THE DOUBTING BELEEVER: OR, A TREATISE CONTAINING

1. The Nature  
2. The Kinds  
3. The Springs  
4. The Remedies of Doutings, incident to weak Beleevers.

BY

ODADIAH SEDGIVICK, Batchelor in Divinity, and Minister of COVENT-GARDEN.

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TO THE
Right Honourable,
ROBERT
Earle of VVarwick,
Baron of Leez, &c.

My Noble Lord, and free Patron.

My Lord:

Renewed heart is a very Heaven in our little World, and Faith is the only Sun in that Heaven. The Sinner never comes to be precious, till he comes to be pious; and the value of that piety still advanceth,

A 3 ac-
The Epistle

according to the quantity of true faith, as though Ring is the more considerable with the Diamond. I cannot conceive of a more compendious way for any Christian full and constant revenues, then this. To get faith, and still to use it: The sum or product of which would be this, Grace and Glory, Heaven and Earth are ours.

Satan well knowes what a serviceable channel Faith is for all our traffique, either for our ship to lanch out into du-
duties, or for God's ship to come laden in to us with mercies: and therefore there is no Grace which he batters, & conflicts so with, as with faith: If wee weaken or shake foundations, this hath a spreading influence into the whole building: A Christian faith cannot be wronged, but presently all the spirituall frame becomes sensible of wrong and losse.

In my weake judgement, it were a great prudence to secure that, which being secured, A 4 now
now secures all. Nothing grows weak where faith grows strong. My Lord, This poor Treatise which I presume to front with your name, is like Aaron and Hur, who staid up the hands of Moses; So doth this Treatise in dread your to stay the hands of faith in a weak Believer, who hath an ample estate on the shore and at land; but those waves of doubtfulings (when he is thrusting in) too often make him to fall back & stagger: Whence follows this great unhappiness, That
whereas his faith might have served in many precious comforts, it is (almost a whole life) employed only to answer fears and doubts. I humbly present the subsequent work to your Lordships personal use, and public patronage. Be pleased (at your leisure) to peruse it, and regard it as the first cognizance of my thankfulness to your Honour, for the living which you did so freely & lovingly confer upon me, wherein I shall desire faithfully to serve your
The Epistle, &c.

your Lord and mine.

Now the Almighty God, and blessed Father, abundantly inrich your noble heart with all saving graces, and continue you long to be an instrument of much glory to himself, comfort to his Church, and good to our Common-wealth.

Your Honours,

perpetually obliged;

Obadiah Sedgwick.
To the Christian Reader.

His Treatise which now is presented to a publick construction, was (many years past) the subject of my private Meditations and Sermons. I did not affect any farther publication of it, then in the Pulpit; but the importunity of others hath compelled it thus to appear in Print.

Note.
Not that the manner of handling the Subject (here insisted on) is excellent or exquisite, but that the matter handled may be supposed to be of common use & benefit, as a little star hath influence, though not that glory which is proper to the Sun.

The case which is here put & discussed, is a case of common experience, there is no believer, but sometime or other...
ther will confess it is his. The Sun being seated in an heavenly orb, shineth with a very pure & constant light, but the candle (though set, & burning in a golden candlestick, yet) burns with a snuffe, & much variablenesse. When Christians are translated, and transplanted from earth to heaven, then their graces shall become perfections; there are no defects.
facts in heaven, there are no mixtures in heaven, but whatsoever is pure there, it is altogether pure: yet on earth it is otherwise, neither the habits of grace, nor the acts of grace are alone in any Christian: When I would doe good, evil is present with me, said Paul; And, I beleive, Lord, help my unbelief, said that poor man in the Gospel. Where is the be-
believer who insists not more on his fears than on his faith? and is not oftner lamenting his doubts, then rejoicing in his assurances? none have an interest in Christ, but believers; none have title to a solid and settled peace, but they; and yet we see the children fearful, & bondmen confident; the best of men still in suit, & the worst of men quiet, as if in full possession; none
none doubting less then such as have most cause to doubt, & none doubting more then such as have most cause to triumph in Christ. And in truth thus it will be, while gross ignorance veils over presumptuous sinners, and misbelief is incident to tender spirits. And is not the hand of Joab in this business too? Is not Satan in all the sins of wicked men, and
and in most of the troubles of good men? either he tempts us to sin, or that will cause us to doubt; or else he tempts us to doubt, and that will cause us to sin. Surely it is not the shortest of his wiles and arts, in matters of Religion, to keepe the judgements of some still staggering; and in matters of a souls interest in Christ, to keep the heart still doubting. Doth
With he not know that the Christian cannot so happily improve Christ, who is still in suit to prove his title to Christ? For the better expediting of these soul-suits, peruse (if thou pleasest) this ensuing Work, which is (I confess) not a garden for every one to walk in, but only physic for the sick or weak. It is intended as an Hospital for the lame, only for a troubled sinner, only for a weak believer: And the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, even he who establisheth us in Christ, prosper it for his glory and the help of some one or other. Thy faith's servant,

OBADIAH SEDGWICK.
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A TREATISE
OF
DOUBTINGS.

From Mark, 14. 31.
O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

These words contain in them the summe of a Christian in this life, which is this: That he is truly, but yet weakly good. Christ here seech in Peter (though a Disciple) a defective faith, and then a defect of faith: Faith hee saw in him, yet it was defective. It was little faith: There was truth, but there was not such actual strenght in it, as might or should be: And besides this, he espies in him a defect of faith; not for
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for the habit of it, but for the act of it, Wherefore didst thou doubt? Which words are a conviction that he did doubt, and likewise a correction; Wherefore, wherefore didst thou doubt? q. d. Thou didst doubt, but thou didst ill so to doubt.

There are many excellent points which might be observed from the Text, I will name some, and insist only on one of them; Thus then.

1. A true Believer may be but a weak Believer, [Thou of little faith!]

2. Christ takes notice even of a weak Believer, [O thou of little faith!]

3. Though Christ likes believing, yet he dislikes doubting, [Wherefore didst thou doubt?]

4. A person may be truly believing, who nevertheless is sometimes doubting: in the same person here you see a commendation of the one, and a condemnation of the other, which suppose
resolve
pose necessarily a presence of both.
This being the Subject on which I purpose to treat, for the benefit of weak Christians, I shall declare five things concerning it: Namely,
1. The nature of Doubtings.
2. The kinds and diversities of them.
3. Their possible consistence with true faith.
4. Their grounds, and springs, and occasions.
5. Their cure and remedies.

Cap. I.
The nature of Doubtings.

To understand this, you must know, that in the worst part of the soul, there are several qualities, viz. 1. Infidelity, which strictly, and amongst those which professe the Gospel, is a positive rejecting of heavenly truths, with
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their secret goodness; herein men forsake their own mercies by plain dissent and sightings of the good word of grace: as is evident in the Pharisees, Luk. 7. 30. who rejected the counsel of God, &c.

2. Despair, which is a manifest dissent, not so much in respect of the thing or object, (for this is assented unto as true in respect of itself, viz. That God is merciful, and Christ did dye for sinners) but in respect of the person or subject, wherein the soul gives up it selfe as lost, as without the compasses and hopefulnesse of the Divine proclamation: It is persuaded that there is no possibility for it to recover the shore, and therefore sinks in the depths: My meaning is, that such a soul, though it sees that in God, and that in Christ which can save, and doth save others, yet cuts off it selfe, as not at all capable of any interest in the mercy of God, or blood of Christ, and to eternally falls under its owne weight,
as is evident in Judas and Cain.

Now Despair, so far as it makes assent unto Truths, it is opposed unto Infidelity; and so far as it dissent from special goodness in them, it is opposed to Faith; and so far as it concludes impossibility of that good unto itself, it is opposed to Hope.

3. Fearful opinions, which are positive assents unto Truths, yet raised upon such probable inducements only, that the soul is left with a suspicion, that the contrary may be true. They are like a man upon a weak plank in a great river, there he sits, and there he fears, because he knows not certainly how long he shall sit there.

4. Doubtings, which are the suspensions, or inhibitions (the holdings up) of the soul from any determinate inclinations one way or other: they are the pawlings of the mind.
The doubting Christian.

As take a man in a journey, where he meets with two wayes, he lookes on this, and inclines it may be the right, and then he looks on that, and supposeth that it may be the right, and then he looks upon both, and makes a stand, and goes on in neither: So it is with the soule in doubtings (spiritually) there are two wayes before it, two objects, two works, to beleive, or not to beleive, and arguments to incline to the one, and to the other, drawing into some equality of strength and weight, just like a paire of scales, answerably ballanced, so that both are at a stand, there is no turning either to the right hand or to the left. Therefore the School-men say well, that Dubitatio est motus supra miram partem contradictionis, cum formidine determinandi alteram partem ejus.

That you may yet conceive this clearly, remember I. In our mindes there are Affentings, which
which are the adherents of the understanding to truths knowne:
And there are Dissentings, which are the bearings off from those
truths. There the soule positively inclines, here it declines; there it
puts out the hand, and here it keeps it in.

2. Doubtings properly stand between them both; they are not
plainly the one, nor plainly the other: If I may speak freely, I
conceive them to have a twang of either; they are a medium, a middle
thing, as your mixt colours are, which you cannot style directly
white, or directly black.

The soul hath a desire to joyne unto Truth, it hath a desire to
share in that goodnesse which it apprehends; yet it neither falls into
nor yet rejects, but like the fish to the bait, it likes it, and is
striking at it, but dares not, and swims about; or like a hewe
of the sea, (that is the Apostles comparison, 1 John 1:6) thrulking

B 4.
The doubting Christian
to the shore, and yet drawing back; or like a Meteor hovering in the aire, twixt up and downe: Such rowling, reeling, actions of the soule are doubtings; they are a recaying, adventuring: The soule sees reason of either side, to draw and with-draw, to give on, and give back. It sees Christ and the promises, knows the goodness and bounty in the one and the other, whereupon it is giving on upon them, and putting out the hand, but then instantly it checks itselfe, and is slayed with contrary arguments and fears; I may not be so bold, perhaps they belong not unto me.

So that the person is hanging betwixt hope and feare, I would, but I may not; I may, but I dare not: It is just with the soule as with those at Chelse, they set out a man, and think to take a King; but then presently they are check'd, and draw him back againe; God, he is my Lord, and my King,
resolved,
King, pray and yet he is not; He will doe me good, yet I feare he will not; He hath pardoned my sins, and yet I feare he hath not; He doth heare my prayer, yet I doubt he doth not; My estate is good and happy, nevertheless I suspect it is not.

Thus doth a man waver, and owle, and is like a man in the unrounded places; he no sooner ducks up one leg out of the dirt, but the other sinks in; the soule is not determined one way or other.

3 One thing know more, that though the mind doth not pitch, rise unto a determinate action spiritually doubtings, yet it ever inclines towards a determinate object: That is, though the doubting Christian cannot come to quit those uncertaine, and trembling, and shivering motions, and bring them to a stayed-esse, and positive fixing, yet his mind being, it looks after Christ, and the promises; it doth not re-
The doubting Christian jealze, nor doth it give up all hopes; it keepes in it two things, which Infidelsity and Despaire want.

2. Things.
1. One is, that it prizeth Christ, and the promises, though it cannot claspe them.
2. Another is, that it gives not up the case as desperate, and impossible; but though it cannot fixe, yet it will be hovering about them.

Cap. II.
The kinds and diversities of them.

The second thing respects the sorts of doubtings, and these I must also touch.

4. Sorts of doubtings.
1. Some are of admiration: in these the minde doth not gain-say simply, no, it doth beleeve, and is only solicitorious about the hidden manner, or way of performance, or accomplishment. Such a doubting
ing was that of the Virgin, Luke 1.34. How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? Non dubitat esse sacriendum, sed quomodo fieri possit, inquirit, saith Ambrose.

2. Others are of Confirmation: Where the soule believes, but desires something more to secure & settle it, so that it might be put out of all doubt, as was that of Gideons, Judg. 6. 36, 37, 39. which Judges 6. kinds of doubtings are the craving of a little more indulgent security from God in matters of extraordinary concernment; not that we properly question the verity of him, but that (in respect of ourselves) we might work the more confidently upon clearer evidence and warrant.

3. A third sort are of negation: and this is such a forme of scrupling, wherein we plainly suspect God of his good word of truth; and is incident unto evil men in their general course, and to good men in respect of some particular carriages, and businesses, as is evident
The wording of the question was a question of doubting, and this doubting, no question, was an unbelieving one. It did not credit the Angels message; so is it expressed, ver. 20. Thou shalt be dumb, because thou believest not my words.

4. A fourth sort are of inquestation, where the minde is diversely carried; and is not come to a rest, as when a cause is not come to a sentence, but hangs in suspense. Now of this sort of doubtings we speake at this time, which againe may be branched:

1. Into Real, which questions the principles themselves, either for truth or goodness, and so they respect matters of faith; or else they question actions touching lawfulness, or unlawfulness, and so they respect matters of fact: In which respect they are more specially stiled Scruples of Conscience, which are nothing else but some grating and painfull
full doubts about points * practically: Of which see the Calvinists.

2 Into Personal; where not the things in themselves, but in respect of our selves, are questioned, and only questioned, not peremptorily denied, or rejected; viz. I know, and believe that God is a Father, that Christ is a Redeemer, and the Saviour of sinners; I now doubt not, whether there be any truth, or good in these, (for these I yield) but upon view of my great sinfulness and many defects, I now only question (and this is enough) whether my interest be in that truth and goodness: What is said here of a case respecting Spirituals, the same may be said of that other respecting the promises for Temporals, because that doubts do extend to both.

3 Again, there are two sorts of personal doubtings.

1. Some are private, which remove all presence of faith: of which see, 1 Tim. 2, 8, &c. Jam. 1, 6.

2. Some
Some are contrary, which do
mingle, but not negates; they doe
impart, and keep faith low, but
not wholly deny or extinguish it,
as in our present Text.

CHAP. III.

Of their possible consistence with A
Faith.

Quest.

And here lies the kernel:
Whether personall doubtings, (i. e.) doubtings of a man's
particular interest in God, and
Christ, and the promises, may
consist with personall Faith?
To which I answer, They may:
for (and mark it well) though
1. Doubtings be sinfull, for
they are the smakings of Cor-
ruption.
2. They be no part of Faith:
3. They cannot consist at the
same instant with the acts of
faith, for it is impossible that faith
should formally doubt. As it is
impossible that I should lay hand.
on the rock, and not lay hand at the same time; or that mine eye should see, and not see the colour at the same time; or my hand receive, and not receive the gift at the same time. So is it impossible that the soul, when it doth believe, should doubt, forasmuch as faith in act, and doubt in act, are opposite, and the soul cannot possibly set out from one faculty at the same time opposite acts; I confess successively it may; yet simultaneously it cannot. But now to believe, and to doubt, are opposite; for in the one I embrace, in the other I do not embrace; in the one I rest, in the other not, &c.

Yet fourthly, actual doubtings may be in a person who hath habitually faith; for this you must know, that faith and doubtings are not opposed as life and death, where the presence of the one determinately concludes the total absence of the other; but as cold and heat in remiss degrees in the subject, where though the nature
The doubling Christian

Father of the faithfull, yet we finde him winding and turning, shuffling and doubting more than once; if we read Gen. 12. and Gen. 15. 2, 3. and Gen. 20!

So David had his tremblings, his faintings, his suspicions; all in him was not faith; he in his haste falls out with some for liers, who yet spake nothing but the truth of God: And so againe, in his haste, he is cut off from before the eyes of God, who yet heard the voyce of his supplications.

Job also, a man of great sorrowes, and of great faith, yet, had he not his qualmes? his shakings? his questionings? indeed in some places he seemes Heroicke in his faith, graciously victorious over all calamities, and riding above waves, yet in other places wee finde the Man, as well as the Believer, he staggers, he fears, he is giving up.

The faithfull in Scripture are compared oftentimes to Trees, which though they be well rooted,
ted, yet may be shaken; and to
Noah's Ark, which though it was
a safe harbour, yet it was tossed;
and to an house built on a rock, which
though it be firm, and cannot be
removed, yet it may be moved;
and to Starres, which though they
be heavenly, yet are twinkling;
and amongst them, much to the
Moon, which with her light hath
yet some dark spots.

What should I alledge exam-Experi-
ple? let your owne experiences; ces.
and daily complaints sufficiently
answer to this, let them give ver-
dict! Some of you have not yet
risen above your feares. Let God
hold up his favour, doe you not
presently doubt? Let him hold in
his hand, doe you not also doubt?
O how we tosse, and rowle, and
 stagger in every sensible difficul-
ty! In matters of this life, scarce
a contrary occurrence which
doth not distract us. Thus is it
with most of us in our infancy,
and in our settings out. But for
you who are of further perfecti-
on, who are ripened unto an assurance, perhaps unto a full assurance, can you never remember any bowings, shakings, shiverings, doubtings? Or think you never to meet with any more? I have known the Sunne one day bright, and the next covered; and David's mountain strong: But, Thou didst hide thy face, and anon I was troubled, Psal. 30.

Besides all this, consider the nature and condition of true faith in this life; it must then be granted, that there may be doubtings with it, so much as no grace is perfect in this life; it hath its contrary in the same subject in some remisse degrees. And it is one worke of faith still to be casting out of doubts, which doth rise in the minde: which working could not be, unless there they were.

Object. But you will say, Whence should these arise? Doth God alter in his Love, in his Nature, in his Fidelity? Or doe the Promises
on, who are ripened unto an assurance, perhaps unto a full assurance, can you never remember any bowings, makings, shiverings, doubtings? Or think you never to meet with any more? I have known the Sunne one day bright, and the next covered; and Davids mountaine strong: But, Thou didst hide thy face, and anon I was troubled, Psal. 30.

Besides all this, consider the nature and condition of true faith in this life; it must then be granted, that there may be doubting with it, forasmuch as no grace is perfect in this life, it hath its contrary in the same subject in some remiss degrees: And it is one work of faith still to be casting out of doubts, which doth rise in the minde: which working could not be, unless there they were.

But you will say, Whence should these arise? Doth God alter in his Love, in his Nature, in his Fidelity? Or doe the Promises

resolved.

misles (which are the great ray of faith) goe and come, ebe and flow? Doe they vary from themselves, either for truth or goodness? Or doth Christ the foundation, the rocke on which our faith is built, is not he the same yesterday, to day, and for ever? If so, how, why, whence is it that a Beleever should doubt?

I answer, That though there be the samenesse in God, in Christ, in the Word, yet there is not an oneenesse in us; and the variations in us doe in no wise conclude any thing in them, no more then the severall alterations in the ayre doe inferre a diversity in the Sunne, which is one and the same in respect of it selfe, however the changes be multiplied here below. Therefore know, that the
CAP. IV.

Springs, Causes, and Occasions of doubting are, or may be these.

Natural corruption: This is a corrupt root, the seed of all sin, and of unbelief. This is that flesh which doth just against the spirit, and thrusts up abundance of motions, and corrupt reasonings, and motives to interrupt our faith in its great businesse of believing; So that when we would do good, evil is present with us; and when we would believe, unbelief is present with us.

It is very true, that in our conversion, the soul is graciously enlarged, and the powers of sin are crushed, yet so, that still we goe with a chaine about our leg; and though sinne hath its deathwound, yet so much life is still remaining, as to interrupt our Graces, to resist them; yea (and if wee looke not well unto it)
to  lay  and  binde  them.
He who hath a maime in his Simile. leg, cannot move in that maner or measure as he desiries; and a wounded hand or arme cannot stretch out it selfe, and lay hold at all times. Corruption is in the best, and will doe its part, and that is one reason why we cannot doe all our part in beleeviving.
You know in the Warres, how the intentions and motions of one side are stoppt, and kept up, by the malice, and subtilite, and power of the other; and that there may be many veines of sweetest water under the earth, which yet are many times checkt, and controlled, by the falling downe of earth. O this body of sin, which (nolentes-dolentes) we must yet carry about with us, how backward is it to come to Christ? how unbelieving is it? how suspiciouis? how scardful? It will not be perswaded, it will not hearken, it will not credite, it will not yeeld, it will not imbrace.
The doubting Christian

The very Disciples, who had the presence of Christ, who saw the Miracles of Christ, who heard the voice of Christ, how often did they doubt? did they question? Whence shall we have bread to feed so many? We had trusted it should have been he who should have redeemed Israel. So that Christ reproves them more then once, or twice, O flow of heart to believe, &c. *Why doest thou think, or why is thy heart troubled? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: But Christ apologiseth for them, The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

A second cause of doubting. Imperfection of faith, this is another cause of doubting. Why should a childe fall so much, and a man so seldom? is it not the weakness in the Nerves, and Sineewes, and loco-motive parts? When fire is newly kindled, it is but little, and hath much smoak; so is it with our faith, the more imperfect it is, the more doubtings in minds.

Matthew 14:31: O than of little faith,
Wreak faith, and many doubtings goe together; like a little heat, and great mists. Some men are but Babes in Christ, they are but plants in the Garden, they are but Lambs in the fold: Now children are apt to feare, and plants to shake, and Lambs to flag behind, and weake Believers to doubt; lay a little burden on a Childes shouder, he knowes not what to doe; shew him the water, he cries out: So is it with weake Believers; their strength is not proportioned unto unusuall exigences; neither have they experiences, nor that quicknesse of art to bye them to their helps.

And these are great matters; 1. when a man wants strength to deal with his enemy, and 2. when he hath not had experience: Therefore let us consider this yet more, where faith is weake, or imperfect, there are three things incident unto those Believers.

They want ability to argue: for
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Three things in weak believers.

David: for their experience is little, and therefore their judgement are not so settled, so that they cannot always maintain their ground. David, because of former experiences, he is not amazed at the uncircumcised Philistine, but rests upon that God for victory here, who had granted him former deliverances from the Bear and the Lion. And so Paul confirms himself, 2 Cor. 1. 10. who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver; but weak faith hath little experience of God's truths, and of God's power, and of God's method and times.

2 They see their wants and hinderances; more than their helps and encouragements; like Elisha's servant, who saw the multitude of the enemies compassing the City, with Horses and Chariots; and thereupon cried out, Aha my Master, how shall we do? but (at first) he saw not the mountaine full of Horses, and Chariots.
Chariots of fire round about Elisha, which might have stayed and upheld him.

It is with new and weake Believers, as with the Israelites, who did heare of the sonses of Anak, those mighty Gians, and of the high and mighty walls about the Cities of Canaan, they looked on these, and were greatly perplexed, and discouraged, but they did not look on the strong and Almighty God, who did promise to goe with them, and conquer for them: So doe these, they looke upon the meere temptations and suggestions of Satan, they looke upon the powerfull stirrings of remaining corruption, they look upon the strength of present crosses, they looke upon their owne weaknesse against all these, they looke upon Gods delayings, upon their owne dulnesses, and whatsoever may keep them downe; but they look not upon that God who hath promised, who hath performed the Oath to Abraham,
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The father of the faithfull; they look not upon Christ, who hath by his blood ratified and sealed the Covenant; they look not upon that mighty Spirit of Grace in them; they look not upon other standing Christians, who can tell them, that God is true in all his promises, and assuredly righteous, and a present help, and who never failes them that trust upon him, and wait.

3. They cannot repaire unto the establishments of faith as strong Beleevers can. They are not yet so acquainted with the Armory of faith; the Promises; they are the Armory of faith; but now these Promises are many, and are graciously framed to the variety of our conditions; which because the beginning Beleever knowes not, therefore in the times of changes, being not so ready, having not his weapons, nor being so presently able to send them out, hence it is that doubtings do so arise, yea and so grow upon
upon him in such strength, that he is like to faint.

You shall experimentally finde many good people, who have in some Cases maintained their ground with credit to their faith, (for they have traversed a particular vein of the Promises, they have found them out, they have applied them, and made use of them, by vertue of which they have borne downe the many risings of doubt and feare in that kind; and have singularly enabled and comforted their hearts against distress and feare.) But these self same persons on a sudden have been, and are strangely puzzeld, distressed, afraid, doubtfull, full of feares and dejections, and all that they can doe is to beare up, yea and that is hardly done to: Why, what is the matter? have they not faith? Yes; and doth not that faith work? Perhaps it doth in a generall way, but with particular efficacie they cannot yet obserue it:
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How so? This, there is a new kind of trouble, a new burden, which yet they were not put unto, and they cannot finde any promise to reach that same: and hence it is that their feares and doubtings do exceedingly sprout up, and distract them.

And this is found to be very true, that in particular and sensible distresses (be the matter and kinde what they may be) the soule remaines in a hurried perplexity, in a waving unsetledness, untill that faith can finde out a Promise to answer it, either expressly, or virtually; one of these two wayes it must reach us in our conditions, or else our feares are up.

3. The studying of the life of sense. This is another spring of doubting, which is evident in Thomas, John 20. 25. Except I shal see in his hand the print of the nailes, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not beleue: He must see, and seele, or else he is faithfullesse.
resolved.

Now to study the life of sense this, viz: To place the disposition of God, and the issues of our condition in our feelings, and what it is sensible apprehensions: As to believe that God is my God, because I finde him so; That he is gracious, because I finde a sensible answer of my prayers; That he both accept of my services, because I find that life of affections. So on the contrary, that he is not my God, because I finde not those sensible reports of his favour; I finde not that quickness, and former smartness of affections; I finde not present answers unto all my desires and requests; That I am not in the estate of Grace, because I see not the vigour, and secret increasings of Grace; That I do not rejoice, nor see my sinnen blotted Three doubts.

Which kind of life must verily be expos'd unto infinite and continual doubtings: For,
The soul here hath no constant bottom to settle upon; our feeling is sometimes more, sometimes less, sometimes none at all. Indeed it is true, that faith may breed feeling; but then it is as true, that faith may be without it: As the soul doth breed seeing and hearing in the eyes and ears, yet the soul may be in the man when these do not see, and these do not hear: A man cannot but be perplexed in his thoughts, if he holds this opinion; That meat doth not nourish him, unless he presently sees how the parts grow bigger by it; Or, that his father doth not love him, because he is not always smoothing and stroking of him; Or, that his seed is lost, because it is not a present harvest; Or, that the channel will shortly be dry, and without water, because the tide is gone out, and hath left it naked: in like manner, to conclude against our souls from Sensibles, and Mutables, exposest it to
the labyrinth of daily fears and scruples.

But secondly, the soul hereby doth advantage Satan in his suggestions; for the life of sense (like the rolling sea) is open to all winds, it hath a secret, restless, unquiet distemper of its own; but besides that, it is open to the singular disturbances, and inquietations from the Devil: For the life of sense hath made two propositions for him of the despairing syllogism, and he can easily make the other, viz.

He who hath not the sense of God's favour, present answers syllogism of from God, feelings of his graces in their nature, and measure, cannot be in the state of grace and salvation (this is the Maxim of sense.) But thou (faith Satan) hast not the sense of God's favour, &c. Ergo, faith he, Thou art not, Ergo also sayest thou, I am not in the state of grace and salvation.

Loe here the issues of the life of sense
sense! And now, no marvaile if the soule gives not on upon Christ, or the Promisses, but is tossed to and fro, and hangs in extreme suspense.

Yet thirdly, it is a life which doth much dishonour God, and therefore exposed to many tears and unsetlednesse: What? To measure the truths of God by our sense? and the graciousnesse of God by our sense? what is this but to arraigne God both for truth and graciousnesse? What is this but to let upon God, and give the sentence, which he hath kept in his owne hands? What is this, but to limit the holy One of Israel? yea, to correct his Wis- dome, as not being skilfull to order the businesse of our Salvation, unless we alwayes have an eye, or a finger at every turn, to know his particular intentions, and proceedings with us?

It is a glorious and singular way to beleeve so long, until we come downe to seeing. But to begin

God will not stoop to our unbelieving way of sense, but we must rise to his grounding way of faith.

Note. We know not what.
begin with feeling, and so rise to a promise believing, is a delusion; but a delusion both dan-
gerous and impossible; for thou hast never truly feele, unless thou dost first believe: Canst thou truly wrong thy heart with that Divine favour, which faith did not let in?

A fourth cause of doubtings is, The fourth when we deny, Faith is the matter of cause of
and grounds to work: How, is doubtings that? It is, when we guide the whole businesse below, and not above; I will give you some in-
stances.

1. You know that the condition of Grace is exposed to many short allowances in externals; and the condition of sinfull men is capable of large prosperity in worldly things: A good man may have many wants, and an e-
will man may have, in this life, adversities of evil; Prosperity his good things, (as Abraham, of good
speakes of Divin.) Now when a pasion lookes upon the bulk, up-
on the outward part, upon the shell, upon the rinde of things, and
and Fees plenty with evil men, and poverty with good men; honour shining there, and contempt clouding here; fulness for them, and leanness for these; pleasures and liberties attending them, and sorrows and restraints befalling these; when I say, he lookes on this, and nor higher then this, it is possible that suspicions and doubtings may start up; it is possible that the soule may sink downe somewhat at it. See an evidence in Ashop, Psal. 73. 2. My feet were almost gone, my steps had well.

3. When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 13. These are the ungodly who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. 13. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in innocency. 14. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. Observe here his distrusts, and doubts; As if his gracious course did no way benefit him, or as if he had served God for nought.

And thus he goes on, 'whiles he bends...
bends his thoughts downward, whiles he keepes in his faith, whiles he denied it matter to work upon; but ver. 17. there he But 17.
gives scope for faith to worke, and then he is free againe, and well againe, [Until I went into the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.]

2 In case of the sinfull condition; While we look on it, and deny Faith its matter also to work upon, we shall be full of doubtings. Let a man look only sinfull upon his sins, upon the nature condition of them, the aggravations of them, what will come of it? 1. Strong humiliations, and those are good. 2. Doubtings and despaire, and those are bad. The single considerations of sin, are the matter only of our feare; they are a grievous burden: Da-Psal. 38. 4. Wisd was not able to stand under it, My sins are too heavi. a burden for me to bear; Psal. 38. 4.

For what hope is there in our selves? What is in a sinner to up to uphold, hold a sinner.
hold a hinder, no burden is an easy to it else. let people behold their sins, and not use their faith, they cannot but doubt; for now sin appears in all the motives and causes of fear, and now God appears not in the nature of a friend, but with the countenance of an enemy, and of a severe judge; and where now can the troubled soul anchor, or fallen, or ease itself?

God (you know) hath given unto man two ears, and two eyes; if we make use of one only, our lives will often hang in doubt and suspense, if we have not an ear to hear what God saith to an humbled sinner, as well as an ear to hear what conscience will say unto a sinner: if we have not an eye to look unto Christ, as well as an eye to look unto our sins; an eye to behold the brazen serpent, as well as an eye to behold the biting fiery serpent, we cannot then but doubt: as we must give conscience its scope to works upon.
upon sin, so we must give faith is scope to work upon Christ, else we shall neither be freed from our doubtings, nor yet from our sins which cause those doubtings.

3 In case of bodily distractions, bodily distractions, which put us into an exigence or strait; if we looke below only, if we looke upon their strength and our strength only, it will now be with us, as with David tired out, and almost spent by the huntings and pursuings of Saul; * I shall one day surely fall by the hand of Saul; or as with Peter, who looking upon the waves, (and not upon Christ,) began to sink, and cryed, Lord save me; Mat. 14. 30, or as with Jephthah, whiles he looked upon the great Armies, We know not what to do; Not long 20, 12. Since, we might have read this in our selves, our very faces, when the Churches abroad were in great distress, we looked on their duties, and on their ruins and weaknesse;
neffe; we looked on man, and gave up all for lost; We did not looke upon God, and therefore our ship was full of water, our hearts did faile us, doubts and feares, like a black Cloud did over-spread us: Nay, at * this very time we heare of an externally disproportionate strenght; that the enemies are more in number, they are confederate; they complot, they intend a great designe, and now I finde the feares, the doubts wagging; and assuredly whiles we looke down-ward only, and not upward; whiles we lay events and issues upon the Creature; whiles we give faith no scope to looke up, and worke upon that God who can save by a few as well as by many, we shall never be freed from doubtings.

The very same is true in our personall occurrences; as long as we looke on the things only which we meet withall, and oppose our own strenght unto them,
it will be with us as an house Simile.
without pillars, tottering with every blast; or as with a ship without an anchor, tossed with every wave: For every croffe is too hard for us, though none can be too hard for God.

4 So for temptations; Here Tempta-also our doubtings fly up, because our faith flies not, but. O say we, we are not able to beare; to withstand, to overcome; the temptations are strong, and many, and daily. Suppose so; And what do we? Verily we are soon ready to sit downe, and to give the day to Satan, never considering that God gives his Soupdi-
ers his Arms, never considering that the quarrel and battle is the Lords, he is ingaged in the fight, for all is for his sake: We think that God looks on only, and be-
lieve not how much he curbs Sa-


...tan, and sustains us; As if Satan might doe what he pleased, and God left us alone to grapple; whereas the Lord makes manifest his
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2 Cor. 12. his power in our weakness, and his grace is sufficient for us, and he will bruise Satan shortly under our feet.

Rom. 16. The first cause of doubtings may be particular and speciall sins after conversion:

Simile. Which are like water dropped into a candle, making it to burne flat and dull, with a black snuffe at the top, & catching as it were, going up and down for hold: or as a rheume, a salt rheum fall into the eyes, which intercepts the sight, and darkens it for a time: So do our speciall sins after conversion, they do dim, and darken the soul, and like those inclosed spirits of the aire in the bowels of the earth, they cause many fearful shakings and tremblings, as is evident in David after his great sins of Adultery and Murder, they did exceedingly weaken his spiritual condition, and wiped off all his comfortables.

Beloved, these sins, they must needs be a strong spring of doubtings,
ings, if we do but consider,

That it is their nature to set us off from the shore & harbor. You know that a ship which lies quiet in the harbor, or by the shore, thrust it out, lanch it into the sea, it is tossed again: Now in all knowne sins which wound the conscience (after conversion) we loosen the Anchor, and put off; The Promises, and Christ, (upon which our confidences were anchored) doe now seem to give, they will leave, they will with-draw.

But suppose, in their sensible virtue they should not. (which yet they doe) neverthelesse wee cannot fasten now, for the very temper of the soule is injured, our spirit is wounded. You know though the staffe doth stand where it did, and as it did, yet if my hand be wounded, I cannot claspe it, nor use it as formerly.

Now what think you, must not the soule needs be filled with feares, and with doubts, which hath...
The doubting Christian hath thrust it self thus from such a gracious harbour as the mercies, the loving kindnesses, the sweet and blessed promises of God? may it not say now, as David once, Psal. 77. 3. I remembered God, and was troubled? and when mayst thou be troubled, who wouldst for such a sin pull away thy hand from such a God.

2. God doth really take these sins ill, very ill, from those upon whom he hath conferred such fruits of his love. For this is a truth, that in case of offences, Love and Bounty can give in the strongest and heaviest aggravations. As in that of David,

2 Sam. 12. 7. I anointed thee King over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul: 8. And I gave thee thy masters house, and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9. Wherefore hast thou despised the Commandement of the Lord to do evil in his sight, &c.
Observe how the Lord pleads it, and aggravates it upon David. Now when a child knowes that he hath committed a fault, (concerning which his father gave him a speciall charge, see thou doe it not) and withall hee knowes that his father is fully acquainted with all the businesse, it is likely (we finde it so) that feares and doubtings gather within the breast of the child; He dares not keep off, and yet he is afraid to come in; he knowes that his father hath taken it ill at his hands.

So it is with us after our speciall sinnes, we know that God hates them, (he hates them not personally, but naturally, not because in such persons, but because in any persons) their nature is repugnant to his: (as we hate poysnon for it selfe, and therefore let it be in a Toad, or in a Prince's Cabin, we hate it still) and they now have saine upon such sinnes, and have incensed a graci-
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gracious Father, what notable tears, what strange misgivings, what apperceptions get up now upon the heart?

Where is my Father? (faith the offending childe) He is within, (faith one) away he runs; or he is abroad, and then down he sits, and weeps, and bewaires his losse, I shall never gaine his fav'our againe.

Thus is it with us after our speciall sins; If God seeme to draw towards us, we are ready to fly from him: I heard thy voice (faith Adam) and was afraid, and hid my selfe: And if he doth not draw towards us, we sit down, wring our souls, and fetch many a deep Ah, Ah, what have I done! Ah me, What, where am I now? I have provoked my God, and am afraid to come unto him, &c.

3 God doth not easily open his favour unto those who thus abuse it: There was free intercourse twixt God and the soule before; but now the doore is shut,
resolved.

Shut, which before was open, and God himself will keep the key, so that nothing, no means or ways shall open unto us, until he doth please. You remember how David kept his distance from Absalom for his lewdness, he kept him off a long time, he might not see the King's face: And David himselfe for his sinnes against his Father, could not (without long-suffering) see the face of God, as before, Psal. 51.

And now think you it strange that the soul should doubt? Assuredly great desires delayed and protracted do cause great fears; yea, it breeds singular suspicions. May be I shall be still put off; Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will be be favourable no more? Psal. 77. 7

Nay, now the soul being made sensible, & having weighed all circumstances, can and doth teach it selfe many arguments and reasons to keep off; It is apt enough to fall upon it selfe, and to
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to, keep downe any readiness
which it obserues to give on upon God, or Christ.
It is some time before faith can finde a way to ingratiate this offending soule, and to esple a sufficient medium, by and through which it may close with God for pardon and favour: And when faith hath found it out, then our mis-giving hearts bear us off; and as our weake children pluck down the Bird soaring up, with a string, so doe our weake hearts pull in our faith; which is now speeding towards heaven by the blood of Jesus Christ for us.
The more tenderness we gaine of the sins, the more shiness and feare growes on us, and seldom doth the soule recover its former hold, and ancient correspondence and intimatenesse with God, until there hath been a proportionable humiliation, and spaces of seeld reformation: Twixt which, and the great discov-
discovery of speciall and renewed assurance, the heart meets with many a wave, with many a sad day, with many a fearfull rising, with many strong and terrible doubtings.

So then you see, that speciall sins after conversion, doe cause great doubtings in the soule; because they make a jar, a wound, they lay a bar twixt us and God, they keep up God, and keep down faith, and give up all the matters of disheartning and fear; they make the soule to be at a stand, to goe away from the gates of heaven many times with singular cheeks, and heavinesse.

A sixth cause of doubtings, may be indispositions unto, or about spiritual duties; when our Altar seems to have no fire, our bodies to have no soules, our affection to be estranged from our services; when we pray but not with that fervency, when we was heare, but not with that attentiveness, when we set upon any
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sort of duty, but not with that activity, with that joy, with that fire, that was sometimes in his spirit. Nay, sometimes there is a strange listlessness, a kind of flat dullness, drowsiness, that doth hardly move upon our works, much less draw ourselves unto duty. Like the Disciples, the soul is so heavy, that it can hardly watch, and pray.

Out of which kind of slothfulness, the hearts of Christians doe ordinarily: awake with doubtings, and that about two particulars especially. One respects the verity and being of grace. (As Gideon in his most sacred cases. Judges vi. 13.) If the Lord be with us or no, then is all the fault mine. So here, If much of grace were in me, how should all these indispositions, dulness, deadness, accompany me? Where is the Spirit of Christ, there is liberty; but I am as one chained up. Where grace is most kindled, there is a holy fue wo warne...
warne the heart in duty; I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, (Ps. 119. 14.) and with my whole heart have I sought thee; so David, Thy word was unto me the joyes, and rejoicing of my heart, for I am called by thy name, O Lord of Hosts, saith Je-

Pl. 119. 14

Jer. 15. 16

Prophet Esai, chap. 56. 7. faith, God will make his people joyfull in his house of Prayer! And besides all this, we are commanded, to serve the Lord with gladness, Ps. 100. 2. Whereupon the soule mis-

Pl. 100. 2.

2 But then, suppose the soule can cleare, and affoyle it selfe from this feare, (by knowing that fire may be where it doth not
alwayses flame, and the root may live where the branches doe not alwayses flourish, and by finding some answerable dulnesses in some eminent Davids, (who often have prayed for quickning) yet there ariseth another doubting from our dulness, and indisposition, which is a feare of acceptance: the Lord will not accept of these services, because they are so heavie, they are therefore without any efficacy. Suppose I may be good, yet they are bad, and can win no favour with God. Thus the soule is oft-times much perplexed by reason of its indispositions: as if either it were totally bad, or God intended little good unto it, because it is not quickned, and more enlivened in the services presented unto him. And verily it will much trouble a tender and sincere heart to observe in it selfe such flat and dull opinions of God, and Christ, and such an ineptitude in it selfe in doing that, which to do with the
resolved.

the best of its strength, and might, and affections, it sees reasons, and hath desires thereto.

A Seventh spring, or occasion of doubtings may be fruitless endeavours; I call them so, because we think them so: What is that? This it is; When we finde our defects in our particular graces, and in particular duties, or some effects of particular corruptions; and have gone to God by Prayer, & in his ordinances, so that we have a long time prayed for the filling up, and inlarging of our weake faith, love, sorrow, joy, assurance, and prayed against that hardnesse, passionatenesse, or whatsoever sinfulnesse observed in the heart: And yet we seeme to be still where we were, we creep on with the same impotencies in grace, and move on with the same burdens of sinfull motions and propensions: O now the soule sits downe with much sorrow, and with dolefull conclusions: Well, it is in vaine to seeke any,
any more, God will make that
good to me which hee threat-
ned unto Moab, Esa. 16. 12. Hee
shall come unto his Sanctuary, and shall
not prevale. I have sought him a
long time, and have not prevai-
led: I shall never rise above these
risings: If God had a purpose to
doe me good, I should have been
sped, ere this.

The opinion of sucesselesse
must needs cause doubtings, be-
cause,
1. God seems to have a contro-
versie with the soul; surely, faith
the heart, something is the mat-
ter that I cannot have audience,
all is not right and even twixt
God and me.
2. The very stays and supports of
duty seem to fail us. You know,
that the Promises are the great
encouragements of all our servi-
ces; and what have we to binde
God but his owne Promises, by
which he hath bound himselfe?
He hath said, that he will heare,
and answer, upon which assurance
of
of his, we came in, and prayed, but cannot get any thing, though we press God upon his owne promise; Whereupon the soule is brought to a stand, If God will not answer his owne word, how shall he answer me?

3 Now we suspect not our petitions, but our persons, and uncomfortably judge or feare, that we have been deceived in our progresse towards heaven; God would be to us as to his, (a God hearing Prayers) If we had been to God as his, serving him with a perfect heart; for God heareth not sinners; Joh. 9. 31. But, If any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. Whereupon the soule strongly argues against it selfe, My heart is sinfull, or else my prayers had been successfull; I regard iniquity in my heart, therefore it is that the Lord heareth me not, Psal. 66. 18.

Beloved, you who deale with observation and experience can acknowledge.
Observe three things.

1. That there are spaces twixt our prayers and God's answers: God hearkens what David speaks, and David must hearken what God will speake. Prayer is our Angle, our Seed, our Dove, our Messenger; it doth not always take at first, it doth not return us always a present harvest; it comes in sooner, and sometimes later, it waits the time of the master.

2. God is wise in causing these spaces, he hath ends, singular ends both for his own glory, and for the good of our graces.

But thirdly, corruption takes occasion hereby, and Satan vents his envious malice hereupon: As the back-biters, and slanderers, and contentious spirits, who love to set variance twixt faithfull friends, let the least occasion happen, a wry look, a mis-placed word, a mis-intended neglect, a forbearing of present dispatch in some desired service; let these fall out, presently the back-biter, en-

Simile.
resolved.

vious, malicious, contentious spirit, catcheth; Lo, you see his love, his backwardness, his heighting of you, &c.

Thus doe our corrupt hearts and Satan; Look you now, you see how needless, how fruitless all the care and service of God is; Alas, he thinks not on you, he regards not your prayers: If he had loved you, if he intended to doe you good, could this bee? would he have held up after so many prayers, so many tears, so many importunities, so many pressings by his mercies, by his Christ, by his promises? No, no, thou art not in favour with God, his mercies, his promises belong not to thee, &c. Thus they.

8 An eighth spring may bee, The imbecillity of judgement about the essentials of Salvation; and cause of doubtings, assuredly, here lies the great spring of doubtings. An erroneous minde is the forge which hammers all our suspicions; it is the wombe which beares and breeds.
breeds all our feares; if it doth not finde, yet it makes all our knots for us.

What one speaks of a plaine place of Scripture. This verse, said he, had been ease, had not Commentators made it so knotty; That we say of a Christians condition. It is gracious, happy, clear, sure, did not erroneous judgments disturb, and vex, and unsettle them. This is true, that a weake judgement, and a tender conscience are seldome without feare and doubting. You see it in the Romans, about practicall matters, whereupon the Apostle presseth the stronger, not to receive the weake to doubtfull disputations; and if they had a particular faith, to keep it unto themselves, knowing well, how weak judgements, like weake plants, are easiely stirred and shaken.

You may see it also in the Ephesians, about doctrinall matters; for Paul giving an Item unto them, to out-grow their childishnes.
Ephes. 4:14. he doth paraphrase it to be such an estate wherein men are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind, &c.

Two things are incident unto shallow judgements (by virtue of which they are objected (with ease) unto doubtings: One is, they have not been conversant in the compasse of Truths, there be some Truths which yet they know not; they have not all their holds and strength.

2 New Doctrines contrary to old Truths, are not so easily over-mastered by their understandings, but doe either win mis-beliefs, or else disturb their true belief. You shall scarce hear any new things stated, but within we hear of many persons startled, as if their faith had hitherto been in vain; for tender Consciences are apt to beleev the most, and therefore sometimes do beleev those points which are

A man must have good eyes to finde out cunning globes...
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Shall I give you instances among our selves? 1. One is an equality of humiliation before conversion: As if no man were truly converted, who hath not equalled the greatest Penitent in the highest degrees of contrition and terror. And hence it is that many distressed, bowed, broken soules, doe exceedingly labour to grinde themselves, and to fall into the flames of horrible feares, thereby to assure themselves of a good estate: Whereas,

1. All Christians are not equal in their preparations: 2. No man can judge his estate at all, simply, by legall humiliation.

2. A full assurance at first, or else no faith: As if Jacobs Ladder had no degrees, and the Sun at his first peeping were in the height of heaven; or that a Schollar must be placed in the upper forme, as soon as he enters the Schoole. Such inconsiderate deliveries as these, they trouble the faith of many (as the Apostle speakes of those...
resolved.

those in 2 Tim. 2. 18. If faith cannot be without full assurance, then I am no believer. Faith David, for I had my saintings; Nor I, faith Peter, for Christ himself tells you, I had my doubtings.

It is a most vaine and dangerous way for any Divine or ordinary Christian to impose Rules, and to deliver a thing, as a dogmaticall and common truth, which he or he have in a speciall way only observed in themselves: The Spirit of God bestowes upon all the Elect of God, the same substantial frame of Grace; but the making up, and the making out of these, is different: As, No simile: man must say he hath no soule, because he seeles not those particular workings of reason and desire which another doth; So, No man must conclude another to be out of the estate of Grace, if haply there be not a plenary and swerableness in them both, for every method and measure of working grace...
Therefore let me caveat a little here, to you who are grown Christians: Remember that there are some who are weak, yet true members of the same body: and does not you indiscreetly insist upon your only personal experiences, and those only in some particulars, in all companies, because you have (perhaps) risen high, therefore none are right, who are below you: Consult the Scriptures, and deliver us what it directs, and wherein it supports: You know not yet the atheistical tender Consciences to throw downe themselves, and to catch at matters and arguments of trouble. Thou tenderst (perhaps) from thy company, a poore, a laden and troubled heart, with a bitter and amazed opinion, that it hath now no faith, which yet came unto thee with some weak and strong desires of firmer faith.

Weak judgements (as I said before) cannot beare all things, but (like some mens Nomacks) are
resolved.
are presently oppressed with meats unusual: And when we have mistaken an error for truth, it may prove to the soul, as the mistaking of poison for medicine, a business of troublesome and dangerous consequence.

2. Ignorance of the Doctrine of Justification; this is another cause of doubtings.
The Doctrine of Justification is a Doctrine of Life, Rom. 5. 18. 10. 5. 18.
The free-gift came upon all men unto justification of life. And it is a Doctrine of Peace, Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, &c. And therefore the ignorance of it must needs be a cause of fear and doubting.

Here consider foure things.

1. The Christian condition is subject to many sensible impressions: We are seldom without guilt is assault, or combat, and those troubles pierce us most which the conscience throws up. A man may bear any wound with more ease, is awake, then that which he hath given ned.
himself. When the Law powerfully reveals, and the Conscience closely applieth the guilt of
our nature and lives, now it is a sad and heavy time. Job crieth out in the sense of this thing; Chap. 13.
26. Thou wouldest things against me, and makest me to possess the ini-
quities of my youth. Solomon tells us, that the wounded spirit is hardly
sustained, Prov. 18, 14. David is even dried up by his roaring, and
worne away with the paine of it. And Paul crieth out as a man alm-
most lost, Rom. 7.

2. The soule makes out at such a time for some ray, and help. It
seekes where it may lay his bur-
den, and finde something to ease
& deliver it. It is with a sick soul
as with a sick body, which turns
from one side to another, from
this part to the other part of the
bed, and of the pillow, and
craves help of this friend and of
another; would have ease from
any, but perchance can get none
from all.

Here.
resolved.

Here is sinne, faith the person; here is a sinfull soule, and there is a righteous Law broken, and a righteous God offended, who yet must, and will be satisfied: He calls upon me, and hath arrested my Conscience: Now good Lord, what shall I doe? I have nothing to pay, or that can give satisfaction. Where-with shall I come before the Lord, and bow my selfe before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calues of a yeare old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oyle? Shall I give my first-borne for my transgression? the fruit of my body for the sinne of my soule? q. d. Those are nothing, those can doe nothing; my sins are many, great, deep, my righteousnesse is none, or too weake to answer for my unrighteousnesse: All the good I have, or can doe, cannot expiate the evill which I have done, or make up that good which I should have. Here is some sorrow, but
but what is that? it is but as a drop to the Ocean of guilt which lies upon me: Here is some duty, but what is that? it is defective in itself, and no amends to the many thousands of breaches which I have made.

3. The soul cannot say it selfe upon it selfe: God calls for satisfaction: I have it not, saith the soul: God will have satisfaction: Lord! what shall I now doe? The conscience works upon us, and tells us; God is just, and if these sins be not pardoned, and a righteousness found and presented, we are lost. Now the soul is at a stand; seriously and sadly bethinks, What have I? Nothing but sin, yet sin cannot answer for sin: Perhaps some imperfect holiness, but that cannot make up a perfect satisfaction.

O my brethren! our blood and spirits must needs goe and come, when the arrest is upon us, and none appeares to haile us: when the ship is split, and no rokke is neare.
near to save us: when the sentence of death is read against us, and none is at hand to pardon us: when the Avenger of blood pursues us, and no City of refuge opens to shelter us: unrighteousness, inability, and Conscience and God meet, and none yet, nothing is yet found to answer for us, or to pacifie us.

4. Without us there is something able to stay us, of which the soul, being ignorant, is still perplexed: it cannot conclude its fears, and scruples, and doubts.

What is that?

I answer, Justification is the stay, and therefore the soul must needs be burdened, being unacquainted with it: As,

1. Till we know where to lay Three down our sinfull burden, we must things, needs be troubled: If a perplexed soul could finde any to charge his debts upon, who would beare and answer for him, then it might have rest: Now Christ in Justification takes our guilt upon him:
Philem. 18. As Paul said to Philemon concerning his servant Onesimus, If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that upon mine account: So faith Christ to the broken and laden sinner, If thou hast any guilt, and sinfull debts to be answered for unto God, put them upon mine account; If thou hast wronged my Father, I will make all even, looke for thy discharge and acquittance by me; for I was made sinne for thee, that thou mightest bee made the righteousness of God in me,

2 Cor. 5. 21. 2 Cor. 5. 21, and God was in me,

19. (ver. 19.) reconciling the world unto himselfe, not imputing their trespasses unto them; And x Job. 2. 1. If any mans sin, he hath an Advocate with the Father, &c.

3 Till we know our justifying righteousness, we cannot but be troubled: That righteousness which justifies us, is not in us: No righteousness justifies, but that which is every way perfect and full, now this is in Christ, and not in us, Rom. 5. 19. By the obe.
Obedience of one, many shall be made righteous. When a sinner is to stand before God for acceptance and life, he stands not before him in his owne rags, but in the garment of his eldest Brother: He cannot say, Lord, here is a righteousness in me which hath fulfilled thy Law; here is a righteousness in me, against which thou canst make no exception; here is a righteousness in me, for which thou art to account, and pronounce me just: But this he may say, Lord, though I have no perfect righteousness to answer thee, yet thy Son hath for me, and he is made unto me from thyself, my righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. 1. 30. And being justified by faith in it, he may have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5. 19.

Brethren, no man can be free from strong fears, and doubts, who thinkes to be acquitted, or condemned by what is in himselfe:
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If a man thinketh this, the Lord will, or doth enter into Judgment with me, and I finde nothing to satisfie him; all the powers of my heart, and of my graces are insufficient, and therefore there is now no hope but I shall be cast, and condemned; you see here is ground of doubtings; yet if a man could looke out of himselfe, and know that his righteousness is to be found in Christ, and God hath appointed it so that I am to be justified by that righteousness only; now the soule may have a stay to rest on: Yet my Saviours righteousness was perfect, was accepted, and he is mine, and his righteousness is mine.

3 Till we know the dispositions (if I may to speake) in God about our justifying, we cannot but doubt; for a man reasoneth thus: I have committed great sins, which now doe grieve me, and I hate them, and I have left them, but I know not how they may
resolved, may be pardoned; those will now cause doubtings. Until we know that God for Christ will justify us from great sins, as well as small, 1 Cor. 6:8, 9. and that he blots out the chiefe cloud, as well as the cloud, Eph. 44:22. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions; and as a cloud thy sins; and that there were expiatory sacrifices, not only for infirmities, but also for enormities, all which typified the virtue of the blood of Christ, which justifies from great sins, &c.

But I have nothing to move Object. God to pardon them.

Yet, pardoning is a gracious work. God pardons sins, not for thy sake, but for his owne sake; Ephes. 4:3:25. No, even I am he that Eph. 4:3:25. blots out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and for his Christ's sake, Eph. 1:7. in whom only we have redemption even the forgiveness of our sins.

But God will call me hereafter Object, to account again, though for a while he seems to be graciously pleased. No,
No, the Lord in his new Covenant of Grace assures the contrary, Jer. 3 v. 34. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. So that you manifestly see, how the ignorance of our Justification leaves the soul in great doubtings, because, 1. A man knowes not where to cast his burden. 2. Where to find his righteousness. 3. What is the virtue, and fulness, and love, and graciousness, the fidelity, and irrevocableness of God in Justifying a sinner by Christ.

A tenth cause of doubtings, is disputing against the Promises. You have heard (here-tofore) that the ignorance of the Promises is an occasion of doubting; and now I am to shew you, that the arguing of the soul against them, is also another cause.

Object. But you will say, Doth any man dare to dispute against God's Promises? I answer, The Promises may be
be considered, 1. In respect of their absolute truth and goodness: Thus they are not disputed against, unless by Atheists, and positive unbelievers, as were those scoffers, 2 Pet. 3. 4. who said, Where is the promise of his coming?

2 In respect of their application and extent: Thus many weak believers are, subject to argue against them: Not, whether they be verity and mercy; not, whether righteousness and peace doe meet in them; but, whether these doe reach to them, and may bee applied by them. Nay, that is not all, they doe oft-times upon unjust grounds, thrust away the Promises from themselves.

And now the soule must needs be hurried with feares and doubtings, in case the condition be sensible, because

1 The Promises are to faith as Three rearground unto the Anchor; cast out sons of it, an Anchor, and if it hath not ground to fasten, or hitch in, the Ship
Ship rows still: This is a truth if faith cannot pitch and fix, the soule cannot be quiet and settled. David in one place useth the comparison of a Bird, that his soule did but unto God, as a bird unto her nest. While the bird is in the ayre, it is hovering, and flying, and restless; so is it with the soul untill faith can settle it under the wings of a Promise.

Nay, againe, the Promises are called the breasts of consolation. When the childe is hungry, and distempered, nothing quiets but the breasts: And assuredly, the Promises do not still the soul nothing can.

Now when a man will row from this ground of faith, when he will fly from his rest, when he refuseth the breasts of consolation, no marvaile if his soule be full of doubts and feares: For this it all one, as if a lame man shoul throw away his crutches, or weak man his staffe, or a sick man his cordials, or a sinking man th boug
though which holds him up. The goodness of the Lord was that which did hold up all his faintings; and to all Gods people have till been held & staid up by Gods Word: and therefore all person must needs be full of doubts, who withdraws his shoulder from such a stay and rock, upon which he should lean and rest himself.

This is but self-siveness, which is ever accompanied with unquietness; for why dost thou refuse to apply these promises which God hath made? Is it not because, thou wouldst have more goodness, faith, love, knowledge, and a settled quietness? And is not this a self-seeking, yea, in some sort a self-standing? What an odd method of worshipping of God is this? Lords, I have but weeke graces, and thou hast promised to strengthen it, and perfect, and finish it, but I will not believe thy promise belongs to me. Unitill I have first a greater.

Note.
So thou hast promised to pardon thy sins, &c.
increase of my grace. Or thus, Lord, I finde much unevenness in duty, and thou hast promised to give thy Spirit, which shall cause me to walke in thy way, but I will not believe this Promise, until I be first more enabled in duty. Or thus, Lord, I find much sinfulness in me, and thou hast promised to change and cleanse the heart, and to subdue iniquity, but I will not believe this Promise, until first I see my sins subdued: When I find my graces increased, then I will believe that thou wilt increase them; when I finde my obedience continued, and my sins subdued, then I will believe that thou wilt cause me to walke, and wilt subdue sins.

q. d. if thou wilt perform thy Promise before I doe believe thy Promise, then I will believe thy Promise. This is as if a man would see the bloud in the veines before the veines are opened; or wash his hands cleane, before he hath turned the cock to let out the water.
resolved.

3 A man is still held by the powers of his corruption; and where corruptions, or wants are still found in their former measure, there the tender soul will doubt and fear.

Let a man bow himself much in hearing, or much in praying, or much in conferring, yet if he have the art of thrusting away the promises, he will be still as he was: v.g. Suppose a man to be sick, call unto his help a College of Physicians, let them consult upon his estate, prescribe the most fitting potions, and quickening cordials, and when the patient hath heard them, he refuseth their prescriptions, he will not take them, but faith, These belong not to me; will his disease at all abate?

So is it with us; when we hear, or read, or conferre, and many promises fall in to our help, if yet we put them aside, we now keep up our sinfulnesse, or weakness, and therefore keepe up our
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our doubtings and distrusts.

Object. But you will say, all promises are not applicable by all men in all conditions, and therefore good reason for us to hold off.

Sol. To which (briefly) thus much: Though all promises cannot be applied by all men at one time, yet some promises may be applied by an humble and sensible sinner at some time or other. v. g.

Note. Suppose thou feele the power of sin, stirring in its motions and workings, and (as Paul complaines) leading thee captive; though every promise cannot now be applied, yet thou dost ill in not fastning on the promises of mortification, which are made for this end, that the sensible and weary sinner should lay hold on them for the subduing of his sins.

Againe, suppose thou findest weakness of grace, (that thou canst not doe the good that thou wouldst doe) dost thou now well to thrust away the promises of assistance and strengthening, by
saying, What is that to me; if God hath said, I will uphold, and I will strengthen, and My grace is sufficient, and My power shall be manifest in weakness?

So again, suppose thou feelest the guilt of sin, piercing and afflicting thy conscience, and God hath promised to pardon iniquities, transgressions, and sins, and to love freely, and to receive graciously, dost thou now well, or wisely, to thrust away the pardoning Promises, and say, What are they to such a one as I am? If any beggar should say, What is that to me, that there are bountiful alms at the rich man's gate? Or a Malefactor, What is that to me, that the Prince will pardon Traitors? Or a sensible sinner, What is that to me, that Christ did dye for sinners, and God will be mercifull to returning sinners? &c.

An eleventh cause of doubtings may be the suspension of divine favour; when God holds up his countenance, the light of it

E 4
from shining into the heart, so that a Christian doth not enjoy his day as before, his God as before, in the sensible evidences of his loving favour, now the soul may (possibly) fall into singular distrusts and feares. See it in David, Psal. 30. 7. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountaine to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled. A Christian's life is in some respect, like a Courtiers, who is neare his Prince, upon his countenance or forbearance all his comforts or discomforts doe depend, VVe may say of him, what Mary spake, when she lost Christ, Luke 2. 48. Behold, thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing, (i.e.,) with an heavie heart. So, &c. But.

Object. How appeares it that this suspension of divine favour should occasion our doubting?

Said. Thus:

1. Gods favour is the greatest good; Thy favour is life, Psal. 30. 5. He there expresseth Gods favour by
by that good which of us is most desirable: Nay, Thy favour is better than life, Psal. 63. 3. Therefore he cryes out, Psal. 36. 1. O how excellent is thy loving kindness! and prayes, vers. 10. O continue thy loving kindness. And Psal. 106. 4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people, 5. That I may see the good of thy chosen, &c.

Now the sensible good of the greatest good, must needs imprint the motions of greatest fear, and suspicion, and trouble, as you may see in David, Psal. 77. 3. 7. & c. For now the glory seems to be departed from Israel.

2. Againe, In these times nothing can comfort the soule, or stay it without much difficulty: Our very graces will hardly uphold us. You know that if the King clouds his countenance, they are not the dignities conferred which will content us; they are not our revenues and possessions which will chease us; So is it with
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with us, when God draweth up his loving countenance; they are not our riches, or our gifts, or our graces, or our services, which can delight us; these do it, while in them we see God's love shining towards us; but if that draw back, these are all put to a strait: All is nothing to David, while he is under this enquiry, Will the Lord be favourable no more? Psal. 77:7.

3. God doth seldom draw up his favour, but for some unkindness on our part: Our sins (ordinarily) are the clouds, which hide his face from us; they are the wall of separation: perhaps some great sin, as David's; perhaps some careless esteem of him, speaking in his Ordinances; perhaps some slight passing by of his secret motions and counsels; as the Church, Cant. 5:2. Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, &c. To which voyce of Christ, how doth the Church demeane her selfe? 3. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? At length,
resolved.

length, though ver. 6. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrew himselfe, and was gone; my soule failed, &c.

How can the soule but be greatly troubled, when it hath turned its day into night, and shut up that light, which once it enjoyned, to its great comfort and solace?

Woman, why weepest thou? (said Christ to Mary, Joh. 20. 15.) Because (said she) they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. So may we justly weep, when our sins have taken away our God from us, in his comfortable favour, and we cannot easily regaine him, and finde him.

4 These times of suspension, ordinarily are times of triall, wherein God leaves the Christian to some notable combats, and to the great exercises of Graces; at which time, corruptions and tentations will stir, and therefore no marvaile, if they be times mixt with some feares and doubtings.
The twelfth cause of doubtings is, the crediting of Satan's testimony touching our estate; when we rest upon his judgement, and see our conditions through his informations.

You know that objects are diversly represented unto the eye: sometimes from themselves in their proper nature, as when a man sees a green colour as it is; sometimes mediately, by other things, as when a green colour is seen through a red glass; now it doth not appear in its native colour, but in the likeness of that through which it is perceived: So is it with our spiritual estate.

Sometimes it is represented unto us, as it is truly existing; and thus we shall see it, and judge of it by the Word of God: And sometimes it is represented unto us, not as it is, but as it appears in some corrupt and deceiveable testimonies, and reports unto us.

As Joseph's chastity appeared to his Master under the nature of abominable...
minable uncleanness, when he took the testimony of it from his filthy wife: So shall our most innocent and upright frame appear unto us to be nothing else but base hypocrisy, if we put the issue of it upon Satan's informations: For as Satan hath an art to colour over the true condition of sinfull bondage, keeping close and in covert the proper image, or (rather) deformity of it: So he hath a delusion too, in hiding from our eyes the true powers of gracious sincerity, and fetching up to the judgement all our weaknesses, and present imperfections, with all former known evils, with which he doth so totally possess the minde, that it can hardly see any thing that good is in itself, or if it doth, yet it sees too much corruption and imperfection, as that it is ready almost to turne the scale and ballance.

And here our crafty enemy ceaseth not, but taking the advantage of a tender conscience,
he exaggerates upon us the large distance of this condition in which we now are, from that which God commands and expects, and hath found in some of his righteous servants; in the citation of whose piety he is not very sparing, that by the consideration of their fulness, and our own emptiness, we might the more easily suspect our condition, and credit his relations.

Which if we once doe, Bone Deus! into what labyrinths doe we wind our selves? into what fears? into what doubts? We shall never set out to belive any Promise, but he checks us backe with the hollownesse of our condition; we shall never set upon any ordinance or duty, but hee foyles us with suspicions (at least) that all is in vaine, God will not bless and prosper his Ordinances unto such; and in those Ordinances, if any matter of bitterness, or uncomfortable, we be delivered, he brings home that
that to us, and tells the soul, This
is thy portion.

Now where our estate rests up-
on a deceitfull informer, where
we take things, as Satan makes
them, where we judge of sin, as he
pleads it, and of Gods love to us,
as he conveys it, and of Gods
Promises, as he interprets them to
us, and of our owne Graces, and
holy temper, as he clears and e-
videnceth them unto us, there
can be nothing but jealousies,
sears, distractions, and daily
doubtings in the heart.

13 Another spring may be a third
some new risings of old sins after tenth
humiliation, and some singular spring
assurance of their pardon.

David gives a touch at this (1 Psal. 25.
think) Psal. 25. 7. when he prays,
Remember not the sins of my youth, nor
26. Thou writest bitter things against
me, and makest me passesse the iniqui-
ties of my youth.

It would trouble us to see a Simile
man rise out of his Grave, (who
hath
hath been buried a long time) and now to haunt us: So these sins which we have long since committed, and long since bewailed, and long since renounced, and after long humiliations their discharge hath been obtained; to meet these sins (like an enemy, with a sword in his hand) with guilt in their faces and countenances; again, this will amaze the soul, it will appale it, and startle it, and make us more than once to sigh and inquire, Why is it so?

Two things will now fall into question:

I. The reality of pardon: where God faith, he pardons sins; there he faith, that he will remember it no more; but it seems he doth remember it, (else how comes it thus upon me as a debt not yet discharged, as a guilt not yet removed?) and if he doth thus remember it against me, I much fear, that as yet the Book is not crossed, this sin is not pardoned.
resolved.

don'd. Upon which, something else may fall in; If this sin be not pardoned, perhaps the rest are not; and if this be risen up against me, how can I tell but all the rest may (asfresh) set themselves in array, and give a second charge upon my conscience too?

2. The reality of Repentance: for where God calls for sound repentance, (as Esay, 1. 16. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to doe evil:) there God doth promise, (vers. 18.) that though our sins be as scarlet, yet they shall be white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, yet they shall be as wool; in which words are expressed a plaine change of the sinfull condition; our sinnes shall not be what, and as once they were.

Whereupon the soule mitigates for its part: God will doe what he hath promised, if I had done what I was injoyned. If my sins had been truly left, they had been fully discharged; but now I pol-

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lesse them againe in their guilt; and therefore I exceedingly feare that I did overtly discharge my selfe of them in my repentance. If Christ had slaine them by his bloud, or if I had drowned them by true sorrow and repentance, they could not thus revive in their guilt; but I feare that I did only skin over these fores, which I feele now to breake out, or that I laid them asleep only, and not dead, because they awake upon me with such terrour and clamour; and if so, then there hath beene a long and fruitlesse veinie of rotten hypocrisy in me; and whereas I had thought my work almost finished, I am as yet to begin againe.

Beloved, this is a secret and piercing fountain of strong feare and doubtings, especially when the sinnes rise up, and set on us a fresh after a course of humiliati on, and some singular assurance of their pardon; and yet it is the case of many Christians, incident unto
unto them in their dayes of great losses, or sicknesses, or death.

14 Another spring or occasion may be some long silences in the conscience.

God (you know) hath set in our selves, our Law-giver, our Judge, and our Witnesse; Conscience doth sustain, and should discharge the offices of all these: In a doubtfull day it should clear our condition, and witnesse for us against the testimony of Satan, and of our own fears; and therefore God hath given unto it an excusing and comforting power, as you may see, Rom. 2. 15. Their thoughts excusing one another, or accusing, And 2 Cor. 1. 12. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c.

Here consider some particulars:

1. Concerning Testimony

2. Concerning our Condition;
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1. There is a three-fold testimony about our estate; 1. One is from the Spirit, which shines in the renewed heart by an unspeakable light, and manifests unto it the things given unto it of God, and so seals, and witnesses the truth and goodness of our particular interests in God & Christ, according to the word of God. 2. Another is from faith, which doth testify the interest of the soul in that happiness which it finds revealed in the Word; for that which faith believes by a direct act in the Word, it may testify of the same to the person by a reflexive act. 3. A third is from Conscience, which beholding the simplicity and godly sincerity of the heart, testifies unto it (against all opposition) that this blessed frame is in the soul; and this testimony being concordant with that of the Word, the soul is thereby greatly sustained, forasmuch as this is known before, viz. A sincere
temper is happy; and now Con-
sience clearing that temper, the
soule hereupon is much cheared.

2 Our condition falls under a
drethree-fold consideration.

1 Sometimes under the accu-
sations of Conscience; Consci-
ence doth speake and testifie, but
it is either that our hearts are to-
tally base, and sinfull, and cor-
rupt, or that in such and such a
particular it is not right, it was
not perfect, but sinfull, and dege-
nerating.

2 Sometimes under the excu-
sations of Conscience: where
Conscience testifies, and acquires,
and speaks peace, either about
the frame of the heart, or re-
titude of some particular action
and course.

3 Sometimes under a neutrall
act, or worke of the Consci-
ence: (i.) The Conscience (like
Absalom to Amnon, 2 Sam. 13. 22)
speakes unto a person neither
good nor bad: It doth not accuse
him, nor doth it excuse him; it
doeth
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doth not speak terror, nor doth it speak peace; it doth not charge any special guilt, nor doth it give us a particular discharge of any.

Now this is the time of fears and doubts; I will shew you why, because,

1. A negative state satisfies not a tender Christian; it doth not satisfy a tender soule; that God lookes not like an enemy, unless also he lookes as a friend; or that Conscience doth not check, but that it should excuse. It doth trouble us many times, that in our exemptions from trouble, we yet finde no Peace-speaker.

2. It gives suspicion of a neutral estate, because Conscience seemes to behave it selfe as a neutral, neither against us, nor for us. I call that a neutral estate, which is not eminently evil; it hath some good in it, and doth some good, but is not so good, as to be gracious, therefore the civil estate is a neutral; it doth
resolved.

not rise to be so bad as the worst, nor to be so good as the best people are. Now this estate (absolutely considered) is bad, it is an evil estate, it is an estate in which if a man lives and dies (and goes not beyond it) he cannot be saved.

3 It may breed an expectation of the worse testimony of conscience; for with-drawments are (sometimes) the fore-runners of some bitter intentions; it fell out ill with Saul, when God withdrew himself from him: So when conscience with-drawes, perhaps my conscience hath found matter against me, and as it doth not now speake peace, so (perhaps) shortly it may speake bitter things unto me.

4 Nay, conscience is God's vice-gerent; it is his Deputy, and therefore in the silence and with-drawments of it, we looke through, and search the disposition of God himselfe towards us, because the servants doe ordinarily expresse
Conscience is the looking-glass.

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express the conceits, and inclinations, and affections of their masters; and this is certaine, that we doe in an angry conscience behold alwayes an angry God, and so in a cheerfull conscience a gracious God, and so shall we in a silent conscience suspect a doubtful God: We doe ordinarily judge how God is towards us by what we finde and feel Conscience to be towards us: This is the glass in which wee see his favours or frownes.

These are the springs of doubtings, which I have enlarged in their opening unto you; it is likely there may bee more then these, (I could also deliver you more about the temporall estate; but that is out of our scope and compasse now;) It now remaines that I descend to the closing up of these springs, to the cures and remedies of these Doubtings, which is the last thing proposed.
resolved.

CHAP. V.
The Cures and remedies of doubtings.

Here lies our next and greatest work, and therefore as Physitians in this part are more cautelous to administer things which are in their qualities most proper, and in their measures most convenient; so must we in the healings and closings of the spirituall distempers of the soule: And therefore that this worke may be happily performed, I shall (desiring Gods grace to assist and bless) prescribe unto you, 1 The particular cures which shall answer all those particular springs of doubtings before mentioned. Then 2 The generall Cures and Remedies which may extend to the help of all, or most of our doubtings, if time and leasure hold out.
The particular Cures.

The first cure, answering the first cause of doubts.

1. Naturall corruption was the first spring of Doubtings, and Mortification is the first help and remedy: That is the Disease, and this is the Cure. I may say that of our faith, which the Apostle speaks of our persons, Rom. 8. 13.

Rom. 8. 13 If ye through the Spirit doe mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live. The more our sins doe dye in us, the more our faith will live in us. We are diseased men (take us in our best condition) and you know the more any disease doth lose of its strength, the more doth our health rise up and thrive; and so we are as a garden which hath many plants, and several weeds, the abating of these, the rooting up, and killing of these, contributes the greater reliefe and strengthening to our plants.

Heb. 10. 22 The Apostle (Heb. 10. 22.) would have them to draw neare with a true heart in full assurance of faith: he would have them to call out
out their doubtings in their approaches unto God, he would have them to come with assurance, with a full assurance; to come so, as verily to be persuaded of God's acceptance of them; not indifferently to come with, May be I shall be accepted, may be I shall not; this is a doubtfull approaching. But what doth he adjoyne to this exhortation? Observe the next words, Having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, q. d. As long as your hearts are evil, as long as Conscience can charge you for entertained evil, you will be wavering and doubtfull; but if your hearts were sprinkled, if the evil of sin were washed from them, then you might come with a full assurance of faith (i.e.). Then faith might persuade you to come confidently unto God, for Faith cannot well persuade, if Conscience can yet truly charge and condemn.

Therefore faith St. John, If our hearts condemn, us not, then have we
The doubting Christian confidence towards God. (i.e.) If sinne be mortified, if Conscience findes no sin harboured, but condemmed, if it cannot condemme us for not condemning our sinnes; then we have confidence towards God. (i.e.) Then if we come to God in prayer, and aske any thing of him in the Name of Christ, Faith may confidently rest upon it, that God doth heare, and will answer. Whateuer wee aske, we receive of him, ver. 22.

There are two effects of our sinnes.

1 They keep downe our faith. I am so troubled (Faith David) that I cannot looke up. See the place, Psal. 40, 12. Innumerable evils have compassed me about; Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to looke up; They are more then the haires of my head; therefore my heart faileth me. You see here that his sins made his heart to faile, to misgive it selfe; and like an hea-
vie rheume they fell on his eyes that he could not well looke up.
They are a hinderance to faith; our natural inclination is a very clog unto the spirit of faith; and when faith would do some good for us, it ever (like a malicious person) throwes in doubts and scruples, and breeds with-holding arguments, and reasonings against the Truths and Promises of God.

2. They make the encouragements of faith to be difficult; By contrary reasonings and denials; they keep off the things, which would edge & quicken our faith. As Peter said in another case, Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinfull man; So the heart here, God is, or will depart from me, because I am such a sinner; he will not heare my prayer, because of my sins; nor be gracious to me, because of my sinnes; nor may I pitch upon his Promises, because of my sins.

Now consider, if that which did keep down faith in respect of its proper inclination (for faith naturally bends upward) and in
respect of its operation, that I cannot exercise it selfe without interruption, were removed; would not faith be higher? If the chaine and bolts were off, if the rheume were dried, should we not looke better? Againe, If the encouragements of faith were kept close to faith, if faith could not see them, and dwell upon them would not our doubtings sink? Therefore it is more then evident that our doubtings would sink if our natural corruption did sink, if our sinfull lusts did sink, which doe breed those indispositions, those interruptions, those continual difficulties unto our faith. Faith would rise, if its contrar did abate. Cast out this bond-woma and her sonne, (said Sarah to Abraham,) for the sonne of this bond-woma shall not be before with my sonne: Stay, cast out this bond-woma and her sonne, cast out natural corruption and infidelity, that Isaac may be alone, that faith may be (as much as may be) alone and
and then it will possess the Promises (and the soul too) with more quietness.

But here the soul replies, No Object. question but doublings would sinke, if sinnfull corruption did fall; If the fountaine did decay, the streams would lessen; but alas, 1. Who can mortifie his sinnfull nature? 2 What kind of mortifying of it is requisite? 3 What way may be taken to effect it?

I will briefly say something to each of these demands.

1 To the first, Who can mortifie his sinnful nature? I answer, Of himselfe, no man can; naturally he hath neither will nor power thereto: But as Chrysostom spake in the business of Repentance, Thou canst not turne thee, but yet thy God can turne thee; That I say here in the business of mortifying, Thou canst not mortifie thy sins, but God can doe it: He can doe it for thee, though thou canst not doe it for thy selfe,
though thy naturall corruption be a spreading Leprosie, he can heale it; though it be a violent Plague, he can cure it: God hath put enough in Christ to save a sinner, and therefore enough to heale a sinner. Remember one thing, in all commands, the duty is thine, and the power is God's; he who commands thee to mortifie sin, is ready enough with sufficient power to effect it, if he be sought unto.

Nevertheless observe by the way, that Mortification may be effected two ways; 1 Passively, as when the Lord doth infuse holy principles of Grace, which are contrary in their nature and vertue to the nature and power of sin, working out sinfull corruption by degrees. 2 Actively, as when the renewed and converted soul doth by faith successively apply, and draw downe the crucifying vertues of Jesus Christ; though the meere Naturall man can doe nothing to the mortification of sin,
sin, yet the renewed person having received grace from God, is by the help of God's Spirit to stir up the grace that is in him, and especially his faith, to trust on Jesus Christ for the further subduings and crucifyings of his sinfull nature.

2. But now for the second demand, What kind of Mortification is most requisite, so as in more measure to free the heart from doubtfulings? In a word, this; be sure the mortifying be.

1. Radicall, lay the axe to the root: As all Graces thrive most, when their springs are quickned, so all sins decay most, when their roots are mortified. Corrupt acts will fall quickly, if a corrupt heart were more sanctified. The strength of sin is inward, there are thestrong holds which need most to be cast downe: By all meanes set up a crucified Christ in thy bosome.

2. Impartiall; It is true, one sin may trouble more then another,
there, but it will be thy wisdom
to trouble all sin: Sins are
chained together as well as Graces;
and one sin serves to help another,
and the neglected sin may perhaps
suddenly wound thee,
and make thee to stagger. The
whole body of sin in every mem-
ber of it, must be the object of
thy mortifying work: This will
testifie the truth of Grace recei-
ved, and the sincerity of thy con-
science, and consequently will
remove many bottomes of fears
and doubtings.

3 Diurnall; (i.e.) a daily work,
Perhaps sometimes thou art fervent
in the work, (when conscience
is struck, or when afflictions
strike thee) but afterwards thou
art negligent, and then sinne gets
strength againe. But as thou
shouldst live by faith daily, so
shouldst thou dye to sin daily;
Watch thy spirit, resist the motion
of it, insist on divine promises,
implead the strength of Christ
every day: Thou shouldest to be-
leve
leave still, as if thou never yet hadst enough of Christ; and so live still, as if thou were to live thy last; and so mortifie sin still, as thou didst at the first time wherein God looked on thee.

4. Speciall. If thou wouldst make thy battell strong in any part, doe it then against Infideli-
ty, and whatsoever upholds and contributes unto it. It is granted, that the Radicall principle of thy doubts is originall sin: but then the immediate principle of it is re-
maining Infidelity. Out of it immediatly come all thy stagge-
rings, and reelings, and questionings, and doubtings: That is it,
( O weak beleeever ) which disa-
bles thy apprehension of the Co-
venant, of Christ, of the Promi-
ises, of thy Title: That is it which perverts thy judgement, and mis-perSwades it with cun-
ning reasonings, so that either thou canst not discerne the full
truth of God's Promises, or thou
canst not see prevailing reasons to per-
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perswade thy selfe that they belong to thee.

Therefore let the maine care and work of thee be, to strike at unbeliefe; be humbled much for it, beseech the Lord to cure thee more and more of it, to remove the ignorance of the Covenant out of thee, and to cast down carnall and proud reasonings, which give the lye to the way of Gods free and full Grace, which would have thee to be first, and of thy selfe, that which thou canst never be without Christ: and to doe and bring that, which God never imposed on thee to doe or to bring, but hath told thee plainly, the working of it in thee belongs only to himselfe, and he is also really and graciously willing to bestow upon thee.

As for the third demand, What way thou mayst take for the mortifying of all this sinne; I answer,

1. Generally, touching all of it, Doe but insist in the wayes on which
resolved.

which already thou art falne; Did any vertue in the death of Christ (laid hold on by faith) did that heretofore helpe against sinne? It will doe so still: Did any love of God help thee the more to hate sin? It will doe so still: Did any assurance of a reconciled God in Christ, freely and abundantly pardoning of thee, weaken sin in thee? It will doe so still: Did solemne confessions of sinne, selfe-judgings, speciall mournings, sufficiently helpe thee with conquest of sins? They will doe so still: Did the humble application of thy selfe to the Ordinances of Jesus Christ (through which he is pleased to reveale his arme) confer any strength against thy sins? It will help still: Did any holy feare, any tenderenesse in Conscience, any declining of occasions? Did vehement wrastleings with God in prayer? Did serious meditation and consideration? Did close society with the Saints? Did studie of farther hol...
holiness? Did frequent reviewing of thy condition, and renewings of Covenant with thy God in his strength? Did holy watchings? Did resistings of the first births of sin? Did they, any of these, all of these, or any other spiritual course besides these, cause thy sinfulnesse to be vile unto thee, to be abhorred by thee, to be cast downe in thy judgement, to be cast out in thy affections, to be cast off in thy life? Go on with these, & sin will then be more and more mortified, & doubts will be more and more weakened: the more that thy conscience is thus sprinkled from dead works, the more shalt thou be able to draw near unto God in assurance of faith.

2. Particularly, for the mortifying of remaining Infidelity, doe these three things:

1. Study exactly the Covenant of Grace, in the Author of it, foundation of it, matters contained in it, and all the adjuncts and terms
terms of graciouslyness, suitableness, fulness, faithfulness, &c. appertaining to it.

2. Study Jesus Christ thoroughly, know him distinctly as a Mediator, and offices, and effects, and works.

Then 3. To much meditation in these, abound in Prayer, that God in particular would cause thee by faith to set thy seal unto them; but more of this will follow in answering some other causes of doubtings.

2. The second spring was weakness and imperfection in faith: The cure and remedy of which is, to perfect and strengthen faith; put more strength, more growth, more ripeness into faith, and your doubtings will be lesse. The simile more purely the fire burnes, the lesse smoke it hath: and when the light and heat of the Sun is greatest, then the clouds and misty vapours are fewest.

Faith and Doubtings are like a paire of scales, where the weight
of the one beares away the other. The Disciples I remember prayed, Lord, increase our faith; and so did hee of whom you heard in Mar 9. 24. Mark 9. Lord, help my unbelief.

Object. You will say, No man can deny, that if his faith had more strength, then his heart should have leffe doubting; but how may that be done? How may faith be strengthened?

Sol. I answer;

1 God who gave faith can strengthen it, for every grace depends upon him, not only for birth, but also for complement; his strength must lead us on from strength to strength, from faith to faith; he who is the Author, is also the finisher of it; And therefore if thou wouldst have a strong faith, thou shouldst go to a strong God, and beg of him; Lord increase my faith; my knowledge is dim, lighten that candle, open mine eyes yet more, that I may see thy truths; My affents many times flaking, but do thou establish and con-
confirme my heart in thy truths; my embracings, applications, very trembling, and broken, and interrupted, but do thou guide mine eye to look upon my Saviour, do thou guide my hand to lay hold on him, doe thou enable my will and affections to embrace all the goodness of thy selfe, of thy Christ, of thy Word.

It is Gods method to lay in (at the first) weak faith, that we might beg for more faith, and give him the honour of all. Had we it strong at first, he should not heare of us; but he dispenseth it by degrees, that in all our gettings, and in all our victories over doubtings, &c. his strength may have the glory. Therefore goe to God, and say, Lord, I would have more faith, thou wouldst have me to perfect it, but all perfection is in thee, and I cannot by my meere strength ripen what thou givest, but thou canst water what thou plantest; though it bee sowne a weake body,
body, yet thou canst make it rise a strong body; though faith at first be but as a graine of mustard-seed, yet thou canst cause it to blossom, and to spread it selfe into a high measure; therefore thou who alone canst doe it, doe it for thy weak servant: Thou must take charge of thine own graces, and if thou givest my faith more strength, my believing will bring thee in the more glory, &c.

2 Thy studying of Christ and the Promises more, will bring more strength and perfection to faith. It is with the Christian as it is with the Schollar, let the Schollar study more the objects of knowledge, and then his knowledge will grow to be more large; So let the Christian study more the matters of faith, and his faith will rise to be more full.

Hence the Apostle prays that the Ephesians, Chap. 3. 19. might know the love of Christ, that they might be filled with all the faithfulness of God; and ver. 17. That Christ might dwell
resolved.

dwell in their hearts by faith, that so they might be able, ver. 18. to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.

What the Prophet spake of perishing, we may say of fainting, and doubting, My people doubt for want of knowledge. Did we know the nature of our Redeemer more, how holy, and compassionate, and helpfull it is; did we know the offices of our Saviour, howabsolute they are in removing our guilt, in conquering our corruptions, in making way for us to the Father, in speeding our suits and requests; did we know how fully he stands for us, he dyed for us, he intercedes for us, how willing he is yet to be more applied by us, and possessed of us, we would believe more, and doubt lesse. What the Psalmist speakes of God, that same is true of Christ, They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.

Yet take a caution in thy study-
The doubting Christian

Note.

A mighty Saviour and gracious.

The doubting Christian, study him as God reveals him, otherwise thy doubts will stick upon thee; if a man studieth his sins in his own way, in a natural way, he shall neither rightly see them, nor yet be freed from them: so if men study Christ their own way, if they will have him to be such a one as their fearful hearts would make him to be, and not such a Saviour as God hath manifested him to be, then not conceiving of Christ as he is, they shall be & remaine still as they were.

3 Be in the ways of strength. There are ways in which God doth reveal his arm; his arm is that which doth strengthen us, and his arm is revealed in his ordinances; for God doth not call us, nor change us, nor strengthen us, nor save us without means.

He who is too good for the Ordinances, will ever be too weak in his faith. A childe which cannot stand when it is borne, may yet goe by the use of the breasts; but
but that person who is weak, and wants strength, if he feeds not, will abate more, and be long want life itself. This is a truth, A new Christian is sometimes full, and a full Christian is always weak; for our spiritual life is like unto our natural life, both of which are within us, yet neither of them do rise, but from something without us.

What the impotent person spake, J oh. 5. 11. He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walke; that we affirm of God's Ordinances, those his means which made us good, can make us better; they made us live, and they can make us walke; they gave faith, they brought the hand which did set the plant, and they can enlarge faith, they bring the shower which doth water that plant:

For 1 They evidence Christ more, and open and unfold the Promises (which are the stayes of our faith) more.

2 They
The doubting Christian.

2 They enervate, or weaken, and scatter the grounds of our feares and doubtings, and exceedingely suppress the reasonings and powers of unbelief.

3 They cleare the understanding, and so keep open the way for faith to God and Christ.

4 They doe instill a secrete and drawing vertue, they doe excite, and quicken, and perswade, Ergo.

Fourthly, let faith know its priviledges, and then it will grow more strong: Faith would doe more, if it did know all that it might doe; assuredly we should have more confidence, did wee know our royalties.

Believers are more to God then the most immediate servants are to a Prince; all the Subjects of a Prince have some priviledges, yet theirs are greatest, who are in nearest service; now none nearer to God then Beelievers; see, 1 Pet. 2. 9. The are a chosen generation, a royall Priest-hood, an holy Nation, a pecu-
peculiar people; Nay, 2 Cor. 6. 18. Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty; and these have those privileges which the servants have not. They who descended from the blood of Abraham, had more privileges than others, and have not they greater, who come from the blood of Christ? The Priests of the Law had singular exemptions, and Kings of all men are most highly privileged; do you think Believers come short, who are not profane, nor civil, nor typical Priests, but royall Priests? who are not Priests only, nor Kings only, but both Kings and Priests, a royall Priest-hood? who are a holy Nation, a peculiar people, (i.e.) a people of treasure, such by whom only God gets something?

O, say many weak Believers, Object. The Lord doth not respect nor love us.

"No? Doth not God love those, whom (out of his mere love) he
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he hath chosen? Doth not God respect the disciple, and generation of Christ? those who come of his blood? They who come from Christ, and are born of God, are surely beloved of God.

But in the world, all men discountenance us, and regard us not.

Yee are Kings in Gods account, yee have the royall oyme, even the Spirit of Grace; the royall garment, even the righteousness of Christ; the royall attendance, even the Angels of God ministering unto you. You have a Kingdom which consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy, Rom. 14. 17. Cannot this stir up faith?

Wee are oft-times afraid to come before God, we fear access.

Are ye not Believers? And are not Believers the Priests of God? And are not Priests privileged by their calling to come before God? The Priests might enter in, when none else might. And is not
Jesus Christ the Altar, upon which we tender all our sacrifices and services to God? and is it not the Altar that Sanctifies the gift? Matth. 23. 19. The Apostle faith, Gal. 5. 1. that Christ hath gotten us a liberty; and Ephes. 2. 13. that we are made nigh by the blood of Christ; and Heb. 10. 19. that we may have boldnesse to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

If therefore wee did once throughly know what priviledges the first-borne have, the Sons of God have, the Generation of Christ have, the Priests of God have, the purchased by Christ have; if we knew the grants of favour, and free access, and singular acceptances with God, in and through Christ, O how might we keep down our feares, and our doubtfulings, and singularly encourage our faith to run, and with fullest eagernesse to embrace our God, our Christ, our Promises!

There be other meanes for the per-
perfecting of faith, as, Experiences, Observation, &c. which I have touched long since, and our Divines are plentiful this way, and therefore I spare.

3 The third spring of doubtings was, the study of the life of sense; the remedy of which, is the keeping of it downe: If you will keep off doubtings, you must keep down sense and feeling. Blessed (faith Christ to Thomas, Joh. 20. 29.) are they that have not seen and yet have believed.

If a man thinks this, That Christ is not mine, unless he handle him; and God is not mine, unless I see him; and grace is not mine, unless I feel it; hee will be for ever full of doubts and feares.

For the helping of which, consider these things.

1 Sense is not a fit Judge of our condition; it cannot report our estate but by what it feels: but the spiritual estate is not always under feeling; we should be
be good and bad, found and lost, cheerful and sorrowful, many times in one day, nay in one hour, if that sense gave sentence on our condition.

Beloved, think well on this; There is How can sense reach unto the not a latitude of desertion? unto the times of want? unto the times of indisposition? unto the times where faith doth express no acts, but such as are pure and clear, and only grounded upon the Promises? In these distracted times Sense finds nothing to speak to us, to evidence for us, for God holds off, and wants hold up, and dulnesses hold in, and we have nothing but a word of promise (all other things seem to faile and forsake) to sustain and retain us.

2 The spiritual course many times goes against our sense, and therefore sense must be kept downe. You know that Abraham against hope believed in hope, Rom. 4. 18, Faith and sense are Rom. 4. 18 many
many times at a contradiction; faith will believe what sense perceiveth not; and what our sense doth perceive, that same our faith will not believe, but the contrary. Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him, faith Job; and Abraham believed his sons safety, in the sacrificing of him; and wee our immortality, notwithstanding our death and corruption. This is very certain, that when we feel corruptions living, faith will believe them to be dying; and when we feel ourselves in trouble, faith will then believe our comforts and deliverances: Faith usually (I doe not say always) believes the contraries unto sense.

For sense goes our way; and faith goes Gods way: Sense allowes and sets it selFFE a time, and Faith is content to receive and take Gods times; Sense moves upon what appears, and Faith upon what is not yet: Sense looks downward, and Faith looks upward;
ward; Sense doth sustaine it selfe by something within us, and Faith sustaines it selfe by something without us, Psal. 27. 3. So Hab. 3. 17, 18. So Esay 8. 17. I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will looke for him, Esay 50. 10. Who is he that walketh in darknesse, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God:

3 Sense or feeling is not medium credendi, but fruitus fidei; (i.e.) It is not the ground of believing, but a fruit of faith. v. g. Take feeling in the most excellent parts of it, as in assurance, and joy, and peace, these are not Antecedents to faith, but Consequents of it. What is that? That is, a man hath not these first, and then faith for or from these, but hee hath faith first, and these afterward.

Why dost thou not beleeve?

If I had assurance that God were my God, and Christ were my Christ, and the Promises were mine,
mine, I would: But say, Is the Word or thy Assurance the ground of faith? and wouldst thou have the fruit before the tree? or thy safety before thou layest hand on the rock? If thou wouldst have assurance, thou must then believe; for the sweetnesse of assurance flowes from that faith which by believing feeds on Christ. So if thou wouldst have joy, believe; for true joy doth not prevent, but attend believing.

We are oft times troubled by our owne pride and folly; God sets us a way to believe, and we will follow our owne way; Hee gives unto us his Word of Promise to ground our believing, and we will have our sense to be the ground: Of which course, I dare say, what Abraham spake to the curiosity of Dives, who would have some to bee sent from the dead, that his brethren might believe; to whom Abraham thus replies, If they heare not Moses and
the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead, Luk. 16. 31.

So say I, If men will not believe, because God hath promised, neither will they believe, if sense should stand up and speake; for we have more reason to suspect our own testimony, then to distrust Gods invitation and promise.

You will reply, This testimony of sense in Assurance is Gods owne answer, and therefore if we had it, it would the more settle our faith.

I answer,

1 Gods testimonies are indeed of a settling and quieting vertue, whether they be the evidencing of our present interests in him, or speciall answerings of our present desires.

2 But then know, thou must first put to thy seale and hand of faith, before he delivers over to thee the assuring Evidences. And as yet I never knew any Christian who
who could be answered without faith, or tooke comfort in that which yet he did not beleive. For though it be the favour of God which doth properly comfort, nevertheless it doth not actually comfort, unless faith hath taken in that favour.

Object. But are not former experiences (which are nothing else but sensible feelings) grounds to future believe? Did not David remember the dayes of old?

Sol. I answer, True, Experiences are good encouragements to the future acts of faith, but the Word of God is still the ground of faith: They are not intrinsicall grounds, but extrinsicall motives.

Note. You may consider the experiences, either in things granted and performed, or in the manner of their performance. Thou haist had Gods favour, thou haist had an answer, but how didst thou obtaigne them? was it not by beleevng? was it not by waiting upon, some
some good word of promise? Thy injoying of them did not prevent thy beleeving of the word of Promise, but the beleeving of that word of Promise did let in, and bring unto thy soule that sweet and gracious experience; and therefore thy experience was not the ground heretofore, nor is it now; only thus farre it serves as a singular furtherance to faith, that that God, on whom heretofore thou didst beleeve, and from whom (in beleeving) thou receivest such gracious helps and answers, will againe (be being the same for ever, and his Promises being Yea and Amen) by further beleeving on his Word, renew his gracious goodnesse and mercifull favour unto thy soul.

4. A fourth spring was, the restraining of faith, the curbing of it in its worke, and in occasions. Now the remedy of this is, to give way unto faith; give it scope, let it doe its whole service, as the Apostle said of patience,

G 5. Jam.
James 1:3-4. Let patience have her perfect works, so let faith; do not restrain it, and then you shall be stayed, you shall be freed: The workings of one contrary restrain the other.

Therefore Christ checks his Disciples for their anxieties, for their carkings, and solicitudes, and would have them to let their faith loose to see a Father who would provide, Matthew 6:32. They had poverty, or feared it; their wants came in, and losses, and so their fears came in, and thoughts. But how should they cast them out? Thus: If faith did believe helps, as well as impatience finde wants; if they would give way to faith to believe God’s providing, as well as sense to see the World abridging & ebbing, they would not have been so full of thoughts: Shall he not much more cloth you, O yee of little faith? ver. 30.

But for the further help in this point, consider,

1. In any occurrence, Faith may be
be our Agent, it can deal for us, because 1. Our temporall life is by faith; 2. The temporall Promises which reach over all the externall condition, are the bottom of faith. Hence it is said, Hab. 2. 5. The just shall live by his faith. When we have no other help, yet faith can be our staffe; when we have no other feeding, yet faith can be our bread: It can negotiate for the soul, it can make repaire to God, and singularly solace and sustaine the soul in his word of Promise.

Suppose a mans means begin to shrink, his condition is drawing thin, he is near to want, at such a time this man may kepe downe his doubts, and tearing thoughts, if he will give faith a scope to work: I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Heb. 13. 5. Here Heb. 13. 5 is a Promise now, and here is plenty enough to faith; and faith (if it may have its perfect worke) will sustaine thee against all doubtings.
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Object. I shall be left, sayest thou.
Sol. Thou shalt not, faith Faith.
Object. Not now, perhaps, for yet I have something.
Sol. Nay, never faith faith, for thou hast a continuall God, and hee hath promised a continuall help. Thou wouldst be a free-man, if faith were free, for faith will not leave God, and God will not faile faith; and why shouldst thou fail, when faith holds up thy heart, and God holds up thy faith?

So for any croffe and trouble; Not any burthen this way, but faith may be a shoulder to cale us: As long as there is a Promise to beare up faith, faith will have strength to bear off the disquietments of our troubles.

Object. I know not what to doe, faith, the person.
Sol. No ? faith Faith, Is not the Lord good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and doth not he know them that trust in him? Nahum. 1, 7.

But troubles are renewed, and come againe; and though I was deli-
delivered heretofore, yet now I feare.

Fear? faith faith, No reason Sol. for that. See a notable place, Job 5:17. Happy is the man whom God correcteth. If a man hath wounds, it is well for him to have a search-ing plaster: and if a man hath a full stomach, it is well for him if he hath a potion; and if his spirits putrific, it is well for him to be let bloud: So, &c.

18 For he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his bands make whole.

19 He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

There is nothing new to God, nor difficult. Though our troubles be grievous to us, yet their deliverance is easie to God, and faith can finde a harbour for every storme; yea, give faith but its scope, it will conclude presents helps from former deliverances; and the escape out of old troubles, shall ensure faith in the new.
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2 Cor. 1.

He who hath delivered, doth, and will still deliver, 2 Cor. 1.

God doth not alter, neither in his truth, nor in his goodness, nor in his power, although our conditions do vary: The temptation may be new, and affliction new, but God is still the same, and the Promises the same, and faith can make use of one God to conquer twenty temptations, and one Promise to bear up against many afflictions.

2 In every occurrence there is a providence, and the issues depend upon it. If Satan tempts, if afflictions, and crosses, and losses, and contempts befall us, there is a Providence to permit them, to order them, to direct them, to restrain them; and if we gave faith a scope to work upon that Providence, we would not be so full of doubts.

1 For Satan, he doth indeed tempt and suggest, but he cannot doe this when he pleaseth, he must ask leave of God to touch Job any
any way: And when he doth do his attempts, the issue doth not depend upon his malice; the Lord looks on, and subministers marvellous strength, and makes his servants subordinate and to pray earnestly, and hear earnestly, and apply his Promises, and will deliver.

We looke upon Satan, and not upon God; we look upon strong temptations, but we look not upon mighty assistances; we consider our owne weaknesses, but do not consider Gods omnipotency; we think how unable we are, but not how able God is; we finde yet no deliverance, and doe not give faith its perfect work, to believe that God will finde a way to conquer for us. If faith did but dwell upon Gods providence in this, how he suffereth Satan to buffet us, and how his grace is sufficient for us, and how his power will be made manifest in weaknesses, how he hath delivered, and doth in our very resistance deliver us, and hath promised to bruise...
bruile Satan under our feet; we would not doubt, we would not gratifie Satan with feares of fainting, but resift him steadfastly, by encouraging our selves in our God.

2 For our croses and losses There is a providence in them, God is in all our troubles and wants: His wisdom is there, and his goodness: O how shall I be delivered? How? Let faith work, and that will tell thee how. Why should I thus be troubled? why? Let faith work, and that will tell thee; it is in very faithfulness, faith. David: And, It is good for me that I am afflicted. No childe of God thus! Nay, let faith work, and it will cleare all; That a good condition is not exempted from afflictions, and that though God had one Sonne without sin, yet he had no Son without sorrow.

3 Our encouragements are, more then our discouragements, and our helps exceed our oppositions; therefore faith is not to be restrained.
The Prophet healed up his servants doubtings, 2 Kin. 6. 16. Elitsees servant.

Feare not, for they that be with us are more then they that be with them.

And so Christ to his perplexed and doubting Disciples about those exigencies and casualties to which they were exposed; Feare not little flocke, it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom, &c. Be not so disquieted, so anxious for your lives, for your safeties. Though you be a flock, and a little flock, and the wolves are many, yet let the worst come to the worst, you shall have a Kingdom.

Oppose that to this, and you need not doubt and fear.

So St. John, 1 Joh. 4. 4. Ye are of God (little children) and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world.

Once more St. Paul, Rom. 5. 20. Where sinne abounded, grace did much more abound; and 21. As sinne reigned unto death, so grace reignes through righteousness, unto eternal life,
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life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

So againe for outward troubles,

Help to trouble & weakness. 

And 2Cor. 1:5. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also, &c.

2Cor. 4:17 Our light afflictions, &c. work for us a far more eceeding weight of glory.

My Father is greater then all, faith Christ.
laf matter to work upon in all occurrences.

It is on the better side, and on the greater side, on that side which will carry it, and bear downe the contrary.

Satan is against me.

But greater is he (that Spirit of Christ) in me, then he that is in the world.

Sin is against me.

But greater is Christ who is for me, then sinne which is in me. Grace hath much more abound.

Men in their power are against mee.

But greater is that Almighty God, before whom the Nations are but as the drop of the bucket, and lighter then a dust in the bal lance.

Troubles are upon me.

But my comforts are greater then my sorrowes, and the glory which I expect, infinitely exceeds the trouble which I suffer.

Wants are upon me.
But my supplies are exceeding; I have a provident Father; and though I have not a large portion of earth, yet I have a sure Kingdom in heaven.

Beloved, if we would but often consider of this, that faith is still on the better, on the surer side, we would quit all our doubtings; we would not feare what man can do unto us, what Satan can do unto us; our owne infirmities would not disable us, nor afflictions; for still faith falls to the surest party, and therefore give it scope. Faith pitcheth upon no weak causes, upon no weak helps, upon no weak stayes; it stayes upon the Name of the God of Jacob.

O how might faith out-face the greatest oppositions, & trample under all our affronts, and losses, and doubts, if we did let it get out unto its encouragements, could we once come with faith to be perswaded indeed, that they who are so for us, are more then they who are against us!
Brethren, in our Spiritual combats we have the better cause, and the better strength; what help heaven can afford, we have. Therefore in all our distresses let us hearten our selves, and encourage our faith: Let us (as Jeph in another case) looke up, and say, Who is on my side, who? and then we may even say what the Psalmist spake, Psal. 124. 1. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may (the Beleever) Israel say, 2. If it had not been the Lord, &c. 7. Our soule is escaped as a bird out of the snare, &c. 8. Our help is in the name of the Lord, &c.

5 A fifth spring of doubtings, was speciall and particular sins after conversion: These, like a strong disease, doe shake the very heart and spirit of the Christian, and stagger him on every side; and like a cloud, fold up all our comfortable communion with God; like a dead fly they fall into all our services. If thou dost ill, sinnelyes at the doore, said God to Cain:
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Cain: And so you shall finde it, that speciall sins after conversion doe much interrupt us in our approaches, and in our confidences.

Now the way to Cure this spring, is,

1. To renew our sorrowes, to set open the fountaine: David did so after his great sins, and so did Peter; the one did water his couch, and his teares were his meat day and night, and the other went out and wept bitterly.

Bitternes, Bitternesse of sorrow (you,read of it in Zach. 12. 10.) imports;

1. An anguifh of spirit; as David saide for his Jonathan, My soule is distressed for thee; so here the falne Christian is distressed for sinning thus against his God, for losing his God; there is oft-times a very tearing and rending in the soule.

2. Fullnesse of griefe; as Joseph was full of compassion, and his bowels could hold no longer upon the oration of Judah; so
resolved.

so the falne Christian is full of holy meltings, his heart is ready to break, and like a full vessell it must have vent.

Many a time he must, and doth consider this vile sinne, and hies him alone to pour out his grieved heart before the Lord, and shames himselfe before him, and confesseth with confusion of face his treacherous and unworthy dealing against his God.

There is, you know, a natural sorrow, as for the losse of Children, and a Politicall sorrow, as was that for the good King Jasiab, and there is a spirituall sorrow, which is for our sins: This must now be exceedingly renewed, and you may raise it by consideration of mercy. O Lord, what have I done? Why have I done raise our this? Thou showedst me mercy in opening my eyes, in changing my heart, in calling me to holinesse, in pardoning of former sins; yet after all this, I have sinned against thee, I have wounded my heart,
The doubting Christian! heart, dishonoured thy Name, turned thy grace into wantonness, lost thy favour, broke my peace, injured my Christ, grieved thy Spirit, turned away thine eare, given advantage to Satan, and deserved for ever to sit in darkness, &c. Beloved, if you finde your hearts unhumbled, you shall finde your hearts still to be unbelieving.

For besides that, great sins are great provocations to our gracious God, they are also (till we are humbled for them) great impediments to faith; faith cannot doe service for us, it cannot uphold us, it cannot bring a comforting promise unto our hearts, untill our hearts are humbled for our sins. God comforts none but mourners; and faith cannot fall in with him, untill our hearts fall out with our selves.

And here take heed you be not slight and too quick; if you be, you shall have your doubtings againe. God doth seldom or
never speake easie peace after a
great sin. If you skin up a sore, it
will breake out againe; if your
sorrowes be not deep and sound,
your feares will be fresh and mul-
tiplied; but let them be pious,
and serious, and then the soule
will after a while recover it selfe,
and plead, and finde mercy with
God, and be able to answer and
silence all the doubtfull reaso-
nings, which will rise against faith
in its wonted communions and
applications.

But you will say, If we should Obje-
sorrow thus, yet we should still
doubt of mercy and Gods fa-
vour.

I answer,

I Thou hast now to answer thy
doubtings; True, I did sin thus,
but I have truly grieved for this
sin; and though I might not ap-
ply mercy because I sinned, yet
now I may, because I am grie-
vied.

See Gods disposition to E-
phraim, Jer. 31. 18, I have surely Jer. 31. 18
H heard
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heard Ephraim bewailing himself; &c. ver. 19. I was ashamed, yea even con-
forced, because I did bear the re-
proach of my youth. But then, ver. 20.
Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a
pleasant child? for since I spake a-
gainst him, I do earnestly remember
him still; therefore my bowels are trou-
bled for him, I will surely have mercy
upon him, saith the Lord.

Though God be offended with
our sins, yet he is delighted in our
sorrows; and nothing melts
him more, then to see us come
melting before him. The mourn-
ful behaviour of Joseph's brethren
moved him, and the returning
Prodigals falling downe to his
Father, and cryings out, went to
the heart of him; and it is not
without cause that David prays,
Regard my tears that fall; and, Are
not my tears registered? And, Put
thou my tears into thy bottle. Melting
tears doe melt a tender God and
Father.

2. To renew our repentance; in which I would comprehend both
both detestations and forswakings. These sinnes must be made very hatefull to the soule, you must imbitter them, you must purge out all the sweetnesse of them, all the liking of them; Nay, you must set upon them as on things most abominable. Hence that phrase of loathing your abominations, Ezek. 36.

St. John, Rev. 2. 5. adviseth decayed Ephesus to remember from whence she was fallen, and to repent. Beloved, this is not a condition to stay in; this water is deep, and drowning is possible, if we lye in it; But if we rise out of our sins, then our doubtings will fall. It is with our Consciences, as it is with water in a pot; if you put no fire under it, it is quiet; but if you kindle a fire, the water will Boyle and bubble, it hath no quiet. So though Conscience be quiet, and kind, and molest us not, if yet fire come under, if any notable sin come in, and kindle in the heart; now the boylings, now.
The doubtings Christian
now the feares and doubts of the soule.

And in these tumblings, the way to cease them, is to remove the fire, and then you shall see how the water growes to a Hilterness againe, and by degrees leaves suffumg: So will our soules come to a pacified temper, to a settledness, if once our sins be removed; leave the sins, and ordinarily the doubts will leave the sinner.

For as sin is our unquiet sea, so repentance is our secure harbour: Any knowne sin unrepented, still puts in, and inlivens doubts in us; but repentance plucks out the venom, and the rage. An amended childe comes againe before his Facher; and a reformed Christian and penitent, may yet be confident.

Sue out a speciall assurance; You may see by Davids disposition, after his speciall sins, that a generall acquaintance would not serve the turne; for speciall sines you must sue out speciall assurance of pardon.

Your
Your Consciences will never be quiet else; Nay this will not satisfy thee, that yet they are pardonable, that they are such as do not exclude thee out of the Proclamation; thou wilt never bee quiet untill God speakes peace, untill he doth put his seale to acquit thee of particular sins.

Sin will rise, it will lye uppermost, thou shalt seele it so, it will lye in thy face, it will come up in serious times, untill thou repent of it, and sue out thy discharge; therefore be earnest with the Lord for pardon of it, for a speciall acquittance: If the Lord Jesus did seale his bloud upon thy heart, thy doubtings would cease.

But you will say, There is now no hope, though we should grieve, though we should repent, though we should sue for pardoning mercy, there is now no hope; for these are sins after conversion, and they are great ones too; and besides we finde no particular promise to eale our soules upon.
Let me answer this doubt fully, for it is a folded one; there are many in it; consider therefore;

Three things.
The pardoning promise is exclusive, in respect of of sinners; but inclusive in respect of penitents; not all sinners, but all repenting sinners shall be pardoned.

The promise of pardon is indefinite to repentance, and I beseech you marke this point: God doth not say, I will pardon sins simply, but if men repent and forsake sins, they shall have mercy. So again, in promising pardon to repentance, he doth not promise it respectively, and conditionally, but absolutely and fully.

What is that? That is, God doth not say, If you repent of such or such sins, then you shall have pardon; but he faith simply and absolutely, If you repent; So that let the sinnes be never so great, never so many, yet if they be sins of which thou now truly repentest, they are assuredly pardoned; Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.
resolved.

upon him, and to our God, for hee will abundantly pardon. Here you see a promise of abundant pardon to be made unto the penitent; though he hath had thoughts, though he hath had wayes, yet if he forsaies them, the Lord will pardon, and shew mercy.

Againe, because that pardon is promised to actual repentance indefinitely, therefore let the sinner be what he will, let him be a person who was not converted before, or let him be a person already converted, yet if he begins true repentance, or the other renewes his true repentance, they shall be pardoned: And the reason is, because it is not sinee simply in such an estate which God pardons, but it is sin repented of, which God doth promise to pardon: And therefore if an evil man, whose life hath been a course of sins, repents and leaves his sins, hee shall have mercy. Or if a good man fall accidentally into sinne, upon his repentance
The doctrine Christian
tance he may confidently plead
out God's promises of pardon, for
he shall have mercy upon his re-
pentance, as you may see, Prov.
Pro. 28. 14 28. 14. He that forsakes his sins, shall
Eze. 18. 32 finde mercy, Ezek. 18. 32. Turne
ver. 21, 22. your selves, and live. See ver. 21, 22.
If the wicked will turne from all his
sins, they shall not be mentioned unto
him.

Whence we may infer, that if
God will forgive his enemies, he
will then (upon the same repon-
tance) forgive his children. If a
King will pardon a returning
Traitor, will he not receive then
a returning sonne? It was a pi-
ous speech of St. Chrysostome, St.
Demi promittat gratiam nobis offens-
dentibus, quid faciet nobis penitenti-
bis? If he promiseth grace unto
us when we are sinning, what
then will he confer on us, if we be
repenting?

2. Christ is of great vertue still,
and as able to put away the sins
after conversion, as well as be-
fore; therefore hee is called the
same, yesterday, to day, and for ever: Heb. 13:8.
And the Apostle reasons it in the Romans, If when we were enemies, Rom. 5:10
we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more being re-
conciled, shall we be saved by his life?

We must think of the pacification by Christ, of the atonement, of the propitiation of the satis-
faction, not as confined to any one sinne, or to any one estate, but in respect of its sufficien-
cy, reaching over both estates, and all the sinnes in both. What is that? That is, the death of the Lord Jesus was not only to reach the sins thou didst commit in thy unconverted estate; and the rest afterward in thy con-
verted estate, thou art to satisfy for by thine owne power some other way. What is this but that Popish leaven? that selfe-justifi-
cation? those humane satisfacti-
ons? What is this but to divide our salvation twixt Christ and our selves? What is this but to re
strain even the sufficiency,
or the efficacy of his death?

No, Christ is unto us in respect of sins before, and sins after conversion, as the Lord was to the Israelites, a pillar of a cloud, and a pillar of fire, Jesus Christ is a cloud in the day, (in the time of conversion) to cover our sins upon our repentance; and a pillar of fire by night, (for the times of former darkness) upon our repentance to consume away our sins, &c.

The difference of our estates doth no way add or diminish to the strength and efficacy of his death: His blood can cry as loud now as heretofore, and is not lesse effectuall to get pardon for our falls in the way, then for our sinnings, when we were not in the way, as is evident in the sins of Paul before his conversion, and in sins of David and Peter after their conversion; for Christ is our constant Mediator, and everlasting Intercessor.

Object. But you will reply, These sins
cut off all our interest in Christ, and all relations, and therefore no hope now.

I answer, though the comfortable interest be cut off, (untill the time of sound repentance) yet the radical interest is not: As the Leprous person was debarred the use of his house (untill he was cleansed) yet he was not debarred the title and right of his house; and therefore thou mayest (upon thy repentance) sue unto the Lord by the blood of thy Saviour, the pardon of these sins.

3 The Lord is mercifull still unto repentant: ye shall read in Psal. 136 that his mercy is set downe twenty six times, with the adjunct of everlastinge, His mercy endureth for ever. And Psal. 86. 5 Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive, and plentiful in mercy, unto all them that call upon thee. So, ver. 13. Great is thy mercy towards me. And, ver. 15. Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering.
suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. So Micah 7:18: Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19. He will turn again, he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Mercy is not strange unto God; it is his nature, it is his delight, and repentance will not be hid from his eyes, if it be not hid from our hearts: He calls us to repent, and causeth us to repent, that he might shew us his mercy, and everlastingness of his mercy.

6. A sixth spring of doubtings was indisposition unto, or about spiritual duties: Whence we fear the truth of grace, which is active and lively, and doubt our acceptance with God, by reason of our dulness and deadness.

For the curing of this consider, 1 That
That dulnesse in holy duties is possibly incident to men truly sanctified. Beloved, there is a great difference betwixt a dead heart, and a dull heart: That heart is properly tearmed dead, which wants a living spring, and therefore spirituall duty is contrary unto it; it hath a secret averseness to holy services, it cares not for holy prayer; there is not onely an indifferency whether the work be done, but a determinate dislike, and positive unwillingnesse, or rather (a Nolition) a nillingnesse to the same. Whence ariseth that, shuffling carriage in wicked men, to finde diverting occasions, and arguing reasonings against the strictnesse and spiritualnesse of duty.

But againe, that heart is properly tearmed dull, which hath in it a living spring, but hath not a lively operation: The Spirit is willing, (said Christ) there the spring was open; but the flesh is weak, there the
the operation was narrow. The Christian may say with David, My heart (O Lord) is ready, my heart is prepared; and as Paul, I would doe good, and I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but yet faith he, I finde a law, that when I would doe good, evill is present with me: And I see another law in my members warring against the law of my minde. So in the Galatians, The flesh lusteth against the spirit, &c. and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot doe the things that yee would. Ye would doe, but ye cannot doe; Yee cannot always do the work ye would do, and ye cannot do it in such a manner as ye would do it.

You know that a full vessell which hath a narrow neck, it cannot send out the waters so speedily, nor so fully; and a sick man, who would fetch more then a turne about his chamber, hee cannot doe that sometimes; if he doth it, it is with extrem wearinesse, not of his minde, but
of his body: Or as a lusty and able man escaped out of prison with a great chain about his leg, he would run away, but the chain hinders him, and vexeth him, so that it doth indispose him in the motion.

In like manner, is it many times with good people; the heart, the will is bent, it is resolved for prayer, for hearing, &c. but then there is a chain clogs them, there is a spiritual weakness, there is flesh in them as well as spirit, and this doth dull them, this doth indispose them about the doing, about the exercise of their intentions and desires.

Therefore let us take heed of denying, or concluding the absence of grace, from the infirmity of working. David prayed often to be quickened, and so may we, strengthen thou me, and yet be alive. It is one thing to have life, another thing to have livelihood: That may be according to thy word. Life and present, when this is absent: for a livelihood, Christian, I may have a dull temp-
per of body, not able to render unto him the spiritual sense of spiritual duties, melancholy doth intercept the vitality not only of nature, but of grace.

2. He may not so seriously meditate and dwell upon the ways and motives of livelihood, he may have but remisse, and unpiercing, or unapplying thoughts of God's great love and mercy, of Christ's blood and intercession, of the Promises's goodness, and fulness; and therefore his spirit may be dull.

3. He may not have such an actual aid and special influence from the Spirit of Christ to excite his spiritual frame and temper; and then if that wind be more slacke, our ship will move on with lesse forwardness.

Or lastly, perhaps he may have over-lasht, he hath been (improvidently or accidentally) in the dulling ways; he hath been surfeiting upon some sinne, or too greedily embracing the heavy world,
world, or been idle in his particular calling. But,

Whatsoever the cause may be, this is certain, that Indisposition is not fundamental; it is not such a case, which nullifies the estate of Grace. For as in our most lively times there is more duty then we can throughly do; so in our dullest times, there is not more duty then we would doe.

And this know, that the Christian condition keeps up for truth of being, notwithstanding the many pauses, the many eclipses, the many indispositions which may, and do accompany it.

But yet again, secondly, be informed of this, that God observes the bent of the heart in the duty, and accordingly accepts of it. You know that place in the Chronicles, how that the good Lord did pardon every one who prepared his heart to seek him, though he were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.

The Indisposition is not fundamental.

Note.
Note. The greatest actions managed from a corrupt heart are not accepted with God: (All the superfluous and abundant gifts of the Pharisees, were worthlesse, yet the Widows mite found acceptance) The meanest duties set forth with a perfect heart are acknowledged by God, he will take notice of them; for God looks to the heart: Hee eyes not so much thy behaviour, he listen not so much to thy words, but (through these) he considereth thy heart; if that come with life, though thy body come with dulness, though thy tongue be not so fluent, yet if there be life and truth in the heart, hee will finde duty and accept of it.

You remember that Simile of the Goldsmith, who hath a skilful eye to finde out the smaller, and neglected ways of gold, though covered with much drosse, and many times there is much fire, and much gold, when both are hidden with dust and coal:
coal: So is it with the Lord, hee can scent out the secrets of our desires, and what we would doe is observed and taken with him for well done, notwithstanding the many indispositions which covet our Altar.

Therefore it is David's counsel to Salomon his son, Know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: If thou seek him, hee will be found of thee, &c.

Beloved, we are mistaken about duty: we judge it not to bee duty, unleasse the tongue can speake much, and our behaviours be fresh, &c. As if a man were not a man, and did no worke in course cloaths: But know wee that the sealing of spirituall service with integrity of heart, is duty.

And that is it which God considers, and unto which hee hath made many promises of acceptance,
Object. This is something to flay us, you will say: But now wee sticke at this, Whether the bent of our hearts bee intire, notwithstanding our indispositions and dulnesses?

Sol. That may easily be discerned: You may know that the bent of the heart is right and eaven in duties.

How to know that the bent of the heart is right:

1 By not contenting your selves with this heavy kinde of performing of duties: You will have life enough to dislike your selves, though you have not power enough to mend your services.

There are some men (and they have evill hearts) which will be picking some help and pleas for their lasie and dull serving of God, from what hath been spoken.

Object. O say they, though we cannot doe as others doe, yet our hearts are as good, and as willing;
God knowes the heart, and regards it.

He doth so, and he knows this of thy heart, that it yeelds him laifie service, and dislikes not it selfe therein: but how the true Christian is not satisfied with this that God accepts of a weak heart; but it would also hereupon bring him a better heart.

It doth many times fall out with it selfe, and rebuke its owne dulnesse, Why art thou so heavy, O my soule? and why art thou so indisposed within me? Thou art serving of a living God, why dost thou not serve him with a more lively heart? And then it breaks out on the sudden, Well, Lord, If I had a better heart, thou shouldest have it; If I could finde more affections I would bestow them on thee.

Hereupon,

2 It falls upon the wayes of livelihood, and exerciseth the art of quickning. It will not rest in this indisposition, but will use all
all the means to better it, else, and this doth abundantly manifest its bent.

As you know, the weak person he will have one turne more, and the ingenuous scholar will write one line more; and the desirous archer will make one shot more: so the sincere heart, hee will assay yet more in duty, perhaps frequency in duty (faith he) may breed fervency in duty. (A man may get him an heat by walking, and by rubbing his benumbed parts.) Or perhaps, faith hee, one duty more in another kinde, may quicken mee to duty in every kinde; as some physick and cordial to the heart may cause more nimblenes in the hands and feet. I am somewhat dull in praying, I will therefore read more, or heare more, that I may finde matter to set on my prayer; I may perhaps meet with that in reading, which may set me on in praying: Or I am somewhat dull in hearing, I will there-
therefore pray more, perhaps God may hear my prayer, and then I may hear his word with more attention, delight, profit, &c. And assuredly so it falls out many times, that our indispositions are more about some particular duties, which are singularly removed by the small dispositions, yet left in us about some other duties.

Or if all this betters not, yet faith he, I will even goe to God's Ordinances, and will come before him, and bring him my soule thus indisposed, perhaps yet hee may be disposed to quicken mee by his Word, to cheere me by his Sacrament: Who knowes but that he may let fall a blessing? that he may so powerfully direct himselfe to mee, as to shake my heart, as to throw off all my dull distempers, and revive my Graces, and excite my affections, &c.

So that if you perceive your dulnesses, if they grieve and displease you, if you will not rest in them,
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them, if you yet set out to the
means of removall, assuredly
your hearts are sincere, God seeth
that the bent is honest, that thou
art indeed willing; and take this
for thy comfort, that if it bee
thus with thee, God (for present)
accepts of thy services, and ere
long thou shalt be freed of these
indispositions, which doe ac-
company thee in thy ser-
ces; God will drive this
sheep from thine eyes, and
these fowles from thy sacrifice.
Once againe, though, note
that

3 The cause of all ac-
ceptation is in Christ: there-
fore doe not doubt that God
will reject thy services because
of thy indispositions, but be-
leeve hee will accept of thy
sincere endeavours, because
of his Christ. Beloved, it
were good for us to consider
all things about duty. A sin-
cere heart must set it out, a gra-
cious God must take it, and
a mighty Redeemer and Intercessor must present it. Christ presents that to his Father, which we present to Christ; the duty belongs to us, but the reason of acceptance is not in the Petitioner, but in the Intercessour: God accepts not for our fulness, nor for our liveliness, but for his Sons worthiness, for his merits; who ever lives to make intercession for us, who offers up the prayers of the Saints, with the perfume and odours of his righteousness.

Are thy prayers servant? They are not accepted for their own strength: Are they weak? They are not rejected for their impotency. Is thy heart sincere? Then know that Christ hath sufficiency of merits to cover thy (selfe-blamed) indispositions, and to gain the acceptance of the weakest (if sincere) services.

Therefore this were a good way, in case of disliked indispositions, not to place the acceptance...
tance in ourselves, but in Christ; and though there be inequality of expressions in duty, quoad nos, in us, yet there is a constancy of intercession by Christ, propter nos, for us. Sometimes we come more fully, sometimes more emptily; sometimes wee run, and other times all that wee can doe is to move; sometimes affections are smart, judgements quicke, expressions ready, requelts fervent, hearings reverent and delightfull, yet at other times the wheeles are almost downe, the spring moves slowly, our affections turne not so lively, our judgements are barren, language sticks, Requets breath only, but flame not; wee heare, and give credit, and flocke it up, and that is all: Here you see the various carriages of our holy services in respect of the person, yet there is no such varietie in Christ.

Whence it would follow, that if our duties found grace with God, because of their accidental vivacity
vivacity in our performance, all our weaker services were utterly lost, and in case of the more lively services, Christ also were lost; because the reason of their acceptation would be in themselves.

But Christ is required to make up our duties, as well as to make up our persons; he must be a Mediator for these, and an Intercessor for those: And because there is a constant merit, and a perpetual offering of that same up, with all the prayers of all Saints; hence it is that they are accepted, not for their owne worth, but for his Name.

7 A severall spring of doubtfulings, was, a conceit of successfulness in duty: We have prayed much for the perfecting of such Graces, or the subduing of such corruptions, or establishing in such duties and courses, yet nothing comes of it, we are as we were, and where we were; therefore we doubt that we are not good, or that God doth not intend
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tend any good to us.
This is the spring, the cure and remedy of which, may be made up by these considerations, viz.

1. Service and progress in duty belongs to us, and their rewards and recompenses belong to God.

I have prayed a long time to God; True, and thou art bound to pray still. I have heard a long time; True, and thou art bound to heare still. Thou doest but what thou art bound to doe. It is the Husbandmans part to plow the Land, and to sow the Corne; and it is Gods part to give the harvest. Hereupon, faith the Apostle, Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not: For God is a God hearing Prayer, and he will be found of them that seeks him, and will not forsake them.

2. God is a good Master: Job did not serve him for nought. I called upon the Lord, and he answered me, said David. And in another place, He hath heard my voynce, and
my supplications, and inclined his eare unto me, therefore will I call upn him as long as I live. Not one of the serv-
vants who traffiqed with the talents, that could complaine hee was an austere Master. Therefore God takes it to heart, when they in Malachi charged him with Mal. 3. 13 neglect, and irrecompence for serving of him; Your words have been set against me, saith the Lord. How so? Ye have said it is in vaine to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord? Whereupon the Lord instantely manifesteth his bountifull and tender disposition to them who did serve him, and think on his Name, They shall be mine (saith he) and when I make up my jewels, I will spare them, as a man spareth his owne sonne that serveth him. Then shall yee returne, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. (i.e. c.) Then yee shall know that it is not lost labour to serve him.
Petitioners must wait an answer, as well as present a request. Therefore know that faith in point of seeking unto God hath a double office.

1. One is, to deliver up in the Name of Christ our wants, which God hath promised to supply in his Word.

2. Another is, to expect and wait those supplies which God hath promised. Therefore faith as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and as the eyes of a maid unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until (even so long let it be never so long) until that he have mercy upon us.

And (beloved) this waiting doth notably distinguish between desires, which come from an unsettled humour, and those which come from poverty of spirit. In them, we give on, but presently give up, as we doe in slight visits with men, knock at doore and if none answer, away we goe.
our business was little, and so our stay is answerable; but in those desires which spring from poverty of spirit, these have faith to believe that God is at home, and have patience to wait his answer.

As a poore begger, (suppose such a one as Lazarus) he will lye at the gate, and knock more then once, and wait more then an hour for some almes, for some crumbs of our tables; and so will humble Christians, who are truly poore in spirit, they will be at heaven gates, and put up request after request, and expect day after day the speeding of them from the throne of grace and mercy.

But we cannot wait.

You cannot! And that is the reason you misse of your answers. If beggers will not stay, they lose their almes; and if Christians will not wait, they lose their grants.

Yet let me not goe off easily from this scruple, for in it lyes the choysest part of the cure: If
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we could but wait on God, then assuredly we should see that we have no reason to cry out of fruitlesnesse in seeking.

How may we doe to wait?

Thus.

1. You are sure to speed. Certainty of answer will beget constancy in seeking. Sure to speed how shall wee be sure of that?

Thus.

1. Take it in promises, and so you are sure.

2. Take it in performances, and so likewise you are sure.

Promises. For Promises, you know, there is a certainty in them; we have no way to pierce into Gods intentions of doing us good, but by his Promises; and in them we have: For as the words of man doe deliver unto us the thoughts of man; so the Promises of God doe discover unto us the intentions and purposes of God. Now then observe what God hath promised to waiting;

Hab. 2. 3. Hab. 2. 3. The vision is yet for an appoin-
appointed time, but at the end it shall speake, and not lye; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Here is the duty, Wait; Here is the Promise, delivered, doubled, trebled, It shall speake. It will come, It will surely come: Nay doubled againe, It shall not lye; it will not tarry. It is as if God had said, Doe but wait, and you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered. O the Rhethoricke of God! O the certainty of his Promises!

Psal. 27. 14. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.

Esa. 40. 31. They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

Micah 7. 7. I will looke unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will beare me.
Will you now see a certain in performances? Then read Psalm 40:1. I waited patiently upon the Lord, and he inclined to me, and heard my cry. Here was waiting, and here was sure speed.

He was but one man.

Then Hebrew 6:12. Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. They did inherit the promises, (i.e.) got all the good out of them by patient waiting. If we be sons, let us wait, and then we also shall be heirs of the promises; the good of them shall be settled upon us.

See also Isaiah 25:9. and Isaiah 49:23. None shall be ashamed who wait upon me. From all which we infer, If God hath made sure promises, If he hath hitherto performed those promises unto such as wait upon him, Then if we wait, we shall surely speed, &c.

2 The things you desire are great, and worth the waiting for. You would think him a strange man, who would not wait the
Sealing of the pardon which the King hath promised him. It is a wonderfull thing, that when God promiseth us pardon of sins, wee cannot have patience to seeke and wait the sealing of it; yet pardon of sins is such a thing, as our very life lyeth in it.

So againe, Is not grace a singular thing? Is not mortifying of sin an excellent thing? And is it much that the Lord puts us to more frequent seekings, to iterated prayers and duties, for those gifts and grants which are so high in their nature? So admirable in their use? So saving in their end? can you be better employed?

3 The answers will sweeten, and easly recompence all the times and labours of seeking. When the man-childe is borne, all the labour in travell is forgotten; the joy of it drownes the sense of that. Let God but lift up the light of his countenance on thee, it will answer and quit theed.
all the prayers that ever thou
madeft in thy life. I found him
whom my soule loveth, I held him, &c.

Doubled services have usually
doubled mercies; for when God
prepares the heart, he will incline
the care; and when he intends a
great mercy, he first enlargeth
the heart to a greatnesse of desire
and seeking. Every true seeking
of God opens the heart wider,
and secretly addes to the flocke;
The more prayers we have put up
to use in the hands of God, the
larger will the returne of them
prove: When wee have beene
long suiters, God doth (ordinar-
ily) at length dismisse us with
more than what we ask; so
that he will answer us not only
for our prayers, but also for our
time.

5. We shall have the best things
in the fittest times; therefore we
should not accuse our services as
lost, for God will answer them;
but then it shall be in the best
things, at the best times.
resolved.

O, will you say, Is it not more then time that I had more grace, and sin more subdued?

I answer, Perhaps not; God doth know that thou hast a proud temper, and thou growest bigger, and art apt to swell upon enlargements; thou art apt to despise others, and to make glorious conceits of thy selfe, and therefore he doth answer thee, not by victory, but by combate; That is, he doth not presently subdue thy sin, that it shall not trouble thee, but lets it alone that it shall exercise thee, thou shalt finde matter to keep thee low and humble, when still thou feelest such remnants, and workings of corruption. To the resistance of which God doth yet enable, and after thy heart growes more emptied, thou shalt have victory. Againe, though thou prayest against thy sins, yet thou dost venture upon the provocations and occasions of sinne, and therefore the Lord may justly hold up, because thou
thou holdest not in. Now the Lord (by his silence) will teach thee in these times, forbearance on thy part, as well as forbearance on his part; and then upon thy next prayers accompanied with this watchfulness, and avoydance of occasions, he will let fall more strength and power to mortifie thy sinfull dispositions.

Wherefore let us not faint in case of suspensions, for God doth suspend his grants to the times, when thou art fitted to receive them, and when it is fit for him to open them.

Is it sin that thou wouldst have subdued? Doe thou seek his subduing power, and withall, decline inviting occasions either from thy selfe or others, and then God will heare thee. Now thou art fitted, and now is it fit for God to help thee; but if thou wilt pray against the disposition, and run still upon the occasion, God will not answer thee.

Is it grace and cayvenesse in duty
which thou wouldst have? Then thou must use former grace, and stick close with humbleness, and diligence, and reverence to the means, and now God will supply all thy wants. Untill thou hast a more humble and doing heart, thou art not fitted for more grace. God giveth more grace to the humble, faith James 4.

I say, he will give thee more grace: Thou shalt have enough for thy condition, and enough for thy salvation, although thou hast not such an equall measure with others, whom God intends for more publick use and service, then he doth thee.

5 God's forbearings should not occasion cessation, but earnestnesse: He is not silent, that we thereby should become speechlesse, but that our desires should grow more fervent.

You know that the skilfull Angler doth not draw back his bait that the fish should not bite.
but that by this means he should
the more greedily leap after the
bait.

And the tender mother steps
aside, not that she would not
have the child seek her, but that
it may even dote after her.

So doth God many times draw
backe and step aside, and as the
Prophet Jeremey speaks, He be-
comes as a stranger, and as a way-faring
man who turneth aside, &c. And as
David speaketh, He is as one that
sleeps: Why? What? Is it that he
doth not know us? No. Is it
that he doth not heare us? No:
Is it that hee will not speed us?
No.

Why then? Surely because
first he delights in this musick, he
smells a sweet odour and favour
in all our humble sacrifices, hee
delights in the broken heart.

2. Hee loves that wee should
strive with him for his grunts, (that
Ro. 15.30 is the phrase Rom. 15.30.) and
Ro. 12.3.4 wrestle with him (as Jacob) and so
Esa. 62.7. prevail upon him: And that we should
give
resolved.

give him no rest, (Ez. 62.7.) until he hath satisfied our souls with mercy, and established them with his grace.

3 He would inhaunce the goodness of the things desired, and make us to wear the answers with more thankfulness to himselfe, with more comfort to ourselves, and with more benefit to others.

8 An eighth cause of doubtings was, weaknesse of judgement about the essentials of salvation, which necessarily doth cause doubtings, both in respect of those suspitions, and errors, and mistakings to which it is subject; as also in respect of that scrupulosity which ever adheres to the conscience, where weaknesse adheres to the judgement.

Now the remedy of this spring, consists in these particulars,

1. Get a distinct knowledge of Fundamentals: It is the emptinesse of our minds that wee bee preposterous in our searches. Many
Many a Christian loseth himselfe in a sea of opinions, before hee hath squared himselfe with the first grounds of Religion.

Remember this, that the first truths doe support and maintaine the rest, (as the cornerstone the rest of the building) and are as the original Will, which decides many scruples in Law. Hence is it, that some men doubt about speciall conclusions, because they are ignorant of the generall principles, which were they distinctly knowne, the falsity of any conclusion would easily become evident unto them.

Men usually dispute first, and know last. As if a Souldier would range an Army, before hee hath learned to handle his weapons. How ordinary is it to heare disputes of Original sin, of Predestination, of Redemption, of Faith and Justification, of Assurance and of Obedience, of the degrees of grace and duty, of the direct and absolute way of life?
life? &c. I say it is ordinary to hear some arguing of these, who yet are ignorant of the nature of these. But, Paul's method was to lay down his foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, which if Paul thought fit to teach, I thinketh it for us to learn. That ship rowls least, which is well bottomed; and that house shakes least, which is well founded; And that Christian doubts least, who is well grounded in the main points of Religion: For besides this, that Primitive truths in we walk give an aim to all truths; so likewise, they uncase all errors, and heresies, and opinions, and arguments which come to pervert the minde another way. And surely when the minde obtains an evidence by one truth for another, and by truth also of error contrary unto it, it is in the least hazard of doubting; for as much as doubtings ordinarily
ly arise from some error, or misapprehension in the minde.

2. Get a distinguishing knowledge of Fundamentals from Accessories. Every part of the house is not the corner-stone or the pillars: A man may take away much, and yet the house may stand: If you take away the painting and musique, or some feelings, and annexed posts, yet the house may stand.

So may a Christian's salvation, though hee know not many accessory truths; nay, although he mistake about them; nay, although he deny them, if this denial be not accompanied with a proud perverseness, but arise one by from inevidence and inabili-

There are three things, about which it were good for Christians to have a distinguishing knowledge, viz.

1. Fundamentals.
2. Consequents.
3. Indifferents.

Fun-
Fundamentals, I call those Three things.

Truths which take up the work and way of salvation; as the doctrine of sinne, and of Christ, and Faith, and Repentance, &c. for these are such things, without the knowledge of which, no man can be saved.

Consequents, I call those inferences or inferences which doe flow from the primitive truths, either virtute rei, in the nature of the thing, just as a stream flows from the fountaine; or virtute intellektus, in the judgemen of the person, as the conclusion is made by such or such a mans conjectural opinion, to flow from such a principle, or such a Text.

Indifferents, I call those actions which in themselves are neither holy, nor evill; neither is a man by any express command from God, (specificative) injoyned them, or (specificative) prohibited them: Which things considered absolutely, if a man doth use them in themselves indifferent in respect of circumstances, may be offensive & infull. See Rom. 14, 14, &c.
The doubting Christian use them he shall not be saved; if he doth not, he shall not be damned. They doe no more constitute a Christian, then a garment doth a man; which whether hee doth weare it yea or no, yet still he is a man.

Now this distinguishing knowledge doth exceedingly assyle the doubting heart, which doth oft-times shake and rowle about the lawfulness of indifferents, &c.

3 Reduce all conjectures and consequent truths unto the first truth: It is the counsell of the Apostle, 1 Thes. 5. 21. Prove all things: And the Prophet Esaiiah, To the Law, and to the testimony, Es. 8. 20.

It was a good speech of Saint Augustine to Manicheus, contesting with him for audience: Hear me, heare me, said Manicheus; Nay, saith St. Augustine, Nec ego te, nec tu me, sed ambo audiamus Apostolum, dicentem, Peccatum non cognovit, &c.

Beloved, we may see what weak crea-
creatures we are, when truths fall
downe amongst us, and when we
fit in the Tribunall; alas, what
distractions, what severall stamps
doe our severall opinions set on
them? what distinctions, limitati-
ons, qualifications! We will be
sure every one of us to handle the
question so, that it shall be so far
true, as may stand with our owne
delights, profits, aimes, and ends;
We doe many times for personall
respects, discourse and determine
of truths.

But now reduce them to the
first truths, how doe our empty
and contrary opinions, and fanci-
cies clatter and shiver to dust?
they fall downe before the Word
of God, as Dagon did before the
Arke of God; for the Scriptures
are the Touch-stone, which will
easily decide counterfeit glosses,
and errors, from genuine and
proper truths; Genuine truths are
like the young Eagles, that can
with open eyes behold the light
of the Sunne, and erroneous glo-
{

resolun.
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for his eyes, which cannot behold the Sunne without twinkling, and watering, and closing.

And note by the way, that if the truth be the truth of God, it doth tend to these three things; viz.

1. The glory of his rich Grace, Ephes. 1. 12.
2. Setting of peace in the Conscience, Rom. 5. 1.
4. Establish the minde in declared truths, Beware, faith the Apostle, Peter, (seeing ye know these things) lest ye being led away with the error of the wicked, fall away from your owne steadfastnesse.

It is not unknown, that some (like Pedlars) wander up and downe, and make a living by their errors; subtill people, and crafty to their owne confusion, who have only a strength of parts to gloss over fins and errors, & to weaken the strength of truths, and ways to Heaven; most rend
ring children of Satan, for they eale not to pervert the right wayes of the Lord, and yet so artificially doe they vent their wares, so neatly doe they set them out with the applause of reason, and carnall licentiousnesse, that many weak-headed Christians swallow up their baits, drinke up their cups, lick in their tumultuous and unsettling doctrines; yea, and some of higher judgements doe many times reele and stagger at the same.

What is the reason?

Surely this; The Master is looking the Anchor, and therefore the Ship begins to tosse. Men doe not establish their hearts in knowne and approved truths; they doe not confirme their faith to what God faith against that bewitching discourse of reason and liberty; they will be listning to naturall reason, and therefore with Nicodemus, break out, How can this be? When men will not stick to truths, it is just that they should
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should be troubled with doubts
and errors.

It is the Apostles counsell,
1 Thel. 5. 21. Hold fast that which
is good. So, 2 Tim. 1. 13. Hold fast
the forme of sound words, &c. That is,
caspe it, graspe it, maintaine it, as
one would a jewell in his hands,
the which another would vio-
ently force away. When the
minde is rooted in truth, it will
not shake with so many doubts,
which will assuredly spring from
erroneous Principles, and Do-
ctrines.

Ae. 15. 27
It seemed
good to the
holy Ghost,
and to us,
to lay upon
you no grea-
ter burden
then these
necessary
things.

5 Meddle with no more truths
then will save thy soule, and serve
thy particular relations. A man
may goe in a shallow water, who
rises and falls, waves and slips in
a deep channell. I will tell you, as
all duties, so all truths doe not
concerne all men: God doth not
expect or require that every Chri-

5. Meedle with no more truths
then will save thy soule, and serve
thy particular relations. A man
may goe in a shallow water, who
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a deep channell. I will tell you, as
all duties, so all truths doe not
concerne all men: God doth not
expect or require that every Chri-

resolved.

prediction and Prophecy; but those parts which direct to thy duty here, and to thy salvation hereafter, are clear, express; he who runs may read them.

But live thy selfe most in these; study to be a good man, and a good master; a good man, and a good servant, &c. Exercise thy selfe to know what concerns thee, and then to pray thy selfe into the practise of that. This is a wise way, and setted, and which is exempted from vaine tumults and many judiciall doubtings.

6 Informe the Conscience with the nature of a Christian, and saving condition; some things are required towards salvation, some things unto salvation; some things give a being, other things a comfortable being; Of all which a person had a speciall and distinct knowledge, he might walk more quietly without fears and doubtfuls. Shal I give you an hint of some particulars? remember when these Propositions.
Preparations to grace are different and unequal; all men are not prepared by the same degrees, or in the same manner for Christ; conviction of the natural estate, and attrition, and anguish, and those legal operations, these are preparations; for men must know their sinfulness, they must have the spirit of bondage, they must be heavy and weary, before they can lay hold on Christ.

Now those legal impressions are different; every believer (of ripe years) hath felt them, more or less, yet all cannot say alike. Every child feels something in his birth, but some children are brought forth with more pains, and others with less difficulty; Lydia was quickly delivered, but Paul layes by it some days. Some people can say, as David in another case, sorrow endured for a night, but joy came in the morning; others may say as the same David; Night and day thy hand was heavy upon me.
resolved.

The Lord is pleased (for he is an arbitrary Agent both for the matter and manner in our spiritual alteration) to single out some persons, and to charge their sins deep upon their Consciences, and to pursue them with singular terrors, to flicke his arrowes and their owne sins so close that they know not which way to turne themselves. He doth almost grind them to powder, and casts them to the dust, and to the lowest amazements, and distractions; and then as the skilfull Artificer, who hath bruised, and battered, and broken the masse into pieces, and throwne it into the fire, and melted it, he yet at length takes it out, and fashions from all this, a most comly, and precious, and useful vessel: So doth the Lord many times with some people, he returns them their old sins, and powerfully mingles the Law and their sins, and their Consciences together, and so with that hammer bruiseth, and breaks their sin.
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sinfull hearts, and with that fire melts them, and dissolves them as it were; yet after a long and sad time of sensible conviction, and horrible bondage, he graciously formes the Lord Jesus in their hearts, and renewes his blessed Image of Grace, and they become the most acceptable Vessels of glory.

But with other persons he deals not in this high measure; he doth indeed arrest them with the Law, but doth not so fetter and iron them; he doth not so imprison them, but upon their falling downe he is pleased to releasethem from their guilt and fears, and to deliver them from the powers of darkness, into the marvellous liberty of the Sons of God.

Note. Therefore know this, that when God hath attained his end, he ceaseth in this way of legall operation.

Quest. What is his end? will you say. I answer, his end is in these legall preparations;
To evidence unto a man the foulness of his heart and life.

2. To convince him of a too-tall unworthiness.

3. To produce most inward dislikes of such an abominable thing as sin is.

4. To make a man willing, upon God's own conditions, to take and receive Christ.

These are the ends, which being in some sooner, in others later, accomplished, the Lord doth cease the workings of preparation.

You know that if a piece of stone or wood will break with one or two blows, we spare the rest; and if the Masse will yield in one dayes firing, we then let it out. So, &c. But if yet the knot-tiness be great, and resistance long, then knotty wood must have iterated blows, and un-yielding metall must have the greater fire.

From all this, the doubtfull heart may perhaps be settled about.
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bout his estate in grace: Aske him, Dost thou love God? I do: Serve him with all thy might, in all thy wayes? I doe: Rest upon Jesus Christ? I doe: Combat, and war against sinne? I do: and yet I feare all is not right: Why? Because I never had such terrors as others. Now then informe thy weake judgement, If God hath shewn unto thee thy sinfulness; If hee hath abated thee, and emptied thee of thy selfe; If sinne and thou are now at defiance; If thou hast yeelded unto the receiving of Christ upon his owne termes and conditions, though thy legall preparations were not answerable to others, either for intention of strength and measure, or for extension of length and time, yet thy condition is good and safe: For that humiliation which is accompanied with these issues, is assuredly blessed and comfortable. If the physick carries away the humour, though it doe not make 
make the person so sick, yet it is
good: And though a man want
a storme to drive him to shore,
yet is he safe enough, if he be
landed with a softer gale and
tide.

2. The operations of Grace are
also different and unequall, not-
withstanding that Christians
may have one common prin-
ciple, and the same externall
means of grace, I beseech you
observe this.

1. There is one and the same
(specificall) seed of regenerating
grace in all Christians; the same
spirit of holinesse, of faith, of
repentance, of love, &c. All
Christians are bottomed alike,
and rooted alike for the substan-
tiall part of Grace.

2. That many Christians may
live under the same means of
Grace, as many people doe live
under the same light and heat of
the Sun, and children under the
same parents.

3. That the exercis of their
graces may yet be different; as children having the same school, may sit in several forms, and having the same food, may yet have several agilities and abilities.

So Christians, who have the same principles of believing and repenting, and praying, and doing, and who have the same ministry, and common assistances, may yet vary and differ in the active part of graces and duties. One may know more than another, one may rest upon God's promises more than another, one may pray with more fervency than another, one may do the other parts of duty more than another, &c. Yet all these may have truth of grace, and may be saved.

Therefore know, that inequality of holy operation, doth not spring from nullity or falseness of grace, but sometimes from the variety of particular occasions, sometimes from the variety...
of particular ends, sometimes from the variety of particular assistance. Every Christian hath not alike.

1 Forcible occasion to exercise his faith and patience:

Nor secondly, doth God intend every Christian for some singular ends and services, to which hee fits others by the greater improvement, and use of their graces.

3 Neither hath every man at all times an equall gale or breath of spirituall assistance to enlighten him, to excite, and affect, and draw him. I might also adde,

4 Neither doth every Christian stir up the gifts and graces in him, he doth not wisely on all occasions and motions improve his flock.

5 Neither hath every man a like temper and constitution, which conduceth much to the actions of the soule.

6 Neither doth every calling
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admit unto every Christian those spaces, and leisures, and remissions, or vacations, which some have to set on their heavenly frame and course.

It is with true Christians as with true men: Every man hath a soule, and faculty from that soule, and actions issuing out of those faculties, yet every man is not equall in the expressive wayes of nature: So is it with Christians, all have truth of grace alike, but the exercise of it is different and personall.

3 As the actions, so the degrees of Grace are different: Compare Christian with Christian, it is as if you should compare one branch and limbe of a tree with another, where though all be set in one common root, yet their particular measures are more and lesse. Or, as if one did compare the Starres together, where though all be interested in the heavenly order, yet they differ among themselves in respect of magnitude and light.
resolved.

Tee are the body of Christ, (faith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. 27.) and Members. members in particular; this was a & 1 Cor. 12. 27. glorious and gracious condition: But then, vers. 29. Are all 29. Apostles? are all Prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? doe all speak with tongues? Nay, Eph. 4. 11. Hee gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers.

Now as this holds firm enough in various degrees of singular gifts for edification, so likewise it is as evident in those special graces for sanctification: For, Eph. 4. 11. Are all in the fold of Christ, sheep? There are some lambs: Peter is commanded to feed both, & (Ergo there are both) Are all in the garden of Christ, Cedars? There are some tender Vines. Are all in the household of Christ, among men? There are some young, there are some babes in Christ too. So Heb. 5. 13. and 1 John. 2. 12, 13. I write unto you little exp. chi.
children, because your sins are forgiven you, and because you have known the Father. You see little children there, as well as young men and fathers; and these children, though children, though little children, though very tender Christians, yet they know the Father, and they had pardon of sin.

Brethren, how exceedingly do we disturb our selves with doubtfulings here? Many people, through a weakness (I say no more) of judgement, doe fall out with their estate and condition, molest, and afflict their hearts, close up all against themselves, suspect, and foolishly reason and argue the nullity of a gracious condition, from the imperfections which they observe in their graces, from their hindiments in faith, and zeale, and sorrow, &c. Alas ignorant people! who are truly industrious after the great measures of Grace, and will not yet quiet their feares, and...
resolved.

and fill their doubtings with this;

1 That such earnest pantings, and inquietations, and unsatisfiablenesse cannot but spring from truth of grace.

2 Then, that where grace is in truth, though in the lowest measure, there the soule hath interest in Christ, in all the Promises, in God, in Heaven, in all.

Remember this, He who hath least in grace, hath not that which he would have; and hee who hath most in grace, hath not that which he should have; and he who hath any truth of grace, hath enough to change his heart, and save his soule. I would believe in that fulnesse of assurance and reliance as thou dost, and if I cannot, I will yet believe as well as I can. Hee who said, O woman, great is thy faith, said also to another, not so strong, Thy faith hath saved thee. No man misleth of heaven for want of measure, but of truth.
The doubting Christian consolation lyes much in the comparative degree, but our salvation is in the positive: Much grace will yeeld unto us here our heaven, and any grace, if true, will yeeld us heaven hereafter.

4. The separable fruits of true grace are different, not onely if you compare one Christian with another, but if you compare the same Christian with himselfe in divers times and occurrence.

1. If you compare Christian with Christian in respect of comforts, it is night with one, when it is day with another: One goes on heavily oppressed, walking in darkness, (that is the Prophets phrase, Esa. 50.10.) He hath not that sensible light of divine favour, (Thou hidst thy face, said David, and I was troubled, Psal. 30.7.) Hee hath not that sensible joy or testimony of his gracious condition, (Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, Psal. 51.12.) How many mourners are there.

Esa. 50.10. Light.
Psal. 30.7 Joy.
31.12.
resolved.

there in Zion? Many who lament the absence of favour, of joy, of peace.

Yet some others there are who do believe, and do rejoice in believing: They see Christ in their arms, they know whom they have believed, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious, 1 Pet. 1:8.

2 If you compare the same Christian with himselfe: For it is with our day of grace, as in this of nature, there are many eclipses, many variations. Job, how thankful, how patient, how confident? Blessed be the name of the Lord: And should we receive good at the hands of God, and not evil? And, though he kill me, yet will I trust in him: Yet anon, how all seems to go againe! Hee curseth the day of his birth, he argues it with God, and exposu-lates much about the hardnesse of his condition.

So David, in some Psalms, all in joy, all in triumph, all in peace; God deals well with him, an-
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answers him, revives him: yet presently wee shall finde him in his teares, in his suspicions, Hath God forgotten to be gracious? in secret disputes with his sad soule, Why art thou cast downe, O my soule, and why art thou disquieted within me?

Now this sensible change and contrariety in the soule, doth no more argue the falleneffe of grace, then the goings and comings of cheerfulnesse in the body conclude the want of true life in it: The confortables of grace are an overplus of our wages, which yet are held up sometimes from the most upright servant.

9. A ninth cause of doubtings, was, the ignorance of the doctrine of Justification: For (you remember,) that I told you this, That sensible guilt was troublesome, a wounded condition was fearfull. When a person finds just cause of feares, many sinnen, undeniable sinnen, and looks all over himselfe, and all abroad, and can finde no comforter, no one
resolved.

one able to flye in 'twixt God and his soule, no peace-maker, no one to lay his burden upon, hee must necessarily bee perplexed with many doubts. For the cure & remedy of which, be pleased to consider of some particular Propositions, which I will lay down to unfold the businesse and comforts of Justification unto believing penitents; for to these onely I address my speech.

1 In Justification, our debts are charged upon Christ: they goe upon his account. You know that in sinne, there is the vicious and staining quality of it, and then there is the resulting guilt of it, which is the obligation of a sinner over to the judgement seat of God, to answer for sin.

Now this guilt, (in which lies our debt) this is charged upon Christ: Therefore (saith the Apostle) God was in Christ reconciling the world to himselfe, not imputing their trespasses unto them: And, hath made him to be sinne for
us, who knew no sinne. You know in Law, the wives debts are charged upon the husband; and if the debtor be disabled, then the creditor sues the surety. Fidejussor, or surety, and Debtor in Law, are reputed as one person: Now Christ is our Fidejussor, He is made a surety of sinne for us, saith the Apostle: For us, (i.) vice nostra, or loco nostro, (i.) in our stead. A surety for us, one who put our scores on his accounts, our burden on his shoulder: So the Prophet, Esa. 53.  He hath borne our griefes, and carried our sorrowes. How so? He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: (i.) Hee stood in our stead, hee tooke upon him the answerings of our sinnes, the satisfying of our debts, the clearing of our guilt; and therefore was it that he was so bruised, &c.

You remember the Scape-goat, Upon his head, all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sinnes, were
confessed and put. And the Goat did 22. beare upon him all their iniquities, &c. What is the meaning of this? Surely Jesus Christ, upon whom Christ, our sinnes were laid, and who alone dyed for the ungodly, and bare our burdens away. Therefore the Believer in the sense of guilt should runne unto Christ, and offer up his blood unto the Father, and say, Lord, it is true, I owe thee so much, yet Father forgive me, remember that thine owne Sonne was my ransome, his blood was the price, hee was my surety, and undertook to answer for my sinnes; I beseech thee accept of his attonement, for hee is my Surety, my Redemption; Thou must be satisfied, but Christ hath satisfied thee, not for himselfe, what sinnes had he of his owne? but for mee, (gracious Father) they were my debts which he satisfied for; and looke over thy book, and thou shalt find it so, for thou hast said, Hee was made sin for us, and that he was wounded for our transgressions. Now
Now this is a great stay, a great comfort, that we our selves are not to make up our accounts and reckonings, but that Christ hath cleared twixt us and God; therefore it is said, Ephes. 1. 7 that in his blood we have redemption, even the forgivenesse of sins.

2 In Justification, the believing penitent hath an universal discharge. What is that? That is, when a man is in Christ, when he is a true believer, he doth not then receive a particular acquittance from such or such sins, but an universal discharge from all the sins he hath committed. You know the promise, Jer. 33. 8. I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. 9. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and honour, &c.

Therefore David speaking of God's fulnesse, and extent of pardoning, and remitting mercy, he Psal. 85. 2 faith, Psal. 85. 2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast co-
resolved.

vered all their sins. Selah. Which covering of all sin, is in sense the same with the Apostles not imputing of sin, Rom. 4. and 2 Cor. 5.

This is a true axiome, Peccata non minuant justificationem; Though sins be different, yet justification is not. When the Lord God justifies a person, the different qualities and circumstances of former sins do not hinder their pardon, and discharge. You know that one may with a pen cross a great summe as well as a little summe; and a King can give a pardon not only for petty offences, but also for rebellions and treasons, and so he doth many times. It is therefore an observable passage in Holy Writ, that there is scarce a sin in any kind, but we may read the blotting of it unto a believing and repenting person, *vix.*

Originall sinne, which was the great deluge of our natures, and on reach the first fire which inflamed the whole world of mankind, yet this sin was pardoned to Adam.

Drun-
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Drunkeness, another sin, which the Apostle (in 1 Cor. 6. 9.) raiseth to the height of eternal separation, yet was it pardoned to Noah, a believing penitent.

Lying, another sin, which is of itself apt to locke the gates of heaven, (Rev. 22. 15.) yet was it pardoned to Abraham, the Father of the faithfull.

Incest, that unnaturall commixturre, yet pardoned to Lot.

Murder, a crying sinne, and Adulterie, a fearefull sin, yet both pardoned unto a repenting and believing David.

Idolatry, that angering and provoking sin, a sin which unthroneth God, and makes a god, yet pardoned unto Solomon.

What should I mention more. Impatience, a sinne, yet pardoned to Job.

Passion, a sinne, yet pardoned to Jonah.

Denial of Christ, against knowledge and resolution, a high sin (and such as a Donatist upon n
resolved.

terms would admit, as capable of a re-acceptation) yet graciously pardoned to Peter.

Persecuting of the Gospel of Christ, blasphemy, and compelling of others to blaspheme (i.e.) injuriously, and despitefully to oppose Jesus Christ, his Word, his Members; O how piercing and bleeding a sin! yet pardoned to Paul, he obtained mercy.

Oppression and Covetousnesse, by which a man doth sucke the blood and life of others, yet pardoned to Zachem.

Nay yet once more, as you may see pardon in Justification, releasing all sorts of debts, so you shall finde it releasing all sorts of debts. Take one place for all, in Levit. 4. where the Lord goes over all sorts and divisions of sinners, and appointed offerings for them all, and proclaims pardon to them all, viz. First, the Priests, ver. 3. Then secondly, the whole Congregation, ver. 13. and 20. Then thirdly, a Ruler, ver. 22, 24.

I. Then
Then fourthly, any one of the common people, verse 27, 28, 31, &c.

Under which foure rankes, he draws in all sorts and conditions of men; and not only appoints a sin-offering for them all, but also accepts of the same; by which, what is else meant but the power and efficacy of the blood of Christ, by which all sorts of sins are pardoned to all sorts of believing and repenting sinners?

Object. Ah Lord! will many a person cry out. Why? what is the matter? Why art thou so heavie? Why? such and such a sin heretofore.

Sol. I reply, Is there not a Justification? Yes: And how comes sinne to be pardoned? Is it not by the bloud of Christ? Yes: But there were great sins; and did Christ dye for the expiation of little sins only? What, did he satisfie for infirmities only, and not for enormities also? And doth Christ indeed leave the greatest debts so
resolved.

Is to cleare? Or cannot faith receive the acquittance of great sins, as well as indeliberated sinnes? Was not the sinne-offering for all sorts of persons? And have not all sorts of sins come within the Proclamation? No, no, my brethren, Justification (without all doubt) crosseth the book. Thou art a debtor, faith God: I am, Lord, faith the peni?ent, I acknowledge my sins; and am sorry for my transgressions, but I intend to run on the score no longer. Thou art a debtor, faith God; I am, Lord, faith the Beleever, and thou hast said, If any man sin, be? hath an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for sinnes; and I believe on him Lord; I take him to be my sin-offering, and in his bloud only I seek for pardon and redemption from all my sins; this were the way to support our selves against our many & strong doubtings about pardon of sins; Yet the Lord knowes I have re?
pented of them, and I doe believe in Jesus Christ for the pardon of them, I heare and know that he is the Mediator of the New Testament, and that his bloud satisfies for all sorts of debtors, and debtors too; though one sin may differ from another, yet his merit and satisfaction differs not from itselfe, but is all-sufficient; and therefore I acknowledge the debt, and rest on his bloud for a full discharge.

3 Discharges in Justification are not repealed, they are not called in againe. Peccata non redeunt, (i.e.) Subsequent sins and falls do not nullifie and evacuate former grants and pardons: for as much as 1. Pardon of sin springs from speciall love and mercy, which alter not their configned acts. 2. It is founded in an unalterable, and absolute, and constant satisfaction; for sinne is not pardoned for any dignity in the person. In the person pardoned, there is no reason or cause of par-
resolved.

ardon, but that is in the blood of Christ, which blood alters and lessens, and abates not, though our carriages do.

Hence it is that pardon of sinne in justification, is till the blotting out of the hand-writing, Col. 2.14. If a writing bee blurred a little, and somewhat blotted, yet it may be read; but if it blotted out, it is no more legible, and who can be called to account upon record when the writings are obliterated? The same phrase is used, Esa. 44.22. I have blotted out as a thicke cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins. Where me thinks something else falls in to our comfort, viz. That God himselfe doth blot out. Though an under officer should blot out an indictment, that perhaps may help nothing; but when the King doth it, who is chiefe Judge, then the indictment cannot returne.

Now it is the Lord himselfe who doth blot out transgressions; he doth it, who onely hath
power of life and death, of condemning or absolving.

In like manner, there is another phrase, Mica. 7. 19. Thou wilt cast all their sinnes into the depths of the sea. If a thing were cast into a river which might be fathomed, then it might be brought up again; or if it were cast upon the sea onely, yet it might be discerned, and taken up again; but when it is in the depths, cast into the depths, the bottom of the sea, now it cannot be fathomed up again.

By which Metaphor the Lord intends to express unto us the powerfull energy of pardoning mercy, that our sinnes shall rise no more against us; Hee will cleare them so, that they (being once forgiven) shall come on the account no more: Hee will drowne their guilt, that it shall not come up against us before him the second time.

Therefore Paul discoursing of Justification, Rom. 4. He used anothe
resolved.

another phrase to express this point, ver. 7. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Covered: Covering is such an action which is opposed to disclosure, and judicial evidences, and to be covered, is to be hid so, and closed, as not to appear with a judicial guilt upon it.

Now the Lord here is said to cover sinne in justification: what is that? That is, the Lord will look upon those sinnes no more with a judicial eye, he will not call them to account any more, that is the meaning of the phrase.

As when a Prince reads over many Treasons, and meets with such and such which he hath pardoned, he reads on, hee passeth by, hee now takes no notice of them, he is not stirred, he sends not out against those whom hee hath pardoned: So, &c. This is for God to cover sinne, viz. not to looke on the sinne pardoned
with a judiciall eye. It is not, as some most empty and dull heads fancie it, God doth not see sinne at all, and he cannot. Of all the opinions in the world, this is the most ridiculous and childish to men who beleevve an All-seeing God: But to cover sinne, is not simply not to see it, but to looke it over as it were, and not to fix or stand upon it with a judiciall eye, (i.) to account for pardoned sins no more.

Hence in the New Covenant, God promising to justifie, or to pardon sin, he saith not onely, I will forgive their iniquity, but addes, I will remember their sinne no more; Jer.31.34. What is that? That is, if I once forgive their sinne, I will not forgive it againe, it shall not need againe to be forgiven once shall serve the turne, I will remember it no more. The meaning is, it shall quite bee forgotten, I will no more plead with them for what I have once pardoned.

As the Gospel needs to be giuen but once, so a mans sinne's but one to be forgiven, once is enough, because if once, then for ever.
I confess, that the sense, and fruit, and assurance of a sin pardoned, this may (redire) returne; this may be lost and got, and the acts of faith concerning the particular pardon of a particular sin, may do so, but God's justifying act, his pardoning act is a free and constant act: Otherwise if hee pardoned us respectively upon an absolute Incessation about sinne, there were no flesh living, that could be justified.

4. Discharges in Justification reach not onely to the guilt, but also to the consequents of guilt: for it is a true rule, Justification and restitution of the laws, remittit paenalia. Therefore faith the Apostle, Rom. 8.1. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. You know that if the body falls, then the shadow which attends the body, that falls too; and if the debt be discharged, the prison is discharged. We have by the blood of Christ the forgivennesse of our sinnes, and therefore the remission of all satisfying...
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tisifying punishment: Why else doth the Apostle say, Gal. 3:13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us? As Christ is said to be made sinne for us, 2 Cor. 5. so is he here said to bee made a curse for us. Hee is made sinne for us, by taking upon him the guilt of our sinnes; and he is made a curse for us, by bearing that wrath and punishment which was due to us, because of our sins.

Nay, let mee speake a bold truth; To have sinne remitted, and yet to be expos’d to punishment, (I speake onely of satisfying punishment) cannot stand with that unspotted justice of God; for no man is justly punished but by reason of unsatisfied guilt. (In peccato sundatur reatus penæ, saith Aquinas well.) Now if Christ hath fully and perfectly satisfied for the guilt, then punishment hath no ground, unless we will say that God will punish for that which is already satisfied.
or that Christ's satisfaction is not total, but partial, (i.) he satisfied for a part, and left some parts of satisfying punishment to us, which is the opinion of the Papists for their humane satisfactions.

But to draw up againe; What a comfortable stay and support is this unto a distressed soule, to see and finde all in Christ? When a person brought to the true sight and sense of sinne, and loathing and forsaking of it, and to the giving of himselfe up unto Christ, shall behold his many forepast guiltts, and see these charged upon Christ, nay and discharged by Christ; nay and so discharged that they shall never bee charged upon him againe; nay and all the consequents of guilt removed, so that Christ hath set him at liberty, he hath made him a freeman, and that against all Satans accusations; bee may hold out the blood of Christ, which will answer all; I am a sinner, but Christ was made sin for me; I deserve
serve damnation, but Christ was made a curse for me. If Believers did not the nature, and extent and vertues of remission by the blood of Christ; if they did know, and were possessed more with this part of Justification, they would strengthen their faith, and their comfort more, and their doubtings and fears would sink more. Be of good comfort, thy sinnes are forgiven thee.

5. One thing more, which I had almost forgot, that which is this, That the substantiall part of Justification is alike to all Believers. What is that? It is this, God for the blood of Christ doth not onely charge the sins of strong believers on Christ; but of weake believers too, and these onely are not discharged; but those also. True faith in any degree, may take out all the benefits of Justification. For as Justification doth not admit of degrees, no more is it made over to the degrees, but to the truth of faith.
resolved.

faith: So that not onely Abraham, the father of the faithfull, who was strong in faith, but the father of the childe, who cryed out with tears, I beleive, helpe mine unbeliefe, he also hath all the reall interests, the very same reall interests in the blood of Christ.

You know the arme hath not an interest in the head and influences therof, because it is big, or because it is strong, but because it is a member, by reason whereof the least finger, and weakest member doth also claime and hath a share. So because every Beleeuer by true faith is made a member of Christ, hee hath therefore a concurrent share in the blood of Christ in the Justification purchased by Christ.

And therefore it is a weaker argument of weake beleevers to deny, or doubt their discharge by Christ.

True, say they, Christ is a strong Saviour, and hath strong merits, and by him is pardon of sinne, and
and by his Name a person is justified, but this is only for men of stronger faith than mine.

Doe not deceive, nor unnecessarily afflict thy selfe, Christ hath done great matters for great sinners, and a weake faith is a joynt possessor, though no faith can be a joynt purchaser of sins remission.

And thus have I briefly informed you with some notions about that part of Justification, which respects our sinnes; there is yet another part, which respects our graces and duties; from the weakness and mixture of which, doe arise many doublings, and such as are not to be disputed down by any thing in our selves, but only to be answered with the doctrine of Justification.

O, faith the humbled sinner, and experienced in himselfe; what a broken estate is here! what an imperfect draught of holiness! My very light is dim, and in all my duties there is yet undutifulnesse; my righteousness
resolved.
is defective, in my faith much unbelief, in my prayers much coldness, irreverence, distraction; and when I have sorrowed for my sins, I may even grieve for grieving no more, and may hate my self, that I cannot otherwise hate my sins: How can I stand before God, who is of purer eyes then to behold sin? Will the Lord accept of such a person, of such discharging of duties? &c.

Let me stop the complaint, and close up the doubtings with a little more enlargement of the doctrine of Justification: Therefore remember,

1. Our persons stand not before God in their own righteousness, nor our own services in their own strength. Indeed the Lord requires holiness in our natures, and holy duties from us; we are his children, we are his people; therefore we should be holy as our Father is holy; therefore the people of his pasture
pasture should serve him. An unholy Beleeuer were a monster upon earth, and an undutifull sonne is a plaine unbeleeuer; for though Christ did dye for those who were once rebellious, yet he dyes for none to make them licentious; So that holinesse, inherent grace is absolutely required to salvation.

To salvation I say,

But to Justification in no wise. What is that? That is, though a man cannot be saved without inherent holinesse, yet is he not justified by it; when he comes to account it with God, he may not say this, Lord, loe, here am I, see if there be any sin in my person, or defect in my holinesse; I have not offended thee; I need not any help, any mercy; my heart is totally clean, and my duties performed at all times in every respect for matter and manner to the full as thou requirest: Enter into judgement with me if thou plearest, I will bee tryed by my owne holinesse.
2 But in the righteousness of Christ, I desire, faith Paul, to be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. 3. 9. See more if the act in Rom. 5. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 2 Cor. of faith 5. 21.

There is such a thing as the righteousness of faith; it is none other then the righteousness of Christ: (we think little of it, we make little use of it; there is a kind of Popery in us all; we look downward too much on our righteousness for a Justification) and when we are to be pronounced just and righteous, when either we or our services expect acceptance, it is in and by that righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Whence two things arise to keep doubts and fears off, viz.

1 That though our holiness of Jesus be weak, yet Christ is strong; Christ, that
that righteousness which justifies is full. When we look upon ourselves, 
Ah Lord! think we, How shall we appeare before God! How will he accept of us! Such poore, 
such weak, such sinfull, hollow 
people! I answer, Christ's righ-
teousness is full, his Coate was 
seamlesse; ours is made up, and 
strangely cut, but his righteous-
eness is compleat, and, He is made 
unto us righteousness, yea, and that 
of God, 1 Cor. i. 30. God hath let 
him out to be our righteousness, 
and he justifies us by it.

2. Though our services be weak, 
yet we are justified by Christ's 
righteousness: Aaron was to 
bears the iniquity of the holy offerings, 
Exod. 28. 38. Their holy offerings 
had some unholy mixtures; but 
Aaron was to bear them, (i. e.) he 
was to take the iniquities away 
from them, and to make the offer-
ings accepted.

Christ is this Aaron, who by his 
righteousness covers all the blem-
ishes, makes up all the weakness-
resolved.

Yes in holy duties.

Therefore my brethren, in all our approaches to God, we should not doubt. It is the Apostle's own argument, Heb. 10. 21. Having such an High-Priest over the house of God, 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. And ver. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. &c. It is as if the Apostle had said, If men did know what a Christ they have, what a full righteousness there is in him, what he doth with it, how he justifies their persons; and justifies their services, pleads for them, beautifies them, ingratiates them with the Father, they would not doubt so much as they doe, they would be better persuaded of God, when they come and pray unto him.

I. remember the Apostle hath an excellent phrase in Heb. 9. 24. that Christ doth appear for us. It is a Metaphor from a Lawyer; If a man hath a Case, he goes to his Law-
Lawyer, and reports all to him, desires him to undertake the whole business, and upon the committing of the Case to him, he appears for his Plaintiff, opens the Case, pleads for him before the Judge, and the Cause is carried: So is it with Christ, he appears for us (i.e.) When a poor sinner, a weak believer comes to him, and opens his condition, his wants, his infirmities, Christ undertakes for him, he pleads for him, (he ever lives to make intercession,) he moves his Father in his behalf, brings out his righteousness, his blood and merits, and what he did and suffered for him, &c. And thus doth Christ for every particular service, duty, and prayer for him who believes on him.

The tenth cause of doubtings was, disputation against the Promises.

O, faith the troubled and fearfull soule, all these promises which you produce, and apply to my
my condition, they are nothing to me, they belong not to me; There is indeed goodness, and truth, a wonderfull worth in them, and they suit with my condition exactly, but I may not lay hold on them; I should but presume to take the bread which belongs to children, but not to dogs, not to such a sinner as I am.

Good Christian, do but track thine owne spirit, or the spirit of any distressed in Conscience, thou shalt finde this to be the last hold usually of unbelief, namely, a reasoning against God's Promises; the which reasoning is sometimes through meerely tenderness of spirit; as when the soule hath arguments to it selfe of that force, to represent a present incapacity of any good which God hath promised, and till they be removed, it dares not lay hold on the Promises; but if they could be satisfied, then it is drawn in to beleeeve: But sometimes there is a reasoning against the Promises, through
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through wilfulness of spirit, as when all the arguments of a doubting sinner are so clearly resolved, and answered by the express words of God, that the person cannot gainsay it; yet the person rather bends still against the Promises, then labours to honour God in them by believing. This later reasoning is an irrational way, and unworthy of our abettung; I should thinke such a Christians doubtings, to arise rather from a fixed and heavy melancholly, then any other speciall cause. Nevertheless, somewhat to help the other Christian, who argues and reasoneth against the Promises, meeryly out of tenderneffe, and fear of his right & title, I would commend a few things to his consideration.

1. No spirituall good is furthered, nor evill weakened by keeping the soule and Gods Promises asunder. Tell me seriously, Is not all our help for soule and body (in the full and whole latitude of it)
it) couched in God's Promises? Are they not our wells of salvation, and breasts of consolation, our sunne and shield? and what vessel hath a poore sinner to draw with out of those wells? what mouth hath he to milk out those breasts but faith? It is faith which knits the Promises and our conditions together; it is faith which makes them to meet each other; and till the Promises meet (in their virtue and influence) with this condition of thy soule, thou shalt never be helped or bettered by them: Till the plaister and the wound doe meet, it will never be an helping nor healing plaister. Thou shalt be (ubi erat) as thou wert, and the promise shall be (ubi erat) where it was, it shall never doe thee good till thou dost apply it.

2 It is believing which must cleare our title. O, faith the Christian, if I knew that the promises belonged unto me, I would then beleeve; I answer,

First, this is a preposterous course
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course, and utterly impossible; as if there could be any wel-grounded persuasion of our interest, before we have any such interest. No, but personal persuasion is a consequent work, it cannot be the antecedent or leading work. You must buy the Lands, before you can be persuaded that they are yours.

But secondly, if ever you would cleare your title to the promises: you must then believe; for it is faith which doth intitle you, and gives you interest and propriety. As the Apostle spake of a great good, After ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise: Ephes. i. 13. that I say in this case. If ever you would be persuaded that God seals his Promises unto you, then do you first put you seale unto the Promises: Believe, and then thou shalt see the good of them to be thy good.

3 The ground of a Christian believing Gods Promises, must not be in him who is to apply them
resolved.

them, but only in him who makes them. O! this is it which gravels, and labyrinths, and still distresseth us, that we set up the grounds of faith in ourselves, and not in God. We are loath to acknowledge that the sole ground of believing is to be found only in that God who promiseth.

It is said of Abraham, when God promised him a child in his old age, that by faith he gave glory to Rom. 4. 20 God. But how came he so to doe? The Text, That he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred yeares old, nor the deadnesse of Sarahs wombe; but he considered him who had promised, and was persuaded that what hee had promised, hee was able also to performe. Why? This is the right course to elicite, or draw out our believing: We must not consider our selves, but wee must consider him who promiseth: Our reasons of believing must be found in him alone on whom we are to beleive.
Therefore I beseech you to remember, that the Promises of God are not only objects of faith, but they are also grounds of believing: They doe not only containe excellent good for us, but likewise the motives to believe that good. Besides the goodness in them which respectively answers our conditions, and the presenting of that goodness unto us by way of gift, there is all reason conjoined with these, to affete our hearts to lay hold on them, namely,

1 A graciousness, that the Lord will freely, and for his own sake doe us all that good.

2 A fidelity, that the Lord who hath graciously promised, will also faithfully performe.

And 3. Sufficiency of power in God, to make good unto us whatsoever word of goodness is gone out of his lips.

So that from all these, a Christian against all his doubtings may yet see ground to believe, the
Resolved.

The Promises of God; because,
1 The Promises are the Declarations of God for good unto us.
2 They are willing Declarations, arising only from the good will of our God.
3 He dispenseth the good in them to sinners freely, without any worthiness or desert on their parts.
4 There is not any good promised, which God is not willing or able to make good.

Lastly, let any person believe on them, and he shall confess, that faithfull is that God who promised, and that that God who hath promised cannot lye.

But now on the contrary, If you looke for grounds of believing in and from your selves, it cannot be that ever your hearts should be free from doubtings; If either you make your owne worthiness the cause of believing, you shall never come to believe: This were not to receive good
good from God, but to buy and purchase it; and it is absolutely against the nature of free promises, as also against the disposition of true faith, which empties us of our selves, and feeth the cause of all our good to be only in him who is All-goodnesse.

Or if you think that you must first finde the good in your selves which yee are to fetch from the Promises, you cannot then believe, you must unavoydably doubt still: because it is impossible for a sinner, or a needy Christian, ever to draw his helps out of himselfe, or to prevent the promises of God. As he cannot deserve any good from God promising, so he cannot bring any good to Gods promises. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come yee to the waters, faith the Prophet, and he that hath no money's Come yee, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. If thou be a thirsty person, here is all provision freely for thee.
4. Another thing which I would commend also to doubting Christians in this case, shall be this: Take some solid pains to clear your entrance into Covenant with God; thereby you shall clear your interest in all particular promises upon your occasions.

There is a gracious Covenant (spoken of in the Scripture) twixt God and his people: He makes us to be his people, and we take him to be our God. And when that Covenant is passed twixt God and a person, that there is a mutual acceptance; then the Lord establishes this person into all the particular promises: As when the woman and man enter into the covenant of marriage, now all is settled on her, and she hath title sufficient.

So when the Lord God and a sinner are married to each other, when they are entered into a Covenant, Thou art my God, and none else, my heart is thine, my life
life shall be thine, &c. The Lord faith unto such a one, And I am thine, and all my mercy is thine, my Christ is thine, my Promises thine: If thou needest any good for soule or body, all good is thine.

I assure thee, O Christian, if this were once out of doubt, that thou and God were entered into Covenant, thou wouldst not so much doubt thy title, or question thy right to apply any particular promise to any condition of exigence wherein thou liest. All are yours, and yee are Christis, and Christ is Gods, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

5 Lastly, consider well, whether there be nothing in a Christ which may not be able to over-argue thy disputes against thy applying of the Promises. I remem-ber that Luther in his Commentary on Genesis prescribes unto tempted persons one very compendious way to withstand all temptations whatsoever: Let Satan come any way, or the world any
any way, or sinne move any way, doe thou answer all with this one ly, Christianus sum, I am a Christian; I may not yeeld to any sinne, for I am a Christian. And surely me thinkes this also might be a compendious way to resolve the doubtings of a Christian, Christum habeo, I have a Christ. O Christian, if thou didst looke more on thy Christ, thou mightst looke more on the Promises: When wilt thou remem-bere, that as there is no comfortable looking on God without a Christ, so there will be no confident looking on the Promises of God without a Christ?

Christ Jesus is thy Jacob's ladder, thy prayers get up by him, and God's Promises come downe by him: All the promises of God are Yes and Amen in him, 2 Cor. 1. 20.

There was a Book in the Revelation which none of the Elders and Worthies could open, but yet the Lambe could open it:
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The Promises are a precious Book, every leaf drops myrrh and mercy, yet the weak Christian cannot open it, may he be afraid to open it, and to read his portion there: Nevertheless thy Christ can open the Promises for thee, and by thy Christ as thou mayst finde a way for heaven here after, so mayst thou espie a way for thy comfort now.

And why, may Christ reply to the doubting Christian, art thou afraid to beleve? to beleve my Fathers word, and thy Fathers word? Did hee ever faile any who trusted on him? Is hee not willing to give, who was willing to promise? Should hee lose of his glory, if thou receivest of his grace? Or shouldst thou lose of thy comfort, if thou shouldst beleve in his promise? Dost thou not care for his good? Why then art thou troubled? Or in good earnest, Wouldst thou enjoy that good? Why then dost thou not be-
eleve? Thou seest the worth of the commodity, but stickest at the price. Did my Father ever tell grace or mercy to any upon the price of their owne worthinesse? How canst thou imagine him to answer thee in justice, who yet deals with thee upon promises? And if worthiness must be found, tell me, Who am I as a Christ of no worthinesse to thee? or of no worth with his Father and thine? I have dyed for thy soule, I have reconciled thy person, I have made God himselfe to bee thine, and therefore his Promises to bee thine, If thou thinkest that God will part from his word, O thou errrest: His Promise is made with Goodnesse, is sealed with Truth, and ratified with my blood.

If thou thinkest it is an inexorable and deathly care to thy prayers, yet consider, it is always an open and pliable ear to my merits. Come then, I once gave my selfe for thee, and since
Resolved.

Here now consider.

1. In these times of sequestration, a man hath just cause of trouble; he should be moved at it, that he cannot behold his God in that graciousness as before, in that lovingness, in that light of his countenance. And verily there is not a Christian really sensible of the divine favour, who should not be as much perplexed in the clouding of it, as he was affected and gladdened in the rising and discovering of it.

Beloved, it is ill with that man who can equally beare up in the absence, as in the conceived presence of God's favour; who is of that hard and unperceiving temper, as not to solace his soule in finding God to bee gracious; and not to be abundantly disturbed in not apprehending the wonted manifestations of his loving favour. How excessively distressed is the Church in the Canticles, that her Beloved had with
Here now consider.

In these times of sequestration, a man hath just cause of trouble; he should be moved at it, that he cannot behold his God in that graciousness as before; in that lovingness, in that light of his countenance. And verily there is not a Christian really sensible of the divine favour, who should not be as much perplexed in the clouding of it, as he was affected and gladdened in the rising and discovering of it.

Beloved, it is ill with that man who can equally bear up in the absence, as in the concrete presence of God's favour; who is of that hard and unperceiving temper, as not to solace his soul in finding God to be gracious; and not to be abundantly disturbed in not apprehending the wondrous manifestations of his loving favour. How excessively distressed is the Church in the Canticles, that her Beloved had with...
The doubting Christian withdrawne himselfe. And David doth in the violence of his distemper and jealousie (whether culpably, I know not, yet) strongly charge God (sure with much heaviness of heart) that hee had forgotten to be gracious.

2. Nevertheless in the times of such suspension, it is an error, and a dangerous error, a fruitless error, absolutely to conclude against our God; or against our selves, of any present or hopefull interest in his blessed favour; Therefore remember these particulars.

1. Observe the ways and times of the interception of divine favour. This is certaine, that God hath ever some speciall end in the holding up of his countenance; and we may, and doe many times give him just cause and reason. In Scripture wee may observe on our part ordinarily two occasions.

1. Some grosse sinnes, which
indeed are as a thick cloud to hold up the blessed light of God's countenance, for he is of purer eyes then to behold sinne. These are the wall of separation, these shut the doore, and draw the curtaines, and doe like some closing rheume fall upon the eye, and indispose it to the comfortable enjoyment of the light: As wee may see in David's two great sines of Adultery and Murder, they did suspend the presence, (i.e.) the comfortable presence of God, and held up the joy of his salvation, which he did so earnestly desire to be restored, Pial. 51.11,12.

2 Remissnesse and carelesnesse in our esteems and affections towards him in his Ordinances. When Christians come to a moderation, to a cooling of their spirituall fervour, to a more negligent acquaintance with God, and a more indifferent performance of holy services and duties; then the Lord holds back, and
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and calls in the sensible light of his countenance: As a father doth alter the set of his looks towards his childe, who is wont to upon his love, and lets down the diligence of his just observance and duty.

See this in Cant. 5.2. **Open to me (faith Christ) my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.** Here was a gracious intreaty, and full of wooing compulsions: What doth the Church now? Surely she rises, she riseth, she runneth, she easily embraceth those calls of Christ; No, ver.3. **I have put on my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? What is this?** She was careless, negligent, full of excuses, so those phrases import, on putting off the coat: For as the keeping on of cloaths was a sign of care and watchfulness; [Nehem 4.23.] so the putting them off was a sign of drowsiness, of a disposition prepared for sleep or rest: Nay (shee had washed
washed her feet,) which was another signe of her sleepy and negligent disposition; It being the manner in those hot Countries (where ordinarily they went bare-footed) to wash their feet after their travel, and so prepare themselves to rest. The meaning of all which, is this: She made many pretences and delays; all which did spring from an acquired sluggishness and remittenss of spirit.

Now marque the issue, Though the Church did not rise to open, yet Christ, vers. 4. puts in his hand at the hole of the doore: (i.e.) Though she had neglected him in his Ministry, yet he sent into her heart a notable item of it by his Spirit, and then her bowels were moved for him. Why? What is the matter? Now she rose, vers. 5. and opened the doore, vers. 6. But my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone; I sought him, but could not finde him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.
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Here you see, that carelessnes
of duty causeth absence of fa
vous: And when men are negli
gent in the entertainments of the
means of grace, God doth in
just wisdome goe off with the
sensible presence of his gracious
favour.

2 Observe the wayes of regaining Gods favour suspended from us: What are those, wil you say?
I answer:

1 Be affected for the losse; every
absence of Gods countenance
should trouble us, but the losse of
his favour that should grieve us.
So was it with the Church there.
Cant.5.4. My bowels were troubled for
him; Or, my bowels roould
rumbled, made a troublous noise.
What do these words intimat
but an eminent disquietnesse
an hearty sorrow for so great
a losse, springing from so great
remissnesse? I say an eminent dis
quietnesse: For where bowels are
mentioned, there an eminent de
gree is suggested, either of com
miseration; as in that of God to Ephraim, Jer. 31. 20. or of singular love and affection, as of the mother to the child, or of most sorrowful affliction, as here.

Nay, so great was this sorrow and bewailment, that ver. 6. her soule failed when he spake; My soule failed (i.e.) my soule went forth, it was gone, it departed, because of the departure of Christ's loving favour: For as the heart is said to goe forth when men are astonished with feare, so the soule is said to goe away, when men are surcharged with grief and sorrow. Whence it is evident, that the Church was almost dead for her folly and negligence, whereby shee had caused her Christ to withdraw himselfe.

And surely if negligent, and regardlesse entertainments of God, or Christ, or his Word, (which cause the cessation of favour) are thus abundantly bewayled with bowels and faintings,
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ings, how much more should the bowels be doubled, and the measures of griefe and repentance be swelled, when the suspension of God's love and favour is caused by our injurious handling of his blessed Spirit, by fighting against his motions, and presuming against the directing and convincing light, to dishonour and grieve him with the most soul iniquities.

Yet if we can humbly and throughly bemoane our losse, and repent of our sins, we shall behold the Lord in mercy and love againe. David could not but yeeld out the countenance of his favour to Absalom, though an untoward sonne: If the clouds did breake, the Sunne would shine againe; for God will not only give, but restore comforts to his mourners.

2. Revive thy uprightnesse, and then God will renew his favour. A good man (saith Salomon, Prov. 12. 2.) obtaineth favour of the Lord;
resolved.

Lord: (i.e.) An upright man, a man whose heart is single, (for he is opposed to the man of many devices) whose heart is single and plaine with God in his walkings, such a man shall obtaine favour from the Lord.

David assures us of it; Ps. 5. 12 Thou Lord wilt blesse the righteous, and with favour wilt thou compasse him as with a shield. It was a good spech of Davids, Psal. 36. 9. With thee is the fountaine of life, and in thy light shall we see light. q. d. Lord, thou hast comfort and favour enought, thy favour indeed is life, the very fountaine of it, and in the light of thy paths shall the sones of men see the light of thy favour.

For, brethren, we cannot see light by darknesse, light must be seen by light; and whatsoever is contrary to light, is an impediment of seeing. Gods favour cannot be seen by any thing which is contrary to Gods nature. Crooked hearts, and crooked wayes,
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ways, an heart and an heart, a tongue and a tongue, a life and a life, (i.e.) a doubling heart, and a doubling tongue, and a doubled conversation, which hath a vein of sinfulness and approbation, this the Lord hates and abhorres; for God is ever single in all his dealings with men: They shall have mercy, or they shall not have it; and so he exceedingly delights in the simplicity of Christians: Let them deal ingenuously with him, give him all the might they have, and him only, though they have not a present sight, yet they have a sure promise of his favour.

The Lord will meet them, Ezra 64. 5. Thou meetest him that rejoyseth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy wayes. Walk thou towards God in uprightness, and God will walk towards thee in comfortableness. Be thou a sonne, and he will be a Father; give him thy heart, and he will shew to thee his face.
Therefore let us cast about, not only for our general, but also for the services of our particular callings and relations, in which if the Lord sees us upright in walking, we shall assuredly finde him to be gracious in distributing the beames of his favour unto our soules.

3 Earnestly seeke Gods favour.

1 Seeke it by enquiries in the ordinances of his favour. Saw ye him whom my soule loveth? said the Church in her losse, Cant. 3. 3. unto the Watch-men. And as Mary, Joh. 20. 13. weeping, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where, they have laid him: And ver. 15. Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. What came of this? See verse 16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary; It was one only word, but enough to make her turne her selle, and say, Rabboni. So may it, and so doth it oft-times fall out with us, in our seekings of Gods favour,
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favour, The Lord doth meet and shew himselfe, with his loving countenance, in his Ordinances: For these Ordinances, God, they are the Exchange, the heavenly Exchange twixt God and his people, wherein they present unto him their duty, and he conferres on them his grace and favour; So that they who have come hither with sighs, O that God would be my God! I have returned with Psalms of joy, The Lord is my God, and my Father, I will praise thee, O Lord my God.

2 Seek it by prayers. How abundant is David in this kind.
Psal. 106. 4. Remember me, O Lord with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people, O visit me with thy salvation. 5. That I may see the good of the chosen. So Psal. 31. 16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. So Psal. 4. 6. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us: For God hath promised his favour, and therefore his people may seek his favour. Nay, he hath commanded hi
people to seek his favour, and therefore they should seek it. See
1 al. 27. 8. Thou saidst, Seek ye my face. My heart said unto me,
by whose face (Lord) will I seek. It is an
advised folly in the suspension of God's favour, to unsonne our
lives, and unpeople our selves, i.e.) to deny that grace
and spiritual relation twixt us and
God. This is not the way to gain
favour, for when we have undone
our relations of children,
we exclude our selves from the
expectations of favour; No, the
wise and surest way is to seek
the renewing of God's loving
countenance, and say as David,
Lord, thou hast hid thy face, and I am troubled, yet thou biddedst me to
seek thy face, and, Thy face (Lord)
will I seek: Nay I doe seek it, for
 Thy favour is life, nay, Thy favour
is better then life; so I esteeme it, so
I acknowledge it, and as my life,
as that which is a life unto my
life do I earnestly desire it; there-
fore, Lord, Make thy face to shine,
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and behold me again, as thou beholdest thy people with thy ancient favour: O visit me with thy salvation, and let me see the good of thy countenance.

Now here take in two helpfull advices more, viz.

1. When you seek the light of God's countenance, doe not blind your eyes; Remember still, that a man who will shut his eyes, shall hardly finde: Now nothing can see God's favour but the eye of faith, for in Christ Jesus only we see, and discern him our gracious God and Father; therefore keep open that eye. The direct workings of faith can always see God, and the reflexive, will at length see God to be my God. When thou comest unto him thus, Lord, I do need, I do prize, I do desire thy favour and countenance, and thou hast promised it, but thou wilt not keep thy promise, thou wilt never shew the light of thy countenance to my soule more; now, though wee seeke much, no marvaile we finde not, and

Simile.
he Heavens to open; you must use the key, as well as the hands, if you will come in and see the loomes: Our hands of Prayer must use the key of Faith, if wee would open the countenance of God towards us; for faith is that which gives us our sights of God, and Christ.

2 Judge not of the issue by what thou feelest, but by what God promiseth; and in case therefore that God doth not shew thee his ancient love presently, or easily, yet knock againe, and provoke thy heart to out-believe all reasonings of feare and corruption.

As David, Psal. 42. 11. Why art thou cast downe, O my soule? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

O my God, faith he, in ver. 6. of that Psalme, my soule is cast downe within me (no question but for the absence of Gods favour, verse 7.

N My
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My rock, why hast thou forgotten me, therefore (faithe he) will I remember thee. Remember him, O David. What encouragements so to do. Thy rocke seemeth to forget thee, and all his waves and billows are gone over thee, thou art in a tossed, and forgotten condition, and yet thou sayest, I will remember thee. Now see ver. 8. Yea the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

God. It is true, these afflictions and sorrows are upon me, and God seems to forget me for present, yet I will remember me, I know he thinks on me, he hath loving kindness, and hee will command it, he can shew it when he pleaseth, I shall assuredly have it, perhaps in the day time, perhaps in the night time, and therefore day and night will I seek him, for his loving kindness, I will remember him.

Ob. But how may one support himself

old, the method of God's former proceedings and behaviours towards us, we shall acknowledge, and so comfort our selves, that when he withdrew, it was a withdrawment either of necessity or expediency, and his loving countenance hath risen againe without a cloud, after a night of sorrow, after a day of seeking.

For the suspensions of his favour are temporary, though his truths be eternall. I will come againe, saith Christ: And, it was but a little (said the Church, Cant. 3.4.) that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soule loveth.

2 Thou art in favour, though thou feelest none: And though thy comfort be in the feeling of it, yet thy happiness is in the being of it: Thou art saved because God loves, not because thou perceivest that love.

2 Tim. 2. 19. The foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth who are his. He knoweth them in respect of the freeness of his election,
election, and in respect of the immobility of his affection; He knowes them still, but they know not him still. Is Ephraim my deare sonne? Jer. 31. 20. q.d. He is so, but he thinkes I thinke not so.

Sometimes the walking child holds the parent, and sometimes the parent holds the child; there is safety in both respects, for whiles either I hold, or am held, I am safe: So is it with us and God, sometimes we lay hold on him by faith, sometimes (nay all times) he lays hold on us by his love; our salvation is in this, that we are Gods, and God is ours; that he hath our hearts, and wee his love, though always wee see it not.

3 Thou shalt have favour, though now it bee drawn up: He will behold thy upright heart, and thou shalt see his face with joy, Esa. 45. 8: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness
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ness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

Therefore the Church elegantly, Micah 7:8. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.

9 He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Remember this one thing, Upright, and believing persons have always a favourable God, though they have not always the sense of God’s favour; yea though Satan doe testify the contrary, which is the next spring of doubtings, and comes in now fitly to be handled.

12 A twelfth spring of doubtings, was, the crediting of Satan’s testimony about our spiritual condition, and interests in God and Christ; to which if any distressed Christian doth hearken and attend, hee shall never bee freed from inquietations, and rowlings of minde, because Satan’s testimony is ever directly
or obliquely against the truth and comfort of our spiritual estate.

For the remedy and cure of which spring, be pleased seriously to consider of these subsequent conclusions.

1 The final trial of our eternal estate doth immediately and solely appertain to the Court of heaven. Indeed the disquisitive part belongs to us, but the decisive part belongs to God: We ought to search and prove ourselves, but no man hath immediate power to decide his estate, by acquitting or condemning himselfe. This must bee done by the voice of God in his revealed Word, which commands and forbids, and therefore absolves or binds.

No subject you know hath this power, to release or bind of himselfe, but that is the royall prerogative of the King. It is true, if the Word condemned us, then our consciences may doe so too;
The doubting Christian too; and if the word absolve us, so may our consciences too; But this is virtute prima, not virtute propria; It is because the Word doth it, not because Conscience of it selfe without the Word can doe either rightly.

Whence two things arise to informe and direct us, viz.

i Satans judgement of our estate is but usurped: It doth not belong to him to sit upon our soules: It is against the Law of Nations, that the same party should be witnessse and judge:

And wee may say to him truly, what the Pharisees proudly objected to Christ, By what authority doth bee these things? Or as they to Moses, Who made thee a Judge over us? Assuredly the enemy of salvation is not to bee the Judge of it, he being so maliciously vowed against our happinesse, it is most unseit for him to decide it; and therefore though he usurps a judgement upon Christians, yet as David, spake in another case, "Thou
resolved.

Thou Lord wilt not leave the righteous
when be is judged: no assuredly, Satan
shall one day be judged for taking
upon him the judging of Gods
people: And doe you thinke that
Satan will give a true judgement
unto us of our spirituall condi-
tion, who dares give in false evi-
dence before God himselfe of
Job, and who is said to accuse the
brethren before God day and
night?

2 No testimony is to bee ad-
mittted, which is contrary to the
judgement of the Word: Beleeve
not every spirit, 1 Joh. 4. 1. but try the
spirits whether they are of God. The
Word must judge us another day,
and therefore it is to judge of us
now. Satans judgement is usur-
peg, and our owne is oft times
erroneous, as in wicked and pre-
sumptuous sinners, who sentence
well for their safety, although
God doth proclaime and pro-
nounce bitter woes unto them.

And as our judgements are oft-
times erroneous, so are they in the

All judgement of
currentes
being con-
trary to
the Word,
is fallen.
times of distress, suspicious and hasty: We do not tell the secrets of ourselves with judgements cleared, and totally informed by the Word, of all our estate, but with judgements affected and distempered; as David in his fit, I am cast out of thy presence; God did not cast him off, but his distempered judgement did cast him out.

2 Maintain the judgement of the Word, against all judgement, when a man hath thoroughly viewed and pierced into the secrets of his heart and ways, by the informing light of God blessed Spirit, and takes his hell and spirit asunder, I mean his sins, weaknesses, graces and dispositions, and lays these, with all he knowes of himselfe, before the Lord in a most sincere ingenuity, so that if he were now to dye, he durst venture the eternal salvation of his soul, with his God, that he keeps nothing back either of what is his owne by nature, or of what is Gods by grace...
resolved.

If now the Word decides for him that his condition is heavenly, his heart is upright, he is indeed one who is truly interested in Christ; this man or woman should now uphold this decisive testimony of the Word, lay it up as the great copy of his eternal salvation; and in case of opposite verdict and testimony, not to molest himselfe with reasoning and doubting, but to preserve the authority of God's testimony, by believing, and most upright walking with God in all the powers of duty.

There yet remaine two springs of doubtings to bee cured, and then I have done with that subject.

13. The thirteenth spring of doubtings, was, the new rising of old sins. This I told you could not but amaze the soule, to see the dead rise out of the Grave againe, and to read the debt as if it were not yet crossed: It doth exceedingly disquiet us about our
Five times the day we do meet our sins, and our sins do meet with us.

1. There are five times when we do meet our sins, and our sins do meet with us.

1. One is the day of our legal humiliation, when the Law, like searching Phisick, enters deeper, stirs up the evil humour, calls our sins into our very faces, and sets them in order before us, and reproves us for them, with undeniable conviction and horror.

2. Another is, the day of our piercing afflictions, when the Lord doth send his messenger of wrath unto us, cuts off from us our delights, tears away our joys, crosses us in our aims, and we see God hewing off friends from us, our children from us, our earthly delights and contents: for miserable evils are of times a cause to make us see our sinfull evils: We doe many times come to perceive our faults, in our punishments: As Pharaoh did, when the plagues were on him, have done evil in not lesting the people.
... resolved.

goe: And Balaam, when he saw the Angel, and heard him threatening, I will now returne; And so the children of Israel, then saw, and confessed their murmuring, and stubbornesse, when God sent evil Angels amongst them, (i.e.) some messengers of his wrath and displeasure.

A third is, the time of some horrible and common judgement, whether it be upon particular persons, or a Nation, interested in the same guilt of sinne with our selves; For this is a time of common fire, which raging and flying up and downe, makes men run into their closets, and bring out their concealed jewels; So doe common and extraordinary judgements return us into our selves, and gives up unto us those our hidden sinnes which we feare will draw the same fire of judiciaall wrath upon our owne persons. I doe not doubt but at the last great Plague, many of the sinfull botches broke out, upon a
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feare left that judicall bocht
should have broken in upon your
bodies and houses.

4 A fourth time is, the time of
death? for though sin and a sin-
ner really meet in all their course
of life, yet sense of sin and a sin-
ner doe not alwayes meet untill
the day of death; for death is a
strict and unavoidable summons
to give up our accounts, and then
the unjust Steward must looke af-
bout him, how he shall answe his
most just Lord and Master.

This time of meeting, evidently manifests it self to our owne
experience; who though we have
kindled our sinnes in the time of
our health and strength, yet have
wee not met with the flashes of
them but in the times of sick-
ness and weakness.

5 A last time of meeting is, the
day of Judgement; and this is a
most certain and infallible time;
It is possible for a man to escape
the legall meeting, by conviction;
and the miserable meeting, by
afflictio
afflictions, judgments, and death it selfe; (for some dye like Nabul, they live wretchedly, and dye senselessly) but at the Day of Judgement, they and their sinnes must meet, and shall; because then the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and Gods righteous judgement shall be evident to the hearts of all the world. Whence it is, that in this day of meeting, they shall cry unto the mountaines to fall on them, and the rocks to hide them (but in vaine) from the wrath of him who sits upon the throne.

2 There are severall causes of the rising of sin: Some are on Gods part, some on our part, some on Satans.

1 For Gods part; God doth many times cause our former sins to rise, by the power of his mighty spirit in the ministry of his Word: For whereas the sinner would hush his feares, and griefs, and Conscience asleep, yet the Lord will not have it so; he doth rub the sore, and gall the Conscience.
science, makes it sensible of the guilt and wounds; he doth pierce
by the two-edged sword of his Word, even to the dividing af-
der of soul and spirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and discerns
the very thoughts and intents of the heart. He meets the person
oft-times many yeares after the commission of the sins, and most
expressly revives and remembers them in all the acting circumstan-
ces, which the sinning person either had, or would have buried in
silence and forgetfulness.

2 For our part: Thus there is
double cause of new rising of old
sins, one whereof is good, and the other is bad.

1 A new commission of the old
sins, which brings back upon us
the sling of the old guilt; for re-
lapses into the disease, occasion
a relapse of the burden and ache:
Cut thy finger againe, and it will
smart againe; fall into thy Ague
againe, it will make thee shake aga-
gaine; Relapses have ever this
judge:
judgement with them, that they make a fresh wound, and the old also to bleed againe. You know in some Wells there are two buckets, put downe the one, and you bring up the other; so the falling into the same sin againe, brings up the old burden againe.

2 Renewed humiliations; for though we doe voluntarily looke we may back upon our former accounts, not revive that thereby we may more humbly sue out a totall discharge. Though we may sin the sinne over no more, yet we may weep it over and over; and though the acting of it may be no more, yet the bewailing of it should last us ever.

3 On Satans part, who like an envious and malicious wretch never gives over to throw unto us our errours and failings, though corrected with truest reformation. So Satan, who is the great cause and incentive to sinne, will not cease after our truest repentance, to vex, and sad, and (if he could,
The doubting Christian could, to despair our hearts with the fresh memory of former and forsaken sins; so that we seldom or never lay hand on a blessed promise, or gain ourselves into the comfortable favour of God, or delight our selves in the sweet peace of Conscience, but he falls in, and checks, and troubles us with the representations of former sins, and perchance makes us let go our gracious hold, with the feares and suspicions, and chargement of former guilts.

3 Now according to the variety of the causes, fetching up upon us our former guilts, must we deliver unto you severall help and remedies.

Consider therefore, on God part, there are severall ends in respect of severall person why he brings on the sinne againe.

1 To make the ground-work more deep and sure: Wee maie our tents too short for our wounds.
...ounds; We sin much, and defile our selves much, and we thinke that a little washing will serve he turne. O! this businessse of else triall, of laying the axe to the root of the tree, of diving into the secrets of sin, of applying the corrosives unto the core and heart of our natures, this goes against us, we are quickly weary of it.

Indeed, some trouble, and some bitterness we grant to be convenient; but to be still accusing our selves before God, still to be lashing and wounding our hearts for wounding of God; Ah, this, this goes against us.

You shall see people sometimes very sensible of their diseased bodies: O now some Physick were good, they finde such aches, such distempers, surely some Physick were good; and some they take, which makes them excessively sick; but then away with it, no more physic: yet at length the disease comes upon them againe, and the Physi-
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Physician prescribes more physic, even that which must goe to the root of the disease, which though it makes them more sick, yet it procures their safety, and better health.

Beloved, God would have men (perhaps) a longer space to fix upon their sins; they flint themselves after great sinnes, and make themselves friends with God presently. Now the Lord knoweth that this skinning of the sore will spoil all, & therefore after a short time he returnes them their sins againe, makes conscience to start at the guilt againe, and deals with us as the skilfull Chirurgion with a man whose leg is broken, & ill set, he breaks it againe, that may be well set.

So doth the Lord, he breaks our soules againe with the guilt of sins; He will make us know, that we must bring him more broken hearts; we shall know what it is to sin against him, and shall make a reall & lasting peace with
at a sound & solid humiliation.

And truly this is the great mercy of his wisdom to work thus; for hereby he makes our foundation low, and sure, and hereby he prevents subsequent stirs, and makes way for our surer and more comfortable apprehensions and applications of his love in Christ. You know that a wise Schoole-master, when a boy skips from a hard lesson to that which is more easy, he puts him back again, and makes him say it over and over, ere he takes it forth. Men think to be catching at Christ, however they love to lay load on him, and throw their vile burdens upon him, though perhaps they never yet weighed their vile sinnings, and dishonourings of God; but the Lord will turne them back again, he will take off these pragmaticall presumers, and set them to learne their first lesson better: He will make them more sensible of their vile hearts, and wares, and actions; they shall not so easily come
come off from their according transgressions; the Lord will hold up the comfortable answer of his favours; and the sweet tastes of the Lord Jesus Christ, and make them againe to sit down in bitter sorrow for piercing the Lord Christ, and shedding his blood, and grieving of his Spirit and all that men might bee more humbled, and more really fitted for Christ.

2. To make us more humble, I assure you oft-times our very victories make us proud, and the very grace which should be a caution to abase us, occasionally and accidentally is a means to puff us up. We rile too often above ourselves, beyond measure: And therefore as to Paul there was given a sting to abase him, lest he should be over-exalted; for many Christians the Lord doth return unto them the sense of some notable guilt, abase their hearts, to put them in minde of themselves.
resolved.

For this reduction of former guilt, it gives up unto us our base and treachrous natures, and the births of our owne hearts; Ah! faith such a person, this heart, this nature of mine, what was it? what is it, if the Lord leave it? See here the grapes the foure grapes of this wild-vine, little reason have I to be so highly conceited of my selfe, as long as I perceive such loathsome accounts and issues from my selfe.

And verily, it makes us oft-times to despise our selves, to abhor our selves in dust and ashes: And this is one great end & use which the Lord makes of former sins, To keepe the heart in a very humble good, and frame: we must have something or other still put unto us of our own, which will let us see how foolish we are by nature, that is Davids phrase, and how brutish we were, that is Solomonis phrase.

3 To make us more carefull:
For the sharp remembrance of sin
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sin doth in a godly heart work stronger detestation, and stronger watchfulness: God doth make their new considerations to bee their present preventions; Future commissions of sin, are many times prevented by new impressions of former sins.

What? should I sinne thus a-gaine? faith the humble heart; have I not reason to crush these births? to crucifie that bitter root, to pray against it, to watch against it, to resist it, to deny it, which hath beene, and is now a sword in my conscience?

But now consider that there is a double carefulnesse wrought by the new rising of sin.

I One respects the guilt of it, and here our care is to get our acquaintance renewed and enlarged. O how doth the Lord by these risings of sin, soon cause the soule to rise up in suing out his grace and favour! It causeth many a teare, many a prayer, many a wrestling with God, many press-
sings upon the promises, many an earnest beseeching to have our pardon and discharge more fully sealed unto our consciences, by the blood of Jesus Christ, and testimony of the Spirit.

2. Another respects the sinnes themselves, in their corrupt qualities, and inclinations, and motions; and this is a greater study against them: former resolutions, strengthening of covenants, confirmations of grace, of circumspection, of detestation, of resistance, of any thing or way by which the powers of sin may bee more subdued and cast down.

4. To make us more thankful; Perhaps the Lord hath pardoned those sins which rise anew in thy heart; they doe not always rise, because God hath not discharged their guilt, but because thou hast not discharged thy new debt; they arise as a debt, for the discharge of a debt; as wee use to put men in minde of their former miseries, not that thereby they are made
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miserable, but because thereby they should be made thankful. Beloved, to have former sins discharged, it is mercy, I say mercy, yea and a rich mercy, greater then to give a condemned person life, or to give an imprisoned person liberty, far greater: No such mercy as that which blots out our sins, which saves a soul from hell, and gives it pardon and life. Now great mercies should be answered with great thankfulnesse: Thou didst, in the sense and sting of thy guilt, goe with an heavy heart, with bitter sighs, with deep oppressions, O that I had mercy! O this burden! O this wound! O this sin! Yea, and with deepe protestations; If the Lord will but pardon it; If he will shew me mercy; If he would receive me graciously, he should have the calves of my lips, I would love him indeed, I would serve him, I would praise and thank him, I would speake good of his name, I would say, Who is a God like him, that forgiveth
iniquities, transgressions and sins, and passeth by the sins of his people?

Well, the Lord hath shewed himselfe like himselfe, a God very gracious and mercifull; but wee perhaps have shewed our selves like our selves, in distresses, earnest and full of promises; but in our exemptions, flat, and full of forgetfulness. Now the Lord doth exceedingly dislike this vanity and doubling of heart; he loves that mercy should bee still acknowledged to bee mercy? hee would have us to looke backe, as well as to looke up, and to give him thanks for that mercy, for which not long since wee would have given all the world, and our soules too: And therefore doth he call unto us our accounts, hee lets us thereby see what they were and what they have done, that we may confesse our errour for not answering great mercy with great thankfulnesse.

But perhaps you will inquire, What if we ourselves for our part be
be the cause of reviving of former
guilt, and stinging of former sins?
I answer, If it be by way of hu-
miliation, to seek the pardon, and
to make confession to the God of
mercy, and to get victory over
them, this should no way dis-
courage us; for this is no more
hurt or prejudice to the soul, then
the after laying open of the
wound to the Chirurgion to
dresse and cure it, is prejudicial to
the safety & welfare of the body.

But if it be by way of com-
misfion, either by relapsing into the
same sins, or multiplying of sinne
in another kinde (both which wil
dig up again our buried and fore-
past guilts) then I know no way
of peace and safety, no way to
allay these renewed accusations
and stingings, but by renewed for-
row and repentance. And verily
what I delivered unto you here-
tofores about recovery from re-
lapsing, that is the course present-
ly to bee taken here: O let us
haste in before the Lord with
hearts
hearts trickling down with tears of blood, for old and present wounds; the very abundance of sorrow, the bitterness of grief, the art of self-affliction. I cannot say that sorrow of sorrow, that hatred of hatred, that indignation of indignation, that revenge of revenge, that repentance of repentance, which are here necessarily required, and that too with longest continuance. Do what thou wilt, shuffle off, cut to thy self a peace, thou shalt never have it, thy sinness shall ever and anon gall, and vex, and wound thee, until thou hast renewed thy bitterness, of most humbled sorrow for renewing of thy filthiness and baseness of thy audacious sinning.

But then suppose, that Satan doth through his malicious art doth revive our former guilt by his accusations; for our greater interruption and disquietment; what is now to be done?

I will shew you here briefly two things:

O 3

One
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1. One is, how you may know that the reviving of former guilt be from Satan or no.

2. Another is, what is then to be done by us?

1. You may know that your sins are revived by Satan, from two effects.

1. One is from the desperate issues of their reviving: you may know whether a man be a friend, of a malicious enemy, who doth revive the errors and failings amongst men; a friend, he revives them that you may be bettered, either to reforme, if the thing be evill, or to becircumspect whether the thing be true or false; but the malicious enemy hee revives them, onely, to make you odious and loathsome. Now Satans reviving of former sins is ever odious, it is of evill for evill, his end is desperate: What is that? That is, that we might give up all possible interests in mercy, all hope of pardon and acceptance. Whence it is, where he revives sins,
sins, former sins, hee bends the heart to some present mischief, to renounce all hope of mercy, and to selfe-murder, and such desperate issues; both which are against the ends of God, and the desires of an holy heart, which upon their reviving of sinne, do ever propose mercy and betterment unto the soule.

2 Another is from the filthy issues, which is this: He revives the sting of sinne, that hee may make us more bold and mad in sinning: He revives sin unto sin, there is no hope of mercy, of recovery, therefore as good to go on as not; Whence he inclines the heart to a leaping into the water, to a wallowing in the mire, to a greedinesse in the course of sinning, which he doth the more easily win from the evill hearts of evill men, by those temporary alleviatiems and cessations of sinning guilt, which they observe in themselves, by their furiousnesse, constant, and hardening revolu-
tions, or exercise of the same sin.

So that if you, whose hearts are tender, have been humbled for former sins, and are so upright as still to hate them, if former guilt be revived with an inclination either to give up all mercy, or to give over yourselves now with licentiousness to the same or other sins: here is Satan in this, Satan now revives thy guilt, and now another course is to be taken.

2 The course then is this, and I beseech you mark it;

1 Strengthen thy heart with more detestations of the sins; the more he revives the guilty accusation, the more doth thou revive thy upright detestations: And as he poures out malice to disturb thy conscience, so doe thou pour out revenge to subdue the grounds of it; and if he vexeth thee, doe thou goe and vexe thy sins.

2 Beleeve not a malicious accuser: Satan doth oft-times serve; Writ in the Kings name, without the Kings seale, he forgiues where
God doth not and he binds where God hath released: And this know, it is God that justifieth, who then shall condemn? If the King himself hath pardoned thee, how unjust is it, for the under-officer to arrest and challenge?

3. But in case of frequent inquietations, when Satan will not be answered, but still chargeth, now make thing appeale from him to God; and if he charge thee in the Court of Conscience, remove it wisely to the higher Court of heaven; let God once more have the hearing, and the deciding. And now, Satan, what hast thou to say unto me? Thou hast sinned heretofore (faith Satan) and thy Judge doth know the truth of this indictment. I have (Satan) I confess it, and my God doth know the truth of my sorrow and repentance. Lord, dost thou not know my tears, my returnings, my judgings of myself, my seekings of mercy and grace? Lord, thou hast known it, O 5 and
and hast known my soul with thy
pardonning and accepting mercy.

4. Rest the soul, and fasten it un-
to the blood of Christ, which will
alwayes crye downe the testimo-
nies and glamours of guilt; No-
thing but that will satisfie God,
and vanquish Satan; and then by
faith, not only lay hand on mer-
cy, but hold out the istability of
mercy. The Kings pardon will
serve twenty yeares hence in case
of suit. Satan may often trouble
and question, but Gods accepting
of thee into mercy, will (I am sure
it may) quiet and uphold thee.

14. The last spring of doubtings
was, silence in the Conscience,
long silence there.

For the closing of this spring,
and with it, this subject of doub-
tings, observe these particulars in
a word.

1. The speech of Conscience,
what that is.

2. The speechlesnesse of Con-
sience, what and how.

3. To make Conscience speake
againe
againe, what required.

4. To support our selves in the times of its silence, what can and may.

1. The speech of Conscience: This is no more then its testimony for us, or against us; for Conscience is intimate with our secret frames, and intentions, and motives, and actions: By its natural light it can tell much, by implanted light more, by renewed and sanctified light, most of all. Now the speech of Conscience for us is nothing else but an approbation of our estate, answerable to the Word, acquitting us against all fears and objections that we are the sons of God, that we are truly changed, that we sincerely love him, believe in Christ, and walk before him; for really the voice of Conscience is but the echo of the voice of the Word, and faith that unto us touching our particular, what the Word delivers in the general. Its voice is but the Assumption, and the voice of the Word.
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Word is but the Proposition: The Word faith, that should be; and Conscience faith, here it is: The Word requires such and such things in a man to be saved, and who is in favour with God, and Conscience brings them out, and answers for the person.

2 The speechlesnesse, or silence of Conscience, is the suspension of its determining and acquitting acts touching our estate in general, or touching some particular doubts: Sometimes Conscience calls upon us, and sometimes we call upon conscience. In matters of direction to practice or forbearance, we usually heare a reall & inward word, Do it not, or, Thou mayst doe it: In after doubts we call upon Conscience for its testimony, In the uprightness of my heart did I it, and my conscience doth beare me witnesse.

Now of all the silences of conscience, that is heaviest which befalls us in our spirituall combats and trials; wherein our gracious con-
condition is questioned, but cannot be issued, because conscience holds up, and doth not testify for us by any sensible approbation and acquaintance, which is caused diversely

1 Sometimes through particular mis-behaviours against the directing voice of conscience, these diversely hold in the acquitting voice of conscience, for conscience will not speak for us, if we presume to sin against it.

2 Sometimes through disregard to the voice of God in the Ministry; for Conscience takes not that well, which the Word takes ill; and therefore God doth usually make us know our neglects of his Word, by the silences of our consciences: And assuredly something is ordinarily amiss, when Conscience speaks unto us neither good nor bad.

3 Sometimes Conscience is silent, to make us look higher than conscience, and that we might know there is a higher Court to which we must make our address.
4 Sometimes Conscience is silent, to make us see upon what bottomes our faith is grounded, whether we can beleue, because God faith, as well as rejoice, because Conscience speaketh.

3 But to make Conscience speak, what must we doe? We have had its gracious testimonies, by which we have been much comforted and supported: How shall we recover it to speech againe?

I answer;

1 Speak to God, and then God may speak to Conscience, & Conscience will speake to thee. God hath a greater command over Conscience, then it hath over us: It is with God and Conscience, as with a King and his Courtiers, let the King speake kindly to a Petitioner, the Courtiers will then embrace him lovingly; and indeed Conscience will carry Gods face, and expresse his dispositions of love: Therefore this doe, speak to the Lord; 1. To shew thee the cause of Consciences silence. 2. To
give thee the testimony of his own Spirit, which will draw with it again the testimony of thine own conscience, Rom. 8, 16.

2 Speak to duty: Be sure thou dost not displease Conscience: If thou hast, repent, and add no more to make Conscience displeased, or silent.

4 But how may we support our selves in the times of silence?

I answer, thou mayst comfort thyself, if

1 The Word can approve thee; the testimony of the Word is ever open, though that of Conscience be not: what is the reason? Because men may have a constant audience and triall of their estates. And take one thing by the way, if the Word (which is always open and speaking) if it acquits thee, Conscience (though now silent, whenever it speaks) will clear thee.

2 Thou hast and dost approve the Word: How is that? That is, if the Word bee thy rule, thy...
light, by which thou hast & dost walk; for when Conscience comes to speak, it gives its sentence from the VVord (by which thou walkest,) and of thy frame and course which thou preservest in an upright and answerableness to the directions of the VVord.

An Addition of four other causes of Doubtings, with a brief resolution of them.

Sence of sinnfull workings. O! faith a distressed soule, Certainly my condition is sharke naught, and I have no right to Christ, nor to any mercy, I may not beleeve: Why? Because I never found such vile workings of heart as of late: I feele a wonderfull rebellion in my heart; I cannot thinke on any good, nor set upon any good, but an army of evill is in me, opposing and hindering me.

Sol. To a soule in such a condition, I would
resolved.

would (for his help) prescribe these five subsequent Considerations.

1. When grace comes in truth, it is ever of that power to make such discoveries, and to raise such airs, as the soul never felt before; for Grace is a new nature, and a new light, and a new active principle. It is put into the soul for that very end, to finde and lay out sin, yea and to expell and thrust it out. The judgement was never so convinced before, nor Conscience so qualified before, nor the will and affections so spiritualized before; therefore never marvel at the strange workings.

2. When a child is conceived in the wombe, it is not now with the woman as in former times; and whensoever Christ is formed in the soul, it is not with that soul as in old times. There is that now faine in, which must purge thee, and rule thee.

2. If good be wrought, evil will work and oppose it. When Christ was born, all Jerusalem was troubled;
bled; so when grace is wrought, sin will stir. Indeed if grace came into the soul either by a small and totall cessation of sinne, that there were no sin residing in the soul, into the which grace comes, then thou shouldst seele no stir at all: Thus it shall be in Heaven; Grace there shall be alone; Holiness, and nothing but holiness there, and therefore no combat, no stir: But thus it never will be on earth: Sinne may be alone in some mens hearts, but grace is never alone in any mans heart in this life. Or if grace came into the soul by a peaceable resignation, if sin full flesh would without any more adoe make a full and free surrender, and give it possession without any dispute and cavill, then also thou mightest expect a calmnesse, and a cessation of arms, no vile stirrings. But O Christian, Grace and sin, The Spirit and the flesh are contrary one to the other, and therefore they lust one against the other. Fire and water will not lye quiet.
quiet. Sad indeed were thy condition, if thou hadst such a frame of (vaine) good, against which no sinfull part in thee would oppose.

Every regenerate man hath a double man in him, the new man, and the old man; that would do good, this would not doe good; that would pray, this would not; that would mourne, this would not; that would beleeve, this would not.

3 But then thirdly, thou who feelest such a rebelling and opposing flesh in thee, what is that which thou dost oppose? It is true, thou feelest an untoward rebellious nature yet within thee, but what side takest thou? It is not I, said Paul, but sin that dwelleth Rom.7 in me. Sin in him opposed good, but Paul himselfe approved good, and delighted in good, and willed good.

The same Apostle speaking of the co-habitation, and the co-operation of flesh and spirit in regenerate persons, that the one did
did lust against the other, and the one was contrary to the other, and that by reason of the rebellion and unrulinesse of the one, wee could not doe the good which we would; he yet comforteth them in such a condition in the next words, If yee bee led by the Spirit, yee are not under the Law. As if he had said, notwithstanding all this rebellious opposition of your flesh, if yet yee yeeld not to bee servants to it, but approve of, and incline unto, and follow in your hearts, and course the rules of the Spirit, the condition is very good and safe.

So that though the evil remaining in us doth oppose the good in us, yet if we our selves oppose not the good, our condition may be good.

Fourthly, as there is evil in thee, opposing of thee in any good, so there is something in thee also opposing of that evil. Dost thou not condemn that hardnesse which hinders thee from
resolved.

from mourning, and sheddest many a tear because thou canst not mourne? Dost thou not strive with the Lord by many prayers, and in the use of all his Ordinances against that unbelieving and rebelliously working nature of thine? Dost thou not with Paul, conflict with it, groan under it, cry out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?

And surely neither the sense of this, nor the resistance of this, nor fervent desires of deliverance from this, can be any evil signes of thy condition.

Lastly, in the sense of inward rebellions and workings, thy way is not to nourish doubting, but thy duty is to stir up believing.

When Paul felt that agony twixt the law of his members, and the law of his minde, indeed he was much troubled at it, but yet he did not conclude against his condition in grace: No, but he acquits that (Rom. 7.25. So then with the minde I my self serve the Law of
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of God, though with the flesh the law of sin (and lets his faith to work, vers. 24. Who shall deliver me? vers. 25: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Marke his practice: This is my condition, I feel rebellious lusts, yea I feel them sometimes captivating of me, what course shall I now take to be delivered of them? to vanquish them? I conf-lict with them, but I cannot con-quer them: I cannot conquer them, yea but Jesus Christ can conquer them, and deliver me from them, and to him will I goe by faith.

Thus must thou doe in the sense of that native rebellion and vile operation of thy flesh; Thou must by faith goe unto Christ, thou must acknowledge thy vileness and thy insufficiency, and also his Sufficiency: Thou must exalt Jesus Christ by faith in his Mediatorship, and trust on him, that he will by his Almighty Spirit crucifie thy sinfull flesh more, and (which was one end of his coming into the world) destroy thot.
works of sin and Satan.

2 Another cause of doubting in a Christian, may be the sense of wrath. O! faith such a one, would you have me to believe, or imagine you that I can doe so, I who feel the very wrath of God in my soule, and the terours of the Almighty wounding me for my transgressions? What, can, or may I believe mercy for me, who now feel wrath upon mee? can I believe that God will bee mercifull, whom I sensibly apprehend to be wrathful?

This is a notable case, and needs a wary and circumspect resolution: Neverthelesse I shall at least endeavour to ungirt this burden for a troubled soule.

1 There are two sorts of persons who in this life may feel the wrath of God.

First, such as are unquestionably wicked; of whom some of them feel the wrath of God, as the beginning of their everlasting perdition: That wrath inflicted
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on them is but the beginning of a just hell due unto them. Thus Judas felt the wrath of God: And some of them feel the wrath of God as a means for their humiliation and conversion. Thus they in Acts 2, 37. who were pricked in their hearts, and thereupon cried out, What shall we do? felt the wrath of God.

Secondly, such as are unquestionably good; of whom some have felt God's wrath in case of desertion, as Heman, Ezra, Job, and others, and some in case of notorious corruption, or sinning, as David, whose bones were broken for it, and God's face hid from him for it, and his moisture turned into the drought of summer.

2. Again, you must distinguish of those effects which appear in persons under the sense of divine wrath, for they are twofold.

1. Some feel the wrath of God and are either only enraged against God with blasphemies, or inraging their hearts the more to
resolved.

If thy condition be either of these, that thou feellest wrath, and that hath driven thee to a search of thy natural estate, and to the discovery of it, and to an humbling for it, and to all the means by
by which thou mayest be delivered as well (and rather) from thy sinfulnesse, as from God's wrath; or if this wrath did awaken thy conscience, and hath been a means to scourge thee out of some particular sinning, to thy former and better walkings with God, thou mayest now safely believe on mercy; yea though thou as yet feelest wrath, yet mayest thou believe mercy: And my reason is this, because now mercy is thy portion, thy condition now is right under many promises of mercy to pardon thee, for it is a truly penitential condition. See Esr. 55.7. Ezek. 18.21,22. Hos. 14.12,4.

3 Though mercy be thy portion, yet know thou, that the sense of wrath will not off, until thou dost believe actually on that mercy. It is not mercy in the promise which alone can remove the sense of wrath, but it must be mercy applied by faith; for till faith works in the soule of a man, till
resolved.

till the poore soule looks on God through the Perspective of faith, God appears not as a mercifull, but as a wrathfull God to it.

And therefore thou being in such a condition as I have delivered, thou mayest safely venture on mercy, though thou feelest wrath (the fore-named Saints did so) and upon believing thou shalt in due time feel the sense of mercy to take off the sense of wrath: Thy faith will see a reconciled God, and then thou shalt enjoy a pacified conscience.

3. A third cause of doubting, may be a condemning conscience. But faith the trembling Christian, My conscience tells me of my sinnings, and of wonderfull sinfulness within me; and God is greater then my conscience who will assuredly condemn me: O may not beleve.

This seems to be a knotty case, Whether a person may beleve Gods absolving of him, though
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Conscience in him be condemning? I will deliver my opinion thus:

First, you must distinguish of condemning conscience: Conscience may either condemn;

1. A man's actions; Or,

2. His person.

1. A man's actions are condemned by Conscience, when Conscience being rightly inlightened and informed by the Word of God, pronounceth of them that they are evill, and damnable, that they are contrary to God's holiness and glory, and therefore are to be abhorred, and crucified, and forsaken.

2. A man's person is condemned by Conscience, not onely when Conscience findes sinnes in the person, but likewise the person in sinnes, (i.e.)not onely such corruptions in the heart, but also the heart approving, and loving of them, and resolved to keep them and goe on in them.

Now observe mee in two Conclusion
chions answerable to these two Propositions:

1. If Conscience condemns thy person, I confess thou hast no reason to believe mercy for thy selfe: If thy Conscience tells thee to the face of God, thou art in a foule sinfull course, and hast been called upon by the voice of the Word, and its voice, to come out of it, and thou dost not leave it; nay, art resolved to pursue it, and so insist on it; now God is greater then thy conscience, and will assuredly condemn thee.

2. If Conscience condemnes thy actions one ly, then thou mayest, notwithstanding that condemnation, believe on mercy. My meaning is this: Though the Conscience by its discerning light, represents unto thee much sinfulness in thy nature and former course, and though it doth condemn thee to bee vile, and most fit to be crucified; abhorred; and forsaken, this condemnation hinders not the right
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of believing: Nay, no man indeed should believe, unless his conscience doth condemn sin in him; not only shew him his sins, but assure him that they are evil, and unworthy his love; nay most worthy of his detestation and mortification.

Secondly, you must distinguish of times, when conscience doth condemn a man; there are two times of a Christian.

1. Some are open and free; He is himselfe, and besides that, hee heares both partes, as well what is for himselfe, as what is against himselfe; yea and weighs matters in controversy in the right balance of Gods Sanctuary, not in Satans balance of cunning suggestions. Will conscience condemn thy person at such a time, and under such circumstances? Nay, will not the word of God acquit thee at such a time against all feares, for the substance and reality of a pious condition?

2. Some are clouded and darkened,
resolved.

ried, either with melancholy, or
afflictions, or temptations, where-
in the Christian seeth his face
through a false glasse, (just as a
Title is made by a deceitfull and
cunning Lawyer) not according
to truth, not all of it, but some
of it: What is past heretofore
for action and affection, or what
hath falne out, not in the course
of life since a mans conversion,
but onely in case of surprisall and
captivity. Now perhaps consci-
ence may condemne thee, but this
is an illegall sentence, it is a cor-
ruped judgement, and is revers-
sible; God will not judge of thee,
as Conscience in such a case doth;
Nay he will repeale it, and disan-
null it.

4. A fourth cause of doubtings
is, a feare lest a man hath sinned
that great sinne against the Holy
Ghost: And the maine induc-
ment to credit this, is, a sinning
against cleare knowledge, which
is one ingredient in that sinne,
Now this is my condition, saith a
P 4: troubled
troubled soule, I have not onely sinned, but sinned against light shining in the Ministry, and working on my conscience; therefore I may rather conclude then question it, Mercy belongs not to me.

Sol. To helpe a conscience thus in thrallled, I would wish that such a person would first be informed; Secondly, be directed.

1 The information which I would commend in this case, is fourfold.

First, that the sinne against the Holy Ghost, is not any sinne which a man commits through ignorance: Whosoever the sinne or sinnes have beeene, (whereof the party stands guilty) whether against the Law, or against the Gospel; suppose it be one, or many hainous sinnes, yet if the person be in a state of blindness and ignorance, if there is a nescience of the fact; if he knowes not what he doth, this ignorance priviledgeth the sinnings thus far, that
resolved.

that therefore they are not the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, the sinne against the Holy Ghost is not any sin against the Gospel, which is elicited and acted through a mis-beliefe or mis-perswasion: If the sin be a sleighting of Evangelicall do-
ctrines, nay a persecuting of them, and of the professors of them, yet if these acts of opposition de-
pend totally on error in the judgement, on a judgement mis-
perswaded (i.e.) rather believing them not to be truths, rather thinking those ways to be false ways; I say this mis-beliefe preserves such sinnings yet from being sins against the Holy Ghost, because the sinne against the Holy Ghost supposeth light even to conviction and approbation. See Heb. 6. 4, 5.

Thirdly, the sinne against the Holy Ghost is not every sinning against knowledge. These are not reciprocally propositions, every sinne against the Holy Ghost is against
against knowledge, and every sin against knowledge is the sin against the Holy Ghost. The former is true, but the latter is not; for many a converted man sinneth against knowledge, who yet never sinneth the sin against the Holy Ghost.

In two cases a man sinneth against knowledge, doth not yet sin that sin against the Holy Ghost: One is, the case of a strong and violent temptation: Another is, the case of a sudden & turbulent passion: It is the same with Peter's case against his knowledge denying and forswearing his Master. If Paul before his conversion had had Peter's knowledge, he had sinned this sinne against the Holy Ghost; And if Peter in his denial had had Paul's malice joyned with his knowledge, he had also sinned that sinne: but the mis-beliefe of the one before his conversion, and the infirmity of the other after it, preserved from this sin. Er-
resolved.
our mis-led the one, and sudden
seare surprized the other.
Fourthly, there are three hor-
rible sinnings which doe attend
that sin against the holy Ghost;
and the Scripture (which wee
were best exceeding warily to fol-
low in resolving this case) expressly
delivers them.

1 One is, total Apostasie from
the truths of Jesus Christ knowne
and tasted. The truths of Christ
must 1. be known and apprehen-
ded, 2. known and tasted, they
must be approved. 3. And then
the person falls from these. 4. Nay
his fall is not particular, (which
is incident to the best,) it is a to-
tall fall, not a falling in the way,
but a falling from the way of
truth, Heb. 6. 4. If they were once
inlightned and tasted, &c. If, ver. 6,
they shall fall away.

2 A second is, a malicious op-
pugnation of that truth which
was once known and tasted, and
from which now the person is
false, called Heb. 6. 6. A crucifying
The doubting Christian, &c.

of the Sonne of God afresh; And Heb. 10. 26. A wilfull sinning after that we have received the knowledge of the truth. And it was evident in the Pharisees, who saw and knew the light, but hated, and persecuted it unto the death.

3 A third is, small impenitence. Whosoever sins the sin against the holy Ghost, he neither doth repent, nor can repent: He is justly and for ever forsaken of God, and given up to a reprobate sense, and a seared Conscience that he cannot repent; though (perhaps) he may see his course be evil, yet it is impossible (tait the Apostle in Heb. 6. 6.) to renew him to repentance.

FINIS.