search and pierce into the same. Shall we doe this for our bodily health, and shall we not suffer the word of God to enter into our hearts to rip up our sinnes, that they being wounded and subdued, wee may be healed, and so our soules live for ever? we cannot live unto God, till we die unto sin: and we cannot die unto sinne, till the same bee wounded in us by this two edged sword. Away therefore with all nicenesse, in disliking the word when it crosseth our humour; and if wee love eternall life, let us then embrace it most willingly.

Saint *Iohn* saith further of this two edged sword; that it came out of *Christ's* mouth. Other kings carrie their swords and scepters in their hands; but *Christ* beareth his in his mouth, to teach us this speciall point. That we must receive no doctrine from any man, which he hath not received from the mouth of *Christ*. For first, *God* revealeth his will unto his sonne, and *Christ* delivereth it unto his Prophets and Apostles by the spirit, and to his Ministers in their writings. They therefore must deliver nothing unto Gods people, but that which they have from *Christ*: if they deliver ought else, they hold not forth *Christ's* sword: neither can it have that powerfull effect, either in the godly or in the wicked.

And his face shone as the Sunne shineth in his brightnesse. Here is the last branch of this description of *Christ*; he is compared to the shining of the Sunne, and that in his strength: because *Christ* is unto his Church as the Sunne is to the world. And looke what duties the Sunne performeth unto the world, the same duties *Christ* performeth unto his Church in a more excellent manner, as their resemblance will evidently declare.

First, the Sunne in the world dispelleth night and darknesse, and maketh the day by bringing light: so *Christ* the Sunne of righteousness, *Malach. 4. 2.* sendeth downe the bright beames of knowledge and grace into his Church, whereby blindness and ignorance is taken away, *2 Cor. 4. 6.* And hereby every one, of what

sort or place soever, is taught first, to labour for knowledge in the will of God. A great shame it is for any to be ignorant herein: when the day commeth we set open our windowes, to let in the light of the Sunne for our comfort: behold *Christ* *Jesus* is ever a shining light in his Church: Why then should wee not open our hearts, that the beames of light and knowledge which descend from him, may enter into us, and give us light? Secondly, we must hereby learne in our whole conversation among men, to walke by this light. We are here but pilgrims travelling towards heaven: and the way of this miserable world is full of darknesse: yet *Christ* *Jesus* is in the middelt of his Church, shining as the Sunne in his strenght, to give the light of knowledge, whereby we may live the right way thither. Without him there is nothing but darknesse and wandering: his Word is the light, and hable to the day darke. We therefore must attend to him in all our affaires of this life: and in the particular duties of our lawfull callings, take direction from the light which shineth from his face.

Secondly, the Sunne serveth most excellently to comfort and revive cold and dead starved bodies; as experience in the spring time teacheth: So *Christ* *Jesus* by the worke of his spirit, conveyeth spirituall life and heat into the dead and frozen heart of man: he is of power to comfort them that mourne, to give life to the broken-hearted, and to revive the spirit of the humble, *Isay 57. 15.* and for this most excellent worke, may well be called the Sunne of Righteousnesse. In regard whereof, we must labour above all things, to be partakers of this life and joy which commeth from *Christ*. In Winter time men use to stand in the Sunne, to comfort and warme themselves with the heat thereof. Behold, *Christ* *Jesus* is the Sunne of righteousness to his Church, which giveth heat and life to all the true members thereof. We therefore must seeke above all things, to have his blessed beames of grace to shine upon our cold and frozen hearts, that by his spirituall heat wee may be received unto everlasting life. In this world nothing is so much regarded, as riches, honours, and pleasures: who will shew us any good, is the worldlings song. But with godly *David*, we must say, *Psalm. 4. 4.* Lord, shew us the light of thy countenance upon us, quicken thou us with thy spirituall life, and comfort us with the beames of mercie. *Quest.* How may I get gracious beames of grace and life, to come from this Sunne of righteousness into my heart? *Answe.* Before a man can live by *Christ*, he must be killed in himselfe. Men doe not kill those whom they would restore to temporall life, but the Lord taketh that course. Thou therefore must suffer his two edged sword to enter into thee, yea, to be thrust up to the hilt into thy heart, that to thy vile finnes and corruptions may be ripped up, and the wrath of God deserved thereby made knowne unto

unto thee, that in thy selfe thou mayest bee out of hope: and then, and not before art thou to receive comfort and life by *Christ*; as a man that is cold in bodie, is most fit to receive heat by cloaths and other meanes of warme-nesse. Now being thus humbled in thy selfe, thou must use the meanes which God hath ordained, to wit, the hearing, reading, and meditating in his Word, with earnest prayer for grace and mercie; and then shalt thou perceive the joyfull beams of life shining into thy soule. If any man had all the world, and wanted this grace of life and comfort by *Christ*, it were but a curse unto him: but though a man want all things else, yet by this life of grace in *Christ* he is blessed for ever: and therefore above all other things men should labour for it.

Thirdly, the Sunne serveth to discover all things. In the night nothing is discerned, but all things appeare in one forme: but when the Sunne cometh forth, all things are made manifest, even the small mores in the aire. Even so *Christ* Jesus the Sunne of righteousness, hee seeth all things, and can discover the most hidden secrets of men: nothing is hid from the light of his countenance, so infinite is his divine wisdom and knowledge. In regard wherof wee must bee moved to looke unto all our wayes, both thoughts, words, and actions, that they bee such as *Christ* approveth; for though we may deceive the world by a false gloss, yet all that wee doe speake or thinke, is naked and bare before him; he knoweth the same, and can and will reveale it.

If this were believed and remembered, it would be a meanes to suppress much fraud and injustice, and many grievous sinnes which are rife in the world. Men thinke if they can cleare the eyes of the world, all is well, they may doe what they will: but wee must thinke upon the shining face of *Christ*, which discerneth and discovereth all secrets; and labour thereupon to make conscience of all our wayes, yea, of our secret thoughts, that God may approve the same.

v. 17 *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: then hee laid his right hand on mee, saying, Feare not, I am the first and the last.*

v. 18 *And I am alive, but I was dead: And behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: And I have the keyes of hell and of death.*

A Here Saint *John* describeth *Christ* further by other arguments: namely, by sundry actions of his. The first whereof is a confirmation of *John* being fore afraid, set downe in this and the next verse. In which action note two things; First, the occasion thereof: Secondly, the means of his confirmation. The occasion was *Johns* exceeding feare, set downe in these words: *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.* The means of confirmation, in the words following, *Then he laid his hands upon me, &c.*

For the occasion, *Johns* feare was exceeding great, and that of death, as appeareth by *Christ* his confirmation: wherein he telleth *John*, *Thou he livest, and hath power over death.* In this his feare note sundry points: The cause, the effect, and the kinde of this feare. For the first; The cause was *Christ* his appearance in glorie and majestie unto *John*, set downe in these words, *When I saw him.* Where we learne, that sinfull men since *Adams* fall cannot abide the presence of God. * *Adams* before his fall talked face to face with God without feare: but so soone as hee had sinned, ^b *hee fled away at the hearing of his voice, and hid himselfe among the trees of the garden.* This feare cometh by reason of mans guiltinesse before God. Hence *Manna* said to his wife, *“We shall surely die, because we have seene God.”*

First, by this, that no sinfull man can abide the presence of God, wee are taught to labour to become new creatures, to have the image of sinne defaced in us, and the image of God restored in righteousness and true holinesse. True happinesse consisteth in fellowship with God: but wee can never have true fellowship with him while we live in our sinnes: 1 *John*. 1. 6. *If we say we have fellowship with him, and walke in darkness, we lie.* We therefore must labour to be purged from our sinnes, and so his presence shall be our joy.

Secondly, this feare of *John* at *Christ* his presence in glorie teacheth us, That the sight and presence of Gods majestie is a most excellent meanes to humble a man, and to make him know himselfe to be nothing in himselfe. When *Abraham* talked with God, the more hee beheld the majestie of God, the more he humbled himselfe, confessing at last, *that he was but dust and ashes,* Gen. 18. 27. And *Ezer* by a great draught of filthes seeing but a glimmering of divine majestie in *Christ*, could not abide it, but cried out, *Depart from me, for I am a sinfull man,* Luke 5. 8. And to the holy Angels, when they stand before the Majestie of God, are said to cover their faces and their feet with their wings: to signifie that they are nothing in regard of the exceeding majestie of God, and in themselves unable to behold his glorie.

Thirdly, hereby we are taught to acknowledge Gods great goodnesse towards us in the Ministerie of the Word: wherein he vouchsafeth to speake unto us, not in his owne person, as he did in mount Sinai, which would be so terri-
ble

* Gen. 1.

b Gen. 3. 8.

* Iudg. 13. 18.

Vse.

ble that none could abide it: but favourably and familiarly by the ministry of men that are like unto our selves. Many abuse this mercy of God, and despise the Word because of the messenger; but we must learne by this bountie of God to receive the Word with all reverence as from the Lord.

Lately, in this exceeding feare of *Iohn*, who was an Apostle and a very godly and righteous man; we learne that the most holy man that is will be astonished even to death with the presence of Gods glorious majestie. And if no man, be hee never so holy, can stand before Gods presence, much lesse can the most righteous works of any man endure the triall of his judgement: if his person cannot abide his presence, his works will never beare his judgement. For the person must first be approved, before the works be accepted. Therefore damnable is the doctrine of the Church of Rome, which teach that such as in themselves are sinful men must stand before Gods judgement seat, bringing with them works of grace, as meanes of their justification, and part of satisfaction to Gods justice. It is a doctrine of desperation: for how can our works be perfectly holy seeing our persons are but sanctified here in part? And who can think that the infinite justice of God can be satisfied by the imperfect righteousness of man.

I. Point. The effect of this feare in his body; *He fell downe as dead at his feet.* This was no small feare, but exceeding great, astonishing his senses, and laying him downe as dead. Physicians say, and that truly, the minde followeth the temperature of the body. But hence we may as truly say, That the body followeth the disposition of the minde; for the affections of the soule wil worke upon the body like unto strong diseases. *Iohns* feare casteth his body into a swoone: And so horreur of conscience when the heart is cold will make the body hot, & the intrals to roule in the body. The same may be said of anger: 1 Reg. 21. 4. where *Ahab* could not obtain *Naboths* vineyard: he laid him down on his bed in displeasure, & was almost dead: even so will other affections worke upon the body.

Hence we learne, that the bodies of men being diseased, must not alwaies be cured by bare Physicke, but sometimes by curing of the mind, and ordering of the affections: for when the dissembler of the body ariseth from the disorder of the minde, then till the minde be well composed and settled, physicke will little avails.

II. Point. The kinde of this feare is insinuated in these words, *he fell at his feet*; whereby the holy Ghost giveth us to understand, that this was a religious reverent feare, which he bare to Christ. For this kind of prostrating the body betokeneth humilitie, and argueth a reverent estimation of the thing feared.

Hence wee are taught, when wee come into the presence of Christ to prostrate our selves as *Iohn* did, and looke that wee be stricken with a religious feare of his majesty. If any shall

think that Christ is now ascended into heaven, and therefore we cannot now fall down at his feet as *Iohn* did. I answer, though Christ be now in heavea, yet hath he his feet upon earth, at which we must fall downe. In the old testament the mercy seat was the pledge of Gods presence: and therefore it is called Gods footstool, Psal. 99. 5. before which the Jewes were to fall downe. Well, though the mercy seat be now taken away, yet some thing is in stead thereof: For wheresoever Gods people assemble themselves in the name of God, there is his footstool: and therefore in the assemblies of Gods Saints, we must cast downe our selves before Christ *Iesus*, and doe all duties unto him with all feare, awe, & reverence of his majesty. This feare of *Iohn*, though it was holy, yet is tainted with some sin and corruption: for it was immoderate feare of death which made him thus astonished and affright. Whence we learne that the most holy affections of righteous men are not perfectly holy, but mixed with imperfection according to the measure of their sanctification, which is always in part in this life. Whereby it appears that no man hath in him a fullall feare of God alone, but some servile feare (wherby we feare God for his judgments) is mixed therewith. And thus much for *Iohns* feare, which is the occasion of this confirmation.

Now followeth the meanes of his confirmation in these words, *Then hee laid his right hand upon me, saying, Feare not, I am the first, and the last: and I am alive, but I was dead: and beholde I am alive for evermore, Amen: and I have the keys of hell and death.* Here note two things; first, the time when Christ used the meanes for *Iohns* confirmation: secondly, the meanes themselves. The time is noted in this word, *then*; that is, after his presence had stroken a feare in my heart, which made me as dead, then the Lord used meanes to comfort me. The meanes of comfort and confirmation are then used when the partie is humbled. And thus the Lord dealeth with all his servants in the matter of their salvation: First, hee bruise their stonie hearts, and woundeth their sinful soules, before hee powreth in the oyle of grace. First, a man must be a lost sheep, and then Christ findeth him and layeth him on his shoulders, and bringeth him home. And indeed they that would finde found comfort by Christ, must first be humbled in themselves. And the reason why men reape so little comfort either by the Word or Sacraments, is the want of true humiliation before they come, whereby the soule is fitted for grace and consolation.

II. Point. The meanes used by Christ to confirme *Iohn*, and they are two. First, a sensible signe, *He laid his right hand upon me.* Secondly, comfortable words, *Feare not.*

Here first observe in generall, Christs gracious dealing with *Iohn*: he useth not one meanes apart, but in great mercy, that he may thoroughly confirme *Iohn*, he giveth him both a signe and

and words. And so he hath alwayes dealt with his servants: When he called *Moses* to be a deliverer of his people; First, hee gave him his word, saying, *I will be with thee*; and then a signe, saying, *Upon this mountain shall ye serve God*, Exod. 3. 12. So when hee would confirme the heart of *Abner* against his enemies, hee first gives him a promise of deliverance, v. 7. then biddeth him aske a signe, v. 11. And for this cause Christ in the publishing of his Gospell, addeth signes and miracles unto his Word, that the truth thereof might be fully confirmed. And so in the worke of our salvation, besides his mercifull promises, which were sufficient in respect of his fidelitie, he giveth us further signes and seales to support our weaknesse, and to confirme our faith in the assurance thereof, even the use of the holy Sacraments.

This teacheth us, that Christ hath a speciall care over his Church and people, in that hee doth so condescend and abase himselfe unto their weaknesse, adding unto his Word, which of it selfe were sufficient, signes and tokens, that by both he might more evidently give that assurance, which by one alone our weaknesse would not so well conceive.

Again, in this means of confirmation, upon the order which Christ useth: First, he giveth him the signe of his presence; *Laying his hand upon him*, to assure him of protection from all danger of death. Then he giveth him his word, bidding him not to feare. Hence we may learn, that the assurance of Gods presence and protection, is a soveraigne remedie against all feare. When *Moses* feared the great calling hee was sent about; to take away that feare, the Lord saith, *I will be with thee*. Hence *David* saith, *He will not feare though he walk through the valley of the shadow of death, because God is his stay and comfort*. Wherefore it concerneth us to labour to be assured not onely of Gods presence, but of his providence and speciall protection: And so in all dangers both of life and death we shall have stay and comfort for our soules.

The Lord having used these two means to confirme *Iohn*, both a signe and his Word; doth yet further condescend unto *Iohns* weaknesse, and establisheth his own word by two reasons: The first, in these words, *I am he first and the last*. Christ is the first, because nothing was or could be before him: The last, because nothing is or can be after him. These two titles are given unto Christ, to expresse his Godhead and eternitie, as before we have heard, v. 8. Now here they are againe set downe, to give us to understand, that he hath in his owne power the beginning and end of all things; and therefore is able to protect his servants from all dangers, and from death; and will make good unto them all his promises unto eternall life.

v. 13. *And am he that liveth, but I was dead, and be-*

hold I am alive for evermore, Amen: And I have the keyes of hell, and of death.

These words containe the second reason to confirme *Iohn*. And it may thus be framed by way of a distinction; *Although I was dead, yet I am he that liveth*, (for so the words are) *and behold I am alive for ever, Amen; yea, I have power over death and hell*. This distinction containeth three parts: First, *Though I was once dead, yet I am he that liveth*. Secondly, *Though I was once dead, yet I live for evermore*. Thirdly, *Though I was once dead, yet I have the keyes of death and of hell*. Of these in order.

I. Part. *And am he that liveth, though I was dead*. Here life is ascribed to Christ in a speciall manner: For Christ liveth in a peculiar sort different from the life of other creatures. For first, he hath sufficient life in himselfe, and from himselfe: Secondly, he giveth life to others. For the first, that we may better conceive it, we must know that life is twofold, uncreated and created. Uncreated life is the life of God, whereby God liveth: This life is eternall and infinite in it selfe, and from it selfe. Now as Christ is God, he liveth this uncreated life; which is all one with the Godhead. Again, created life is twofold: The first is naturall, preserved by means of meat and drinke. The second is spirituall, both begun and continued by means of the immediate operation of Gods Spirit, whereby we have fellowship with God. And this spirituall life is more perfect than the naturall. Now Christ liveth not the naturall life, but as he is God liveth the uncreated life: and as he is man he liveth the spirituall life, his body and soule having all their subsisting, and sustentation in the second person in Trinitie: and therefore he hath in himselfe most absolute and perfect life, and so liveth of himselfe.

Secondly, Christ is here said to live, because he giveth life unto men: & that two wayes; first, as he is God; and so he giveth life to all good & bad; For in him every thing liveth, *noweth and hath his being*, Act. 17. 28. Secondly, as he is mediator, God and man; and so he giveth spirituall life unto his Church and people. Hence he saith to his Disciples, *because I live, ye shall live also*, Joh. 14. 19. For looke as Christ died not for himselfe, but for us, that we might not die eternally: so now he liveth in heaven the spirituall life, not for himselfe alone, but for us, that we might live that spirituall life in and by him eternally. And therefore our life is said, *to be hid with God in Christ*. And for this cause in the Sacrament, we do eat the body, and drinke the blood of Christ really by the mouth of faith, that we might know that our life is to be fetched from him. For as we receive grace from his grace; so we receive life from his life.

Hereby we are taught to seeke for this spiri-

Exod. 3. 11.

Psal. 137. 4.

D

ual life at *Christ's* hand; that we may say with *Paul*, *I live not now, but Christ liveth in mee*, Gal. 2. 21. and that *our life is hid in Christ*, as in a head and root. For hee liveth in heaven that wee might live by him: our care must not be so much for our temporall life, which is but a vapour, and like a fleeting shadow; as for this spirituall life which is eternall. But the practice of this dutie is rare to be found, though the omission of it bee a grievous sinne. Mens whole care is for temporall life: few thinke on this, how to procure to themselves this spirituall life by *Christ*; though hee have said, *I live that you may live in mee*. This appeareth by their common practice: They will goe ten, twentie, yea an hundred miles to provide meanes for their bodily preservation; and yet will scarce goe one or two miles to provide the meanes of their salvation for ever. The cause thereof is, the hardness of mens hearts, which are not touched for their sinnes, nor feelee the smart and weight thereof. This we may see plainly in the woman of Samaria: For when *Christ* sate at the Well of *Jacob* talking with her, and telling her that he was the well of life, of whose water whosoever drinke should never thirst, she did nothing but cavill with him: But when he laid to her heart her principall finnes, then the least off cavilling, and in reverence, and some beginning of faith, acknowledged him to be the *Messias*. Even so let the Minister say unto his people, hee can bring them to the water of life: they will nothing regard, but cavill at the doctrine of the Gospell, till their finnes bee touched, and their soules humbled by the sight thereof. Wherefore if we would have our hearts fit to receive spirituall life by *Christ*; we must first labour to have a sense of our sinnes, and to feare Gods wrath due unto us for the same. Hereby we shall be weaned from the dangerous love of earthly things; and our soules shall bee ravished with desire of *Christ Iesus*. Hee is the Well of life: and if once we could feelee a parching heat in our soules, by reason of our sinnes, then would wee thirst and never be at rest till wee had drunke our fill, and dived our selves in his saving merits. This naturall life is but vanishing, and therefore wee must labour for this spirituall life by *Christ*, which is eternall. This will comfort us in all distress: and take from us the feare of death, of hell, and all danger.

The second part of the distinction: *Though I was dead, yet behold, I live for evermore. Amen.* This point is uttered and propounded by two notes to be observed: first, by a note of certaintie, *Amen*. Secondly, by a note of attention, *Behold*. The note of certaintie, (*Amen*) serveth to assure us, that this is an infallible truth which *Christ* a firmeth of himselfe, saying, *I live for evermore*. The note of attention which is prefixed, *Behold*, serveth to stirre up *Johns* minde, and the minde of every one of us, to a serious consideration of this which *Christ* saith, *I live for evermore*. And because it pleaseth *Christ* to pro-

pound this point in this manner, let us a little stand thereon, and herein consider two points. First, in respect of what nature *Christ* is said to live for ever. Secondly, for what end he liveth for ever. For the first. No doubt as *Christ* is the Mediator of the Church, he liveth for ever; and therefore this must be understood of *Christ*, in regard of both his natures, Godhead and manhood. In respect of his Godhead, he is eternall with the Father, and with the holy Ghost, living of himselfe that uncreated and eternall life, which is all one with the Godhead, being eternall, without beginning or ending. Secondly, he liveth for ever as he is man: for after his death hee ascended up to heaven, where in full glory he enjoyeth immediate fellowship with the Godhead: for in him dwelleth the fulnesse of the Godhead bodily; his manhood being wholly immediately sustained by his godhead.

II. Point. The end for which *Christ* liveth for ever, is to give eternall life to his Church, and to every true member thereof. So *S. Iohn* saith, *This is the testimony of God, even the Father, that hee hath given us life: everlasting, and this life is in them that have some*. And here *Christ* must bee considered of us, as the head of his Church, as the root and ground of our salvation, and the fountain of all our happiness. For as the root of a tree liveth not for it selfe, but for the body, and for all the branches: even so *Christ Iesus* he hath eternall life in him, not for himselfe alone, but that hee may convey the same to all his members. Yea, we must consider *Christ* as the common treasure and storehouse of all true felicitie; wherein life eternall is hid up for all the members of his Church: for which cause hee saith, *He that is meane indeed: and whosoever catch his flesh and drinkes his blood, shall live for ever*: to give us to understand, that his manhood hath quickning vertue in it: yet not of it selfe, or by it selfe, but as it is the manhood of the Sonnet of God. For from the Godhead it receiveth this quickning power; to give eternall life unto the Church. And here the meanes must bee considered, by which *Christ* giveth life unto his Church: namely, by vertue of that mysticall union which is betweene him and every member of his Church. Which union is thus caused: God the Father giveth *Christ* unto his Church, and to every one that is to be saved by *Christ*; and that really and truly, according to the tenour of the covenant in which hee hath promised to give *Christ* with all his benefits to every one that beleeveth. The manner and order of this gift is this: Whole *Christ* God and man is given to every beleever, even as hee is Mediatour. And yet the God-head of *Christ* is not given with the manhood, but onely the vertue and operation of the Godhead in the manhood; by which the manhood is made able to merite for the beleever. But the manhood of *Christ* is given both for subsistence, and in regard of all benefits that are conveyed to man by it, as justification and redemption.

John 6. 37.

John 6. 54. 55.

demption; as truly as lands and goods are given of man to man. And when God giveth Christ to any, he doth withall give unto the same party the spirit of Christ: for hee that hath part in Christ, hath part in his spirit, and this spirit createth in his heart the instrument of faith, by which Christ given of the father, is received and apprehended, both his body and blood, and the efficacy and the benefits thereof. Christ is not received in imagination, as men receive things by conceits in the brain, but as hee is given of the Father; namely, in the word and Sacraments really and truly, though spiritually. And the same spirit that worketh this faith, doth knit the beleever unto Christ really, though mystically, making him one in Christ; so as Christ is the head, and the beleever a member. And thus is this mystical conjunction wrought, from whence proceedeth this eternall life.

The benefits that come from this mysticall conjunction are these:

I. Hereby a beleever begins in this world to live eternall life: for by the worke of his spirit, Christ maketh that man that is thus united unto him, to begin to die unto all sinne, and to live unto him in actually as himselfe liveth.

II. Hence commeth the resurrection of the bodie: for this conjunction being once begun, remaineth eternall, and is never wholly broken off, no not from the body, while it is consumed to dust and ashes. Looke as in the winter season the sap returneth to the root of the tree, and then all the branches seeme as they were dead: but when spring time commeth, by vertue of the sunne, the sap ascendeth, and maketh them fresh and Greene againe: even so, the bodies of Gods children have their winter season while they lye dead and rotten: but yet by vertue of their union and conjunction with Christ at the last day, shall life be conveyed from Christ Iesus unto them, whereby they shall be raised to life.

III. Hence commeth eternall life to every beleever: that is, glory and blisse in bodie and soule in heaven for ever and ever: so being once begun (as it is in this world) it is never dissolved. And thus wee see how Christ conveyeth eternall life unto his members.

The words bearing this sense, doe containe in them the foundation of two maine Articles of our beleefe: namely, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting: for both these are effected to us, by vertue of our union with Christ; for he liveth for ever to give life to us. And this is the ground of all true joy: as wee may see in Job, who in the midst of his misery stayed himselfe on this, That he knew his Redeemer lived, and that he should rise againe, and behold him with those same eyes, wherewith he saw other creatures: Job 19. 25, 26.

2. Again, if Christ live in heaven to give unto us eternall life, then must wee learne to have our conversation in heaven with Christ; for where our life is, there should our conversa-

tion bee. Now that our conversation may bee with him, wee must often seriously consider with our selves of this everlasting life, which Christ there keepeth in store for us: and for this cause principally doth Christ here say, Behold, I live for ever.

3. This also must move us to put all our affiance in him, and to place all our joy and rejoycing in him. Men have most regard to that part of their body, by which the whole bodie and every member liveth. Well, wee profess our selves to bee members of Christ, and in him is hid our spirituall life; wee therefore must set our hearts and affections on him especially.

The third part of the distinction is this: Though I was dead, yet I have the keyes of death and of hell. Here we must not imagine that hell is a bodily place kept with locke and key, and doores, as mens dwelling houses are: that cannot bee proved by any place of Gods word. Neither yet that the torments thereof are bodily, such as be inflicted in this world: but rather they are spirituall, being the apprehension and feeling of Gods wrath and vengeance, whose jealousie burnes like fire. But Christ in this phrase borroweth a comparison from stewards of great houses, who at their installing into their stewardships, have the keyes of all things given unto them. Which giving of the keyes is a token of regiment and authoritie bestowed upon them. And the meaning is this: That Iesus Christ though hee once died, yet by his death did vanquish hell and death, and hath obtained full power and dominion over them both for evermore.

Hence arise sundry instructions; first, that power and authority to forgive finnes properly belongeth only unto Christ. No mere creature hath this power: for hee that can forgive finnes, must bee able to take away the punishment of sinne, namely, hell and death; which none can doe but Christ alone, who hath the keyes thereof. And to say, that a man can properly forgive finnes, is to say, that a man hath power in himselfe over hell and death. And therefore the Priesthood of the Church of Rome is full of blasphemy, who take upon them properly to pronounce unto men the pardon of their finnes of themselves: and they deride the custome of reformed Churches, who from God pronounce the pardon of finnes unto them that repent.

Secondly, hereby we are taught to reverence Christ, and to performe unto him all due honour and royall obedience. If wee never have done this heretofore, we must now begin; and if wee have done it, wee must endeavour to doe it more. For Christ hath the keyes of hell and death, he can open the gates thereof at his pleasure, and cast thither whom he will. Many deceive themselves through their false conceit of Christ: they thinke not of him as of a Judge, but as a Saviour onely: they make him all of mercy and pittie; and thereby they take

occasion to goe on in sinne. But wee must consider, that Christ is likewise a righteous Judge, who hath the power of hell and death in his hands, and therefore wee must not flatter our selves in our evil wayes, but strive to please him continually with feare and trembling, lest by our sinnes we stirre up his wrath against us, and cause him to call us into hell, whence is no redemption.

Thirdly, this is a matter of great comfort unto all those in Gods Church, that in this life unfainedly cleave unto Christ: and especially in time of affliction and temptation, and at the houre of death; for Christ having the keyes of hell and death, is able to keepe them from hell, and from the sting of death. And this hee will do because they trust in him, for he hath promised it. If this were alwaies sounding in our ears, it would minister endlesse joy unto our soules against the servile feare of hell and death.

V. 19. Write the things which thou hast seene, and the things which are, and the things which shall come hereafter.

Here Saint *John* propoundeth a second action of Christ. For having confirmed *John* against his great feare, he giveth him a commandement to write the things which he had seene, &c. This Commandement was given to *John* in the seventeenth verse, and is here againe repeated for these causes: First, that *John* might see the speciall care of Christ over his Church, that hee still continueth a provident head thereof, for their good estate after his ascension. Secondly, that Gods Church in all ages may understand, that it is necessary men should know the estate of the Church to bee subject unto troubles, that thereby they may better arme themselves against the evils to come. Thirdly, that *John* might bee fully assured of his calling, to write and publish this booke. Fourthly, that Gods Church in all ages might be out of doubt, that this booke is no device of man, but a booke of God, and part of holy Scripture reveald from Christ to *John* for the good of his Church. If it be said: though Christ did faithfully reveale his will, yet *John* might erre in publishing it. Answer. As Christ delivered this to *John*, so he received and published it faithfully, without all fault either in matter or manner; for wee must make a difference betweene the Prophets and Apostles and all other teachers. As the Prophets in former times, so the Apostles in the new Testament were called immediately by Christ, and had such speciall assistance of Gods Spirit, that they could not erre, when they propounded by preaching or writing any doctrine of Christ unto the Church of God: this appeareth by the promises of Christ made unto them, Luk. 10. 26. *He which heareth you, heareth me, and he which refuseth you, refuseth me; and he which refuseth*

me, refuseth him that sent me. Againe, Mat. 10. 20. *It is not you which speak, but the spirit of your Father speaking in you.* John. 14. 26. he promised to send his spirit to bee their comforter, which should teach them all things: yea, to lead them into all truth. John 16. 13. Which promise some apply to all Gods Ministers; but if we marke the circumstances thereof, we shall see that properly it agreeth to the Apostles: for though in others the certainty hereof cannot bee affirmed, yet in them it may: for which cause, in the Councell at Jerusalem thus they write unto the Churches; *It seemeth good to the holy Ghost, and to us*; as being assured of the certaine direction of the holy Ghost: which no Ministers ever since could say, being subject to error both in speaking and writing. This distinction must bee held for the certainty of our faith in the points of religion, and for our assurance of the faithfull penning and publishing of this booke. And thus much of the causes of this repetition.

In the words of this Commandement is contained the division of this whole booke, *Write the words which thou hast seene*: that is, set down what I have shewed thee in this vision. *And which are*; that is, all things which I reveale unto thee touching the present estate of the Church. *And which are to come hereafter*; that is, those things which concerne the future estate of the Church to the end of the world, as I will reveale unto thee. Thus then is the whole booke distinguished: I. It containeth things touching the present estate of the Church in *Johns* dayes. II. It intreateth of things which concerne the future estate thereof from *Johns* time, to the end of the world.

Hence observe the lawfulness of the art of Logicke: for divisions are lawfull (else the holy Ghost would not here have used them) and so by proportion are other arguments of reasoning: and therefore that art which giveth rules of direction for the right use of these arguments, is lawfull and good. Those men then are farre deceived, who account the arts of Logicke and Rhetoricke to bee frivolous and unlawfull, and in so saying, they condemne the practice of the holy Ghost in this place.

V. 20. The mystery of the seven starres which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlestickes is this: The seven starres are the seven Angels of the Churches, and the seven candlestickes which thou sawest, are the seven Churches.

This is the third action of Christ: namely, A the interpretation of the Vision in the principall parts thereof; which hee expoundeth for these causes: First, *John* in this businesse was to shew himselfe a Prophet of God, by declaring the present and future estate of Gods Church. Now the principall part of a Prophet, is to expound visions or dreames revealed either to himselfe, or to others; as we may see in *Daniel* and the rest of the Prophets. Secondly, that *John* might be encouraged in the publishing of this booke, and of the things revealed unto him: For *John*s calling respected the Church of God. And when he should perceive these visions to concerne the Churches, this would stirre up his diligence, in observing and penning the things revealed.

Now Christ expounded not the whole vision, but two principall things therein: namely, what was meant by the seven starres; to wit, the seven Angels, or the seven Ministers of the Churches: And what was meant by the seven golden candlesticks; namely, *The seven Churches themselves*. The reasons why both were so called, we have shewed before, with the use thereof. Here onely I will observe these three points: First, why Christ in the interpretation of his vision doth not expound the whole, but onely two principall parts thereof. This hee doth for these causes: First, because he hath given unto his Church the gift of interpretation, which hee would have them to exercise about this vision: For if he had expounded every part himselfe, then hee had left herein no matter to his Church, whereabout shee might exercise her gift. Secondly, to provoke Gods Ministers especially, with other members of his Church, unto all diligence in studying this and other parts of Scripture. For if all things were easie and plaine, then men would grow careless in reading and searching out the knowledge of Gods word. Thirdly, to stirre up every Reader of this booke earnestly and heary desire to understand the same. Fourthly, to excite all his servants to prayer and invocation upon God for his grace, that they may with reading the Scripture understand the true meaning thereof.

I. Point. Note here, the Ministers of the Churches are called Angels. What these Angels are, appeareth in the Chapters following, to wit, the Pastors and Ministers of these seven Churches of Asia. So *Matth. 21. 10. John Baptist* is called Christs Angel or Messenger: whereby we have good light for the expounding of a place in *Paul*, 1 *Corin. 11. 10.* saying, *That the woman ought to have power over her head, that is, be covered, because of the Angels.* Where, by Angels may well be understood the Preachers and Ministers of the Gospell. And the reason of that precept may be this: Among the Corinthians the covering of the head was not as it is with us, a token of preeminence and superiority, but a signe of subjection. And therefore

the Apostle would have the women of Corinth, when they came into the congregation, to have their heads covered according to the custom of their country in other assemblies, to signify their submision and reverence unto the ministry of the Gospell.

Whereas Ministers are the Lords Angels and Ambassadors: thence we gather that every Minister of the Gospell must carry himselfe as the Messenger of the Lord. Messengers have regard of two things; of the matter of their message, and of their manner of delivery, that they speake all which they are commanded, and in such order as their Lord and Master would have it spoken, or speake it himselfe if hee were present: and hee that faileth in either of these, may justly bee challenged of unfaithfulness. The Minister therefore being Christs Messenger, must deliver the whole will of Christ alone unto his people: as also in that manner which Christ approveth, and would himselfe observe if he were present. Now can wee once imagine, that Christ would deliver his will partly in English, partly in Latine, and other languages, or intermingle with the testimonies of the Prophets and Apostles the sentences of Fathers, of Philosophers, Poets, and other writers? Those therefore that in this sort dispense Christs Gospell, doe hereby bewray unfaithfulness in their deliverie. Indeed this is counted the learned kinde of preaching: But it is not that manner which Christ approveth. And besides, if this kinde of teaching may take place, it will bring in as great barbarisme, in regard of true Divinity, as was among the Schoolemen, when Gods word was wholly turned unto needlesse disputation, yea, it would shortly banish the Gospell out of this land.

III. Point. Note the phrase which the holy Ghost useth; hee saith not, The seven starres signifie the seven Angels, but are the seven Angels: and the seven candlesticks are the seven Churches; giving to the signe the name of the thing signified. Wherein we have a good warrant for our exposition of that phrase in the Sacrament, *This bread is my bodie: this cup is my blood*: Which the Papists understand properly of the very bodie and bloud of Christ by reall transmutation. But as these seven starres are said to be seven Ministers, because they did signifie the seven Ministers; so is the bread called the body of Christ, because it signifieth and representeth his body, and the cup his bloud. And as it is absurd to say, the seven Ministers were indeed seven stars, because they are so called: so it is absurd to hold the bread in the Sacrament to be really Christs bodie, or the wine his bloud, because it is so called. And thus much of the third action of Christ in the interpretation of this vision.



CHAP. 2.

Verſ. 1. *Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write; Theſe things ſaith he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand, and walketh in the middle of the ſeven golden candleſticks.*

IN this chapter and in the next, is contained the ſummary of four ſeveral books wherein hee giveth ſome particular commendations to *Iohn*, to write unto the ſeven churches of Aſia, and to ſend unto them ſeven letters or Epistles. The first of which commendations is expreſſed in the beginning of this first verſe, *Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write*: Then after followeth the Epistle, which word may be expounded one way, either to ſignifie the miniſter or paſtor of the particular Church of Ephesus, and ſo it is commonly taken of the moſt ; or elſe it may be taken the company of the Miniſters, teachers, and Governours of the Church of Ephesus: for therein were many Paſtors and Governours, as appeareth, Acts 20. 28. *Where thou calleſt together the Biſhops* (as the Word ſignifieth) and giveth them charge over their particular ſlocks. Now in Scripture the name of one perſon taken collectively, ſometimes ſignifieth the whole multitude; as Exod. 4. 22. *Iſrael was ſometimes my firſt borne*. Where the whole houſe of the people of Iſrael is called by the name of one man. And ſo though Antichriſt be not a particular man, but a ſtate and company of men in the ſucceſſion of the Popes; yet is that whole ſtate noted by the ſpecial name of one man: *As that Antichriſt, ſuch a man of iniquity ſhall be*. Thus we ſee how the word *Angel* may be taken: and whether we underſtand it of one man, or of the whole company of elders, it is not much materiall.

In this particular commandement, note two points: Firſt, that Chriſt himſelf is to write to the whole Church of Ephesus, as appeareth Chap. 2. 1. where *Iohn* is commanded to write in a booke, and ſend to the Churches: as alſo by the concluſion of this Epistle, where it is ſaid, *Let him to whom it becometh to heare, heare*.

Although the *Church* ſaith unto the Churches: and yet hee ſpeaketh in the ſingle ſort to the whole church, ſpecially to the Angel or paſtor thereof. This ſheweth two ends. Firſt, to intimate to this Miniſter his duty, which ſtood in two things: In ordering the contents of this Epistle to the whole Church: and in becoming a pattern and example to the ſmall, or declining things therein required. Secondly, because ſuch a much good or much evil comes to every particular Church by the Miniſters thereof: ſuch is the efficacy of his place and calling. If he be faithful, he bringeth great good to the Church: if unfaithfull, exceeding great hurt: as may eaſily be proved by many examples in ſcripture. Now Chriſt ſaith to the Angel of this Church, that he might be a means of much good unto them all, by exhorting them to the practice of all good duties required in this Epistle.

1. Point. Among all the Churches of Aſia, Chriſt ſaith firſt to the Church of Ephesus: not for that this Church had authority over the reſt (for they were all on likeneſſes, and all of gold, but becauſe Ephesus was the moſt famous city there exceeding the reſt in riches and ſtature. Whereby Chriſt giveth us to underſtand, that his will is that thoſe people, towne, and Cities which excel others in ſtature and riches, ſhould alſo give before them in knowledge, obedience, and other graces of Chriſt: and ſo admirably ſingular it be with paſtors for preſent: They which excel others for outward reputation and temporal bleſſings, ought to go before them in ſpiritual graces, as goodnelle and religion. Thoſe which ſhall ſo be herein, and ſuffer others that are far their inferiours to go before them in ſpiritual graces, ſhall ſure it turne to their ſhame before men, but eſpecially at the tribunaſſe of Juſus Chriſt.

This much for the Commandement. Now followeth the Epistle it ſelfe, which containeth three parts, as all ordinary Epistles doe. A propoſition, and the concluſion. The propoſition in theſe words, *Theſe things ſaith he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand,*

and walking in the middelt of the ſeven golden candleſtickes. The propoſition and concluſion, in the verſes following. The preface is borrowed from the former chapter, verſ. 16. and 13. where alſo it was handled. The intent of *Chriſt* herein, is to draw this Church to a reverent adoration of his perſon : and to cauſe in them a greater care to embrace and obey his admonition. This appeareth by that twofold action which hee voucheth of himſelfe, to wit, his holding the ſeven ſtarrs in his right hand, and his walking in the middelt of the ſeven golden candleſtickes: by the firſt whereof is ſignified his power in protecting and governing his Miniſters: and by the ſecond is noted his preſence in the middelt of his Church, guiding and bleſſing his Miniſters with all the members thereof. As if he had ſaid; If I be he that have power to protect and governe, that am preſent alſo to bleſſe and direct both Miniſters and people; then my admonitions are to be revered and obeyed.

In this preface note two ſpeciall points; firſt, that *Chriſt* here againe repeareth that which was before delivered, touching his preſence in his Church, and his mighty power and providence over the ſame in protecting, guiding, and bleſſing both Miniſter and people. By which repetition he would give us to underſtand, the ſpeciall weight and moment of this point, to wit, that it ought to bee ingraven in the hearts of every one in Gods Church. And indeed till we be perſwaded thereof, we ſhall never learne religion ſoundly. The ground of true religion is this: To take the true God for our God: and *Chriſt Ieſus* for our Redeemer: and it conſiſteth not in a ſwimming motion hereof in the braine, but in the ſure perſwaſion of the heart, which wee never have till wee bee reſolved both of *Chriſts* preſence with us, and of his providence over us, for our bleſſing and defence.

II. Point. In this preface alſo note, that the perſwaſion of *Chriſts* preſence and ſpeciall providence in his Church, is a notable meane to draw us on to all good duties: for thereby *Chriſt* would perſwade both the Miniſters and people of Ephelus, to receive and embrace this his Epistle. And no doubt hee that is indeed perſwaded hereof, cannot but bee moved to walke before God in all holineſſe and obedience: as did *Enoch*, *Abraham*, and all the godly Patriarkes. Thus much for the preface.

v. 2. I know thy workes, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canſt not forbear them which are evil, and haſt examined them which ſay they are Apoſtles and are not, and haſt found them lyers.

Here beginneth the ſecond part of this Epistle, to wit, the propoſition, containing the ſubſtance and matter of the whole Epistle. This propoſition hath two points: Firſt, a commendation of this Church, in the ſecond and third verſes. Secondly, a rebuke and reprehention, in the 4. verſe. The commendation is firſt generally, in theſe words; *I know thy workes*. Then, more particular, for ſpeciall duties and actions, in the words following, *and thy labour and patience, &c.* For the firſt, *I know thy workes*; many doe expound this of workes of mercy and liberalitie: but that will not ſo well ſtand; for he ſaith to every Church, *I know thy workes*; and yet ſome of them are blamed for want of theſe good workes. By *workes* then is meant, the wayes, that is, the practices and dealings of the whole Church, as well of Miniſters as people, in all their affaires. Alſo by knowledge here wee muſt underſtand, a knowledge that goeth with approbation, as may appeare by comparing this with the fourth v. whither it hath relation: for thus they muſt go, *I know thy workes and approve of them: and yet I have ſomething againſt thee*. So that his meaning is, *I know thy workes*, that is, all thy wayes and dealings in thy liſt, and conſeſſation are manifeſt unto mee, and I doe generally approve of them.

Here firſt in this testimony of his knowledge, *Chriſt* miniſteth a remedy againſt ſecret finnes and offences. Theſe, the murderer, and adulterer wait for the night where-
C to attempt their ſhamefull practices: The tradesman in ſecret falſifieth his weights, and minglenth his wares: among moſt men, fraud, oppreſſion, and iniuſtice doe abound; and all becauſe they thinke, that if menie ſee, all is well: as *David* ſaith, the wicked man ſaith, *God ſhall not ſee, he will not regard*. But if men could thinke and bee perſwaded of this, that *Chriſt ſeeth and knoweth all their wayes*, it would cauſe them to make conſcience not onely of groſſe finnes, but even of their hidden and ſecret offences.

Secondly, whereas this knowledge is joined with approbation, it may bee demanded, how this can ſtand with the juſtice of God, to approve of that which is not anſwerable to the tenour of his law, as the beſt workes of the moſt righteous man are not, being ſtained with ſome corruption, *Iſa. 64. 6. Anſ.* The Goſpell, which is another part of Gods will, revealeth more unto us than ever the Law could doe: namely, that if a man be in *Chriſt*, to him there is no condemnation; and that God will accept this true deſire and endeavour to pleaſe him, for the deed it ſelfe, *2 Cor. 8. 12.* And thus according to the tenour of the Goſpell, *Chriſt* approveth of their workes in this place, though they were not able to abide the rigour of his law. But a Papiſt will here reaſon thus: If a righteous mans workes bee approved of God, then they are no finnes, (for God will not approve of any thing that is ſinfull,) and if his
workes

workes see no finnes, then hee may fulfill the law; and so be justified by his workes. *As for* That which *Christ* approveth simply, hath no finne in it; but here hee onely approveth of their workes in part, namely, to farre forth as they came from the worke of his spirit in them. But as they proceed from the will of the worker, which is in part corrupt, they are not free from the staine of sinne; and so hee approveth them not. Again, workes of grace are approved of *Christ* with the pardon of sinne; for accepting of the person, hee remitteth the faults that bee in his good workes, and so onely approveth his owne worke in him. And so here we must conceive of his approbation of their workes, to wit, as proceeding from his spirit, and having the faults thereof remitted in his owne merit.

The speciall commendation of this Church is for particular actions: The first whereof is *diligent labour*, which is an excellent worke, especially in a Minister of Gods word to be painfull in his particular calling, for the faithfull instruction and godly regiment of his particular charge. Hence *Paul* saith, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Hee that laboureth in the word and doctrine, is principally worthy double honour.* And herein *Paul* matcheth, yea, preferreth himselfe before other Apostles, *that he laboureth more abundantly in the ministry of the Gospel, than they all*, 1 Corin. 15. 10. Hence we learne that the worke of the ministerie, if it bee done as it ought, is a worke full of great paines and labour; contrary to the common opinion of men, who thinke that the life of the Minister is full of ease, and his calling a matter of nothing, such as may be done with the turning of the hand: but here the judgment of *Christ* is otherwise, who useth not thus to approve a light or idle worke.

Secondly, this commendation of diligence in the Minister, must admonish all Christians that desire to bee approved of *Christ*, to give all diligence to learne and know the will of God, that they may doe the same. And here a common fault is to be reprov'd: many will heare, but where is their labour to grow in knowledge and in grace? that is wanting: which is the cause of such fruitlesse hearing as is common in the world. For earthly things men relinse no paines; but Gods heavenly knowledge and graces are not regarded. What a shame is this that men should bestow their strength and wit about base and transitory things, and yet neglect the maine good which concerns their soules for ever?

Thirdly, the Ministers diligence in teaching must provoke conscience of obedience in the hearers; that is the end of his worke, without this hee spends his strength in vaine, and therefore with the Apostle, they must endeavour in all things to keepe a good conscience before God and all men, Act. 24. 16.

The second thing which *Christ* here commends, is patience in bearing the crosse, which

dorh actually accompanie the Gospel of *Christ*. And this indeed is praise-worthy in the Angell of this Church; for heerein hee goeth before sundry worthy Prophets: *Ieremie* was marvellous impatient, for the mocking of the people: And though *Iohn* had beene schooled in the Whales belly, yet when all things went not according to his minde in the destruction of *Ninive*, he became exceeding discontent.

Herein must all the Ministers of the Gospel become followers of the Angell of this Church. While they labour in the Gospel of God, they must possesse their soules with patience, and make knowne to all men their meeke and mild spirit. Yea, every Christian in the profession of religion must learne to practise this duty: Luke 8. 16. The good ground receiveth the seed, and bringeth forth fruit: but how? *with patience*: Neither can we possibly attaine to eternal life, unless wee arme our selves with patience to beare the crosse: for whosoever will live godly must suffer afflictions, 2 Tim. 3. 12. *Through many tribulations wee must enter into heaven*, Act. 14. 22.

II. Again, here observe how *Christ* joyneth labour and patience together: this hee doth for two causes: First, to let us see the fruit of sin which God hath set on the labour of man. Before the fall, the labour of mans calling was practised without all trouble or paines; but since mans fall, the best callings have their crosses and vexations, which are the punishments of mans transgression. Secondly, to shew the malice of Satan against the good progresse of the Gospel. *Paul* saith to the Thessalonians, *He would have come to them, but Satan did hinder him*. Hee seeketh the trouble and sorrow of the Minister, not onely by stirring up persecution, but by keeping his people from profiting by his ministerie: and therefore every Minister had need to take paines with patience in his calling.

And as *Christ* joyneth together labour and patience in the worke of the ministerie: so should every Christian after this direction joyne patience with his paines in the duties of his particular calling, whether it be in Church, commonwealth, or family. For look what is the estate of the Minister in his place, such should bee the estate of every childe of God in his. This therefore they must doe: first seek to know the duties of their particular callings, and therein labour and take paines with all good conscience: Then considering the crosse doth accompany godly diligence, they must labour to joine patience with their diligence, for their continuance in well doing even under the crosse. And for attaining of this patience, they must set before them the promises of Gods blessing and protection while they so continue; not suffering themselves to bee dismayed by any affliction. And if wee shall this walke in the duties of our particular places painefully, and with patience, we shall have our commendation.

162. 14. 15.

176.

176.

1 Tim. 5. 17.

on of *Christ Iesus* and his blessed reward, which are imputed to the praise of men, and the rewards. But on the contrary, if we waile in our callings negligently, or else forsake them because of afflictions; or be impatient in labour, we shall lose our reward, and undergoe the rebuke of *Christ*, which is worse than all outward evils that can befall us.

The third speciall worke for which *Christ* commendeth this Church is, severitie shewed against wicked men; in these words, *How thou canst not beare them which are evil.* By evil men, hee meaneth such as lived offensively, and maintained manifest errors and heresies. These hee could not beare, but judged them as burdens: and therefore sought to disburden her selfe of them.

Hence wee may gather, that it is a necessary thing for every Church to bee purged of evil men. The Church of God in all ages hath put in practice this worke. So soone as *Caine* had slaine his brother *Abel*, *God cast him out from his face*, as appeareth by his owne complaint, to wit, from that particular place where *Adam* and his family worshipped God. When false Prophets and Idolaters did rise among the Israelites, the Lord commandeth, *That they should bee killed and taken from among them.* And therefore hee saith to *Ieremie*, *If thou turne and repent, I will bring thee againe, and if thou take away the precious from the vile, thou shalt bee according to my word.* 1. Corinth. 5. 4, 5. *Paul* commandeth in the name of *Christ*, that the incestuous man bee delivered unto *Satan*, the Church purged of that old leaven, and that wicked man be put from among them, ver. 13. Besides the evidence of these testimonies, some reasons may bee added to prove the necessitie of this separation. First, God will be worshipped in an holy manner; and they that worship God must bee purged and sanctified; but evil men defile Gods worship, and therefore they ought to be severed from the Church. Secondly, lest the whole Church be infected with the contagion of their doctrine, or the infection of their life: for as leaven soweth the whole lump, so will evil men defile the whole Church. Thirdly, they are burdens to the Church, and therefore must bee cast out. For the Church should bee eased of every burden.

This doctrine is the truth of God, and ought to be practised of Gods Church. Whereby we may see a common fault in the most congregations among us; wherein all that will are admitted not onely to the hearing of the Word, but also unto the Lords Table, hand over head without restraint, as though every man were a good and sound Christian: Whereas experience sheweth, that many be ignorant, many contempters of the Gospell, many Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, and blasphemers, all which ought to be barred from the Sacraments; and in that respect severed fro the Church as burdens.

Secondly, hence wee may gather, that *Christ* hath given to his Church a power judiciall, to suspend evill men from the Sacraments, and to excommunicate them from the outward fellowship of the Church: for else hee would not have commended this minister with his church, for the execution of his power. The reasons alleged to the contrary, are of no force. I. Say they, the parable, Matthew 13. 30. alloweth the growing together of tares and wheat till harvest; and therefore evill men must be suffered in the Church without separation. Answer. In that parable *Christ* speaketh not of any particular purging of the Church by Ecclesiastical jurisdiction; but of the universall purging of his whole Church by his holy Angels in the end of the world: for there the field doth not signifie any particular Church, but the whole world; and the servants are not men, but Angels, that must gather together all both good and bad in the end of the world, to the last judgement. Again, they allege, Luke 14. 23. *Compell them in the high wayes to come into the supper.* Here (say they) all must be brought in, but none must bee excluded the societie of the Church. Answer. *Christ* speaketh not of compelling men unto the Sacraments, but unto the Ministry of the Word, whereto men must be caused to subject themselves; which hindereth nothing why the ungodly should not be debarred from the Sacraments, which are the seale of Gods mercy in *Christ*, ordained onely for such as repent and beleve. Quest. Seeing this separation must be made, how farre forth may wee converse with those that are openly evil and offensive, either for life or doctrine? Answer. Evill men must be considered divers wayes: first, as they be members of some common-wealth, of some city, and incorporation: secondly, as they are members of some particular Church by toleration. In the first regard, it is lawfull for us to converse with them. I. for outward dealings and civill affaires, as bargaining, buying, and selling, &c. II. we may maintaine outward civill peace with them; So *Paul* commandeth the Romanes *to have peace with all men as much as in them lay*: that is, so farre as it would stand with faith and good conscience. III. In this civill conversing with the wicked, wee must performe all duties of outward courtesie and love unto them, so farre forth as it doth not dishonour God, or hinder the good of the Church. And therefore *Paul* commandeth us to bee *soft and courteous, shewing all meeknesse unto all men; even to evill men*, as the reason following sheweth: *For we our selves were in time past unwise, disobedient, deceived, &c.* and then were we evill.

Secondly, consider them as dwellers in the Church, and members by permission: and so we may live with them in it: for we must not make a separation from the Church, because wicked men are permitted therein. *Christ* lived among the Jewes, though their teachers and rulers

were

The 1st.

Gen. 4. 14.

Deut. 13. 7. 8.

1 Cor. 5. 19.

Rom. 12. 18.

Th. 3. 15.

verse 3.

were both hereticks and hypocrites: and yet we must remember, that living among them, and beholding their wicked conversation, we must not approve of their ungodlinesse, but be grieved for the same, as righteous *Lot* was for the abominations of *Sodom*, 2 Peter 1. 7. Further, if it fall out by the negligence of the Governours, that evil men be admitted to the Sacraments, we must not for their company refuse to communicate: for our Saviour Christ living among the Jewes, communicated with them in their Sacraments and service of the Temple, though many of them were notorious both for wicked life and false doctrine. The reason is, for that another mans evil conscience doth not defile our good conscience: but wee may keepe a good conscience in that action wherein the wicked is defiled. Now though wee may thus converse with evil men, yet these two caveats must be observed: 1. To have no private company with knowne and open evil persons. This *Paul* expressly forbiddeth, saying, *I have written unto you, that you company not together*: that is, in private and familiar manner. 2. We must not shew speciall familiaritie to evil persons. God will not take the wicked by the hand, Job 8. 20. and we should be followers of God. Therefore *S. Iohn* saith, *If any man come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into house, neither bid him God speed*, 2 Joh. 10. which must be understood of speciall familiaritie: for thereby wee doe not onely performe our ward dutie to the person, but also give countenance to their finnes: which in any case wee must not doe. And thus wee see how to converse with evil men.

Hereby all those are justly blamed, which fit themselves for the humours and dispositions of all companies. This ought not to bee. If any be knowne to be openly wicked, either for life or opinions, wee must not keepe private company with them, or afford them our speciall familiaritie; but by withdrawing our selves from them, ease us of such burdens.

Our Saviour Christ having commended this Church for her severity against the wicked, in that shee could not receive them, doth prove the same to be true by two arguments. The first whereof is contained in these words, *And hath examined them*, &c. to the end of the third verse. The second, in the 6. verse. For the first, it is taken from the sharpe and round dealing of this Church against evil men; and it hath two parts. First, her discoverie of false Apostles, *And hath examined them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hath found them liars*. Secondly, her opposing her selfe against them, being discovered, in the third verse, *Thou hast suffered, and hast patience*, &c.

In their discoverie of these false Apostles, note two speciall points: first, that God hath given to particular Churches the spirit of discerning. This appeareth by sundry testimonies

of Scripture, 1 Corin. 2. 15. *The spiritual man that is, he which is endued with Gods holy Spirit, discerneth all things*. And *Paul* affirmeth, That the faithful *Corinthians* did discern the Lords body, that is, see and put a great difference betweene the bread and wine in that Sacrament, and other common bread and wine: which none that want the spirit of God can doe. Augustine, hee biddeth them *prove themselves whether they bee with faith or not*: to give us to understand, that they had a gift of discerning, whereby they did know their owne estate, whether they were under the curse, or under grace. And *Saint Iohn* biddeth the Church *rejoice in the spirit*: that is, those doctrines which men pretending the gifts of the spirit, did teach. And in this place this Churches discovering of false Apostles, doth teach plainly, that shee hath a great difference who bee sent of God to teach his Church, and who not. And hence the godly learned in the Church, are said to have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. 5. 14. and in this regard, the Churches of God differ from all other companies of men. For unlettered men bee of Gods Church, they want this gift of discerning spiritual things that differ as true Apostles and false, good and bad, truth and falsehood, &c.

Hence wee may gather, that the Church of God hath a gift to discern which is a true Church, and which is not: for the Church can discern whether a man bee a true Apostle, or not, and by the same gift it may discern the state of any particular Church. Where also it followeth, that wee may easily see whether the Church of England bee a true Church, or not. It pleaseth some to cal it into question, as it now standeth, and they avouch, That it is no Church of God, that there are no true Ministers, no true preaching, or right administration of the Sacraments now; and that these things with us are illusions of Satan, and our Church his synagogue. But that ours is a true Church of God, is thus proved. The Churches of Germany, France, Scotland, and Italy, that have received the Gospel, are the Churches of God: and they have the gift of discerning which is a true Church of God, and which is not. Now they give the right hands of fellowship unto us, and reverence our Church as the Church of God. To whose testimony wee must rather cleave, than to the opinion of a few private men; and to resolve our selves, that wee are the true Church of God.

Secondly, hence wee may gather, that the Church of God hath a gift to discern Scripture from that which is no Scripture. The Papists say the Church indeed hath this gift: but it is by counsell and communion from the Church of Rome: which is a mere forgery. For the Church of Ephesus, which could discern of false Apostles, could no doubt by the same gift discern of the bookes of God, and that without counsell from the Church of Rome: for at

1 Cor. 12. 10.

2 Cor. 13. 5.

1 John 5. 1.

2 Jo. 10.

Vf.

this time when *Iohn* writ, it was a more famous Church than the Church of Rome, and therefore went not thither for counsell.

I I. Point. In what things this discerning of false Apostles doth consist. It is a iudiciall action of the Church, consisting in two things here noted; First, in examination of false doctrine and false teachers; secondly, in condemnation afterward. The examination of them is set downe in these words; *And hast examined them that say they are Apostles, and are not.* Their condemning or sentence-giving, in the words following, *And hast found them liers.*

For the first; examination is a gift of God to his Church, and was here used for the triall of false Apostles. *Quest.* How may any Church try a false teacher? *Ans.* This is a point of large discourse; but the heads of true examination are these.

First, that Church, or that man that would rightly examine a false Teacher, must prepare himselfe thereunto after this manner: hee must looke that he have a meeke spirit, and a humble heart; for God revealeth his will, not to the proud, but to the meeke and lowly; and as *I say* faith, to them that are of a contrite spirit, *Isay* 57. 15. And in this humbling of himselfe, a man must renounce his owne naturall wit and reason, and become nothing in himselfe but even a foole, in respect of his owne conceit. Also he must unfainedly pray to God, that he would reveale unto him his truth. *Ake* (saith Christ) *and it shall be given you, even the holy Ghost, unto them that desire of the Father.* And *S. Iames* saith, *If any man lacke wisme, let him ake of God, which giveth to all men liberally.*

Secondly, after preparation hee must labour to know thoroughly what the false teachers are, and what be their opinions, with the grounds and foundations thereof; wherein they agree, and wherein they differ from the truth of God, maintained by the Church: for it is a foule oversight to misconceive the state of the adversaries question, by propounding it otherwise than they hold, as it falleth out with many in the handling of controversies.

Thirdly, due proofe must be made, whether the adversaries doctrine bee of men or of God. This is Gods Commandement, *1 Iohn* 4. 1. *Prove the spirits, whether they bee of God, or no.* And for triall hereof, we must have recourse unto the word of God; it must bee judge in this cause: *Isa.* 8. 20. *To the law, and to the testimony; if they speake not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* *Ioh.* 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye look to have eternall life, and they are they which testifie of mee.* Who so fit to judge in the matters of God, as God himselfe? and so hee doth in his written Word, of all doctrine and opinions in religion. The Scriptures shew whether the doctrine examined bee directly gathered thence, and by just consequent or not.

Fourthly, serious consideration must be had of the faith and lives of the teachers examined: for a false teacher by Gods just judgement is usually a wicked liver. And therefore Christ saith, *Ye shall know them by their fruits:* if they be thoroughly examined, such they will appeare, howsoever for a time they may beate the eyes of men: as the histories of the Church in many famous heretikes doe plainly declare.

The second branch of this discovery, is sentence-giving, in these words: *And hast found them liers.* The Church here giveth out a sharpe and severe sentence against them, shee calleth them false Apostles, and liers; and yet she sinneth not, for Christ commendeth her for it. Though to raile or taunt cannot be seeme any, yet Magistrates and Ministers in their places may give out severe speeches against offenders, in token of detestation of their sinnes, and not offend. Thus *Iohn* called the Scribes and Pharisees a generation of vipers, *Matth.* 3. 7. and our Saviour Christ called *Herod* a Fox, *Luke* 13. 32. and *Paul* called the *Galatians* fooles, *Gal.* 3. 1. And in this place the Church calleth these false teachers liers, which is very much: for therein she accuseth them of three things: First, of teaching that which was false indeed: Secondly, that they knew it to bee false, and so sinned of knowledge: Thirdly, that they did it of malice, with intent to blinde the eyes of the Church and to deceive the people.

In this discovery, wee may observe the just accomplishment of *Pauls* prophetic, *Acts* 20. 29, 30. namely, that there should rise up among the Ephesians grievous wolves, and men speaking perverse things; and such were these false Apostles, who after examination were found liers.

Again, seeing in the dayes of this Apostle *Iohn*, men durst presume to claime Apostolike authoritie, and call themselves Apostles, when they were not: no marvell if the Pope of Rome six hundred yeares after, did challenge to himselfe to bee *Peters* successor, and to have Apostolike authoritie: and that they dare now avouch some bookes to bee Scripture, which are not: as also bring in their traditions and unwritten verities, to bee received and obeyed equally with Gods word.

v. 3. Thou hast suffered, and hast patience, and for my Names sake hast laboured.

Here our Saviour Christ declareth how this Minister & Church of Ephesus opposed themselves against false teachers after their discovery. The manner wee shall see in handling the points particularly as they lie in order. *Thou hast suffered*, or, thou hast borne a burden: for the word signifieth to be pressed down under a great burden: this burde was the troubles which false Apostles

Matth. 7:16

Luke 11:13.

Iam. 1:5.

Vf.

files brought upon them after they were discovered, partly by open affliction and persecution, partly by the spreading of their hereticall and schismaticall doctrine. These false teachers were *Shion, Cerinthus, Marcion*, and such like, who in the daies of *Iohn* troubled this Church, as histories doe shew.

Here wee may observe, that it is Gods will, that the best Churches should bee troubled by wicked men, and hereticall teachers, who both by false doctrine, and persecution, become grievous burdens. This the Lord permits for weighty causes: I. That true beleivers may be excited more constantly to embrace the sincere doctrine of the Gospell: and therefore *Iude* most worthily exhorts the Christians in his time, to fight for the common faith. II. That professors may be tried whether they soundly hold the doctrine of the Gospell, or not: 1 Cor. 11. 19. *It is meet (saith Paul) that there should bee heresies in the Church, that they which are sound in the faith and approved, may be knowne.* III. That God may execute his judgements upon wicked men and hypocrites, that have not loved his truth revealed unto them: 2. Thess. 2. 10, 11. *God gave them up to strange illusions to believe lies, because they have not loved his truth: for many know the word that love it not.*

This must teach us to take heed of a common scandall in the world, which is to bee offended at religion, because there bee in the Church schismes and heresies: which come not from the Gospell, but from the malice of Satan, who soweth his tares among the Lords wheat. Wee must consider that it is the will of God there should bee such evils in his Church: and therefore should labour to bee so farre from offence, that hereby we be rather provoked with more cheerefulness and courage to love and embrace religion.

And haſt patience, and for my name haſt ſuffered, &c. Here is set downe the dealing of this Church against these false Apostles in all their persecutions. But first note the coherence of this vertue with the former: *Thou haſt ſuffered trouble, and haſt had patience. Queſt.* How can these stand together? It is against mans nature, in trouble to bee patient: for troubles and afflictions make men discontent, and to fret against God and man. *Anſ.* They stand not by nature, but by grace: Rom. 5. 4. *Tribulation bringeth forth patience; namely, to all those that have received to beleve in Christ; for to them God giveth the spirit of meeknesse in their troubles, shedding his love into their hearts, whereby they are enabled to suffer any thing for his name, even with joy.*

And haſt patience. This is the first meanes whereby this Church opposed her selfe against the false Apostles: they troubled her two waies; by persecution, and by false doctrine. Now by patience this Church opposeth her selfe against their persecutions. And indeed, that is the most

A excellent means for any man or any Church to oppose themselves against their enemies, and to vanquish them; for hereby they shall stop their mouthes, and if it be possible, win them to their faith and religion.

In this their practice we have an example for our direction, how to oppose our selves against wicked men, with whom we live; or any enemy that shall trouble us, either by oppression, or hereticall doctrines. Wee must not render taunt for taunt, and abuse for abuse; but labour for patience, not in bearing with their sinnes (that may not bee) but in a meeke enduring of their injuries and wrongs whereby they trouble us. Thus shall we stop their mouthes and soonest overcome them.

B *And for my names ſake haſt laboured.* Here Christ setteth downe the second meanes whereby this Church opposeth her selfe against the spreading of false doctrine by these false Apostles, which was the second way whereby they became a burden unto her. The meaning of the words is this; that they had taken much paines to maintaine the glory of God, and the true doctrine of Christ Jesus, labouring therein as much as the false Apostles did to broach their damnable heresies.

Here we are taught a second duty, how wee are to oppose our selves against all hereticall and schismaticall teachers; namely, as they labour to publish their false doctrine, so must we endeavour to maintaine the glorie of God and his true religion. Hereunto a twofold labour is required, partly of the Minister, and partly of the people. The labour of the Minister stands in these things principally: I. He must endeavour by reading and studie to furnish himselfe with the true knowledge of the foundation and substance of the Gospell and true religion, that hee may bee able soundly and plainly to teach the same. For this cause Saint *Iohn* is commanded to eat the little book, Revel. 10. 9, 10. which was as it were by studie and meditation to have the same digested and settled in his heart. Hence *Malachie* saith, *The Priests lips should preserve wisdom, and thither should the people come for instruction.* And every Scribe taught of God, must have store in the treasure of his heart, like a good householder. Matth. 13. 52. Secondly, hee must deliver the whole will and counsell of God, concerning salvation, truly and distinctly unto his people, as it is propounded in the bookes of the Prophets and Apostles. This *Paul* commendeth by his owne example, Acts 20. 27. testifying unto this Church that hee had taught them all the will of God, and kept backe nothing which hee was commanded to deliver unto them. III. He must labour to discern, and be able to discover false teachers unto the people; that hee may not only know them himselfe, but also cause the Church to take notice of them: Tit. 1. 9. *Paul* requireth that the teacher in the Church, *Be able to convince the gainsayers to his truth.* In this disco-

Use.

Mal. 2.

very he must doe two things. First, detect the heretical doctrines. Secondly, their wicked manners. Thus dealt our Saviour Christ in his owne person living in the Church of the Jewes, with the Scribes and Pharisees: he did detect unto the people their false interpretations of the law, Matth. 5. 21. to the end. And also their wicked lives and damnable hypocrisie, Matth. 23. 3, 4. &c. to the end. And S. Paul in all his Epistles, laboureth to discover the wicked lives, and to confute the heretical opinions of the false Apostles. IV. Hee must endeavour that the doctrine of the Gospell thus published, may edifie. This is the end of all teaching, as Paul sheweth, 1 Corinth. 14. throughout the whole Chapter. Now it doth edifie, when it is so applied to the hearers, that thereby they are won to Christ, suffering themselves to be reformed by it in heart and life, and so made fit for the kingdom of God. V. He must be careful in his owne person to become a patterne of the doctrine of the Gospell which he teacheth, that to the people may have a double light to follow. This is a notable means in the Minister to make men to love the Gospell, and the neglect thereof causeth many to contemne and despise the same. VI. Lastly, hee must bee diligent in praying for his owne and other particular Churches of God, that they may know, believe, and obey the same doctrine which is taught them out of Gods word. Thus did Paul, as we may see in his particular Epistles, pray for every Church, that by the blessing of the spirit, they might embrace and obey the Gospell of Christ, Phil. 1. 4, 9, 10. Col. 1. 9, 10, 11.

The people also for the name of Christ and his religion, must undergoe a threefold labour. I. Every one must see that himselfe know and believe the true and sincere doctrine of the Gospell. This Christ injoyneth to all, in this Commandement, *Repent, and believe*, which none can do unless they first know and understand the doctrine thereof; and therefore every one must doe as Mary did, for which Christ so commends her; namely, lay aside matters of lesser moment, and give our selves to heare and learne the doctrine of Christ, Luke 10. 39. 42. II. Every one must use all good means, that knowledge of religion which himselfe hath received, bee conveyed to others. And indeed, if wee truly believe, wee cannot containe our selves, but wee must needs teach others. For, as Christ saith, *He that drinke of the water of life, shall not thirst, but flow rivers of water of life streaming out for the good of others. Quest.* How should private men convey their knowledge unto others? *Ans.* I. All masters and governors of families are bound in conscience to teach those that are under them, the main points and grounds of true religion: his place requirerth gifts, and God looks for increase. For every Christ's family should be a little Church as it is said of the house of *Abigail* and *Priscilla*, 1 Cor. 16. 19. 11. Every man in his place must

labour to convey that knowledge he hath unto his neighbour, yea to his enemies. *The Jewes would compass to kill him, and to make a man a proselyte:* And Idolaters at this day will travell farre and neere to make a man of their profession. Much more therefore must all true Christians labour to convey their knowledge to others, so to winne them unto Christ. III. Every man is to edifie those that be members of the same Church, in these three things; faith, hope, and love; as *Jude* notably exhorteth in the end of his Epistle, *Edifie one another in your most holy faith.* v. 20. *have compassion of some in putting difference, and others save with feare in pulling them out of the fire.* v. 22. 23. IV. Every private man must profess and defend the true religion of Christ against all the enemies thereof: 1. Pet. 3. 15. *Benedicite always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.* And this confession must be, not only in word, but in deed. For by a blamelesse and holy conversation everie Christian holdeth forth the word of life, Philip. 2. 15. 16.

Seeing the maintenance of true religion is so excellent a worke, we must be admonished every one in our place to take paines in all the duties that belong unto us, that by us Christs religion may be furthered. For Gods Church is not called the pillar of truth, onely because the Minister thereof maintaineth Gods truth; but also because every member of the Church is as a pillar in his place to maintain and profess the true doctrine of Christ for his glorie. Besides, this is a duty of the first Table, and therefore we must have more speciall care for the performance thereof. And thus we see the two means whereby the Church of Episcopus opposed her selfe against false teachers.

And last not furthest. Here Christ setteth downe in what manner this Church laboured to maintaine his true religion, and thereby his honour and glorie: namely, by constancie and perseverance in labour. This is an excellent vertue, and a notable example for us to follow: for we through Gods goodness have the true religion of Christ among us, and for many yeares sundry among us have maintained the same against all enemies, though not without some trouble and danger. Now this which hath been done is nothing, unless we hold on in our good course constantly, and labour unto death in the maintenance thereof. This exhortation is the more necessary, because wee know not how long we shall enjoy the Gospell with peace; for usually after long peace God trieth his by persecution; neither know wee by what means of triall God will exercise us. Therefore as wee now profess the Gospell, so let us continue constant therein, and not turne with time or state: for then wee lose our commendation at Christs hands. And thus much for the commendation of this Church for her vertues.

Matth. 23. 15.

Ulc.

John 3. 3.

v. 4. *Neverthelesse I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*

These words containe the second part of the proposition of this Epistle, to wit, a sharpe and severe reproofe of this Church for decay in grace; as will appeare in the opening of the words. *Neverthelesse I have somewhat against thee:* Here Christ speaketh as a Judge unto this Church, and to the Minister thereof, and laith this action unto their charge; that they had left their first love, that is, that love which they bare to God and his religion, and to their brethren, at that time when they were first called unto the profession of the Gospell. This love they are said to have left, not as though they had quite lost it, but onely because they suffered it to decay, and to wax cold in good works. But some will say, they are before commended for their zeale and labour for Gods glorie, and for their severity against false teachers; how then had they left their first love? *Ans.* At this time when Christ doth thus reprove them, their love was commendable; but yet it was nothing in regard of that which they had at the first conversion.

If Christ have something against this Church for leaving her first love; then no doubt he hath something against the Church of England, and against us at this day: howsoever we may persuade our selves that we be high in his favour, yet we are in the like, or a worse estate than this Church now was: for a great part of the bodie of our Church hath left off their first love; and the greatest part hath no love at all. That many have left their first love is too too evident. For such as in Queene *Maries* time were content to suffer for the Gospell, as the histories of our Church doe shew, after they enjoyed a little quietnesse, became meere worldlings, as their lives have testified afterward. And in such congregations where the Word hath long bene preached, this is too apparent, that men who for the space of twentie, or ten, or seven yeares, have shewed fervent love to Christ and his Gospell, and to their brethren, doe now fall away, and shew none at all. Hee that hath but halfe an eye, may see many for a yeare or two very forward and zealous in religion, who soone after suffer pleasures, profits, or preferments, to draw them quite away: some I confesse through the mercie of God are free from this decay. But there is yet a more grievous fault among us: for the greatest part of our people have no love at all. These are the dayes whereof Christ said, *love should wax cold:* and whereof *Paul* said, *Men should be lovers of themselves:* for take the most congregations where the Gospell hath bene long preached, yet you shall finde that the hearers are neither bettered for knowledge, nor for obedience, but

remain still as ignorant and prophane as ever they were. This argueth that they have no love of God in their hearts, though they have a formal profession of his name in their mouth; for where the love of God is, there must needs be increase in knowledge, in grace, and in obedience. Again, see how men generally walke in their callings, and therein behold a meere defect of love. All the paines they take is for their private gaine and pleasure; no regard is had of Gods glorie, of the maintenance of true religion, and of the good of their brethren: herein their owne consciences shall be the witnesses. So that generally this may be said, We have no love at all. What an action shall we then thinke hath Christ against us? It must needs be grievous; and so our case fearefull and dangerous. If an earthly Prince and Potentate had an action against us, and his case were good, it would make us looke about us, yea to tremble and quake, and to be at our wisend. Behold, not a worldly Prince, but the King of heaven and earth hath a matter against us, just and grievous: oh how should this move us to search our selves, to trie our estate, and to humble our selves upon the knees of our hearts before his Majestie. We may not imagine that this charge of Christ doth not concerne us: the conclusion of this Epistle shewes it belongs to all that have eares to heare. And therefore we should labour to prevent Gods judgements, by judging our selves for our decay and want of love.

Again, this rebuke of Christ for decay of love, should teach us to labour for increase in love to God and to our brethren; adding grace to grace in our hearts, as we adde day unto day in our lives, that so our love may abound: read 1 *Thess.* 4: 9, 10. where *Paul* argueth this dutie at large: hee confesseth they did love one another, and yet beseecheth them to increase therein, *Phil.* 3: 13, 14. in *Pauls* person wee have a worthy president, which wee must follow, if we thinke to come whither he is gone before: though hee had gone farre in the love of God, yet hee laboured to perfection; and therefore considered not that which was past, as resting in it, but rather how farre he was too short, that so he might use means to increase in love, and in all other good graces, till hee come to perfection. A Christian mans life is a way, charledeth to heaven, wherein wee once setting foot, must ever goe forward, and not stand still or turne backe, lest wee never come there. The state of a Christian is like unto a childe, which still groweth till it come to a perfect strength: and so must every child of God labour to grow in the graces of God, till they bee perfect men in Christ: For if they stand still, Christ hath something against them.

The Rhetorists in their annotations abate this place, to prove that a man may quite fall away from grace. Therefore to cleare this text, and to confirme our hearts in the truth of Gods word, this question must be scanned, *Whether a*

March 24. 12. 32.

1 Tim. 3. 1.

many may quite fall away from grace? *Answer.* Grace in Scripture is taken two waies; first, for that favour of God, whereby he accepteth of some for his children in Christ. This is the first grace and the fountaine of all other: and taking grace in this sense, I say, that the signes of grace and the sense thereof in the heart, may be lost: but the favour of God it self cannot bee lost of them that truly believe. When an earthly father is displeased with his child for some notorious crime, he will turne the signes of his favour into signes of displeasure, and shew the same partly by words, and partly by stripes; and yet he still continueth his Father, and holdeth him for his sonne, without any purpose to disinherit him: Even so God dealeth with his children; for their finnes and corruptions, he will turne away his loving countenance from them, and change the signes of his favour into anger and displeasure; when as yet the good purpose of their adoption is not altered, but remaineth firme for ever: and God is still their father, though an angry father through the provocation of their finnes. Secondly, grace in Scripture is taken for the gift of grace which are bestowed on them that believe in Christ. These gifts of grace be of two sorts, some more principall, of absolute necessity unto salvation, without which none can be saved; as faith, and also hope and love, which proceed from faith. There be others also lesse principall, which be very profitable and requisite, yet not absolutely needfull unto salvation: As the feeling of Gods favour, alacritie in prayer, and sense of joy, and comfort in the holy Ghost. These lesse principall graces also may be lost. The principall graces also may be decayed, lessened, and covered in regard of operation, even in Gods children: but quite extinguished they cannot bee, for God upholdeth them by perseverance: where faith, hope, and love are once truly wrought by Gods spirit, they are never wholly or finally taken away, but only in part, and in sense and feeling for a time. This answer is agreeable to this text, for the Church of Ephesus is here blamed, not for quite losing her love, but because she had left her first love, suffering it to decay and wax lesse than it was at their first conversion.

And because this doctrine is oppugned earnestly, not only by the Church of Rome, but also by some churches & schooles of the Protestants: I will first shew the truth thereof out of Gods word, and then scan their chief reasons that are brought against it. That grace cannot bee wholly and finally lost, these reasons prove: I. Mat. 16. 18. The promise is made to Peter, and in him to all the faithfull; That upon that faith which hee professed, Christ would build his Church, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it. Which last words must be marked, for they intimate, that the devil with his adherents would shew much force and violence against the faith of the elect, but yet

they should never get the victory or overcome it wholly. II. Mat. 24. 24. Christ foretelling that false Prophets should come, saith, *They shall seduce, if it were possible, the very elect.* Where he taketh this for granted, that the elect, albeit they may be assaulted grievously, yet they can never be wholly or finally drawne away from their faith. III. Joh. 10. 27, 28. *My sheepe heare my voice (saith Christ) and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternall life, and they shall never perishe.* To this they answer; It is true they shall never perishe, so long as they remaine the sheepe of Christ. But that cavill is cut off in the next words, *Neither shall any plucke them out of my hand: my father which gaved them me, is greater than all, and none is able to plucke them out of my fathers hand:* And therefore neither the devill, nor the world, nor the flesh, can by any temptation draw the sheepe of Christ from their faith, and make them no sheepe. IV. Reason. Joh. 3. 36. *He that believeth in Christ, hath eternall life. They say hee hath it in hope, and no otherwise.* I answer: If they have it in hope, they shall never perishe: For hope maketh not ashamed. V. Reason. Rom. 8. 30. *Whom he predestinated, them also he called: and whom he called, them also he justified: and whom he justified, them also he glorified.* Those which are elected, called, and justified by faith, must needs be glorified: and therefore cannot fall away finally: for such shall never be glorified. And in the end of the chapter, v. 38. he addeth, *That neither death, nor life, Angels, principallities, nor powers, nor any thing else can separate us, viz. the faithfull, from the love of God which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.* But if the faithfull might fall away finally, the they might be severed from the love of God. VI. Reason. Rom. 11. 29. *The gifts of Gods calling (that is, the peculiar gifts that pertaine to salvation) are without repentance.* They say it is true, God indeed never repenteth him of his gifts: but yet a man may perishe and fall away, because he may refuse and reject Gods grace given unto him. This answer is frivolous, maintaining this absurdity; that the powerfull will of God should be brought under the silly will of the creature: if a man could repell Gods grace given unto him, then should mans will take place, and Gods will bee made frustrate and void. VII. Reason. I Joh. 3. 9. *Whosoever is borne of God sinneth not: because his seed remaineth in him; neither can hee sinne, because hee is borne of God.* How is that true? for chap. 2. 10. *Hee that saith, he hath not sinned, maketh God a liar, and his word is not in him.* Answer. The place must bee understood thus; *Hee that is borne of God sinneth not;* that is, with full content, and with all his heart. Sinne doth not reigne in him: for the regenerate man consisteth of two parts, flesh and spirit; the sinne is not as he is spirit, that is, regenerate; but as hee is flesh and sinfull. His will sinneth not as it is spirituall, but as it is carnall. The Papists say, indeed hee sinneth

Rom 5:

not, so long as hee continueth to bee borne of God. This shift is cut off by the word of the text, *Neither can hee sine*, because the seed of grace, even the word of God abideth in him. This place plainly proveth, even in the judgement of the Papists, that the child of God cannot wholly or finally fall from grace. They say it is an hard place, and indeed they cannot answer to it. VII I. *Reason*, If a man may finally fall from grace, then may hee be wholly cut off from Christ: for grace is never wholly lost, till a man bee quite cut off from Christ. But it cannot bee, that a member of Christ can bee quite cut off: for then it should follow, that one and the same man must bee often joynd to Christ; namely, to often as hee falleth by sinne, if hee would bee saved. Whereupon this would also follow, that one and the same man must be often baptized: for Baptisme is the Sacrament of initiation, the means of admission into the Church, and the seale of our union with Christ. But Rebaptization may not be admitted. The Church of God denieth it upon this ground, because a man is onely once borne of God. IX. *Reason*, Christ teacheth us to pray thus, *Lead us not into temptation*: that is, suffer not Satan and sinne wholly to vanquish us. This petition being taught by Christ, must needs bee lawfull and according to Gods will: and therefore hereunto, as to every lawfull petition, belong these two things: First, Gods Command to make it: Secondly, his promise to assure us it shall bee granted. Whereby this is evident, That there is in Gods word a promise assuring every child of God, that he shall never wholly be conquered of the devill; and therefore hee can never wholly or finally fall from grace; for if hee might, then were hee wholly overcome in temptation.

The contrary arguments bee of three sorts; places of Scripture, Examples, and Reasons. For the first, Exod. 32. 32. when the Israelites had sinned that great sinne of Idolatry, *Moses* prayeth God to forgive them; *If not* (saith hee) *blot mee out of thy booke*. Hence they gather, that a child of God may bee blotted out of Gods booke of life, and to finally perishe. *Ans.* That place must be understood with this condition, *If it be possible*: as in the like prayer it is expressed by Christ, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup passe from mee*. This condition must needs be added: for else we must say, that *Moses* prayed for that which he knew was impossible; namely, that one private man should suffer eternall punishment for the sinnes of others; though in temporall punishment such a thing may be, yet in eternall it is impossible. Again, *Moses* in this prayer doth principally shew his exceeding affection and zeale for Gods glorie, and for the safetie of his brethren, both which he preferred before his own life; as if he should say, Lord pardon them, and rather than thy name should lose glorie, blot me out of thy booke. The like affection was in *Paul*, when

A he said, *He could wish himselfe to be separate from Christ for the love of his brethren the Jews*. They further urge the Lords answer to *Moses*, v. 33. *Whosoever hath sinned against me, I will put his name out of my booke*. But as the Lord therein answereth to *Moses* prayer, so must it be understood, with the like exception.

II. *Object*, Ezek. 18. 24. *If the righteous man turne away from his righteousness, and commit iniquitie, and doe according to all the abominations that the wicked men doth, shall hee live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: but he shall die in his sinne*. Here (say they) it is plaine, that a man may fall from grace.

Ans. Righteousnesse is twofold: of the outward action, and of the person. So *Paul* distinguisheth, when he desireth to be found not in his owne righteousness; which is of the law; that is, such as was in him while he was a Pharisee: but in the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of the action is, when a man for outward actions keeps the Law of God. The righteousness of the person is that, whereby a man is accepted righteous before God. And answerable hereunto, there be two kinds of righteous men; one that is outwardly righteous before men, though not indeed: the other, that is truly righteous before God. Now of the former of these two, must that place bee understood: for the Lord there pleadeth with such as did esteeme and avow themselves to be righteous, saying, *Their fathers had eaten sowre grapes*: that is, had sinned, and they were punished for their fathers offences, though they were righteous: And the holy Ghost speaking according to their owne conceit and opinion of themselves, calleth them righteous: and of such it is true they may turne from their righteousness.

III. *Object*, Luk. 8. 13. *Some beleeve for a time, and in time of temptation goe away*. *Ans.* There be three kinds of faith: Historicall, Temporarie, and saving faith. In Historicall faith, is knowledge of the Word of God, with assent unto it. In temporarie faith are 3. things; knowledge of the Word, Assent, and Approbation also, with some joy. In saving faith, there are foure things: Knowledge, Assent, Approbation, and Apprehension: that is, in applying of the promises of God unto a mans selfe; whence proceedeth joy. And answerably, there are three kinds of beleevers: I. such as know the word of God, but yet have no love thereof: II. such as know it, assent unto it, and rejoyce in it also for a time. The third are such as apprehend the promises, and apply them to themselves. Now the two first kinds of faith may be lost; and the two first kindes of beleevers may fall away, whereof Saint *Luke* speaketh: But hence it followeth not, that saving faith may be lost; for hee that is endued therewith can never fall away. But faith (say they) is only one: Eph. 4. 5. *There is but one faith, one God, one hope, and one Baptisme*. *Ans.* By one faith is there meant one

Rom. 9. 3.

Phil. 3. 9.

religion, and doctrine of salvation: as elsewhere is usually by the name of Faith, 1 Timoth. 1. 19.

Their second kind of arguments are *Examples*: which are chiefly two: one of *Adam*, the other of *David*. For *Adam*: they say hee was created righteous, and yet he fell wholly from grace: and therefore any beleever now, may much more fall away, who have far lesse grace than he had. *Ans.* This argument is not good: for though *Adam* had a greater measure of grace than we now have, yet our grace hath a greater privilege than his had: his grace came by creation; ours is by redemption and regeneration. *Adam* had the first grace, to be able to obey; but he wanted the second to be sure to persevere: because God would permit his fall, to make a way, both to manifest his justice and mercy in our redemption by *Christ*. But the child of God after his conversion, wherein he hath the first grace to repent and beleve, hath also an infallible promise, That he shall receive the second grace to abide in that faith. And therefore *Paul* saith, *I am perswaded, that hee which hath begun this good worke in you will performe it untill the day of the Lord Iesum Christ*. And againe, *The Lord is faithful, who will stablish you, and keepe you from evil*.

Secondly, *David* (say they) by his two grievous finnes fell wholly from grace. *Ans.* Hee fell indeed grievously, but not wholly: for after his fall hee contemned not Gods Word, hee hated not God, nor despaired of mercee; which hee must have done, if hee had fallen wholly. And therefore he had remorse for his sinne, so soone as the Prophet *Nathan* came unto him. But (say they) he prayeth God to create a new heart in him, therefore he had then no grace: For creation is a making of that which hath no being. *Ans.* *David* then speaketh not as hee was before God, but as hee was in his owne sense and feeling: for by his finnes Gods graces were sore decayed. But (say they) he repented not for the space of one whole yeare: Now, where there is no repentance, there is no faith, and consequently no grace nor pardon. *Ans.* In repentance there be two things: the gift of repentance, and the act and practice thereof. The gift of repentance was in the heart of *David* when hee yet lay in his finnes: but the act lay hid, and he wanted the renewing thereof all that time. Againe, *David* had the pardon of his finnes past, though he had not the pardon of those two finnes, till he repented of them. Neither was his repentance lost, but decayed onely; he wanted not the power of it simply; but the practice of it only in the act.

Their third kinde of arguments are drawne from equitie and reason.

I. He that is a member of an harlot, and of the Devill, ceaseth wholly to be a member of *Christ*: but a child of God truly beleieving, may become the member of an harlot, and of Satan, as *David* did. *Ans.* There be three kinds

of members; dead, decayed, and living members. A dead member is that which is onely in shew a member: as a legge of wood, or brasie in a mans bodie. A decayed member is a true member, though weake, as is a legge or arme that is taken with a pallie, or sore wounded. But a lively member is that which doth move and doe all it functions perfectly. So in the Church there be some members dead, and onely in shew; others feeble and weake, that by reason of some grievous finnes are not able to doe their duties. And there be lively members which serve God with an upright and perfect heart. Now, though a member of an harlot cannot bee a lively member of *Christ*, because by his finnes he weakneth and woundeth the graces of God (for every adulterer and fornicator doth as much as in him lyeth cut himselfe off from *Christ*) yet he may be a decayed member of *Christ*. And this may the rather stand, because a man is made the member of *Christ* one way, namely, spiritually; and the member of an harlot another way, namely, bodily.

II. *Reason*. If a man cannot fall from grace, then preaching, prayer, the Sacraments, and all meanes of perseverance are needlesse. *Ans.* Nothing lesse: for they have all their good and necessarie use unto them which have grace; even to make them constant in grace. For where the Scripture teacheth the certaintie of salvation, it implyeth the use of the meanes of perseverance. *Paul* in his journey to Rome was certaine they should all come safe to Land by the promise of God: yet when the mariners would have gone out of the ship, *He telleth the Captaine, unless they stay in, wee cannot bee saved*: because they were the meanes to bring them to land. So when *Ishay* had told *Ezekias* from the Lord that he should live fiftene yeares longer, he was thereby assured of recovery, and yet he used a bunch of figges as a meanes thereof, as also food and raiment to preserve his life afterward.

III. *Reason*. This doctrine of certaine perseverance maintaineth men in securitie. *Ans.* Securitie is twofold, carnall, and spirituall: carnall, when a man regardeth not at all the meanes of his salvation, but giveth himselfe wholly to the profits and pleasures of this world. Spirituall, when a man relieth on God for his salvation, by beleiving his promises: and this securitie it maintaineth, but not the carnall securitie: For it teacheth the use of the meanes of perseverance, as prayer, hearing, and reading of the Word, and receiving the Sacraments. And thus I conclude this question, That the true child of God, who truly beleeveth when he sinneth, doth neither wholly nor finally fall away, neither can doe.

Lastly, if this were true of this famous Church of Ephesus, which was founded and preserved by the Apostles, that he suffered her first love to decay; then how can it be otherwise with us, but that we should suffer our first love

Phil. 1. 6.

1. Thes. 3. 5.

Act. 27. 44.

1. Cor. 11.

1. Cor. 11.

love

love as well towards God as man, to lessen and diminish? and that this is so, our consciences will tell us, if we looke to that love and zeale we had at our first calling; and though we have not felt this decay, yet we must know we be in danger of it continually. And therefore wee must take heed, that wee suffer not our good affections in religion to diminish. Water that hath bene once hot, will afterward bee most cold, and freeze the hardest: even so, when our hearts have bene once heated with the fire of the Lords Altar, as true love and other graces of the spirit; if we suffer them to decay, we shall become more frozen in iniquitie than any others. The hawke while she is quicke to take her prey, is set upon the hand of Kings and nobles, but if she wax weake and die, she is cast off to the dunghill. Even so we while we are hot and cheerefull in love towards God and his Church, wee are carried as it were on Gods owne hand: but if we faint and decay in love, we shall be cast lower than if we had never bene so exalted. This love of God in us is like a little flame of fire, for the maintaining whereof we must doe three things: First, take heed of all manner of sinne, which quencth love and other graces of the spirit, as water quencth fire. In the old testament the priests kept fire burning upon the altar day and night, to bee **always** readie to sacrifice unto the Lord: and so must wee keepe a flame of love and other graces continually burning in our hearts, that thence we may offer up acceptable sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord. Secondly, we must stir up the gifts of grace that are in us, as *Paul saith to Timothy*, 2 Tim. 1. 6. using a comparison from the fire, which burneth more bright and cleare when it is stirred up. Lastly, we must exercise our selves in the duties of pietie, as faith, repentance, love, and such like: and so shall they not decay. And thus much for the sinne of this Church.

v. 5 Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe thy first works: or else I will come against thee shortly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou amend.

Our Saviour *Christ* the faithfull Physician of our soules, having sharply rebuked this Church, doth here prescribe unto them a sovereign remedy against their sinne of decay in love. From whence we may learne, that the law whereby sinne is reproved is to be taught, but with this qualification, that withall the doctrine of the Gospel bee joynted therunto,

A that the finnes which are ripped up by the law, may be cured by the Gospel. This is *Christs* manner of preaching in this place, whole practice is a most worthy platforme for all his ministers: for we have no warrant at this day to preach the law barely, which only maketh the wound, without the Gospel which alone sheweth the remedy.

The remedy here prescribed is of speciall use, and worthie our consideration: generally by it we have direction to answer to two necessary questions of practice, which often fall out in the life of man. First, a man is effectually called to profess the Gospel, and yet after his conversion, either through the corruption of his nature, or by the temptation of the Devill and the world, falleth into sinne againe: what must this man doe for his recoverie? *Ans. He must remember whence he is fallen, and repent of those his sins, and doe his first works.* The second question is this: A man that hath all his life long lived in ignorance and sinne, is now touched in conscience for his losse liie; how shall this man escape the wrath of God, and become reconciled unto him? *Ans. He must first remember whence he is fallen by Adams sinne, and by his owne transgressions: Secondly, he must repent of his sinne: Thirdly, endeavour to doe the first works, whereto he is bound by the law of creation; and so shall he escape the wrath of God, and bee received into his love and favour.*

In particular, this remedie hath three parts: The first, *Remember whence thou art fallen*: The second, *And repent*: The third, *And doe thy first works.* These words following, *Or else I will come against thee, &c.* are a reason of this remedie, to perswade them to doe the duties prescribed.

For the first, *Remember whence thou art fallen.* The words beare this sense; Examine thy selfe thorowly, and see in thy selfe the decay of thy former love: and then ponder the same in thy heart seriously and thorowly. Here *Christ* injoyneeth to his Church two duties. I. *Examination*, whereby she must descend into her owne heart, and search out her owne wants, especially the want of her love to God, to his word, and to her brethren. II. *Consideration*, whereby shee must often thinke of these her wants, and lay the same to her heart unfaindly.

This course which *Christ* taketh with this Church, teacheth us first that it is a dangerous thing for any person in Gods Church not to be acquainted thorowly with his owne estate, that he may search out his owne wants, and deeply consider of the same. For this very thing *Ieremie* blamed the people in his time, that no man said with himselfe, *what have I done?* And *Christ* layeth this sinne to the charge of the people of the old world, that they were ignorant of their estate; *They knew nothing till the flood came and took them all away.* And

Ier. 1. 6.

Math. 24. 39, 40.

this is the common sinne of this age: no man almost doth examine himselfe and consider in his heart his owne estate, by reason of his finnes and wants. Nay, men are growne to this, that they count it a meane to breed melancholy, and therefore doe flie the practise of this dutie, and so nuzzell themselves in their fearefull securitie.

Secondly, here we learne that it is a speciall dutie for them that live in Gods Church, to be thorowly acquainted with their owne estate, to examine and search out their owne finnes, and often to consider seriously of their particular wants. *Zephaniae* preaching the doctrine of repentance unto the people, beginneth thus, *Search ye, search your selves, oh nation, not worthy to be beloved.* Where the word translated *search*, signifieth such a search as a man would make for some small thing in a great heape of chaffe. This is the Lords counsell, Hag. 1. 7. Consider your owne wayes in your hearts: and it must be our practice if wee would bee saved. This dutie is the beginning and ground of true repentance, and therefore *Christ* here giveth it the first place; for no man can truly repent before he be acquainted with his own infirmities, and with his owne fearefull and damnable estate, by reason of his sins. And therefore *David* saith, *I first considered my wayes, and then Turned my feet into thy testimonies.* The cause why so few in the world doe truly repent, is want of consideration from whence they are fallen; and what be their sins, and the dreadfull judgements thereby deserved. For till the mind doe truly conceive her owne miserie, the heart can never rightly hunger after mercie. Sinne must be our greatest woe, before *Christ* become our chiefe joy. The second part of this remedie is *Repentance it selfe*: for after a man is well acquainted with his wants, and hath thorowly considered of his owne miserie, then he cometh to repent. In handling hereof five points are to be observed. I. What repentance is. II. How it is to be practised. III. Who commandeth it. IV. To whom it is commanded. V. For what they must repent.

For the first, Repentance properly is in the minde, as the word in this place doth import: for it signifieth thus much, After some folly or oversight to be better advised. Repentance then in the minde is a change from evil to good, or a turning from sinne unto God: Act. 27. 20. *Repent and turne to God.* Which latter words expounded the former, and plainly shew what repentance is. And this change in the minde standeth in this resolution, whereby a man by Gods grace purposeth to leave all his former finnes, and to cleave unto God in holy obedience unto all his Commandements. And when this resolution is in the minde, therewithall followeth a turning of the whole man in will, in affections, and in all the actions of his life. This appeareth by that description of the practice of repentance, which *Paul* reduceth to

seven heads, viz. *Care, clearing off themselves, indignation, feare, great desire, zeale, and revenge.* 2 Cor. 7. 11. whereof some are renewed affections, and some reformed actions.

Hereby appeareth, that their description of repentance is not so fit and proper, which say it standeth in these three: contrition, faith, and new obedience. For contrition is not a part of repentance, but a cause thereof, and so is faith, as *Christ* teacheth us in his well known sermon, *Repent, and beleve the Gospel*; where they are plainly distinct. And indeed a man must first beleve in *Christ*, and then followeth repentance, and for new obedience it is not a part of repentance, but a fruit thereof. Others make regeneration and repentance all one, but that cannot so well stand: for regeneration goeth before, and repentance followeth after as a fruit thereof: for godly sorrow which is a part of regeneration, causeth repentance. The minde therefore must first bee renewed, and then it turneth it selfe unto God, and withall turneth the whole man. And thus we see what true repentance is.

II. Point. How must repentance be practised?

The practice of it standeth in two things: in true humiliation, and true reformation. In *humiliation* a man humbleth himselfe under the hand of God, making true confession of all his finnes, from a sorrowfull heart, condemning himselfe for the same, and earnestly craving pardon for them, at the hands of God in *Christ*.

Reformation is a change of all bad actions into good: and if case require, a making of satisfaction unto others for injuries done unto them. Example hereof we have in *David*; who having committed those two great finnes of whoredome and murder, when he was reproved by *Nathan*, repented, confessing his finnes, and made the one and fiftie Psalmes, and (as it is thought) the 32. Psalmes, therein notably shewing both his humiliation in heart, and reformation of life. So *Manasse*, when he was converted, *bee repented, humbling himselfe before God, and praying for the pardon of his finnes, God heard him.* And thus came the prodigal child unto his Father, saying, *Father, I have sinned, against heaven, and before thee, I am now worthy to be called thy son, make me one of thine hired servants.* And so in all the Psalmes of repentance, we may see these duties of humiliation and reformation joyntly practised, as Psal. 6. and 38. and 77. and 130. 143.

Here then consider the fearefull practice of the Church of Rome in their doctrine of repentance, received generally for many hundred yeares. Repentance with them standeth in three things: In contrition, in confession of all his sins to the Priests, and in satisfaction to God by good works. But all these things may a wicked man do. For *Indu* was grieved for betraying his master; he confessed his sins, and also gave againe the money wherewith he was hired. A second abuse is, that they make contri-

Mark. 1. 15.

Chap. 2. 2.

Psal. 119. 59.

2 Chron. 33. 11.

Luk. 15. 18.

on a part of the practice of repentance; by contrition we must understand remorse of conscience for sinne; which is no grace of it selfe, though it may be an occasion thereto in Gods elect. A third abuse is, that they prescribe a confession of all a mans sinnes unto men; which is a gibbet for any mans conscience; wherein they require more than Gods doeth. A fourth abuse is, that they require satisfaction to Gods justice by mans good works; whereby they overthrow satisfaction by Christ, and exact that of men which none is able to performe. Wee therefore must reject their wicked doctrine, brought by the Devill into Gods Church, and imbrace that saving repentance which standeth in true humiliation and reformation.

I I I. Point. Who is it that commandeth repentance unto his Church? namely, Iesus Christ. Many, not onely Papists but Protestants, gather upon this and such like commandements, That God giveth to every man sufficient grace to repent if he will: For else (say they) he should but mocke them, in bidding them repent: considering that without his grace it is as impossible for any man to repent, as for a man to rise and walke that is fast bound hand and foot. *Answer.* This collection is unsound: For the manifestation whereof, I will first lay downe the grounds of the true answer; and then apply the same. First, this commandement to Repent, is not given to every man, but onely to the Church of God, or to that people which is to bee a Church: and God giveth it to them for this end, that hee may gather among them his elect. In Gods Church there bee two sorts of men; Elect, and Reprobate; both which are mingled in this life. Now when the commandement to *beleeve and repent*, is given out in Gods Church, it is directed properly to the elect; and to the other whom God hath refused onely by consequent, because they are mingled with the elect. Again, these commandements bee given to the elect for two causes. **I.** To teach them, not what they are able to doe of themselves; but what they ought to doe. **II.** To be an outward meane to bring them to repent and beleeve. For with the Commandement Christ is present by his spirit to worke in the elect grace to repent and beleeve: Phil. 2. 12. *Work out your salvation in feare and trembling:* rendring this reason in the next words, *For God worketh in you both the will and the deed.* In the Church there be some reprobates, who have the same commandement given unto them; but for other uses: as **I.** To keep them in outward order. **II.** To teach them their owne impotencie. **III.** and principally, that God in his justice may make them void of all excuse at the last day. From hence I answer thus: This proposition is not true, to wit, *If God command men to repent, then hee giveth them grace to repent, unlesse it be thus qualified; That God command them to repent, for this end, that they may praitsse repentance.* For God gi-

A veth out his Commandements for divers ends. Some that they may be practised; and others to take from men all excuse in their disobedience. Thus he commanded *Pharaoh* to let the people goe; that by his disobedience his heart might be more hardened, and God more justly manifest his glorie in his destruction. So he commanded *Isay* to goe and preach unto the people: not for their conversion, but to *blind their eyes, and to harden their hearts.* And to hee commands the reprobate to repent; but neither directly as he doth his children, in whom hee intends the practice of repentance; but by consequent, because they live among his children: nor yet with intent they should obey, but rather to harden them, and to make them inexcusable, because of their sinnes. And therefore in them his commandement cannot import any ability to obey.

B **I V. Point.** Who be commanded to repent? namely, *The Church of Ephesus*, that is, the Minister with the whole body of the Church. This may seeme strange, that hee should command them to repent, seeing they had already repented at their conversion. Here therefore we must learne that there bee two degrees in the practice of repentance: First, the beginning of repentance: Secondly, the renewing of the same. And in these two consisteth the whole state of a Christian mans life. He must begin to repent when hee is received to mercie: hee must renew that repentance for his daily offences.

C If God therefore have given us grace to repent, we must not content our selves with that good beginning, but adde more repentance daily unto it. For no man liveth that hath received grace to repent, but hee seeth in himselfe continual cause of renewing the same, by reason of his daily falls and wants; or everie sinne decayeth grace, which must bee repaired by a new practice of repentance. This dutie must needs bee practised. It is the most dangerous case that can be for any man to lie in sinne, for sin makes a man liable to all Gods judgements. And it is not so much the act of sinne, as the lying in sinne that bringeth damnation. For this cause *Paul* 2 Cor. 5. 20, speaking to those that were reconciled to God, doth still most earnestly beseech them to be reconciled unto him, saying, *We beseech you in Christs stead, as though God did beseech you through us, that ye be reconciled to God:* Intending thereby to provoke them to the daily renewing of their repentance, that thereby they might get a more full assurance of their reconciliation.

D **V. Point.** For what must they repent? namely, for the decay of their love: not for the want thereof, but for that they suffered it to wax lesse, both towards God and his Word, and towards their brethren. The same thing is spoken to us daily in their ministerie of the word: that whereas our first love is gone, many having fallen from it, and more having none at all,

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we should inwardly repent, of this our decay and want; but if we have had love, and now wax cold, we may renew it; and if we never had it, we may labour for it; that so we may be answerable to his blessed desire. And here observe, that Christ enjoyneth us a strait repentance. It is not enough for men to repent them of grosse finnes, as whoredome, theft, drunkenness, and such like; but they must repent them of their wants of grace, as of the knowledge, and feare, and love of God, & of brotherly love, and of decay in any grace, be it never so little. We have many iudiciaries in conceit, that bee Pharisaically minded, thinking too well of themselves; that they need no repentance, because they live civilly, and are not tainted with grosse finnes: But these consider little what God doth here require; even repentance for our secret wants and decays. And great reason it should be so, for else to what end should we examine our selves of our secret wants, unlesse we should repent us of them, having found them in us.

Again, if this Church must repent for her wants; then what great cause have we to repent in this last age of Atheisme, a grosse and common sinne: of outward pride in apparell, a sinne flat against Gods word: and for contempt of the Gospell, a sinne that enlargeth it selfe more and more among us; and for crueltie and want of mercie and compassion, all which are ripe in our Church; and may more easily remove the candlestick from us, than want of love could remove the candlestick from this Church. And thus much for the second part of this remedie.

The third part of this remedie, is, *to doe their first workes*: that is, shew the like zeale and fervencie of love to God, to his Word, and to their brethren, that they did at the first time of their conversion. This dutie Christ addeth to the former; because true repentance never perisheth in the heart, but alwayes breaketh out into action in the life.

Here then is an excellent lesson for us to learne and put in practice: we must search our owne hearts, and see what good things have bene in us; what good motions and desires, or good affections. We must also call to minde our former waies, and see what good things we have done: and if in heart or life we find decay, we must recover our losse, and seeke to doe our first workes, and strive to continue so doing to our lives end, that so we may escape this heavy charge of decay in grace. Thus much of the parts of this remedie.

If not, I will come against thee shortly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou amend.

In these words Christ layes downe a reason to perswade the Church of Ephesus to the practice of the former remedie, especially for repentance. This reason containeth three parts.

1. A generall commination in these words, *If*

nor, I will come against thee shortly. 11. A particular threatening of a particular judgement, *And remove thy Candlestick out of his place.* 11.1. The condition of them both: *except thou amend.*

1. Point. *If not, I will come against thee shortly*: that is, if thou doe not practise this remedie, and the duties therein prescribed, especially the dutie of repentance; then I will come against thee shortly. The words may as well be read thus, *If not, then will I come to thee shortly*: For so they are in the original, and doe containe in them sufficient and profitable instruction. God is said to come to any people two wayes, in mercy, and in judgement. In mercy, when hee testifieth his presence by workes of mercie: As when Christ in spirit went unto the old world, and preached unto them in the person of Noah an hundred and twenty yeares before the flood, 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20. Secondly, God cometh in judgement, when he testifieth his presence by judgements. In the second commandment God saith, *Hee will visit the sinnes of the fathers upon the children*, that is, he will make inquirie among the children for the fathers sinnes, and if he finde them to live in the same sinnes that their fathers did, then will he punish them; that is properly to visit. So in this place, *If thou repent not, I will come unto thee*, and testifie my presence, not in mercie, but in judgement.

In this generall threatening we may observe, that when a Church or people decay in love to God, to his word, or to their brethren; or else lie in any sinne: then God prepareth himselfe to come unto them in judgement: Amos 4. 12. *Because I will doe them: and thus unto thee, for thy sinnes, therefore prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*; meaning, that because they lay still in their sinnes, therefore hee would make knowne his presence by more fearefull judgements: This doctrine according to Christs direction is to be applied to us, and to our Church: for the sinnes that were in the Church of Ephesus, are the sinnes of our church and people. They decayed in love to God, to his Word, and to the brethren, so doe we. Nay generally there is no love at all in us, as hath bene shewed: and besides these wants, there be many grosse sinnes where in our church and people doe lie; as in Atheisme both in judgement and practice; in contempt and neglect of Gods worship and true religion; in crueltie, oppression, and want of mercie: and that which is more, though God summon men to repent by his daily judgements, yet few or none by true humilitie prepare to meet God, and to prevent his judgements. Security spreads it selfe over the whole body of our people. And this being our case and state, it must needs be that God hath bene long since in coming to us by his judgements; and at this day he is still coming, because wee still decay in our love and other graces, and more and more goe on in sinne. So that if we thus continue, the truth is

he will come shortly unto us, and that by most fearefull judgements. For this was written to the Church of Ephesus, to bee a direction not onely unto them, but to all Churches to the end of the world, that be in the like or worse case. What shall we then doe?

Our duty is taught us in these words (*If not*;) that is, if thou repent not. Wee must prevent the Lords comming in judgement by unfained repentance: everie man and every family apart must repent privately, and the whole Church openly and publikely: no way else we have to stay the Lords comming againt us by his fearefull judgements.

The second part of this reason, is a more particular threatening than the former; *And will remove thy Candlestick out of his place.* Where he sheweth with what particular judgement hee will punish his Church: namely, by removing away the candlestick. The meaning whereof may bee gathered out of the former chapter, where particular Churches were called candlestickes; therefore here he threatneth to remove his Church from the cite of Ephesus: to take away the ministerie of his Gospell, and the profession thereof, and in his just judgement to send among them, Ignorance, Apostasie, and heresie, in stead of the knowledge of his truth. This particular judgement must bee referred to the first words, *If not*; that is, if thou repent not, this will I doe; I will make thee to bee no Church, and take my Gospell from thee.

In this particular threatening, three points are to be observed; one concerning the Minister; the second concerning the whole body of the Church; the third concerning every private man. Touching the Minister note this; If hee shall decay in love to God, to his Word, or to his brethren, or if he lie in any one sinne known to himselfe, it is a meanes to deprive him either of his calling, or of Gods gifts bestowed on him; for this threatening is here directed especially unto the Angel of this Church of Ephesus. When *Jeremie* had bene wanting in delivering the Lords will unto the people, partly for feare, and partly through impatience; then the Lord becomes a Prophet unto him, saying, *If thou returne, I will bring thee againe, and thou shalt stand before mee.* Whereby he would give him to understand, that if he returned nor he should cease to be a Prophet unto him. The same thing is true of all Gods Ministers; if they decay in love, faile in their durtie, or lie in any sinne, they must speedily renew themselves by repentance, or else God will deprive them either of their calling, or of the gifts thereof. True repentance and the renewing thereof is needfull unto all Christians; but especially to Gods Ministers, if they would continue in his favour, and stand before him, becoming his mouth unto the people.

The second point concerneth the whole body of a Church; to wit, if a Church or peo-

ple decay in love to God, to religion, and to their brethren; or doe lie in any common sin, they procure hereby the removing of the Gospell from them, and the abolishing of true religion. *The Prophet is a foole* (saith the Lord) *and the man of the spirit is mad:* This was a great and fearefull judgement: but marke the cause; *All is for thine iniquitie:* that is, for the sinne of the whole Church doth God send foolish Ministers. If this be so, then we have just cause in our Church to feare the removing of the Gospell from us, for there is a generall decay of love in many, and in the most no love at all. Many scorne and contemne true religion, and hate the professors thereof. In regard whereof, wee may wonder at the great patience of God, that yet continueth his Gospell among us: *For God giveth men up to strong delusions; to beleeveth lies, because they love not the truth.* Wherefore being in this danger, our durtie is, to use all good meanes to prevent this judgement of God: which can no other way be done, than by true and unfained repentance by the whole Church in generall, and by every man apart, and every family apart. For when God shall speake suddenly against a nation or kingdome, to roote it up, and to destroy it; if that people repent of their wickednesse, the Lord will repent of the plague and judgement which hee thought to bring upon them, *Jer. 18. 7, 8.*

The third point concerneth every private man, and it is this: If any man decay in love, or want love to God and to his brethren, or lie in any sinne known to himselfe: This is a meanes to remove the candlestick from him; to deprive him of his knowledge and other graces of God. The affection of love in the heart is like the watch of the clocke: if the watch stand, the wheelles stand; as the watch goeth fast or softly, so goe the wheelles answerably. And so it is in man: if his love to God and to his Gospell doe increase, then doth his knowledge and other graces of God increase in his heart: but if this love decay, then other graces decay; and if love be gone, then farewell all pietie and true religion. If we would know the cause of such palpable ignorance as is in many that have long heard the Gospell preached, it is nothing but want of love. *Hebr. 3. 12, 13.* the holy Ghost sheweth by what degrees men come to fall away from God. First, sinne deceives them, by drawing them to commit it: then their hearts are hardened by the custome of sinning. Thence followes unbeliefe in many points of religion: and so they wake Apostasie from God, and set themselves against his truth. Take heed therefore of lying in any sin, for that is the high way to small Apostasie: rather strive to increase in love unto God and unto his Word, and so shall all his good graces increase in thine heart.

Out of this particular threatening some gather, that a man may be cut off from Christ, and fall away finally from true faith and repentance. For (say they) if a whole Church may be cut

13of. 9. 7.

2 Thef. 3. 13.

12m. 19. 5.

off

off from Christ, and become no Church: then may any one member of the Church be cut off, and become no member: but a whole Church may be cut off, as here we see, and therefore may any one man. *Ans.* This reason is not good: there is great difference betwene the state of a whole Church, and of one man that is a true member of Christ. For a particular Church is a mixt company of true professors and dissemblers: like unto a field wherein are good corn and tares; and like unto a barme floor, wherein is wheat and chaffe mingled together; and yet all are reputed believers, because they profess the Gospel outwardly. Now by reason of this mixture, it may come to passe, that a particular visible Church may fall away, and become no Church; either when the godly are taken away, and hypocrites and dissemblers made manifest; or else when true believers waxing few, are not able to maintain the publicke profession of the truth, against the might and multitude of the enemies, which may daily increase. But the case is not so with a particular member of Christ; he cannot finally fall away, as hath been shewed at large, ver. 4. And thus much for the second part of this reason.

The third part of this reason, is the condition of both the former threatnings, in these words; *Except thou amend, that is, I will come in judgement upon thee, and take my Gospel from thee, unless thou prevent my coming by true repentance.*

Here note, that all the threatnings of the old and new Testament are conditionall; *Satanas con mitt to Ninive, and crieth, yet forty dayes, and Ninive shall be destroyed.* He said no more; but yet that threatning must be understood with this exception, *unless it repent.* Why (will some say) are the threatnings in Gods Word propounded conditionally? *Ans.* Gods whole will and pleasure is one alone in it selfe: and yet it may thus be disguised, to be partly secret, and partly revealed. Gods secret will is touching those things which he hath not made manifest unto men. His revealed will is touching those things which are manifested in Scripture, or do fall out every day. Now Gods secret will is without condition; for as every thing cometh to passe, so God willed it: when good things come to passe, then he willet simply; when evil things fall out, then he permitte to be done. And to make Gods secret will conditionall, is to bring Gods will under the power of man, and to subject the Creator unto the creature. But Gods revealed will is conditionall, because it containeth the matter of mans salvation: and this manner of propounding it, is a most effectually way to bring the sune to passe: for it keepeth men more in a wefull obedience, than if it were absolute.

In this condition note two things, that Christ repeareth it twice, both in the beginning of it, *If not;* and in the end, *Except it repent.* Hereby he would give us to under-

stand, That when men commit sinne, and lie therein, or when they decay in any grace, then have they most necessary cause to repent, if they would escape Gods fearefull judgements. And seeing our estate is like to the state of this Church, or else worse by much (for wee lie in sinne, and thereby cause God to come to us in judgement, as we tender our owne good both in this life, and after death, let us turne from our sinnes and repent, every man apart, every family apart, and the whole Church publicly: for repentance is most needfull, else would not the Lord have doubled this condition.

v. 6. *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the werkes of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

These words are a second reason to prove that which was set downe in the second verse: namely, That this Church could not abide them that were evil. In the second verse this was made manifest, by their discoverie of the false Apostles; & here he proveth it by their affection of hatred, towards the werkes of the Nicolaitans. These Nicolaitans were certaine hereticks in the primitive Church that held these two opinions: First, that adulterie and fornication were no sinnes; Secondly, that men might communicate with the sacrifices of idolaters in their Idoll temples; and according to their opinions were their practices. These hereticks (as it is thought) came of one *Nicholas*, one of the seven deacons mentioned Act. 6. who though for a while he did faithfully discharge his duty outwardly, yet after fell away, and became head of this heretical sect.

But this thou hast. This Particle, *But*, hath reference to the former verse. As if he should say, Though this be thy fault, that thou sinnest in thy first love; yet for this I commend thee, that thou hatest the werkes of the Nicolaitans.

This practice of Christ discovereth the common sinne of this age: which is, to let out in their colours mens faults and infirmities, to their greatest disgrace; and yet by silence and oblivion to burie all their virtues, which are praise-worthy. This ought not to be so: wee must follow Christs example, who with just reproofe adjoyneth due deserved praise. If our friend or our foe have a fault, when we are called thereunto, we may speake of it, and wee must reprove them: but yet withall wee must commend the good things that bee in them. Secondly, Christ here teacheth us, That it is not sufficient to any mans good estate before God, that he have good things in him; for that a man may have, and yet bee in danger to bee cut off from Christ. *Saul* had good things in him at the first entrance unto his kingdom, but what was he afterward? *Iehu* was very zealous for Gods glorie, in killing all the idolatrous

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priests, but he would not depart from the first of *Jeroboam*. And *Judas* no doubt had many good gifts while hee was with Christ, but his end was so fearefull: And this Church had many good things in her: yet is shee in danger of being cut off from Christ: And so many among us have excellent gifts: some for knowledge, some for mercie and conceiving of prayer; and yet for all these they may bee cut off from Christ. Therefore wee must not content our selves with these, but labour for the principall, which is true, hearty, and untainted repentance, which we must daily renew for our continuall falls. And this will keepe us in Gods favour, and from his judgements.

More particularly Christ here commendeth this Church, for *hating the errors of the Nicolaitans*. Whereby hee would teach us our duty if we be Christians; namely, to take knowledge of the finnes and errors of our times, and to hate the same unfainedly. Yet note, hee commendeth them for hating *their workes*, not *their persons*: giving us direction how to temper our hatred in the world. We must set it against the sinne, not against the person of any man. Some will say, the Prophets prayed against the persons of the wicked. And *David* professed hatred of the men, *Psal. 139. 21*. Doe not I hate them that hate thee? *Ans.* *David* was an extraordinary Prophet, and had no doubt this revealed unto him; that those his enemies were obdurate, and would not repent. Again, imprecations of the Prophets in Scripture, must be understood as prophecies of Gods judgement to come upon those against whom they prayed. But we which want that extraordinary spirit, must keepe our selves to our ordinary rule: Hate the finnes, and love the persons.

Further, observe the workes here hated: namely, Idolatry, and Adultery, which are joynted together in these Nicolaitans. Adulterie is the punishment of Idolatry; and Idolatry the punishment of Adulterie. Spirituall Adulterie is punished with bodily Adulterie. This was verified in the old Jewes; when they fell a whoring after strange gods, God gave them up to uncleane lust. And it is palpable in the Church of Rome: they being fallen to idolatry, doe abound in all uncleannesse: for they tolerate Stewes for fornication: and adultery and Sodomie are common among them.

Again, sundrie men may here bee well admonished, who will be of no religion, because there are many sects and schismes among the professors thereof. These men should consider, That in the best Churches planted by the Apostles, there were sects and heresies, even in the Apostles times, as here in *Ephesus*. And therefore no marvell, if there bee sects and schismes among us at this day. This offence should not move any to dislike the Gospell, but rather cruse them more firmly to cleave unto the truth.

Which I also see here. This Christ addeth to encourage them to goe forward in the vertue for which he commended them, in hating evill workes: for what could more provoke them to zeale and constancie therein, than to know they did that which Christ himselfe did? And here wee see, that Christ would have everie member of his Church to be like minded, and like affected unto him, as he was man. We must love those things which Christ loveth, and hate those things which Christ hateth, rejoyce wherein Christ rejoyceth, and mourne for those things for which Christ mourned. And great reason it should bee so: for wee profess our selves to bee members of Christ, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, for out of his blood sprung the Church: and there must be consent and conformitie betwene the head and the members. *Quest.* If Christ hated these wicked men, why did he suffer them to live, and not cut them off from troubling his Church? *Ans.* Because hereby he would manifest his love to his Church, and his justice upon the wicked: for he can bring light out of darknesse, and good not only out of good, but out of evill.

v. 7. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches: To him that overcommeth, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

These words containe the conclusion of this Epistle: the scope whereof, is to excite this Church to the more careful performance of the duties befoie prescribed. This conclusion hath two parts: a commandement, and a promise. The commandement in the beginning of the verse; *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches*. In this commandement note three points; I. who are commanded, *Those which have eares*; II. The dutie commanded, *They must heare*. III. What they must heare, namely, *What the spirit saith unto the Churches*.

I. Point. The parties commanded are thus set forth, *He which hath an eare*: who these be, Christ doth more fully expound, *Matth. 13. 9*. when hee saith, *Let him that hath an eare to heare, heare*. Where he maketh this distinction of hearers; that some are deafe hearers, some hearing hearers. The deafe hearers are those that bring with them to the ministerie of the word their outward eares onely, but their hearts are not affected with it: neither doe they care to learne to believe, or obey that which is taught them. The hearing hearers are such as beside their bodily eares, have eares pierced

ced in their hearts by the spirit of grace, whereby they do not only heare the word outwardly, but their hearts are also affected with it, and made pliable unto it; so as they beleve it, and bring forth obedience unto it. This hearing care is set forth by *David*, when he saith: *Sacrifice and burnt offerings thou wouldest not have: but mine eares hast thou opened and prepared; and then I said, Loe I come.* Hercof *Isay* saith, *Thou openedst mine eares; and I was not rebellious.* And this hearing care *Lidia* had given her, when God opened her heart; whereby she became attentive to the word of God preached by *Paul*.

By this distinction of hearers which Christ maketh, we may learne, that Gods grace unto salvation is not universall, that is, God giveth not unto all mensuch measure of grace, whereby (if they will themselves) they may beleve, repent, and be saved: For in Christs time, and ever since, there have been in the Church these two kinds of hearers; whereof the deafe hearer doth not receive nor beleve the Gospell unto salvation. Neither is it true, that God giveth grace sufficient unto all, whereby they might be saved, if they by their malice and sinne did not abolish the time. For though he admit all sorts into his Church, yet not all, but some only have eares pierced by the spirit of grace that they can heare. And therefore when the Disciples asked Christ, *why he spake in parables?* he answered thus, *To you it is given to know the will of God, and the secrets of his kingdom: but to others it is not given.* Shewing plainly that the gift of hearing to salvation is not given to all, and in some made void by their owne wilfulness: but to some it is given, and they have hearing eares: and to some it is not given, and their eares are deafe.

Secondly, seeing this commandment is directed to the hearing hearers; we must hereby be admonished to use all good meanes to become good hearers of Gods word; bringing with us not onely the bodily eares which wee have by creation, but the spirituall eares of the heart, which we have by regeneration. For it is not sufficient to our salvation to receive the word into the outward bodily eares, unless the inward eares of the heart be opened, that our soule may be affected with the word, and fitted to receive, to beleve and obey the same. Thus did good king *Iosias* heare the law read; the text saith, *His heart melted within him.* And thus did *David* heare when the Lord said to the Church, *Seek ye my face: his heart answered, I seek the face, O Lord.* And as wee must be carefull to get spirituall eares; so wee must take heed of deafe eares. Which is when a man cometh and heareth the word of God, but yet hath no care in his heart to learne, beleve, or obey the same. This deafe eare is a fearful judgement of God, whereof we may read, *Isay 6.9.* where the Prophet is sent, *To make their eares heavy, and their hearts fat, lest they might not heare, nor beleve: lest they*

should turne and be saved. And this the rather we must looke unto, because it is a judgement of God upon many among us at this day. The greatest part of hearers are deafe hearers: which appeareth by this, that after long teaching they neither increase in knowledge, nor in faith, nor in obedience; but remaine the same for blindness of minde, hardness of heart, and profaneness of life, that they were at the first hearing of the Word: these must know that Gods judgement is on them; and if they would be saved, they must labour to come out of this estate, and endeavour so to heare with their hearts, that they may be turned unto God both in minde, heart, and life.

II. Point. The duty commanded: namely, *to heare.* Hearing in Scripture is not onely to listen with the bodily care: but to be attentive to that which is taught, and with attention to bring faith, conversion, and obedience every way. Eph. 4. 21, 22. the hearing of Christ is notably described: It is not so much to conceive the doctrine of Christ in our minds, and to be able to utter it, as *to die unto sinne, and to the lusts of the flesh, and to rise to newnesse of life.* And indeed, a man doth heare and learne no more of Gods Word, than he doth beleve and practise. From whence we are againe to be admonished, that we so heare with attention, that by hearing we suffer our selves to be changed, and that with our change we joyne care to beleve, and conscience to obey. This is that saving hearing which bringeth eternall life: all other hearing doth increase our finnes to our further condemnation. Whereby also appeareth the fearfull state of many, who lend onely the outward bodily care to heare the Word, but their hearts be not moved, nor their lives changed thereby.

III. Point. What is to be heard? namely, *That which the spirit saith unto the Churches.* Which words must be referred to that which went before, and not to that which followeth: for this commandment belongs to the matter of the Epistle which went before. The promise following rather concerns the persons themselves than the matter. The things then that are to be heard, are these; Christ his sharp reproofe for sinne: his threatnings of punishment: a remedy prescribed, and motives to practise the same, especially repentance: for of all these Christ spake before.

From this, that Christ bids them heare these things which concerned their estate in finnes, and amendment by repentance, we learne two things. First, that it is a most necessarie thing for every Church of God, and every member thereof, to know and consider their owne wants and finnes, and also the judgements of God that hang over them for the same. Secondly, that after any man, or any Church hath considered of their finnes, and of Gods judgements; it is a most necessarie thing, to turne unto God by true repentance, if they have not repented:

and

Vse.

PBL. 40. 6.

16. 59. 5.

A2. 16. 14.

24. 11. 13.

verf. 11.

1 Chr. 34. 27.

PBL. 27. 6.

and if they have repented, to renew the same daily, and doe it more: that so Gods judgments both private and common may be avoided. We therefore must hereby bee moved to search into our owne wayes, to finde out our owne sins, and to consider of Gods judgements thereby deferred, that by true repentance we may turne unto God, and so escape his fearefull judgements.

Further, these words, *What the spirit saith unto the Churches*, containe two reasons to move every man to heare. I. Because they are spoken by the spirit, that is, the holy Ghost. II. because they are not spoken to one man, or one Church alone, but to all Churches. For the first: It may be demanded seeing Christ spake these words, How can it bee said that the spirit speaketh them? *Ans.* Both may stand: first, because all the outward actions of any persons in Trinitie are common to the rest: but to teach the Church is an outward action of Christ, and therefore it agreeth to the Father, and to the holy Ghost. As when the Father created things in the beginning, the Sonne also created, and the holy Ghost created them. So here when the Sonne teacheth, the Father teacheth, and the holy Ghost teacheth: For as the three persons are one in nature, so must they be joyned in all outward actions. Secondly, Christ saith the spirit speaketh, because hee now sitteth at the right hand of the Father, doth not teach his Church in bodily presence, but by his Spirit, which after his ascension hee sent to bee their comforter and instructor.

Here then observe that the holy Ghost speaketh to the Church in Scripture. The Church of Rome appoints a Judge to speake unto men in matters of controversie, which is the Church: because (say they) a Judge must speake: and Christ is absent from his Church: and the word is a dumbe letter, and cannot speake: Therefore the Church must needs be Judge. But they erre grossly: The Church cannot be Judge. It is but Christs Minister to put in execution that which hee commandeth. Christ therefore must bee Judge unto his Church by Scripture, which is not a dumbe Judge: for therein his spirit speaketh plainly and sufficiently for the resolving of any point in controversie, that is needfull in Gods Church.

The second reason to attention is, because these things are spoken to all Churches. Where we see that things spoken to one Church agree to all, From whence we must learne this speciall dutie in reading and hearing Gods holy Word; namely, to read and heare with application. Wee must not rest in a flourishing knowledge of the story, but apply every precept and example unto our selves. If it be an example of vertue, we must apply it to our selves for imitation; if it be an example of vice, we must apply it to our selves to move us to eschew and avoid the like. For God would have all to learne that which hee speaketh unto one. And thus

A much of the Commandement.

To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the Tree of life, which is in the middle of the Paradise of God. These words containe the second part of this conclusion, to wit, a most excellent promise: wherein consider two points. First, to whom it is made: Secondly, what is promised. For the first: The promise is made to *him that overcometh*, that is, to him that in fighting prevaileth against all the spiritual enemies of his salvation, sinne, Satan, hell, and condemnation. There bee three things requisite to make a man able to overcome these enemies. First, he must be borne anew in Christ, of water, and of the spirit, 1 John 5. 4. *Hee that is borne of God overcometh the world.* so by regeneration he is freed from the bondage of hell, death, sinne, and Satan. Secondly, hee must have true faith, by vertue whereof he must deny and renounce himselfe, and be whatsoever he is in the death, passion, and obedience of Christ. Therefore S. Iohn saith in the same place: *This is the victory which overcometh the world, even your faith:* for when a man is in Christ, by faith he is made partaker of Christs victory upon the crosse, and by it receiveth power to subdue his owne corruptions, the world, and the devill. Thirdly, hee that would overcome must keepe faith, that is, true religion, and a good conscience, standing out in life and death against all adversary power whatsoever.

In this, that life everlasting is promised to them that overcome; First, we observe, that the doctrine of universall grace, affirming that the promises of the Gospel for life and salvation, belong to all and every man whatsoever, unlesse hee will reject them, is a device of mans braine. For life eternal is not promised to every man as he is a man coming of *Adam*; but to a man as hee is in Christ by faith, and a new creature. The promises of the Gospel, he universal in need to all that overcome: but that is a propertie which restraines them actually to true believers. Secondly, hereby we are taught so to live, that we may lay truly in the testimonie of a good conscience, we have overcome all our spirituall enemies, and doe continually stand conquerours over them. This is a matter of endless joy and comfort, which will cheere the soule in great distresse. But to live and lye in sinne, is or will bee a hell to the conscience. What avails the treasures and honours of this world to any man, while his conscience shall tell him hee is a vassall to sin and Satan? For while he continueth in that estate, hee is out of the favour of God, and hath no part or portion in the kingdom of heaven. Therefore it standeth us upon, to labour to feele in our hearts the certaine evidence of the victory over our spirituall enemies; by the true testimonie of the spirit of grace.

The second point is the thing promised, to wit, life everlasting, scored by the gift, *To eat of the Tree of life.* And is secured unto us by

two circumstances. First, by the cause of it: Secondly, by the place where it is to be found. The cause is *Christ Iesus: I will give to him to eat of the Tree of life*. Where hee maketh an opposition betwene himselfe and the first *Adam*. The first *Adam* sinned; and thereby cast himselfe and all his posteritie out of the earthly Paradise, and lost the benefit of the tree of life: But *Christ* the second *Adam*, commeth and suffereth for sinne: and thereby openeth the way to a better Paradise, than the first *Adam* lost: and to all that overcome he giveth libertie to enter in, and to eat of the tree of life. The Tree of life properly, was a tree placed in the middle of the earthly Paradise: and it was so called; first, because it was a pledge and Sacrament unto *Adam*, that he should live for ever, if he continued in obedience to God: secondly, because it had in it (as may be proved) vertue and power, whereby it would have preserved him from death and olivage for ever, if hee had stood in his innocencie.

The earthly Tree of life was a figure and signe of *Christ* our Saviour and Mediator; who liveth an eternall spirituall life, not onely as hee is God, but as he is Mediator, and that not for himselfe onely, but for this end, that he may convey quickning spituall life to all that believe in him: and for this cause hee tearmeth himselfe the tree of life. Further hee saith, *Hee will give her of it: that is, to eat*, sometime signifieth to believe, *Joh. 6. 50.* hee cannot here be so taken; For faith endeth with this life, and hath no use afterward. Therefore *to eat*, in this place signifieth to have immediate fellowship with *Christ* in Heaven: where *Christ* shall bee unto him a tree of life to make him live for ever.

In this promise rose two points. 1. In what things eternall life consisteth: namely, in immediate fellowship and communion with *Christ* in heaven. Secondly, that life eternall standeth not in outward meanes, as meat, drinke, clothing, phisicke, recreation, sleepe, and such like: but in an immediate partaking with *Christ* in all his blessings. So that when *Christ* is all in all unto us immediately, then doe we eat of the tree of life, and thereby shall live eternally.

II. *Circumst.* The place where eternall life is to be had is in the Paradise of God. This Paradise of God is the third Heaven, a place wherein the Lord doth manifest himselfe in his glorious Majesty, and which he hath prepared for the glorie of all his Elect. Hereof *Christ* spake to the theefe on the crosse, saying, *This day shalt thou bee with mee in Paradise*, *Luk. 23. 43.* and likewise was *Paul* rapt in vision, and saw an *heaven* which cannot be uttered: and hee called it the third heaven, in respect of the heavens under it: for the place wherein we breathe is the first heaven, the starrie firmament is the second heaven, and the Paradise of God is the third: which is therefore called Paradise, because it is a place of endless joy and pleasure. And

the adding of the name of God, doth not onely put a difference betwene it, and *Adams* earthly Paradise, but also sheweth it to be a great and most excellent place. So *Rahel* saith, *I have wrestled with my sister the wrestlings of God*, that is, strong wrestlings. And in the Psalmes, *The Mountains of God*, doe signifie high and mighty Mountaines. And that this Paradise is such an excellent place, appeareth at large, *Revel. 22.* Forthermore must come none unclean thing, but the Saints and Angels doe there enjoy the presence of God, and behold his glory: so much as the creature is able to comprehend: There God communicateth himselfe to all the elect, and becommeth all things unto them immediately: so that this must needs be a place of all joy and comfort.

The consideration whereof must admonish us to seek the things that bee above, that wee may have a place in this heavenly paradise. For why should wee set our hearts upon the vaine glory of this world, which passeth away as a shadow and cometh to nothing, and in the end is but labour and sorrow, when wee have all that the world can afford? But the joys and glory of this paradise of God be endless and unspeakable: let us therefore deny our selves, depend upon *Christ*, and in all things keepe faith and a good conscience unto the end. And thus much for the first Epistle.

v. 3. *And unto the Angel of the Church of the Smyrnians, write these things, saith hee that is the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.*

In this verse and therest that follow to the twelfth, is laid downe the second letter or Epistle of *Christ* to another Church of Asia, called Smyrna. Before the Epistle *Christ* gives a second particular Commandement unto *Iohn* touching the writing hereof unto this Church, in these words, *and unto the Angel of the Church of the Smyrnians write*: Which is prefixed to this Epistle, that this Church and all other Churches of God might bee assured, that *Iohn* had sufficient warrant and calling for the writing hereof: Which thing is necessary to every penman of the holy Ghost, that the Church need not to doubt of the authority of Scripture, but receive the same as the pure word of God.

Hence we may gather, that all ordinary Ministers of the Gospell, must have warrant and calling for every doctrine which they teach in Gods Church; for the Apostles, that were extraordinary men, of more excellent gifts, might doe nothing without warrant. Of the parts of this commandement we spake in the first verse of this chapter.

The Epistle is selfe followeth, containing three parts, a Preface, a Proposition, and a Con-

Conclution. The Preface containeth a preparation to the matter of the Epistle in theſe words; *Theſe things ſaith he that is the firſt and the laſt, which was dead, and is alive.* In this Preface hee ſheweth in whoſe name this Epistle was written unto this Church, namely, in Chriſts name: which he ſetteth downe for two cauſes. Firſt, to ſtir up the people in this Church to a religious attention, and a reverent care of receiving the things therein written, as the pure words of Chriſt Jeſus. Secondly, becauſe no Commandement in the matter of Gods worſhip and religion is to bee received from any creature, but from Chriſt alone. And therefore this Epistle concerning the true worſhip and religion of God, is propounded in his name alone. In this preface Chriſt is deſcribed by two notable Arguments: firſt, *To be the firſt and the laſt*: ſecondly, *that hee was dead, but is alive.* The meaning of them both was ſhewed in the 17. and 18. verſes of the former Chapter, whence they are borrowed. By the firſt, Chriſt would ſignifie, that he is everliving God, without beginning or ending, before all creatures, and after them. By the ſecond, that hee is true man, and assumed mans nature to ſuffer death for our finnes, and roſe againe to life for ever, and to give to man eternall life.

In this deſcription two points of doctrine are expreſſed.

I. That Chriſt is a perſon, conſiſting of two natures, Godhead and Manhood: *He is the firſt and the laſt,* and therefore God: *Hee was dead, and is alive,* and therefore is true man. If any aſke how one perſon can conſiſt of two natures; Anſw. As body and ſoule concurre to make one man, ſo the God-head and Man-hood of Chriſt concurre to make one Chriſt; and therefore are united.

II. Doct. Here is the foundation of all true comfort unto Gods Church and people, in any miſery and affliction. Which ſtandeth in two points: firſt, that Chriſt is able to helpe them in any miſery; ſecondly, that hee freeeth them quite from it, or eaſeth them in it, ſeeing he is *God, the firſt, and laſt.* Secondly, that as hee is able, ſo hee is willing and ready to helpe them, for he is man, who tooke on him our nature, dyed for us, and roſe againe unto life, to give to us eternall life. This is the very ſcope and end for which Chriſt thus deſcribeth himſelfe to this Church that was in affliction. Here then we have direction, where and whence to ſeek for true comfort in any tribulation of this life; namely, wee muſt have recourſe to Chriſt, and in him conſider both his abilitie and his willingneſſe, to eaſe all his children in affliction. And by theſe wee muſt arme our ſelves againſt deſpaire, and againſt immoderate grieve and ſorrow under the crolle.

v. 9. *I know thy workes, and tribulation, and povertie,*

A (but thou art rich) and I know the blaſphemie of them which ſay they are Jewes and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan.

Here beginneth the Propoſition of this Epistle, containing the matter and ſubſtance of the whole Epistle. This propoſition hath two parts; a commendation of this Church, and counſell how to behave her ſelfe in the time to come. The commendation is in the 9. v. where withall are mingled ſome comforts unto this Church, being in affliction.

B *I know thy workes.* Theſe words were handled in the former Epistle. The meaning briefly is this: I know all thy dealings, and thy wayes, I know the whole tenour of thy life; and I doe withall well like and approve of them. Here Chriſt ſetteth downe an excellent property touching himſelfe; namely, that he ſeeth and knoweth all things whatſoever, nothing is hid from him: and that this Church might bee reſolved hereof, he repeateth this unto them; *I know thy workes.* Neither is it any vaine repetition, being indeed the ground of all true piety, and ſincere obedience.

Wee therefore in all our affaires are here taught to labour to be fully reſolved in our conſciences, that Chriſt is with us, and ſeeth us, and knoweth the whole tenour of our wayes in thoughts, words, and deeds. David had learned this, when as hee ſaid, Thou knoweſt my fitting and my riſing, thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off. Thou compaſſeſt my paths, and my lying downe, and art accuſtomed unto all my wayes: there is not a word in my tongue, but thou knoweſt it wholly. This perſwaſion is very neceſſary: for it will move a man to make conſcience of every thought, word, and action, and of his whole behaviour; ſub where this perſwaſion is wanting, there is no religion in the heart, nor good behaviour in the life. When this takes place, Religion beginneth and increaſeth with it; ſo doth good conſcience and true obedience; for hee that hath the Lord alwaies before him, will not greedily fall. *Pla. 11. 8.*

D *And tribulation.* Marke here how workes, that is, a godly conſervation, and tribulation goe together. Hence we learne, that God will have tribulations joyned with his graces; where he beſtowes his graces, there alſo he layeth tribulation: and that for weighty cauſes; as to humble them for their finnes paſt, to make triall of their faith and other graces, and to prevent in them finnes to come. The conſideration whereof muſt move all Gods children in this our Church to looke for ſome tribulation: for God hath beſtowed among us plentie of his graces, with long peace, and many outward bleſſings: and his will is, that trouble and

affliction should accompany the same.

Further, *Christ* saying, *I know thy tribulations*, would hereby comfort this Church; as if he should say, True it is thou art in great trouble, but it cometh not by chance, but by the special providence of my Father: and I doe know and regard the same. Psalm. 113. 6, 7. the raising up of the poore and needy, is made a fruit of Gods beholding the things that are done upon the earth. This is an excellent comfort for any Church or people that be in affliction: for when they shall know, that beside the hand of God therein, *Christ Iesus* regardeth their sorrows; this must needs arme them with long suffering and joyfulness. Wee in this Church (as hath bene shewd) may persuade ourselves, that God will send tribulations among us; now when they come, what shall we do? that we sink under them? No; but we must now forecalt to use the means whereby we may stay our hearts under the smart and burthen of them; that is, by selling our hearts in this persuasion, that *Christ* seeth our affliction, and withall hath speciall care to comfort or deliver us, as hee seeth most for his glory, and the good of our soules.

In the next words *Christ* setteth downe two kinde of tribulations in this Church, *Poverty*, and *Reproach*: By *Poverty* he meaneth want of temporall things to maintaine this naturall life. Where observe sundry things: 1. That true religion and pietie will not free any from outward povertie. The religion of this Church was excellent, and yet they were in want: and therefore let no man thinke, because he is godly, hee shall be rich, or not fall into povertie. If it be said *Godliness hath the promise not onely of the life to come, but also of this life*, that is, of earthly blessings and riches: I answer, it is true; but yet with difference: Eternal blessings onely are promised absolutely; and temporall blessings with restraint, namely, if they serve for Gods glory, and the good of his children: otherwise they must want as this Church did. 2. The Lord would comfort this Church in her povertie, by saying that hee knew it and regarded it. Where wee see a meanes to comfort all those that bee in want of outward blessings: They must consider, that *Christ* seeth and observeth their want whatsoever; and if they bee his servants, hee will free them from it, so it be for his glory and the good of their soules; or else arme them with patience to beare it, if they pray unto him. 3. *Christ* here approveth of workes where hee acknowledged piety; so that good workes and povertie may stand together. And therefore good workes doe not consist onely in large Almes, as the Church of Rome would have it; though these have due reward and praise in their place. But every worke of a mans lawfull calling, done in obedience to God, with an honest heart, from a good conscience, and for Gods glory is a good worke, be the calling never so base. Thus may the shepheard praise God in his calling, as well as the Magistrate or

Minister. For it is not the matter of the worke that commendeth it to God, but the manner of doing.

But thou *overrich*. Here *Christ* intendeth both to praise and to comfort this Church: as if he should say, Notwithstanding thy outward povertie, yet thou art rich in God, as Luk. 1. 21. Men are rich in God in two respects: 1. When they are reconciled to God in the merits of *Christ*. 2. Corin. 8. 9. *Christ* became poore for our sakes, that wee through his povertie might be made rich; that is, that wee might have the pardon of sinne, and bee received into Gods favour. Hereupon *David* calls the Lord his portion and his cup. And *darable riches and righteousness are with wisdom*, Proverb. 8. 18. 11. When they receive his grace, whereby they are enabled to bring forth good workes, both in duties to God and man. Of this *Paul* speaketh, when he exhortheth rich men to be rich in good workes, and to lay up for themselves a good foundation against the times to come, 1 Timoth. 6. 16.

In this commendation sundry duties are to be learned: 1. Poore men are here taught, seeing God denieth unto them earthly riches and wealth, to labour to bee rich in God, to be reconciled unto him in *Christ*, and to get such grace, that they may doe good duties both unto God and man, in faith and with a good conscience. 2. Rich men, on whom God bestoweth outward wealth, must hereby bee admonished to embrace *Pauls* charge, 1 Timoth. 6. 17, 18. Above all things seeke for true riches in the living God: and not suffer these outward blessings, to puffe up their mindes; but use them as a meanes to make them rich in God, by getting Gods grace, doing good workes, and distributing to the poore. This admonition is most necessary, for though the promises of Gods grace be not denied unto the rich, yet sure it is, riches doe choake the seed of grace in the heart, and hinder the care men ought to have for spirituall riches. And hence it cometh, that more of the poore fort receive and obey the Gospell than of the rich. 3. Herein be shold the madnesse of the world. For the most mens greates labour and care is after worldly wealth and honour: never regarding the true treasures of Gods grace, which will commend them unto God, when the other must perish and the wicked owners thereof. Let us therefore judge as *Christ* doth of true riches, and accordingly labour to be rich in his sight.

The second part of their tribulation is the reproach and blasphemy of their enemies, in these words; *I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jewes and are not*, &c. that is, I know the grievous slanders and revilings which thine enemies fasten upon thee. For blasphemy signifieth not only speeches of disgrace against God, but against men: As *Nabab* was accused, 1 King. 21. 10. to have blasphemed GOD and the King. And of this *Paul* faith,

faith, *When we are reviled, we bleſſe: when we are blaſphemed, we pray*, 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13.

Hence we learne, that all Churches and men that deſire truly to ſerve God, and to keepe good conſciences, muſt looke for ſlanders and revilings: neither muſt this ſeeme ſtraunge unto them; for Chriſt hath ſaid, it muſt bee ſo. Nay rather they might marvell, if they ſhould ſuffer no reproaches for Chriſts ſake, ſeeing hee hath ſaid, *curſed are you when all men ſpeak well of you*, Luk. 6. 26. It is indeede a grievous thing to bee ſo evill rewarded for well doing; but this muſt bee their comfort and ground of patience, That Chriſt heareth and knoweth every reproach, and will in his good time remedy the ſame.

The perſons which blaſpheme this Church are thus deſcribed; *Which ſay they be Jewes, and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan*. As in ſome famous cities, ſo in Smyrna dwelt ſome of the Jewes, who had their Synagogue, that is, ſuch places of aſſemblies, where they ſerved God after their manner: and thought they denied Chriſt, yet they thought themſelves to bee the onely true worſhippers of God in all the world; and therefore did blaſpheme and raile upon the Chriſtians that beleaved in Chriſt. And of theſe Chriſt ſaith, though by birth they were Jewes, yet indeede they were not the Iſrael of God, nor his true worſhippers, as they accounted themſelves. Whereby in generall we may ſee, from whom come raylings and reproaches on Gods ſervants; namely, from thoſe which ſay they are true worſhippers of God, and are not: *For hee is not a Jew, that is one outward*, Rom. 2. 28. He therefore that ſlandereth the truth, and the profeſſors thereof, is an enemy to Chriſt, as well as to his ſervants: for no friend of Chriſt can poſſibly ſpeake evill of his Goſpell and religion. This ſhould bee conſidered for the comfort of the godly, becauſe they that endeavour to ſerve God in ſinceritie, are of all men moſt ſubject to reproach: *Hee that refraineth from evil, maketh himſelfe a prey*, Eſay 59. 15.

Touching theſe Jewes, two points are to bee conſidered: I. What they are in their owne opinion: II. What they are in the judgement of Chriſt. For the firſt, becauſe they were Jewes, by birth deſcending from Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, Gods ancient ſervants, therefore they thought themſelves the onely true worſhippers of God, as their forefathers were. And this is the manner of all wicked men; *To bleſſe themſelves in their wickedneſſe*, and whatſoever they do, yet ſtil to ſay and think, God will bleſſe them. Take an heretike, who overthrowes the truth of God by his errors, and hee will ſay he teacheth that which in confidence hee is perſwaded is the truth, for which hee will ſhed his blood, and whereto he would have all men yeild. So take a profeſſed witch, man or woman, they will ſay, all that they doe is by the power of the good Angels, and by ſome ſpecial

gifts given unto them above others; but they will not be brought to acknowledge that they doe any thing by vertue of their league with the Devill, from whence indeede cometh all they doe. And ſo the carnall Proteſtants of our time, they looke for Gods bleſſings in this life, and for eternall life by Chriſt after death, and yet walke in the broad way to deſtruction, in ſinne and profaneſſe. Thus they bleſſe themſelves in their evill wayes, and make Chriſt a packe-horſe for their iniquities. But in the example of theſe Jewes, wee muſt learne to lay downe all preſumptuous thoughts of our owne goodneſſe, and vaine perſwaſions of Gods favour, without his true grace; and rather looke unto our ſinnes, and be humbled for them, that God may liſt us up. II. Point. Chriſts judgement of them is this; *They are not Jewes, but a Synagogue of Satan*; that is, a companie of men that ſeemed to ſerve God after the Jewiſh manner, but did indeede worſhip the Devill. Herein are many things to bee conſidered. I. How this could be true of any companie of the Jewes, who were the choſen people of God? Anſw. Election is twofold: ſpeciall, and generall. Gods ſpeciall Election is, when in his eternall counſell hee chooſeth a man to life eternall: and this befall not all the Jewes, but ſome onely: Gods generall Election is, when hee vouchſafeth any people to become his Viſible Church, to have and carrie the outward ſignes and privileges of his covenant: and thus was the Nation of the Jewes Elecd, and therefore were circumciſed, and received the Paſſeover. From this generall Election, a Church and people may fall, as the Jews did, and ſo became the Synagogue of Satan; being indeede never within the particular calling, from which a man cannot fall away: for *Gods Election remaineth ſure*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *His calling is without repentance*, Rom. 11. 29.

II. Point. At what time did the Jewes begin to bee a Synagogue of Satan? Anſw. Not at the crucifying of the Lord of life, (though that were a moſt heinous ſinne) for though ſome therein ſinned of malice, yet many did it of ignorance. This Peter confeſſeth, Acts 3. 17. and therefore in his firſt Sermon after Chriſts Aſcenſion telleth them, *that the promiſe belonged to them and to their ſeed that were afore off*, Acts 2. 39. But when the Apoſtles had a long time preached Chriſt unto them, and convinced their conſciences out of the Old Teſtament, that hee was the true Meſſias, and yet they remained obſtinate; rejecting and perſecuting both them and their doctrine; then they ceated to bee a Church of God, and became a Synagogue of Satan: for this cauſe Paul and Barnabas ſhooke off the duſt of their feet againſt them, and turned to the Gentiles. Whereby we ſee, when a Church of God becometh no Church; namely, not ſo ſoone as they hold an heretike for the Church of the Galarhians held juſtification by worke, yet thereupon ceaſed

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not to be a Church: but when they embrace an heretic against the foundation of religion, and bee convicted of it, not by private men, but by Apostolicall authority, or by publicke judicial sentence of the Church from the authority of Gods Word.

Hence we may learne, first what wee are to thinke and judge of the Church of the Papists, of the Libertines, and Anabaptists, family of Love, and such like; namely, that they are no Churches of God: for they hold heresies against the foundation, which the Church long agoe condemned by Apostolicall and judicial authority. Again, here wee learne what to judge of this our Church of England: many there bee that say we have no Church among us, because some private men have reprov'd the same for some things that are sinfull, and yet they are not reformed. But this is a fond and foolish reason: For first, the error must be against the foundation: and yet that maketh not a Church to bee no Church, unless it be obstinately maintained after sufficient reproofe, and judicall conviction by the word of God: But no such thing can be affirmed of us, and therefore we remaine the true Church of God.

III. Point. How became the Jewes a Synagogue of Satan? *Ans.* Through their unbelief: as it is plainly proved, Roman. 11. 20. *Obje.* But they held the Word of God, and defended the bookes of the old Testament, for which wee are beholding unto them. *Ans.* Indeed they held the letter: But if wee regard the true meaning of the Prophetes, and the subject of the old Testament, which is Jesus Christ, that they razed out and denied. And so though they held the letter, yet worshipping God our of Christ, they worshipped an idoll, and not that God which would give unto them eternall life. For out of Christ there is no salvation. And so we may say of the Church of Rome: though they hold the bookes of the Old and New Testament, with the Creed of the Apostles (whereupon some say wee ought not to depart from them,) yet the truth is, that indeed they hold them not. The Christ of the Papists is but a fained Christ: for they take from him both his nature (especially his humanity) and his offices: and therefore we have just cause to separate from them.

This example of the Jewes, that were once a most famous people, but are now become the Synagogue of Satan, must be set before our eyes continually. For when all the world were rejected, they stood high in Gods favour; but now for their unbelief they are cast off from God, and are become the Synagogue of the Devill. Which must admonish us, *Not to be high minded, but to feare.* Roman. 11. 20. for if God spared not the naturall branches, them that were his first chosen people, he will not spare us that are but wilde olives grafted into the true vine. We must therefore take heed of unbelief, and labour for true faith, which we must testifie by

A. obedience in our lives and conversations.

V. 10. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: Behold, it shall come to passe that the Devill shall cast some of you into prison that yee may bee tried, and yee shall have tribulation tenne dayes. Bee thou faithfull unto the death, and I will give thee the crowne of life.*

Here followeth the second part of the Proposition of this Epistle, to wit, that heavenly and spirituall counsell which Christ giveth to the Church of Smyrna: which I call *counsell*, because in the next chapter our Saviour Christ collecth such kind of instruction by the name of counsell. First, here note that Christ commendeth this Church, and giveth her counsell, but doth not at all rebuke her for her faults, as hee did the Church of Ephesus. Hence the Papists gather, that Gods Church, and so the members thereof, may live without sinne, and fulfill the law. But they are deceived: Christ therefore abstaineth from reproofe of this Church, not for that he had not anything against them, but for these two causes especially. First, because this Church of Smyrna did truly repent and beleve, and did not decay in grace as the Church of Ephesus did: and therefore had the pardon of her finnes, and was in Gods love and favour. Secondly, this Church did endeavour to obey Christ, and to testifie her faith and love thereby. Now God accepteth the desire and will of obedience in his children, as obedience is felix: and therefore did not reprove them for any fault that was among them.

Seeing this Church being in affliction is so farre forth accepted, that Christ reproveth nothing in her; we are taught, it is profitable for Gods Church and people sometime to bee in affliction: for thereby are the gifts and graces of God preserved, as Faith and Repentance: and many grievous finnes prevented, which otherwise Gods children might fall into.

The counsell is itselfe contained three parts. A precept. A prophetic. And a precept againe. The first precept is in these words, *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.* This precept may seeme to bee against other places of Scripture, as Phil. 2. 12. *Work out your salvation in feare and trembling.* And, Roman. 11. 20. *bee not high minded, but feare.* *Ans.* There bee three kindes of feare: I. Naturall feare. II. feare proceeding from grace. III. A distrustfull feare proceeding from unbelief. The naturall

fear is a declining and shewing of death and these things: that tend thereto this fear is in all men, in as much as every thing desireth to preserve it self; this was in Christ, who in his agony feared death, as it was a separation of soule and bodie asunder: yet this was no sinne in him, but only an infirmity without sinne. The second kinde of feare, is that which cometh from grace, Malac. 1. 6. *If I be a father, where is mine honour? If I be a master, where is my feare?* This feare is a reverent awe towards God in regard of his mercy and judgements: and this is a vertue and no sinne. The third is distrustfull feare, when men for affliction forsake religion and obedience to God, standing more in feare of men than of God: and this is that feare which Christ in this place forbiddeth, being a sinne that draweth men from God unto perdition.

In this Commandement Christ doth two things. First, hee giveth them and us to understand, what is the sinne in which every man is conceived, and the seed whereof remaineth still in the children of God; namely, distrustfull unbelief, whereby men feare the authority of the creature, more than the glorious Majestie of the eternall God: which proceedeth from this, that men consider not of God as hee extendeth his providence over all things, and as hee is a mighty Judge taking revenge upon all sinne and wickednesse.

Secondly, here Christ describeth the meanes whereby Gods people may arme themselves against all perils and troubles whatsoever, to wit, *Christlike fortitude*: which is a gift of God proceeding from true faith, enabling a man to lay aside all feare, and with courage to undergo all dangers whatsoever, that he may in life and death maintain faith, and a good conscience: this vertue God prescribed to the Prophets when they were to enter into their calling, and our Saviour Christ to his Apostles, & to his Church of Smyrna. And it were to bee wished, that all the Ministers of the Gospell might speake unto their people as Christ speaketh unto this Church, *Fear not*. But the truth is, if they deale faithfully, they must change their note, & say with Ioh. waile and howle see Priests and people, lying in sackcloth and ashes, because the day of the Lords vengeance is at hand. For it is lamentable to see the state of the whole bodie of our people, of whom we may generally say with the *Throp'et*, *There is no knowledge of God in the land*. And where knowledge is, there is little conscience to live thereafter. Consider also how the most are carnall minded, dead in sinne, they favour not the things that pertaine to Gods kingdome, but their hearts are wholly possessed with earthly desires and delights, and spirituall things affect them not. Yea, in all places we shall see, that as naturall sleep wrapeth up the senses of the body: so a spirituall slumber benumbeth their mindes and hearts. For though God preach daily unto us by his judgements,

yet like the old world wee know nothing of the evil day; wee never call to minde the judgement to come. And if hereunto wee joine the common crying finnes of this land, as swearing, cursing, oppression, sabbath-breaking, drunkennesse, whoredome, and all uncleannesse, yea, Atheisme it telle the ground of all; How can wee say with Christ, *Fear not*? yea, rather we must call men to repentance in sackcloth and ashes. For God is jealous for his glory, neither will hee alway bee chiding, nor wink at our iniquities, he hath whet his sword and bent his bow, and unlesse wee repent, the day of havocke will come shortly, wherein he will take vengeance upon all our iniquities.

And although this bee the common state of the land, yet Christ hath his remnant among us, who doe mourne for the finnes and abominations of the times, and doe endeavour to keepe faith and a good conscience in all things: and to these it may be said, *Fear not*, but take to your selves Christian courage, and arme yourselves therewith; lay aside all distrustfull feare, and glorifie God in your hearts, strive to keepe the faith in a pure conscience unto the end, and so shall Christ appeare to your joy, when the wicked shall bee ashamed. And to move Gods children to this Christian fortitude, first let them consider what a judgement of God is due unto them that are distrustfully fearful, when they should suffer any thing for the name of Christ: Revel.

21. *8. they must have their reward in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone among the damned*. Secondly, let them observe the Lords presence and his gracious promise of protection in distresse, *He will cause his Angels to pitch their tents about them, that no perill shall hurt them*. 2 King. 6. when a mightie armie came against Elisha, his servant was sore afraid: but marke how hee comforted him, *Fear not* (saith he) *for they that bee with us are more than they that bee with them*: And so it is with Gods children. Thirdly, let them consider that it is a most honourable estate to suffer any thing for the name of Christ. And therefore the Apostles rejoiced exceedingly when they had beene beaten, *That they were counted worthy to suffer any thing for Christs sake*, Galat. 5. 14. *The crosse of Christ is Pauls whole rejoicing*. And if hee would boast of any thing, it should bee herein, 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. This were Gods servants affected: and therefore they that repent and believe, need not to feare what flesh can doe unto them.

The second part of Christs counsell is his prophetic: which is a prediction of that particular affliction which this Church of Smyrna should suffer; and first hee prefixeth this note of attention, *behold*: then hee setteth downe the prophetic it selfe, *The devill shall cast some of you into prison*. *Behold*, hereby he would teach us an excellent lesson: that wee must often consider before hand of the day of our visitation, wherein God will trie us, lest we perish therein;

16. 66. 5.

16. 34. 6.

verf. 4. 6.

A. 5. 42.

16. 13. 5.

Hof. 4. 7.

our Saviour Christ coming towards Jerusalem: *over it*, and when hee came to it hee foretold the final destruction of that citie: which therefore came upon them, because they considered not the day of their visitation, neither the things therein fore-told that did concerne their peace. And the like destruction will come upon us in this land, if wee consider not the dayes of our visitation: let us therefore now in the dayes of peace forecall what is to come, and prepare our selves against the day of the Lordstriall; and so shall wee escape the fearefull and final destruction that shall come upon the wicked. *It shall come to passe that the Devill shall cast some of you into prison, that yee may be tried, and yee shall have tribulation ten dayes.* These words containe Christs prophecie, wherein hee sheweth himselfe to be true God; for as *Isay* in many places sheweth, it is the property of God alone to fore-tell a particular affliction that is contingent. But some will say, others can foretell certaine things to come: as the Physician, the sicke mans death; and the Astronomer the time of the eclipys; how then is this proper to God? *Answer.* The Physician foretelleth the sicke mans death, onely by vertue of causes present, in which the future death is to him apparant: And the Astronomer foretelleth the eclipys, by the consideration of the naturall and ordinary course of the Heavens in present, and by that can come to foretell it in time to come. So that simply none can foretell a thing contingent, except hee see it present in the causes; but Christ foretelleth things to come simply of himselfe, though no cause be present, as appeareth in this place.

In this prophecie Christ describeth this affliction by sundry arguments. First, by the cause thereof, which is the Devill. Secondly, by the parties that were to be afflicted, *Some of you of the Church of Smyrna.* Thirdly, by the kinde of punishment, *Imprisonment:* fourthly, by the end thereof, *their triall.* And fifthly by the time of it continuance, *for ten dayes.*

I. *Argument.* The cause of their affliction is the devill. *Quest.* How can that be, for being a spirit he cannot offer violence to mens bodies to cast them into prison? *Answer.* True, but hee is the God of the world that ruleth in the hearts of the wicked; hee inclineth their wils to hate Gods children, hee firreth them up to persecute, and maketh them his instruments to cast Gods servants into prison.

In this that the Devill causeth the afflictions of Gods Church, we may learne sundry points. 1. What manner of men those be that persecute the Church of God? namely, wicked men, such as are inspired by Satan, and wholly guided in minde, will, and in affection by him: thus made *Paul* say, *Hee was the head of all sinners:* because in persecuting the Church of God hee was guided by the Devill, and made his minister: which must teach us to take heed how we persecute the Church of God, or any member

A thereof, either in word or deed: for he that doth so is the vassall of Satan in that action, and while he holdeth that course, he sheweth himselfe to bee no better than one that is wholly guided by the devill: for the devill is the principall agent in persecutions, and wicked men be his instruments.

II. Hereby we are taught to take pittie upon all persecutors, bee they Kings or Monarchs, or whatsoever: yea, we must pray for them though they be our enemies: because they are possessed and guided by the Devill, and in their persecutions doe his will, and become his servants and vassalls.

III. Here we learne with what weapons we are to defend ourselves in time of persecution: namely, with spirituall weapons of prayers, and invocation, wherein we must shew our faith in Christ, our repentance and true obedience; for our principall adversary is a spirit, and hereby we shall best defend our selves against him, and get the chiefeest victory. *Thus* for his prayer is called, *The Chariot and horseman of Israel.* Nothing doth so much prevaile in troubles and persecutions, as prayer from a penitent and believing heart. And if God should send a forraign nation against us, howsoever the weapons of the souldier must be used, yet our principall weapons must be praier and fasting: for thereby we shall soonest foyle our principall adversary Satan, who feareth not the speare nor sword, and yet will flie before these spirituall weapons.

C I. *Argument.* The parties that must be afflicted, were some of the Church of Smyrna, not all.

III. *Argu.* The kind of their affliction was imprisonment.

IV. *Argu.* The end of their affliction, was the triall of their faith, hope, love, and patience, with other graces of God, and the manifestation of the same, first to their owne conscience, and then unto the world. In these three Arguments, note first a speciall point touching Gods providence, to wit, that it is the first cause of all, above all causes ruling and disposing them all. God in governing the world by his providence useth instruments of two sorts: good, or evil. The good instruments are good Angels, and regenerate men; by whom commeth no disorder, for God worketh both in them and by them. Wicked instruments are the Devill, and wicked men, and though God use them wel, yet from them is much disorder and sinne, for he worketh not in them, but only by them, permitting their sins and disorders, that thereby hee may shew forth his justice, mercie, and power: which herin do notably appear, in using these instruments which be evil in themselves, that notwithstanding their malice hee causeth wonderfull order: first by his providence he restraineth their fury and rage, so as they cannot shew it to the full as they desire. See this in the Devils persecution against this Church: hee

King. 11.

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cannot kill the members thereof, but only cast them into prison: hee cannot imprison them all, but some onely: neither can hee keepe them in prison alwayes, but for a short time. Secondly, by his providence he turneth all that they doe, to the good of the Church: the devill afflicteth the Church for the destruction and damnation of their soules; but God turneth it unto their good, to make their faith manifest, and to prevent many finnes in them. These things wee should often thinke of, and blesse Gods name for ever, that by his providence he doth matter Satans power and malice; and so dispose of all actions of the wicked, that they tend to the good of his Church. This must also teach us to renounce our selves, and to put all our trust and confidence in Christ his providence, making that our comfort, our stay, and protection in all distresse.

Againe, whereas the end of afflictions in Gods Church is the triall of faith, and other graces; hence we are taught many things. First, to labour to have in our hearts the power of godlinesse in true faith and unfained repentance; and not content our selves with the forme and shew thereof in a naked profession onely. For wee must bee cast into the fire triall of afflictions, to see what is in our hearts. In the day of triall, shewes will not serve the turne, nor stand us in stead. Trialls and afflictions will consume them, as the fire doth drossie and stubble. Secondly, to be joyfull and glad, when the Lords will is to call us to suffer for his sake: because this is a meanes to make knowne good graces in our hearts. *Iames 1. 2. Brethren, count it exceeding great joy, when ye fall into divers afflictions, knowing that the triall of your faith bringeth forth patience.*

V. Argument. The time of their continuance in affliction is for *ten dayes*. By which some understand a *long time*: according unto that which *Iacob* saith to *Laban*: *Thou hast changed my nages ten times*, that is, often. And so the *Israelites* are said to sinne, *ten times against the Lord*: that is, many times; but this exposition will not so fely stand in this place; for Christ intendeth to comfort this Church. But what comfort could this bee, to say they should bee so long in affliction? Others expound *ten dayes* to be *ten yeares*. And so the word *dayes* is sometime used to broken yeares; for in the Scripture there bee yeares of dayes, as well as yeares of weekes. But though this exposition may well stand with the words, yet none can shew by true record, that this Church was afflicted onely for ten yeares, and no longer. Therefore a third exposition is this. That by *ten dayes* is meant some short space of time: and so I understand this place, because it is most futable to all circumstances. For here Christ intendeth to comfort this Church, which is most fely done, by fore-telling a short time of their affliction.

In this circumstance of time, Christ setteth

A downe two things; First, that the afflictions of Gods Church and people are for a certaine time decreed of God, which cannot bee changed, lengthened, or shortened. Particular proofes hereof wee have in Scripture. So God foretold *Abraham*, That the afflictions of his people should be *430. yeares*: which time they were afflicted, especially in *Egypt*: but at the time night when those yeares were expired, they were led out of *Egypt*, and their afflictions ceased, *Exod. 22. 46*. And the *70. yeares* captivitie were well knowne unto *Daniel* to be determined of the Lord: And therefore hee armed himselfe with patience during that time, and prayed nor for deliverance, untill it should bee expired.

B The consideration hereof must move us to arme our selves with patience when God shall send affliction, because wee cannot deliver our selves before the time which God hath appointed: for the continuance of our afflictions is set downe by God, and cannot be changed by us. Secondly, here Christ sheweth, that the afflictions of his Church are but for a short time: and therefore *Paul* calleth them *momentarie*, in regard of the eternall weight of glory which shall be revealed at the end of this life, and never have end. Which is a singular ground of comfort unto the childe of God in any distresse.

C Thus wee see the parts of this prophacie; yet in the words there is a further thing intended; for every word containeth a reason to comfort this Church: as first, from the cause of their persecution, which is the Devill; and therefore they must not feare, for if hee cast them into prison, their cause is good: wee see Gods enemy, and so the Lord is on their side, who then can bee against them to doe them hurt? Secondly, not all your whole Church, but onely some (saith Christ) must bee afflicted. Thirdly, Satan cannot kill you, but onely cast you into prison. Fourthly, his imprisonment shall not tend to your damnation, but make for the triall of your grace. And lastly, it is but for a short time. In all which you may see the power of Gods providence overruling your enemy, and turning his rage unto your salvation; and therefore take comfort and courage unto your soules, lay aside all feare and all dread, and keepe faith, and good conscience to the end.

D The third part of this counsell is a most blessed precept, containing, most heavenly advice: *Be thou as he that was dead, and I will give thee the crowne of life*. Gods servants are called faithfull, in regard of their fidelitie which they owe to God, and that is in two respects: I. Every member of Christ is baptized; wherein God for his part promitteth Christ, with life everlasting: and the partie baptized promitteth unto God againe, that he will deny himselfe, and cast himselfe wholly upon God in life and death, and keepe faith and a good conscience. Which promise is called the *Signa-*

time of a good conscience. 1 Peter 2. 21. And when a man keepeth this promise made to God, then is he faithfull, and when he breaketh it, hee is unfaithfull. I. God giveth unto his children many good gifts and graces, as knowledge, faith, repentance, and care to keepe a good conscience, which hee would have them in all things to keepe and preserve. And therefore Paul biddeth *Timothie, keepe that thing which is committed unto him of trust.* Now a man is faithfull unto God, when hee maketh good use of the gifts and graces of God, and still preferreth the same, using them for Gods glory, and the good of his owne soule, and of his brethren: like as wee are counted faithfull with men, when wee keepe that thing safe which is committed unto us of trust. The meaning then of Christ is this: Thou hast made a promise unto mee in baptism, to renounce sinne and Satan, and to keepe faith and a good conscience unto death; therefore performe this thy promise: and for those gifts which I have committed of trust unto thee, see thou keepe them well, and use them to my glory in the good of thy brethren.

Against this precept three sorts of men offend, and be unfaithfull unto God. I. Those that being baptized, doe yet live in ignorance and security, never seeking to know God, or to understand his will, no nor so much as for their owne vow in baptism; although none will brag more of fidelity unto God, than these men doe. II. Those that have knowledge and understanding in Gods will, and yet make no conscience to live accordingly. III. Those that for a time shew forth many good things, as care to get knowledge, and to keepe faith and a good conscience, but after suffer themselves to be entangled and drawn away with the profits and pleasures of the world, or else to be driven back by trials and persecution. And of these three sorts bee most men generally; whose case is fearefull and dangerous, for they shall never have the crowne of life, if they continue thus unfaithfull.

To induce men to fidelitie, Christ addeth a most forcible reason, promising thereunto, *The crowne of eternall life.* Hence the Papists conclude, that Martyrs by suffering martyrdom, doe merit the kingdom of heaven; because it is called a Crowne, therefore say they it is a reward. Whereunto I answer two wayes: I. The kingdom of heaven is called a Crowne onely in resemblance, because as with men after the race is run, they receive the garland; even so after men have fought the good fight of faith, and kept a good conscience in this life, then in the life to come they receive the crown of glory. For the keeping of faith and a good conscience is not the cause, but the Antecedent of eternall life. Secondly, the reward is promised not to the martyrdom, but to the Martyr: and yet not for his sufferings, but because hee is a member of Christ, and by suffering death

but showed his faith in Christ, for whose merit alone he is to be rewarded. And so must this, and all other promises of like sort be understood: for the Papists doe foully erre when they apply the promises unto the works, which are made unto the workers. By this promise, wee all that have made our vow to God in baptism, must learne to become faithfull in keeping the same unto the end. It is a shame for a man to bee unfaithfull unto men, much more with God. And the more fearefull is this sinne, because onely the faithfull shall inherit eternall life. Secondly, all such as have made a shew of good things heretofore, and now doe suffer the same to decay, must call to minde from whence they are fallen, and become faithfull keepers of the graces of God, holding fast true religion and good conscience, and waite constantly in obedience: and then shall they have the crowne of life, though not for their deserts, but onely for the merits of Christ.

v. 11. Let him that hath an eare, heare what the Spirit saith unto the Churches: he that overcommeth, shall not be hurt of the second death.

These words containe the last part of this Epistle: namely, the Conclusion. Wherein observe generally, as also in the two next verses, that Christ repeateth the same things which he spake before in this and the former chapter, yea in the very same words. This must be considered, because it is done by Christ, who is the Doctor of his Church, whose example both for matter and manner of teaching must bee our rule and precept. The like did the Apostles; *I grieveth not Paul to write the same things;* Phil. 3. 1. And Peter saith unto the dispersed Church, *That hee will often put them in minde of the same things before his departing, wherein they had knowledge and were established.* Hereby all Ministers of the Gospell in their ministry have warrant, often to teach and repeat the same points of doctrine, even in the same words. Yea, Gods faithfull Minister may preach the same Sermon oftentimes, if hee doe it not for ease to himselfe, but for the benefit of the people. And therefore if any hearer of Gods word, shall at any time marke the Minister to deliver the same things often, he is not curiously to finde fault with his ministry, for by that reason they may finde fault with Christ, who severn times repeateth the same things unto these Churches.

This Conclusion hath two parts: a Commandement, and a Promise. The words of this Commandement have beene expounded in the seventh verse, with the doctrines and uses thereof; yet here is to bee observed what the Spirit commendeth thus seriously to our hearing. The things are three, which were handled

1 Pet. 11.

in the former verses. First, touching Gods providence, that he seeth and regardeth the tribulations of his Church. The second, touching triall, that Gods Church and people ought before-hand to consider of the day of visitation, and thereby arme themselves with courage against afflictions, that they suffer not themselves to be overcome with any feare. The third touching faithfulness: Gods people must consider what promises they have made to God in Baptisme, namely, to keepe faith, true Religion, and good conscience unto the end; and these they must performe unto death. These things being so carefully commended unto us by Christ we must labour to have them engraven in our hearts, that wee may practise them in our lives. And to incite us hereunto, wee must make the two reasons contained in the words. First, *because the Spirit of Christ speaks unto us.* Secondly, because they *concern all Churches*, (though principally they were spoken to the Church of Smyrna) and therefore none may seeke excuse to exempt himselfe from learning and obeying these things.

The promise, *Hee that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.* Of the means of overcoming, wee have spoken in the seventh verse. By second death, is meant the condemnation of the soule and body forever and ever. For there be two kinds of death mentioned in Scripture: the first is the separation of bodie and soule asunder at the end of this life: The second is, when soule and body both are severed forever from Gods comfortable presence, Rev. 21.8. The second death is expounded to be *an abode in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.* The meaning thereof of the promise is this: that they which overcome, though they may suffer the first death, yet they shall never suffer damnation; their soule and body may be severed one from the other for a time, but neither soule nor bodie shall ever be severed from God, to goe into that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Which is a most gracious and happy promise.

Here first marke to whom this promise is made, namely, *To them that overcome.* Where learne, that it is not sufficient for a man to profess and approve, or to teach the doctrine of the Gospel; but withall he must joyn a fight against himselfe, against sinne, the world, the devill, and against all the enemies of his salvation, and not suffer them to reigne over him, but to fight, as by Gods grace hee may overcome; and then shall the second death never hurt him. It is nothing to professe, if we still live in sinne: and therefore wee must not content our selves with knowledge, but labour to feele in our hearts such power of grace, as will make us truly to say wee are conquerours over our spirituall enemies. This is that blessed state of all those, unto whom life everlasting is promised, who shall never taste of the second death.

Secondly, here is answered a great question, which every mans conscience will move unto him; namely, How may I escape the second death, that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone? *Answer.* Thou must in this life truly turne unto God from all thine evil wayes, renounce thy selfe, and put all thine alliance in Christ his death and passion: and evermore labour to keepe true religion, faith, and good conscience unto death in all estates. This doe, and though thou taste of the first, yet the second death shall never touch thee.

Thirdly, hereby Christ giveth us to understand, that of the two deaths the second is the worse. The bodily death is terrible unto nature, but the second is the proper death indeed, the destruction of the creature in soule and body eternally. And yet behold the madnesse of man, who feareth greatly the first death, and regardeth nothing the burning lake: like unto little children that fore their owne shadows, and yet are not afraid of fire and water, that will burn and destroy them. This is mans miserable estate, through the blindness of his minde, and the hardness of his heart.

v. 12. *And to the Angell of the Church which is at Pergamus write, This saith hee that hath that sharp sword with two edges.*

Here is the third particular commandement which Christ gave to *John*, whereof wee have spoken before in the first verse: shewing there what is meant by Angell, and why this particular commandement was given unto *John*. This third Epistle of Christ, as the former, hath three parts: a Preface in this verse. The proposition of the Epistle, vers. 13. and so forward unto the 17. And the conclusion in the 17. verse.

I. Part. The Preface sheweth in whose name this Epistle is written, namely in Christs name. The causes whereof we have the seed before in the first verse. Christ is here set forth by an action of his Kingly office, borrowed from the former Chapter, verse 16. *These things saith hee, that hath the sharpe two edged sword:* that is, He who is not onely Priest and Prophet of his Church, but the King thereof, to guide and govern the same. The sword which he hath in his hand, or in his mouth (as *Isa.* saith) is that two edged sword, yea, that sharpe two edged sword: thereby is signified the whole word of God, the Law and Gospel; which is so called by reason of the operation thereof, as it is Heb. 4. 12.

Christ is thus described to comfort this Church of Pergamus. For hereby three things are signified: First, his wonderful power in slaying original sinne and corruption by his Word,

word, in all them that beleeve in him : so as there is no hope of recovery for sinne, after it is once wounded. Secondly, that he wil strengthen and preserve his Church, and all the true members thereof by the same word, against all their enemies. Thir, it doth after this manner : The whole word of God both law and Gospel must be knowne, and beleeved ; then whensoever any temptation cometh, faith maketh the same word powerfull in us to repel the temptation, and to strengthen us in affliction : for it is that sword of the spirit, whereby wee wound all our enemies. But if it bee not beleeved, it is but as a sword in a sheath, and will nothing helpe us. Thirdly, hereby he signifieth that hee destroyeth all their enemies : this is the chiefe end why he so describeth himselfe in this place. How Christ woundeth his enemies here-with, we have shewed in the former chapter, and the sixteenth verse, with the uses thereof.

Verf. 13. *I know thy workes, and where thou dwellest, even where Satans throne is : And thou keepest my Name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those dayes when Antipas my faithfull Martyr was slaine among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

Here beginneth the second part of this Epistle ; to wit, the Proposition : which containeth two parts : A commendation of this Church in this verse, and a Reproofe, verse 14, 15. The commendation is twofold : First, general in these words, *I know thy workes*, then speciall in the words following, *Thou hast kept my Name, &c.* Of the generall commendation we have spoken in the former Epistles, v. 2. and 9. This yet must be observed, that Christ here-with beginneth the matter of all his epistles, intending no doubt, hereby to settle the persuasion of his presence deeply in every one of our hearts : for it is indeed the ground of the holy feare of God, which is the beginning of all true religion and godlinesse. And here Christ giveth the president for his Ministers : namely, that the first thing they must teach their people, is to bee perswaded of this presence of Christ ; wheresoever they are, Christ is with them, and whatsoever they doe he seeth them. This will cause them make confidence of all their waies, and it is impossible that any should ever have found knowledge or good conscience, till hee bee perswaded hereof. *Abraham*

A knew well that in *Abimelechs* court they would make no confidence of murder, because *they wanted this feare of God* to feare God and keepe his Commandements, is the whole dutie of man : and therefore wee should give all diligence herunto. It is indeed a hard lesson for us to learne, and of our selves wee cannot learne it : but if we use the means, Gods blessing will be upon our endeavour, and then shall wee have knowledge upon knowledge, and grace upon grace, with the comfort of a good conscience.

The particular commendation of this Church is, for her constancie in maintaining the doctrine of the Gospel, in these words, *I know where thou dwellest, even in a place where Satans throne is, and yet for all that thou keepest my name* : that is, thou holdest still my true religion and doctrine. The throne of Satan is any place where superstition, idolatry, or prophaneesse is maintained without controlement, and from whence wickednesse is conveyed to other places. For the devill is the God of the world, and he hath his thrones among men. Pergamus was a great city of the Gentiles which maintained Idolatrie, and persecuted the Gospel, from whence also iniquity was derived to other townes and places : therefore it is called the devils throne.

Herein wee may observe sundrie points of great importance. First, the exceeding policie of Satan : hee hath his kingdom in this world, and for the establishment thereof, he must have his thrones where wickednesse and Idolatrie is maintained without controlement, and whence sinne is derived to other places. In all ages it hath beene thus, and will continue so to the end. In the old world hee had his thrones among *Caines* posteritie : In the Church of the Jewes, even in the dayes of the Kings of Israel, the high places and groves, where the people sacrificed to their idols, were the devils thrones : the oracles of the Gentiles where the Devils gave answer unto men, were his chiefe thrones : in the dayes of Popery, every Church and chappell were thrones of Satan, wherein were erected Images and holy roods for the worship of Saints, whither the people came to worship from country to country. In most schooles of learning for many hundred yeates, the Devill had his thrones : for therein was nothing taught but errors, heresies, and most abominable idolatries. In these our dayes the devill hath his thrones among us, where any wizard dwelleth or cunning person (as they are called) for thither whole countries doe flocke for helpe, and for counsell, and so yeeld homage to Satan. All dicing, and all brothell houses, wherein abominable wickednesse is freely committed, are Satans thrones. Yea, all those families are the devils thrones, where men live without love or practice of religion, in blindness, and in ignorance, in blasphemie, drunkennesse, whoredome, injustice, or any such impieties.

Gen. 10. 11.

Use.

And in reason it must needs be thus, for the Devil being a Prince of this world, will have his throne in some parts thereof.

Hereby wee see it is most needfull in every Christian kingdome, there should be thrones of Justice in civill courts, for the maintenance of equitie, the reward of vertue, and for the repressing of injustice and iniquitie. And also thrones of Ecclesiasticall jurisdiction for the reprehending and punishing of all those finnes which the civill court reacheth not unto. And it is necessarie that in these thrones, Justice should be administred without partialitie, that Gods throne may be erected, which is opposit to the throne of Satan.

Again, the Devils cunning appeares notably in the choice of the place where he setteth up his throne: it was no petite towne or village, but a chiefe and famous citie, which had bene the seat of many Kings. This hath bene his practice in all ages, to chooſe the chiefeſt places for the seat of his throne. Great Babylon in Scripture is called, *A cite of iniquitie*, that is, a throne of the Devil. And Rome that was once a famous Church, is now, and hath been long that spiritual Babylon, the throne of the devil. Yea, in Jerusalem the citie of the great King, had the Devil got up his throne, when Christ called the temple a den of thieves. And in our dayes the people of great townes and cities are generally more backward in embracing the Gospell, than in little villages. The cause hereof is, the malice of the Devil, who will have his throne in chiefeſt places, for the greater hinderance of religion: there he much prevaieth by choaking the word with pride, profit, and pleasures, causing them to content themselves with a forme of godlinesse, when as they want the power thereof. And thus he dealeth in greater townes, that thence impietie may be derived to the country round about, as tradesmen doe their wares from place to place. And therefore the people of great townes especially, must labour not onely to know the Gospell, but to beleve and obey the same. Every man must reforme himselfe, and every family themselves, that Gods throne may be established, and the Devils throne battered downe among them.

Secondly, whereas this Church dwelleth where the Devils throne is, wee may observe, whence the Church of God is gathered; namely, out of Satans kingdome. Gods Church is a company of men ordained to salvation, taken from under the power of the devil: though after their calling they be Gods peculiar flocke, yet they are by nature the children of wrath. Thus Paul spaketh of all the Gentiles, Act. 26. 18. And particularly of the Church of Colossa, Coloss. 1. 13. *That God delivered them from the power of darkness, and translated them into the kingdome of his deare Sonne.*

Hence wee learne, 1. That no man is to stand upon his Gentilitie, or glorie in his parentage

A for nobilitie and great blood, but only rejoyce in this, that he is drawne out of the kingdome of darkness, and from under the power of Satan, and placed by Christ Jesus in the kingdome of grace. For what will it profit a man to weare about his necke a chaine of gold, if so be his heart, will, and affections, be chained to the devils service? and what availeth it Princes to sit upon their stately thrones, if they themselves be in subjection unto Satan, and doe homage unto his throne? yea, what will all the treasures, honours, and pleasures of the world availe to him that is debarred from the riches of Gods love in Christ, and delitute of the treasures of his grace, and so led captive by Satan at his will and pleasure? Secondly, some doe think that a man may be saved by any religion; the Jew by his religion, the Turke by his, the Papist by his, &c. yea it is the common received opinion of our ignorant people, that every one shall be saved by his good meaning. But all these are meere dotages of mens braine: for a man may hold his good meaning, and yet serve the Devil at his throne. It is not sufficient to hold this or that religion, or to practise civill vertues, as justice, temperance, &c. unless a man be one of Gods Church, severed from the companie of them that serve Satan. Thirdly, here all Gods seryants have a notable meanes of stay and comfort in afflictions. If they be persecuted, and cast into most darke dungeons for the name of Christ, they must call to mind that they are taken out of the devils prison in the kingdome of darkness, and placed in the glorious kingdome of Jesus Christ, and made members of his Church, and shall be inheritours of his glorie. Fourthly, hence wee learne, that the preaching of the Gospell hath in it a divine power: no creatures, except the good Angels, have power comparable to the devils; and yet the preaching of the Gospell is stronger than all the power of Satan: for it gathereth a Church where the devil hath his throne, delivers them from under the power of Satan, and placeth them in the glorious liberty of the sonnes of God: although therefore it be preached by finfull man, yet it must be revered as the power of God, and his owne arme to save his flock. Fifthly, hence wee gather that God will have his people to dwell with wicked and ungodly men: for the Church of Pergamus dwelleth where Satans throne is. This he doth for good causes: 1. That their faith, obedience, and repentance might be exercised, and they preserved from many finnes, which otherwise they should fall into. *Moses* telleth the Israelites, that the Canaanites must not be all cast out at the first entrance; but dwell among them, lest wilde beasts did grow up which would devour them; and so the wicked must dwell among the godly to exercise Gods graces in them, lest they fall into sinne and securitie. 11. That they might shine forth as lights unto the

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wicked.

wicked, by their godly conversation, Philip. 2. 15. *That ye may be blamelesse and pure, the fannes of God without rebuke in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation, and among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.* And thus the godly must doe, that by their unblameable life, others might bee wonne to the faith: for godly example is a notable meane to draw men to love and embrace faith and true religion, 1 Pet. 3. 1. 111. That God may shew on the godly tokens of his speciall love and favour: which hee doth, when hee sendeth judgements upon the wicked, and spareth his children. Hence it was, that when the Lord would bring a common judgement upon the Jewes, he caused those that mourned for their owne finnes, and for the abominations of the people, *To be marked in the forehead that they might be spared.* So that if any godly person dwell among such as hate religion, and be prophane, he must content himselfe, knowing it is Gods will his Church should be vexed and troubled by the societies of the wicked and ungodly. Sixthly, hence it appeareth that Gods people may lawfully dwell among wicked and ungodly men, alwaies remembering that they communicate not with them in their sins and rebellions against God: For so *Let dwell in Sodome,* and this Church of Pergamus where the Devill had his throne. 1 Cor. 7. 1. this question is answered: a master is a heathen man, and his servant is converted to the faith; whereupon he thinketh he is free from serving his master: but *Paul* telleth him he must doe externall service still, so farre forth as he keepe good conscience, and bee not constrained to renounce true religion. Lastly, hence we have direction to answer a question much urged against us by the Papists, to wit; Where our Church was fourescore yeares agoe, when *Luther* first began to preach: they intend hereby to prove our Church to be but of fourescore yeares continuance, and so our religion to bee new. We answer by the like; Where was the Church of Pergamus, when the Devils throne was in that citie? Surely it was there where the Devill had his throne. And so when Antichrist that man of sinne, had spread Poperie over all Europe, at that very time was Gods Church in Europe where Poperie was professed, mingled with the Papists: which to bee thus appeareth by this, that in all ages there have bene some, who openly have oppugned Poperie, more or lesse, partly by writing, and partly by speaking, as the records of all ages doe testifie and make manifest: so that though iniquity had the upper hand, yet our Church had his being in the midst of poperie.

And thou keepst my name; That is, though thou dwell in a place where the devill hath his throne, yet thou holdest fast my name, so as neither force nor fraud of the adversarie can take my name from thee; so much the words import. By *Christ's name*, we must understand

the doctrine of the Gospell: so *Paul* is said to be *A chosen vessel to carrie Christs name among the Gentiles*: that is, to publish among them the doctrine of the Gospell.

Here this Church of Pergamus is particularly commended for her constancie, in holding fast true religion against all adversarie-power whatsoever. Hence we learne that it is not sufficient to teach, or know and beleve the doctrine of the Gospell in time of peace; but wee must bee constant in holding it fast against all gainsayers, and not be turned about with every wind of doctrine; but in life and death keepe sure the truth, that neither fraud nor force of any adversarie-power draw it from us, or us from it. Matth. 13. *The kingdom of heaven is compared to a treasure hid in the field, which when a man findeth, hee goeth and selleth all he hath to buy the field.* The scope of that parable is this: If any man should come into any of our fields, and by searching finde a gold mine, he would not make it knowne to any, but cover it close, and goe his way, and sell all that he had to buy that field, that therby he might enrich himselfe: even so having found this, that the Gospell revealeth the way to life everlasting, though we must not conceale the same from others, yet we must bee like this man herein, that wee could be content to part with all that wee have, that so we might make the Gospell ours. 1 Tim. 3. 9. *Deacons must have this propertie, To have the ministration of faith in a pure conscience.* There a good conscience is compared to a sure treasure-house, which cannot bee robbed by any adversarie-power: and faith, that is, true religion is the treasure there safely laid up: such a storehouse must we get for the preservation of the faith. Any thing else we may lose, but if we part with true religion, salvation is gone, and all is lost. And therefore in life and death we must keepe fast faith.

Further, Christ amplifieth the praise of their constancie by two arguments: First, that they held Christs name without denial: Secondly, that they kept the faith in the time of bloudie periculation. For the first in these words, *And hast not denied my faith.* This is an excellent commendation: for many will hold the doctrine of the Gospel for a time, and yet after denie the same by apostasie: but this church held fast true religion, without any revolt at all. Their practice must we follow, and so hold fast true religion, that therein wee never make revolt: for if we shall once denie religion, we know not whether God will give us the grace of repentance, that we may professe it againe; which if he doe not, we perish eternally. Consider *Elasars* example, who sold his birthright for a mess of red broth, and after lost the blessing; which when hee would have recovered, hee was rejected, and found no place to repentance, though hee sought it with tears. Therefore to prevent the fearefull danger of not repenting after revolt, wee must still hold fast true religion

gion without deniall.

Here in this place the *faith of Christ*, is all one with *Christ's name*, that is, with the true doctrine of the Gospell. And it is called *Christ's faith*: First, because Christ with the Father and the Spirit, is the author thereof: Secondly, because Christ revealeth the same from the bosome of his Father: for God revealeth his Gospell unto men by his Sonne Christ Jesus: Thirdly, because Christ is the substance and matter of the Gospell: for indeed Christ Jesus is the principall subject of the whole Bible, being the end of the Law, and the substance of the Gospell.

The second argument of their praise for constancie, is taken from the circumstance of time; they held fast true religion in the time of bloody persecutions: *Even in those daies* (saith Christ) *when Antipas my faithfull martyr was slaine, among you where Satan dwelleth*. Who this *Antipas* was, is not knowne, neither certainly recorded in any historie: it is thought he was the Minister of the Church, who opposed himselfe against Idolatry and Gentilisme in this citie of Pergamus.

In this argument note two points. I. That Christ commendeth *Antipas*, calling him his faithfull martyr. Whereby we see, that in Gods Church, it is lawfull to honour Saints and Martyrs. For that which Christ doth, his Church may doe. This their honour must stand in two things: In due deserved praise and commendation, and in a carefull imitation of their good vertues and godly lives: and for this end doth Christ commend *Antipas* unto his Church, that they might follow his good conversation: but as for Popish honour of invocation and adoration, it hath no ground in Gods Word. Againe, in calling him faithfull Martyr, he commendeth more the cause of his death, than the death: to shew that the cause maketh a martyr, not the death: For an hereticke may be put to death for his damnable opinions. Therefore *Antipas* is a martyr, not because he was slaine, but because he was faithfull unto death for the maintenance of Christs true religion.

II. Point. In the end of the verse Christ sheweth who were the authors of *Antipas*'s death: namely, such among them in whom Satan ruled: for he was slaine (saith Christ) *among you, where Satan dwelleth*. Which words he repeateth, to give us to understand, that all persecutors, let them carrie what face they will, are in truth such, in whom the Devill ruleth, where he hath his hold, and keepe possession. *Quest.* Why did Satan more dwell there than in other places? *Ans.* Because many in this place were gentiles, who contemned and mocked the Gospell, & maintained Idolatry, whereby they became the holds of Satan. And by proposition we may gather, that all contemners of religion, and all that walke in their owne wicked wayes, are indeed the stables and holds of the Devill, though they should be the Tem-

ples of the holy Ghost. And to many families as there are, where religion is mocked, Gods name blasphemed, injustice and impiety practised: so many holds of Satan there are where the devill ruleth: and such they continue till they reforme themselves of their impieties; and embrace the Gospell sincerely. And therefore all masters of families especially should love the Gospell, and see that in their families religion be taught, embraced, and obeyed, that so the devill may have no hold in their families. *Quest.* Whether might not *Antipas* being Pastor of this Church, have fled for safety of his life? *Ans.* There be two kinds of persecution, one that is directly intended against the Pastor principally: the other against the whole Church equally. In the persecution directed against the Pastor, this must be considered; Whether God gave him opportunitie and libertie to flee, or not: if God gave him libertie and opportunitie, he may flee, and the Church is to assist him, and to use means for his preservation: but if God denie him means to escape, then he must judge himselfe to be called of God to suffer death for his name, and so he may not flee. And such was the case of *Antipas* in this Church. But if the persecution bee directed against the whole Church equally, then the Pastor may not flee, but take part in their sufferings, that he may be a means to stay and comfort his brethren.

v. 14. *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that maintaine the doctrine of Balaam, which taught Balac to put a stumbling blocke before the children of Israel, that they should eat of things sacrificed unto Idols, and commit fornication.*

Here followeth the reproofe of this Church of Pergamus, which is first generally propounded in these words, *I have a few things against thee*: Secondly, in particular, for want of zeale, in suffering among them such as maintained the doctrine of Balaam. Thirdly, he setteth downe a reason or confirmation thereof in the end of the 14. vers. and in the 15.

The generall reproofe is the same which was given out against the Church of Ephesus, ver. 4. Whereby he would teach us a speciall duty: namely, that every man must seriously consider with himselfe, what finnes he hath in him, which Christ may have to lay unto his charge. For this very cause doth Christ reprove it unto this Church. And therefore wee note

call our selves to reckoning, and examine our selves not by our owne wits, but by the rule of Gods Word, and search out all our thoughts, words, and actions; and see how many things Christ may have against us, that so making a forthead reckoning, and seeking to be cleared by true repentance, we may not be condemned for this at the last day: for if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged. This is a necessarie ducie, and the practice of it is the ground of all grace, and confectionable obedience: as on the other side, the want hereof is the cause why many that live in the Church doe perish eternally. For a day of accounts will come, wherein we shall never escape, unless by a forthead reckoning in the practice of true repentance from dead works, and by faith in Christ Jesus we prevent the same. Lamentable and fearefull is the state of all those, that never call themselves to this account: it causeth them to goe on in sinne without remorse, Hos. 7. 2. Hereof Ieremie complained, *That no man said, what have I done. And for that cause he denounceth fearefull judgement against the people.* This was the sinne of the old world: *men knew nothing till the flood came, and destroyed them all.* This securitie bringeth mens soules to hell, before they wot where they are; and therefore David crieth out, Psal. 50. 21. *Oh consider this (meaning the account that God will take with them) lest God teare them in peeces, and there be none to deliver them.* The end of preaching and hearing Gods Word, is to bring the soule to eternall life and salvation: but the want of this account, maketh the holy ordinance of God to be of none effect to many a one. For how should men embrace with comfort the word of reconciliation, till they seele in themselves their enmitie with God, and desert of condemnation.

II. Point. *Because thou hast them that maintaine the doctrine of Balaam.* &c. Here is the particular reproofe of this Church for want of zeale; in that they entertained and suffred hereticall Ministers to live among them, which maintained the doctrine of *Balaam*. This shewed, that though they loved the Gospell, and embraced it, yet it was very coldly, and without that fervent zeale which they ought to have shewed against such hereticks.

Here first, Christ teacheth this Church to shew forth zeale in excommunicating and casting out such hereticks, as by damnable doctrine did trouble them. This place is a sufficient ground for the practice of that Ecclesiasticall censure. When men hold hereticall opinions, the Church after two or three admonitions is to excommunicate them and cast them out. So did Paul to *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, 1 Tim. 1. 20. Secondly, Christ reproveth this Church for entertaining such hereticks and wicked men, doth give us to understand, that every member of Gods Church should have a great dislike of all persons, that hold not the do-

ctrine of Christ in truth, but maintaine errors against the tenour of Scripture, and the profession of the Church. For this cause Paul charged *Timothee* to separate himselfe from *such* as teach otherwise than hee had given direction, and consent unto the wholesome words of our Lord Iesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, being pressed up and knowing nothing. This then must bee our careful practice: we have by Gods mercie true religion among us, which we must maintain with zeale: and if any bring in other doctrine, we must reject it, and shew forth detestation to him that bringeth it, not bidding him God speed, 2. John. 10. Wee must rather lose our lives, than suffer the truth of God to be defaced.

Thirdly, that which Christ layeth to the charge of this Church, may in sundry respects be charged upon our Churches and congregations at this day: namely, *want of zeale against sinne, and severity against sinners*: for though the governours of our Church repel the heresies of Poperie, Anabaptists, and family of Love, and suppress all doctrines that raze the foundation, which are commendable things; yet in the midst of our congregations be abundance of Atheists, who by deed and conversation deny Christ Jesus: for many know nothing in the matters of religion, and more be profane: who both thinke and speake most basely of religion, and of the teachers and professors thereof. Yea, we have flat Epicures permitted to live in our Church, such as make their belly their God; who give themselves wholly to eating, drinking, sports, and delights; without all regard either of the generall duties of Christianity, or the particular duties of their calling. Wee have also among us many cruell & mercilesse persons, that in their affairs abound in the practices of fraud, wrong, usurie, and oppression, whose trading is upon the poore, in the pride of their covetousnes, whereby also they eat the flesh of Gods people, and steale off their skin from them, and breake their bones, and chop them in peeces as for the poore, and as flesh within the cauldron, Mich. 3. 6. And yet all these because they submit themselves to the civil authority, are permitted without controulment to bee partakers of the privileges of Gods Church, even to the receiving of the seales of Gods covenant, being themselves flat enemies to the grace of God. Yea, many of these are greatly countenanced and graced for wisdom and reputation; when as such as feare God and make conscience of their ways, are counted vile. All which, as it argueth exceeding want of zeale in severity against sinne; so it cannot chuse but provoke the Lord to come against us in judgement, as he did against this Church. The meanes whereby this evill is to be reformed, doth follow afterward.

III. Point. The reason or confirmation of the former reproofe, whereby the Lord would move his Church to detest these false teachers, is taken from the effect of their doctrine,

1 Tim. 2. 14.

Amos 5. 10.

Jer. 3. 6.

Mich. 2. 4.

V. 6.

and it is layd down in this finitude: As *Balaam* the false Prophet taught *Bala* to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to cause them to eat of things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit fornication; so this Church maintained among them Nicolaitans, who taught, it was lawfull to eat things sacrificed at Idoll feasts, and to commit fornication. The first part of this similitude is in the end of this 14. verse: *Whose taught Bala to put a stumbling block, &c.* The second part is in the 15. verse.

Touching the doctrine of *Balaam* we are to observe three points: First, what a stumbling block, or an offence is. Secondly, what it is to cast a stumbling block. Thirdly, by what means king *Bala* did cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel. For the first, a stumbling block is properly any thing, as wood, or stone, or such like, that is cast in a mans way, to hinder him in his gate, and to cause him to trip or fall: And by resemblance in this place, an offence is any thing that causeth a man to sinne against God, and so to slip or fall, or to goe out of his way that leadeth to life. Further, an offence is twofold; either given, or taken. An offence given, is any speech or deed, whereby a man is provoked to sinne: and so was *Peter* an offence unto Christ, though he rooke it not, *Matth. 16. 23.* An offence taken, is when any man taketh occasion to fall and sinne, by that which is well done by others: so were the Pharisees offended at the sacred preaching of our Saviour Christ. II. Point. The casting or putting of a stumbling block, or giving an offence, is the doing or saying of any thing, whereby a man is occasioned to sinne: and this is done, either about things evill in themselves, or in things indifferent. Things evill are such as Gods word forbiddeth and they are twofold, either perswasions, or examples. Bad perswasions, are false doctrine, and evill counsell. Bad example, is also giving of offence, because it doth embolden evil men in their sinne, and draw the godly to evill. Again, in things indifferent, as meat, drinke, apparell, &c. may offence bee given, when as they are used unreasonably, not in fit time and place, and before fit persons. And of this *Paul* speaketh, saying: *If I know my eating doth offend my brother, I would not eat flesh while the world standeth.* The offence here spoken of was an offence given in evill things, for it was an evill act done by *Balaam*, and accordingly received and taken of the Israelites: for hee used outward provocations to allure them unto sinne. III. Point. The meanes whereby king *Bala* did cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, is set downe in the end of the verse, *by provoking them to eat of things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit fornication.* That we may understand this fully, read *Numb. 25.* The summe of the historie is this: When *Balaam* had assayed sundry wayes to curse the children

of Israel, and could not, he gave *Bala* counsell to use meanes to cause them to sinne. As his counsell *Bala* sent forth the most beautiful women in his kingdome into the campe of Israel, to intice them to the service of their Idols, and to banquet with them at their Idoll feasts, that so they might draw them to fornication; whereunto the Israelites condescended, and so sinned against God. Thus much of the meaning of the words.

First, here observe a speciall proprietie of false teachers, namely, to cast offences before men, to cause them to fall in the way that leadeth to salvation. By this Christ intendeth to make known unto this Church the false doctrine of *Balaam*. *Paul* in his Epistles calleth the doctrine of the Gospell, *truth according to godliness*: because the intent of the Gospell is, to lead men to true godlinesse. On the contrary, the doctrine of Antichrist is called the *mystery of iniquitie*; because the scope thereof is to draw men to all iniquitie and abominacion. Here then we have a rule, whereby wee may judge betweene true doctrine and false, even by looking into the end and scope thereof: if it ayme at true piety and sincere obedience, wee may judge it to be good; but if it tend to draw men to idolatrie and sinne, then it is a false doctrine. Thus we might scan all false religions, as the religion of the Turke and Jew at this day. But because wee are more troubled with the doctrine of Poperie among our common people, who call it *The old religion*, therefore let us a little examine the same by this rule.

The end of Poperie is to pull downe the kingdome of Christ, and to dismantell his lawes; as will appere by a short view in every commandement: and therefore it cannot bee the true religion. The first commandement teacheth us, *To chuse and acknowledge the true God for our God alone.* But the Church of Rome teacheth to make more gods than one, and to acknowledge the creature to bee God; for by their doctrine men are to pray unto Saints, whereby they make them gods in giving this divine proprietie unto them to know the heart. Their doctrine also ascribeth unto Saints, *power to merit*; which is a property of God: for none can merit but he that is God. The humane nature of Christ could not have merited any thing, unless it had been joyned to the Godhead. Yea, they make the wood of the crosse to bee god: for in their masse-booke at this day, they call (not Christ crucified on the crosse, but) the verie crosse it selfe, our *only hope*: yea, the Virgin *Mary*, who is but a creature, they place as Queene in heaven, giving her power over Christ to command him in the matter of salvation, and so they dismantell the first commandement. The second commandement they revoke, in teaching it to bee lawfull to make images of the Trinitie, according as they shewed themselves in the old and new Testament: the Father like an old man, the Sonne as

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1 Tim. 6. 3.
Tit. 1. 1.

1 Thim. 1. 1.

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he lived, and the holy Ghost like a dove; and therein to worship them. Again, they teach that men may adore the Images of Saints, which is flat against that commandment. The third commandment they disannul, interchanging it to be lawfull to swear by Saints, and not by God only. The fourth they disannul, by making the festivall dayes of Saints, equall with the Lords Sabbath, and to be kept holy unto God as solemnly as the Lords day. Whereby also they take away the liberty of the Church in the lawfull use of six dayes, for honest labour in a mans calling. The fifth they disannul, in giving freedom and immunity to their clergie from subjection to civill authoritie, and indispensing with subjects for their joyntie and allegiance to their lawfull Princes: and with children and servants from yielding due helpe, service, and obedience, to their Patents and Masters. The sixth, by their houles of refuge which they call *Sanctuaries*, wherein murderers may be in safety; and by maintaining ignorance in religion, through which they murder many a simple soule. The seventh, by tolerating of itewes, and allowing of incest; for by their law it is lawfull for the great uncle to marrie his neece, descending from his brother or sister, so it be without the fourth degree, which is against nature. The eighth, by making sale of all things, of heaven, hell, of earth, of pardons, and delivering men from purgatorie: which is flat robbrie, and most grosse deceit and couzenage. The ninth they disannul, by falsifying the canon of Scripture, for they make that canonically which is no Scripture: and besides in their doctrine practically they defend a lie, for when a man hath confessed his sins to the Priest, if the Magistrate aske the Priest what sins the man confessed, they teach the Priest to say, *I know not*, that is (say they) *to tell us the truth*: which is a flat lie. And whereas they would defend this by an exposition of Christs words when he saith, *The day of judgement is not knowne to the Sonne of man*: that is, (say they) to reveal it unto others; they doe but deceive the simple by an exposition which is not fit. The last commandment they disannul, by holding concupiscence before consent to be no sinne, when as we know by Gods Word, that the first evill motions in us be sinnes. So that hereby we may see, that Poperie is but a false religion, though it have falsely among our common people the name of *The old religion*, and therefore we must abhorre the same as ungodly.

Now whereas some doe charge the doctrine of our religion to be sundry wayes scandalous, they may be easily answered: First, they say, it is a doctrine of desperation, because it imports, that God created men so, as he will have but a few, making them for this end, to cast the greatest number to hell. To this I answer two things: First, touching the number of them that are to be saved: of which little is said in Scripture, and therefore I will not say much:

yet this may be averred, The number of the elect in it selfe is a *great company*, but being compared with them that shall be damned, it is but small. II. Touching the end of mans creation, our doctrine is not, that God created men for this end, to cast them to hell: but this wee teach, that God created all men to manifest his glorie in them: in some, by their just and deserved damnation for sin. We teach not that men are otherwaies condemned than for their sins, and therefore he that is condemned hath his just reward. III. *Charge*. They say further, our doctrine is a doctrine of blasphemie; for that we teach God to have decreed the fall of man, and to make God the author of mans sin. *Ans.* We teach indeed that God decreed *Adams* fall, but thence it followeth not, that he is the author of mans sinne. For Gods will is twofold, generall, and speciall. Gods generall will is, to permit that which is evill, notwithstanding, but because with God evill hath some respect of good, and in this respect we say God decreed *Adams* fall. Gods speciall will, is his approving will; whereby he taketh pleasure and delight in that which is good: and in this regard God nilled *Adams* fall, and mans sinnes: And yet in some respect he may be said to will them. A Magistrate, though he take no comfort or delight in the death and execution of a malefactor, yet he decreeth and appointeth it, and so may be said to will it. Even so God who out of darkness can bring light, permitte evill, because with him it hath some respect of good, and so may be said to will it. III. *Charge*. They say also that the doctrine of our church is a doctrine of securitie, because we teach that a man may be certaine of his salvation, and of perseverance in the faith unto the end. *Ans.* This is not a doctrine of carnall securitie; because we doe impose necessarily the use of meanes to them that would be certaine of their salvation, and persevere unto the end; as namely deniall of themselves, and humbling themselves in continuall prayer, with hearing and meditating in the word of God, and receiving the Sacraments for the increase of faith, and renewing of their repentance: All which will rather make a man fearefull and careful than secure. For with the meanes, is certaine of salvation, both attained and preserved: so that our doctrine is not a doctrine of offences, but a true doctrine that beareth out the plaine way that leadeth unto life.

Secondly, Christs detestation of this doctrine of *Balaams*, must admonish us to bee so careful of our behaviour everie way, that we give no offence unto any; for if we doe, we are *Balaams* schollers. This is a point of speciall observation; we must looke to our communication, that it be void of railing and bad speeches; and to our conversation, that it be holy and unblameable. In every thing wee must have care not to hinder others in the way of life. *Woe be to them* (saith Christ) *that give offences: it were better that a huge millstone* (such as an asse can

but turne about, as the word imports) were tied about his necke, and that he were cast into the sea. The reason is, because when a man by any means giveth his brother offence, he doth as much as in him lieth, to plunge his brothers soule into the pit of destruction, and therefore we must sic offences as hell it selfe; yea, rather on the contrarie, we must helpe our brethren forward in the way of salvation, and remove from them all stumbling blockes that cause them to fall. If this dutie were practised, our Church would abound with graces and godliness: but this dutie is wanting, and hence it comes that we have so small increase after long labour in preaching: for example and evill counsell doe quench the graces of the spirit in mens hearts.

Thirdly, hereby we must learne to have speciall care against offences given by evill counsell or bad example. For if it bee the property of a false Prophet to cast stumbling blockes before others, then it is a dangerous thing to fall upon them when they are laid before us. While we live in this world we shall see many offences given: but we must take heed we take them not. And therefore Christ biddeth us, *If thy foot offend thee, or thine hand, cut it off, or thine eye, pluck it out*: Teaching us to forgoe the dearest thing that can be unto us, if it would cause us to sinne against God. And to move us hereto, marke the Israelites example in the wilderness: while they kept a good conscience, and observed the true worship of God, all *Balaams* curses were turned into blessings; but when they fell to Idolatrie and fornication with the Moabitish women, then was Gods wrath kindled against them, and his plague seized upon them. Even so, if our Church bee carefull to keepe it selfe to the true religion, which by Gods mercy we enjoy, and will have care to keepe a good conscience in becoming a penitent and obedient people unto God; then may *Balaam* curse, and all our enemies spit their venom, yet we shall be safe. But if we let goe true religion and good conscience, and fall to sinne, then we must looke for Gods heaveie judgements to fall upon us in his wrath, as they did upon his own people. Fourthly, when *Balaams* cursing would not prevaile, then did faire women, and banqueting draw them to idolatry and fornication. Hence we learne, that temptations on the right hand, that is, taken from profits, pleasures, and preferments, are most dangerous, and soonest prevaile to draw men from God. The state of a Christian is like a besieged citie; when a huge armie cannot sack it, then silver and gold will open the gates thereof: even so, when adversity cannot make a man to forsake religion and good conscience, then by prosperitie, ease, and pleasure, hath the devill stolen away his heart. Those therefore that have ease, pleasure, and outward blessings at will, are in a far more dangerous case in respect of sinne than others; unless God vouchsafe unto them speciall grace to watch against

A these pleasing temptations. This made godly *Iob*, *To sanctifie his children every day when they feasted each other at their house, lest anyone then should have blasphemed God in his heart*. Because he knew the devill by pleasures would soonest winde him selfe into their hearts.

Lastly, note the order of these finnes: First, they are drawne to sit at Idol traffs, and then to commit adultery: where we see that these two goe together; Spirituall adultery, that is, Idolatrie: and bodily adultery one is the plague and punishment of the other; that people which give themselves to Idolatry, will God give up to bodily adultery. As this was true in these Israelites, so it is to be seene among the Turkes; and with the Papists at this day, who maintaine fornication in tolerating stewes, and further it much by their vow of single life, wherewith they bind the conscience, though the partie want the gift of continencie.

vers. 15. *Even so hast thou them that maintaine the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

Here followeth the second part of the comparison, where Christ setteth down two things: First, what the Nicolaitans were: Secondly, how hee was affected towards them. What they were is expressed in the first words, *Even so*; which is a note of resemblance or comparison, having reference to the words going before. They may be thus described: The Nicolaitans were a sect in the Church of Pergamus, that maintained two damnable opinions according to the doctrine of *Balaam*. I. That it was lawfull to eat things offered to idols in the honour of idols, sitting in the idols temple. II. That fornication was no sinne, but that a man might lawfully commit it. It may seeme strange, that in the daies of the Apostles there should be men professing the name of Christ, and yet hold such damnable opinions; but the truth is hereby evident, that there were such in this Church. And that we doe not conceive a liking of their wicked opinions, let us examine their reasons, whereupon they might seeme to be grounded.

For the causing of things sacrificed to Idols, they would plead thus: I. From the doctrine of Christian libertie, *Things indifferent may be lawfully used: Things offered to Idols are things indifferent, as meats, and drinks; and therefore may lawfully be used*. Ans. Meats and drinks, if they be considered in themselves, are things indifferent, and may lawfully be used: yea after they have beene offered to idols, if they be sold in the market, they may be lawfully bought and eaten in private houses, if it be done without offence of the weak, as *Paul* teacheth at large, 1 Cor. 10. 25, 29. But if these meats be considered as they are offered to Idols, and eaten in the Idols temple in the honour of Idols,

Idols, they be unlawfull. And yet the Nicolaitans held this to be lawfull.

II. Reason. An Idol is nothing, 1 Cor. 8. 4. and therefore we sinne not in eating meats offered unto them. *Ans.* An Idol is nothing, that is, in nature subsisting: nothing created or ordained of God; it hath no property of the God-head: but yet an Idol is something in mans imagination, which giveth it the honour of God, and reputeth it as God, making it a God unto himselfe.

III. Reason. *Namian* the Syrian went into the Temple of the god Rimmon, and there kneeled downe; Even so may Christians eat in Idoltemples. *Ans.* When *Namian* went in thither, he did not kneele downe to the Idol, but to the king, performing a civill duty unto his Prince; who used to leane on *Namians* shoulder, &c. worship his false god. And though *Namian* were present at Idol-worship and service, yet it was with protestation against it: for being cured of his leprosie, he promised to worship no god but the God of Israel; and thereupon he led two mules with the earsh of the Land of Israel, in token of his publike profession of thankfulness to the true God for his cleansing. If these in Pergamos whom Christ disliked, had gone as *Namian* did into Idol temples, they had not sinned as they did. And at this day, if men protest against the Idolatry of the masse, they may enter into those congregations where masse is said: for this protestation is a just condemning of their false worship.

The second opinion of these Nicolaitans was, that men might lawfully commit fornication. This opinion they would thus justify: First, from the practice of *Lot*, who sold to the men of *Sod* his daughters, when they called for the strangers that were come into his house. Which thing (say they) *Lot* would never have done, if fornication had beene a sinne. *Ans.* It seemeth that *Lot* cannot bee excused in that action, though his purpose was by a lesse evil to prevent a greater; but God hath plainly taught, That *man* may doe the least evil, for the procuring of the greatest good that can be, Rom. 7. 8.

II. Reason. The Lord (say they) commanded *Hesekiel*, to take a wife of fornication, and children of fornication, Hos. 1. 2. It is not therefore unlawfull. *Ans.* There be divers interpretations of that place. Some say, that was only in vision, and not a fact done. Others say, it was in speech only, because he prophesied unto the people that he himselfe was a man of fornication unto them. These expositions may well stand. Yet others hold that the Lord commanding him this, it was to be done, and was done indeed. And sundry circumstances seeme to prove that it was a fact done: for the womans name is set downe to be *Gomer*, and her fathers name *Israhell*. Secondly, a thing in vision or in speech onely, doth not so much prevail with wicked people, as that which is done indeed. Thirdly, the ancient opinion of best

Divines that lived nearest to the Apostles times avouch, it was a fact done. *Object.* But this maintaineth fornication, against good manners and the expresse law of God. *Ans.* It were to indeed if the Prophet had done it on his owne head, but he did it by Gods speciall appointment, who is Lord of his owne law, and may dispense with it at his pleasure. God in his law forbiddeth to kill; yet *Abraham* is commanded to kill his *sonne*: which if he had done, he had not sinned, because he had a speciall commandment for it; which a man must obey, though it be against a morall precept. Again, *Hesekiel* tooke a wife of fornication, not to maintaine her in her sin, but to make her a chaste woman. And whereas he was also commanded to take unto him children of fornication, it must not be understood of children begotten by him, but borne of her in fornication. As if he should say, Take a wife with her children, which shee brought forth in fornication. So that this place which way soever wee take it, doth nothing maintaine their wicked errors.

III. Reason. Acts 15. The Apostles charge the Churches, To abstaine from that which is strangled, from blood, and from fornication: There (say they) fornication is reckoned among things indifferent, and therefore may be used lawfully. *Ans.* It is there reckoned among things indifferent: First, because it was accounted of among the Gentiles: Secondly, because the Gentiles did joyntly by these three things offend the Churches of the Jewes. But hence it followeth not that it is indeed a thing indifferent.

II. Point. The affection of Christ towards these men, is noted in these words: Which thing I hate. This hatred must be referred not to the persons of the Nicolaitans, but to their opinions, lives, and practices.

Hereby Christ would instruct us in sundry needfull duties. First, if wee will follow him, we must hate all honour and approbation that may bee given to idols, bee it never so little. These Nicolaitans might say, they abhorred Idols, and worshipped them not; onely they went with their friends into their Temples, and sat downe to eat meat before them: now even this dealing Christ hateth. Wherein he doth notably condemne the practice of the Romish church, which say, they worship not Idols, but the true God: and yet they doe that which Christ hateth; for they kneele downe before them, and adore them, and light candles unto them, and offer unto them rich Jewels, and much sumptuous attire; which is a great deale more than the Nicolaitans did: And therefore they are much more to be condemned, and their practice also hated of us. Secondly, Christs hatred of the least honour of Idols, doth afford a speciall caveat to such men as give themselves to a travelling life; as into Italy, Spaine, and other Idolatrous places: they should content themselves within the precincts of the Church,

and not proceed further without warrant of a speciall calling, whereby they may assure themselves of Gods gracious protection. For hereby they give occasion to themselves to doe that which Christ hateth, though they say they hate idolatry: For if a man escape to be present at their abominable service, yet he cannot avoid the going to their Temples, where he is to offer some gifts, or performe some ceremonie after the custome of the countrey; whereby he shall give some approbation at the least of their idolatry: whereas he ought to have the least appearance thereof, even the garment spotted with the flesh. Thirdly, by this his affection Christ would teach us to grow to an hatred of all familiar societie with idolaters: for though we may have societie of concord with them, yet societie of amitie, which is a speciall liking betweene man and man, we must not maintaine with them.

Fourthly, Christ hateth not only their idolatry, but their fornication also. Hereby teaching us to grow to a hatred of fornication, which the rather must be detested, because the *bodies of every man and woman bee not their owne, but Christs*: and therefore ought not to bee imployed in the honour or service of the Devill, but of Christ. Again, the bodies of every Christian man and woman are the members of Christ; now it is an unseemly thing to take the member of Christ, and make it the member of an harlot. Thirdly, their bodies are temples and dwelling places; not for earthly Princes, but for the holy Ghost: and therefore must be furnished with Gods graces, and adorned with charity and other gifts of Gods Spirit, that they may bee fit mansion places for so worthie a guest. But by fornication they are made the sties and stables of the Prince of darkness.

vers. 16. *Repent thy selfe, or else I come unto thee shortly: and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth.*

Christ having laid downe the finnes of this Church, and the errours of the Nicolaitans, doth here propound unto this Church; First, a remedie for her recoverie: Secondly, a reason to enforce the practice of the remedie. The remedie is in these words, *Repent thy selfe*. In it consider these points: First, what it is to repent: Secondly, why Christ so often urgeth thereunto: Thirdly, to whom Christ prescribeth this remedie. Of the first, we have spoken in the first verse of this chapter: Briefly therefore; Repentance is a change of the minde from evil to good, and a turning from sinne unto God. Here repentance must be taken more largely, for all the duties that accompany repentance in the practice thereof; as I. *Humiliation* of a man by confessing of his finnes unto God, and con-

demning of himselfe for the same. II. *Prayer*, whereby a man doth earnestly intreat the Lord for the pardon of the same finnes. III. *Reformation*, whereby a man in heart purgeth, and in life endeavoureth to leave all his former finnes, and for ever after to doe all things in obedience unto God: unto all these doth the holy Ghost exhort them in this place.

II. Point. Why doth Christ so often prescribe this dutie of repentance, and so much urge it? *Ans.* Not for that it is a cause or a meritorious means to procure remission of finnes and life everlasting, as the Papists doe folly and damnably teach; for that nothing can doe but the obedience and possion of Christ: but first because it is a token of Gods favour procured, and a most excellent fruit of faith, such as maketh a man ready to doe evil, and moveth him to doe good: II. because it is a way wherein men may walk unto eternall life, that would have remission of finnes, and life eternall.

III. Point. To whom is this remedie prescribed? *Ans.* First, to the Church of Pergamus, and then to the Nicolaitans in that Church, though they were most wicked. Touching the Church of Pergamus: they were before commended for most worthy graces, for they had repentance: and yet now, Christ saith still unto them, *Repent thy selfe*. Herein teaching us a most worthy lesson, which every one ought to learne and practise; namely, that the life of a Christian is a continuall practice of repentance.

C When a man hath once repented, that is not sufficient; but every new day must have a new repentance for his daily slips. *Use our Gods Embassadors* (saith Paul) *be Christlike in living in Christ: so that you should here, as we do, unto God*. Now they were reconciled to God before, for they are called *The Temple of the living God*. His meaning therefore is, that they should strive more and more after reconciliation with God; both in regard of their further assurance, and also for their particular finnes wherein they daily offended. Every Christian must daily wrestle with his owne corruptions, which he feelth in himselfe, that the longer he liveth, the more he may grow in dislike with himselfe. And in this dislike of himselfe he must daily proceed, that he may every day more and more grow up in Christ. And lest any should thinke, that this was spoken to this Church alone, and not to us; consider, that we are in the same case with them; their finnes are our finnes, as we have proved: We want zeale and severity against sinne and sinners. Now being in the same state with them, we must therefore practise the same remedie, and renew our repentance, though we have repented heretofore.

Secondly, he prescribes this dutie to the Nicolaitans: they held two damnable errors, and no doubt lived accordingly in chastities: and yet Christ bares them not from his kingdom, but bids them repent. Where note that great

1 Cor. 6. 19.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

1 Cor. 5. 11.

and grievous sinners are not barred from Gods mercy, if they will repent. Excellent is that saying of *Isa*, *God is much in pardoning*; and that of *Dacalatio*, *With God is plentiful redemption*. This point is seriously to be considered: for we have in our congregations many that are well spoken of in the world and yet for knowledge of God, and practice of life, are flat Atheists. We have also among us Epicures, blasphemers, murderers, and fornicators, with these Nicolaitans. Now to all these and such like, this doctrine appertaines, not to embolden them in sinne, but to assure them there is mercy in store for them with God, if they will truly repent. They must not tunc the grace of God into wantonnesse, and make his mercy a bolster to their iniquity; for this is despising of Gods bounty, whereby they heape up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath: but if with *God* they humble themselves in dust and ashes, and cry to heaven for mercie from a broken heart, that carrieth a resolute purpose to leave all sinne; then, though their finnes were never so many, they shall all be drowned in the bottomlesse sea of Gods mercy: though they were as crimson and scarlet, which will take no other dye, yet in Christs blood they shall bee made as white as wooll and snow: yea, though they have fallen often into the same finnes, which is most feareful and dangerous, yet upon this untained repentance they shall be restored to mercie: for the fountain thereof cannot be dried up: but see they doe repent; for who-soever looketh for Christs merits, must know that he looketh for true repentance. Thus much for the remedy.

I I. Point. The reason whereby Christ would set an edge upon the former remedy, containeth a twofold threatening or commination: the first, against the whole Church, in these words, *If not, I come unto thee shortly*. The second against the Nicolaitans in these words, *And will fight against them with the sword of my mouth*. For the first, *If not, I will come unto thee shortly*, these words were expounded in the fifth vers. The meaning is this: if thou repent not, I will come unto thee, and tell thee my presence by taking punishment upon thee, for thy want of zeale, and severity against sinne and sinners. To this effect the Prophet *Isa* saith, Chap. 30. 27. *The voice of the Lord shall come from farre to take punishment upon the Assyrians*.

In this threatening the phrasis is to be noted: Christ saith; *If not, I come unto thee*: expressing a thing to come, by a word of the time present. To give them to understand, that his coming unto them by judgements was as certaine, as if it were present, unless they did repent. Where this general rule is to be observed of all: namely, that when a Church or people doe not repent, the Lord will come unto them to execute his judgements upon them. Yea, though they have before repented, if for particular finnes and wants they doe not renew their repentance,

he will surely come to punish them. This might be proved at large by testimonies of the Prophets and Apostles: but it is so evident in this text, that I omit all further proofs; only I will apply it to this our Church, of which this may be truly said; Thou dost not repent, nor renew thy repentance for thy daily finnes. For albeit there be some among us, that by Gods grace repent, and set themselves daily to the exercise thereof, yet take the greater part of our congregations, and they are so farre from renewing their repentance, that they doe not repent at all; for either they have no knowledge of Gods will, or if they have knowledge, yet they want care and conscience to put the same in practice. This being our case and condition, what man may not bee a Prophet against our Churches and congregations, being thus directed by his portion of Scripture, to say and that truly, *That God will come unto us in judgements to plague and punish us for our finnes and iniquities*? We may looth our selves in hope of mercy still, but the state of our Church continuing as it is, nothing can bee expected but judgements from the Lord. This then must be a motive to perswade us to repent, every person apart, and every family and congregation apart; we must humble our selves in dust and ashes for our finnes past, intreating the Lord to be reconciled unto us, and purpose fully in our hearts, and strive in our lives to obey God in all his commandments: yea though we can say we have repented, yet for our daily wants and finnes wee must renew our repentance. Thus doing, we shall stay the Lord when he is coming against us. But if we goe on in blindness, ignorance, and rebellion, following the lusts of our owne hearts, then nothing but vengeance and judgements are to be expected; for this conclusion must stand with all Churches and people: *If they repent not, God will come in judgement against them*.

The second threatening or commination is directed unto the Nicolaitans, in these words: *And will fight against them with the sword of my mouth*; That is, I will bear enmitie with them, and testifie the same by waging battell against those among you that maintaine the lawfulnessse of eating things sacrificed to Idols, and of fornication. Thus I say will I fight against them with the sword of my mouth; that is, with the preaching of my word, the law, and the Gospell.

In this commination Christ alludeth still to the storie of *Balaam*; for when he was sent for by *Balaam* to curse the people of God, the Lord stood against him in the way with a naked sword, to keepe him from going: and when his eyes were opened, that he saw the Angel of the Lord with him in that sort, he fell downe and adored the Angel, for it was the Lord: yet because he ceased not from his wicked covetousnesse, but gave bad counsell against the Israelites, when he could not curse them to cause

them

Numb. 22.8.

them to sin: therefore he was slain with the edge of the sword among the Midianites by the children of Israel. Even so Christ dealeth with the Nicolaitans, because they goe on in their bad counsell, perswading the lawlesse of eating things sacrificed to Idols, and also of fornication; therefore first he will fight against them with the sword of his mouth, the ministration of his Word, thereby to reclaim them from their wicked waies, if it be possible; but if that will not serve, he will still fight against them, and with the same sword destroy them for ever.

Vfe.

First, here marke, Christ saith not, I will kill them, but fight against them; for he intended not at the first to destroy these Nicolaitans, but his purpose was to withdraw them from their wicked waies; yet so, as afterward if they would not be reclaimed by his word, he would thereby destroy them. Wherein wee may behold the exceeding patience of Christ Jesus toward lewd and grievous sinners, that maintained the lawlesse of idolatrie and fornication, and gave themselves thereunto. So the Lord in spirit strove with the old world, and spared them 120. yeares, to withdraw them from their wickednesse by the preaching of Noe. So likewise he spared the Ananites till their finnes were come to the full; and the Egyptians also for many 100. yeares though they were most cruell persecutors of his owne people. And though the Jewes most maliciously crucified the Lord of life; yet he spared them fifty yeares, before he cut them off from being a people. Yea, daily experience teacheth us this his long suffering: wee may heare most bloody and bitter oathes from blasphemers, whereby they daily crucifie Christ with their tongues. The like may be said of the adulterers and all cruell persons, and yet he forbears the same; yea, in our owne selves we daily taste of this his patience; for so soone as we were borne, we deserved to be cast into hell, and yet in mercy he vouchsafeth unto us, to some twentie, to some thirty, and to some more yeares, for a time of repentance; when as every day hee might in justice condemn us. This therefore must admonish us in the feare of God, not to abuse this his long suffering any longer, but now while the day of mercy listeth, to humble our selves and turne unto him by true repentance. These are the dayes of grace, but how long they will last, God only knoweth: for when death once comes, he shewes no more mercy. The old world because they abused the long suffering of God, were destroyed, and are now in hell in prison for it, as Peter teacheth: and undoubtedly the same prison will be our portion, if we take the same course that they did.

1 Pet. 3. 19. 20.

Secondly, in this threatening we may observe, that all irrepentant sinners have God for their enemy, to fight against them with a drawne sword. For this cause sinne in Scripture is called rebellion, and every sinner is a rebell against God. A fearefull thing it is to have God for an enemy: and yet this is the condition, not only

of such as did never repent, but of all those that hold the name of Christ in possession, and yet continue in any one sinne, without renewing their repentance. This also must serve to induce every man that hath not repented, now to begin: and if they have begun, to repent more, daily renewing the same for their daily sins, and so shall they be the friends of Christ, as Abraham was, and as his disciples were.

John 1. 9.

Thirdly, in these two threatnings Christ shewes himselfe to be the true Doctor of his Church: for he will fight against these Nicolaitans, when as hee will onely come unto his Church. Where we see he divideth his word aright: wherein consisteth the principall wisdom of a true Prophet, giving comforts to whom comfort belongeth, and threatening judgements to whom judgement is due; and making difference of judgements according to the state of the persons against whom they are threatened. For the heavy judgements of God must not be threatened against all persons, but against the impenitent. And because there be degrees of judgements temporall, and eternall; therefore temporall judgements must be threatened to those to whom they belong, and eternall judgements denounced against those to whom they belong, observing the circumstances of time, place, and persons, according to Christs example in this place and els-where. So likewise the benefits of the Gospell are not to be propounded to every person hand over head without difference, but with restraint to some only, as Gods Prophets have done. It is oft a great offence in the Church, when the benefits of the Gospell are propounded to all, and the threatening of the law denounced against all, without limitation or restraint. The conditions therefore of repentance, and impenitence, of faith and unbeliefe, and also the degrees of the mall, must carefully be observed in the dispensation of the law and Gospell.

Fourthly, the end of Christs fighting must be considered: for the first, he intends to reclaim them from their evill waies, but if they will not be reclaimed, then to cause the same word to be an occasion of their deeper condemnation. This must be deeply weighed of us all, who have had by Gods grace for many yeares the plentiful preaching of the Gospell, by which God hath continually rebuked and checked the finnes that be among us, as ignorance, blasphemy, and dishonestie, cruelty and all iniquities whatsoever, and the same thing the Lord yet continues to do unto us. We therefore must thinke, that all this while the Lord is fighting against us: when ignorance is reprov'd in the ministry of the Word, the ignorant person must thinke the Lord is fighting against him, and so all Acheits, blasphemers, adulterers, oppressors, and cruell persons, when their finnes are reprov'd, they must know that the Lord stands face to face against them with the sword of his mouth, seeking to reclaim them from

from the ſe iniquities, as he did to *Balaam* in his way. And when any mans finnes be thus touched, he muſt not rebell, but humble himſelfe, as *Balaam* fell before the Angel: conſidering it is the Lord that wageth battell againſt him. When wee heare that forren nations ſhake their ſwords againſt us, how are wee moved, both high and low? Shall we feare the ſword of metall man, and ſhall we not tremble when we heare that the ſword of the everliving God is ſhaken againſt us? Thoſe therefore whole hearts are guilty of any one ſinne, muſt humble themſelves by true and ſpeedie repentance: there is no withſtanding of the Lord: if his ſword doe not cure us, it will cut us in peeces: if his word doe not convert us from our finnes, it will be an occaſion to caſt our ſoules deeper into hell. Thus he dealt with *Balaam*, when he would not be reſtrained from giving bad counſell: he was ſlaine among the Midianites. Few thinke on theſe things: from whence cometh ſuch great contempt of Gods ordinance in the minifterie of the Word, as wee ſee this day: but they muſt know, that either death or life come by the ſtroke of this ſword, and therefore they muſt repent.

Fiſtly note the title given to Gods Word: it is called, *The ſword of Christs mouth*: not only becauſe it was once delivered by himſelfe, from his owne mouth, but becauſe it doth daily proceed from his mouth: for the Miniſters of the Goſpell, which bee truly called, are the very mouth of Chriſt, from which Gods people receive his word. *If thou ſhalt returne* (ſaith the Lord to *Jeremie*) *and ſhalt ſeparate the precious from the vile, then ſhalt thou ſtand before me, and bee according to my word.* 2 Cor. 5. 19. We are the embaiſadors of Chriſt, beſeeching you in his ſtead: which is an high and wonderfull honour. The conſideration whereof is a ground of ſundry duties.

Fiſt, all ſtudents that are in the way of preparation to higher callings, muſt hereby learne to conceive a good opinion of the minifterie of the Goſpell, and to affect the ſame above other callings. For though the blind world count it a baſe calling, yet Chriſt we ſee maketh the miniſter his owne mouth: which honour is not given either to the Lawyer or to the Phyſician.

Secondly, hereby every Miniſter of the Goſpell is taught to deliver nothing in his publike miniſtery, but the pure Word of God, ſo ſure forthwith Chriſt ſhall enable him, and that alſo in to pure a manner, as in the perſwaſion of his own conſcience he thinks Chriſt would ſpeake, if he were there preſent: like unto faithfull embaiſadors, who ſpeake only the will of their Lord and Prince, and in that manner which their Lord and Prince doth beſt approve. If this were weighed, we ſhould not have ſuch preaching as is commonly uſed, conſiſting of a mixture of teſtimonies: partly divine, and partly humane, conſidering that neither Chriſt nor his Apoſtles to preached.

Thirdly, the people alſo are hereby taught their duty: when they heare a miniſter ſpeak unto themſelves ſpeake unto them in the minifterie of the Word, they muſt not deſpiſe Gods ordinance, becauſe it is delivered by man, but receive the ſame, as from the mouth of Chriſt, and as the pure Word of God, ſo ſure forth as it conſenteth with holy Scripture. In this behalf *Paul* bleſſed God for the Theſſalonians, *That they received the word from him, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God,* 1 Theſſ. 2. 13.

Sixtly, where Chriſt ſaith, *I will fight againſt thee with the ſword of my mouth*; Wee may obſerve, that the kingdome of Chriſt is ſpiritual, and not of this world: for if it were worldly, then a civill ſword wielded by the hand of man ſhould belong unto him. But he hath no ſuch ſword, he governes his Church and people by the ſword of his mouth, his holy word. Whereby appeareth, that the primacie of the ſea of Rome is from hell, not from heaven: for the Pope ſaith he is Chriſts Vicar, and yet he will be armed with both ſwords: when as Chriſt dealeth not with the civill ſword, but onely with the ſword of his mouth.

verſ. 17. *Let him that hath an eare heare what the ſpirit ſaith unto the Churches: To him that overcommeth will I give to eat of the Manna which is hid, and will give him a white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written, which no man knoweth, ſave he that receiveth it.*

Theſe words are the concluſion of this Epiſtle, which containe two parts; a commandement, and a promiſe. The commandement in theſe words, *Let him that hath an eare heare what the ſpirit ſaith unto the Churches*. The promiſe in the words following, *To him that overcommeth*, &c. The commandement ſerveth to ſtir up Gods Church to attention, in marking that which Chriſt delivereth unto them, as hath beene ſhewed before, verſ. 7.

In this commandement of Chriſt note two things: fiſt, that all men in Gods Church are bound in conſcience to frequent Sermons, whereby they may come to the knowledge of thoſe things that God preſenteth unto them. At the Nativitie, Eaſter, and ſuch good times, as they are called; ignorant people will come to the Church: but it may be not once more of a moth after, or a quarter of a yere. But Chriſt ſaith, *my ſheepe heare my voice*. So that he

that will not come to hear the voice of Christ, is none of his sheepe. *Matth. 16. 19.* Christ saith to Peter, *I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* There the preaching of the Gospell, is the key of the kingdom of heaven: So that looke how necessary it is for a man to have his soule saved and to enter into Heaven, so behoovefull it is for him to hear Sermons: For that is the turning of the key whereby wee enter into this kingdom, *2 Corinth. 5. 12.* the preaching of the Gospell is the doctrine of reconciliation: and therefore looke how necessary it is for a man to bee reconciled to God; so needfull it is for him to heare the Word preached. *He that is of God, heareth Gods word: and he that heareth it not, is not of God, 1 John 4. 6.* But men have many excuses to exempt themselves from hearing Sermons. Some say, if God himselfe would preach, or Christ, or an Angell from heaven, then they would heare; but so long as sinfull man preacheth, it is no great matter, though they absent themselves. *Ansiv.* This is a presumptuous reason; for the preaching of the Gospell by man, is Gods owne ordinance; and that for these causes: First, since *Adams* fall man cannot abide the voice of God: so as if man should heare God speake, hee would cry out with the Jewes, *Exod. 20. 19.* *Let not Gods voice be heard, lest wee die.* And with *Peter, Depart from mee, I am a miserable sinner.* Secondly, God speaketh by man to try the obedience and humilitie of men; to see whether they would bee content to receive and believe his Word, being propounded by sinfull man that is like unto themselves. And thirdly, to maintaine love betweene man and man, by mutuall conversing in this holy ordinance. Others doe say, they may well enough keepe themselves in their families, for there they have their Bible wherein be the Sermons of Christ, and of his Prophets and Apostles, than which no Minister can preach better. *An.* It is Gods ordinance that these Sermons of Christ, of the Prophets and Apostles, should be agayne handled, preached, and expounded in his Church: and therefore every man is bound in conscience to come into the congregations, and there to heare with reverence Gods holy word. Others will not come to the Church, for they thank God they can serve God with as good a heart on horse-backe, or on their journeyes, as those that come unto the Sermons. *Ansiv.* These persons are blinde and ignorant, a seduced heart beguileth them, and therefore they despise the ordinance of God; butler then heare what *Silvanus* saith, *Hee that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, that is, the doctrine of God, even his prayer shall bee abominable.* God speaketh to us in the ministry of his word, and if we refuse to heare him there, shall we thinke he will heare us when we pray? Know therefore if thou refuse his word, he will refuse thy prayer: neither indeed can any without the word pray aright. Such people deceive themselves, their

prayers in their needlesse journeyes shall bee their judges to condemn them; for therein they confesse God is to bee worshipped, and yet in practice they reject his direction for the same. Lastly, others say they have knowledge enough, the Ministers can teach them no more than they know: and therefore they need not goe heare so much preaching. *Ans.* These that pretend such perfect knowledge, are commonly the most ignorant, not knowing the end of this ordinance of God; for preaching serveth not onely to teach men to know God, and his will, but also to increase in knowledge, and to yeeld obedience to that which they know. If therefore thou hast knowledge, it is well: but that is not enough, if thou wouldest be blessed, thou must doe that which thou knowest, *Joh. 13. 17.* And for this cause the most learned man that is, must still frequent the hearing of Sermons, to further himselfe in obedience: because a man may know much, and yet want conscience to obey.

Secondly, in this Commandement men are enjoyned the reading of the word, and hearing of it read, not only publicly, but also privately in their families: that thereby also they may cometo the knowledge of that thing which Christ propoundeth unto them. *Luk. 10. 26.* *Christ saith to one of the Scribes, what is written? how readest thou?* taking it for granted, that men must read the Scriptures privately. And the Lord saith, *My people goe into captivity, because they have no knowledge: yea, they perish, 1 Isai. 4. 6.* But wofull is the defect of this duty; for many have not the Bible in their houses for their private exercise in the word: and in many families it is set up for a shew, or lieth covered with dust, when as cards and tables are worne with use. It is not amiss for men to get statutes of the Land into their houses, and to read therein, for the knowledge of mens lives; but yet herein they are blame-worthy, that either they have not, or els regard not the book of God, whereby they might be acquainted with the statutes of the Lord, for the better guiding of their unrulely affections. Other things in this commandement have beene observed before.

The second part of this conclusion, is an excellent promise made to him that overcome, which for substance hath bene handled in the conclusion of the former Epistle. Here onely some speciall blessings are particularly promised: In the handling whereof two points are to bee considered: First, the persons to whom the promise is made, *To him that overcome: the* whereof I have made before, *verf. 7.* Secondly, the blessings promised, comprised in this threefold gift of God: First, *To eat of the Tree which is hid:* Secondly, *To receive a white stone:* Thirdly, *A new name written in the stone.* All which three significative in effect, *The chellion, vocation, glorification, and glorification of Gods people.* But I will handle them in particular. The *chellion* is, *beginning of*

the hidden *Manna* to eat. *Manna* properly signifies that food which God gave from the clouds to the people of Israel, which for the excellency of it, is called, *The wheat of Heaven*, *The food of the strong*, or *the food of Angels*. In forme it was like *Coriander seed*, and in colour *white*, in taste it was *pleasant and sweet*. Here with God fed his people in the wilderness 40. yeares: to teach them, *That man liveth not by bread onely, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*. This is thought to bee the same white *Manna* which is used in shops at this day; but I will not dispute thereof, seeing it is doubtfull. That *Manna* did represent a more excellent food: and therefore *Paul* calleth it, *A spirituall meat*, because it represented unto them the spirituall food of the soule, *Christ Jesus* the true *Manna*, *The living bread* that *came downe from heaven* as we may see at large, *John 6*. And so in this place by *Manna*, we must not understand the *Manna* of the people of Israel; but *Christ* himselfe the true food of life eternall. How *Christ* doth become unto us spirituall *Manna*, and the true food of life, I will shew by these conclusions. I. Hee is this food, not in regard of his doctrine, or of his miracles, nor yet only in regard of the blessings of his death and passion: But *Christ* himselfe God and man is true food of life, as is shewed at large, *John 6*. And in *Christ* himselfe are his death and passion, and the benefits thereof, food unto the soule. II. *Concluse*, *Christ* is this food, not as he lay in the manger, or as hee now sitteth in heaven at the right hand of his Father; but as he suffered the wrath of God and pangs of hel upon the crosse, and as he died and was buried: for our life cometh out of *Christ*s death. I II. *Concluse*, He is this Food not in regard of his God-head: for that no creature can receive or apply to his justification, or sanctification: but in regard of his Manhood, subsisting in the person of the sonne of God. *Christ*s flesh profiteeth nothing, severed from the godhead: but yet his body and bloud have this vertue, to be true spirituall food, because they are the flesh and bloud of that person which is God. IV. *Concluse*, *Christ* is not a bodily food to be received with the hand, eaten with the mouth, and digested in the stomacke; but hee is a spirituall food, to be received, applied, and digested by faith: And being so received, he doth preserve the soule unto eternall life. This faith is that whereby a man is enabled to believe that *Christ* crucified is his *Christ*. And thus doth he become our spirituall *Manna*, when by true faith we assure our selves that hee suffered for our sin, and rose againe for our righteousness.

Is *Christ* crucified, the true bread of life, and our spirituall *Manna*? then should we long after him, with a true spirituall hunger in our very hearts, as truly as any man longeth after meat and drinke. When a man is famished, for the staying of his hunger hee will pull his owne

flesh from his bones, and eat it; Even so, for the satisfying of our hungry soules with *Christ* Jesus this food of life, we must forsake the dearest thing in all the world, though it bee our owne flesh; for that which we will doe for our bodies, we must doe much more for our soules. *Quest*. How shal we attaine to this true spirituall hunger? *Answer*. It is with the hunger of the soule, as it is with the hunger of the bodie. In bodily hunger bee two things: A great paine in the stomack for want of nourishment: And a strong and earnest appetite, which continueth till the stomacke be filled. Even so wee should feele a paine in our hearts, rising from a sense of the wrath of God for our sinnes; And then we must labour to have a greedy appetite, and earnest desire to be filled with *Christ* crucified; and never be at rest till we be satiate with the merit of his passion, which only can free us from Gods wrath and fill us with true joy. But wofull be these times: for there is in most mens hearts a deadnesse of spirit, whereby they are made insensible of inward wants and miseries: They are like unto full men that feele no paine for want of food. There is indeed an hunger, nay, a greedy worne in many after the profits, pleasures, and honours of this world: but few or none doe hunger after *Christ*. But if wee would have a part in the feast of the *Lambe*, wee must labour to have this longing appetite after *Christ*: If we be full stomacked, wee shall have no refreshing from his merits. *Mary* saith truly in her song, *God filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich and full goe away empty*. Which is a most fearefull curse, when the soule is debarr'd from the food of life: But blessed are wee if wee hunger after *Christ* and his righteousness, for then wee shall be satisfied: *Christ* will give unto us our fill of the water of life freely, *Rev. 21. 6*.

Secondly, here wee may take view of the profane madnesse of the world: for though this bread of life *Christ* Jesus, be the most excellent food of all, farre surpassing the *Israelites* *Manna*, the food of *Angels*; yet it is nothing or little desired. Men are like the foolish *Israelites* that had more regard to *leeks and onions*, and to the flesh part of *Aegypt*, than to the *Angels* food which God gave them from heaven. They spend their wits, and their strength, by day and by night, that they may satiate themselves with the trifle riches and vaine pleasures of the world: And yet these men have the name to be the onely men; whereas indeed they are prophane *Esaus*, and wicked *Israelites*. As therefore this practice is damnable: so must wee learne to detect it. And on the contrary, seeing *Christ* Jesus is the true *Manna*, our principall care and desire must be to be fed therewith. Wee must thinke it is a great disgrace to *Christ* Jesus, which hee cannot indure without revenge, that we should have lesse regard to him the true bread of life, than to earthly food which perisheth.

Thirdly

Thirdly, here we may see that which is usual in the Scripture intreating of the Sacraments, to wit, the name of the signe given to the thing signified : for Christ here promisseth them *Manna*, meaning thereby not the Israelites food, but himselfe, whereof their *Manna* was a signe, a feale, a pledge: as appeareth plain, because *Paul* calleth it *spirituall meat*, 1 Corin. 10. 2.

Further, Christ is not only called *Manna*, but *hidden Manna*, to put a difference between himselfe and the *Manna* of the Israelites, which was visible that every man might see it. And Christ is called hidden *Manna* for two causes: first, because no man by nature knoweth this food, or desireth it: Secondly, because God doth not reveale this food to all men effectually; as may appeare, *Math. 13. 35. I give thee thanks (O Father) that thou hast hidden these things*, that is, the doctrine of the Gospell, and the mysteries of the kingdome of heaven) *from the great and wise men of the world, and hast opened them unto babes.*

Use.

Is Christ hidde? *Manna*? then first here learne to take knowledge of the state of men in the world: They know not Christ, neither doe they feele in themselves any want of this food, and therefore they know not what it meaneth: for meat and drinke is never knowne, till a man bee hungry. Yea, to many that live in the Church this *Manna* is hidde; for though men heare the doctrine of Christ, yet not one of an hundred feele in themselves any want of Christ: let the conscience speake, and this will prove true. Ignorant people blesse themselves, and say all is well, Christ is a Saviour: when as indeed to them Christ is hidde. Nay, which is yet more lamentable, to many which teach and preach Christ, Christ is hidden *Manna*: for many of them never feele in their hearts and conscience, that they had need of Christ for the pardon of their sins, and the salvation of their soules. It is not the knowledge in the braine that maketh Christ knowne to man; but knowledge in the conscience, when a man feelles in his heart and soule, that hee stands in need of the blood of Christ, and all the benefits of his passion for his redemption and salvation. And seeing this is the condition of the world, we on the contrary must labour to feele in our selves, that wee stand in need of Christ, and of all the benefits of his passion, to free our soules from the gulfes of hell, and the wrath of God. Away with bare mentall knowledge: for till wee have this true sense of our owne wants, wee can never get into our hearts any sound grace.

Secondly, is Christ hidde bread not revealed to all? Then calling effectually to salvation (so as if he will, every man may be saved) is not universall: for then should Christ not bee hidde, but revealed to all: which is not so. Election therefore and effectual vocation is definite and particular. And thus much of the first

branch of this gift.

The second gift is a *white stone*. Here Christ borroweth a comparison from the custom and manner of the Gentiles, to whom the Epistles are directed. A white stone was of great use among them: For first, the Judge in giving sentence, used white stones, and blacke stones: the giving of a white stone, was a token of absolution; the giving of a blacke stone, a figure of condemnation. Here then the giving of a white stone, may signifie *absolution from Christ of all mans finnes and trespasses*. Again, when the Gentiles would know, which were lucky dayes (as they speake) and which were unlucky; they used to cast lots with white and blacke stones, and that day which light on a white stone, was judged to be a lucky day, that which light on a blacke stone was judged to be unlucky. This practice they used as might be shewed by sufficient records. And though this practice have no warrant, yet may Christ allude unto it, to signifie unto them that hee will give them good successe in all their actions: yea, happy dayes, and a blessed life full of all joyes and pleasures. Others doe expound it of giving victory, whereof the giving of a white stone was a figure: but this is not to fit, neither can it bee shewed by true record that they had such a practice. I rather take it Christ alludeth to the first, and here promisseth to him that overcometh, the true remission of all his sins and full absolution; not in regard of civil punishment, but in respect of guilt and punishment before God, which is eternal damnation.

Here note one infallible token of the pardon of sinne; namely, to overcome, that is, to renounce our selves, and by faith rely wholly on Christ, testifying this faith by maintaining good conscience, and true religion unto the end: And therefore if any desire to know whether God have absolved him of his finnes, let him labour thus to overcome, and then shall this assurance be sealed up unto him.

The third gift, is a new name written in the stone. What this new name should bee *S. Iohn* expretheth in his first Epistle, chap. 3. ver. 1. saying, *Beloved, what love the Father hath shewed to us, that wee should bee called the finnes of God.* This new name therefore is to bee the *sonne* and *heire of God in Christ*. And because it is given of God himselfe, therefore wee must not thinke it is an idle name, or a bare title onely: but with all God giveth him a new condition, whereof this name is a token and title. God changed *Abrahams* name, and called him *Abraham*: but it was when he had changed his estate, and made him the Father of the faithfull. And there was a change in *Jacob*, when God called him *Israel*. This new name then signifieth the giving of a new estate to a man or woman; which they had not before: namely, their regeneration, whereby they are made to die unto sinne, and to live unto God: for therewith goeth

the blessing of Adoption, whereby they become the Sonnes of God, and heires with Christ, and so have heaven and earth for their possession, and all miseries and crosses, yea, sinne it selfe turning to their good; they have also the protection of Gods holy Angels in this life, and at the last gaspe death to be no death, but a strait passage to eternall life.

Further, this new name is said to bee written in the white stone: that is, in the pledge of abolution; which sheweth the union of these two: Abolution, and Regeneration. So that whom the Lord of his mercie absolves from their sinnes, them in his bounty hee brings to a new estate and condition. Hee that is in Christ is a new creature, 2 Corin. 5. 17. A point to be observed, as yielding speciall advice to reforme the grosse and common abuse of Christ. Men persuade themselves, that Christ is their Saviour, and will pardon their sinnes, for he is mercifull; and thereupon they take occasion to live as they list. But let no man here-with deceive himselfe, for they that have abolution, have regeneration also: A new condition of life goes with the fruition of Gods mercy in Christ; they that goe on in sinne, have not the pardon of sinne; the corruption of sinne must be abolished where the guilt of sinne is abolished; and their lives are reformed that have their sinnes remitted. Here some man may say, why are not those called by this new name, to whom Christ gives it, for usually men are called after their names? The answer is made in the end of the verse: *Because no man knoweth that name but hee that receiveth it*: that is, in that manner and certainty as hee that receiveth it. And therefore the children of God must not be much offended when they are reviled for their profession, because the world knowes not their estate.

Here wee may observe divers points: First, that hee which is the childe of God, and hath this new name given him, knowes that hee is Gods childe, justified and sanctified. Neither is this knowledge by probable conjecture onely, and good hope, as the Papists would have it; but certain and infallible: for else others should know it as well as he that receiveth it: which is here denied. Each one is bound in charitie to be persuaded, that godly professors are the Sonnes and Daughters of God: But the man himselfe that hath received this new name and new estate, he knowes it other wise, and therefore certainly and infallibly.

Secondly, if no man know this name but hee that receiveth it, then can none beside God and the conscience, know from within the man, his particular faith and Adoption. And hereby wee are to be admonished, to beware of charging the evill and hard censure of hypocritise upon any that live in the Church; in so doing we overshoot our selves: this judgement belongs to God, not to man, save onely to the man himselfe: for wee cannot discern the good within the man properly, but by effects. *Quest.* How

farre forth may a man judge of another mans Election? *Ans.* There be two degrees of judgement; judgement of certaintie, and judgement of charitie. Judgement of certaintie, is when a man can tell downe certainly, such a man shall be saved: This is a peremptory judgement belonging unto God, and to some men onely, so farre forth as the Lord revealeth it unto them: as hee did the estate of some men, to David and to some Prophets. Whereupon David sometimes prays for the final destruction of his enemies; but this is not given ordinarily, no not to Gods Ministers. The judgement of charitie is that, which binds a man to judge the best of another: and herein be two degrees. First, touching the unregenerate; charity bindes us, not to despair of such as yet live profanely; but to hope that God will in good time call them. And touching the regenerate, who have given good testimonies of their vocation, charity bindes us to be persuaded without doubt that they be the children of God. And this we may doe without repugnance to this place; for though wee cannot from within the man know his estate, yet by the fruits wee may; which is the highest degree of judgement that charitie can exercise.

Thirdly, here wee see the Church of Rome is deceived, who makes *Visibilitie* the marke of Gods Church: for Gods Church is a companie of men which beleve: The ground of the Church is Gods election and adoption, & mans faith, which none other can see but the parties that have them. The signes thereof may be seen, but properly the Church cannot be seene. It comes to be visible by the fruits of Election, and by the outward works of love, which proceed from faith. Wee therefore hold farre better, that we beleve there is a Church, and not that we see the Church.

Lastly, if others know not the name of Gods children, then what marvell is it, if the wicked miscall them? 1 Joh. 3. 2. *The world knowes them not.* Gods children therefore must not be daunted at the reproaches of the wicked, but pray with Christ, *Father forgive them, they know not what they doe.* Luke 23. 34.

v. 18. *And unto the Angel which is at Thyatira write, These things saith the Sonne of God, which hath his eyes like to a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brasse.*

Here followeth the fourth particular commandment of Christ unto *Iohn*, as also the fourth particular Epistle. The Commandment in these words, *To the Angell which is at Thyatira write*: of the substance of this Commandment I have spoken before; onely remember the

end thereof, which is to terrifie this Church of Thyatira, that *John* had a calling and commandment from God to write this Epistle unto them: and further to certifye the whole Church of God, to the end of the world, of his calling to write this booke of the Revelation.

The Epistle it selfe containeth three parts: a Preface, a Proposition, and a Conclusion. The Preface in these words, *These things saith the Sonne of God, which hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brasse*: all which things almost have beene handled in the beginning of this Chapter; and in the former from whence they are borrowed. In the Preface, first is set downe in whose name the Epistle is written, to wit, in Christs name: the causes thereof wee have shewed before. Then Christ is described by three arguments: First, *To be the Sonne of God*: Secondly, *To have eyes like a flame of fire*: Thirdly, *To have feet like fine brasse*. For the first, in the former Chapter hee was called *the son of man*; but here he is called *the son of God*: where by God, wee must not absolutely understand the God-head of the whole Trinitie, but the person of the father, who being opposed either to the Sonne, or to the holy Ghost, is usually called God: nor that hee is God more than the Sonne, or than the holy Ghost; but because hee is the first in order, and because he is that person from whom the God-head is communicated to the Son and to the holy Ghost. So that here Christ is called the son of the Father: which mystery wee cannot fully understand, for the Word hath not revealed the same; neither can we find it elsewhere out of the Word. But yet for the better conceiving thereof, remember these two rules. I. That Christ is the Sonne of the Father, not in respect of his God-head, but in respect of his person. For the God-head of the Sonne is the same with the God-head of the Father: the God-head of the Father doth not beget, neither is the God-head of the Sonne begotten. II. *Ryle*. Christ is the Sonne of the Father, not by creation, as the Angels and *Adam* were; nor by adoption, as every beleever is; but by nature, in that hee is begotten of the substance of his Father before all the world; for the father communicates from himselfe the whole god-head that is in himselfe unto his sonne.

Christ is here called the Sonne of God, to stirre up reverence, attention, and care in this Church, in marking and obeying the things that follow in this particular Epistle. And in their Example Christ also teacheth us, that when wee heare the word of God preached or read unto us, wee should receive with feare and trembling, and reverence: because he that speaketh unto us out of his word, is *the Sonne of God*. When *Pilate* was about to condemne our Saviour Christ, hee heard it said that *Christ was the Sonne of God*: and thereupon hee trembled, and was the more afraid, *Joh. 19. 8*. Shall a silly heathen man that knowes not Christ

tremble towards him when he heares his name, and yet wee that professe our selves to beleve in him, bee nothing moved with reverence towards him, when hee speakes unto us in his Word? At his presence the hills melt, and at his voice the rocks cleave in sunder: and therefore if our heart shall not melt and cleave asunder with a reverent feare when he shall speake unto us, wee are worser than these senselesse creatures.

Secondly, Christ is said, *To have eyes like a flame of fire*: which we must not conceive literally. The words are borrowed from the former chapter, *vers. 14*: where Christ is described not as hee is in truth, but as hee appeared to *John* in Vision. We have shewed before what is signified by these fire eyes: namely, Christs infinite wisdom in himselfe, and vigilant zeale over his Church. The end wherefore hee so described himselfe to this Church, is to give them to understand, that hee can see and discern their very secret sinnes; for sundry among them were given to private offences, as to fornication and idolatry, as wee shall see afterward.

Here then wee have an excellent remedie against secret sinnes: shame and feare of punishment restraine some from open sinnes, but yet the same men when they are in secret, doe without feare commit privie sinnes against the first and second table. But these men must remember, that being with-drawne from the presence of men, they are yet in the presence of Christ; for hee hath *fires eyes*, wherewith hee seeth these most secret sinnes, which they hide from the world. For though we may make faire weather with men, yet we can never blear the eyes of Christ. If fornicators, wantons, usurers and blasphemers, would remember this, by Gods grace it would bee a notable meanes at least to restraine them from their secret sinnes, if not, to move them unto the practice of true repentance.

Thirdly, Christ is said to have *feet like fine brasse*. Whereby is signified (as hath beene shewed) his infinite power and strength; whereby hee doth subdue sinne, Satan, and all his enemies, first unto himselfe, and then unto his members. And Christ is thus described unto this Church, to terrifie certaine wicked men among them, that gave themselves to fornication, idolatry, and other sins: as also to affright this whole Church, who by their wicked companie were almost drawne away to the same sinne.

Here wee have a notable remedie against loosenesse of life; namely, to consider that Christ, whom we call our Saviour, walketh continually in his Church with feet of brasse, to tread Satan and all his enemies under his feet: and such are all that will not submit themselves to the regiment of his word, *Luk. 19. 27*. If the blasphemer could consider this, it would stop his mouth: and when the adulterer, the

these, or any siner goeth about his wicked devices, this by Gods grace would bee a notable meanes to make him breake off his wicked purpose. When Benhadad heard, that the King of Israel would come against him in battell, *He sent his men with ropes about their neckes to crave peace, and in their humbled himseife. Shall men be thus afraid of the fury of man, and shall we not tremble and feare at the fury of Christ, who hath these feet of brasse to trample in peeces all his enemies?* The want of this consideration is one maine cause why sin doth abound.

v. 19. *I know thy workes, and thy love and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy deeds, which are more at the last than at the first.*

Here begins the second part of this Epistle, to wit, the Proposition, which consisteth in the substance and matter thereof: and it hath two parts: a commendation of this Church, and a rebuke thereof. The commendation in the 19. verie, the rebuke or dispraise in the 20. verie, and those that follow, almost to the end of the chapter. The commendation is twofold: generall in these words, *I know thy workes.* This hath beene handled before: verie 2. The particular commendation standeth in five notable works: to wit, *Love, Service, Faith, Patience, and Increase in goodnesse.*

For the first, by *Love*, wee must understand *Love to men*: for afterward they are commended in duties to God, in faith and patience, but love and service are duties of man to man. Touching love, note three points: What this love is; What is the property of this love; and how it is to be practised. First, *Love to man is a gift of the spirit of God, whereby a man is well affected to his neighbour for Gods sake.* This love is a gift of the spirit, is plaine, Galat. 5. 22. where it is reckoned among the gifts of the Spirit. Next I adde, *That hereby a man is well affected to his neighbour.* To be well affected to another, is to rejoyce at his good, and to desire and seeke the same; and withall to be grieved at his misery, and to beare the bowels of compassion toward him, being ready to receive and helpe him to our uttermost. By *Neighbour*, wee must not understand onely those that are neere unto us in habitation, but even all those that are of the same nature with us, even any of mankind. He is thy neighbour, that is a man as thou art, and to beare the Image of God as thou dost, be hee friend or foe, neere or stranger unto thee: and to him must thou be well affected. Lastly, I say, *For Gods sake:* For God is first and principally to be loved for himselfe, and man in God and for God, because he is the creature of God, and beareth his Image. The

A love we beare to man, is a fruit of our love unto God; for this Commandment wee have of him, That he that loveth God, should love his brother also, 1 Joh. 4. 21.

I. Point. The property of this love is, *To be fervent*; and that for two causes: first, it need require, every man is bound within his calling to rectifie his love by giving his life for his neighbour, though hee bee our enemy or a stranger: which wee shall never doe unless our love be fervent. Secondly, there is much ingratitude, hatred, emulation, and many injuries in the world now the persons from whom these come must be loved: the unworthinesse of the partie must not quench our love, but it must burne when the waters of mens injuries and malice would quench the same.

II. Point. The practice of our love must be squared by this rule, *To love of ourselves*; as wee wish our owne good heartily, so wee must wish our neighbours good. This is the law of Nature, *To doe as a man would bee done unto:* And it is the law of God, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy selfe.* Example: A man of some trade is to make a bargain, and if hee will lie, or use false weights and measures, hee may advantage himselfe. This the Devil and his owne corruption will suggest unto him, while hee is about the bargain: hee therefore must call to minde this rule of love, and examine his owne heart, whether hee would have another man to deceive him by lying, by false weights, &c. The same thing must men doe, when they are tempted to oppression or cruelty; let them thinke whether they would have others to wrong or oppress them, and so shew forth love by this rule, doing as they would be done unto. It were to bee wished, that our Church might have the deserved praise of this vertue of love: But *Christ* foretold of these our dayes, *That love should wax cold,* Matthew 24. 12. *And that men should bee lovers of themselves.* And so it is, for every man now is for himselfe, no man seeks anothers good. Goethorow townes, markets, and faires, and rare it is to finde a man that in his affaires seeketh the common good, as well as his owne. For this is the common rule, *May I not make of mine owne what I will?* But hee that hath the grace of love, *Seeketh not his owne only, but the good of others also,* 1 Corinth. 13. vers. 5.

Here then wee must learne to practise this vertue, that wee may have Christs commendation with this Church: every man in the general calling of a Christian will make great shew of love; as when he comes to the Lords table, and in prayer: But in their particular affaires few shew forth true love, nay, many by lying, oppression, cruelty, *Flee the shame from the flesh, and the flesh from the bone of the pore, and breake the bones within the flesh, and chop them as for the por,* as the Prophet speaketh. These little consider this rule, or that account which the Lord will take of them, who hath sworn,

Ioh. 3. 17.

1 Tim. 3. 3.

Mich. 7. 3.

Vss.

never to forget these works, Amos 8. 7. Learn therefore in thy particular calling to shew forth love: and imploy thy common duties, not for thy selfe alone, but for the good of those with whom thou livest: hee is love, and hereby shall thou be known to be the servant of Christ, John 13. 35. and the child of God, Translated from death to life, 1 Ion. 3. 14.

The second thing for which this Church is commended, is *service*. To signify divers significations of the Word, here it brokeneth a worke of love, whereby a man within the compasse of his calling becomes a servant unto every man for that mans good. Read, Heb. 6. 10. where this is both commended and described Gal. 5. 13. *Do service one to ano: her in love.* 1 Corinth. 13. 5. *Love seeketh not her owne, but maketh her selfe servant unto all, to doe them good.* And Christs commandment is, *Let him that would be in the chief among you, be like the servant,* Luk. 22. 26. Now the principal part of this service is, when a man is readie with his goods, according to his abilitie, to helpe the poore, especially those that bee godly. This is a fruit of love, and therefore it is here set after it, as also in the places aforementioned, 1 Petr. 6. 10. Gal. 5. 13.

It were to bee wished that our Church and people might have the like praise for this vertue. But the richer sort spend their substance and wealth upon haukes and hounds, bulls and peares, upon costly attire; and banqueting: so as when the poore that are in need come for reliefe, they have nothing to spare; and if any thing be given, it is drawn as hardly from them as a ribbe out of their side: Men will give frankly, to delight themselves with playes and pastimes, and such like vanities: but the poore that bee their owne flesh, may die in the streets for want of that which men give to their dogs. But if we respect the commendation of Christ Iesus, let us abandon these vanities which hinder us in the practice of this vertue of *service* for the good of our brethren. And to induce all men hereto, let them consider, 1. How the Church of the old Testament was charged with giving the first fruits of their wine, corne, and oyle; and likewise with many sacrifices and ceremonies which belonged to the Temple: These things indeed bee ceased, and yet wee may not mispend these goods which hereby are spared; for in the new Testament the poore are in stead of the altar, and they must have that which the Altar had among the Jewes. Again, Isay 58. 18. *Hee that poureth forth his soule to the hungry,* that is, hee that seeing the poore in miserie, heeth the bowels of compassion moved towards him, and from his pitifull heart releeveth the want, according to his abilitie, his light shall never be put out, but shall spring out of the darkness, and his darkness shall be as the noone day. This is pure religion and undefiled before God, to visit the fatherlesse, and the widow in their adversity. Remember this,

Hee that hath mercy upon the poore, lendeth unto the Lord, Prov. 19. 17. So that when the poore come for reliefe, God cometh to borrow of us some of that which hee hath given us. The poore are the Lords collectors; now when the Lord would borrow of us, shall wee make denial, and lend him empty away? Thirdly, consider that Christ himselfe comes in the person of the poore that is hungry, sicke, naked, or in any want: and therefore if wee would escape the fearful sentence of condemnation at the last day, *I say from mee ye cursed in to everlasting fire: for I was an hungry, and ye gave mee no meat, &c.* Then wee must have regard unto the poore, and shew our bounty in their reliefe, who are our owne flesh: so shall wee make God our debtor, and be commended with this Church by Christ himselfe in this world; and at the day of judgement heare that blessed voyce of his approbation, *Come ye blessed,* Mat. 25. 14.

The third vertue for which this Church is commended, is their *faith*. By *faith* here wee are to understand *first faith*; which is a vertue whereby a man is faithful to God in keeping that vow and promise which hee made to him in his baptism: which was to renounce and deny himselfe, and wholly to give up himselfe to acknowledge one God in three persons; and accordingly to beleave in, to worship and obey the same God all his life long. In this sense is *faith* taken of *Paul*, when hee saith, *That younger widows buye damnation, because they have forsaken their first faith:* and in the former Epistles of Christ unto these Churches, where he commands them to be *faithfull*.

It were to bee wished that our Churches and congregations might in like manner bee commended for their fidelitie to God; but that cannot truly bee done of us generally. It is a common thing for men to sweare by their faith; but it is a rare thing to finde a man to keepe his faith; as will appeare by this short survey of our people: For first, the greatest part in all places are ignorant of God, of his word, and of their vow in baptism; and also voyd of care to attaine hereto. Now all these are unfaithfull unto God. Others, though they have knowledge, yet they have no love, nor care of good things, which concerne the Kingdome of heaven, but all their delight is in eating, drinking, gaming, and in pastimes and pleasures: Herein they spend their time and strength; and these also have denied their first faith, and their case is dangerous: for as yet their belly and their pleasure is their God, and their end will bee damnation. A third sort are teamed wife men of the world: but if wee regard their fidelitie to God, there is nothing in them; they are worldly persons and earthly minded, such as spend both wit and strength to get wealth; like unto the mole, who is alwayes in the earth. These also are unfaithfull unto God, in regard of their vow in baptism. For as they account

1 Tim. 5. 12

Use.

gaine

gaine godlinesse, so gold is their God, and they lay to the wedge of gold. Thou art my confidence. Seeing then all these be unfaithfull unto God, wee must bee admonished to remember what wee have promised in our baptisme: And withall have care to performe the same as wee tender the salvation of our soules. For if we be unfaithfull, as *Paul* said of the younger widowes, damnation belongs unto us.

The fourth vertue for which this Church is commended, is *patience*. Of this I have spoken before, *verf. 2*. Here onely note, that it is joyned with *love to men*, with *fidelitie to God*, and with *service both to God and men in the duty of love*. Whereby Christ would signifie, that no good thing can bee done by any man, without patience. Love is no love without patience: neither is faith any faith without patience: for when a man loveth another, for his love he shall sometime receive hatred. Now unlesse he have patience to beare that hatred, his love will surceale. And so if a man have care to bee faithfull unto God in the world hee shall be sure to have much contempt: so that unlesse hee have patience to beare the same, his faithfulness will faile; *Patience bringeth forth experience, and experience hope*, Ro. 5. 4. and 15. 4. no comfort of the Scriptures, nor hope without patience. And therefore in the Parable of the Sower, *The good ground bringeth forth fruit with patience*: though a man have never so good gifts, yet without patience hee cannot put them in practice. This therefore wee must joyne with all the good graces wee have: as *Peter* counselleth us, 2 Peter 1. 6. When a man is in temptation, and apprehendeth the wrath of God, which is the forest thing that can be, without patience hee will despaire: Without patience a man will bee weary of well-doing, both in duties to God and man, and to his owne soule. Hence the Apostle saith, *ye have need of patience*, Heb. 10. 39.

And thy workes. Here Christ repeateth his generall commendation of this Church, which wee must not thinke to bee done in vaine, but hereby he would let us see, how exceeding well he did approve of their workes. The cause why hee liked them so well, was their increase in well-doing: whereof we shall intreat afterwards.

Christ repeateth his approbation of their workes after some worthy vertues, to shew unto us, what things are required in the doing of any worke that shall bee acceptable to God; Namely, these foure things, faith, love, service, and patience. Faith is necessary, because in well-doing a man must testifie his fidelitie to God, which hee shall best doe, if first he learne out of the Word, whether God have commanded that worke to bee done or not, that so hee may bee sure to doe, or not to doe that which God will have him: for it is not sufficient to have a good intent in the doing of our workes, as is commonly thought, though falsely; but our workes must bee done in faith, that is, in a sure

perswasion out of Gods word, that the things wee doe are approved of God; for *whatsoever is not of faith, is sinne*. Secondly, love is necessary in every good worke wee goe about, *For faith worketh by love*, Gal. 5. 6. Hence the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 13. 3. *If a man should give his bodie to bee burned, and bestow all his goods in Almes upon the poore: yet if hee did not thefe in love, it would not please God*. Thirdly, service to man is required in our good workes. This must bee carefully marked: for the end of mans life is in his calling to serve man, and by that to serve God. Col. 3. 24. Servants must obey their Masters, and in their persons doe service unto Christ. And that which is there spoken of servants, must bee referred to the workes of every man in his calling: they must bee done for the good of men, so as God may be served in them. This overthrowes the foolish conceit of the Papists, which thinke that the most excellent workes of all are fasting, pilgrimage, wearing of rough attire, and whipping of their bodies: For good workes must bee done in faith and love, to benefit men; either in soule or body: but these workes of theirs are not done in faith, neither doe they profite the doers or any others: Fasting hath it place, yet it is no good worke, but a thing indifferent in it selfe. Lastly, patience is necessary in every good worke, that men faint not in doing that which is good: for they that doe any good thing, shall be sure of many crosses, partly from men, and partly from Satan, as alio by Gods providence. Now when these befall a man in well-doing, without patience they will stay his proceeding: And therefore it is truly said, *The good ground bringeth forth fruit with patience*.

These being the vertues that make a worke acceptable to God: wee must labour in every action of our lawfull calling whatsoever it bee, to practise the same in faith, love, service, and patience. Wee must not tie good workes to Church matters only, as hearing the Word, and giving almes; but the practice of any worke of a mans lawfull calling, be it never so base, with these vertues is a good worke, and approved of God in it kinde, as well as the best worke that is, nor for the worke it selfe, but because therein doth appeare faith, love, service, and patience: and because this Church so performed their workes, therefore doth God double his approbation.

The last vertue for which this Church is commended, is increase in godlines, in these words, *And that they are more at the last than at the first*. The Church of Ephesus was before reproved for decay and losse of the graces of God: but this Church did grow and increase in graces, and therefore are her workes more approved, than the workes of any other Church.

It were to bee wished, that our congregations might bee commended for their increase in godlinesse, in faith, obedience, and other good workes; but that cannot justly bee done, for the

the number of our people is increased, but their growth in grace doth not appeare. Many live in ignorance, and though they heare much, yet they profit little; so as it might bee said of them, as the Author to the Hebrews saith, *Whereas concerning the time ye ought to bee teachers, you have neede againe that we teach you the first principles of the Word of God.* And as Paul saith of certaine women, *They are alwayes learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth.* Others also, though they know something, yet they practise lesse than they which know nothing. And which is worst of all, many that heretofore have had good beginning in them, by their bad conversation, and the greedie cares of the world, have lost the same againe, and goe backward in knowledge, in obedience, in faith, and love. Rare it is to finde those that are like to this Church of Thyatira, whose workes are better at the last than at the first. A fearefull case it is, to bee ignorant of Gods will, and a great judgement of God, to decay in love, and other graces: and therefore that wee may prevent Gods judgements, wee must have care to get knowledge, and to increase therein, and with knowledge to joyne obedience in all good duetie to God and man. Some plead for themselves by reason of age, want of memory, and capacity: but these must learne to shew forth better affections, and more sincere obedience.

The younger sort also must imploy their wit and strength to get knowledge, and with knowledge joyne obedience, that they may increase in grace as they grow in dayes. Yea, every one that hath any good beginning, must endeavour to make it more: For to him that hath, shall more be given, and hee shall have abundance; but from him that hideth his gift, or abusethe the same, shall bee taken away that which hee seemeth to have, Luk. 8. 18.

V. 20. *Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, that thou sufferest that woman Jesabel, which calleth her selfe a Prophetesse, to teach and deceive my Servants, to make them to commit fornication, and to eat meat sacrificed to Idols.*

Here is Christs reproofe of this Church of Thyatira, and it is twofold: First, of the whole Church, in this 20. verse. Secondly, of a woman in that Church, verse 21. In the reproofe of the whole Church note two things: The reproofe it selfe; And the reason thereof. The reproofe it selfe is contained in these words,

A *Notwithstanding I have something against thee:* that is, though I have praised thee for many worthy works, yet there be some things which I doe not approve. This reproofe hath beene handled in the former Epistles. The reason of the reproofe followeth in these words, *That thou sufferest the woman Jesabel, who calleth her selfe a Prophetesse, to teach and seduce my Servants.*

This reason of her reproofe containeth sundry points worthy our consideration. I. From the phrase and forme of the words, wee may consider the large power that God gave to his Church: which was, besides the power to preach the Word, and administer the Sacraments, a further power to appoint who should preach among them, and who should not preach: and also a power to repress evil men and evil women, and to keepe them in order. The like power was given to the Church of Ephesus, as wee have seene in the Epistle to that Church: they had power to discern false Prophets, and Apostles, and to restraints the same. The like power did God give to all Churches, as wee shall see if wee read the histories of the Church; and great cause there is hereof: for without this authority, no Church could long stand and be a Church.

B II. Here note that it is not sufficient for a Church to have the preaching of the Word, but it must have severitie and sharpe government, whereby wicked people may be restrained: this Church is therefore discommended, for that shee used not that severie authority, which God had given her in suppressing of sinne. And in our congregations the like fault is to bee found, where much preaching is, yet sine abound, adulterie, blasphemie, elerie, and crueltie; and the cause is, for that this severie execution of government in restraining finnes, is not so straitly put in practice as it ought to bee.

Again, in this reason of his reproofe Christ doth charge them with two faults: First, for suffering a woman to teach: Secondly, for suffering a woman to seduce his people. For the first, the word translated *teach* is in the new Testament commonly put for publicke teaching in the Ministerie. Their fault then was this, that they suffered a woman to teach openly: and it is against the word of God, 1 Tim. 2. 12. *I permit not a woman to teach.* And, 1 Corinth. 14. 34, 35. *Women ought to keepe silence in the congregation, and bee subject to their husbands, and learne of them at home.* Object. But Deborah was a Prophetesse, Jud. 4. 4. And Huldah prophesied, 2 King. 22. 4. For Jesabel sent to her for counsell, 2 Chron. 18. 4. And therefore women may prophesie. Answer. These women had extraordinary gifts and calling: and therefore upon their example wee may not make an ordinary rule. II. Object. But it may seeme Paul alloweth it, when he saith, *A woman prophesying, or prophesying uncovered, dishonoureth her head,* 1 Cor.

1 Corin. 11. 5. *Anſw.* Hereto ſome doe anſwer thus, that in the infancy of the Church ſome women were extraordinarily indued with that gift, and did indeed prophecie. Others judge it to have bene a fault in that Church, and therefore ſay, in the 14. chapter, the Apoſtolic reproveth it: commanding women to keepe ſilence in the Churches. Thirdly, a woman may be ſaid to pray, when ſhee giveth her aſſent to the prayer of the Miniſter, by ſaying, *Amen*: And ſhee may be ſaid to prophecie, when ſhee ſingeth *Pſalmes*, or readeth the *Scriptures*: For ſo the Word is uſed in Scripture, 1 Chron. 25. 1. *Aſaph and his company propheſied with harps and viols*: that is, (as it is tranſlated) they ſung propheſies, and plaid thereunto upon their instruments.

From the rebuke of Chriſt againſt this church, wee gather that it is not warrantable by Gods word for a woman to adminiſter the Sacrament of baptiſme. For baptiſme is a ſeale of the covenant in the publique miniſtery, and ſo a part thereof, and muſt goe with the preaching of the Word, and may not be adminiſtered by women, who are not allowed to preach; no not in the time and caſe of neceſſity when men are wanting. And although they may not teach publicly, yet they may teach at home; and in the abſence of the husband it is her dutie to teach her children. Prov. 31. *Lemuel*, that is, *Salomon* is taught many worthy things of his mother. And *Timothy* was brought up a child in the *Scriptures* by his grandmother *Lois*, and his mother *Eunice*, 2 Tim. 1. 5.

Hence ſome would gather, that as a woman may not teach publicly, ſo ſhee may not publicly governe in a Common-wealth. But this conſequence is not good: For publique teaching is ſtrictly forbidden to a woman, ſo is not publique civil regiment. There is a ſpecial reaſon why ſhee may not publicly teach; for it is the will of God, that as Chriſt was a man, ſo they that ſtand in his roome and ſeal in the publique miniſtery, ſhould alſo be men. But the regiment of a kingdome is a civil thing, and ſo may lawfully be adminiſtered by a woman when ſhee cometh unto it by lawfull ſucceſſion to her father, whoſe whole patrimonie in the want of ſonnes ſhee may rightly enjoy. *Object.* But the woman muſt be in ſubjection unto the man. 1 Cor. 14. 34. *Apoſt.* So the may, and yet have ſoveraignty in the kingdome. *Object.* But the man is the head of the woman. 1 Corin. 11. 3. *Apoſt.* That is, the man in that hee is a man is a perſon more excellent than the woman as ſhe is a woman: Yet the perſon that in regard of ſex is inferior, may have more excellent gifts, and ſo likewiſe may exerciſe authority and rule: and wee ſhould by good experience, that the government of a woman is a happy government no records of time can ſhe be a more happy regiment for bleſſings temporal and ſpiritual under any man, than we have long enjoyed under our noble Queene.

The ſecond fault of this Church is, that they ſuffered a woman to ſeigne and teach falſe doctrine, and thereby to ſeduce Gods people. That this is a fault, Chriſt reprove ſheeweth evidently, and therefore I will not ſtand to prove it.

Hence wee may gather, that every man is not to be left to his owne confidence, to teach and hold what doctrine hee will: but all ſuch men or women as teacherous doctrines, by the governours of the Church are to be reſtrained. It is a grievous fault in any Church not to reſtrain the authors and maintainers of ſects and falſe doctrines, and of opinions which ſtand not with the truth of Gods word: and on the contrary, it is a vertue and a good gift in any Church, when they reſtrain the authors & favourers of ſects and falſe doctrine. And in this regard our Church is to be commended and approved, and the Common-wealth likewiſe, for making laws to reſtrain both Popiſh recusants, and ſome Proteſtants, who depart from this our Church, as being no Church of God, but a member of Antichriſt and of Babylon.

Now that Chriſt might aggravate theſe their offences: hee deſcribeth the woman, firſt, by her propertie, in this name *Leazel*, that is, one like *Leazel*: ſecondly, by her action, which calleth her ſelfe a *Propheteſſe*: her teaching is deſcribed in the end of the verſe. Touching her propertie, Chriſt calleth her *Leazel* for two cauſes: Firſt, for that ſhe was like to *Leazel*, and in her perſon revived the manners and opinions of *Leazel*. For as *Leazel* brought among the Iſraelites the falſe worſhip of the Idoll *Baal*; ſo this woman laboured to bring into this Church of Thyatira, Idolatry, and other ſinnes.

Again, *Leazel* was given to fornication, as the Scripture recordeth of her by the mouth of *Iſai*, 2 King. 9. 22. and ſo was this woman given to fornication. Thirdly, *Leazel* was a woman of authority, and by her place and dignity did countenance and maintaine idolatry, and other wicked ſinnes: ſo it is like, that this woman was of ſome place and authority, and did thereby countenance her wicked opinions and damnable ſinnes.

In this reaſon of her name, note firſt a notable practice of Satan for the furtherance of his kingdome, which is this: In ſucceeding ages he laboureth to revive the erroneous opinions and wicked vices of ungodly perſons of former times. This wee ſee plined in this place: for long after *Leazels* death (the wife of *Ahab*, a wicked woman) even in the Apoſtles time, he raiſed up another woman like to *Leazel*, both for wicked life and doctrine. And the like practice he uſeth at this day. In all ſuch as follow the rules and counſell of *Aluchiel*, is revived the craft of *Belſhazzar*: in the Popiſts are revived the opinions and manners of the wicked Scribes and Pharifees; in the recusant-Proteſtants is revived the ſect of the Donatists, and the

the sect called Audiani. The family of Love revives the opinions and manners of the Valentinians and the Montanists, and many other damnable errors. Now this the Devill doth because he knows by experience the great hurt that these opinions and sins have formerly done unto Gods Church.

Secondly, Christ calleth this woman *Iezabel*, that hee may provoke this Church to a greater detestation of her in regard of her damnable wayes: and that shee might bee in as great disgrace with them, as was *Iezabel* in the Old Testament to the people of God, that so they might better eschew her wicked seducement. And herein wee have a good direction for our profitable reading of the bookes of the Old and New Testament: namely, that when we meet with examples of wicked men and wicked women, wee must thereby take occasion to bee unlike them. And if we find our selves like them any way, either in wicked opinion, or in practice, we must thereupon grow to a dislike with our selves. Again, finding the examples of good men or good women, wee must labour to conforme our selves thereto, and become like them: and in this regard approve our selves, when wee see our selves conformable unto the godly in any vertue and grace.

The second Argument whereby Christ describeth this woman, is her action: *Shee calleth her selfe a Prophetesse*; that is, shee challengeth her selfe to bee one that doth teach Gods will by the instinct of his spirit. And herein became a notable patron of the damnable sect of the Nicolaitans: for she held the lawfulness of fornication, and of eating things sacrificed to Idols. And for the maintenance hereof, she saith she is a prophetesse, one that speaketh nothing but as shee is taught by Gods spirit. This is the practice of heretickes, under pretence of the spirit to maintaine their damnable devices, as might easily be proved by induction of particular heretikes, in former ages.

First, hence then wee are taught to labour to have the spirit of discerning, whereby wee may try the spirits whether they bee of God or not. Many will be of no religion, because there bee so many false Teachers, and such diversitie of opinions in religion. But herein they bewray their profanenesse; they ought the rather to labour for this gift of discerning, whereby to know what is from God, and what is not.

Secondly, hence wee are taught, that when wee are unjustly slandered, disgraced, or injured, we ought not to fret and tume, but by patience to content our selves: for wee see that wicked men to maintaine their wicked opinions and manners, will not stick to abuse God himselfe, and make his blessed spirit the Author and patron of their errors and sinnes. Wee by our sins deserve disgrace and reproach; but the spirit of God hath done nothing amisse. And therefore wee must bee patient, being in the same condemnation, as Luke 23. 40, 41. and

rather rejoyce, in as much as wee are partakers of the sufferings of the spirit, 1 Pet. 4. 5.

Again, heie observe how shee approved her selfe to bee a Prophetesse, namely, by her owne testimonie only; *Shee calleth her selfe so*. Where we may see the note and mark of a false Prophet; to wit, their owne bare word and testimony. A true Prophet or Prophetesse hath sundry testimonies, besides their owne word, to prove the lawfulness of their callings: as in the Primitive Church, they had the gift of speaking divers languages without study, and of working miracles: they had also puritie of doctrine, joyned with integritie of life: and lastly, many excellent gifts of God, as zeale, courage, and constancie to maintaine the same.

Christ having described this woman for her further disgrace, as also to aggravate the fault of this Church in suffering her, proceedeth to describe her doctrine. And first he sheweth the end and scope thereof, namely, to seduce and to deceive. Wherein he giveth us a further note of a false Prophet or Prophetesse; to wit, to teach such doctrine as drawes men to sinne against the first or second Table. True doctrine is according to godlinesse, and leadeth men thereto; but the end of false doctrine is impietie against God and man: as was shewed by the doctrine of *Balaam*, vers. 14. and such was the doctrine of this woman.

Sundry students now adayes are marvellously affected with the Sermons, Commentaries, and posills of Monks and Friers. These they preferre before the writings of other godly and sound Divines, which is a lamentable case: for they are in their kind *Iezabels*; the scope of their doctrine is to draw men to errors and transgressions against the law of God; yea, to bring men from Heaven to Hell. And therefore this exceeding approbation of them is no small offence: being in truth the right way to bring in againe, Errors, Atheisme, and Poperie. For turne a Papist from a morall point (wherein he often erreth) and his doctrine and Sermons are nothing but false and erroneous: and therefore as Christ would have this Church to hate the doctrine of this woman, because it did deceive; so must wee labour to grow to dislike with the commentaries and posills of Monks and Friers which tend to that end.

Secondly, Christ setteth forth the end of her doctrine, by two arguments; First, by the persons deceived, *his servants*: secondly, by the means whereby they are deceived, to wit, *by causing them to commit fornication, and to eat meates sacrificed unto Idols*.

Touching the persons. Whereas shee deceived not all men, but the servants of God, (for here is a plaine distinction of men) this increaseth her fault, because they belonged unto God. But here two questions may bee moved: First, why some men are the servants of God, and some are not. Secondly, whether the servants

vants of God may be seduced by false teachers. To the first, some answer, that God would have all men to be his servants, and for his part doth all things needfull unto all men, to make them his servants; redeeming them, and giving them sufficient grace hereunto; yet some are not his servants, because they themselves will not, but willfully reject his grace that is offered unto them. But this doctrine is against common reason, and doth much derogate from the glory of God: for hereby they make every man an Emperour, and God an underling subject unto man; they make Gods good pleasure to depend upon mans pleasure, and the accepting of his grace to depend on mans will. But God is the first cause of all things, his will overruleth mans will: and therefore it is absurd to say some men are not Gods servants, because they themselves will not. The true cause hereof is Gods good pleasure, electing some; and they alone become his servants, because hee hath chosen them. But God did never chuse all men first to grace, and then to glory: and therefore as *Luke* saith, *so many as were ordained to everlasting life, believed*: So wee may say: so many as are elected of God to grace and salvation, they become his servants.

The second question. Whether may Gods servants be seduced by false Prophets? *Ans.* There be two sorts of servants of God: servants in appearance, and servants in truth. Servants in appearance, are such as outwardly only embrace the word, and receive the seales of Gods covenant: and the greatest part of particular Churches are such servants. Now these may fall away, and that wholly: and hence it cometh that whole particular Churches may fall away, as did the Church of Galatia, and many other: and these are called servants, because wee must in charitable judge, that all which make profession of true religion in Gods Church, are the servants of God. But the true servants of God, though they may be seduced in part, and for a time, yet they can neither wholly nor finally fall away: for the promise of Christ is to the contrary, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock, that is, the faith which thou professest, will I build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Which last word (*prevail*) insinuateth, that the Devill shall shew great malice and strength to vanquish their faith, but yet shall never wholly overcome it. And *Mar. 6. 13.* wee are taught to pray, *Lead us not into temptation.* To leave unto temptation, is wholly to bee overcome in temptation; which being a lawfull petition, must needs have Gods promise to grant the same belonging unto it. And therefore though Satan may strive to overcome the child of God, yet hee shall never get finally victory over him: for true faith purifieth the heart, and cannot stand with a purpose to continue in any one sinne: these two banish each other. Sinne brings the child of God upon his knees, but true faith doth raise him up againe.

A II. Point. The meanes whereby shee sought to seduce them, was *by drawing them to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to Idols.* Whereby it is plaine, she was a favourer of the sect of the Nicholaitans; whereof entreatie was made in the fourteenth verse. And thus much for the reproofe of the Church.

V. 21. *And I gave her space to repent her of her fornication, and shee repented not.*

Here Christ reproveth this woman for her obstinacy and hardness of heart, whereby she went on in sinne without repentance. By *space to repent*, wee are to understand liberty to live: for though by her sinnes shee deserved present death, temporall and eternall: yet God of his mercy gave her liberty to live, that shee might repent.

In her example we are taught what to judge of that space of time which God giveth us to live in this world: namely, that it is a time of repentance: for before a man be borne, and after this life, can none repent: but the time wee now live, or have lived, or shall live, is the only time allotted for repentance. This point ought seriously to be considered of all estates: for it doth plainly rebuke the shamefull practice of many at this day, who leade not their life as a time of repentance, but spend it wholly in another course: some in following their vaine pleasures, as carding, dicing, &c. some in heaping up riches, seeking nothing but temporall profits: others in good fellowship, (as they call it) that is, in company keeping, in eating and drinking. God in justice might have cut off these men so soone as they were borne, and yet in mercy he gives them time to repent, to some twenty, to others thirty, forty, or fifty yeares: but they abuse this mercy of God, and in stead of repenting injoy themselves in such workes as are contrary thereunto. Their case is most fearful, they treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and declaration of the just judgement of God: like unto a man that every day for some certaine time, carrieth a fagot for his owne burning in the end.

Secondly, from this end of life, all that have not repented, must learne not to deferre their repentance, but now beginne while it is called to day, and in the exercise thereof spend the whole time of their life. The end of all our endeavours while wee live, should bee this, to get a roome in the kingdom of God, which we can never have without repentance.

Next consider, who it is that gives this time of repentance: neither man nor Angell hath this time in his hands, but the power of appointing it belongs unto Christ alone.

Hereby then all persons whatsoever are to be admonished, without delay to repent. The young

young man will take his pleasure in his youth, and repent when he is old: but hereby he rob-
beth Christ of his honour, who onely hath
power to point out the time of repentance. Vie
therefore the time present while thou hast it,
and deserte not repentance: for how knowest
thou that thou shalt live to be old? And though
thou dost, yet how canst thou tell whether
God will give thee repentance, considering
thou dost refuse, while he called for it? Men
thinke, that if they die quietly and peaceably,
all is well, they goe to Heaven straight: but
herewith many are deceived; for unless they
have truly repented, they goe straight to the
Devill, let their manner of dying be what it
will. A quiet death is a comfortable thing, but
no sure signe of grace, because it may come by
reason of some easie lingering sickness. Con-
sidering therefore wee have no title unto this
grace of repentance, to claime it at our plea-
sure, it being the rare gift of God; nor any
lease of our life, but be meere tenants at will;
let us seeke to turne unto God with full praise
of heart, while it is called to day: and if we have
begun, let us daily renew this grace to the end
of our life.

Thirdly, consider to whom God gives
space of repentance: namely, to a *wicked wo-
man*, as wicked as *Iezabel*. Wherein behold
the endless mercie of God, that unto such a
wicked person, who blasphemed God, in fater-
ring her finnes upon the spirit of grace, and
dishonoured God by seducing his servants,
doth yet vouchsafe a time of repentance. This
hath beene, and is the dealing of God with
most grievous sinners. *Masses* was one that
sold himselfe to worke wickednesse, giving
himselfe to Sorcerie and Idolatrie: and yet up-
on his heartie repentance, God received him to
mercy. And *Salomon* fell most fearfully, but
yet before his death, wee may perswade our
selves he repented and was received to mercy;
for he was a pen-man of Scripture, all which
were holy men of God, as *Peter* saith, 2 Pet.
1. 20. The Israelites were a people of *Sodom*,
and *Gomorrah*, as bad as those who are con-
demned in hell, and yet mercie is offered unto
them upon their true repentance and conver-
sion.

Hereby no man must take occasion to live in
his finnes: but those that feele themselves laden
with the huge burden of their transgressions,
have here a comfort to keepe them from des-
paire: for if they can humble themselves, and
come unto Christ, and pray for the pardon of
their finnes, there is yet with the Lord mercy
in store that they may be saved.

Laity, Christ saith, *He gave her space to re-
pent of her fornication*. No doubt shee had ma-
ny other finnes whereof she was to repent, for
no sinne goeth alone, but every capitall sinne
draweth many with it: Christ his meaning
therefore is not that she should let passe other
finnes without repentance; but he nameth this

one sinne of fornication, because it was a prin-
cipall sinne in her: for shee both practised it in
her owne body, and to make her selfe the sta-
ble of the Devill, who should have beene the
Temple of Gods holy Spirit: and also main-
tained this sinne, and so drew others thereto.
Now speciall and principall repentance must be
of principall finnes.

Here then is a patterne for all sinners how to
practise repentance. They must begin with
their capitall finnes, which burthen their
conscience, and whereto they are most addi-
cted, and repent of them. For the man that truly
repenteth of one sinne, repenteth of all: for
true repentance maketh the heart alike affected
to all finnes: And that heart which is brought
to hate his speciall finnes, will never ap-
prove of pettie finnes. This lesson ought
carefully to be learned and put in practice: For
the repentance of most men is only in generall;
to say, wee are all sinners, Lord have mercy
upon me, or God forgive me. But this confu-
sed repentance is not good, it stands with a
purpose to sinne againe. In particular therefore
we must search our consciences, and see wherein
wee have most dishonoured God, and what
sinne hath next plunged our soules to the
pit of hell; and with that wee must begin to
bring our soule to heaven, by repenting truly
for the same, and turning from it with all our
hearts.

Hence the Papists gather, that man hath free
will to doe that which is truly good before
God, as namely to repent: for, say they, *God
gave Iezabel space of time to repent*, and there-
fore she had power to repent, or else the gi-
ving of that time unto her had bene in vaine.
Ans. The reason is naught: it followeth not
because God gave her time to repent, therefore
she had power of her selfe to repent: as will ea-
sily appeare, if we consider the ends for which
God gives men space and time of repentance,
and commandment so to doe. The ends are
two. I. That in that time of repentance which
he alloteth to men, he may give his children
grace, whereby they may be enabled to obey
his commandment and to repent: for the Lord
useth the commandments and threatnings of
the Law, and the promises of the Gospell, as
outward means of giving grace unto men by
the worke of his spirit. II. He giveth com-
mandment and time to repent, that men may see
what they should doe, nor what they can doe:
and that the wicked may be with out excuse at
the day of judgement, and bee ashamed of
their slavery, and bondage unto sinne in this
life.

And *shee repented not*. Here the sinne of *Ie-
zabel* is exprest, namely, her *impenitencie* and
hardnesse of heart, whereby without remorse
shee lived in her fornication and idolatrie. For
the understanding of this her sinne, two points
are to be handled. I. Where this sinne of im-
penitencie is forbidden in Gods Word. II.

What is the great guilt of this sinne, for the first there are two parts of Gods Word, the Law, and the Gospell, which must not be confounded, but distinguished, or else wee shall overturne many points of Christian religion. The Law gives commandment touching things that were by nature in *Adam* before his fall, forbidding those things which are contrary to those virtues which were in his perfect nature. But the Gospell commands, and forbids things that are above nature, and in that part of Gods Word is the sinne of impenitencie forbidden; for the Law condemnes no more than it revealeth, but it never revealed repentance, and therefore it doth not forbid or condemne the want thereof. Secondly, for the greatness of this sinne, it may appeare, because hereby men heap sinne upon sinne, and *wrath* unto themselves against the day of wrath. Some to aggravate the grievousnesse of this sin, say that impenitencie is the sin against the holy Ghost: and that opinion is ancient, but yet false and erroneous; for the sinne against the holy Ghost is a *blasphemie*, *Matth. 12. 31*, but this is not a blasphemie. Again, the sinne against the holy Ghost is in this life, but finally impenitencie is never before the end of this life.

Hence also the Papists gather free will to good by nature: they did not repent, therefore they had free will and power to repent if they would. *Ans.* This reason is no good: thus much may hence be gathered, that they had free will not to repent and to sinne: for every man sinneth freely, but yet it followeth not, that they have the same power to cease from sinne, or to repent without Gods speciall grace, without which no man can will or do that which is truly good before God.

Again, the same sinne which is repoved in this wicked woman, may bee laid to the charge of the greatest number in our Churches and congregations. God hath given unto men a long time of repentance, to some ten, to some twentie yeares, but they repent not, as their lives doe plainly testifie: for some live in irreligion and prophaneesse, some in Sabbath-breaking, some in fornication and adultery, some in idlenesse, some in covetousnesse and extortion giving themselves wholly, and spending all their time in seeking the things of this life, never regarding with reverence the things of God.

v. 22. *Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit fornication with her into great affliction, except they repent them of their workes.*

Christ having repoved this Church and

this woman for their love all faults, both here give speciall counsell and direction unto them both, whereby they may avoid and escape the grievous judgements due unto them for their sinnes, both in this life, and in the life to come. This counsell of Christ hath two parts: First, to *Iezabel* and her company, v. 22. The second to the Church of *Thyatira*, v. 24, 25. The summe of Christs counsell to *Iezabel* is, *repent*: which is not expressed, but in stead thereof the reason to move her to repentance is propounded. And it may be framed thus, *If thou repent not, I will punish thee with sundry judgements*: But thou wouldest not be so punished: and therefore repent.

This reason hath two parts: A threatening; and an exposition thereof. The threatening in these words, *I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit fornication with her into great affliction*. And before this threatening, Christ prefixeth a word of attention (*Behold*;) whereby he would teach them and us, that wee ought seriously to consider of the threatnings that are propounded in Gods word against sinne and sinners. When *Iosias* heard the booke of the Law read, *his heart melted*; which it could never have done, unless it had first trembled at the judgements therein denounced. And the pricking that was wrought in the hearts of the *Iewes* by *Peters* first Sermon, was nothing else but a compunction wrought in them, upon consideration of the judgements and condemnation due unto them for crucifying the Lord of life. The cause why sinne is so ripe in every estate and condition of men at this day is, for that men set light by the threatnings of Gods Word. If men would tremble when they heare of Gods judgements, it would make them cry out, *Men and brethren, what shall we doe?* but because God is mercifull, therefore men feare him not, *Isa. 57. 17*.

This threatening hath three severall parts, according to the three severall sorts of persons whom it concerneth. The first is against *Iezabel* her selfe, who was the chiefe of them all, in these words, *I will cast her into a bed*. The meaning whereof may be gathered out of the like words of *Iosadab* to *Ammon*, bidding him *lie downe on his bed, and make himselfe sick*. So that Christs meaning is, that he will strike her with some grievous sicknesse: the place for the sick person being pur for the sicknesse it selfe: As if he should say, *Iezabel* takes her pleasure in fornication, and thereto abuseth the bed; I will therefore send on her some great sicknesse which shall cast her into her bed.

Here note Gods dealing with sinners: In those things which they abuse for the furtherance of their sinnes, will the Lord plague and punish them. *Iezabel* abused her bed with fornication, and thither shee must be cast with sicknesse: *Dives* in his life time abused his tongue and taste by gluttonie, and therefore is he now in hell therein most of all plagued and

2 King. 22. 19.

A. 2. 17.

2 Sam. 13. 9.

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tormented, as his crying for a droppe of water to coole his tongue, doth import: gamesters take their pleasures in carding & dicing, which many times God turneth to their woe: fortherby they are usually brought to extreme want and miserie. *Ahab shed Naboths blood to get his vineyard, and for that sinne must his blood, the blood of Iezabel, and his children, be shed.* And now in these dayes the covetous for their gaine doe sucke the blood of the poore, but that blood will have blood from them againe; *The Lord will spoyle the foule of him that spoyleth the poore.* Prov. 22. 23. This must make us to beware how wee abuse any creature of God to serve us for any sinne: for the Lord will cause that to be a meanes of woe and punishment unto us, which we misuse unto our lusts.

Againe, note here who is the author of grievous sicknesses, namely, Christ himselfe: For he saith, *I will cast her into a bed.* Sicknesses come not by chance or fortune, but from the hand of God. This we must learne to beleeve, and it will cause us to make better use of sicknesses than usually we doe: If men did beleeve this, it would make the hardest heart to repent in time of sickness: for this they would say, Hath God cast me downe with sickness? no doubt it is to humble me for some of my sinnes, to make mee know them, to leave them, and to turne unto him. This use the servants of God have made herof: when the Prophet came to *Hezekias, and told him he should die, he turned his face to the wall and wept,* as for other things, so for his sinnes especially. And *Jacob* being to die, *leaned on his staffe, and by faith worshipped towards the bed head:* lifting up his body to doe reverence unto God, thereby testifying his humilitie, faith, and hope. And the like ought we to doe; which if we could, we should finde our sickness would become a blessing unto us.

The second part of Christs threatening is the punishment of her followers, which received her doctrine, and committed fornication with her; *They must be cast into great affliction.*

First, this must teach all persons, that it is a devilish speech to thinke and say, that fornication is but a *tricke and slip of youth*: for great affliction is the punishment of this sinne, which notably argueth the heinousnesse thereof.

Secondly, hence we may gather some of the causes, why towns and kingdomes are afflicted with grievous warres, famine, and pestilence: among the rest these are two, fornication, and embracing of errors and superstition. Sodome for fornication and other sinnes was burnt with fire and brimstone from heaven: the Israelites for this sinne suffered most grievous afflictions. And among the Corinthians, for committing to the Lords table in this sinne, among others *many were sicke, many weak, and many slept.* And this land of ours hath bene afflicted with famine, and pestilence, as for other sinnes, so for fornication; which in time peace is mul-

tiplied; and so will continuell it draw upon us bloodshed also and great afflictions: For that which is said of the followers of *Iezabel*, must be verified of all that live in the like sinnes.

The second part of the reason is, the exception of these comminations: *except they repent them of their works.* Where we may see: First, that all the threatnings of Gods judgements and of eternall destruction, must be understood with the exception of repentance. Whence also this followeth, that men of yeares living in the Church, are not so much condemned for other particular sinnes, as for living in their sinnes without repentance: every sinne makes a man subject to damnation; but it is this impenitencie that brings upon them a quall damnation. Want of repentance for sinne, is more dangerous than the sinne it selfe. The consideration whereof, must teach us not to lie in sinne, though wee have committed it, but turne to God by speedie repentance; for it is the continuance in sinne without repentance that casteth the soule to hell. When thou shalt turne from thy sinne by true repentance, thou art free from the threatening and the curse of sinne: For they admit the exception of true repentance. Jerem. 18. 8.

Further observe, how this exception of repentance is placed between two threatnings of judgements, which sheweth how God minglerh his judgements with mercie: he sheweth not wholly either justice or mercy, but tempereth them together in all the workes that concerne mans salvation.

Thirdly, here note that repentance prevents not onely eternall damnation, but also temporall judgements, as grievous sicknesses, and other plagues and afflictions. This point may have speciall use among us: We have by Gods mercy enjoyed his Gospel with long peace, but for our abuse thereof we may justly feare it shall be taken from us; and if we would escape that judgement, we must repent both high and low.

Of their works. That is, of their idolatrie and fornication: where hee sheweth of what things true repentance must be, namely, of bad workes in particular, whereto men give themselves: every man that would truly repent, must consider of his particular faults: The drunkard in particular of his drunkennesse, and the covetous man of his covetousnesse: and in stead of injuries and hard dealing shew mercy to the poore. The common repentance of the world that is done in generall, is nothing but a vizard of repentance, and yet it is all that is used of the greatest part of our people: for they will come to heare the Word, and to receive the Sacraments, and in generall confesse themselves to be sinners; and then they thinke they have done enough: But true repentance is of particular sinnes: As *David* Psalm. 51. cried out of blood-guiltinesse.

v. 23. *And I will kill her*

Luk. 16. 24.

1 King. 21. 23, 24.

Ils. 38. 2.

Ebb. 11. 31.

V. 2.

Num. 25. 9.

1 Cor. 11. 30. with cap. 6. 12. and 10. 2.

children with death, and all the Churches shall know that I am hee which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to his works.

Here is the third part of Christs threatening against *Iezabels* children: by children we are to understand properly those which are borne of her, and were of her household, and not her followers, for they were threatened with grievous afflictions in the former verse. It had been sufficient to have said, I will kill her children. But to note the certainty and grievousnesse of this punishment, he saith, I will kill them (with death.) *Quest.* How can this stand with the justice of God, to punish the offences of the parents in the person of the children? *Ans.* God dealeth so for temporall punishments, not for eternall.

And though we could not perceive the justice of God in so doing, yet we must reverence the same, blaming our owne ignorance. Albeir, even in reason we may conceive of the equity of this course: for societies, as church, common-wealth, and families, are Gods ordinance, and the parties in them must be considered, as members of those societies: so God conceiveth of them when he inflicteth the punishment deserved by one upon another, as of the Prince upon the people, of the parents upon the children. This he may justly doe by reason of that neere bond which is betwene the members of the same societie: like as in the naturall bodie when the stomacke is disordered, the head akech: and when the heart is wounded, the stomacke is sicke, and the body may be siniten for the errors of the tongue. Thus when *David* sinned, the child died, and when he numbred the *Israelites*, the people were plagued. And thus is the child stained in bloud for the fathers treason against earthly Princes, and so God punished this woman in her children: that she might know the greatnesse of her sinnes, he smote her children with death.

Hence parents are taught to make conscience of every sin: for thereby they may bring judgements upon their children and family, even to death. Now what bloody hearted parents are those that will make no conscience of doing that whereby they bring vengeance upon their owne children? And by the same reason must every man that lives in any societie be admonished to take heed of sinne: because thereby a man (especially if he be a principall member of a societie) may bring destruction upon many: As *David* did by numbring the people: And *Achan* by his covetous heath, *Josu.* 7. And *Abul* upon his posterity. So that impenitent per-

sons which will not be reformed, but goe on in sinne, ought to be banished both Church and common-wealth, as hurtfull members, yea enemies to all good societies.

That these threatnings might take place in the hearts of *Iezabel* and her followers, Christ removeth two carnall conceits, whereby they might thinke to delude or escape these judgements threatened. The first is this, *Iezabel* and her company might thinke that their practices were secret, not known to the world, and therefore they were not in danger of Gods judgements. This is a wicked imagination that comes into the minde of all sinners; but this Christ cuts off, saying, *And all the Churches shall know that I am hee which search the reins and the hearts:* As if he should say to *Iezabel* and her company: You may perswade your selves that because your sinnes are secret, therefore my judgements shall not befall you: But know, that I will discover your secret sinnes and practices in such sort, as all Churches shall know by experience in your persons, that I do see and discern the most hidden thoughts of mans heart.

First, here observe to whom Christ will discover their sinnes; not to all the world, but to the Church of God; *All Churches shall know.* This Christ doth to terrifie *Iezabel* and her company: For as it is an excellent honour to be well esteemed of with the Churches of God, so it is a most shamefull dishonour to be in disgrace with the Churches of God: For *whatsoever is bound or loosed by the Churches on earth, the same is bound or loosed in heaven.* And therefore by true proportion it followeth, that they which are in disgrace with Gods Churches on earth, are also in disgrace with God himselfe in heaven.

Hence wee are taught that howsoever wee must (so much as in us lieth) endeavour to approve our selves to the whole world, yet especially wee must labour to be in good account with the Churches of God, and the members thereof: And on the contrary we must continually avoid the doing of all such things as may justly bring us into disgrace with the Church of God. *Rom. 16. 16. The Churches of Christ salute you.* And, *1 Cor. 16. 19. All the Churches of Asia salute you.* Where the Apostle meaneth not, that they did by word of mouth send greetings unto them: But hereby he would signifie that all Churches did approve of them, which he saith for their great comfort. *Paul* received *Timothy* into the company, because the Churches gave him a good report, *Act. 16. 2, 3.*

But what is the thing that all Churches should know by experience in the persons of *Iezabel* and her company; namely, that Christ is hee which doth indeed search the reins and the hearts: where, by *Reins* and *hearts*, we must understand the same things, namely, the thoughts and affections of men; for in that sense those words are often used in the old Testament. *Qu.* How can reins signifie the thoughts

Matth. 18.

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and

and affections, seeing the thoughts are seated in the brains, and the affections in the heart? *Ans.* The reynes are put for the thoughts and affections, not because they are seated therein, but for that resemblance and analogie that is betwene them; for as the reynes are seated in the most secret part of the body, so the thoughts and affections are seated in the most secret place of the soule: and the heart is put for the thoughts and affections, first, because the affections are there seated; Secondly, because the thoughts, though they bee seated in the braine, yet they have their operation in the heart, for joyfull thoughts make a merry heart, and fearefull thoughts an heavy heart. Again, the word (*Search*) signifieth a most narrow search, and such an one as goeth with finding; thereby, shewing, that nothing is so secret in man, but the Lord both can and doth see and discern the same.

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Hence we learne first, that Christ our Saviour is not onely man, but very God, one person standing of two natures. That Christ is man, heretickes deny not: but whether he be God or not, there is the question. Which yet is here evidently proved: for he that hath in him the particular properties of God, must needs be God: But Christ hath in him the true properties of God; he can search and discern all the thoughts, and all the affections of the hearts of all men, which none can doe but God only: *Jer. 17. 9, 10. The heart is deceitfull and wicked above all things: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, and trie the reynes.* And therefore Christ is true and very God.

Secondly, hereby we are taught to beware and take heed of hypocrisie in all things, but especially in the mattes of religion. Hypocrisie is, when a man teines outwardly to be that which he is not inwardly. But wee must have care to bee truly in heart that which wee appear to be in life and profession: we must come as neere Christ in thought and affection, as in our outward action: for Christ knowes as well the whole state of every mans reynes and heart, as he doth their speeches and their deeds.

Thirdly, hereby wee must learne to suspect our selves of our unknowne sins, as of our unbeleeffe and presumption: not contenting our selves with an acknowledgement of our knowne sins, for we can never discern the depth of our corrupt heart, and yet God knoweth them. This was *David's* practice, after due examination of himselfe he yet crieth, *Lord cleanse me from my secret finnes*: As if he should say, I have O Lord searched my heart, but I cannot sufficiently know my owne corruptions, therefore do thou O Lord help to cleanse me from them. If this were practised, true religion would flourish: for many justifie themselves, when as they know not what is in their hearts, little considering what Christ saith unto the Pharisees, *Ye are as like unto men which justifye your selves before men, but Christ knoweth your hearts.*

Ps. 13. 11.

Ps. 13. 15.

And I will give to everyone of you according to your works. Here Christ proceedeth to remove a second wicked conceit, whereby they might seeme to illude Gods judgement, and to scorned. For they might say, Let the Lord his judgements and plagues upon us, yet we shall escape them; as *Isay* said of the wicked in his time, *That they made a league with death, and hell, and said the judgements of God shall passe over them.* *Isay 28. 15.* But to cut off this wicked conceit, Christ threatneth a just reward to every one according to his workes. As if hee should say; You may sooth up your selves, and falsely thinke, that you shall escape my judgements: but know ye, that I will reward every one of you partly in this life, and principally at the day of judgement, according to your workes, be they good or bad. For these words must especially be understood of the day of judgement, as they are used, *Rom. 2. 6. Rev. 20. 12.*

Hence the Papists gather, that men are saved not onely by faith in Christ, but also by workes; for thus they reason: By that whereby we must be judged, must we be justified and saved; but by workes we must be judged, and therefore saved. *Ans.* The proposition is false: There is great difference betwene justifying and judging: for judging is only the declaration of a man to be just, but justification is the making of a man just. And because the declaration of a man to be just, is by workes, therefore is judgement by workes. Again, it is not said, I will give to you for your workes, but according to your workes. If he had said, I will give to every one of you for your workes, then it might have seemed they had beene justified by them. But here Christ doth only set the workes in our ward signe or rule, where to see we will conforme and square the last judgement.

Secondly, whereas every man must be judged, that is, saved or condemned according to his workes; hence wee may gather, that good workes are necessary to salvation, yet not as causes thereof, either efficient, or helping any way, but only as a way or means to come unto salvation: For faith is necessary, and good workes are the token and fruits of faith, and so are necessary.

Thirdly, here we must be admonished to be careful to abound in good workes; not to win heaven by them, but to get assurance of salvation in our selves. And these good workes are the doing of the duties of piety unto God, and of charitie unto our brethren, even the duties of the Morall law; or more plainly, the doing of the generall duties of a Christian, and the particular duties of a mans calling: For if hee be done in obedience to God and to his glory, proceeding from faith and love unto his brethren, though the calling bee never so base, they are good workes. And on the contrary, this must admonish us to make conscience of every evill way, for finally bee the markes of

condemnation; and so many wicked works as we commit, to many markes and brands doe weter upon our selves of our just and deserved condemnation, unlesse we repent.

Lastly, becaus we may gather, that there be degrees of joy in heaven, and of torments in hell. For judgements and rewards goe according to mens works. And therefore they that testifie their faith by grace and many good works, shall have great reward: they that testifie their faith by lesser and fewer works, shall have lesser reward: and so for sinnes, the more heinous they bee, the deeper condemnation they doe procure.

V. 24. *And to you, I say, the rest of them of Thyatira, As many as have not this learning, neither have knowne the deepnesse of Satan (as they speake) I will put upon you none other burden.*

25. *But that which you have already, hold fast till I come.*

Here Christ commeth to a second part of his counsell, which concerneth the Angell, and the better part of this Church of Thyatira: and first hee beginneth with the preface of this counsell: wherein we may observe two points: First, who speaketh: Secondly, to whom he speaketh. For the first, hee that speaketh is Christ. *I say,* hereby Christ challengeth unto himselfe the absolute and all-sufficient authority of the supreme Doctor of his Church, in that he speaketh in his owne name. Whereby hee putteth a plaine difference betweene himselfe and all other his Ministers, either Prophets, Apostles, or ordinary Teachers; for they must not propound any thing unto Gods people in their owne names, but in the name of Christ. But Christ teacheth in his owne name; being the fountaine of all divine knowledge and understanding that is revealed in the Word of God. And thus Christ himselfe speaketh in his owne name, to strike the heart of the Angell of this Church, and the better part thereof, with reverence, and to move them to receive and obey the counsell following, considering it cometh immediately from Christ, the Doctor of the Church.

II. Point. The parties to whom he speaketh, *to you:* that is, the Angell and the better part of this Church: for so Christ expounds it in these words following, though first hee say in generall, *To you:* that is, *The rest of them of Thyatira.*

Whenas Christ will behave himselfe as the Doctor and chiefe Angell of this Church, note that hee maketh a distinction of the persons in the Church, and also divideth his counsell, giving one doctrine and one judgement to one part, and a divers doctrine and judgement to another.

This giveth us good direction for sundry actions: for some may aske, how must doctrine be delivered in a mixt congregation, where some are Papists, some Protestants, some are hardened, others despaire? *Ans.* The persons must be distinguished after the example of Christ, and suitable doctrines divided for them, that every one may have his due. Impenitent sinners must be terrified, and threatnings delivered against them, with exception of them that repent; Comforts must be propounded and applied to them that despaire, with restraint from all impenitent persons that goe on in sinne.

If any demand more particularly who these be whom Christ calleth, *The rest of them of Thyatira*; Christ answers directly (as the words import) *To as many as have not this learning, neither have knowne the deepnesse of Satan.* Where Christ giveth two notes whereby to discern who bee the rest of them of Thyatira: The first is, the not receiving or maintaining of the false doctrine of *Iezabel*, whereof entreaty hath beene formerly made: The second note is, ignorance in the deepnesse of Satan: *neither have knowne the deepnesse of Satan*: that is, neither have acknowledged nor approved the doctrine of *Iezabel*, which is the deep and profound learning, as themselves doe judge.

In this observe a most wicked practice of *Iezabel* and her followers: they esteemed highly of their owne opinions, calling them profound and deepe learning: but for the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles in the old and new Testaments, in it there was no such matter. This in all ages hath beene the practice of wicked persons, highly to esteeme their owne conceits, and basely to neglect the word of God. The teachers of the Jewes doe hold to this day, that the Lord gave to *Moses* a most plaine and easie law which hee delivered to his people; but the most secret and profound doctrine was unwritten, shewed to *Moses* by revelation, and by him delivered to the Priests and Levites, which they keepe still in their Cabbala. And of the like judgement touching Scriptures are the Popish Churches: The word written is but an inkie word, a dead letter, or a nose of wax; but the most perfect Scripture is unwritten, which is, the consent of faith and of doctrine in the hearts of all Catholikes. And by such great termes, the Anabaptists, Libertines, and Antians, maintaine their doctrine, and abuse Scripture; calling the written word milke for every novice, but the consent of heart among themselves with Revelations, that is the strong meats. Yea, this opinion hath crept in among

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us in part: men thinke basely of Scripture, and preferre other mens writings before it. For let a man preach plainly the bare word of God, and deliver doctrines and exhortations out of the same, this is but plaine preaching: But let another come and utter his minde partly in Latine, and partly in Greeke, and other languages, alleaging withall the testimonies of Fathers, Councils, and other writers: that is the learned preaching. And thus doe most men abuse Scripture, and exalt the writings of men above it. But seeing this is the practice of *Iezabel* and wicked men, let us on the contrary learne to reverence the written word, and give place thereto above all the testimonies and sayings of men whatsoever.

The despise of Satan. As if he should say: They count it deep learning; but it is the learning of the Devill, wherein you may see his profound craft and policie. Where note, that when Christ will alleage the speech of *Iezabel* and her followers, he doth it with disgrace unto them: for they counted their doctrine deepe learning; but Christ repeating their opinion, calleth it the *despise of Satan*.

Hence I gather, that Christians cannot safely act and play the Comedies of heathen men: for they are full of many blasphemous speeches and oaths flat against the word of God: which they ought not to repeat, but with disgrace unto them. For Christs practice must be a patterne for our imitation: he would not repeat to much as one word of a wicked woman, without some note of disgrace. If it be said: they repeat these speeches with disgrace and dislike: I answer, it is not so: for if they did, that would take away the whole Comedie, being full of such bad speeches. And this I take to be the equity of Gods Word, thus to reason from Christs example.

As they speake. These words Christ addeth: First, to shew that the words going before were not his owne, but the words of *Iezabel* followers touching her doctrine. Secondly, to shew the proud and presumptuous mindes of heretickes, in maintaining their wicked opinions. Thus have false teachers upheld their errors, by proud and swelling words, as *Iude* the 16. and 2 Pet. 2. 18. The pure Word of God is not so maintained; but in the humility and lowliness of spirit, and in the practice of piety from an humble heart: for God teacheth the lowly his wayes, and giveth grace to the humble, *Psal.* 25. 14. And therefore this is a note of false doctrine, by swelling words to maintain the same.

Hitherto we have spoken of the Preface before Christs counsell: now followeth the counsell it selfe in this sentence, *Though I lay no other burden upon you, yet I would have you to hold fast that which you have already, till I come.* This sentence is a distinction, containing two parts: First, in these words, *I will lay no other burden upon you, than that which you have already:*

that is, howsoever I threaten my judgement unto *Iezabel* and her followers, yet I will lay none other punishment upon you but my reproofe only, for following *Iezabel* among you with her false doctrine and followers.

This branch of this distinction containeth a most comfortable instruction: namely, that all those that give themselves to maintain purity of doctrine, and sincerity of life, shall be safely preserved in the time of common judgements, under the blessed protection of God, to farre forth as it is for Gods glory and their good. And considering this mercy is offered to the godly, we must hereby learne to become followers of this Church of Thyatira: that is, wee must endeavour to maintain the pure truth of Gods holy Word, and withall have care to shew forth sincerity of manners: in making conscience of every sinne, and endeavouring our selves to walke in all the wayes of Gods commandments with cheerfulness. Hereby wee shall get protection from common judgements, when they are laid upon the wicked: but if we partake with the wicked in their sinnes, wee shall receive part in their plagues.

The second part of this distinction is in these words, *But that which you have already, hold fast till I come:* that is, mine Apostles have delivered unto you the pure and sound doctrine of salvation; now I charge you that you hold that fast, and maintain it untill I come to judgement. Here is a plaine and most excellent commandment, containing speciall instructions meet for this Church of Thyatira, and all Churches. Before our Saviour Christ had commended this Church for not approving the doctrine of *Iezabel* and her company; but here hee giveth them another commandment, To hold fast the true doctrine of Christ, taught them by his Apostles; when by he would teach them, and in them all Churches to content themselves with the pure doctrine of the Apostles, and not to affect or approve any other doctrine besides, whatsoever: As *Paul* biddeth the Galatians, though wee, or an Angel from heaven, preach unto you any other doctrine than that which wee have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

By the light of this commandment we are directed in sundry duties. First, not to regard unwritten traditions, which the Church of Rome doth so highly magnifie, for it cannot be proved that the Apostles ever taught them.

Secondly, not to regard the doctrines of men, which some bring into us under colour of Revelation from God since the Apostles times.

Thirdly, hereby we learne what to thinke and judge of the three great religions of the Turkes, the Jewes, and Papists at this day. The Turkish religion is not to be regarded: for it had beginning six hundred years after the Apostles time, with whole doctrine only

Vse.

Vers. 25.

Gal. 1. 8.

Vse.

wee must content our selves. Also the Jewish religion we must not regard, for they reject the doctrine of the Apostles. And the religion of the Papists we must renounce, because it is not of the Apostles teaching, but had it beginning by little and little long after their times. If this commandment were safely kept, which is laid on this Church, men would not be of so many religions: but all would be of one religion, cleaving fast to the doctrine of the Apostles, and contenting themselves with it; which is the true rule for reformation of life, and the right way to attain salvation.

Lastly, here is a rule and direction for those which will be of no religion, because of the diversitie of opinions touching the same. They must have recourse to the doctrine of the Apostles, and content themselves therewith, nothing regarding new doctrines, be they never so glorious.

Till I come. Here Christ sheweth how long the doctrine of the Apostles must be held fast: namely, not for a short time, but till his second coming to judgement: whereby we learne, that it is the duty of Gods Church to preserve and maintaine the puritie of true religion unto the end of the world. This is no small matter, but a most needfull duty enjoyned unto us by speciall commandement, and withall a matter of great consequence: for the puritie of religion is the foundation and marke of the Church, and the right way to direct mens soules to eternall life. For this cause *Paul* chargeth *Timothy*, To keepe the true patterne of wholesome words, and to continue in the things which hee had learned. And in regard of this duty, the Church is called, *The pillar and ground of truth*. And Christ for this cause gave to his Church both Pastors and Teachers; Pastors to instruct in righteousness, for the maintenance of puritie in manners: and Teachers to maintaine the puritie of doctrine, in soundnesse of judgement. This therefore must admonish us, that we have care not onely to learne religion in our owne persons, but also to convey the same to ages following, that the puritie thereof may be preserved to the coming of Christ. This duty especially concerns the Preachers of the Gospel; they should teach the truth, and confute error, and bear downe false doctrines, which poison the truth of God. If in the night season a man set up a false light in the heaven, all the ships that are coming to land are in danger of shipwrecke: So in Gods Church, if the bright light of pure religion bee not set up and advanced, the soules of men are cast into the gulfe of hell. The want of care in performing this duty, is the cause why God sends heresies and Apostasies into his Church. Thus came in the Apostasie of Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11. *Because men loved not the truth*. And so no doubt will the Lord deale with us if we have not care to maintaine the puritie of Apostolicall doctrine.

v. 26. *For he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over nations.*

27. *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken.*

28. *Even as I received of my Father, so will I give him the morning starre.*

29. *Let him that bath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches.*

Here is the conclusion of this Epistle, which containeth two parts: First, a promise, vers. 26, 27, 28. Secondly, a commandement, vers. 29. In the promise, note two things: the parties to whom it is made; and the benefit promised. The parties to whom, *are every one that overcometh*; whom Christ describeth by a property of sincere obedience, *To keepe his works unto the end*.

Here then we have a description of true obedience. First, the forme thereof consisteth in *observing the workes of Christ*: which wee must not understand, of doing them according to the rigor of the law, but of a purpose and endeavour to keepe them. For this is a privilege belonging to all that are in Christ, that God accepteth their wills and endeavours of obedience, for perfect obedience it selfe. This wee must know and hold for truth: for many have but little knowledge, and thereupon are driven to despaire: yet they must know for their comfort, that if they have care to get more knowledge, and make conscience to obey that which they know, then they are keepers of the workes of Christ, and shall have the reward promised.

Secondly, obedience is here described by the object or matter thereof; to wit, *the workes of Christ*: that is, all such workes as Christ hath ordained in his word, and those whereof he is the author by his spirit in his members.

Hereby we learne: first, that hee that will obey God in Christ Jesus, must not thinke his owne thoughts, speake his owne words, nor doe his owne deeds; but he must thinke, speake, and doe that which Christ would have him. Secondly, that no worke is or can be acceptable to Christ, but that which is ordained by him. *Isay* complaineth of them that would reach the feare of God by mens commandments: so

that there is no true feare of God, but that which is taught by Gods commandments, and the like may be said of all other our obedience. This rule overthroweth all other religions besides the true religion, as of the Jewes, Turkes, and Papists: For almost all their works are of mens inventing, and were never ordained by Christ: such are most points in Popery, as saying of Masse, going on pilgrimage, fastings, vowing, and praying to Saints, &c.

Thirdly, whereas he saith, *my workes*, meaning not one or two, but all his workes; we learne that true obedience consisteth in doing all the workes of Christ: For Christ and the devill will never part stakes: God must either have all our workes or none. And therefore David saith, *I shall not bee confounded, because I have respect unto all thy commandments.* And good king Josiah is commended, *For that he returned to the Lord according to all the Law of Moses.* This point must bee learned of all: For many thinke if they doe many good things with Herod, all is well; and for this cause many a man abhors covetousnesse, and pride, and yet is a contemner of the Gospell: But true obedience must bee in all things.

Unto the end. Here is the fourth branch of true obedience; it is constant. That obedience which Christ will reward must not be for a day or a yeare, but from time to time thorow the whole course of our life to the end of our daies. And thus we must judge of obedience, not by some particular actions, but by the whole tenour of a mans life. Put case a man hath made conscience of all his wayes, thorow the whole course of his life, and yet in sicknesse by reason of the extremity thereof is distracted and raveth, blaspheming God, and so dyeth; What must we judge of this man? Surely wee must not censure him by his behaviour in his sicknesse, but consider what hath bene the tenour of his life: if that have been upright, then his obedience was good, and shall be rewarded.

II. Point. The benefits promised: and they are two. The first is, power to rule, verf. 27. *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: And as the vessels of a potter shall they bee broken: even as I received of my Father.* The second is the morning starre, verf. 28. where note by the way, that these words, *Even as I have received of my Father*, are referred amisse in our English translation, to the giving of the morning star, when as they properly belong to the former words in this sense; As I have received power over nations of my Father, so will I give to him that overcometh power to rule with the rod of Iron, &c. Now come to the benefits.

First, here is promised by Christ, *A power to rule over nations*: Christs power as he is mediator is very great; and here is set forth by three arguments, borrowed from the second Psalm verse 8. p. First, by the largenesse of it; it reacheth not to one countie alone, but to all

countries, and to all men, in all nations. Secondly, by the Sovereignty of it: Christs power is absolute in ruling and overruling. And this his Sovereignty consisteth in two things: First, in making lawes unto the consciences of men; so as if they be not kept, hee may justly condemne them: and in overruling the wils of all men, conforming them to his will, will they nill they: which is signified by this, *Hee shall rule them with a rod of iron.* Secondly, in that he hath this absolute power in himselfe to save and to destroy, and therefore is said to have *The keys of Heaven and Hell.* Which is signified in the next words, *And as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken.* Thirdly, by the fountain of it; Christ receiveth this power from his Father. Indeed as Christ is God he is equall with his Father, and hath this power of himselfe: But as he is Mediator, his power is given him of his Father, Matth. 28. 18.

For the better understanding of this place, two questions must be handled: First, how far forth doth Christ give this his power unto men? *Answer.* Christs Sovereigne and generall power over the whole world is not indeed given to any creature, nay it is incommunicable, and cannot bee conveyed to the person of any creature man or Angell: This truth wee must hold of all Christs offices, they are only in the person of Christ, and cannot passe from him to any other. II. *Quest.* How then doth Christ say truly, that he will give him that overcometh power over nations? *Answer.* Not that his Sovereigne power is actually given to the creature; but because the creature being in Christ, hath the fruit and benefit of this power in his salvation. And this power is in them two waies: First, hereby Christ makes all his servants (being his members) partakers of his glorie in heaven, whereas the whole world besides is condemned in hell; and therefore we are said *to be raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* And againe, he saith, *The Saints shall judge the world,* not in giving sentence upon them: but as witnesses and approvers of Christ his sentence: For the elect shall first receive the sentence of absolution; and then being taken up into the clouds shall sit with Christ, and there approve of the just condemnation of all the wicked. Secondly, by this power he enableth those that be his, in their owne person to overcome all the enemies of their salvation. His meaning then is this, as if he had said, Howsoever my Sovereigne power over all creatures in my selfe cannot be derived to any other, yet by vertue of this my power, I will exalt them that overcome, to partake of my glorie; and will give them power in themselves over their finnes, over death, hell, the world, and all the enemies of their salvation.

Here then behold unto what exceeding dignity every true servant of God is advanced, not in himselfe, but in Christ: He hath rule over nations,

Rev. 1. 18.

Eph. 2. 6.

1 Cor. 6. 2.

Psalm. 119. 6.

2 King. 23. 25.

Matt. 6. 10.

Verf. 27.

nations, and victorie over all the enemies of his salvation, yea hee is made partaker of Christs glory.

Hence we are taught to make conscience of every sinne whatsoever; for the privilege of every Christian is to have power to judge the wicked world: Now as it is a shame for a Judge that sitteth and condemneth a murderer or a theefe, to be a theefe or a murderer himselfe; so it is for any Christian to live in any one sin, seeing hee himselfe must condemne the world of those sinnes. Neither can wee thinke that Christ will ever advance him that lives in sinne, to condemne the same in others, unlesse he first reforme it in himselfe.

Secondly, the consideration of this privilege of a Christian, must be hid in our minds against the time of adversity and affliction, and of the pangs of death. For he that hath kept faith and a good conscience all his life, is a Prince in Jesus Christ, and shall rule over all his enemies. And therefore though now hee bee afflicted and wronged by them, yet in Christ hee is their Judge, and shall one day condemne them that doe him wrong. And as for death it is subdued in Christ, and shall bee no death unto him, 1 Cor. 15. 54.

Againe, the words in the originall are thus; *Hee shall feed and rule the nations, as a shepheard ruleth and feedeth his lambs with hisooke.* The Papists upon the words of Christ to Peter, Joh. 21. 16. *Feed my sheepe*, that is, feed and rule my sheepe, would gather *Peters* supremacie over the Church in all the world. But their grosse abuse of that place will appeare, by comparing it with this promise of Christ, to every one that overcommeth: for if their collection be good, then hence will follow, that every Christian man should have the like supremacie, and be a Pope: which how absurd it is, every man may judge. Therefore that place of *Iohn* must not be understood of any supremacie: for there Christ teacheth *Peter* the faithfull discharge of his office and dutie. From this first gift of Christ, the Papists gather two things. 1. That the severall Saints in heaven are patrons of countries and kingdomes, as *Saint George* for England, *Saint Denis* for France, *Saint Patrick* for Ireland, &c. Secondly, that wee may pray unto Saints, for the Saints rule the Nations, and therefore know all Nations; and if they know them, then they must be prayed unto. But they swarve from the meaning of this text: for first, it is not said, that the Saints shall have power, one over one countrie, and another over another; but every Saint hath power over all Nations: Secondly, they have power over all nations, not because they rule them actually, but because they have the fruit and benefit of Christs power, whereby they are ruled. And for their second collection: we must by nations understand not all Churches, but unbelievers: for the wicked are they that must be broken like porters vessels. Now the

A faithfull have no power over the Churches, but over infidels: and therefore both their collections are absurd.

I will give him the morning starre. Here is the second benefit promised by Christ to him that overcommeth. The morning starre properly signifieth, that bright starre which riseth a little before the Sun, some time of the yeare, which the Heathen call *Venus*. And hereby is meant Christ himselfe, as Rev. 22. 16. *I am the bright morning starre.* Christ is called a starre: First, because he illuminateth all men with the light of understanding, and his Church with the knowledge of the will of his Father, and that sufficiently in all matters that concerne salvation. Secondly, to shew that the Prophecie by *Balaam* touching Christ, whom he calleth the *starre of Jacob*, is now fulfilled, when as Christ by his Apostles hath plentifully revealed himselfe to all nations.

Further, hee is called a *morning starre*, for that special resemblance which is betweene him and it; for the morning starre riseth not in the beginning or middle of the night, but in the end of the night towards the beginning of the day when the sunne is about to rise, and then it shineth brighter than all other starres. Even so Christ, he came not in the beginning or middle of the darke time under the law, but in the last age of the world, wherein after his incarnation he did shine most fully to all nations; so as there was no such light or knowledge before his coming as hath beene since. C *Peter* verifieth when he saith, *We have a most sure word of the Prophets, to which yee doe well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a darke place, untill the day dawne, and the day star arise in your hearts.* Where the time of the Law and Prophets is called a time of darknesse: and their preaching then, as a candle light: but the preaching of Christ under the Gospell, is as the day starre which shineth most brightly; he is not called the morning star, because he shineth to all the world in all times as the morning star doth, but because he shineth unto men in the last age of the world.

It is further said, *I will give him it.* Where is promised fellowship and participation with Christ, as he is the day starre. And herein are two benefits comprised: First, perfect illumination, whereby ignorance shall be wholly taken away after this life, when as men shall know God fully, so farre forth as a creature can know the Creator. Secondly, the light of perfect glory: for by fellowship with Christ we shall bee made to shine as the starres, as *Daniel* speaketh: yea, we shall become *Saints in light*, as the Apostle saith.

Whereas Christ compares himselfe to the morning star: First, we see the grosse error of many among us, who live in blindnes of minde and ignorance; walking in their wicked lusts and pleasures, without care of keeping faith or good conscience, and yet perswade themselves

Vers. 28.

Numb. 24. 17.

2 Pet. 1. 19.

Dan. 12. 3.
Col. 1. 12.

Vse.

selves that they have part in Christ, and shall be partakers of his light and glory. But they are deceived: for all such as live in blinde ignorance, and in sinne, are mere darknesse, and so can have no fellowship with Christ, who is that bright morning star: for what fellowship can bee betwene light and darknesse? This bright morning starre serveth onely for them that receive the light thereof, and walke by it: but those that walke in the darknesse of their finnes have no benefit by it.

Secondly, seeing Christ is this morning star, we must have care to learne *Peters* instruction: namely, *Labour that this bright star may rise and shine in our hearts.* This we shall feele, when we use those means whereby the beames of this starre may shine upon us, not onely for the enlightning of our mindes, but also for the heating and reviving of our frozen and dead hearts. For as the Sunne in the Spring time quickeneth by it warme beams some things that he dead all winter; so Christ *Iesus* this morning starre by the beames of his grace doth enlighten

A our mindes, and revive our dead and frozen hearts. And till such time as wee feele these things wrought in us, wee cannot say, that this *morning starre* is risen unto us, or hath shone into our hearts.

Thirdly, whereas Christ appeareth in the morning, when darknesse is past, we are hereby taught to lead our lives in godlinesse, righteoutnesse, sobrietie, and in all manner of upright and godly conversation: *For the night is past, and the day is come,* wherein wee may see to walke uprightly; *And therefore we must cast off the unprofitable workes of darknesse,* as the Apostle exhorteth us, *Rom. 13. 12.* And know this, That those who in this light doe not walke accordingly, but delight in sin the workes of darknesse, shall one day have their fill: He that loveth the darke, for the hiding of his talent, must be cast for his reward into *infer darknesse.*

Let him that hath an eare to heare, heare what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. Here is Christs commandment, the second part of this conclusion: But herof we have spoken before.

Mat. 25. 25. 30.

Verf. 29.



CHAP. 3.

Verf. 1. *And write unto the Angel of the Church that is at Sardis, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Starres; I know thy workes, for thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art dead.*



These words containe the fifth particular commandment of our Saviour Christ unto *John*, wherein he is enjoyned to write and send a speciall Epistle to the Church of God in Sardis: of this commandment we have spoken before. The Epistle it selfe is contained in the six first verses, and hath three parts: A Preface, the matter of the Epistle, and the Conclusion. The Preface in these words, *These things saith he which hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven starres.* In this Preface, first is set downe in whose name this Epistle is written, to procure authoritie unto it: it is in Christs name, whose soveraigntie is described by two royalties, that is, by two prerogatives or privileges belonging unto him as hee is a soveraigne king of his Church: the first is, *The having of the seven Spirits of God.* The second, his *having of the seven starres.* For

C the first royaltie: In the first Chap. verf. 4. 1 shewed that by *seven spirits*, were meant the *holy Ghost*; from whom proceed all the gifts and graces that any men enjoy: and therefore whereas Christ is said to have the *seven Spirits of God*, the meaning is, that hee hath the holy Ghost. And this is a royaltie of Christ, as he is the King and head of his Church. If it be said, that other servants of God, as *David*, *Peter*, and *Paul*, had the holy Ghost: *Ans.* It is true, but not in the same manner with Christ; for he hath the holy Ghost two ways: in regard of his divine nature, and of his manhood: as Christ is God, he is the beginning of the holy Ghost: for the holy Ghost is a person in the Trinitie, proceeding from the Sonne as well as from the Father; in regard of which proceeding, Christ is said to *send the holy Ghost*, and to doe whatsoever he doth by the holy Ghost; as to overcome death by the eternall spirit, and to rise from death to life.

Secondly,

Secondly, as Christ is man, he hath the holy Ghost, because the holy Ghost poured into him the perfection of all graces and gifts whatsoever. And for this cause hee is said to be *anointed with the oyle of gladness above his fellows*; and to be enriched with the perfection of all graces, and that two waies: both for number and degrees. For number: with men, some have some graces, and some men others; but Christ, he hath the graces of all men, and all Angels: more graces in number, than all men and all Angels have. And as they are in number perfect, so they are perfect in degree: for in measure, they exceed the graces of all creatures, men or Angels: and therefore the Father is said to have given the Spirit unto his *Sonne without measure*: and thus much is meant by the first royaltie of Christ. Now the end why Christ is said to have the holy Ghost, is to shew that he is a most lively head of his Church, who is filled with plentie of all sort of graces, whereby he is able to enrich his Church, and to revive the members thereof, who are dead in their finnes; and such indeed was the speciall estate of this Church.

First, hence we learne, no man can have true fellowship with the holy Ghost but by Christ. It is manifest, that none can have fellowship with the Father, but by Christ: and here the same is yet verified touching fellowship with the holy Ghost, especially for the obtaining of those graces that concerne eternall life. This serveth for our speciall instruction: for among the Papists there are many that have worthy and excellent gifts of God, as knowledge, memorie, &c. and yet in them bee wanting the speciall gifts of the spirit: as, faith which iustifieth, and regeneration: for touching assurance of these in themselves, they profess themselves to be ignorant. And whence cometh this, but onely from their want of Christ: for the Christ of the Papists, as they teach him, is an Idol-Christ; and therefore wee are not to marvell though we see the most learned among them to seeke and mocke at our doctrine of assurance of faith, and certainty of election. I. We have many among us that will say, they looke to be saved by Christ, and to have their finnes pardoned by him; and yet you shall perceive in them no grace of knowledge, or conscience of true obedience. But these things cannot stand together, to wit, loosenesse of life, and forgiveness of finnes: and therefore these men deceive themselves: for if they had Christ, they should have his spirit, and the graces thereof purging their hearts: for Christ and his spirit are never severed: he that hath the spirit of Christ working in him faith and good conscience, hath an infallible token that Iesus Christ is his. This must admonish us to labour for true union with Christ Iesus our head, to become flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; that in him we may have fellowship with the Father, and with the holy Ghost: for till wee bee united unto

Christ, we shall never have the graces of salvation wrought effectually in our hearts.

The second royaltie of Christ is, that he *hath the seven starres*: that is, the seven Pastors of the seven Churches of Asia: they are called *starres*, because in their ministry they mighten men in the way that leadeth unto life. And Christ is said to have them because he is a soveraigne Lord over them, and they be his servants. For he appointeth that person that shall be his Minister among men; he giveth him gifts meet for his calling, he prescribeth also unto him his office and duties. But the Pastors of Churches (will some say) are made by the Church. *Ans.* The right of ordaining Pastors belongeth to Christ, as his royaltie: the office of the Church is to testify, ratifie, and according to the Word of God to approve of them, whom Christ maketh and endueth with gifts: and for that cause is the Church said to call and ordaine Ministers.

The end why Christ is said to have sovereignty over the Ministers, is to strike the heart of the Minister of this Church of Sardis, with conscience of his former negligence; and to stirre him up to diligence and carefulnesse in his place. And indeed the consideration of Christs sovereignty over them, is an excellent motive to stirre up all Ministers to be diligent in their place, and so likewise all Christians. For considering that they are Christs, and the gifts they have come from him; this must move them to make conscience of all good duties; for being Christs, they must give themselves wholly to doethe will of Christ, whose they are. If wee would have us live, we must be thankfull, because he is the Lord of life: if our death will glorifie him, we must be content, because wee are his. Thus much of the Preface.

The matter of this Epistle containeth two parts: A reproofe of a vice, with the remedie thereof, vers. 1, 2, 3. And a praise or commendation, vers. 4. The reproofe in these words, *I know thy works*; that is, *I know all thy works, they are all manifest unto mee, and I mislike them*. So must these words bee understood in this place, as may appeare by the reason of this reproofe in the words following, *Thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art dead*. Wherein is set downe the fault of this Church, namely, *Hypocrisie*; for that they pretended Christian religion in outward profession, but yet wanted the life of Christianitie, and the power of godlinesse: for the meaning of the reason is this; *Thou hast a name that thou livest*: that is, Churches round about thee judge and speake of thee, as of a Church that is borne anew in Christ, and is guided by his spirit (for by life we must understand *spirituall life*, not corporell) but yet for all this thou art dead: that is, thou wantest true spirituall life by regeneration, and art indeed dead in thy finnes: this is a great and a sharpe reproofe.

That which is here said of this Church of Sardis, may be truly verified of divers Churches

ches in this age. As first, of the great Church of Rome, who are guided by the Pope as by their head. That Church hath a name to be alive, and in their own pretence it is the only true Church of God in the world ; but in truth and before God it is dead. Some say, it is as a body full of diseases, and whose throat is cut : but yet the heart pants, and life remaineth therein. But we may say, it hath no manner of spirituall life, but lieth stark dead as a carcase in the grave. The reasons that some allege for it are of small moment; first, say they, it hath the Sacrament of Baptisme, which is a note of a true Church : and therefore it hath some life. *Answer.* First, baptisme is not alwaies a note of a true Church: for circumcision in whose stead commeth baptisme, was a Sacrament used of the Samaritans when they were no people of God ; and so no Church of God. Again, baptisme without the true preaching of the Gospell, is no infallible signe of a Church : it is but a scale pulled from the writing, or set to a bare paper to no use : and further, outward baptisme, without inward baptisme, is no note of a Church : but such is baptisme in the Church of Rome; it hath not inward baptisme joined unto it, neither the true preaching of the word, for the doctrine which they teach is a quite overturning of Christ and his Gospell : and therefore outward baptisme may bee where there is no Church. Secondly, I answer, that baptisme in the Church of Rome, is a Sacrament not to their Synagogue, but to the hidden Church of God among them. For God had his Church among them even in the midst of Poperie. There were alwaies some among them that renounced their Religion, whom God called home unto himselfe by the means which were among them ; as the use of this Sacrament, the Apostles Creed, and of other bookes of holy Scripture. For as God said to *Shas*, in *Abahs* time, *I have reserved seven thousand that never bowed the knee to Baal*; so it may bee said of many among the Papists : God hath there his secret Church, who never yielded to the Popes government and doctrine.

Second answer. Antichrist (say they) sitteth in the Temple of God. Now the Temple of God, is Gods Church ; and therefore the Church of Rome is Gods Church. *Answer.* He sitteth there, not as a member thereof, but as an usurper and deceiver. For in the Church of Poperie is the hidden Church of God : they are therein mingled, as a little wheat like much chaffe, and as little gold with much drosse. So that though the Church of God bee where Antichrist sitteth, yet the Church whereof he is head is no Church of God ; for whether wee regard their doctrine or worship of God, there is no meanes to hegeer or preserve so ritually life in their Church. Further, this which Christ saith of Sardis, may be said not only of the Papists, but of the Churches of the Protestants; as of this our Church of England, and of the most congrega-

tions in the great townes thereof, though not for doctrine, yet in regard of mens conversations : for the bodie of our people seeme to bee alive by their outward profession, but indeed they are dead in respect of the power of godliness : for by occasion of outward peace these sins abound ; fullnesse of bread, pride, both inward in heart, and outward in attire; also cruelty, covetousnesse, and carnall securitie ; like as it was in *Noahs* time. Now where these finnes reigne, there the power of godliness is wanting : men content themselves with an outward profession, but the spirituall life of grace is not to bee seene. And yet this doth not prejudice the state of our Church to nullifie it from being the Church of God : for God hath his chosen among us in all places, who live indeed a spirituall life : though the body of our people be dead in sin, and so will continue while peace abideth : the threatnings of the Ministers will not awake men out of the sleepe of sinne ; it must be the rod of correction that must put into them the power of Religion. Men are like so little Children, who besides admonition, must feele the smart of the rod to bring them to their dutie.

Further, in this Church of Sardis, whom Christ calleth dead, though they had a name to live ; note the state of the Church of God : for this was a true Church of God, who among the rest was washed in the blood of Christ, c. 1. 5. and yet Christ saith it is dead in *fines*; that is, in part, not wholly. And therefore a Church that is in a very corrupt state both in regard of outward conversation, and of sundry erroneous opinions, may yet remaine the true Church of Christ, if so be they erre not in the foundation. Which serveth for answer to them, that thinke our Church to be no Church ; because it maintaineth not that outward order which they thinke should be in it. And therefore though we must preferre Church before Church, yet wee must not condemne a Church to be no Church for some corruptions that be therein: A true body may have some blemish ; and a true Church some want.

Again, the Churches of God say, this is a Church ; yet Christ saith, they are dead. How can these two stand ? *Answer.* The Churches about Sardis judged this to be alive, according to the rule of charitie, because of their outward profession of true religion; for as infants are not indeed all holy, as experience sheweth ; yet till wee see the same made manifest, we are in charitie to judge them to be holy, that are borne of faithful parents : even so ought the Minister and every one in Gods Church, to thinke the best of every one in Gods Church, till God make manifest what he is, *Paul* following this rule, calleth whole Churches erect.

But thou art dead. Here are two judgements: one of neighbour Churches, the other of Christ; and Christs judgement is preferred. We must therefore regard specially the judgement

of Christ, and labour to approve our selves: and our conversations unto Christ, rather than to men: for let men say what they will of us, it is Christ that must save and condemn: this made Paul to say, *I passe little to be judged of you or of mans judgement: why? for he that judgeth me is the Lord.*

And indeed, without Christs commendation, the judgement of men is nothing: for Christ may condemn us, when men thinke well and speake well of us: therefore he saith, *Woe bee to you when all men shall speak well of you,* Luk. 6.26.

v. 2. *Bee watchfull, and strengthen the things that remaine, that are readie to die: for I have not found thy workes perfect before God.*

There bee two degrees of hypocrisie: First, when men professe that which is not in their heart at all. The second, when men make profession of more than is in their heart. This second kind of hypocrisie oft befalleth the children of God: and it is that which Christ reproveth in this Church of Sardis in the former verse. After which reproofe, here hee propoundeth remedie to their vice, and a reason to move them to use the same. The remedie is in the beginning of the verse, where are two duties prescribed: *To be watchfull, and to strengthen or confirme the decayed graces of God in them.* For the first, *Be watchfull:* To be watchfull, here is a most worthy and excellent dutie, it is not bodily but spirituall: and it is practised when any man hath a circumspect care and diligent heed in respect of the salvation of his soule. This dutie of watchfulness concerneth two things: sinne, and death. Watchfulness against sinne, stands in two duties. First, a man must daily and continually bebinke himselfe before-hand of all finnes and vices into which hee may haply fall: and for the doing of this, he must consider in himselfe two things: his Nature, and his Calling. Touching his Nature, he must consider, that in him remaines the seed and roote of all sinne, and therefore that he may fall into any sinne whatsoever. Again, a man considering his nature, shall find himselfe more inclined to some finnes, than to others: and those he must especially marke and observe. Secondly, for his calling a man must mark the sins thereof: for since the fall of man, every calling hath his speciall finnes, whereto men that walk therein are more incident. The Magistrate hath his finnes, the Minister his, the Lawyer his, the Physician his, and the Trades-man his. And touching these, a man must consider unto what vices and abuses men are most subject, that walke in that calling wherein hee liveth, and so shall have a fore-sight of the finnes that hee

A may fall into. Secondly, after this fore-sight of sin, hee must watch his heart with all diligence, that though it be tempted and assaulted, yet it be not tainted with any one sinne: as the wise-man counselleth, *Keep thy heart with all diligence, that is the fountaine of all thy actions may be kept holy and pure.* The second part of this watchfulness respecteth death, or the second coming of Christ. In this two things must bee practised: first, a man must every day bebinke himselfe of his end, and of the coming of Christ, either in generall to all the world, or particularly unto him by death: and in this consideration he must esteeme and judge of every day as of the day of his death, or the day of judgement. Secondly, hee must prepare himselfe against death, and against the day of judgement, every day, even this present day, as though hee should now die, or meet Christ in judgement: and the next day doe the like, and so goe on continually to the day of his death. And for our furtherance in this Christian watch we must be mindfull of temperance and sobriety, that wee keepe mediocritie in the use of the creatures of God, and of the things of this life. For when men plunge themselves, either in the cares of this world, or in earthly delights, they quite forget both sinne and death, and the day of judgement: and thus wee see what Christ meaneth by watchfulness.

As Christ preferreth this dutie unto this Church, so are wee in the name of Christ to be enjoyed the same Christian watchfulness, both against sinne and death, and the day of judgement. And to move us hereto, consider these reasons: First, wee are watchfull for the preservation of the things of this life: as if a towne bee in danger of sacking or burning, there is watch and ward kept continually: and if a mans house be in danger of robbing, he will sit up night and day to save his goods: yea every man is very painfull and watchfull to heape up to himselfe the things of this world: Now, what a shame is it, that men should bee watchfull in temporall things, and yet have no care of their soule that must live for ever? Again, want of watchfulness is the fore-runner of death, and eternall destruction. 1 Thess. 5. 3. *When men say peace and safety, then shall come upon them sudden destruction.* When the rich man had enlarged his barnes upon the increase of his substance, he promised to himselfe ease and security, saying, *Soule, sleepe, take thy rest, &c.* but it was said unto him, *O fool, this night shall thy soule be taken from thee.* And the old world knew nothing, till the flood came and destroyed them all. Now, if the want of watchfulness be the fore-runner of destruction, how great a cause have we to watch?

The second dutie enjoyned, is to confirme the graces of God decayed in them: *Strengthen the things which remaine that are readie to die:* as if hee should say, Sunlike bee the graces which I have bestowed on you; but many

Cor 2.34.

Prov 4.23.

Use.

Luke 12.19.

Luk. 12.35.

arc

are lost and gone: and those which remaine are about to perish, unless you confirme them; therefore see now you strengthen and repaire the same.

In this dutie, Christ teacheth this Church and us an excellent lesson; that whosoever hath received any gift of God, must have care to preserve it, and to make the same gift flourish in him by continuall increase. If a man have received knowledge, faith, and repentance, or any other gift of grace, hee must not suffer the same to lye dead in him, but stir up, increase, and confirme it daily, that he may be a perfect man in Christ. For the gifts which men have are not their owne, but Gods also, who looketh to receive his owne with advantage. And therefore men like good Stewards must so use the gifts received, that they may returne them to God with increase. Thus Paul perswadeeth Timothy, *Stirre up the gift of God which is in thee: for else the receiver is an unfaithfull servant, and so shall be rewarded. And for the better performance of this duty, we must often read the word of God and meditate therein: we must heare it often preached, and with due reverence and preparation receive the Sacrament, and pray continually, striving earnestly against the corruptions that be in us; and daily stir up our hearts to all good duties. Thus did David check the corruption and deadnesse of his heart; Why art thou so cast downe O my soule; and also stirre up the same unto all good duties, saying, I have applied my heart to fulfill thy statutes alway even to the end,* Psal. 119. 112.

Hereby are reproved the common sort of professors and hearers of the word; who stand at a stay, and goe not forward in grace. This is a great fault: for as wee have received grace, so wee ought to stirre up the same, that wee may confirme and increase it daily.

Further, Christ addeth, *which are about to die*: where hee answereth to a question that is moved by sundry at this day, namely, whether graces that concern salvation may be utterly lost or no? Christ answereth by a distinction, that some graces that pertain to salvation, may be lost quite; and others may be decayed, so as they are about to die. For the graces of God that pertain to salvation, be of two sorts: some be absolutely necessarie, so as without them a man of yeares cannot be saved; and such are *faith and regeneration*. Others be lesse necessary, which sometime goe with faith, but not all wayes: such are, *A plentiful feeling of the favours of God, joy in the holy Ghost, and boldnesse in prayer*; these may be lost wholly for a time in the servants of God. Yea, faith and regeneration themselves, may decay grievously, and be ready to die, as this text saith. Secondly, consider faith and regeneration in themselves, and they may be wholly lost: for nothing in it selfe is unchangeable, but God. The state of the Elect Angels by nature is changeable, for they stand by the power of God. Thirdly, these graces

A may perish and decay finally, unless they be confirmed. *Quest.* Why then doe not the Elect finally fall away after their callings? *Ans.* Their standing cometh not from the constancy of grace or faith, but from the promise of God made unto them; and to their faith: so Christ saith to Peter, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rocke, that is, upon the faith which thou hast professed, will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*: that is, though they may assault it, and grievously weaken it, yet they shall never be able finally to overcome it.

Seeing sundry graces of God may bee lost, & the most necessary graces greatly decay, yea, of themselves quite die: we that have received from God any grace, either of faith or repentance, are hereby taught not to bee presumptuous, or over-confident in our selves, but with feare and trembling worke out our salvation.

The reason to enforce the former remedy, is this, *For I have not found thy workes perfect before God*: And therefore watch, and confirme the decayed graces of God that be in thee. In this reason, Christ giveth them and us to understand, that he maketh a search in his Church of all the workes that men doe in the same, that he may accordingly reward them: for not finding doth presuppose a search. And so the Scripture speaketh of God usually. Before the old world was destroyed, it is said; *The Lord saw that the wickednesse of man was great upon the earth*; as if he had looked from heaven upon the earth, and beheld that it was corrupt; speaking after the manner of men, to signifie that search which hee maketh into mens actions. And so he is said to come downe from heaven, at the building of Babel, Genes. 11. and before hee destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *hee came downe to see whether they had done according to their cry, which was come up to him*. And so before the Lord punished the wickednesse of the Israelites, *Hee made a search into their wayes*: And the second Commandement is this, *God will visit the finnes of the Fathers upon the children*: that is, hee will make a search, whether the finnes of the Fathers be among the children, and if they be, hee will punish them.

D Seeing Christ makes this search into all mens actions, wee are taught in all things to have care to conforme our selves to the wil of Christ; and so set our selves to the doing of all good duties, according to his Word: If wee knew a Magistrate would come to make search in our house, we would be sure to see all things in order against he came: Shall wee be thus circumspect to prepare for the coming of an earthly man? and shall we not much more prepare our selves against the search of our Saviour Christ the everliving God, from whom nothing can be hid?

I have not found thy workes perfect. Workes are perfect two wayes; by the law, or by the Go-

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Math. 16. 18.

Use.

Phil. 2. 13.

Gen. 6. 5.

Gen. 18. 21.

Lev. 2. 12.

1 Tim. 4. 6.

Psal. 42. 11.

Vfe.

spell. By the Law, when in our works we doe all that the law requireth: and thus are no mans workes perfect in this lite. By the Gospell, our workes are perfect, when they proceed from a beleieving heart, that hath a care to please God in all things: and these workes are perfect not in themselves, but in the acceptation of Christ. Here by *perfect workes*, Christ meaneth not the perfection of the law, but of the Gospell: as if he had said, I have searched into your wayes: you doe many workes in shew, but they proceed not from sincere faith, nor from a heart that hath care to please God in all his Commandments, and a full purpose not to sinne against him: you have a shew of godlinesse, but you want the power thereof.

Here observe, that Christ condemneth this Church, not because their workes were not outwardly conformable to the will of God, but because they proceeded not from a beleieving heart, that had a full purpose to forsake all sin, and to please God in all things.

Use.

Wee therefore must take heed of all hypocrisie, by the example of this Church: and labour to bee of *Dauid's* minde: and pray with him, that our hearts may be upright in the statutes of the Lord: That we may say with *Hieremias*, Behold Lord how I have walked before thee with an upright minde: for this is a notable token of grace, and an infallible badge of him that is the childe of God.

Before God. Some may say, Christ here distinguisheth himselfe from God, and therefore he is not God. *Ans.* By God in this place wee must understand, not God simply, but God the Father. For Christ here speaketh of himselfe, not as hee is God, but as hee is Mediator, God and man: in which respect, even as hee is now glorified, he is intior to his Father.

Where note, that Christ being now glorified in Heaven, carrieth himselfe as Mediator: whence wee gather, that wee may lawfully and without presumption pray unto Christ, without the meanes or intercession of Saints or Angels. The Church of Rome deny this: and say, because Christ is now in full glory in Heaven, therefore wee must use unto him the mediation of Saints: but Christ being now in heaven, marks our workes in particular: and therefore we may without presumption come unto him by prayer.

v. 3. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard: and hold fast, and repent: If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a theefe, and thou shalt not know what boure I will come upon thee.

A When Christ hath reprov'd them for their sinne of hypocrisie, and prescribed them a remedy with a reason thereof; he doth as a good Physician and Pastor, shew them the way how they may practise that remedie. For they might say, we are commanded to watch, and to renew our decayed graces; but how shall we doethis? Christ answereth, by doing three things: I. by remembering that which thou hast received by hearing: II. by holding fast: III. by repeating of thy finnes.

For the first, Remember therefore: that is, call to minde the doctrine of salvation which thou hast bene taught by mine Apostles. This remembrance is a most excellent meanes to move a man to subjection to Gods will, to repent, and to practise all good graces. When *Dauid* saw the prosperitie of the wicked, his feet had almost slip: But his remedy against that temptation, was his going to Gods Sanctuary, and there calling to minde the end of those men. *Againe, I have remembered thy name. O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy Law. Peter* denied his master, when he forgot his word: but when hee was put in minde thereof by the looke of Christ, and the crowning of a cocke, he then repented, and wept bitterly, Luk. 22. 61, 62. Sinnes committed by men of ignorance, are many and grievous: and therefore all finnes are called ignorances, Heb. 9. 7. but if men would by faith keepe in minde the word of God, it would bee a notable meanes to keepe them from sinning.

Psal. 73. 19.

Psal. 119. 55.

C Here then wee have a soveraigne remedie against sinne: namely, wherefoever we are, or whatsoever we doe, wee must call to minde the Word of God, and the promises of God: and those will be a lanthorne unto our steps, and a light unto our pathes. The Devill labourerth above all things, to bring us to forget the word: for then hee knowes he can easilly draw us into any sinne. *Quest.* How shall we keepe in minde the word and promises of God? *Ans.* That is a grace of God; and for the attaining unto it, wee must first labour to have our hearts affected with the love of Gods word and promises: for a man can never keepe in minde that, whereof he hath no liking. Secondly, we must labour to beleve the word of God: for faith gives it rooting in our hearts, Coloss. 3. 7. The cause why there is so little remembering of that which is taught, is, for that it is not mixed with faith in those that heare it.

Use.

Againe, the thing to be remembred is, How thou hast received and heard: that is, looke what doctrine thou hast received by hearing, and that remember: where wee see Christ joyneth receiving and hearing together. Whence wee may gather, that teaching and receiving of the word of God by hearing, is the prescribed general meanes, whereby God revealeth his will, counsell, and purpose touching the salvation of mankind; neither is there any other meanes appointed hereunto in the word of God.

This sheweth, that their opinion is false, who

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teach that God calleth all the world effectually unto salvation: for how can they be called, that never heard of the word of God? but all in all ages never heard of the word of God; albeit since the coming of Christ, their sound hath gone forth into all nations: Secondly, this sheweth the fondnesse of their opinion, who defend the doctrine of universall grace: that God should give grace pertaining to salvation, to every man in the world, so as hee may be saved if hee will: for the meanes to receive grace is the hearing of the word: which all men in all ages never had vouchsafed unto them.

The second dutie prescribed, is the *holding fast of this doctrine*. To hold fast, here signifieth two things; first, to maintaine the doctrine of the gospel received and taught by the Apostles. Secondly, to put the same in practice in a godly life; of these wee have spoken before, Cap. 2. 25.

The third dutie is to *repent*: where by repentance is not meant the beginning of repentance, but the renewing and *restoring of the same*, for their hardnesse and deadnesse of heart, whereby they did slackly and coldly practise the good duties which they did professe.

Hereby wee are taught, not to content our selves with the beginning of repentance, but wee must renew the same continually; and that not for grosse sinnes onely, but even for the wants that bee in us; as for our dulnesse and deadnesse of heart, and for our hypocrisie, and decay in Gods graces.

And because this Church was very dead and dull of heart; therefore Christ addeth a reason to move them to the practice of this dutie: which is a most terrible threatening, in these words, *If thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a theefe, and thou shalt not know what houre I will come upon thee*.

Here marke Christs order and dealing: having prescribed a remedy for the fault, hee giveth them a direction to practise the same; and after addeth a most terrible threatening to drive them thereunto: as if hee should say, If thou wilt not watch against sinne, and against death, and for that end remember my Word, hold fast the same, and repent: then looke as a theefe comes upon a man on a sudden, and spoile his goods, and cuts the throats of his children; so will I come on thee on a sudden, and powre upon thee my wrath, whereby I will even cut the throat of thy soule, and thou shalt have no meanes to escape my punishment.

Here Christ threatneth suddaine and speedy destruction: but yet with condition and limitation of repentance. Now because wee be like this Church (as hath beene shewed) by reason of the long peace which wee enjoy; wee may also use the same reason and threatening at this day, to stir up our dead hearts. We must watch against all sinne, and against death: and for this end must have in memory the word of God, and hold fast the faith unto the end, and repent

continually of all wants: but if we doe not this, then are the vengeance, and eternall punishments of God, to be powred upon us without measure; and that suddenly, when wee cannot prevent them. If a man have but a sparke of grace, the consideration hereof will move him to repentance, and to watchfulness: but if this will not awake a man out of his sinnes, then nothing remaineth but a fearefull expectation of the wrath of God, which shall be unavoidable, and endure for ever. Indeed if a man had some thousand yeares allotted for the punishment of his sinnes, there were some cause why hee might continue in them: but seeing this punishment is eternall, and when many thousand yeares are expired, they are as far from the end of their woe as ever they were: therefore it must stir up all dead and drowzy hearts unto repentance, and cause them to shake off security, ignorance, and coldnesse in religion; and to break off the course of every sinne.

v. 4. *Notwithstanding thou hast a few names yet in Sardie, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walke with mee in white: for they are worthy.*

Here beginneth the second part of the matter of this Epistle, namely, *the praise and commendation of some part of this Church*. The words doe thus depend upon those which went before, whereas Christ had said, that this Church was dead in sinne, and had only a name to live; some man might aske, how it could bee a true Church. To this Christ answereth in the beginning of this verse; That though the greatest part in this Church were dead in their sins, yet some few there were among them that were alive in Christ, and did tellise the same by true and sincere obedience.

In this coherence wee may observe two instructions. 1. that a particular congregation on earth is made a Church of God, and so called in regard of Gods Elect therein, who doe truly beleeve. For the privileges of a Church belong unto particular congregations, onely by reason of the faith of the Elect among them. The Catholike Church is the whole company of the Elect truly beleeving in Christ, and particular congregations are members of it, so far forth as they doe truly beleeve: the rest that doe not truly beleeve, are not members of the Church before God, but onely in the judgement of men: like unto superfluous humours which are in the body, but no parts thereof. This confuteth the doctrine of the Church of Rome, who teach that wicked men that are rejected in Gods decree, may yet bee true members of the Church of God.

Secondly, in this coherence Christ intimateth unto us a distinction between man and man in this Church: For all that were in this Church, were men called, professing Christ and his Gospell: and yet of them, some were dead in their sinnes, and others were alive in Christ. Touching this distinction of men, wee must search the cause thereof. It must not be ascribed to any power or will in man, but to the good pleasure of God, as the Scripture teacheth; for when the body of the Israelites had given themselves to Idolatry, there were yet *seven thousand that never bowed the knee to Baal*. What was the cause why they did not live like to the other Israelites? Surely nothing in the will of man (though the Idolatry of the other was to be ascribed to themselves) but the text is cleare it was the good pleasure of God, who had preserved and kept them.

By this wee see how erroneous and false the Divinitie of some Protestants is, which ascribe the cause of this distinction between man and man, to the libertie of mens will being renewed by grace, saying, That God gives to everie man saving grace, by vertue whereof, hee may repent and believe if he will: but yet because the will of man doth still remaine finfull, hence it cometh, that hee hath liberty to obey, or not to obey. And therefore the cause why some men lie dead in sinne is, because they set their will to refuse the grace of God; and the cause why some men live in Christ is, because they incline their will to embrace the grace of God. But this doctrine doth greatly diminish the grace of God, in that it maketh the acceptance thereof to lie and depend on the pleasure and will of man: when as the power of almighty God joyned with his will, is the true cause thereof, leaving some to themselves, who doe fall, and enabling others to stand by his grace.

Now follow the words of this commendation: *Notwithstanding thou hast a few names yet in Sardie*: that is, There be yet in this Church a few persons knowne to me by their names: (for by names, we must understand persons named) which have not defiled their garments. Here (to omit many expostions) is an allusion to the Ceremoniall Law, wherein God set downe a distinction between things cleane and unclean, not in themselves, but by his appointment: and among the Jewes, if any man had but touched an unclean thing with his hand, or with his garment, thereby he was defiled and his garment defiled legally; and so hee or his garment were reputed unclean: whereupon they had a speciall care not to touch the things that were defiled, nor not with their garments. Now this signified another thing unto them, namely, That they ought to abstaine, not onely from the outward finnes of the morall Law, but even from all occasions, intentions, shewes, and appearances of evil. And in this place, this is meant hereby; that some in this Church

of Sardie, had so farre made conscience of sin, that they would not meddle with very occasions and appearances of evil.

Hereby wee see, that the servants of God are but few in number: for the bodie of this people were dead in sinne, and a few onely in this great place lived in Christ: so Christ saith to his Disciples, *The flocke to whom the Father will give the kingdom of Heaven, is but a little flocke*. The Prophet *Isaiah* is sent, *To harden the hearts of the bodie of the people for their iniquities: and, the tenth part onely must bee saved*: and in the Gospell it is said, *The way to hell is broad, and many there be that walke therein: but the way to heaven is strait, and few there bee, that enter into it*.

Hereby then wee are taught not to follow the example of the multitude, but of the fewer and better sort. It is a soule sinne that keeps many from religion, and brings them to destruction, when they will live after the manner of the world, and as their fore-fathers have done. This is a false rule, and a dangerous course.

Thou hast a few names: That is, persons whose names I know, and have recorded. They are called names, because Christ observes and knowes them by their names. Where note, that those that are the true servants of God, are particularly knowne unto Christ: *The haire of your head are numbered* (saith Christ to his Disciples) much more were their names knowne. Again, hee biddeth them *rejoyce that their names were written in heaven*. And Christ the good Shepherd knowes his sheepe, and callesthem by their names. John 10. verie 3.

This is a matter of endless comfort unto the people of God: for what can cause a man more to rejoyce, than to know that his name particularly is knowne to the King of Kings, and that accordingly hee hath speciall regard unto him? When the Lord would comfort *Moses*, and put courage into him in doing the duties of his calling, hee telleth him, *Thou bee was knowne unto him by name*. Yea, this is the foundation of mans salvation, *The Lord knoweth who are his*.

Which have not defiled their garments: Here they are commended for uprightnesse and sinceritie of life and conversation, in that they kept themselves from the very shewes and appearance of evil; when as the rest of this Church was dead in sinne.

In their example Christ prescribeth unto us a patterne of true pietie, how we ought to carry our selves in the Church of God on earth: wee must not content our selves with a bare profession of Religion, and keepe our selves from grosse finnes onely, but abstaine from the very shewes of evil. Yea, more particularly, here are three things taught us, touching sin: First, that wee ought to make conscience of every sinne

Luke 12. 32.

Is. 64.

verie 13.

Mat. 7. 14.

Use.

Luke 12. 7.

Luke 10. 4.

Exod. 33. 17.
12. 24. and 19.
1 Tim. 2. 9.

in our owne person. Secondly, that we ought to keepe our selves from the contagion of sinne in others, either by giving consent unto them, or furthering and allowing them any way therein. Thirdly, that we ought to abstaine from the very occasions, and shewes, and appearances of sinnes : So *Paul* teacheth us to *abstaine from all appearances of evils*, Eph. 5. 3. hee will not have sundry sinnes, as fornication; uncleane- nesse, &c. so much as once named, thereby to give the least approbation unto them. We must therefore looke on this example, lay it to our hearts, and conforme our lives unto it: so shall we be good servants of God, and have the same commendation with these few: for true religion stands not in knowledge, but in obedience; and this is true obedience, to make conscience of every sinne in our owne persons; to take heed of the infection of sinne in others, and to abstaine from the appearance of evils. A happy Church should wee have, if these things were practised; but this is the shame and reproach of our profession, that wee have no care of true obedience in our selves and others, whereby we should glorifie God, and grace our holy religion.

The Church of Rome hence gather, that a man after baptism may live without mortall sinne. For these few persons in this Church in their baptism put on Christ; and after kept themselves from all occasions of sinnes, so as they had not committed any mortall sinne. But their collection is unsound: For first, though they had to this time abstained from all mortall sinne, yet how can they prove that they sinned not afterward? Secondly, they are said not to have defiled their garments, not for that they had not committed any sinne, but because they endeavoured to keepe themselves from the appearance of all sinne; and so must the obedience which is ascribed to Gods children in Scripture bee understood, namely, of their sincere purpose and endeavour to obey: and so among us, those that have a setled purpose and resolution to make conscience of every sinne, and in all things to doe the will of God, they are reputed for the keepers of the law. For God in his children accepts the will for the deed. *And they shall walke with me in white* After the commendation of these few, Christ addeth a promise of living with him in glory. For so white garments have alwayes beene used to signifie joy, happinesse, life, and glory: Eccl. 9. 8. *At all times let thy garments be white*, that is, take thy delight and pleasure in using the creatures of God. So that here these few have a promise to bee freed from all want, and to live with Christ in all glory, joy, and pleasure.

This benefit hath beene in effect further urged in the former Chapter: here only I will note one doctrine: namely, That they which live in the world among the wicked, and do not communicate with their sinnes, shall not partake with them in their punishments; for the

body of this Church must have Christ to come amongst them as a Thiefe; but the godly must walke with Christ in white, in glory. *Lot* was freed from the destruction of the Sodomites, because hee partaked not with them in their sinnes: and among the Israelites, *Those that mourned for the sinnes of the people, were marked in the fore-head, that when judgement came upon the wicked, they might be spared.* Gen. 19. Ezck. 9. 6.

This point must be remembered for by reason of long peace and prosperity among us, many sinnes abound, as ignorance, Atheisme, contempt of Religion; and prophaning of the Lords Sabbath, with innumerable sinnes of the second Table. All which call for judgements from Heaven, and no doubt they will be punished, partly in this life, and partly in the life to come, unlesse our people doe repent. Those therefore, that would not partake of the common judgements that are to come, must now beware that they communicate not with the common sinnes that doe abound, and see that they keepe faith and a good conscience, having their righteous and zealous hearts grieved, for the abominations among which they live.

After the promise is adjoined the reason thereof, *For they are worthy*. Hence the Church of Rome doth conclude, that a man by his works may merit Heaven, because they bee worthy of reward. A most blasphemous conclusion, and a manifest abuse of the word of God. Gods children indeed are worthy of life everlasting; but not by the merit of their works; for then they should be done according to the rigour of the Law; but for the worthinesse of their person, when as they stand righteous before God in Christ: for when God will save any man, he gives Christ unto that man truly and really; so as he may say, Christ is mine. And with Christ God gives his spirit which worketh in his heart true saving faith, whereby hee doth receive Christ: and so Christ and his righteousness belongs unto that man really; and by vertue thereof hee is worthy of life everlasting: and this is the worthinesse which Christ meaneth in this place, and not any worthinesse of their works; so that this doth helpe them nothing at all, and yet it is the most probable place of Scripture, to prove and justifie the Doctrine of mans merits.

v. 5. *He that overcometh shall bee clothed in white aray, and I will not put out his name out of the Booke of life: but I will confesse his name before my Father, and before his Angels.*

Gen. 19.

Ezck. 9. 6.

v. 5.

Two kinds of worthinesse.

v. 6. *Let him that hath an
care, heare what the spirit saith
unto the Churches.*

Here is the conclusion of this Epistle: and it containeth two parts; a promise, and a commandment. The promise is in the fifth verse; and the commandment in the sixth. In the promise are two things: first, the parties to whom it is made, *To him that overcometh*; whereof wee have spoken before. Secondly, the thing promised, to wit, glory and eternall happinesse; which is expressed three wayes: First thus, *Hee shall be clothed in white array*: that is, he shall have everlasting life and happinesse: much is signified by white rayment, as we have already shewed.

Hence the Church of Rome conclude, that a man may doe good works respecting a reward. *Ans.* In some sort it is true; for so it is recorded of Moses, *Hebr. 11. 26. Hee had respect to the recompence of reward*. But yet the recompence of reward must not be the principall end of our good works: for chiefly wee must thereby intend to testifie our faith, and our obedience unto God; and with that wee may have respect to everlasting life.

The second thing promised; *And I will put out his name out of the booke of life*. For the understanding of this, two questions must be scanned: First, what this booke of life is: Secondly, whether a man may be blotted out of this Booke. For the first; this booke of life is nothing else, but Gods predestination or eternall decree of Election, whereby hee hath chosen some men unto salvation upon his good pleasure. And this is called a Booke, because it is like unto a booke. For as the Generall in a Campe, hath the name of all his souldiers that fight under him, in a Booke; and as the Magistrate of a towne hath the name of every free man and denizen inrolled; so God in the booke of his Election, hath the names of all that shall be saved.

For the second Question. A man may be written in the booke of life two wayes: either truly before God, or in the judgement of men onely. Those whose names are truly before God written in this booke, cannot be blotted out: For Gods counsell touching the eternall state of every man, is unchangeable. This the golden Chaine of Gods decree, doth plainly shew: *For whom hee hath predestinated, them hee hath called; and whom hee called, them also he justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified*. Others there be that have their names written in this Booke, onely in the judgement of men; and thus are all men written in the Booke of life, that professe the Gospel of Christ in his Church: for so charitie binds us to judge of them: And these may have their names blotted out. In this sense doth the Scripture often speake; as when the Prophet saith, *Tha*

A God would blot his enemies out of the Booke of life (meaning *Judas* principally) his meaning is, that it might bee made manifest, his name was never written therein. This then is the meaning of this promise; that they who doe avoid the occasions of sinne, and have care to keep faith and good conscience unto the end, have their names written in the booke of life, and they shall never be blotted out.

Hence I gather two things: First, that the number of the Elect, in respect of God, is certaine: for the names of those which are to be saved, be as it were written in a booke; and being once written in, they remaine there for ever. Some doe teach, that all may be saved, if they will: but this is a mere fancy of man: for what should there need any booke of life, if that were so? Secondly, hence I gather, that this number can neither increase, nor be diminished, let men doe what they can: *If they had bene of us, they would have continued with us*, 1 John 2. 19. *All that thou hast given me have I kept, and none of them is lost*, Joh. 17. 12.

Whereas a man may be written in the booke of life, to wit, in the judgement of men, and yet be blotted out: hereby we are to be admonished, to looke unto our selves, and to make conscience of every sinne, and to avoid and shun the very occasions thereof. For so long as we professe the Gospel and obey the same, our names be in the booke of life: but when we commit any sin, we doe as much as in us lieth, make a pen, and reach it up to heaven to blot our names out of that booke: and they that keepe a course in sinning, doe plainly shew that they were never truly written therein.

Secondly, considering that the number of the Elect is certaine, it must bee a motive to cause us to labour for some assurance of Election, that wee may truly say, we have our names written in Gods booke. But here some bad person will say, seeing the number of the Elect is unchangeable; I will live as I list: for if my name be in the booke of God, it shall never be blotted out; and if it be not in, it can never be added. *Ans.* These men deceive their owne soules: for they that have their names written in the booke of life, shall live as these few did in this Church of Sardis, in true faith and holy obedience. For he that is ordained for glorification, is ordained to justification and sanctification: and it is impossible for him that shall be saved, to live alway in sinne: and therefore these men must rather labour to repent and beleeve, and to get some signes of their election, that they may know that their names are written in the booke of life.

The third benefit is this: *I will confesse his name before my Father, and before his Angels*. That is, in the day of judgement I will acknowledge and professe him to be mine; one of my elect, that keepeth faith and good conscience unto the end. I will take him from the company of the wicked world, and set him on my right

Phil. 2. 1.

12. 27.

Use.

Use.

Rom. 8. 30.

right hand, and advance him to glory, pronouncing upon him the blessed voyce of absolution, *Come, thou blessed of my Father*, Matth. 25. 34. The end why this benefit is thus propounded, is to draw this Church to professe the name of Christ in this world : for if they would professe Christ before men, hee will acknowledge them for his owne at the last day.

This same reason here propounded, mult induce us to make a true confession of Christ, against the world and all Christs enemies: which to doe is a very hard matter. A man of himselfe cannot stand out; but yet the consideration of this, that Christ will confesse him at the last day, will bee a notable motive and meanes to enable him thereto. If any carnally Prince should come to a man among a great companie, and call him by his name speaking kindly unto him, hee would esteeme it a great honour unto him: and for that hee would not flie to die in the Princes cause. O then, what honour is this, that Christ Jesus will in the last day vouchsafe to all those that in this life doe sincerely confesse him, and overcome. He will confesse them to bee his, and receive them to his owne glory. But on the contrary, those that will not confesse him here, but disgrace him, either by false doctrine, or profaneness of life, will Christ at the day of judgement utterly disgrace, by denying them to bee his, and there pronounce upon them the fearful sentence of condemnation, *Go ye cursed*, &c. Which if we would then escape, and also procure unto us the joyfull voyce of absolution, we must here labour to hold the truth of Christs doctrine, and also keep a good conscience unto the end. But if we onely professe him in judgement, and not in the practice of an holy life, surely Christ will professe that he knows us not, and then give us our portion with the devill and his Angels.

The Commandement followeth: verse 6. *Let him that hath an ear, heare*, &c. Of which we have spoken.

v. 7. *And unto the Angel of the Church which is of Philadelphia, write: These things saith bee, which is holy and true: which hath the key of David, which openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.*

Here beginneth the sixth particular Epistle of our Saviour Christ, from this vers. to the 14. And before (as to the rest) is prefixed a speciall Commandement unto *Iohn*, whereby hee is enjoined to write this Epistle unto the Church of Philadelphia: the end of which Commande-

ment, is to warrant the calling of *Iohn* to write this Epistle: but of this wee have spoken before.

The Epistle it selfe containeth three parts: a Preface, the matter of the Epistle, and the Conclusion. The Preface in this vers, *These things saith bee*, &c. Wherein is set downe, in whose name this Epistle is sent; namely, in Christs: where (as in the former Epistles) hee is excellently described, for the winning of more credit unto this Epistle; and that, first by his properties, *Holiness and truth*; secondly, by his Kingly office, in the words following.

For his properties. First, Christ is said to be holy. *Quest.* How can Christ be said to be holy as hee is man, considering hee descended from Adam, who conveyed his sinne and the guilt thereof, to all his posteritie? The common answer is this: That indeed Christ descended from Adam, as he is man; but his substance was sanctified by the holy Ghost in the wombe of the Virgin, and thereby hee was freed from Adams sinne. This answer is true, but not sufficient: for men, besides the corruption originall, take from Adam the guiltinesse of that sinne which Adam committed. Now sanctification taketh away the corruption of sinne, but not the guilt thereof. Therefore a more full answer is this: that all which come of Adam by naturall generation, doe receive by that order which God set in nature at the creation, saying *increase and multiply*, both the nature of Adam, and the sinne and guilt thereof. But God for the preventing of this in the Incarnation of Christ, ordained that Christ should not come of Adam by naturall generation, but by a miraculous conception of the holy Ghost: where by hee tooke the nature of man, with the infirmities thereof, without the sinne of mans nature, or the guiltinesse thereof. And thus is Christ free from sinne as he is man.

Further, Christ is holy two wayes. In himselfe; and in regard of his Church. In himselfe, he is holy sundry wayes: First, in regard of his God-head, for his divine nature is holiness itselfe. Secondly, as he is man; for his manhood was not onely free from all manner of sinne, by reason of his miraculous conception, but it was also enriched and filled with holiness, and that in greater measure than all men and Angels: for hee received the gifts of the holy Ghost without measure. And againe, as hee is man, Christ is holy in regard of his obedience and actions; for living on earth hee did actually as our Suretie fulfill the law for us. Secondly, Christ is holy in regard of his Church. First, because hee is the Author of that holiness, which is in every member of his Church. Yea, hee is holy in regard of men in a further respect; namely, as the root of all mens holiness, as hee is Mediator. For looke as from Adam is actually conveyed originall sinne, to every one of his posteritie that cometh by naturall generation; so from Christ is righteousness

ness and holiness conveyed to all that beleeve in him : and for this cause hee is called our righteousnesse and sanctification : and in this sense especially is Christ said to be holy in this place.

Whereas Christ is said to be holy not only in himselfe, but for us : here we must marke what is the principall thing in Christian Religion : namely, to have care to be ingrafted into Christ, that from him we may receive grace to become new creatures, and feele in us his power to kill our corruptions, and daily to renew his owne image in us, in righteousnesse and true holiness ; and that as truly, as wee feele in us *Adams* corruption. It is not sufficient for us to plead, that Christ will be our Saviour, and will free us from all sinnes ; but wee must labour to have Christ convey holiness into us, and that as sensibly as we see the root convey sappe into the branches : and this holiness we must make to appeare in our lives, as the branches by their fruit and leaves, do shew they receive sap from the root.

Secondly, here note, Christ propounds himselfe unto us and to all Churches, as a notable pattern to be followed ; giving us to understand, that all that beleeve in him, and looke to be saved by him, must be holy as hee is holy, making conscience of every evil way ; for Christ is holy to make us holy. Let us therefore behold Christ, and see wherein hee expresseth himselfe to be holy ; and therein let us follow him. So *John* saith : *He that hath this hope, purifieth himselfe as he is holy* : that is, useth all good meanes to conforme himselfe to Christs holiness.

Thirdly, hereby wee learne, that the common title given to the Pope, whereby he is called (Holiness) is a blasphemous title : for to be holy, is here made a propertie of Christ. And yet more is given to the Pope, than to Christ in this place : for hee is called holiness, which is a title of God alone.

The second propertie, whereby Christ is described, is *Truth* : Christ is said to be true, in three regards : First, because hee is without all error or ignorance, knowing every thing as it is. Truth is in Christ properly, and in the creatures onely by meanes of him. Secondly, because whatsoever he willeth and decreeth, he doth it seriously, without fraud, deceit, change, or contradiction, as the whole tenure of Scriptures doe shew, wherein every part is sutable and agreeable to another. Thirdly, because hee maketh good every promise made in the word : for in him all the promises of God are yea, and Amen. 2 Cor. 1. 20.

Whereas Christ is said to be true, yea, *true* it selfe : First, we learne a full difference between him, and all false wicked spirits ; for they are spirits of error and falsehood, for the devill is the Father of lies, and the author thereof.

Again, whereas Christ is true in all his sayings, wee ought without all doubting to be-

leeve his word, and all promises made therein, that concerne our salvation. If Christ could erre or lye, and men be deceived by him, then they might justly doubt of the truth of his Word : but seeing he is true in all his promises, we must beleeve in him : and in all our distresses either of bodie or minde, depend upon him : for hee hath made a promise to helpe, and he will never faile them that rest on him.

Thirdly, in this propertie, hee propounds himselfe an example, to be followed of his Church and of us ; that as Christ is serious in his decrees, and constant in his promises ; so must wee purpose every good thing seriously, and also make good whatsoeuer good thing we promise. For, *Lysars must be destroyed*, *Psalm* 5. 6. *They that love, or make lies, must never come into heaven, but be flung out thence, and cast into the burning lake of fire and brimstone*, *Rev.* 22. 15. But it is a note of a man, that is a good member of Gods Church in this world, and that shall be inheritor of Christs kingdome in heaven, to *speake the truth from his heart*, *Psalm* 115. 22. And lying is a note of the childe of the devill, *John* 8. 44.

Secondly, Christ is described by his Kingly office, which hath the keys of David, which openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. Where first, let us see the meaning of the words : for which purpose we must have recourse to *Isay* 22. 22. whence these words are borrowed, being there said of *Eliachim*. The circumstances of the text will easily shew the meaning of the words in this place : *Shebna*, who had beene an ancient Steward to many of the Kings of Israel, was Treasurer also unto King *Hezekias*. And because hee was an hinderer of reformation intended by *Hezekias*, the Lord threatned to cast him out of his office : and further, the Lord signifieth that *Eliachim* shall come in his roome and have the same office : now to expresse this thing, the Lord saith, *The keys of the house of David shall be laid upon his shoulders* : That is, *Eliachim* shall be made a Steward of the house of David, even of the Kingdome of David, whereof *Hezekias* was Governour : (for so the house of Juda, and the house of Israel, are often put for the whole kingdome of Juda and Israel.) And the giving of a key was an ancient token of placing and investing men in chiefe rule and authoritie ; so that the meaning of this place, is this ; that God hath given unto Christ soveraigne power and authoritie of governing his Church. *Quest.* But why is Christ said to have the key of David ? for Davids kingdome was a temporal kingdome, but Christs kingdome is not of this world, *John* 18. 36. And yet it is said, *The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his Father David* : and he shall reigne over the house of Jacob : *Luke* 1. 32. 33. *Ans.* Christ may be said to have the keys of David two wayes : First, properly ; for when hee was borne of the blessed virgin *Mary*, he was borne King of the Jewes.

Jewes, by right descent from his father David, as his Genealogie plainly sheweth, Luke 3. And also the question of the wise-men at Jerusalem, saying, *Where is the King of the Jewes, that is borne?* Matth. 2.2. And therefore when the Publicans asked tribute of him, he pleaded the privilege of a Kings sonne; albeit, to avoid offence, hee was content to yeeld of his right, and to pay tribute; Thereby shewing, that hee had right to the kingdome of Israel, though he would not take it upon him; and therefore came in such a time when the Kingdome was taken of the Romane Emperour. Secondly, hee may bee said to have the key of *Dauids* kingdome typically: for *Dauids* kingdome was a figure of Christs kingdome, and *David* himselfe a type of Christ; as it is most excellently deciphered in the Prophets, *Jeremie* 23. 5, 6. *Hosea* 3. 5, where Christ is plainly called *David*, by the name of him that was his type, figure, and figure. *Quest.* Why were not as well the kingdomes of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Pharaoh*, types of Christs kingdome, as *Dauids*? *Ans.* Because *Dauids* kingdome was a kingdome of light and pietie; but theirs were kingdomes of sinne and iniquit. And hee is said to have the key of *Dauids* kingdome, because his kingdome and the righteousness thereof was figured by the pietie in *Dauids* Kingdome. And this kinde of speaking is justifiable by Gods word. So *Mat.* 2. 23. Christ is called a Nazarite: which place hath relation to that which is said properly of *Sampson*, who was a most excellent figure of Christ, and did most notably represent him in his death, wherein hee killed more than in his life. Now Christ is called a Nazarite, not because he observed their rites and orders, for that he did not: he dranke wine, so did not the Nazarites; but because hee was the truth and substance of that order; for in him was fully accomplished that holiness, which was figured by that order; for he was perfectly severed from all sinne and pollution. And so here hee is said to have the key of *David*, because hee had the sovereigntie which was figured by *Dauids* Kingdome.

Which sheweth that no man openeth, and openeth and no man shutteth. Here Christs kingdome is compared to a house, which can bee opened and shut by none but Christ; whereby is signified, that none hath power above Christ in his kingdome; and that his power therein is sovereigne and absolute. So that hereby is meant, that Christ Jesus sitting in heaven, hath sovereigne power & authority over the whole Church of God, to governe the same. That wee may the better understand this sovereigne power of Christ, wee must know, it hath three parts. I. To prescribe. II. To judge. III. To save, or destroy. In prescribing, Christ hath absolute power, and that in sundry things: as first, in prescribing doctrines of faith, and religion unto his Church, to bee beleaved and obeyed, and that on paine of damnation. This

power he puts in execution, when in bookes of the Old and New Testament, hee prescribeth the doctrine of the Law and the Gospel, to bee obeyed and beleaved. And none but hee can make an Article of faith, or a law to binde the consciences: and therefore *Paul* saith, *Whosoever shall teach any other doctrine, then that which wee have received of us, let him bee accused,* Gal. 1.8. Secondly, for regiment; hee hath absolute power to prescribe how hee will have his Church governed, and by whom: and therefore *Moses* when hee was to make the Tabernacle, did all things according to the patterne that the Lord gave unto him. So *David* gave to *Salomon* paterines of all things that were in him by the spirit, touching the building of the house of God, 1 Chron. 2.8. 12. Thirdly, hee hath absolute power to appoint the time of keeping his Sabbath: for as the ordaining of a Sabbath belongs to Christ, so doth the changing thereof; hee that prescribeth worship, must prescribe the ordinary set time thereunto, which isto continue to the end. And therefore it is but an opinion of men, to hold that the Church may make two or more Sabbath dayes in a weeke, if they will. Fourthly, In prescribing the Sacraments: and therefore *Paul* saith, *What I have received of the Lord, that deliver I unto you: speaking of the Lords Supper.* For hee that gives grace, must also appoint the signes and scales of grace.

The second part of Christs sovereigne power, is power of judgement. Which is a sovereigne power to determine of his owne will, without the consent of others, or submission to men or Angels. And in determining, Christ hath two privileges. First, to expound Scripture: the absolute power of expounding the law, belongeth to the Law-giver; and his exposition is authentically. Secondly, to determine of all questions, and controversies in Scripture. And therefore it is a wicked opinion of the Church of Rome, which hold, that the principall Judge of interpreting Scripture, and deciding controversies, is the Church.

The third part of Christs sovereigne power, is to save, and destroy. This is exprest in these words, *Hee openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth*: and for this cause hee is said to have the keys of hell and of death. Whereby is signified; first, that he hath power to forgive sinnes; for that hee procueth at his Fathers hands. Secondly, that hee hath power to condemne: for when men beleev not his word, he hath power to hold them in their sinns, for which hee can call them unto hel. The ground of this threefold power of Christ is this; because he is sovereigne Lord over his Church, and the members thereof.

The Church of Rome say, that this key of *David* hath more in it than sovereigntie over his Church: to wit, a power to make and depose Kings that bee in his Church. This they teach, that they might prove the Pope to have title

Erod. 32. 42. 43. Heb. 4. 5.

1 Cor. 11. 23.

Reva. 6.

in ordaining and deposing of Kings by virtue of the keyes. But they erre grossly: for though Christ as hee is Mediator, be above all Kings, yet in that regard he neither maketh nor deposeth any Kings: and therefore hee saith plainly, *Cyberkingdome is not of this world.* This caused him to refuse to take upon him the office of an earthly Judge or Prince, *To divide inheritance betweene two brethren.* Hence it was, that hee refused to give sentence of the adulterous woman. And yetas Christ is God, hee maketh or deposeth earthly Kings: so the wiseman speaketh of him in the person of wisdom, *By mee Kings reign.*

For the further clearing of this, wee must handle another point, which is delivered hence concerning the power of the keyes: which is a power whereby the power of the keyes of *David* is put in execution. This power of the keyes is mentioned, *Matth. 16. 19.* when Christ saith unto Peter, *I will give unto thee the keyes of the kingdome of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt binde upon earth, shall bee bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* This power of the keyes is a Ministry granted to Gods Church, to open and shut the kingdome of heaven. First, I call it a ministry: that is, a service, because whatsoever the Church doth in Christs name, is nothing but the dutie of servants unto their Lord: from whence it is, that the most worthy members and officers that ever were in the Church, as the Prophets and Apostles, were but the Ministers of Christ. That this is a service, I shew more plainly thus: When *Adam* fell, in his sinne all mankind fell with him, and thereby were all barred from the kingdome of heaven. Now since that fall, Christ became man, and in his man-hood satisfied the justice of God for mans finnes. And this satisfaction of Christ, is properly that key whereby heaven is opened, being opposite to mans sinne whereby it was shut. And Gods Church and Ministers cannot properly open heaven by any power they have, but onely reveale unto men what Christ hath done for them: and withall apply unto them, the doctrine of Christs satisfaction which is revealed. And in this regard they are said to open and shut the kingdome of heaven: not as Lords but as Ministers and servants.

Next I adde, that this power is given to the Church: that is, to the company of true beleivers called to salvation by Christ, and to none other: and therefore it is said of them, *Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, &c.*

Thirdly, I adde the end of this power of the keyes, *To open and to shut heaven.* How the Church doth this, Christ that gave this power knoweth best, and hee hath set it downe, *John 20. 23. Whosoever finnes ye remit, they are remitted: and whosoever finnes ye retaine, they are retained.* The Church therefore opens heaven, when it pardons mens finnes: and it shuts the same, when it lawfully retaines their finnes

and holdeth them unpardoned: besides this, there is no opening and shutting of heaven, committed to the Church. *Quest.* Can the church pardon sinne or retain the same? *Ans.* Yes, for these are the words of Christ: but let us see how. It is one thing to give sentence of the pardon of sin, and another to pronounce the same sentence given, To give the sentence of the pardon of sinne, is onely proper to Christ the head of the Church; no Saint, nor Angell, hath that privilege: but yet the Church pronounceth the sentence of pardon given by Christ. If wee should say, the Church should pardon sin, wee should rob Christ of his honour: for that is a privilege of his God-head. Thus wee see what the power of the keyes is.

The right use of this power, is when the Church doth use the same for the opening and shutting of heaven: First, in the name of Christ alone, as a servant: Secondly, according to the rule of Gods Word, not after mens affections or inventions: Thirdly, for this end, to bring sinners to repentance, and to continue them therein that they may be saved: and to the Church thus using this power, Christ hath promised, that *Whatsoever they bind in earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they loose in earth shall be loosed in heaven, Matth. 18. 18.*

Further, this power of the keyes, hath two parts: the ministry of the word, and spirituall jurisdiction. The key of the ministry of the word, is set downe and established by Christ, *Mat. 16. 19. I will give unto thee the keyes of the kingdome of heaven, &c.* This ministry of the word is a key, because it opens and shuts heaven: this it doth two ways. First, by teaching and explaining the substance of religion, the doctrine of salvation, whereby men must come to heaven: and in that regard, is called the key of knowledge, *Luke 11. 52.* Secondly by applying the promises of the Gospell, and the threatening of the Law: For when in the ministry of the Word, the promises of remission of sins and life everlasting, are applied to beleivers that repent, then the kingdome of heaven is opened: and when as in the same ministerie of the Word, the curses of the Law are denounced against impenitent sinners, then is the kingdome of heaven shut. Yet touching the ministerie of the Word, this distinction must be remembered that otherwhiles the Church is certaine of the faith and repentance of some men, or some congregation; and then they may pronounce remission of sins absolutely: but otherwhiles they are uncertaine of their faith and repentance, or of their impenitency: and then they must accordingly remit or retain mens finnes, that is, conditionally; pronouncing the remission of finnes to all that repent, and denouncing damnation to all that repent not. And thus is the Word to bee publicly handled in Gods Church at this day, because our congregations are mixt companies, consisting of some that repent and beleeve

believe, and of others that doe not truly repent nor believe.

The second part of this power of the keyes, is *spirituall jurisdiction*: I call it *spirituall*, to distinguish it from that outward jurisdiction whereby the commonwealth is governed. That this spirituall jurisdiction is a key, may appeare, *Math. 18. 16, 17, 18. If thy brother offend thee (saith Christ) admonish him privately: if he heare thee not, yet take with thee two or three: and if he heare not them, tell it to the Church; and if he refuse to heare the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and as a Publican.* Then followeth the promise, *Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; & whatsoever ye loose, shall be loosed in heaven.*

This spirituall jurisdiction, is a power whereby the Church pronounceth sentence upon the obstinate offenders in the Church, and puts the same in execution. And it hath two parts: Excommunication, and Absolution. Excommunication, is an action of the Church in *Christ's name*, excluding an obstinate offender that is a professor of the Gospell, from all the privileges of the Church, and from the kingdom of heaven. So *Paul* commandeth the incestuous man to be committed to Satan: that is, not only put out of the Kingdom of Christ, but also after a sort made subject unto Satan, to be outwardly afflicted by him. And therefore Christ saith, *If he heare not the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man*: that is, as one that hath no title to the kingdom of heaven. Here may some say, Can the Church thrust any man out of the kingdom of heaven? *Ans.* It is Christ onely that receiveth men thither, and it is he alone that must thrust them out: the Church doth not properly either receive men in, or put them out; but onely pronounce and declare what Christ doth in this behalfe. As if a man that lives in the Church, be a common drunkard; the Church finding in Gods word, that *no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of heaven*, which is the sentence of Christ, may pronounce the same against him, and to exclude him from the kingdom of heaven. *Object.* The true childe of God may be excommunicated, but he can never be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. *Ans.* The true childe of God may for a time, and in part be excluded the kingdom of heaven. In part, as a man that hath freedome in any incorporation, may lie in prison for some trespasses, and so want the use of his freedome, though he be a freeman: so the childe of God for committing sinne, may want the use of this liberty and freedome which he hath in Gods kingdom; and for a time, while he liveth in sinne without repentance: yet wholly and for ever he cannot: but so soone as he repents, hee shall be received certainly againe: for no man is to be barred either from heaven or the Church, any longer than he remaineth impenitent.

Whereas this censure is such, as doth exclude a man both from the kingdom of heaven, and

the liberties of the Church till he repent: wee may here see, that this censure ought to be used with great reverence, feare, and consideration: even such or greater, as we would use in cutting off a member from the body. The abusing therefore of this sentence in small matters, cannot but be a grievous sinne, and a breach of the third commandment, wherein one of Gods most weighty ordinances is taken in vaine.

Further, one speciall degree of Excommunication, is *Anathema*: which is, when one is pronounced to be condemned, whereof *Paul* speaketh, *1 Cor. 16. 22.* But this is not pronounced upon any, but on those that sin against the holy Ghost: and therefore it is seldom used, because that sin is hardly discerned: consisting not so much in the speech, as in the malice of the heart against Christ.

The second part of this spirituall jurisdiction, is Absolution: which is, when a malefactor upon his sufficient repentance, is approved to be a member of the Church; and is admitted to the kingdom of heaven. And yet here the Church receives him not into the kingdom of Christ, but only declareth upon his repentance what Christ doth. And thus we see wherein Ecclesiasticall jurisdiction consisteth: and what be the parts of the power of the keyes.

For the better discerning of this power of the keyes, wee must remember foure speciall abuses hereof that have taken place in Gods Church for many hundred yeares. The first is this: that in former ages the Church hath given this power of the keyes to *Peter* alone, debarring the same from all other, even from the rest of the Apostles; as though they had onely the use, not the right of this power. But the case is plaine, this power belongs to every Minister of the Gospell, though they be not Apostles, as well as it did to *Peter*; for in the promulgation of this power, *Math. 16. 19.* though Christ direct his speech to *Peter*, yet he speaketh unto all, as the circumstances of the place doe plainly shew: for Christs question (*Whom sayest thou I am,*) was made to all: now because it would have bene great disorder in this holy company, for all of them to have spoken; therefore *Peter* being both more ancient and bold of speech, speaketh for all, and the rest answered in his person: and so accordingly, Christ speaking to *Peter*, doth make a grant of this power unto all his disciples in his person. And therefore, *Ioh. 20. 22.* hee gives this power to all, saying plainly, *Whosoever sinnes ye retaine, they are retained, &c.* So that the word of God is plaine in this point, to satisfy the conscience of any that is not wilfully addicted to the Popish religion. *Quest.* Whence have the Ministers of the Gospell this power? *Ans.* By succession from the Apostles: for Christ saith, *Math. 28. 19, 20. Goe and preach, I will be with you to the end of the world.* Where he cannot meane the Apostles onely; but with them all Ministers that did preach and bap-

tize, after them, making this promise to the Apostles, not as they were Apostles, but as they were Ministers and Preachers of his Gospell.

The second abuse is, that the Church of Rome hath turned the power of the keyes into a supremacie over the Church, making it to be a soveraigne authority, whereby *Peter*, and his successors the Popes, have liberty to make lawes, canons, and constitutions, which binde the conscience: as also to make kings, and to depose the same. A most notorious abuse of this power, which is no superiority, but a ministry: the chief power whereof consisteth in the dispensation of the word and will of Christ: For Christ said not to *Peter*, I will give thee the keyes of the kingdomes of men, but of the kingdomes of heaven. The third abuse hereof is, that the Church of Rome hath thereby for a 1000. yeares almost, barred Kings, Queenes, and Emperours from being Governours over the Churches of God: an error flat against Scripture: for when as good King *Iosiah* intended the reformation of religion, and the abandoning of Idolatry, hee made a covenant with the Lord for the accomplishment of the same: and is said to have caused all that were in *Jerusalem*, and *Benjamin* to stand to the covenant which he made. Now shall we say, *Iosiah* did evil in causing them to do so? God forbid: It is recorded of him by the holy Ghost for his commendation. *Object.* But Gods Pastors and Teachers have the power of the keyes, and Princes have not? *Ans.* True, but yet they have a civill power, whereby they rule over Gods Church: for there is a civill power, and a spirituall power. Princes rule not by any spirituall power, but civilly: and thereby they have power to compell all their subjects to the outward means of Gods worship, and to forsake Idolatry, and may also punish them that obey them not. *Object.* By this power of the keyes, Kings and Queenes are brought under Pastors.

Ans. In Pastors and Ministers we must consider their persons and goods, and their office and word which they bring: Princes are over their persons and goods, and yet may be under their word and ministry: because therein they stand in Christs stead. Yet all this sheweth nothing why Princes in Gods church should be so robbed of their right, as the church of Rome doth.

The fourth abuse is, that the Church of Rome for some 800. yeares, hath turned the power of the keyes unto the Priests in their Sacrament of Penance: for whereas by Gods word, the Ministers power is onely to pronounce the absolution of Christ: with them every Priest sits as a Judge, and the people come unto him as to a Judge, making knowne unto him all their thoughts, words, and deeds, (as neare as they can) wherein they have broken any commandment: which done, the Priest enjoyns him to bewaile his sins; and after contrition, doth properly give sentence of pardon, even as Christ himselfe doth: and then after appoints

him works of satisfaction, to be done for the temporall punishment of his sins: which during his times are pardoned in heaven. Wherein he hold a most devilish practice, as may appear by the manifold errors contained therein. As first, the confession of all a mans finnes; which hath no warrant in Gods word. Secondly, that the Priest should give sentence of pardon on a most notorious practice, whereby Christ is robbed of his honour: for the Pharisees could say, *None can forgive finnes but God*, that is, properly, *Mark. 2. 7.* Which Christ approveth, and it is most true; for he that can forgive finnes properly, must make satisfaction for finnes. Thirdly, they absolve from the fault, but they will not forgive the punishment: and thereby they rob others, to enrich themselves. Fourthly, they enjoyne satisfaction to God by men for their finnes: whereby they do nothing else but overturne the all-sufficient satisfaction of Christ, and enjoyne that to man which is impossible. All these are most horrible abuses of this power, which ought to be knowne and considered, being a sufficient warrant unto us, that the Church of Rome is no true Church of God: for though the Pope carry in his armes the keyes, yet they are not the keyes of heaven, but of hell. For he hath made moe places of rest and woe, than ever God did: as *Limbo Patrum*, and *Purgatory*; and therefore must needs make moe doores thither, and so moe locks and keyes.

By this doctrine, touching the keyes of *David* given to Christ, and the power of the keyes in the Church derived thence, we may learne sundry things. First, that Christ, who hath the keyes of *David* to open and shut, doth not open to all, but to some onely. The reason hereof is this: *Adam* being created in integrity, was in the favour of God: but by his sinne he lost the favour of God, and so barred himselfe both out of the earthly & heavenly paradise: and all his posteritie by the same sinne, and by their owne actuall finnes are likewise barred: for *sin* is a partition wall betwene us and God: and a cloud betwene our prayers and God himselfe, as *Ieremie* speaketh: so that sinne is the cause of this exclusion; and so many finnes as a man committeth, so many bolts and barres he maketh to exclude himselfe from the kingdom of heaven. The consideration whereof should move every one to take a narrow view of his miserable estate in himselfe, through *Adam*: for by originall sinne wherein we were borne, and by our actuall transgressions wherein we live, we barre our selves from the kingdom of heaven. It is lamentable to see how the whole world lieth in sinne, and how the devil bewitcheth men to conceale or diminish their sins, making great sins small, and little sins none at all; when as the least sinne which they commit (without repentance) is sufficient to barre them for ever out of the kingdom of heaven. Again, seeing every sin doth barre us

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our of heaven, this must be a motive to induce every one of us, to repent of all our finnes, to bewaile the same, and to pray earnestly for the pardon of them in the death of Christ; and continually to labour to turne unto God from all sinne, because, if wee live but in one sinne, it will be a mighty barre, sufficient to exclude us the kingdome of heaven eternally. Thirdly, seeing Christ keeps the keyes of heavea; hereby we are taught to come unto Christ, and to seeke by him to enter into the kingdome of heaven. For Christ by his death hath opened heaven: as he said unto *Nathaniel* and *Philip*, *Verily, I say unto you, hereafter shall yee see heaven open*: meaning, by the ministry of the Gospell: and seeing it is open, wee must strive to enter into it, as the men in *John Baptists* time did, *Matth. 11. 12.* This wee doe by endeavouring to become good members of Gods Church on earth: for that is the doore and suburbs of the kingdome of heaven, which every one must enter into that would come to heaven it selfe; even as a man that would come into an house must needs come to the doore. Now, in the Church there is the true doore which is Christ himselfe, and the key thereof which is his word, and the ministry of the word, which doth locke and unlocke the same. *Quest.* What shall wee doe to become true members of the Church? *Ans.* We must doe two things; First, humble our selves for all our finnes, praying unto God for the pardon of them, and beleeving the same through Christ. Secondly, endeavour and purpose by Gods grace every day to leave the same finnes. This doing, we are at the doore of heaven; and if wee would have our soules enter into heaven when wee die, this wee must doe while we live. But if wee enter not into the doore of grace, by the key of knowledge, in the ministry of the word while wee live, we shall never come to the gate of glory after death.

v. 8. *I know thy workes: behold, I have set before thee an open doore, and no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

In this verse, and so forward to the twelfth, is contained the matter of this Epistle, which may be reduced to three heads; a Praise, a Promise, and a Commandement. The Praise is in this eighth verse. The Promise in the ninth and tenth. The Commandement in the eleventh. For the first, the praise of this Church is first

summarily propounded; *I know thy workes*; which hath beene expounded, and the end thereof, with the uses in the former Epistles. Then he addeth the reason of his commendation, wherein are two things to be observed. I. The signe of Christs approbation, in these words, *I have set before thee an open doore.* II. Their conversation, or the workes which Christ approved in the words following, *Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.* Both these may be understood, either of the Angell or Minister of this Church, or of the whole Church also. I take it to be meant of both. Being spoken of the Minister of this Church, the words beare this sense; *Behold I have set before thee an open doore, &c.* that is, behold and consider, I have vouchsafed unto thee opportunity and liberty to preach the Gospell, and thereby to convert men unto me. So much *S. Paul* meaneth by the *doore of utterance*, *1 Cor. 16. 9.* *For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name:* That is, though thou be indeed but with small measure of gifts, pertaining to thy calling, yet thou hast maintained my Gospell, and hast not denied my name.

These words being thus expounded, doe afford as these instructions. First, from the signe of his approbation, we learne, that it is a great privilege for a Minister to have liberty to preach the Gospell, and thereby to convert men unto Christ: so much the word of attention *behold*, importeth: which may also further appeare by this, that the most famous and worthy Prophets of God, were not alwayes vouchsafed this favour, as *Isay* and *Ezekiel*, who were sent sometime to harden the people. And Christ himselfe complaineth of the want of this privilege, saying, *I have spent my strength in vaine*: and in regard of this privilege, the Ministers of the Gospell are called *Saviours*. And by reason of this liberty they have title to the promise of *shining as starres in glory*, *Dan. 12. 3.* This therefore is an unspeakable mercy, and so ought to be esteemed of all Ministers which have the same vouchsafed unto them; they ought highly to magnifie the name of God for it, and to value it more worth than all earthly blessings whatsoever.

Secondly, from the workes which Christ approveth in the Angell of this Church, we may observe, that Ministers endued with small measure of gifts, may bee able to doe great service unto God in his Church: this thing is plain in the Minister of this Church; and might also bee shewed by manifold examples of such men in all ages: but to come to our times. In the dayes of *Queene Mary*, when Religion was in banishing, this our famous Schoole of the Prophets, had many learned men in it; yet not one of them stood out for the defence of the Gospell: when as a poore secular Priest not three miles off, who was farre behind them

Isa. 66.

Isa. 49. 4.

Obid. 1. 1.
Tim. 4. 16.

Cambridge.

in gifts of learning and knowledge, yet having the truth revealed unto him, did stand out for the maintenance of the same, even to the sealing of it with his blood. And at this day many men of smaller gifts in the ministerie, doe more further the Gospell, by the increase of the knowledge of Christ crucified and true obedience, than those that are enriched with farre greater gifts of knowledge both in tongues and Arts : so as though they be many hundred degrees short in regard of Schoole-learning, yet they goe as farre before them in benefiting Gods Church.

If this be so (will some say) then it is needlesse for men to be brought up so much in the Schooles of learning. *Ans.* Not so, for as much as may be, Gods Ministers ought to have knowledge of Schoole-learning, both in Arts & tongues. And yet for all this, it oft commeth to passe by Gods providence, that the greatest Clerks for learning, are lesse profitable to the Church than men of smaller gifts. This God doth to humble the learned, that they be not proud in themselves; and to magnifie the work of his Spirit in the weaker instruments.

Further, these words must also be understood of the whole Church: and then they beare this sense: *I have set before thee an open doore: that is, I have vouchsafed unto thee a speciall privilege, even libertie to enter into the kingdome of heaven. From whence wee observe, That libertie to life everlasting, is a speciall privilege belonging not to all men, but only to the Church of God, & the true members of Christ.*

This point hath sundry uses.

I. To confute this erroneous opinion; That Christ did effectually redeeme all and every man. Which is flat against Gods word, and this text: for those that are effectually redeemed, have libertie to enter into the kingdome of heaven: but all men have not that libertie, for then it were no privilege of Gods Church alone to have heaven opened unto them.

II. Seeing this is a privilege which God vouchsafeth unto his Church, to have heaven gate opened unto them; hereby wee are taught to take the benefit of this libertie while the doore is open; and in time to strive to enter therein. For as Christ telleth *Nathaniel*, the Church of the new Testament *shall by faith see heaven open*. Wee must not therefore neglect this opportunitie. But it is our common shame, that wee be slacke in seeking the kingdome of God, and the righteousness thereof, suffering our selves to be clogged with heapes of sinne, and worldly luists, that we can neither walke in the strait way, nor enter into that doore that leadeth unto life; for sinne is an heave burden, like a great packe that will not suffer a man to enter into so strait a doore. Wee must therefore cast off all sinne, that we may so enter in, and walke in the way of life.

And no man can see it. Here is the continuance of the former benefit, against all adversa-

rie power whatsoever. And this againe confuteth another opinion of the same kinde with the former; to wit, That Christ died for every man, but yet some are not saved because they will not; they shut heaven doore against themselves. But this opinion cannot stand: for *none can shut heaven doore against them*, to whom Christ hath set it open effectually, neither sin, Satan, nor the world, no not man himselfe, nor all their power together. For herein is the will of man ruled by the will of God: and looke whom God will have to enter into heaven, them doth he incline to will their owne salvation: and also make unwilling ever to shut this doore against themselves. *For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, &c.* that is, thou art endued with some measure of grace; as of faith, hope, and righteousness: and according to that measure thou hast maintained my word, and not denied my name.

Hence we learne, that a man endued with a small measure of Gods grace, may doe works pleasing unto God, and by the same grace come to life everlasting. Christ saith to his Disciples, *If your faith were as much as a graine of mustard seed, by it should you be able to remove mountains.* Now, that which is here said of the faith of miracles, may in like sort be said of all faith, and so of justifying faith; if a man have never so small a measure thereof, yet thereby he shall doe works acceptable to God: for as *Paul* teacheth, *Gods children receive not the reth, but the first fruits of the spirit*; that is, a small measure of grace in this life, which is only a pledge of that which they shall fully receive in the world to come: for this cause is *Rahab* commended for her faith, although it were but small and weak, as we shall see if we reade the whole historie, *Iosh. 2*. For God accepteth of man, according to that he hath received. It is not so much the measure of grace that saveth a man, as the truth of grace before God.

This serveth notably for the comfort of those that have care to keepe faith and good conscience. Such are most dismayed by reason of their wants and corruptions: but they must know that God approveth of their grace, though it be but small, if so be they have care to increase in grace, and desirous to please God in all things, according to the measure of grace received. II. Hereby every one must be encouraged to embrace and obey true Religion. Many be dismayed herein, by reason of the great measure of obedience which they thinke God requireth; and therefore they leave off all obedience. But this ought not to be so: for God approveth of a man in Christ, according to that grace which he hath, be it more or lesse; and not according to that which by the law he ought to have. And yet none of all this must make us slacke and negligent in using those means which God hath vouchsafed unto us for the increase of grace, that so wee may also increase in true obedience.

Math. 17. 10.

Rom. 8. 13.

Heb. 11. 31.

Uti.

And haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name. Here he ſetteth downe two works for the which he commendeth this Church. Firſt, their faithfull keeping of the Word of Chriſt. Secondly, the profeſſion of his name in the time of perſecution. This behaviour of this Church muſt be a patterne and a looking glaſſe for us to ſquare our converſation by. For theſe words, *Thou haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name,* though the words be few, they containe much in them; ſignifying, that this Church hath ſpeciall care of keeping Gods word in every Commandement, both legall and evangeliſſall. Happy were our Church if the ſame might truly be ſaid of us, that we had care of obedience unto God, and of the true profeſſion of his name. But generally wee faile in practice, though in outward profeſſion wee make ſome ſhew thereof. Thus much of the praiſe of this Church.

v. 9. Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which call themſelves Jews, and are not, but doe lie: behold, I will make them that they ſhall come and worſhip before thy feet, and ſhall know that I have loved thee.

Here follows the ſecond part of this Epistle; namely, the promiſes of Chriſt, which are two: Firſt, concerning the converſion of certaine Jewes, verſe 6. Secondly, concerning the deliverance of theſe *Philadelphians* in the time of temptation, verſe 10. For the firſt of theſe promiſes: In all likelihood, there was in this Citie of *Philadelphia*, a Synagogue of the Jewes, which bare an outward ſhew, that they were the true worſhippers of God: albeit they denied the name of Chriſt, and perſecuted his Church. Yet Chriſt here promiſeth, that hee will convert them, and make them members of his Church, and cauſe them to worſhip him in the congregation before this Church of *Philadelphia*.

In this promiſe, note three points touching the converſion of theſe Jewes. The Author thereof; The parties converted; And the fruit of their converſion. For the firſt. (ſaith Chriſt) *Behold, I will make them.* The words are very ſignificant, being doubled; and they make Chriſt the whole and ſole Author of their converſion.

Hence we learne, that in the converſion of a ſinner, God hath the whole and ſole worke: true it is, that a man willet his converſion in the act thereof, but yet it is God that wor-

kerh that will in him; it is not of himſelfe. This confuteth the erroneous Doctrine of free will in the Church of Rome, whereby they teach, that a man can diſpoſe himſelfe to worke out his ſalvation, being only helped by Gods grace. Like unto a ſick man, who thought he be weak, yet being holden up by another, can geſe of himſelfe. *Anſw.* But Saint *Paul* teacheth us, That a man by nature is not ſicke, or weak with ſinne, but ſtarke dead to ſinne: and can no more move himſelfe in the worke of his converſion, than a dead man in the grave, in the worke of his reſurrection. But they ſay, by this we make a man like unto a blocke. *Anſ.* Not ſo; for though he cannot turne himſelfe unto God, yet he hath his will and underſtanding free to uſe in civill and outward actions: and beſides, there is a poſſibilitie in his nature to be converted by grace, which is not in a blocke.

Again, whereas Chriſt ſaith, *I will make them come, and they ſhall come;* Here is plainly confuted the Doctrine and opinion of ſome, which hold, That a man being effectually called, may come unto Chriſt or not come at his pleaſure; when God hath given grace, man may receive it, or reſuſe it, if hee will. This is flat againſt this text: for *God will make them come,* and mans will muſt be pliable to Gods will in this matter.

But they alledge, *Matthew 23. 37. O Ieruſalem, Ieruſalem, how oft would I have gathered thee, as an hen, &c. but thou wouldeſt not.* *Anſ.* Chriſt there ſpeaketh not of the will of his good pleaſure, for that cannot be reſiſted, but of his ſignified will in the minitry of his Prophets, and himſelfe as hee was a Prophet, and the Miniſter of circumciſion unto the Jewes, for ſo he might will their converſion, and yet they will it not. *Object.* 2. *Act. 7. 51. Ye ſiſtemeeked Jewes, ye have alwayes reſiſted the holy Ghoſt.* *Anſ.* That muſt be underſtood of the Minitry of the Prophets and Apoſtles, who ſpake by the Spirit of God, and not of the Spirit himſelfe.

11. Point. The parties converted, namely, *Them of the Synagogue of Satan.* Such as called themſelves the only true worſhippers of God, and yet indeed and in truth, were no better than the ſlaves of Satan.

This iſto be obſerved: for hereby wee may ſee, that not onely ſinners which commit ſmall finnes, are converted unto God, but even grievous and ancient ſinners; ſuch as have long continued the ſlaves of Satan. Chriſt died not for painted ſinners, but for grievous ſinners: and therefore *Paul* chargeth *Timothy* and the Miniſters with them, *to waite for the converſion and repentance of them that were taken in the ſnare of the Devil, and that according to the Devils owne will.* *Roman. 1. 18. Paul* ſpeaketh of ſome Gentiles that were given up to a reprobate ſenſe; which was a fearefull caſe: and yet no doubt, many of them were after turned to beleeve the Goſpel: for ſuch are they that are

Ephe. 1.

Tim. 2. 26.

taken in the snare of the Devill, and yet there is repentance to be waited for of them.

This doctrine must not be abused to liberty in sinning: for that is the right way to cast our soules into the pit of destruction. But yet seeing Christ will bring home unto his kingdome most grievous sinners, we must hereby take occasion not to bee discouraged, either by the greatest or multitude of our sins, from coming unto Christ. For marke, Christ onely raised three that were dead to life: *Lazrus* daughter that was new dead, the widowes sonne that lay on the hearse, and *Lazarus* that lay thinking in the grave. This is a notable figure of conversion of sinners: he will not only call to repentance small and young sinners, but even great and old sinners that lie rotting and stinking in the grave of sinne, as *Lazarus* did in the grave of death. He came to call sinners to repentance, and to save the lost sheepe, which are ready to be devoured by Wolves and wild beasts. Wee must all blesse the name of Christ for his large mercy, and in time lay hold upon it, and repent.

III. Point. The fruit of their conversion in these words, *They shall come and worship before thy feet, and shall know that I have loved thee.* These words may be fitly expounded by another place of Scripture, 1 Corin. 14. 24. 25. *If all prophesie, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, hee is rebuked of all men, and judged of all, so as the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and hee will fall downe on his face, and worship God, and say plainly, God is in you indeed:* So that the meaning of these words is this; I will cause them to come to the congregation of Gods people, and at their feet to fall downe and worship the true God.

Here are set downe two notable fruits of the conversion of a sinner. First, concerning God: The second, concerning the Church. The fruit of conversion that respecteth God is, *The true worship of God*, noted in these words; *I will make them come and worship*; that is, *In spirit and truth, with body and soule, to adore the true God.* This truth no man can bring forth til he be converted: For the wicked and naturall man calls not upon God. True it is, they will acknowledge there is a God, and that the same God is to be worshipped, and therefore they will come outwardly and heare the word, and receive the elements of the Sacraments: but the true worship of God, is in spirit and truth from the heart, which a naturall man cannot performe unto God. This is the fruit of true conversion, which when a man receiveth, he doth heare the word of God with reverence, tremble at Gods judgements, and mingle the Doctrine of the Gospell with faith in his heart: and in calling upon God he fees his finnes, and therefore by prayer doth earnestly desire the supply of grace and the remission of his finnes; having his heart also believing that hee shall receive

mercy: And in thanksgiving his heart is filled with joy, and the grace of thankfulness; to as being converted, all his worship unto God is in spirit and truth.

In the worship of these Jewes, are noted three properties required in Gods service. First, it must bee willing and cheerefull; so did these Jewes worship God: For they are said, not onely to worship God, but *to come and worship God*: thus doe all Gods children worship him. *Mat. 56. 7.* Those whom God bringeth to his mountaine, hee maketh joyfull in his house of prayer: *Psalm. 110. 3.* *They shall come willingly in the day of assemblies.* By this property, wee may see a great number at this day every where come farre short in the true worship of God: for most men never regard the preaching of the Word, but content themselves with morning and evening prayer; which they frequent to avoid the penalty of the laws of the Magistrate, and the shame of the world. But these are miserable worshippers of God: his worship ought to be free and willing.

The second property: the worship of God must be expressed with seemely, meet, and convenient gesture. The word translated *Worship*, signifieth *doing of reverence, with bowing of the body and knees*: And therefore it is not an indifferent thing, but necessary, to use convenient gesture in Gods worship, that thereby the grace and humilitie of the heart may bee expressed. The *Angels that stand before the throne of God, have two wings to cover their feet, and two to cover their face*: thereby testifying their reverence to Gods Majestie. In this point also many come short; for as the common complaint is, the manner is to lie snorting and sleeping upon mens elbows at sermons, and in the time of prayer to sit unreverently with their heads covered. These things ought not to bee: for God is Lord of body and soule, and ought to be worshipped with both.

The third property: All that will truly worship God, must first be humbled for their sins, and have the pride of their hearts brought downe, and bee stricken with a feare of Gods glorious Majestie: So these Jewes did prostrate their bodies at the feet of the congregation, when they came to worship God. The Jaylor that imprisoned *Saul and Silas* over-night, and put their feet in the stocks, would then have very little regarded *Pauls* doctrine, being so cruell and rigorous to their persons: Yet when hee was about to have killed himselfe with his sword, (supposing the prisoners had bene gone because he saw the doors open) he was glad and joyfull to heare the voyce of *Paul*, who called unto him, that he should do himselfe no harme, for they were all there: then being humbled by that strange and wonderfull worke of God, hee comes in unto them, humbles himselfe, and falls downe before them, craving them to tell him what he must doe to be saved. In like manner, so long as men have not their proud hearts beaten

beaten downe, they will never worship God in spirit and truth. Would wee therefore know why the most part worship God formally? surely it is because they have not bene humbled with a feare of Gods Majesty, and a terror of hell: Neither can it be hoped, that we shal ever worship God sincerely, till our hearts bee thus broken within us, and we touched with a feare of Gods judgements. The want hereof is the cause why men and women content themselves with a bare mumbling over of the words of the *Lords prayer*, the *Creed*, and *ten Commandments*, never seeking in the sinceritie of their hearts cheerfully, and willingly, both with soule and bodie to doe worship unto God.

The second fruit of true conversion concerneth man, and that is, *A reverence of the true worshippers of God*, noted in these words, *Reverence their feet*. These Jewes when they were converted, did not thinke themselves worthy to bee members of this congregation, but submitted themselves to bee foot-stoolles unto them. This reverence shewes it selfe in this one thing which is the ground thereof; namely, a bale opinion which every true converted person hath of himselfe, by reason of his owne unworthinesse: This was in *Paul*, causing him to call himselfe the *chiefe of all sinners*. And the same ought to bee in every one of us; for this is true grace, and a note of true repentance, when a man or woman can truly abase themselves beneath all Gods people; so as if the question were, who is the vilest person in the Church? the conscience of every man should answer, *I my selfe*. The proud and Pharisaicall heart is far from true conversion; but the humble heart is pleasing to God.

And shall know that I have loved thee: These words containe a reason of the former submisive behaviour of the Jewes: for it might be asked, why shall these Jewes come to joyne themselves with Gods people, and bee content to make themselves foot-stoolles unto them? The answer is, because *Christ will make them know, that he hath loved his Church*.

Here marke and see the ground of all true reverence, *Gods love and favour*. Sundry persons both in Church and Common-wealth have reverence due unto them, as Masters from their servants; Parents from their children; and all superiours from their inferiours. Now if these men would attaine to true reverence indeed, first, they must seeke to bee in the love and favour of God, and of his children, and so they shall procure unto themselves true reverence; for when men set their hearts to feare God, then will God turne the hearts of men to reverence them. This ought to bee thought upon of those that bee great in birth and wealth: They must not stand on these things, but looke to the foundation of true reverence; namely, the favour of God, which they must seeke for: and getting that, God will get them reverence, even of wicked men. The

cause why many in high place, as Masters, Masters, &c. want true reverence is for that they care not for the favour of God, the ground thereof.

v. 10. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, therefore will I deliver thee from the howre of temptation, which will come upon all the world, to trie them that dwell upon the earth.*

These words containe the second promise of Christ unto this Church, concerning their preservation in time of most bloody persecution: for this Epistle unto this Church, as also this booke, was written by *Iohn*, after the ascension of his spirit in the dayes of *Domitian* the Emperour of Rome; after whom succeeded *Tryjanus*, who when hee was seated in his Empire, raised up against you: persecution against Gods Church, in all places of his Dominion, wherein hee put to death innumerable thousands of Christians for the space of fouretee yeares. Of this persecution our Saviour Christ foretels this Church, calling it, *The howre of temptation*, and withall he promitteth to preserve this Church in the time of this bloody persecution: adding a reason thereof, *Because they had constantly and sincerely professed his Gospel*.

In this promise of preservation, note sundry points. 1. The occasion thereof, *The keeping of the word of his patience*. 2. The thing promised, *deliverance under Tryjanus*. 3. A prediction of this persecution, *That shall come unto the world in this end, to try them*.

1. Point. The word of *Christ*: patience some expound to be Christs Commandment of patience; but that exposition is too strait; here it signifieth the whole Doctrine of salvation by Christ; which is called the word of patience, first, because it teacheth patience; Secondly, because it is the instrument of patience; for when a man knowes salvation by Christ, and also beleeveth the same to belong to him, that will make him patient in all the miseries of this life; thirdly, because it cannot be protested and holden unto death without patience; but as it is said of the good ground, *It bringeth forth fruit with patience*; so must every one doe that professeth this Gospel.

In this occasion of Gods promise observe, that Gods grace well used, is rewarded with increase. Those which have received but small measure of grace at the first, by becoming faithfull therein, have received increase: which serves to move us to bee faithfull in the use of those talents which wee have received: For hereby we shall receive increase, when as those

which

Which having received good gifts from God, ask knowledge, and such like, because they have not been faithfull in the use thereof, have been deprived of the same. Wherefore whosoever hath begun to know the will of God, to believe, and to repent; let the same parties proceed to use those gifts still to Gods glory, and the good of his Church and people, among whom they live; and they shall see the Lord will double and treble, and greatly increase the same unto them.

Again, note the doctrine of the Gospell is a *Doctrine of Patience*. This sheweth how good and meet it is for every one to learne the Gospell in the dayes of peace; for every one in times of triall, would wish for strength and patience: and we know not how long these daies of peace will last. Again, each man in his calling is subject to many crosses and miseries; for *in the sweat of our face must we eat our bread*. And who is free from paines and diseases, yea, who can scape death if he list? Now in all these and in all other troubles, we have need of patience. And therefore in the time of health and ease, let us hide in our hearts the seedes of this grace, to wit, the Doctrine of the Gospell, and then in due time we shall reape the fruit of patience, which will make us contented in all distresses both of life and death. And if we would know why most men are so impatient in afflictions: it is because they have so little knowledge and faith in the Gospell of his grace.

Secondly, seeing the Gospell is the word of patience; hereby all persons that looke to be saved by the Gospell, must learne to put on patience, keeping a moderation in all their thoughts, wils, and affections: for when wee be impatient any way, wee are not futable to the Doctrine of our salvation.

Thirdly, this word of patience is called Christs (*The word of my patience*) because Christ is the author of it. This is added to beat downe the pride of this Church; for when God doth praise them for their obedience, their hearts might have beene puffed up with pride. But to prevent this evill in this Church, whom he now praised, he calleth it *his patience*, that they might not thinke this good thing was of themselves. And the same consideration must checke the proud thoughts that rise in our hearts; namely, to remember that no good thing we have is our owne, but Christs. What hast thou which thou hast not received? why then shouldst thou boast? 1 Cor. 4. 7.

II. Point. The thing promised, is *preservation and deliverance in the bloodie persecution under Trajanus*: In which for the space of foure-teenne yeares innumerable Christians were put to death; *I will deliver thee from the hour of temptation*.

Here first observe, that God hath appointed certaine set houres and times for the triall of his Church, as well for the gifts of his grace, as of their wickednesse and hypocrisie. Thus hee led

the Israelites forty yeeres in the wilderness, to see whether they would obey him: and he sent forth Prophets among them, to see whether they would turne from the true God or no. And as God thus dealeth with his Church, so he hath appointed particular times and houres wherein he will trie particular persons: *God bid Abraham sell his son, and that was his triall*. And *Herodias was left unto himselfe, that the Lord might see all that was in his heart*. And so for every Christian. God hath a set time of triall, wherein hee will either make manifest his grace, or disclose their hypocrisie.

This point ought to be well weighed, for herein the Lord dealeth like the worthy founders of great schooles, who have appointed certaine set times of posing, for the triall of their Schollers, to see what every ones proceeding is, that they may be accordingly rewarded. And as it is a shame for one to have beene long in good Schoole, and to have made no proceedings in learning; so it is for any one, that hath lived long in the Schoole of Christ, and hath not profited in grace. This therefore must teach us these duties: First, to trie our selves, and that straitly concerning our progresse in knowledge, faith, repentance and obedience: for God himselfe will try us, whose eyes we can never blind, though we may deceive men: He will lay open our hearts, and make knowne what is in us, whether it be true grace, or false hypocrisie. Let us not cover our selves with figge leaves, for God will strip us naked; but rather let us search our selves, touching our sins and Gods graces: and never rest contented, till we have found in our soules the good gifts of grace, which will abide his triall.

Secondly, hereby wee are admonished, as neere as we can to conform our hearts and lives unto the word and will of God; for he will try us. Wonderfull it is to see how common the reproach of precisenesse is, and if it were not well knowne that the world is full of Atheists, that might discourage many a Christian. But the remembrance of this triall, wherein hypocrisie will vanish as the stubble before the fire, must move us to labour for sinceritie. When we have done our best, we shall be farre short of that wee ought to be. And therefore through the reproach of the world, let us hold on our good endeavour, and labour to have the maine graces of true faith, and a good conscience, with a resolute purpose not to sinne: that so we may stand in the day of triall. But if wee want these and live loosely, wee shall be found like the foolish Virgins, that have onely the blasphemous lamps of an outward profession, and want the saving oyle of grace, which may make us acceptable unto God at his appearing. We have beene trained up in the schoole of Christ; what a shame will it be, if when Christ comes to prove us, we be then found barren and void of found grace? David bethinking himselfe of this triall of the Lord, doth conforme himselfe

unto the will of God : and therefore offereth himselfe unto this triall, saying, *Lord prove me* : meaning in regard of the truth and sincerity of a good conscience, not of the perfectness of his owne wayes. And hereunto must we endeavour, not suffering any time to reigne in us.

Quest. But how was this promise verified : touching their deliverance from persecution, seeing no Church was free from it ? For even the Churches of Asia, whereof this in Philadelphia was a principall one, were persecuted by *Trajanus*. *Ans.* This and such like promises of deliverance to Gods children from trials and afflictions, must be understood not simply ; but with condition : to wit, so farre forth as they may be hurtfull unto them, and in the least measure hinder their salvation : and indeed they are promises of deliverance from the evil of temptation and persecution ; not from persecution and temptation it selfe. *Psal.* 91. 10. The Lord promisseth to him that trusteth in God, *The plague shall not come nere his dwelling* : and yet by experience we know that Gods children in generall plagues are taken away as well as others ; and therefore that promise must be understood of deliverance, not from the plague it selfe, but from the hurt thereof ; so as it shall not hinder the good or salvation of any in the godly mans house. Wee pray, *Lead us not into temptation* ; which we must not understand of freedom from all temptation ; for it is the will of God we should be tried : but therein we are taught to pray, that God would not forsake us in our temptations, or give us up wholly to the power of the devill ; but that it may tend to our profit and not to our hurt, as well in respect of grace, as of salvation. And so farre forth was this promise accomplished to this Church.

The due consideration whereof, is most comfortable to Gods Church and people ; teaching them not to feare the crosse in any temptation, God will have his Church tried, but the faithfull therein need not to bee dismayed ; for God by his promise hath taken away the evil and poyson of all triall and temptations, to them that have care to keepe faith and a good conscience, though they suffer a thousand crosses in this world never so long ; yea though they die under the crosse : which may put comfort into the heart of any distressed soule whatsoever, and revive those that are oppressed with temptations.

Againe, in that this promise is not made simply and absolutely, but with restraint : hereby we are taught, that the petitions of these persons which pray simply and absolutely to be freed from all temptation and adversities, are not according to Gods will and word : For every petition must depend upon some promise of God : but we have no absolute promise of freee, some from all trials and temptations, but only so farre forth as they be evil. And therefore in praying against temptation, wee must qua-

lifie our petitions for temporall deliverance, according to the tenor of the promises of Christ : that is, so farre forth as may most advance Gods glory, and best further our salvation.

Quest. How can this great persecution be called but an *houre of temptation* seeing it lasted fourteen yeares ? *Ans.* In divers respects it may be so called : First, in regard of God, *with whom a thousand yeares are but as one day* : and therefore fourteen yeares with God are but as one houre. Secondly, in regard of that punishment which every man by his sinnes deserveth in hell eternally : Thirdly, in the affliction of Gods people which were tried. When *Sueob* served *Laban* seven yeares for *Rachel*, his affliction made him thinke it was but a short time ; *Gen.* 29. 20. So when Gods children suffer for the name and Gospell of Christ, the consideration thereof will make them thinke long afflictions to be but short. This affliction caused *Paul* to wish to himselfe eternall perdition for the glory of God, in the salvation of the Jewes ; *Rom.* 9. 3.

The end of this phrase touching the shortness of time, was to comfort this and all other Churches in the time of this grievous persecution : for the consideration of the shortness of the time, is a meane to ease any affliction ; and to arme an impatient man with some measure of contentation.

III. Point. The propheticke or prediction of this affliction, is in these words : *Which will come on all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* Here Christ foretelleth a thing which was to come, simply by himselfe ; and from himselfe : not by the scope of any cause ; or any man or Angell. And hereby he proves himselfe to be true God : for it is a property and privilege of the true God, of himselfe, and by himselfe, to foretell a thing to come, before it can be seene, either in it selfe, or in the causes thereof : no man nor Angell can so absolutely foretell that which is to come ; but in their predictions they first see the things present in their causes, unless they be revealed unto them from God. But some may here demand, whether Christs foreknowledge and prediction were the cause of this grievous persecution. *Ans.* Not so : for things come not to passe because of Gods foreknowledge thereof, but because they would come to passe, therefore God foretelleth and foretelleth them : there is a higher cause of all things than prescience and prediction to wit, the good will and pleasure, and decree of God. So Christ is said to be delivered to be crucified, by the determinate will and counsell of God : and from the same eternall counsell did this persecution under *Trajan* originally proceed : for the first cause of the event of every thing is Gods decree, either ordaining or disposing the same. It will bee said, if this bee so, then is God the author of sinne. *Ans.* God forbidd : For the manner of Gods will and decree is divers : some things hee decreeth to cause

1 Pet. 3. 8.

Act. 2. 23.

and

and effect of himselfe, and by himselfe, as all good things : some other things God decreeth to be effected by others, as sin. And so evil things, though they be not according to his revealed will, yet they come in some sort from his will and decree: for if he simply willed them, they could never be. Beside, in Gods decree are set downe, not onely the things to be done, but also the means and circumstances thereof; as wee may see in the persecution, the place and end are plainly noted. This we must remember, and on the contrary, take heed of the opinion of some Protestants, which hold and reach, that sundry things come to passe, God onely foreseeing them, and no way decreeing or willing them : as namely, sinne. But to give unto God a bare foreknowledge, without a decree, is to put upon him an idle providence, which the nature of God will not admit.

The end why Christ alleageth this prophetic, is to expound his former saying : For it might be asked, why doth Christ call this persecution, *the houre of temptation* ? Christ answereth, because it will certainly come to try them that dwell on earth. Where we may note what is the propertie of afflictions and persecutions, be they publique or private : namely, they serve to discover the state of mens hearts; either by making manifest their faith, repentance, and feare of God, or by detesting their impatience and hypocricie.

V. 11. Behold, I come shortly: hold that which thou hast, that no man take thy crowne.

Here is Christs commandement to this Church; wherein consider, first, what he enjoyneth them : then the reason thereof. The thing he enjoyneth is this, *hold fast that which thou hast*; that is, hold as it were with both hands that little measure of faith and grace which thou hast received from me, and in no wise part with the same. This commandement hath been before expounded, Chap. 2. vers. 25.

Thereasons to enforce this commandement are two : One going before it in these words; *I come shortly*: that is, either in the generall judgement, or by death unto thee particularly. Before this reason is put a note of attention, *Behold*; to give us to understand, that the speedy coming of Christ unto us, either by death in particular, or in judgement generall, is a matter of great moment, never to be forgotten, but laid up as a treasure even in the bottomes of our hearts. Herein we must not flatter our selves, and say with the bad servant, Matth. 24. 48. *My master doth foretell his coming*: for that is the cause of so much wickednesse and impenitencie as is in the world : but rather with an ancient Father, thinke we ever heare the sound of his trumpet.

This daily perswasion of the speedy com-

ming of Christ, is of notable use. For first, it will daunt the most desperate wretch that is, and make him to tremble in himselfe, & restrain him from many sinnes. And if a man belong to God, and be yet a loose liver; this perswasion will rowze him out of his sins, and make him turne unto God, by using the means of repentance : for who would not seeke to save his soule, if he were perswaded that Christ were now coming to give him his finall reward ? Secondly, if a man have grace and have repented, and doe beleve, this perswasion is a notable means to make him constant in every good duty, both of piety to God, and of charity towards his brethren. Thirdly, this serveth to comfort any person that is in affliction; for when he shall beleve this which Christ hath said, *I come shortly*: he cannot but thinke but his deliverance is at hand : for at his coming hee bringeth perfect redemption to all his Elect.

The second reason is set after the commandement; *that no man may take thy crowne*: that is, *the crowne of thy glory, even everlasting life*. This must not be restrained to the ministry of this Church, taking it onely for the crowne of his ministry, though it be also understood of him; but the same must be referred to the whole Church : as if our Saviour Christ should say, If thou hold not fast thy faith and other graces, thou wilt lose the crowne of glory that is ordained for thee.

Hence some gather, that a man ordained to life may finally perish, because another may have that crowne which was ordained for him. But this is a flat abuse of this and such like texts of Scripture : for the words are not absolute, that a man may lose his crowne, but *conditional* : *Hold fast, or else thou shalt perish and lose eternall life, though it be ordained for thee*. Now the use of such speeches, is not to signifie falling from grace, but to shew unto us our owne weaknesse in our selves; that we might acknowledge, that if we were left of God wholly to our selves, wee could not, but perish. Therefore they serve to stir up the childe of God to humble himselfe in the acknowledgement of his owne weaknesse, unto a carefull using of the means to come to salvation. Like as a father that takes his childe and sets him on a horse, guiding the horse with one hand, and holding him with the other; and then saith to the childe, *take heed lest thou fall* : Not meaning thereby that the childe shall fall, but intending to make him sit faster; and let him know, that if he should leave him he would fall.

Secondly, Christ useth such speeches, that thereby he may make his Church persevere in grace unto the end ; for all exhortations and threatnings in Gods word, are instruments of perseverance in grace unto Gods children : because as God hath appointed who shall be saved certainly, so hee hath ordained certaine means to bring the same to passe: part whereof

are exhortations and threatnings, which doe not import any finall relapse, but serve as means and causes of perseverance : and for this end doth Christ here bid this Church *hold fast, lest another take her crowne.*

In this threatening we may note, that when God withdraws his grace from one man, or his blessing from any one people, for the abuse thereof, hee hath others ready to bestow the same upon, who will use the same well : when *Judas* was cut off from the Apostleship, *Matthias* was chosen in his room : and when the Jewes by infidelity fell away from God, he had the Gentiles in store to ingraffe in their stead : for the name of God is not shorned. When any one people shall abuse his Gospell, he can give it to other that will bring forth the fruit thereof, *Matth. 21. 43.*

Use.

This must be thought upon, for by Gods mercy, we renew Gods people, and doe enjoy his Gospell : but we must not flatter our selves herewith, for if we abuse the same, wee must know, that he hath another Nation in store, whom he now contemne, whither he can send his Gospell, and cause them to bring forth the plentifull fruits thereof. We therefore must embrace and hold fast this blessing of God which now we enjoy, and shew forth the power of obedience, or else God will take it from us. And wee know not how neare this judgement is : seeing other particular judgements have not brought us to repent. And what else meane the rumours of waies ? are they not Gods warnings, bidding us hold fast his Gospell, or else it will be taken from us ? Although therefore we lose all other things, as honours, riches, lands, or life it selfe ; yet let us hold fast our crowne : When the Arke of God is gone, no glory is left, *1 Sam. 4. 21.*

v. 12. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall goe no more out : and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the Citie of my God, which is the new Jerusalem, which cometh downe out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.*

v. 13. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit*

saith unto the Churches.

These words are the conclusion of this Epistle, which containeth two parts. First, a promise in the 12. verse. Secondly, a commandement in the 13. For the promise : In it we are to observe two points : The party to whom it is made ; and the thing promised. The party is, *he that overcometh*, of whom wee have spoken before ; for this promise hath bene propounded six times, for substance the same, though in other termes. Yet here the very word *Overcometh*, doth give us to understand ; that he that would have his service pleasing, must dispose himselfe to a battell or combate, (for overcoming presupposeth a fight.) The enemies which he is to fight against, are spirituall, to wit, his owne corrupt nature, the wicked world, and the devill ; and in this spirituall combate a man must be a good souldier, before he can be a good Christian : for all these enemies will seeke to draw him backe and hinder him, so soone as he shall any way endeavour to please God. Indeed God could have freed his servants from all temptations, but he will not ; it is Gods pleasure by temptations to have his servants tryed. Wherein it is manifest, that they are deceived, that imagine the state of a Christian to be a freedome from all miseries and temptations, or a state of ease, wherein is no strife or trouble to disquiet the minde : nay, it is a souldiers condition, in which hee that would overcome, must wage a perpetuall battell against all his enemies, both within him, and without him, and that unto death.

The thing promised ; *Will I make a pillar in the house of my God, and he shall goe no more out.* Here Christ doth most notably expresse the state and condition of eternall life. In the description wherof he doth allude to the custome and practice of men, who minding to preserve the memory of their names after their death, used to erect durable pillars of wood or stone, in some towne, valley, or mountaine, with their names engraven or written thereon. This practice is common in humane histories : and *Abraham* wanting issue, *set up a pillar with his owne name upon it, in the Kings dale, thereby to continue his remembrance with posterity.* The meaning then is, as if Christ had said, others for the continuing of their memory after their death, doe in some speciall place erect some durable pillar of wood or stone, with their owne names written or engraven thereon : But to him that *overcometh*, I will not set up such a pillar, but even make him a pillar durable and everlasting, whose memory shall alwayes continue.

He addeth further, he shall be a pillar in the Temple of my God : as if he should say, Others set up their pillars in valleys and mountains, or such places where some notable exploit hath been wrought ; but the place which I will chuse

(saith

(saith Christ) is the Temple of my God; that is, the Church triumphant, which was figured by the Temple in Jerusalem, and by the Tabernacle, as we may see, Hebrewes 9.9. and Revel. 21. 3. for those were two places where Gods people worshipped him; and where God testified his presence in a special manner unto his people. And so in the true Temple, the Kingdome of Heaven, Gods Saints and Angels doe worship him immediately: where God is present with them in most glorious and comfortable manner. This then is Christs meaning: he shall not onely be a part of that Temple, but an excellent part, even a pillar in the triumphant Church in heaven. And to shew what is meant by this Temple, Christ calleth it *the Temple of his God*: thereby noting the highest Heaven. Where observe, that God is called Christs God: which argueth inferioritie, and therefore it must be understood of Christ, as he is man, and as he is Mediator: in which respect he receiveth from his Father all his Offices, and power to execute the same. But as Christ is God, he is equall with his Father, and receiveth nothing from him.

And to instruct us yet further herein, (Christ saith) *Hee shall goe no more out*. When men erected pillars for their memoriall, in proesse of time they would weare away: and therefore they caused them to be renewed, or else their remembrancethereby would not continue; but he that is once made a member of the triumphant Church, shall there remaine for ever and ever: and no time shall ever come, wherein he shall cease to be a pillar in the same.

Further, in the pillars erected by men, their names were written or engraven: And to this practice Christ alludeth, saying, That he that is made a pillar in the triumphant Church, shall have names written on him: these names are three: 1. *The name of my God*; that is, I will make it manifest, that this man is indeed the Sonne of God, and that God is all in all unto him. The second name is, *The name of the Citie of my God*: By Citie, he meaneth not the triumphant Church, but the place where the triumphant Church shall be; to wit, the highest Heaven: as it is taken, Revel. 21. 10. So that hereby Christ would teach us thus much, that he which overcommeth, shall be knowne to be a Citizen of Heaven, and that the privileges of that kingdome belong unto him.

And lest any should doubt, what is meant by the Citie of God, Christ here describeth it: first, by the resemblance thereof, calling it *Jerusalem*: because that Citie, in regard of the Temple especially, was a figure of the Kingdome of Heaven. Secondly, he calleth it *the new Jerusalem*; that is, the place of the triumphant Church, even the highest Heaven: which is not called new in respect of being, for it was from the beginning; but in respect of the manner of revealing and manifesting it: for in the old Testament the new Jerusalem was revealed to the

Jewes onely, and that obscurely: but under the kingdome of Christ, it is more fully revealed not onely to the Jewes, but to all the world. Thirdly, he addeth that it doth now descend out of Heaven from his God, therein answering to an objection; for it might be said, this Temple of God in Heaven is so farre off, that we cannot ascend or attaine unto it, how then shall we come thither? Christ answereth, that this new Jerusalem cometh downe from God out of Heaven. *Quest.* How (will some say) can Heaven come out of Heaven? *Ans.* As Paul saith of Christ, that he was crucified among the Galatians before their eyes, because his crucifying was so lively represented unto them in the ministerie of the Gospel: So here Heaven may be said to come downe from God out of Heaven, in regard of the preaching of the Gospel, which doth most visibly represent and set open Heaven unto us, that Gods people may enter therein: by the faithfull embracing whereof, we become Citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God, Ephes. 2. 19.

The third name which shall be written on him, is *Christs new name*: whereby is not meant any title of Christ, as *Iesus, Mediator, &c.* but the dignitie, power, and glory of Christ. *Quest.* How can that be called new, seeing hee had power and glorie from all eternitie? *Ans.* It is called new, because it is received of Christ, as hee is Mediator, God incarnate; being that which was given to him after his death and passion; standing in his rising againe, in his ascension, and sitting at the right hand of his Father. Hereof Paul saith, Philip. 2. 9. *God gave him a name above every name*: that is, dignitie, power, and glory: as it is expounded, Hebr. 1. 7. And this glory, power, and dignitie, w^h Christ gave to them that overcome. And thus wee have eternall life set out unto us by the Author of life himselfe. The summe whereof is this; That he which overcommeth shall be made a true member of the triumphant Church, and there continue for ever: and shall have three names written on him; *The name of God*, having this made evident, that he is the childe of God: *The name of Gods Citie*, being made partaker of the privileges of Gods Kingdome of Heaven: *The new name of Christ*, communicating with Christ in his glory and Majestie.

And Christ doth thus describe life eternall unto us for speciall causes; which may be these. 1. To comfort them which have care to keepe faith and a good conscience; and to encourage them against all hinderances and miseries of this life: for what can more hearten a man in good duties, than to set before him his recompence and reward? whereby we learne, that in all miseries and troubles that may befall us for the maintenance of true Religion and good conscience, we must comfort our selves and not faint. And to encourage us herein, we are carefully to propound and set before us the due consideration of life eternall: for this it was that caused

Heb. 11. 26,
27, 28.
Heb. 11. 2.

Moses to despise worldly honour, and to choose affliction with the people of God: We must also looke unto Christ, *who for the joy that was set before him, endured the crosse, and despised shame.* Souldiers that are uncertaine of any reward are yet content under their Generall to adventure their lives at his command; how much more then ought Christian Souldiers to fight manfully, and stand fast in all troubles for Christs sake, who hath set before them such a great reward?

Secondly, it is thus described, to bring Gods people to a view and taste of life eternall, that thereby they may the more affect it. Many cast off all care of religion and good conscience, for the present delights of earthly things; they can see no goodnes nor pleasure in spiritual things. The sweetnesse of earthly pleasures putt mens mouths out of taste, in regard of any relish of life eternall; but this must not be so with us, we must be of *Moses minde*, who desired to see the land of Canaan when he was not permitted to enter into it; and then eupon God tooke him up into Mount Nebo, and shewed it unto him: So considering Christ hath thus largely described this kingdome unto us, we must labour to comprehend in our understandings, and in our hearts to possesse by faith, something of life eternall, though we cannot as yet fully inherite the joyes and pleasures thereof.

Thirdly, it is thus described, to teach us to practise *Pauls rule*, 1 Tim. 6. 12. *namely, to passe through all the miseries and troubles of this world, and to take hold of eternall life.* This is a most necessary duty, but yet little practised: men with both hands lay hold upon the things of this world, upon riches and pleasures; but who considereth that is prepared by Christ in heaven for them that overcome? and who laboureth to hold thereon, and to keep that sure, though he lose all things else?

Lastly, this description of eternall life, here serveth to make the people of God to feare no death, though it were most cruell and terrible; for death is but a strait doore, whereby the child of God must passe to all glory and happiness, when he shall be made a pillar in Gods temple. Thus much generallly of the thing promised: Now follow in particular the parts thereof.

First, whereas Christ promiseth to make them that overcome, pillars and chiefe members in the church triumphant: Hereby we are taught to labour to become true members of Gods Church in this life. For life eternall must begin here, and they that would bee pillars in his church triumphant, must now become members of his Church militant: for not onely Ministers and teachers are pillars in Gods Church; though they be chiefe pillars therein; but every one young and old, man and woman, that is a true beleever. And thus shalt thou become a pillar in Gods Church on earth, by maintaining and upholding the Gospell of Christ:

which thou must doe, partly by teaching those, whom thou art bound to teach with in the compasse of thy calling; and partly by good example of life and conversation; and chiefly by a true and bold profession thereof, not onely in time of peace, but even in the greatest trials and afflictions.

Secondly, he addeth; He will make him a pillar in the Temple of God: that is, in the Church triumphant: for in the new Testament we have no other temples, but Gods Church triumphant and militant. Hereby then we must learne to renounce that ignorant opinion of the world, who judge every material Church to be the Temple of God, and as holy as the Church in Jerusalem was. But the distinction of place, and place in regard of holinesse, which was under the Law, is taken away by Christ. The house is now as holy as the Church; churches indeed must bee regarded and maintained, not for holinesse, but for order sake: now men may every where offer the calves of their lips, and lift up pure hands from a pure heart unto God.

Thirdly, *I will write upon him the name of my God;* that is, whereas God the Father is my God first, I will also communicate unto him the same name of God; and he shall have God even my God, to be his God also. By this it is plaine that no man can have fellowship with God but by Christ: we must not looke to have immediate fellowship with God of our selves, or by any other, but by Christ: God heares not, God helps not, God saves not, but by Christ; nay, God is no God unto us out of Christ. For first, he is a God unto Christ, and then in him and by him unto us. Therefore if we would call upon God, we must call on him through Christ; if we would give him thanks, it must be in and by Christ: for in him onely are we heard. If we would know God, it must be by Christ, for hee is the very engraven Image of his Father, in whom is manifested the wisdom, justice, and mercie of God, in him dwelleth the fulnesse of the Godhead: and to conceive of God out of Christ, isto make God an Idoll in the braine. Lastly, if wee would receive any temporall blessing from God, it must be in and by Christ; as meate, drinke, and cloathing. For if we receive them from God out of Christ, we are but usurpers of them, and the use thereof shall turne to our further condemnation.

Fourthly, hee saith, *I will write on him the name of the city of my God:* that is, he shall have the privileges of the kingdome of heaven. We doe all desire and looke for the inheritance of Gods kingdome after this life; therefore here wee must live as citizens of Gods kingdome; conforming our selves to Gods Commandement, abandoning all sinne, and so living in faith and a good conscience unto the end, that after this life we may assuredly perswade our selves, we shall be made partakers of the privileges of this kingdome.

Fifthly it is said, this Cite of God is the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God: that is, by the preaching of the Gospel. Hereby we are taught more carefully to seek to attain to the kingdom of God; for behold God sendeth his mercy herein: our sinnes shut heaven gates against us, but by the blood of Christ he hath opened them; and by the Ministry of the Gospel he makes heaven come downe unto man: God therefore would not see us damned; hee hath made open a way, even a new and living way, whereby we may come to heaven and escape hell. God hath brought downe heaven among men, we must therefore with the people in John Baptists time, violently enter into this kingdom, and strive to take it by force, Matth. 11. 12.

Lastly, he saith: I will write my new name on him: that is, I will make him partaker of that glory and dignity wherewith I my selfe am glorified since my death and resurrection. Marke this: All that after this life must have Christs new name, must in this life become new creatures: So Paul saith, If any man bee in Christ, he is a new creature. And againe, Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creation. Would wee then partake with Christ in his glory? we must here be partakers of his grace: herein standeth true religion, to become new creatures, and not in bare knowledge and profession. We must therefore put off the old man which is corrupt with sin, and be renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the new man, which after Gods created in righteousness and true holiness. But if we content our selves with the image of the old man wherein we were borne, we shall never partake of Christs glory: for this new name must be given to the new creature, old man and it cannot agree together.

V. 13. Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches.

This conclusion hath bene handled in the former Epistles.

V. 14. And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith Amen, the faithfull and true witnesse, that be-
ginning of the creatures of God.

Here followeth the seventh and last Epistle to the Church of the Laodiceans; whereto is prefixed a commandement unto John, whereby hee is authorized to pen the same, in these

words, And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write, which hath bene handled before.

The Epistle it selfe hath three parts, a Preface, the substance or matter of the Epistle, and the conclusion. The Preface, in this 14. vers. wherein is set downe, in whose name this Epistle is written; to wit, Christs: who is here described by two arguments: 1. Hee is called, Amen, which is that faithfull and true witnesse: 11. He is the beginning of the creature of God.

For the first, Amen is an Hebrew Adverb of asseveration, signifying as much as verily, truly, or certainly. This title is given to Christ, and the reason thereof is expressed in the words following, which are a full exposition of the same. Amen is that faithfull and true witnesse: So that Christ is called Amen, to testifie that he is a witnesse, a faithfull witnesse, and a true witnesse: which title was given to Christ in the fifth verse of the first chapter; where it was expounded, and reasons rendered why he is so called. Unto which title is here added, that he is a true witnesse; because he speaks the truth, according as every thing is in it selfe, without error, deceit, or falsehood: for that which he receiveth from his Father, is the will of his Father, which is the rule of all truth.

That wee may come to the right use of this Argument; we must first search out the ends, for which Christ is here called Amen; that is, a faithfull and true witnesse, which by the contents of the Epistle, we may easily ghesse to be these. First, to set forth himselfe unto the Angel of this Church, an example and patterne of fidelity to his Ministry: in the duties whereof he had bene slacke and negligent: Christ therefore by his owne example, would teach him without respect of persons, to instruct the Church of God truly and faithfully. How this duty is to be performed, hath bene shewed before, Chap. 1. 5. And not onely to the Angel of this Church of Laodicea, but also to all the Church, and to all them that profess themselves to be his members, doth Christ propound himselfe an example of two most worthy virtues: Faith, and Truth. For the first: Faith is a vertue, whereby a man makes good all his lawfull words, promises, oathes, leagues, compacts, and bargaines whatsoever, so as his word is as sure as an obligation, as we use to speake. Truth is another vertue, whereby a man without fraud, lie, or deceit, speaketh the truth from his heart, that is necessary to be knowne for his owne good, the glory of God, and the good of others.

We must therefore set before our eyes this president of our Saviour Christ: As he is a witnesse, yea a faithfull and true witnesse, without any faining or falsehood, so let us labour to shew our selves faithfull in all lawfull promises, and true in all our speeches; that so by these vertues we may be knowne to be like unto Christ, through our whole lives and conversations.

Secondly.

Secondly, Christ is here called *Amicus* to induce this Church of Laodicea, to apply unto her selfe effectually the Word of God, whether threatnings or promises. This Church had been negligent in the duties of Religion, which came for want of applying Gods Word unto themselves. The right manner of applying Gods word is this: In Gods word we are to consider the Law, and the Gospell. In the Law, there are Commandements and threatnings: now a man must apply to his owne person and life Gods commandements particularly, that thereby he may come to know his particular finnes: then hee must also apply the threatnings of God unto himselfe, that thereby hee may be humbled through the sight of his misery, and to made fit and capable of Gods grace. Thus the prodigall sonne applied the law unto himselfe, when he said, *I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and am no more worthe to be called thy sonne.* So did *Daniel*, and *Ezrah*, by applying the law unto themselves, humble themselves and their people: for this is the way to humble any man, and to make him fit to receive grace: *for the Law is our school-master to bring us to Christ*, Gal. 3. 24. and the want of this speciall application of the Law, was a cause of the dullitie of the Laodiceans, and is also of our slacknesse in Religion at this day.

Secondly, the Gospell also must be applied: not onely by believing it to be true, as the Papists teach; but also by applying unto our selves particularly the promises of righteousness and life everlasting by Christ. According as *Paul* saith, *I desire in min Christ, and to be found in him, not having my owne righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.* Let us (saith he) as many as be perfect, be thus minded; teaching everie one this speciall duty of particular application. For as *Saint Iohn* saith, *hee that by faith doth not apply: he promises of the Gospell particularly to himselfe, makes God a liar.* And the want of this application is the cause of negligence in Religion, and of so many luke-warme Gospellers as be at this day. For it is not sufficient to know the Gospell to be true, or to be able to teach it unto others, unless we can thus apply it to ourselves. This then serves to prove that justifying faith must not onely be a bare assent to the truth of the Gospell, but a speciall faith which doth apply unto a man those promises which are propounded concerning righteousness, & life everlasting by Christ.

The second argument and title whereby Christ is described, is this; *That hee is the beginning of the creatures of God.* The meaning whereof is, that Christ is he that is the Creator of all Gods creatures that were created: so it is said, *By him all things were created in heaven and in earth:* and though this be true, yet I doubt not but that Christ is here called the beginning of the creatures of God, for a further

respect; namely, because he is the beginning of the new creature in regeneration: so it is said, *wee are the workmanship of God created in Christ unto good works.* So that every regenerate person is a new creature; to which purpose it is said of Christ, *where hee shall give his people an offering for sinne, hee shall see his seed, &c.* Because Christ is the root and seed of all that are borne againe. How is Christ (will some say) the beginning of a new creature? *As follows.* Two wayes: 1. As hee is the author of regeneration; for he is the cause whereby a man is regenerate, in which respect hee is called the *Father of eternitie*, Mat. 9. 6. And againe hee saith; *Behold I send the children whom thou hast given mee.* Secondly, because hee is the matter and root, out of which a new creature doth spring; and to the Church is called *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*: alluding unto *Adam* and *Eve*, who were a type of Christ and his Church. For as *Eve* was taken out of *Adams* side, so the Church and every member thereof sprang of the blood that issued out of Christs side, which was of infinite merit, being the blood of him that was God.

The end why Christ in this Epistle is called the beginning of Gods creatures (as wee see by the contents thereof) is, to meet with this common vice of this Church; that they had more care to seeme to be religious, than to be religious indeed: Now Christ would by this his title give them to understand, that their chiefest care must be, to become new creatures indeed. And no doubt this is the fault of our dayes; our care is lesse for the power of godlinesse, than for the name thereof; wee more respect shew, than substance, and shadow, than truth it selfe. Which ought not to be, for if we would be in Christ, we must become new creatures. To exercise our selves in the Word, and Sacraments, and Prayers, are good in their kind; but without this new creation, they are not sufficient to salvation.

Secondly, hereby hee would meet with this speciall pride of theirs, whereby they did boast themselves to be rich and to want nothing. But Christ tels them, that there was no dignity in any thing out of this, whereby in Christ they are made new creatures. Wherefore wee must leave by them, not to be puffed up with outward privileges of nobilitie, wealth, strength, or such like, as many doe: but he that would rejoice, must rejoice in this, that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Further, by calling himselfe the beginning of the creatures of God, Christ would teach them and us, that hee doth love his Church, and preserve the same. *Eve* was created by the hand of God, not apart from *Adam*, but of his ribbe, for this end, that he might love and protect her, and that shee might reverence and serve him: Even to every new creature springeth out of Christs hart blood, which God hath wrought that wee might know how Christ hath loved

Luk. 15. 21.

Dan. 9.
Ezr. 9.

Phil. 3. 9. 10.

1 Ioh. 3. 10.

Col. 1. 16.

1 Ioh. 3. 10.

1 Ioh. 3. 10.

1 Ioh. 3. 10.

Eph. 5. 30.

us, and that wee ought to magnifie and honour him: *Adam* was not the author, but the matter onely, whereof *Eve* was made: but *Christ* is both the author, and the matter of our regeneration; wherein appeareth his exceeding love unto us. And looke as the root spends it selfe for the preservation of the branches, so did *Christ* spend his owne blood for the salvation of his Church.

Fourthly, whereas he is called, *The beginning of his generation*; hence we may gather, that the doctrine of the Church of Rome is erroneous, which teach, that a man in his first conversion, hath use of his naturall free wil, and can dispose himselfe in the act of his regeneration. But the creature of God cannot dispose himselfe in his creation; now every man that is regenerate is the *new creature of God*, and therefore hath no power to dispose himselfe in his new creation.

v. 15. *I know thy workes: thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou werest cold or hot.*

v. 16. *Therefore because thou art luke-warme, and neither cold nor hot: it will come to passe, that I shall spew thee out of my mouth.*

In these words, and so forward to the 21. verse, is contained the substance or matter of this Epistle: and it hath two parts: A dispraise, v. 15, 16, 17. And Comfellow, vers. 18, 19, 20. They are dispraised for two vices: first, for luke-warmnesse, v. 15, 16. secondly, for their pride, vers. 17.

I know thy workes. This is a generall reproofe, signifying thus much: *All thy workes are knowne unto mee, and I utterly dislike them.* Then followeth the reason of this dislike, *Thou art neither cold nor hot:* which is a comparison borrowed from waters, whereof there be three sorts: hot, cold, and luke-warme. Now hot and cold waters doe not so much annoy the stomacke, as luke-warme water doth: they are sometime comfortable to the stomacke, but luke-warme water doth disquiet it, till it be cast up: and to those three kinds of waters, he compareth three sorts of men. By *cold water*, he understandeth such as are enemies to religion: as at this day are the Jewes and Turkes, and other barbarous people. By *hot water*, he understandeth men that are earnest and zealous of the truth. So that when he saith of this Church, *Thou art neither cold nor hot*, his meaning is: thou art neither an open enemy, nor truly zealous of my Gospel.

I would thou werest cold or hot: *Christ* wisheth not simply, that they were enemies unto him; but only in respect of that estate of *lukewarmnesse*, in which they were: as if he should say, I had rather thou werest either cold or hot, than thus luke-warme as thou art. For if wee would understand it simply, we should make *Christ* to desire that men should bee his enemies. By *lukewarme men*, he understandeth a people, who are in shew Gods Church, but in truth want the power of godlinesse, and the zeale of the spirit. *Because thou art such* (saith *Christ* to this Church) *therefore I will spew thee out of my mouth*: that is, looke as he that hath drunke luke-warme water, cannot abide it on his stomacke, but must needs spew it up againe; so am I weary of this thy security, I cannot abide it, and therefore will I cast thee out from all fellowship with me, and make thee which art a Church in shew, to be no Church.

Thus we see their fault, namely, luke-warmnesse; the greatnesse whereof, he aggravats, first by comparing it with the extremes, cold & hot, both which he preferreth before it, as may appeare by his wish and desire: And secondly, by the penitment therof, namely, utter rejection.

Hereby wee must examine our selves, whether this fault may not justly be charged upon us: after due triall, it will appeare, that we are guilty of this sinne. The which that it may the better appeare, I will note the severall kinds of luke-warme Christians.

The first luke-warme professor, is the Priest; as the tenor of his religion, and the manner of his worship of God, doth plainly shew: for he doth partittakes with *Christ* in the matter of salvation, affirming that hee receiveth from *Christ* to worke out his owne salvation, and so assumeth part of *Christs* glory to himselfe.

Secondly, all *time servers* are luke-warme Gospellers; that is, all such as alter their religion with time and state: and of this sort are the body of our people, who professe themselves to bee of the true religion the Prince is of: which sheweth evidently what they will doe in time to come, namely, turne with the time as their forefathers have done.

The third sort, are the followers of *Nicodemus*, who came to *Christ* by night only: that is, such as say and think that they may go to masse with their bodies, if they keep their hearts unto God: these halt betweene two opinions, and neither serve God nor *Man*.

Fourthly, all *Mediators*: such as will make pacification betweene the religion of the Protestant and the Papist; so holding our religion, as not caring to embrace theirs also, because they thinke they differ not in substance, but in circumstances onely. Let these pretend what they will, they are in heart Laodiceans.

Fifthly, all *worldlings*, which as God saith, Luk. 16. 13. *Serve God & Mammon*, God & the world, by setting their heart upon riches. These men abound every where, for though they

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heare God in the ministry of his word, and as it were touch him in the Sacrament, yet their hearts are fure from him, running after their covetousness, Ezec. 33. 31. and who are such their consciences will witness: yea, their behaviour proclaims it to the world, though they will heare the Word, yet their wit and strength is spent upon the world, and the things thereof.

Sixthly, those that profess Christs religion in outward actions of his worship, but yet in their lives give themselves to the common sins of the time, some to drunkenness, to fornication, to covetousness, or cruelty: some to this sin, and some to that. To this sort wee must reffer those, that in the word approve religion, and yet their hearts delight in gratifying themselves with the malicious, brutish, and irreligious formes of strange and forren attire: These spend their time and their wit in decking of their bodies, and so suffer their soules to goe to wracke: when as apparell should be an occasion to put us in minde of a shame through sin: and by modest attire, we should expresse the vertues of the heart, but these hereby profess the vanity of their minde.

Now though we be not intangled with these gossamerines, yet wee cannot excuse ourselves from this sinne of luke-warmnesse. For the want of zeale of Gods glory, of love to his truth, of care to obey his commandments, and to keepe good conscience, the want of hatred of sinne, what argue all these but luke-warmnesse? Herein we must lay our hand upon our mouth with *lob*, for we cannot plead with God no nor for this common sinne. But that we may be out of all doubt, that this sin of luke-warmnesse hath infected our congregations as it did the Church of Laodicea, I will make it plaine by the signes thereof, which are common among us, that so we may the better know our fearefull estate.

The first signe is, *Negligence in the duties of that true religion which we profess*. This appeareth sundry waies: for first, howsoever we come to the assemblies where the Word is preached, yet few doe profit there, by increase in the knowledge of that religion which is taught, and in the amendment of life. This may any man see to bee true, that hath halfe an eye to looke into the state of our assemblies, and mens owne consciences will herein witness against them. Again, where Gods Word is ordinarily heard, there are very few that spend any time in searching out, and trying whether the things be so or not which are taught them. Nay men will not bear cost to buy a Bible: and if they have one, yet they will not take paines to read the same, at least in such a constant course as they ought to doe. Thirdly, the Lords Sabbath is broken, for though most men at set times will come into the congregation; yet there is not that private sanctifying of the Sabbath after the congregations are dissolved, which Gods word

repareth. Men men beate themselves to their owne affaires, and to our world delights; to omit those that have no care at all of sanctifying the Sabbath in any sort. Now these persons must needs want both knowledge, obedience, and all sound grace, that will not let apart some time, wherein they should employ themselves in Gods Word: And by these signes it is evident, that there is a grievous disease of negligence in the duties of Religion, that infects our congregations. Now where this negligence is, though coldnesse be not, there cannot be zeale, and so luke-warmnesse must needs abound.

II. *Signe of luke-warmnesse*. The Religion of most men is this; in the generall calling of a Christian they shew religion, but in the affaires of their particular callings where is religion? In the Church they are good Christians, but in practice of the duties of their particular callings who sheweth his religion? For when as men should pacifie their callings, according to Gods Word and true godliness, they follow the desires of their owne hearts. Little conscience is made of lying and oppression: that love and plaine dealing which ought to be betwixt man and man, is wanting: which proveth them plainly to be luke-warme Gospellers.

III. *Signe*. There bee many that profess themselves to be luke-warme, neither hot nor cold. For though all generally come to the hearing of the Word, and the receiving of the Sacraments, yet many when they see some make conscience to become answerable in some measure to the word which they heare, and the Sacraments which they receive, doe take up in their mouths this slander of piousness against them; mocking them for doing that which in the Word and Sacraments themselves profess should be done. These men will not be enemies to the Religion of Christ; and they profile themselves not to be zealous, by reproaching zeale in others: Therefore they doe more than these Laodiceans did, even profile themselves to be luke-warme. For he that reproacheth another for zeale in religion, branteth himselfe with this sinne of luke-warmnesse. And who knows not how many of this sort are every where? I dare say with good conscience, our congregations generally consist of such. Now marke what followeth hereupon.

First, that our common professors of religion are in worse case than heathen men, Jewes and Turkes, that know not Christ. This Christ teacheth in preferring cold persons before luke-warme: as if he should say; I had rather thou werest a Pagan, than a professor without zeale. And *S. Peter* to this purpose speaking of such, saith; *It had beene better they had never knowne the way of truth, than after they have knowne it, not to obey the Commandments of God*. So that needlesse there be further matter in us than knowledge and bare profession, our case is worse than the case of Jewes and Turkes. Religion knowne will not make thee better than them.

but it is zeale and obedience that must preſerre thee before them.

Secondly, from the conſideration of our eſtate, I gather that we are in danger to be ſpued out of the mouth of Chriſt, as luke-warme water out of the ſtomacke. This is the puniſhment here threatned, which was written for our inſtruction, that wee might know where luke-warmeneſſe takes place, where this puniſhment will follow. We may flatter ourſelves as the men in the old world did, and thinke all is well, never regarding till the judgement come: but the truth is, that in regard of this ſinne, we are in danger to be cut off from the Church, and from true ſocietie with Chriſt: God can doe this ſundry waies, either by bereaving us of his Goſpell, and making us aſt the heathen: or by ſending the enemy among us, to deſtroy and root us out of this land: and even in our neighbour countries and townes, he ſets ſpectacles before us, that by them we may ſee how hee can ſpew us out, and cut us off from being a people. And thus much of the firſt fault, namely luke-warmeneſſe.

v. 17. For thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and made rich, and have need of nothing: and knoweſt not how thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poore, and blind, and naked.

Here is the ſecond ſinne of this Church, namely, ſpiritual pride. The words depend upon the former, as a reaſon thereof: before hee charged them with deadneſſe in religion, and here he painteth out the cauſe thereof: namely, ſpiritual pride of heart. As if he ſhould ſay, I thou thinkeſt thus within thy ſelfe, *I am rich*, for it is the manner of the Scripture to expreſſe the thoughts of men by their ſpeeches; becauſe the thoughts of men are as evident to Chriſt, as any mans ſpeeches can be to another.

In that Chriſt doth expreſſe mens ſecret thoughts, and propound the ſame in this booke; we may hence gather, that it is a part of Canonick Scripture: for it is a privilege of the Scriptures to ſet downe the thoughts of Churches, and of particular men, even as they conceive them. This can no man doe in any booke of his owne deviſing. And hence we may gather an argument againſt Atheiſts, That Scriptures are the Word of God, becauſe they reveal mens ſecret thoughts.

Now followeth the thought it ſelfe of the Angell and people of this Church, *I am rich*, that is, I have many excellent gifts and graces of Gods Spirit: by this effect he expreſſeth their ſpiritual pride in overweening their eſtate be-

fore God. This is a common ſinne in the world, and ever hath beene. Chriſt ſaid, *Hee came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*; By righteous, meaning ſuch as thinke themſelves righteous. And the proud Phariſie in his praier, which he conceived in his heart, thought himſelfe *ſure better than the poore Publican, or other men*. And Paul bringeth in the Corinthians thinking proudly of themſelves, ſaying, *We are full, and made rich, &c.* This ſinne takes place in the Papiſts at this day; who perſwade themſelves, that they can ſatiſſie Gods juſtice by temporall works, and fulfill the law of God, and merit for themſelves, and for others.

To come to our ſelves: this ſame proud thought hath place among us. Firſt, we thinke we are rich, in regard of knowledge: both yong and old ſcorne to be catechized, becauſe they would not ſeeme to be ignorant; ſome ſticke not to profeſſe this pride by bragging thus, that they know as much for ſubſtance as any man can teach them, when as indeed they know nothing, but that wick nature will teach a man. I ſometimes plead that they have a moſt firme faith, ſo as they never doubted of Gods mercy: which is nothing but the preſumption of a proud heart; for true faith is troubled with doubting. Thirdly, men will profeſſe, that they are rich in love, both towards God and their neighbours; when as they love the world and the pleaſures thereof, more than Chriſt; and ſo have no true love of God in their hearts. IIII. (to make more plaine, that this ſpiritual pride reigns in mens hearts) marke this; let any bodily calamity be made knowne to a man, that is newly befallen him, oh how is he preſently perplexed! but let Gods Miniſters out of his word make knowne unto him his inward fearefull eſtate, that by reaſon of ſinne, he is in danger of Gods judgements, and a firebrand of hell, he is not afraid. Worldly newes doth affright men much, when as the threatnings of the word move them nothing. What argueth this, but that their hearts are foreſtalled with this falſe conceit, *I am rich*. The drunkard in his drunkenneſſe, the filthie perſon in his uncleanneſſe, and every man in his ſin ſootheth himſelfe with this, *God is mercifull, I am rich, and in his favour he will not condemne mee*. Well, it being thus manifeſt that ſpiritual pride is our common ſinne; wee muſt labour to ſee it in our ſelves, and uſe all good means that it may be removed. The means follow afterwards.

And increaſed with goods, or, am made rich, ſo the words are: theſe words are added onely for amplification, to ſhew that this Church had not any ſmall portion, but an exceeding meaſure of ſpiritual pride: The doubling of the words, ſheweth the ſtrength of this conceit. Whats the cauſe, that this Church was growne to ſuch an height of pride? *Anſ.* It may be it was knowledge, wherewith no doubt the Angell of this Church, and many therein did a-

bound:

1 Cor. 5. 2.

bound : now the holy Ghost saith, *That knowledge puffeth up.* This is true in all places : great knowledge, (without special grace) great pride. This is the sinne of the Schooles of learning. Where knowledge abounds, there pride of heart abounds, and men are puffed up according to the measure of their gifts, unless by his grace, and the sight of their sinnes, God doe humble them.

And have need of nothing. This is a further sign of their great pride, that they thought they needed not the helpe of any thing, or any person beside themselves : And all such as thinke they have no need of the blood of Christ for the washing away of their sinnes, doe surfer and abound with this spirituall pride of heart. This serves further to convince our congregations of this damnable spirituall pride. If any one be sicke in body, he straight tendereth unto the Physician ; but not one of a thousand seeketh to the Minister till the pangs of death draw neere. The soules disease by sinne is not felt ; there is no complaint for want of the blood of Christ. But if we would be emptied of this pride, we must labour to see that wee stand in need of Christ, and every drop of his blood ; till such time as we feele that in us, there is no goodnesse in our hearts : We are but the proud Laodiceans, and our case is wretched and damnable.

And knowest not how thou art wretched, and miserable, and poore, and blind, and naked. Christ intending to strike this sinne of pride to the very heart, doth here set downe the true cause thereof ; to wit, *Ignorance* : as if he should say, *Thou knowest not thine owne naturall estate, as thou art borne of Adam out of Christ, and therefore thou art proud, and thy pride maketh thee luke-warme.* Then he sheweth whereof they were ignorant, namely, of their naturall estate.

For the first, Christ making Ignorance the cause of their pride, teacheth us that pride is not the first sinne that ever was in the world, as many both Papists and others have thought. True it is, pride is a great and mother sin, and the cause of many foule iniquities : but yet ignorance is a mother sinne, whereof pride springeth. The cause why any person swels with pride in himselfe, is ignorance of his owne naturall estate. By this then wee are taught to learne to know our owne estate, what wee are by nature in our selves without Christ, for that is the way to pull downe our hearts. For this cause the Prophets of God used to call them, *To a searching of themselves.* Zeph. 2. 1. when they would bring the people to humility and grace ; that men seeing their estate by reason of their sinnes to be damnable, might be humbled and caused to forsake themselves, and come unto Christ. And surely till such time as men bee humbled for their sinnes, they will never get found grace, but be as the proud Pharisee, hypocrites and dissemblers, though they have much knowledge. But when a man hath fear-

ached his naturall estate, then besides knowledge of himselfe come other most excellent graces : as humility, the feare of God, and true obedience with good conscience. And therefore first of all, let us labour to be acquainted with our owne estate in our selves, and with our perisnall sinnes, and with Gods judgements due unto us for them. For this is the ground of true grace. The spots and blemishes of our bodies wee can soone elpy, and wipe away : and why should we be lesse carefull of our soules, which be farre better ?

That Christ might fully make knowne unto them their ignorance of themselves, it pleaseth him to describe to them their naturall estate, and so proportionally the naturall condition of all Churches, and of all people : which is the state of mans miserie. This he propoundeth two waies : first, generally in these words, *And knowest not how thou art wretched and miserable* : then by the parts thereof, which be three, *povertie, blindness, and nakednesse.*

For the first. The word translated *wretched*, significth one subject to calamities, griefes, and in a word to all miseries. And that wee may know who is thus wretched, I will enter into a description of mans miserie : whereof that wee may conceive aright, two things are to be considered : First, the root, and fountaine thereof, for therein we shall best see what misery meaneth. This root is *originall sinne*, and it hath two branches : First, that particular transgression whereby *Adam* sinned, which was not only the sinne of his person, but also of the whole nature of man, spreading it selfe to all his posterity, Christ excepted. Secondly, the defacing of Gods image, and the corrupting of mans heart, which by reason of the fall of our first Parents, hath in it a pronenesse unto all sinne, both in will, affection, and in all the faculties of the soule. In these two stands originall sin ; and in them, and with them we must conceive of mans misery, as in the root thereof. Secondly, wee must conceive of mans misery under the forme of punishment, having relation to the first sinne of *Adam*, and to the corruption of each mans nature thereby received. The punishment of sinne must be considered finally waies, according to the divers kinde of mans being : either in this world, or after. For it is either in this life, or at the end of this life, or after this life. And so accordingly is misery to be considered.

Now of the punishments in this life, some concerne the whole man, some the parts of man, some his estate. Punishments concerning the whole man, be of two sorts. The first, is subjection to the wrath of God, whereby a man since *Adams* fall is made the child of wrath : a misery of all miseries, and yet the more grievous, because without some grace, a man cannot discern and see the same. The second is a *bondage under the Devill*, whereby a man in his mind, will, and affections, is subject every way to the will of the devill ; which though we cannot

not describe, yet we may thus conceive of it. The regenerate man saith, *I sinne, but I would not sinne*: The naturall man saith, *I sinne, and I will sinne*: It is my nature to sinne, and my delight; and this was the state of this Church.

Punishments concerning the parts of man, be either miseries of his soule, or of his body: the miseries of his soule be these. First, in the understanding, ignorance of Gods will: and in landry, madnes, and foolishness and in all men, paine and difficulty, both to learne and remember whatsoever is good: which was not in man by creation. In the conscience also, be accusations, secret feares, and terrors. In the will, is rebellion to Gods will. In all affections, pervertesse. All which are miseries of the soule.

The body also hath these miseries. I. It is subject to all infirmities, sicknesses, diseases, and aches; which are so many, as all the books of Physicians neither do nor can record the same. II. Mans body is mortall, and subject to temporal death, which no man can possibly avoid or prevent by all the art and skill in the world.

Punishments of mans estate, concerne either his goods, or calling. In goods there be these miseries; want of things necessary: for by reason of sinne it is a punishment, and in it owne nature a curse: and all the hurts that come by the creatures, for their enmity towards man, and toward one another; as also their subjection to vanity; all these be miseries and the punishments of mans sin. In mans calling there is misery: for therein is man subject to trouble, to lesse, and sorrow: which come as a punishment of mans first sinne. And all these bee the miseries of man in this life.

At the end of this life, comes *bodily death*, the separation of soule and body asunder; which in it selfe is a most fearefull curse, for so, it is the very gate of hell.

But after this life, is the accomplishment of all miseries, and that is *eternall destruction and condemnation in hell fire*: which to be the end of all miseries, appears by this, because it is a reparation of mans person from the societie and presence of God: and an enduring of Gods wrath in the whole person, even in the place of the devill and damnable soules, and that not for a time, but forever and ever eternally. And thus we see what punishment is, and answerably what misery is: whereby we may see what it is to be wretched, namely, in a word to be subject to all miseries, whether we consider them in the root thereof, *original sinne*; or under the forme of punishment in this life, in the whole person and in soule and body severally, in goods and calling, at the end of this life, and in the world to come.

The proper end that moves Christ to say to this Church, *she knew not that she was wretched*, is this; to teach this Church, and in them us, and all Churches to learne to know their owne miseries, to feele the time, and to be touched in conscience for them. We therefore must learne not to flatter our selves with hope of our good

state: but labour to see our misery both in sin, and the punishment thereof: And seeing it, strive to be touched with it, that we may cry for till such time as this in some measure bee wrought in us, we shall be but luke-warm professors, having a shew of godliness, but wanting the power thereof. The true light of our misery is the gift and grace of God, but yet we must use all good means, that we may come to see the same, & to be touched with it, that so we may have hearts herby fit to receive the gospel, which contains the remedy of this our misery.

And *miserable*; that is, *worthy to be pittied*: this is added, not to set downe another thing, but to expresse the greatnesse of their misery: as if he should say, Thy misery is not small, but so great and so grievous, as indeed thou art in that regard to be pittied of all men.

Hence we learne, that we must not despise parties miserable by reason of their sinnes, or scorne and contemne them; but contrariwise lament and pittie them. When *David* saw men sinne, and so pull heapes of misery upon them, *hee shed rivers of teares*. The Lord makes it a good mans property to *mourne for the abominations of the people*. *Jeremie* for the sinnes of the people *wished his head were full of water*. And *jull Lot* grieved his *righteous heart for the abominations of Sodom*. It was the fault of the Corinthians, which *Paul* reproveth, that when the incestuous man had sinned that grievous sinne, *they were not humbled, but puffed with contempt against the partie*. And it is a fault in sundry men at this day, that they are not humbled in themselves when they see other men sinne. We must not doe so, but shew the grace we have above others, in being grieved for the miseries which men without grace by their sins pull daily upon them. Thus much of their misery in general.

The parts of their misery are three, which Christ noteth particularly, that if it were possible, he might cause this Church to lay aside this damnable pride; for these in all men are maine miseries. The first is poverty: *And poore*; that is properly one that hath not a rag to his back, nor bread to his mouth, unless hee begge the same of others. But here it is taken for one that is spiritually poore: which poverty wee shall better conceive, if we doe understand what be true spirituall riches. True riches be Gods grace and favour in Christ: as the pardon of sinne, and life everlasting. The poore man therefore is he, that wanteth Gods favour for the remission of his sins, and the gift of eternall life: and hath in him no good thing that is acceptable to God, but in regard of his soule, is as silly and poore as any beggar in regard of his body.

The end why Christ calleth this church poore, is to beat downe the proud conceit of her own good estate, and to cause her to seele her spirituall poverty, and so become poore in spirit. And we in them are likewise taught to labour

to feele our owne povertie, how by nature there is no goodnesse in us: but we are utterly destitute of the grace and favour of God, that so we may goe out of our selves, and in regard of our selves even despaire of our salvation: for till this poverty of spirit be wrought in us, we may make a shew in profession, heare the word, and receive the Sacraments, but we shall never have sound grace. And blessed were our estate, if we could lay aside that devilish pride, which puffeth up our hearts, and become poore in spirit; then were wee in the right way to receive the Gospel, and the graces thereof: but till we be beggers in ourselves, we never begin to be rich in Christ.

How can Christ truly charge this Church with poverty; for the Laodiceans were a rich people, and had great store of wealth? *Ans.* True it is, they were rich in wealth, as histories shew, and yet poore to God. For all honour and wealth in the world is nothing without the grace and favour of God in Christ. *Paul* saith, *Wee are compleat in Christ*: forth of him therefore we have nothing. To the Corinthians he saith, *All things are yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods*. But nothing is ours till we have Christ, and Christ us.

As it was with this Church, so it is with all other. Every person and all people are but poor and beggerly, if they want Christ: and therefore if God have given any man riches and wealth, he must lay this good foundation; use them as helpes to further his salvation: for by them he may attaine to the meanes of salvation, and alio shew forth the fruits of faith. But they that have wealth and use it otherwise, shall finde it turne to their deeper condemnation.

The second part of their misery, is *blindnesse*. *Quest.* How can they be said to be blind: for they had a learned teacher no doubt, that both was able and did teach the will of God; and the people likewise knew the points of religion, and beleaved the Gospel? *Ans.* They had knowledge indeed; but yet they were blind: first, because they knew not their owne estate. If a man had all skill in all arts and sciences, and great knowledge in the word: yet if he know not himselfe in some measure, he is but a blind man. Secondly, because they did not know God in Christ: They knew no doubt, that there was a God, and that Christ was a Saviour, but they could not apply it to themselves, to be able to say, God is my God, Christ is my Redeemer, & the holy Ghost my sanctifier. Thirdly, because they could not discern of things that did differ; as betweene good and evil, betweene evil and evil, betweene temporall things and eternall blessings: This spirituall discerning, is a gift of Gods grace.

In that Christ saith, *They were blind*, though they had knowledge: we may learne, that all knowledge is but meer ignorance before God, to those persons that know not themselves, and

God to be their God in Christ. For want hereof Christ calleth the Angell of this Church *blind*, though other wise he were a very learned man. Which must teach us not to rest content with any humane learning, no not with the literall knowledge of the Gospel; but we must labour further to know our selves, and to know God in Christ, and Christ our Redeemer: and bee able in some good sort to discern betweene things that differ. *David* a most worthy Prophet intitleth the 32. *Psal.* *his learning*. What learning sheweth he there? *Ans.* Surely nothing but the knowledge of the pardon of his finnes. And indeed that is it which seasoneth all our learning: and therefore above all things we must labour for it.

The third part of their misery, is *Nakednes*. Nakednesse is twofold; to the eye of man, and to God. Nakednesse to the eye of man is bodily, and that is also twofold; either that which was before the fall in the bodies of our first parents, whereby their bodies being uncovered, appeared very glorious without shame: or that which is after the fall, whereby the body being naked and bare, appears full of shame; which is so excessive by reason of mans sinne, that if necessity would permit, the whole body both face and hands should be covered. Nakednesse before God, is when any man lies before God a deformed sinner. In this case *Moses* saw the Israelites, *when they had made a golden calfe*: for thereby they deprived themselves of Gods Image, and were guilty of that most grievous sinne of Idolatry. This is a misery of all miseries, and the greatest nakednesse that can be: and thus is the nakednesse of this church in this place. *Quest.* Why doth Christ call them naked? *Ans.* To move them, and in their persons all professors to have care not to flie from God, and to hide their finnes with *Adam*, but to bring themselves into his presence and there lay open their finnes, that they may obtaine a covering for them by Christ. It is the practice of the world, to hide their finnes from men, but never to care how bare and naked they bee in the sight of God, who yet seeth them all as plainny, as wee the sores of any poore leazer that shewes the same to move our pittie towards him; which if we could see, we should be ashamed not to seek to cover our sins before God. Wee must therefore labour in our owne consciences to see the nakednesse of our soules before God: and seek to be touched and humbled for the same, that so we may earnestly intreat for the righteousnesse of Christ, to be a covering to cloath our soules. This was *Dauids* practice: for when hee saith, *Blessed are they whose finnes are covered*. *Psal.* 32. 1. hee would give us to understand, that he used to uncover his finnes, and lay them open before God; that at his hands in Christ, he might get a cover for them.

These are the particular parts of a mans misery, which every man must labour to feele in him.

Exod. 32. 25.

Ioh. 31. 37.

Col. 2. 10.

1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

Use.

Use.

himselfe, if he would be partaker of the righteousness of Christ: for thus hath Christ both in generall and in particular, set downe the misery of this Church; that hee might prepare them to receive the blessed comfort which followeth in the next verse.

v. 18. *I counsell thee to buy of mee gold tryed by the fire, that thou mayest be made rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be cloathed, and that thy filtbie nakednes do not appeare: and annoyne thy eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

Here beginneth the counsell of Christ unto this Church. Wherein, first he propoundeth a notable remedy for her misery before noted. In this remedy, we are to consider three things: the manner of prescribing it; the remedy it selfe; and the meanes whereby it is obtained.

For the first, this remedy is propounded; not in any sharpe commandement, but a milde and gentle advice, *I counsell thee*. And herein Christ doth take to himselfe the office of the Counsellor of his Church. For as God hath his Church and people, so he hath his Counsellors, by whom in mercy he hath revealed his counsell unto his Church. The principall Counsellor is Christ; so he saith in the perion of Wisdome, Prov. 8. 14. *Counsell is mine. And I say saith; To us a Child is borne, and hee shall call his name, Wonderful, COUNSELLER, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace:* yea, hee is both King and Counteller to his Church. This office Christ challengeth to himselfe, for these causes: first, because he adviseth his Church, touching the way whereby they must escape everlasting death, and come to eternal life. Secondly, because he teacheth them how they may practise every businesse, so as it may please God. Thirdly, because he teacheth them how they may in grievous dangers and distresses finde a good issue, or else be able with patience to beare them. These things he worketh daily in his Church, not by extraordinary meanes, but ordinarily by his word and spirit; and therefore may justly challenge this honour, to be called *the Counsellor of the Church*.

From this office of Christ, wee learne two things: First, to doe all the honour and reverence we can unto his Majestie; for hee is our professed Counsellor, who employes himselfe for the good of his Church. Counsellors of the State and of the Law, are highly honoured and respected of all sorts, even for their counsell in worldly matters, though often it faile: how

much more ought wee to honour Christ our heavenly Counsellor, whose counsell leadeth unto glory, and is stable and sure for ever. Look how much his counsell excelleth theirs, so much ought he to be honoured above them all. Secondly, in all distresses and grievous temptations, and dangers either of soule or body, wee must take counsell and advice from Christ Jesus: for to this end doth hee reveale himselfe to be a counsellor, that men in distresse comming to him, by his advice might be comforted and eased. When *Aboub, Ammon, and Mount Seir* banded themselves against *Judas*, the people were in great distresse and danger; but marke what good king *Iehoshaphat* did, he betooke himselfe to the Lord his counsellor, saying, *I ord we know not what to doe, but our eyes are towards thee.* 2 Chron. 20. 12. that is, direct thou us in this danger, for of our selves wee know not how to escape. This practice ought to be followed of all men, especially in time of any danger, such as these dayes are by reason of sinne. The counsell of Wizzards, Sorcerers, and Astrologians, ought not to be sought after; but by prayer we ought to humble our selves, and call only and continually on this our only true Counsellor.

II. Point. The remedy it selfe: which hath relation to the former Verse, for there hee lets downe the misery of his Church in three parts; which were all great miseries. And here he so propoundeth his remedy, that it is answerable to their miseries in the severall parts thereof. For first, here is gold to make them rich, answerable to their poverty; Secondly, *raiment* to hide their nakednesse; Thirdly, *eyesment* to take away their blindnesse.

For the first, by *gold*, according to the Analogie of the Scripture, we are to understand the graces of Gods spirit: as true faith, repentance, the feare of God, love of God, and the true love of man: 1 Pet. 1. 7. *Faith is compared to gold in the tryall thereof:* and so may all other gifts of the spirit be hereby understood. Secondly, by *gold*, we are to understand *Christs merits*, yea, *Christ himselfe*, as the fountaine of all grace.

This *gold* is further said to be *tryed by the fire*: that is, most pure and precious *gold*, purged from all dross, as fine as can be made by the art of man. This is added to expresse the property of Gods graces and gifts, namely, that they are more precious unto God than *gold*; yea, than *gold tryed by the fire*, as *Peter* saith.

By this every person is taught, how to beautifie himselfe both in soule and body: It is the common blind opinion of the world, that furrer attire and rich Jewels doe adorne the body; and indeed in some cases the body may be adorned with pearles and Jewels: but the right way to adorne any person indeed is, to furnish the soule with these graces of the spirit, which unto God be more precious than fine gold. Our bodies and soules ought to bee the dwelling places of the *Holy Ghost*; and there.

v. 18.

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v. 18.

fore we must adorne them, and make them fit for so worthy a Guest: which must be done by the good grace of the spirit, and not by strange and forren attire, which no good man could ever abide.

Secondly, these graces have a further effect than to beautifie; and that is, to *make rich*. Here then see the common folly, yea the spirituall madnesse of men in this world; who spend all their time, wit, and strength, to furnish their houses with treasure, and to enrich their bodies, and in the meane time leave their soules ungar- nished. What a madnesse is this, that men should neglect the true riches, and follow after that which is nothing else but counterfeit copper? Seeing therefore Gods graces be the true treasure which fadeeth not, let us seeke after them, as Wisdome counselleth: Pro. 8. 10, *Receive mine instruction, and not silver: and knowledge, rather than fine gold: For wisdom is better than precious stones.* The second part of this remedie is, a *white garment*: that is, *Christ himselfe*, and his righteousnesse imputed. So Paul saith, *All that are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*: There Christ is made a garment, whom every one that beleeveth in him, doth put on. Again the fruits of the spirit are a garment; and therefore we are commanded to *put on tender mercie, kindeesse, humble- nesse of minde, meeknesse, and long suffering*. Further, *Christ* is the end of this garment; namely, to cover the nakednesse of our soules, *lest the filthinesse thereof which we by our finnes have brought upon us, doe appeare*. The third part of this remedie is, *anoyning with eye salve*: where, by eye salve, we must understand the *spirit of Illumination and knowledge, wrought in the minde by the holy Ghost, whereby men know themselves and their estate*: for as eye-salve sharpenes the eyes and cleares the sight, where it was by some occasion dimmed, so doth Christ by the Illumination of the spirit, make a man know God in Christ, and to discern between good and evill, and between things temporall, and blessings eternall.

Thus we have the meaning of the words: whereby we may see, that by all these three, we can understand nothing else but *Christ himselfe* and his merits. Now one and the same thing in *Christ*, is signified by divers termes, to shew that there is in *Christ* the fullnesse of all grace, and plentifull redemption; yea, store of supplies for all our wants. The *Ladiceans* were poore, but *Christ* was their riches; they are naked, but *Christ* was their garment: and lastly, they were blind, but *Christ* was their eye-salve. So that what wantssoever be in us, there is a store of supply thereof in *Christ*. This must the more diligently be marked, because the Papists make *Christ* but halfe a Saviour, in putting our merit unto his: and so disgrace him in his glorious worke, wherein he is a most absolute Saviour and Redeemer.

III. Point. The meane whereby these wor-

A thy gift of God may be gotten, is by buying and bargaining: in *Christ* faith, *I purchaseth thee by my*. Where he alludeth to the outward state of this Citty, for it was rich, and also given to much trafficke, as Histories record; and therefore he speakes to them in their owne kinde, as if he should say: You are a people exercised in much trafficke, and delighted with nothing more than buying and selling: well, I have wares that will serve your turne; as *gold, garments, and oyle*, therefore come and buy of me. These words must not be understood properly, for so we can buy nothing of *Christ*; because there is nothing that is good in any, but it proceedeth from the free gift of God in *Christ*.

B This is onely spoken by way of resemblance to buying and selling, which stands in these points which are the principall things in bargaining. First, a man sees his want, and desires to have it supplied; and therefore goes to the place where such things are to be sold. Secondly, hee seeth the thing, and he liketh it. Thirdly, he priceth and valueth it. Fourthly, he maketh exchange for it, by money or by money worth. Fifthly, if it be a great summe, he giveth earnest. Sixthly, getting of *Christ* there is a kind of resemblance to all these. First, a man must seele himselfe to stand in need of *Christ* and his merits; because men see want of bread, meat, and drinke in their houses, therefore doe they goe to buy the same. Now looke how sensibly any man feesle these worldly wants; so evidently should we feele our want of *Christ*, and his merits. For this is the first beginning that causeth us to seeke to receive *Christ* Iesus. Secondly, feeling our wants, wee should hunger and long after *Christ*, that we might be made partakers of him and the vertue of his merits: as a man that is to buy a thing doth take liking thereof, which doth stir up a desire in him to buy; so must we labour to have a liking of *Christ*, which will move us to seeke unto him. Ilay 55. 1. *Hee, all they that thirst, come and buy: to that none makes this bargaine, but he that thirsts*. Thirdly, wee must prize and value *Christ* above all things in this world, even at so high a rate that we account all things in respect of him to be but losse; yea, even *drifts* ending, as Paul did.

C Fourthly, we must make exchange. How? we can give *Christ* nothing but his owne. *Answer*. Properly there is no exchange, and therefore he saith, Ilay 55. 1. *Hee, come and buy without money, for nothing*. *Simon Magus* is heavily checked and accused, for offering to buy the gifts of the holy Ghost, Act. 8. 18. And yet there is an exchange to be made, *if we must give in our finnes, and receive his righteousness*; and therefore he is said, 2 Cor. 5. 21. *To be made filthy for us, that wee should be made thrighteousnesse of God in him*. See a most blessed exchange; for our sinne and shame, wee receive his blessed grace and righteounesse. *Quest*. How is this exchange made? *Answer*. In the practice of faith and repentance; for when we humbled ourselves

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and confeſſe our finnes, praying earnestly for remiſſion, and beleeve our reconciliation by Chriſt, then is he our righteousneſſe. Laſtly, though we can give nothing unto Chriſt, yet he giveth unto us an earnest in this bargaine; to wit, ſome portion of Gods Spirit, and ſome ſmall meaſure of his graces: as grace to bewaile our ſins, to humble our ſelves, and to pray for the pardon of them, with purpoſe not to ſinne againe: theſe be the earnest of this bargaine. And thus is heaven bought and ſold betwene Chriſt and us; the receiving of his true ſaving graces, be they never ſo ſmall, even as a pemie is a ſufficient earnest for a bargaine of an hundred pounds.

Here wee ſee wee are commanded to buy Chriſt, and to make a bargaine with him, whereby we may have right to him and his merits. But how goes the caſe with the world? ſurely many come where this bargaine is offered, but few there be that buy. Wee are like to Paſſengers on the ſea, who ſee many goodly buildings, ſumptuous cities, and fruitfull Iſlands, but they make no purchaſe of them; they onely praiſe them, as they behold them, and ſo paſſe by: ſo we come and heare the doctrine of Chriſt and his merits, and approve of the ſame: but where is the partie that maketh this bargaine? Come to particular points, and it will appeare, that few bargaine for Chriſt. For who ſeels his owne miſeric as he ought? Who perceives himſelfe to ſtand in ſuch need of Chriſt as he doth? worldly wants we feele, and are affected with them, but in regard of ſpiritual wants, we are ſenſeleſſe, and yet till we truly feele our miſery, wee never come to make this bargaine with Chriſt. Againe, come to our deſire and hungering after Chriſt: In bodily thiſt and hunger, we can ſay; *I hunger, or I thiſt*: but who can ſay, *I hunger and thiſt after Chriſt and his righteousneſſe*? Alas, our hearts are full, wee feele no want: may they are dead, we feare none evil; and as for our valuing and eſteeming of Chriſt, we are plaine *Cadent*, and *Eſines*; we preferre the world and the baſeſt things therein before Chriſt. And for the exchange; we are loth to part with our finnes, and to put on Chriſts righteousneſſe. Which plainly ſhewes we make no exchange; and though we be willing to lay heapes of finnes on Chriſt, yet who takes Chriſts righteousneſſe and declares the ſame by the fruits thereof? And laſtly, for the earnest of the ſpirit, though ſomewhere be that have received it, yet the body of our people, as their conſcience can tell them, have not received it: for they want knowledge, faith, and other graces.

By all theſe, it is more than manifeſt, that this bargaine is not made: and yet true it is, that for worldly and baſe bargaines he muſt riſe early that muſt goe beyond them. But what a ſhame is this, that we ſhould be to expert in vile earthly things, and have no regard of this excellent and heavenly bargaine? Wherefore ſeeing Chriſt

calleth us hereunto, let us make this one bargaine with him, and that preſently; which we ſhall teſtifie by doing the five former duties: let us never be at reſt, till we may ſay each one for himſelfe, *I have bargained with Chriſt, and received hiſeameſt*. Yea, our care ſhould bee, that this bargaine be made not with us alone, but with our children. Many are forward to bring up their children in good trades, wherein they may buy and ſell for their living; wherein they doe well, but withall they ought to be as careful to teach them to make this bargaine with Chriſt, and then they doe farre better. For this is the cheapeſt and the chiefteſt merchandise that ever was ſet to ſale, which wee may buy without money, and yet it will make us rich for ever. Many labour in traffike and take great paines, and yet often loſe thereby: but make this bargaine once, and then thou ſhalt never loſe it, nor any thing thereby, but continue for ever rich in God.

v. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten: bee zealous therefore, and amend.*

Because our Saviour Chriſt hath ſo ſharply rebuked this Church, they might thereby take occaſion to diſtruſt, and deſpaire of his favour and mercie; here therefore it pleaſeth him, to take away all occaſion of doubting, after this ſort: *If I ſeto rebuke and chaſten all thoſe whom I love, then you are not to deſpaire of my mercie, by reaſon of my ſharpe reprove, whereby I have threatened to ſew you out of my mouth, for your ſin of luke-warmeneſſe. But thus I ſeto deale with all thoſe whom I love; and therefore in this regard you need not to doubt of my love and favour.*

The meaning. *As many as I love*; Chriſt loves the creatures two waies; as he is *Creator*, and as he is *Redeemer*. As he is the *Creator*, he loves all his creatures, with a common and general love, whether they be living or dead, reaſonable or unreaſonable. As hee is *Redeemer*, he loves his creatures with a ſpecial and a peculiar love; which is not common to all, but proper to that part of mankind, which is choſen to ſalvation before the world was. And of this peculiar love he ſpeaketh here, *I rebuke*: The word in the originall which is tranſlated *Rebuke*, is more ſignificant than can fitly be expreſſed in any one Engliſh word; thus much is meant thereby, as if Chriſt had ſaid; *Fiſt, I will convince them of their finnes, and after reprove, admoniſh, and checke them for the ſame. And chaſten*: This muſt be underſtood of a kind of correction, which a father uſeth of his child, called *nurturing*: which is correction to breake the childe of his fault and bad manners, and to teach him his dutie. This then is the meaning: All thoſe whom I beare ſpecial favour unto, doe I convince of their particular faults,

and then checke and reprove them and nurture them as a Father doth his childre: to make them leave their particular vices, and to walke in obedience. And to assure us that this is the true meaning, read *Prov.* 3. 12. whence the words are taken, and *Heb.* 12. 5. where they are more fully explained.

Here then Christ sets downe his ordinarie dealing with them, whom he taketh and chuseth to be his Disciples and members; namely, he convinceth them of their faults; he reproveth and chasteneth them for this verie end, to breake them of their finnes, and to bring them to reformation. And this dealing of Christ belongeth to everie servant and member of Christ without exception; yea, Christ layeth rebukes and chastisements on all his children, and that in divers measure, according to the nature of their finnes, and the disposition of the parties. Such as are hardly broken of their finnes, hee layeth on them more heavey judgements and chastisements, that they may bee brought to deeper humiliation, and so to true repentance. And therefore everie one that would be a Disciple and member of Christ, must looke to goe under his correction, and his sharpe and severie rebuke; according as they are in heart disposed unto finnes either more or lesse; *He must passe under the rod, that would come into the bond of the Covenant, Ezech.* 20. 37.

The use of this doctrine is twofold, set downe, *Prov.* 3. 12. The first is thus; *My son, desist not the correction of the Lord: for the Lord correcteth whom he loveth, his chastisements are tokens of his love:* that is, who so ever the Lord either in the ministration of his Word reproveth thy finnes, or by affliction chasteneth thee, despise it not, neither sit light by it, but make good use thereof unto thine owne soule. The second use is, *Faine not when thou art corrected:* that is, let not the grievance of it daunt thee, but arme thy selfe with patience; because hee useth to correct all those whom he doth love, making his chastisements tokens of his love.

Secondly, Christ here setteth before all Governours, an example to follow, especially to fathers and masters: his example is this: *On everie child that he loveth, he layeth corrections, for this end, to breake them of their finnes:* So answerably, Governours must shew tokens of love towards those that are under them, by due reproofe and correction, that so they may be broken of their mislemeanour, and brought unto obedience to God. It were to be wished, that both Parents and Masters would follow Christ in this example, and to seek the reformation of those that be under them: but more lamentable is the case; Parents and Masters doe thinke it sufficient for them, if they provide for their children and servants, food, and rayment, and necessities for the bodie: and so altogether neglect the good of their soules, which is the cause of many finnes, and so of many judgements;

both which ought to move them to put in practice this duty.

Thirdly, the verie order of Christs words doth minister unto us necessarie instruction, touching his manner of correcting his servants. For first, hee propounds a direct end of all his corrections upon them; to wit, their nurturing and reformation; then, that hee may attaine thereto, he proceedeth thus: First, he doth convince their consciences of their finnes, then by reproofes he rebukes and checks them, and lastly, correcteth them, by laying chastisements on them. A most excellent and blessed order, in using correction for the good of the partie chastised, which ought to be followed of all Governours, Parents and Masters especially. First, they must propound a good end of their corrections, even the amendment and salvation of the partie: and that they may then proceed aright, they must first convince their conscience of the fault, then reprove, checke, and admonish them: and if that take not place, they must proceed unto meet and convenient bodily correction: all which must be done, not for revenge, but to bring them to amendment, and to make them obedient to the will of God. Whereby we see, how far many Parents & Governours overshoot themselves, when as they make their corrections matters of revenge and choller; wherein they seldom intend the reformation of the offender: which is a fault far against the word of God; and therefore to be considered of everie good Christian.

Be zealous therefore, and repent. In the former verse hee propoundeth a remedie against their *Spiritual pride:* in these words he doth directly propound a remedie against their *lukewarmnesse.* But first observe the coherence of these words with the former. Christ had said; *Whom I love, I rebuke and correct, according as their fault is:* therefore saith he to this Church, *Because I have rebuked and corrected thee by severe threatenings for thy lukewarmnesse, therefore now become zealous and amend.*

Here see the proper end of all reproofes and corrections: namely, the reformation and amendment of mens faults and mislemeanours whatsoever, that so they may be more carefull of their wayes, and more zealous in good duties than ever they were. Whensoever therefore wee are reproved by the word of God: or when the Lord shall visit any in body, mind, or goods, by any kinde of crosse, we must remember to take occasion thereby to repent and amend, knowing that by all these, as by so many Sermons, the Lord calls us to amendment.

Now come to the remedie of their *lukewarmnesse;* *Be zealous.* That we may understand this Commandement, wee are to handle some points touching *zeale.* First, what is *zeale?* *Zeale* is a burning affection in regard of Christian religion, and the true worship of God. This *zeale* is compounded of two affections: of love, and anger or indignation: so

that in this Commandment are two duties enjoined unto this Church. First, that they should love Christ and his Religion above all things. Secondly, that they should be grieved officially for this, that Christ was dishonoured, his worship profaned, and his doctrine not embraced, but in stead thereof false worship, and false doctrine entertained: when both these concur, then *zeale* is in the heart. A most notable example hereof we have in Christ, *Psalm 69. 9.* where the Prophet *David* in his person saith, *The zeale of Gods house had eaten him up.* Whereby thus much is signified, that the heat of his love for the maintaining of his Fathers glorie, had even consumed him: and that his indignation was so great, because his Fathers name was dishonoured, and his worship profaned, that it did even eat him up. This we shall see to be true in Christ, if we read the historie of his life, *John 2. 17.* yea, he professed of himselfe, *that it was meet and drinke unto him to doe his Fathers will.* *John 4. 34.* That thing he preferred before his owne life or satisfaction: nay, for the accomplishment thereof, hee was content to suffer the pangs of Hell. The like *zeale* was in *Eliaz*, when all Israel was fallen to Idolatrie; *his heart was zealous for the Lord of Hosts.* *1 King. 19. 14.*

II. Point. The kinds of *zeale*. *Zeale* is either good or bad: In good *zeale* are these things required. I. True faith, as the root thereof; *1 Tim. 1. 5.* *The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith undefiled.* Now, one part of *zeale* is love, and therefore as love proceeds from true faith, so must true *zeale* also; and that which is not grounded on faith, is rather rashnesse and fiercenesse of nature, than true *zeale*. II. Repentance; *2 Cor. 7. 11.* There are seven fruits of repentance required, whereof *zeale* is one, that is good *zeale*; Even a burning love of true Religion, and a godly indignation when false religion is embraced. There may be *zeale* in a man that hath no repentance; as was in *Ishmael*, *2 King. 10. 16.* *Come with me (saith he) and see the zeale that I have for the Lord.* Yet hee wanted repentance, for verse 20. 21. it is said, *Ishmael regarded not to walke in the Law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sinnes of Terabham, which made Ishmael to sinne:* and therefore he had not in him the true *zeale* that is here commanded. III. *Zeale* must come from knowledge: for without knowledge it is but rashnesse and boldnesse, such as the Jewes had, *Rom. 10. 2.* *Whose zeale was without knowledge.* And such as *Paul* had before his conversion, *Phil. 3. 6.* *In zeale he persecuted Gods Church:* Knowledge therefore in Gods word, must be the guide and conductor of our *zeale*.

III. Point. The fruits of *zeale* must be considered for the better discerning of true *zeale*. First, true *zeale* continueth a man in everie thing to seeke to please God; *Whether*

A *we be out of our way, or in it; that is, or whether we be in one right manner, we are in none yet. For the love of God constraineth us.* So wherefore this true *zeale* is in any measure, it offereth violence to the heart: for as a man cannot but endeavour to doe his dutie, for the love hee beareth unto Christ. *Eliaz* said, *The grace of God was in his heart as new wine in a vessel, which must needs vent out.* *Job 32. 18, 19.* Secondly, true *zeale* makes a man endeavour to serve and please God with all his heart, power, and strength. So good King *Ioshiah* hearing the words of the Law read, hee turned not slackly or negligently, but with all his heart, and all his soule, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses: so as like him was no King before, neither after him arose there any like him. *Psalm 51.* *David* humbling himselfe for his finnes, prayes for the pardon of them with such marvellous *zeale* as no tongue can utter: *Desiring God to remember him according to the multitude of his mercies,* often repeating the same thing in divers tearmes, that in some sort hee might expresse the earnest desire of his heart: And in giving God thanks for his benefits, hee putteth all the strength of his heart thereto, crying out; *My soule praise thee, O Lord, and all that is within me.* *Psalm 103. 1.* And thus wee see what a thing it is to be zealous; whence true *zeale* ariseth, and what it worketh in mans heart.

Seeing wee (as hath beene shewed) are tainted with the fume of *lukewarmnesse*, and coldnesse in Religion; let us here learne how to redresse this vice. Wee must become zealous, having in our hearts a fervent love of true religion, and vehement indignation when the same is disgraced, and false worship takes place. Let Religion therefore take place in our hearts; and let us be fervent and shew the same in our lives by zealous obedience. Away with all slacknesse and lukewarmnesse; it were better to be Jewes and Turkes, and to hold no Religion, than to be lukewarme in the true profession. And thus much for *zeale*.

The second part of this remedie is, to Repent, or amend. This they are also enjoined, because *zeale* without repentance is nothing but rashnesse. *Ishmaels* *zeale* was no true *zeale*, because he wanted repentance, even then when he was zealous. But where he was this Church enjoined to repent? Namely, for *lukewarmnesse*: not for that she had committed any horrible sinne, but because she was slacke in good duties.

Here then wee have a good lesson for the ignorant sort, that challenge Gods mercie unto themselves, because they are no notorious malefactors; as murderers, and adulterers, they hate no man, but doe good unto all; but here they are taught to reforme this their blindness & ignorance: For repentance must be for want of good duties, yea for slacknesse therein: wherefore

King 19. 15.

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fore let no man touch himselfe in his ignorance with a false persuasion that all is well, if he live not in grosse finnes. This is the enchantment of the Devill, whereby hee rocks many asleepe in their finnes, till hee carrie their soules to Hell. A good meaning will not serve the turne, God requires zeale in well-doing.

v. 20. Behold, I stand at the doore, and knocke: If any man heare my voice, and open the doore, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Here Christ, to keepe his Church from despair, ministers unto them the signes and tokens of his love and favour: and before the same sets downe this note of attention, *Behold*, hereby intending to make them more attentively to marke the tokens of his love; that plainly seeing the same, they might not doubt thereof.

Hereby in generall we are taught, that if we would arme our selves against desperation and distrust in any distresse, we must both often and seriously consider, and marke the tokens of Gods love unto us, and that will fortifie our faith. Read Psal. 23. In evier verse save the last, he sets downe tokens of Gods love and favour towards him; and then in the last concludeth thus; *Without doubt, kindness and mercie shall follow me all the dayes of my life, and I shall remaine a long season in the house of the Lord.* Our hearts are naturally filled with doubting, which will bewray it selfe in any distresse. But to prevent and cut off all hurt that may come thereby, let us marke the good dealing of our God towards us, and observe the tokens of his love and mercie in his ordinarie providence: and these will notably strengthen us against distrust. And surely, no person is so full of despair, but if hee could looke backe into the mercies of God, from the beginning of his dayes, and lay them to his heart, they would minister comfort unto him, in regard of his love and favour at that instant.

More particularly; Christ ministering comfort unto this Church, doth expresse his meaning by a borrowed speech, comparing evier man unto a house, his heart unto a doore, whereby entrance is made, and himselfe unto a guest or stranger, desiring to come and entertain, not so much to finde courtesie, as to shew favour and kindnesse.

In the words of this verse, there bee two signes of his love set downe. First, an heartied desire of their conversion, which he earnestly seeketh: Secondly, a promise of mutuall fellowship, after their conversion. The first in these words; *Behold, I stand at the doore and knocke:*

A In this desire Christ expresse two things. First, that this Church if we regard the greater part thereof, had no true fellowship with Christ, nor Christ with them; for he stands at the doore of their hearts, which were closed up against him. This may seeme strange, but the case is evident: for though they had in them many good things, as know ledge of Gods will, and did professe the Gospell, and were partakers of the signes and seales of the Covenant of grace; yet they are tainted with this notorious sinne of *lukewarmnesse*, which closed up the doore of their hearts against Christ, and barred him out.

B Here then we are carefully to observe, that a man may have in him many good things, and yet by living in one sinne, be quite cut off from all true fellowship with Christ. *Iudas* had many excellent gifts, he forsooke all and followed Christ, hee preached the Gospell, and administered the Sacraments; and yet by covetousnesse, the doore of his heart was quite barred against Christ. So *Herod* reverence *Iohn*, and heard him gladly, and did many things at his instigation, Mark. 6. 20. yet by the sinne of incest, his heart was to closed, that he had no fellowship with Christ. And to it is with us: It is good that wee know the will of God, approve the same, and professe the Gospell and also receive the seales of the Covenant: but yet for all these, our case may be such, as wee shall have no true fellowship with Christ. For if we nourish, though but one sinne, and live therein, that will make a separation betwene Christ and us, bee the sinne what it will; as covetousnesse, adulterie, profanenesse, or such like. Hereby then; all that desire to have true fellowship with Christ, are to bee warned to purge their lives from all sinne, so as their hearts bee not tainted with nourishing any one sinne; for even one sinne, whatsoever it bee, is a strong barre, that will keepe Christ from coming in to us.

C Secondly, whereas he saith, *I have stood at the doore:* (for so the word *stans* is.) Here he speaketh to this Church, as he used to speak by his old Prophets. As by *Isaiah*, *I have spake unto you all my Prophesies since early everie day, and sending them.* And by *Isaiah*, *I have spread out mine hands all the dayes unto rebellious people, which will hearken in a way that was not good: even after their owne imaginations.* So here, *I have stood at the doore:* that is long, even till night, as the word *supplex* importeth.

D Hereby Christ would signifie his great patience, in waiting for the conversion of this people of *Laudacea*. In justice he might long agoe have cast them into the pit of destruction for their finnes, and yet in mercie hee waited for their conversion: and complains that he hath waited long. Here then wee have just occasion to take a view of Gods patience in waiting for the conversion of a sinners. And that which hee saith to this Church, hee may as justly say unto

Isaiah 7. 25 & 26.

Isa. 63. 2.

us; for he hath stood verie long at our doores, even 26. yeeres and upward, and yet still continueth knocking, so as he may justly complaine of his long waiting. Let us then here learne to know the day of our visitation, which is then to any people, when Christ stands at their doores and knocks, and unto us this day is present. Wee have the Ministerie of the Gospell; and therefore we must be perswaded, that this is the time of our visitation, and hereupon learne the dutie which Christ teacheth the Jewes: namely, *acknowledge the day of our visitation*; which if we doe not, wee must looke for like vengeance which fell upon the Jewes, because they regarded not when God sent his owne Sonne from his bosome, to knocke at the doore of their hearts.

And knocke. Here is a further signification of his desire of their conversion: wherein wee may behold his grace and unspeakable mercie towards this Church, and in them towards all other his children. This Church hath bard out Christ by their sins; and yet hee pursues them, hee *knocks*; hee useth meanes to enter for their good, and vouchsafes them mercie, even then when they refuse it. Thus when *Adam* had sinned, and fled, and hid himselfe, did the Lord seeke in the garden, and make with him the covenant of grace. And therefore it is truly said in *Isay*, *The Lord is found of them that never sought him.* Luk. 15. 4, 5. *Christ fetcheth the lost sheepe that was gone astray.* All which shew and set out unto us, the unspeakable greatnesse of Gods mercie in Christ, unto miserable man, who then shewes mercie unto him, when hee never seeketh it. This his mercie is verified in all Churches, and unto us; Which must be an occasion to enlarge and stirre up our hearts, to blesse the name of Christ for this unspeakable mercie, in vouchsafing us favour when we never sought it, but refused it.

Quest. How doth Christ knocke?

Ans. The words going before, whereto these have reference, give light unto the question. Before Christ had threatned this Church, even to *shut her out of his mouth for her lukewarmnesse*; and after he counselleth her to *buy of him gold, and other remedies.* Now, upon this greivous threatning, the Church might despair of his mercie: But Christ to comfort her, tels her here, that these reproofes and rebukes were but knockings at the doores of our hearts, to make them open: For then Christ knocketh at the hearts of any people, when he vouchsafes them meanes to see their sinnes, and threatens them for the same; and withall gives them counsell, whereby they may escape the fearefull punishments thereby deserved.

Here then note the state of any people that have the Ministerie of the Gospell vouchsafed unto them; they have Christ among them, standing at the doore of their hearts, and knocking to come in, by exhortations, admonitions, threatnings, and by promises, which is a

great and endless mercie.

First, seeing we have Christ knocking at our doores, there ought not to be in us such dullnesse and deadnesse of heart, in hearing him knocke. If a man of any account come and knocke at the doore of our house; oh what a stir will we make to let him in quickly? What a shame then is it, that wee should bee dead-hearted, when Christ Jesus the King of Heaven knocks at the doores of our hearts? Secondly, this must admonish us with all speed to turne unto God by true repentance; for we know not how long hee will continue knocking; and if we doe not heare, and turne before he withdraw himselfe from us, we perish eternally. For if we refuse when he knocketh at the doore of our hearts, hee will refuse when wee knocke at the doore of his mercie, Prov. 1. 25; 26. Math. 25. 11, 12.

Note further, this knocking is not ordinarie, but is joyned with crying: for he saith, *If hee heare my voice*: so that hee both knocks and cries. It is then the knocking of one that would enter: we therefore ought answerably, with serious regard to receive the threatnings of the Law, and the promises of grace, and so bee as earnest in receiving and embracing him, as he is in knocking to come into us.

The second token of Christs love, is a gracious promise of fellowship with them, in these words: *If any man heare my voice, and open the doore, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* These words have bene much abused, and therefore I will stand to set downe the true use and meaning of the same. Marke, the forme of speech is such, as gives unto a mans will and soule, an action in his conversion, whereby he comes to Christ, and receives Christ.

This may seeme strange, but it is for just cause used by the holy Ghost: for in the conversion of a sinner, there bee three workes, the holy Ghost, the Word, and mans will. The holy Ghost is the principall Agent enlightning the minde with true knowledge, softning the heart, and changing the will from cvill to good. The Word is the instrument of the holy Ghost; for now he worketh not by revelation, or speciall instinct, but ordinarily in & by the Word, when a man is reading, hearing, or meditating, either publicly or privately: for the Word preached is the power of God to mans salvation from faith to faith. Thirdly, mans will, though by nature it be evill and dead unto grace, yet being renewed by the holy Ghost, in the first act of conversion moveth and striveth to be turned. It is not like a peece of wax onely passive, which without any action receiveth impression. But as fire, so soone as it is fire doth burne, and so soone as it burneth it is fire: so the will, though by nature it move not, yet being renewed by grace it moveth, and so soone as it moveth, it is renewed. And hereupon it is, that the holy Ghost ascribeth action unto a sinner

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sinner that is to bee converted : which argueth not, that by themselves men can have a will to bee converted, but that being renewed, they may will their conversion. And for this cause is the Gospell preached in these tearmes, *Repent and believe*: not to shew that man by nature can repent or believe; but that God in mans conversion, doth give him grace to will and desire the same.

Hence then it followes, that this Text hath been divers wayes abused: First, by the Papists, who hence would gather *free will of conversion in a sinner by nature*. True it is, a man hath free will in his conversion; yet not by nature, but by grace, neither can any more bee gathered hence; for here it is only said, *If any man heare, and open when I knocke*. Nay, hence we may rather gather, that a man by nature cannot heare, nor open, because the counsell is given to such as are poore, and blinde, and naked by nature.

Secondly, they also abuse this Text, that hereby would prove a *flexible free will by grace* to be in man, which is this; Sundrie men thinke, that after the fall of *Adam*, all being wrapt up in sinne, God gave a generall grace, whereby a man might will, and receive that which was good; and this grace though it dispose the will in some part to that which is good, yet it takes not the corruption away, but that remains still; whereupon if he will, he may receive Christ by that generall grace: or if he will not, he may refuse Christ by his naturall corruption, which yet remaineth in him. It is said, this may be gathered from this Text: But the truth is, here is no foundation for *flexible free will*: all that can here be gathered is, that man hath free will in his conversion, yet not by a generall, but by Gods speciall grace. Nay, Christs ministerie serves for this end, that those which before could not turne of themselves, might by grace bee converted. This flexible grace is against Gods word; Christ saith, *Everie one that hath heard, and hath leaved of the Father, cometh unto me*: He saith not, may come if he will, but peremptorily *cometh*: For mans will cannot dispose and overrule the work of God; but the work of God overrules the will of man: though man be unwilling, yet when God calleth effectually, he cannot but come: For the creature cannot reject or resist the will and calling of his Creator.

If any man open unto mee, I will come, &c. The proper intent of Christ in this conditionall promise, is to provoke them that bee dull and heave, to listen diligently to Christs words, and to receive the doctrine of salvation from him gladly.

In the example of this Church we are taught our dutie. Seeing Christ in the ministerie of his word, knocks both by threatnings, by promises, and good counsell: therefore wee must all of us listen unto the words of Christ, and open the doores of our hearts, and receive him into the same. But alas, the practice of the world is

A false otherwise: men are christen *Nabals* unto Christ, who though he come friendly, yet they repell him, making no account of such a guest. Nay, we are *Bethlemites*, which have no room for Christ in the Inne of our hearts: Christ will needs lodge with us, hee must lie among the beasts in the filthy stable. Nay, many send him out of their gates with the Jewes, and crucifie him with their finnes. But let us abandon this greivous sinne, for it is the right way to plunge our soules into the pit of destruction.

Quest. How must a man open his heart to receive Christ? *Ans.* By doing two things: First, he must labour to see his owne vilenesse; that hee is unworthy to receive so blessed a Guest; then hee must humble himselfe, and acknowledge that his unworthinesse. Even as the Ruler did when he said unto Christ, *Lord, I am not worthy thou shouldst come under my rooffe*. This humiliation is the beginning of grace. This done, hee must by true faith lay hold on Christ, that is, believe that Christs death and passion is for the pardon of his finnes, and for the salvation of his soule: For, as Christ dwelt in mens hearts by faith, so by faith hee must bee received into their hearts. Here some will say, If this be to receive Christ, then all is well. But take heed thou deceivest not thy selfe, with a vaine imagination of thine owne braine, in stead of faith. Looke therefore that thy faith be true and sound: if it be true faith, it will worke by love, even a true love of Christ and his members, which will appeare by keeping his Commandements, *Joh. 14. 23.*

I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with mee. Here is the thing promised; to wit, mutuall communion and fellowship with Christ. This is the principall token of Christs love, being indeed the verie ground of all true happinesse, joy, and comfort, and therefore it is added to move them to open unto Christ. This societie is here propounded in two parts. First, the sinner being converted makes a feast unto Christ, *I will come in unto him; and sup with him*. Secondly, Christ makes a feast unto him, *And hee shall sup with me*. And in these two consists the summe of *Salomons* Song of songs; where Christ entertaineth the Church, and the Church againe feasts Christ.

For the first, some may aske, how can a poore sinner make a feast for Christ? *Ans.* Cant. 4. 16. The Church, or everie Christians soule, calleth Christ unto a feast, *in his Garden to eat his pleasant things*. This feast consisteth of these things. First, of the fruits of true repentance: *Psalm. 51. 17. A broken and contrite heart*, is a daintie dish acceptable unto God. Secondly, of an heart believing the word and promises of God: for without faith it is impossible to please God, *Heb. 11. 6*. Thirdly, the penitent sinner must give up himselfe in soule and bodie, a holy and acceptable sacrifice unto God, by serving God faithfully, not only in the duties of pietie, but also in the faithfull performance of

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Rom. 12. 2.

the duties of his particular calling: these bee the delightfull dishes wherewith Christ is fed.

The second feast is made by Christ, and hee shall sup with me. Christ comes not to be entertained only, but to entertaine: And the feast which he makes, is his owne bodie and blood: For his flesh is meat indeed, and his body is drink indeed. The vessels whereon these meats are carried, are the Word and Sacraments. And all that bee his welcome guests, are true penitent sinners, which have hungering and thirsting hearts after his bodie and blood, Luk. 1. 52. And from this feast arise these blessings; Righteousness, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Seeing this fellowship with Christ is here promised to those, that open and receive him into their hearts: First, hereby wee are taught to renounce all earthly & carnall pleasures, and not to addict our selves to drinking and quaffing, or sumptuous fare; for here is a better feast set before us, whereupon wee must set our hearts, turning our eyes from all worldly pleasures. We know by experience how friends entertaine each other; but wee must labour to know how to entertaine Christ, and to feast him with his owne graces, that he may sup with us, and we with him, and so have true fellowship with him.

Again, by this wee may see a notable abuse of many that come to the Lords Table: for here wee see is required an interchange of feasting betwene Christ and a Christian; but many there be that will come to the Lords Table, and feast with Christ, that will never feast Christ againe: And yet we ought to be as careful to feast him, as to feast with him. It is a shame to sup often with Christ, and yet like ungratefull Nabals, never to have one good dish of grace and holy obedience to set before him, wherewith indeed wee should feast him daily. Others will seeme to give him good entertainment, for that day whereon they feast with Christ: but soone after they give him gall to

eat, and vinegar to drinke, by their daily finnes.

v. 21. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and sit with my Father in his throne.*

v. 22. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches.*

Here is the conclusion of this Epistle, and it hath two parts. A promise, verf. 21. and a commandement, verf. 22. In the promise note two things. First, to whom it is made, *To him that overcometh*. Hereof we have spoken. Secondly, the thing promised; that is, fellowship with Christ in glorie: *I will grant to sit, &c.* whereby is not meant equalitie of glorie and honour; for that is not possible for any creature to receive; but a participation only of some part of his glorie, so much as shall suffice for his perfect happinesse. And because it might bee thought no great matter, therefore it is illustrated by a comparison, *as I overcame, and sit with my Father in his throne*. As if he should say; I will advance them that overcome their spiritual enemies, into the participation of my glorie, even as my Father (when I had overcome) advanced me into the fellowship of his glory. Now Christ as he is Mediator, is inferior to his Father, and in that regard is not advanced to equall glorie with his Father, though he sit with him: So the members of Christ, being inferior unto him, may sit with him in his throne, though their glorie be unequal. These things for substance have beene handled, chap. 2. verf. 25, 26.

The second part of this conclusion, *Let him that hath an eare, heare, &c.* hath also beene handled before.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life: And hee that winneth soules, is wise, Prov. 11. 30.

FINIS.