

THE
DOUBTING
BELEEVER :
OR,
A TREATISE
CONTAINING

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. The Nature | } of Doub-
tings, in-
cident to
weak Be-
leEVERS. |
| 2. The Kinds | |
| 3. The Springs | |
| 4. The Remedies | |

BY

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be sold at his Shop in Pop-head Alley,
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TO THE
Right Honourable,
ROBERT
Earle of VVarwick,
Baron of Leeze, &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 Sin-
ner never comes to be
precious, till he comes to
be pious; and the value of
that piety still advanceth,

according to the quantity of true faith, as the 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 channell Faith is for all our traffique, either for our ship to lanch out into du-

duties, or for Gods ship
to come laden in to us
with mercies : and there-
fore there is no Grace
which he batters, & con-
flicts so with, as with
faith : If wee weaken or
shake foundations, this
hath a spreading influ-
ence into the whole buil-
ding : A Christians faith
cannot be wronged, but
presently all the spirituall
frame becomes sensible
of wrong and losse.

In my weake judge-
ment, it were a great pru-
dence to secure that,
which being secured,

A 4 now

The Epistle

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 indeavour to stay the hands of faith in a weak Beleever; who hath an ample estate on the shore and at land; but those waves of doubtings (when he is thrusting in) too often make him to fall back & stagger: Whence follows this great unhappinesse, That
where

whereas his faith might have served in many precious comforts, it is (almost a whole life) employed onely to answer fears and doubts. I humbly present the subsequent Worke to your Lordships personall use, and publique patronage. Be pleased (at your pleasure) 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.

A 55 your

The Epistle, &c.

your Lord and mine.


Now the Almighty
God, and blessed Father,
abundantly enrich your
noble heart with all sa-
ving graces, and continue
you long to be an instru-
ment 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 publike
construction, was (many
yeers past) the subject of
my private Meditati-
ons 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.

Not

Not that the manner
of handling the Sub-
ject (here insisted on)
is excellent or exquisite,
but that the matter
handled may be suppo-
sed to be of common use
& benefit; as a little star
bath influence, though
not that glory which is
proper to the Sun.

The case which is
here put & discussed, is
a case of common expe-
rience; there is no belee-
ver, but sometime or o-
ther

ther will confess it is
his. The Sun being sea-
ted in an heavenly orb,
shineth with a very
pure & constant light,
but the candle (though
set, & burning in a gol-
den candlestick, yet)
burns with a snuffe, &
much variablenesse.
When Christians are
translated, and trans-
planted from earth to
heaven, then their gra-
ces shall become perfe-
ctions; there are no de-
fects

fects in heaven, there
are no mixtures in hea-
ven, but whatsoever is
pure there, it is altoge-
ther pure: yet on earth
it is otherwise, neither
the habits of grace, nor
the acts of grace are a-
lone in any Christian:
When I would doe
good, evil is present
with me, said Paul;
And, I beleeeve, Lord,
help my unbelief, said
that poor man in the
Gospel. Where is the
be-

beleever who insists not
more on his fears then
on his faith? and is not
oftner lamenting his
doubts, then rejoycing
in his assurances? none
have an interest in
Christ, but beleevers;
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 qui-
et, as if in full possession;
none

none doubting less then
such as have most cause
to doubt, & none doub-
ting more then such
as have most cause to
triumph in Christ. And
in truth thus it wil be,
whiles gross ignorance
veils over presumptu-
ous sinners, and mis-
belief 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, & that will cause us to doubt; or else hee tempts us to doubt, and that wil 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

Doth 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 physick 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 faiths servant,

OBADIAH SEDGWICK.

A Table of the Heads in this
TREATISE.

CHAP. I.

THE nature of doubtings. Page 3

CHAP. II.

Four sorts of doubtings. 10

Those of Inquietation are

Either { 1 Reall, or 12
 2 Personall. 13

CHAP. III.

Quest. Whether doubtings may consist with a true faith?

Sol. They may.

This is first explicated 14
2 Proved. 13

CHAP. IV.

The spring of doubtings are

1 Originall sin. 22

2 Imperfection in faith. 24

Which { 1 Wants ability to argue. 26
 2 Insists most on discouragements. ibid.
 3 Is unacquainted with our armory. 28

3 The

The Table.

3	The life of sense.	p. 30
	What it is.	31
	Three demonstrations that it is a cause of doubtings.	ib.
4	Restrainings of faith.	35
5	Special sins after conversion.	42
	Four reasons thereof for doubt- ings.	43 to 49
6	Spiritual indispositions.	ib.
	Two knots are made by them.	
1	Whether our graces be true.	50
2	Whether our services can be ac- cepted.	51
7	Fruitlesse endeavours.	53
8	Imbecillity of judgement.	57
	Which first wants the strength of truth, because it wants the appre- hension of it.	59
2	Is easily over-mastered with error.	ibid.
9	Ignorance of the doctrine of Justi- fication.	63
10	Disputation against the Pro- mises.	72
	Three arguments, confirming that to promote Doubtings.	73
11	Suspension of divine favour.	79
	Four Grounds for doubting in this	

The Table

this. 80

12 Crediting of Satans testimony. 84

13 New risings of old sins. 87

Now we question,

1 Reality of pardon. 88

2 Sincerity of repentance. 89

14 Silence in conscience. 91

Four occasions to doubt by reason thereof. 93 to 96

CHAP V.

The cures of doubtings. 97

1 Mortification, a cure of inherent corruption. 98

What kinde of mortifying doth it. 103

Specially of unbeliefe. 108

Three directions for that. 110

2 Faith is to be perfected. 111

Some rules for that. 113

3 Keep downe the life of sense. 122

Some directions concerning this. ib.

4 Scope is to be given unto faith. 129

Three considerations about this. 131

5 What to doe concerning speciall sins after conversion. 142

Three directions, with encouragements, if followed. 143

6 The

The Table

6	The case of indispositi on.	156
	The difference betwi x t a dull heart, and a dead heart.	157
	All indisposition is not funda- mentall.	161
	The bent of the heart may be right notwithstanding dulnesses.	164
	And a way of acceptance.	168
7	Considerations and directions about supposed succeslesse in du- ties.	172
8	Knowledge, 1. Distinct, 2. Distin- guishing, necessary.	176
	Derived conjectures are to bee re- duced to the prime truths.	182
	Foure things of which a weake Christian should be more fully in- formed.	
1	Of preparations to grace.	199
2	Of the operations of grace.	201
3	Of the degrees of grace.	ibid.
4	Of the fruits of grace.	208
9	Concerning Justification.	210
	Five singular comforts concerning pardon of sins in it.	211
	Other supports from the imputa- tion of Christs righteous- nesse.	234

The Table.

10 Two kinds of dispute against the Promises, 236

Five helps about this, 238

11 Search the causes of the suspension of Gods favour. 242

The wayes of regaining Gods favour. 248

Quest. How a Christian may support himselfe in the interim. 259

12 Satans testimony of our estates is illegall, and not to be admitted. 262

13 Severall times, 267. and causes, 271. and ends of reviving of old sins. 274

Quest. How to know whether it be Satans work or no. 280

14 How a silent Conscience may be made to speake. 284

How to support our selves under the silence of conscience. 295

In the Additionall part. 296

1 Obj. Sense of sinfull workings.

Sol. Five considerations about them. 297, &c.

2 Ob. Sense of wrath. 303

Sol. Severall kinds of it. 304

The

The Table

The way to cure it. 307

3 Ob. A condemning conscience. ib.

Sol. Difference betwixt condemnation
of the sin, and of the person. 308

4 Ob. A feare of the sin against the
holy Ghost. 311

Sol. What that sin is not. 312

What the ingredients of it are. 315

A
TREATISE
OF
DOVBTINGS.

From Matth. 14. 31.

*O thou of little faith, wherefore didst
thou doubt?*

THese words containe in
them the summe of a
Christian in this life,
which is this: That he is
truly, but yet weakly good. Christ
here seeth 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 act-
uall strength in it, as might or
should be: And besides this, he e-
spyes in him a defect of faith; not
B for

The doubting Christian

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

pose necessarily a presence of both.

This being the Subject on which I purpose to treat, for the benefit of weake Christians, I shal 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 cures and remedies.

CAP. I.

The nature of Doubtings.

TO understand this, you must know, that in the worst part of the soul, there are severall qualities, viz. 1. Infidelity, which strictly, and amongst those which professe the Gospel, is a positive rejecting of heavenly truths, with

Four qualities in the soule.
Joh. 12. 48
Heb. 12. 25

B 2 their

their secret goodnesse; herein men forsake their own mercies by plain dissents and slightings of the good word of grace: as is evident in the Pharisees, *Luk. 7. 30.* who rejected the counsel of God, &c.

2 Despaire, 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 it selfe, *viz.* That God is mercifull, and Christ did dye for sinners) but in respect of the person or subject, wherein the soule gives up it selfe as lost, as without the compasse and hopefullnesse of the Divine proclamation: It is perswaded that there is no possibility for it to recover the shore, and therefore sinks in the depths: My meaning is, that such a soule, 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 bloud of Christ, and so eternally falls under its owne weight,

As *Jer. 2. 25.* There is no hope: no.
Esa. 38. 18 They that goe downe into the pit cannot hope for thy truth:
This holds not only in the pit of the grave, but also in the pit of despaire.

as is evident in *Judas* and *Cain*.

Now Despaire, so farre as it makes assent unto Truths; it is opposed unto Infidelity; and so farre as it dissenteth from speciall goodnesse in them, it is opposed to Faith; and so farre as it concludes impossibility of that good unto it selfe, it is opposed to Hope.

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

Simile.

4. Doubtings, which are the suspensions, or inhibitions (the holdings up) of the soule from any determinate inclinations one way or other: they are the pawings of the minde.

The doubting Christian.

Simile.

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 beleeve, or not to beleeve, and

* Dictated from the spirit, and from the flesh; from that, by way of perswasion; from this, by way of dissuasion.

* 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 utramq; partem contradictionis, cum formidine determinandi alteram partem ejus.*

3. Things to be further observed.

That you may yet conceive this clearly, remember 1. In our mindes there are Assentings, 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 soule hath a desire to joyne unto Truth, it hath a desire to share in that goodnesse which it apprehends ; yet it neither fastens, 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 wave of the sea, (that is the Apostles comparison, *John 1. 6.*) thrusting

Doubtings
are stagger-
rings.

Rom. 4. 20

Simile.

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 recoyling, 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 it selfe, and is stayed with contrary arguments and feares; 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 Chesse, they set out a man, and think to take a King, but then presently they are checked, and draw him back againe; God, he is my Lord, and my
King,

King, nay and yet he is not; He will doe me good, yet I feare he will not; He hath pardoned my ins, and yet I feare he hath not; He doth heare my prayer, yet I doubt he doth not; My estate is good and happy, neverthelesse I suspect it is not.

Thus doth a man waver, and owle, and is like a man in the un-*Simile.*
 rounded places, he no sooner
 lucks up one leg out of the dirt,
 ut the other sinks in; the soule is
 ot determined one way or other.

3 One thing know more, that
 though the mind doth not pitch,
 r rise unto a determinate action
 i spirituall doubtings, yet it e-
 er inclines towards a determi-
 ate object: That is, though the
 dubting Christian cannot come
 et to quit those uncertaine, and
 embling, and shivering moti-
 ns, and bring them to a stayd-
 esse, and positive fixing, yet his
 ind honcs, it looks after Christ,
 d the promises; it doth not re-

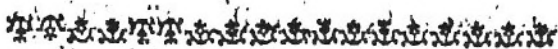
Note.

The doubting Christian

ject, nor doth it give up all hopes; it keeps in it two things, which Infidelity 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: I conjecture that there are four doubtings. sorts of doubtings.

1. Some are of admiration: in these the minde doth not gain-say simply, no, it doth beleieve, and is only solicitous 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 fa-
ciendum, sed quomodo fieri possit, in-
quiri, saith Ambrose.*

Luk. 1. 34;
Tom. 5. de
Maria in-
terrog.

2. Others are of confirmation:
Where the soule beleeves, but de-
sires 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
kinds of doubtings are the cra-
vings of a little more indulgent
security from God in matters of
extraordinary concernment; not
that we properly question the ve-
rity of him, but that (in respect
of our selves) we might work the
more confidently upon clearer e-
vidence and warrant.

Judg. 6.
36, 37

3. A third sort are of negation:
and this is such a forme of scrup-
pling, wherein we plainly suspect
God of his good word of truth;
and is incident unto evill men in
their generall course, and to good
men in respect of some particular
carriages, and busineses, as is evi-
dent

dent in Zacharias, Luke 1. 18.
 Luk. 1. 18. *Whereby shall I know this? This 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 dumbe, because thou believest not my words.*

4. A fourth sort are of inquietation, 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 *Recall*, which questions the principles themselves, either for truth or goodnesse, and so they respect matters of faith; or else they question actions touching lawfulnessse, or unlawfulnessse, 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 painful.

full doubts about points * practi- * As Romi
call : Of which see the Casuists. 14. 23.

2 Into *Personall*; 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 beleeve 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 yeeld) 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 doubtings doe See Luke
extend to both. 12. 28.

3 Againc, there are two sorts of personall doubttings.

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

2. Some

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

~~And here lyes the kernell, whether personall doubt-
 ings, (i. e.) doubtings of a mans
 particular interest in God, and
 Christ, and the promises, may
 consist with personall Faith?~~

CHAP. III.
 Of their possible consistence with
 Faith.

Quest.

AND here lyes the kernell,
 Whether personall doubt-
 ings, (i. e.) doubtings of a mans
 particular interest in God, and
 Christ, and the promises, may
 consist with personall Faith?

Sol.

To which I answer, They may:
 for (and mark it well) though
 1 Doubtings be sinfull, for
 they are the smokings 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

Simile.

on

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 soule, when it doth beleeve, should doubt, forasmuch as *In sensu* faith in act, and doubt in act, are *composita* opposite, and the soule cannot possibly set out from one faculty at the same time opposite acts; I confesse successively it may, yet simultaneously it cannot: But now to beleeve, 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 habituall 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 totall absence of the other; but as cold and heat in remisse degrees in the subject; where though the nature of

Actual doubtings may consist with habituall faith.

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

David.

So David had his tremblings, his faintings, his suspicions; all in him was not faith; he in his

Psal. 116.

11.

Psal. 122

God hath

forgotten

me, &c.

haste fals out with some for lyers, 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.

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 feares, 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 *Noahs Ark*, which though it was a safe harbour, yet it was tossed; and to an *house built on a rock*, which though it be firme, and cannot be removed, yet it may be moved; and to *Starres*, which though they be heavenly, yet are twinckling; and amongst them, much to the *Moon*, which with her light hath yet some dark spots.

What should I alledge exam- Experiences.
ples? let your owne experiences, and daily complaints sufficiently answer to this, let them give verdict: 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 difficulty! 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 perfection,

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 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 doubtings with it, forasmuch 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 doe rise in the minde: which working could not be, unlesse 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

mises (which are the great stay of faith) goe and come, ebbe and flow? Doe they vary from themselves, either for truth or goodnesse? 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 onenesse 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

Sol.

CAP.

CAP. IV.

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

The first
cause of
doubtings
Originall
sinne; the
fountaine
of unbe-
leeve.

It corrupts
and mis-
informs
the mind,
and with-
holds the
will.

It is a dis-
ease hang-
ing about
the best.

Note.

I. **N**aturall corruption: This is
a corrupt root, the seed of
all sin, and of unbelieve. This is
that flesh which doth lust against
the spirit, and thrusts up abundance
of motions, and corrupt reason-
ings, and motives to interrupt
our faith in its great businesse of
beleeving: So that when we would
do good, evill is present with us;
and when we would beleeve, un-
believe is present with us.

It is very true, that in our con-
version, the soule is graciously in-
larged, and the powers of sin are
crushed, yet so, that still we goe
with a chaine about our leg; and
though sinne hath its deaths-
wound, 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 stay and binde them.

He who hath a maim in his *Simile.*
leg, cannot move in that maner
or measure as he desires; 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 beleiving.

You know in the Warres, how *Simile.*
the intentions and motions of
one side are stopt, and kept up, by
the malice, and subtilty, and pow-
er of the other; and that there
may be many veines of sweetest
water under the earth, which yet
are many times checked, and con-
trolled, by the falling downe of
earth. O this body of sin, which
(*nolentes volentes*) we must yet car-
ry about with us, how back-
ward is it to come to Christ?
how unbelieving is it? how sus-
picious? how fearfull? It will not
be perswaded, it will not hearken,
it will not credit, it will not
yeeld, it will not imbrace.

The

The very Disciples, who had the presence of Christ, who saw the Miracles of Christ, who heard the voyce of Christ, how often did they doubt? did they questi-

Luk. 24. 21. on? *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

Luk. 24. 25 *slow of heart to beleieve, &c. * Why doe*
 * 38. *thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my selfe: But Christ apologiseth for them, The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weake.*

A second cause of doubting. 2 Imperfection of faith, this is another cause of doubting. Why should a childe fall so much, and a man so seldome? is it not the weaknesse in the Nerves, and Sinewes, 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 doubting it finds.

Matth. 14. 31. O thou of little faith,

aith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Little faith, and great 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 Beleevers to doubt; lay a little burdén on a Childes shoulder, he knowes not what to doe; shew him the water, he cryes out: So is it with weake Beleevers; their strength is not proportioned unto unusuall exigences; neither have they experiences, nor that quicknesse of art to hye them to their helps.

Simile.

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 Beleevers.

1. They want ability to argue:

C

for

Three things in weak believers.

David.

Paul.

2 Cor. 1.

David was

right in

Psal. 9. 10

They that

know thy

name will

put their

trust in

thee, for

thou Lord

hast not for-

saken those

that seek

thee.

Elisha's

servant,

2 King. 6.

15, 16, 17.

for their experience is little, and therefore their judgements are not so settled, so that they cannot alwayes maintaine 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 Beare and the

Lion. And so Paul confirms him-

selfe, 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

Gods truths, and of Gods power,

and of Gods method and times.

2 They see their wants and

hinderances, more then their

helps and encouragements; like

Elisha's servant, who saw the

multitude of the enemies com-

passing the City, with Horses and

Chariots, and thereupon cryed

out, Alas my Master, how shall wee

doe? 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 Beleevers, as with the *Israelites*, who did heare of the sonnes of *Anak*, those mighty Gyants, 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 own dulnesse, and whatsoever may keep them downe; but they look not upon that God who hath promised, who hath performed the Oath to *Abraham*,

Israelites.

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.

The Armory of faith,

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 veine 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 distrust and feare.)

Note.

But these self same persons on a sudden have been, and are strangely puzzled, 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 efficacy they cannot yet observe it:

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 unsettledness, 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.

Till faith
doth settle
we shal be
unsetled.

The third
caule of
doubtings
Joh. 20. 25.

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

Now

Now to study the life of sense
 s this, vizi To place the disposi-
 tion of God, and the issues of our ^{The life}
 condition in our feelings, and ^{of sense}
 sensible apprehensions: As to be-
 lieve that God is my God, be-
 cause I finde him so; That he is
 gracious, because I finde a sensible
 answer of my prayers; That hee
 loth accept of my services, be-
 cause I find that life of affection.
 So on the contrary, that he is
 not my God, because I finde
 not those sensible reports of
 his favour; I finde not that quick-
 nesse, and former smartnesse of
 affections; I finde not present an-
 swers unto all my desires and re-
 quests; That I am not in the e-
 state of Grace, because I feele not
 the vigours, and secret increas-
 ings of Grace; That I doe not
 beleieve, because I doe not re-
 joyce, nor see my sinnes blotted
 out, &c.

Three de-
 monstrati-
 ons, that
 the life of
 sense can-
 seth doub-
 tings.

Which kind of life must verily
 be exposed unto infinite and con-
 tinuall doubtings: For,

A bowle
upon a
bowle, &c.

Sense
meets
with con-
trarieties,
& cannot
resolve
them: but
faith can
reconcile
all by re-
sting on
God and
his Word.
(David,
Job, and
Paul, &c.)
Conclufi-
ons can
never be
firme,
which de-
pend upon
variable &
change-
able prin-
ciples.

I The soule here hath no con-
stant bottome to settle upon; our
feeling is sometimes more, some-
times lesse, 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 soule doth breed seeing
and hearing in the eyes and eares,
yet the soule may be in the man
when these doe not see, and these
doe not heare: A man cannot but
be perplexed in his thoughts, if
he holds this opinion; That meat
doth not nourish him, unlesse he
presently, sees how the parts
grow bigger by it; Or, that his
father doth not love him, because
he is not alwayes smoothing and
stroking of him; Or, that his
seed is lost, because it is not a pre-
sent harvest; Or, that the chan-
nell will shortly be dry, and with-
out water, because the Tide is
gone out, and hath left it naked:
in like manner, to conclude a-
gainst our soules from Sensibles,
and Mutables, exposeth it to
the

the labyrinth of daily feares and scruples.

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

Note.

He who hath not the sense of Gods favour, present answers from God, feelings of his Graces in their nature, and measure, cannot be in the state of Grace and Salvation (this is the Maxime of sense) But thou (saith Satan) hast not the sense of Gods favour, &c. Ergo, saith he, Thou art not, Ergo also sayest thou, I am not in the state of Grace and Salvation.

The Syllogisme of sense.

Loe here the issues of the life of

sense! And now, no marvaile if the soule gives not on upon Christ, or the Promises, but is tossed to and fro, and hangs in extreame suspence.

Yet thirdly, it is a life which doth much dishonour God, and therefore exposed to many feares and unsetlednesses: What? To measure the truths of God by our feeling? 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 set 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 Wisdom, as not being skillfull to order the businesse of our Salvation, unlesse we alwayes have an eye, or a finger at every turn, to know his particuler intentions, and proceedings with us?

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

Note. It is a glorious and singular way to beleeve so long, untill we come downe to feeling. But to begin

begin with feeling, and so rise to a promise
believing, is a delusion both dan- will doe,
gerous and impossible; for thou till we lay
canst never truly feele, unlesse hold.
thou dost first beleave: Canst thou
truly warme thy heart with that
Divine favour which faith did
not let in?

A fourth cause of doubtings is, The fourth
when we deny Faith its matter: cause of
ind. grounds to worke: How is, doubtings.
that? It is, when we guide the We give
whole businesse below, and not a- not faith
bove; I will give you some in- its perfect
stances. work and
full scope.

1 You know that the condi- to all ob-
tion of Grace is exposed to many jects, and
short allowances in externals; all occasi-
ons.
and the condition of sinfull men: Four in-
stances.
is capable of large prosperity in Prosperity
worldly things; A good man of evil
may have many wants, and an e- men, and
vill man may have, in this life, adversities
his good things, (as Abraham of good.
speakes of Dives.) Now when a
parson lookes upon the bulk, up-
on the outward part, upon the
shell, upon the rinde of things,
and

and sees plenty with evil men, and poverty with good men; honour shining there, and contempt clouding here; fulnesse for them, and leanness for these; pleasures and liberties attending them, and sorrowes and restraints befalling these; when I say, he looks on this, and no higher then this, it is possible that suspicions and doubtings may start up; it is possible that the soule may sinke downe somewhat at it. See an evidence in *Asaph*, Psal. 73. 2. *My feet were almost gone, my steps had well-*

3. *nigh slipt.* 3. *When I saw the prosper-*

12. *ity of the wicked.* 12. *These are the*

13. *ungodly who prosper in the world, they*

13. *increase in riches.* 13. *Verily, I have*

14. *cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed*

14. *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, [*Untill I went into the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.*]

2 In case of the sinfull condition; Whiles 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 despaires, and those are bad. The single considerations of sin, are the matter only of our feare; they are a grievous burden: David was not able to stand under it, *My sins are too heavie a burden for me to beare*, Psal. 38. 4.

For what hope is there in our selves? What is in a sinner to uphold? Nothing in a sinner to uphold. hold a sinner.

hold a sinner? No burden is an ease to it selfe. Let people behold their sins, and not use their faith, they cannot but doubt; for now sinne appears in all the motives and causes of feare, 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 soule anchor, or fasten, or ease it selfe?

God (you know) hath given unto Man two eares, and two eyes; if we make use of one only, our lives wil often hang in doubt & suspence, if we have not an eare to heare what God saith to an humbled sinner, as well as an eare to heare what Conscience will say unto a sinner: If we have not an eye to looke unto Christ, as well as an eye to look unto our sinnes; 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 worke upon

*Psal. 81. 8
I wil hear
what God
the Lord
wil speak,
etc.

Note,

upon sin, so we must give faith
its scope to worke 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 distracti- Bodily di-
ons and occurrences, which put stractions.
is into an exigence or strait; if
we looke below only, if wee
looke upon their strength
and our strength only, it will
now be with us, as with David David.
tired out, and almost spent by
the huntings and pursuings of
Saul, * I shall one day surely fall by * 1 Sam.
the hand of Saul; or as with Peter, 27th I.
who looking upon the waves, Peter.
(and not upon Christ) began
to sink, and cryed, Lord save me; Mar. 14. 30
or as with Jehoshaphat, whiles he Jehosha-
looked upon the great Armies, phat.
We know not what to doe. Not long 2 Chron.
since, we might have read this in 20, 12.
our very faces, when the Chur- Our selves
ches abroad were in great di- A little
stresse; we looked on their dust before the
and ashes, their ruines and weak- K. of Swe-
nesse; den came
into Ger-
many.

nesse; 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 disproportionable strength; 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 strength unto them,

it

* This was preached in the times of the great calamities of the Church in Germany.

While our eyes are down, our feares will up.

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 crosse is
too hard for us, though none
can be too hard for God.

4 So for temptations; Here Tempta-
allo our doubtings fly up, be- tions.
cause our faith flies not out. O
say we, we are not able to beare,
to withstand, to overcome; the
temptations are strong, and ma-
ny, and daily. Suppose so; And
what do we? Verily we are soon
ready to sit downe, and to give
the day to Satan, never conside-
ring that God gives his Souldi-
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-
leeve 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

2 Cor. 12. his power in our weaknesse, and
 Rom. 16. his grace is sufficient for us, and
 he will bruise Satan shortly under our feet.

The fifth
 cause of
 doubtings. A fifth 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 falln in-
 to the eyes, which intercepts the
 sight, and darkens it for a time:
 So do our speciall sins after con-
 version, 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 Mur-
 der, they did exceedingly weaken
 his spirituall condition, and wi-
 ped off all his comfortables.

David.
 Psal. 51.

Beloved, these sins, they must
 needs be a strong spring of doubt-
 ings,

ings, if we do but consider,

1 That it is their nature to set us off from the shoare & harbor; You know that a ship which lies quiet in the harbour, 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.

Four
things
here about
speciall
sins.

Simile.

Speciall
sinnes
though
they loose
not the
estate, yet
they loose
our
hands.

But suppose, in their sensible vertue they should not, (which yet they doe) nevertheless 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.

Simile.

Now what think you, must not the soule needs be filled with feares, and with doubts, which
hath

hath thrust it selfe thus from
such a gracious harbour as the
mercies, the loving kindnesse,
the sweet and blessed promises
of God? may it not say now, as
Psal. 77. 3. *David once, Psal. 77. 3. I remem-
bred God, and was troubled? and
wel 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 up-
on whom he hath conferred
such fruits of his love: For this
is a truth, that in case of offen-
ces, Love and Bounty can give
in the strongest and heaviest ag-
gravations: 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 more-
over have given unto thee such and
such things. 9. Wherefore hast thou
despised the Commandment of the
Lord to do evil in his sight, &c.*

Gods
goodnesse
aggravates
our sin-
ning.

2 Sam. 12.

7.
8.

9.

Ob-

Observe how the Lord pleads it, and aggravates it upon David. Now when a childe knowes *Simile.* 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 business, it is likely (we finde it so) that feares and doubtings gather within the breast of the childe; 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 finnes, 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 poyson for it selfe, and therefore let it be in a Toad, or in a Princes Cabin, we hate it still) and they now have falne upon such finnes, and have incensed a graci-

* Note.
Sin in any,
hated of
God.

Simile.

The doubting Christian

gracious Father, what notable feares, what strange misgivings, what appallings get up now upon the heart?

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

Thus it is with us after our speciall sins; If God seeme to draw towards us, we are ready to fly from him: I heard thy voyce (saith 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,

shut, which before was open, and God himselfe will keep the key, so that nothing, no meanes or wayes shall open unto us, untill he doth please. You remember how David kept his distance from Absalom for his lewdnesse, he kept him off a long time, he might not see the Kings face: And David himselfe for his sinnes against his Father, could not (without long suings) see the face of God, as before, *Psal. 51.*

David to Absalom.

And God to David. Psal. 51.

And now think you it strange that the soule should doubt? Assuredly great desires delayed and prorogued doe 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 he be favourable no more? *Psal. 77. 7.*

Note.

Psal. 77. 7

Tender & wounded hearts apt to multiply exceptions against themselves.

4 Nay, now the soule 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

to keep downe any readinesse which it observes to give on up-
on God, or Christ.

It is some time before faith can finde a way to ingratiate this offending soule, and to espie 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 beat us off; and as our weake children pluck down the Bird soaring up, with a string, so doe our weak hearts pull in our faith, which is now speeding towards heaven by the blood of Jesus Christ for us.

The more tenderneffe we gaine of the sins, the more shynesse 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 settled reformation: Twixt which, and the great disco-

discovery of speciall and renewed assistance, 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 feare, they make the soule to be at a stand, to goe away from the gates of heaven many times with singular checks, And heavnesse guided

6 A sixth cause of doubtings, may be indispositions unto, or about spirituall duties: when our Altar seems to have no fire, our bodies to have no soules, our affections to be estranged from our services, when we pray, but not with that fervency, when we heare, but not with that attentivenesse, when we set upon any

A sixth cause of doubtings.

D

fort

sort of duty, but not with that alacrity, with that joy, with those becoming spirits.

Nay, sometimes there is a strange listlessness, a kind of flat dulness, drowziness, that we hardly move upon our worke, much adoe to draw our selves on to duty. Like the Disciples, the soule is so heauey, that it can hardly watch, and pray.

Out of which kind of slumberings, 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 another case, (Judg. 6. 18.) If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befalling us? So here, If truth of Grace were in me, how should all these indispositions, dulnesses, deadnesses accompany me? Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is liberty, but I am as one chained up: Where Grace is truly kindled, there is a holy fire to warme

Like the Disciples. It troubles a Captain when he cannot make his men come on, and fight. Two places of doubting hence,

Note.

warme the heart in duty ; I have
 rejoyced in the way of thy testimonies, Pl. 119. 14.
 (Psal. 119. 14.) and with my whole David.
 heart have I sought thee ; so David,
 Thy word was unto me the joy, and re-
 joycing of my heart, for I am called by
 thy name, O Lord of Hosts, saith Je- Jer. 15. 16.
 remiah, Chap. 15. 16. And the Esa. 56. 7.
 Prophet Esa, chap. 56. 7. saith,
 God will make his people joyfull in his
 house of Prayer : And besides all
 this, we are commanded, to serue
 the Lord with gladnesse, Psal. 100. 2. Psal. 100. 2.

Whereupon the soule mis-
 gives, How can my condition be
 good, which differs so much from
 the secret and lively dispositions
 of Grace ? How can it be good
 which is so unanswerable to that
 quicknesse promised, and found
 in the people of God ? How can
 I be good, who about the actions
 of good am so dull, and heaue,
 awkward, and slow ? &c.

2 But then, suppose the soule
 can cleare, and asloyle it selfe
 from this feare, (by knowing
 that fire may be where it doth not

The doubting Christian

alwayes flame, and the root may live where the branches doe not alwayes flourish, and by finding some answerable dulnesses in some eminent *Dauids*, (who often have prayed for quickning) yet there ariseth another doubting from our dulnesse, 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 elther 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

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

7 A seventh spring, or occasion of doubtings may be fruitlesse 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 enlarging of our weake faith, love, sorrow, joy, assurance, and prayed against that hardnesse, passionatenesse, or whatsoever sinfulness 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

A seventh
cause of
doubtings

any more, God will make that good to me which hee threatened unto *Moab*, *Esa. 16. 12.* Hee shall come unto his Sanctuary, and shall not prevaile. I have sought him a long time, and have not prevailed; 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 succeslesnesse must needs cause doubtings, because,

Three
things in
this.

1. God seems to have a controversy with the soul; surely, saith the heart, something is the matter 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 services; and what have we to binde God but his owne Promises, by which he hath bound himselfe? He hath said, that he will beare, and answer; upon which assurance
of

of his, we came in, and prayed, but cannot get any thing, though we presse 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 hears me not, Psal. 66. 18.

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 Gods answers: God hearkens what *David* speakes, and *David* must hearken what God will speake: Prayer is our Angle, our Seed, our Dove, our Messenger, it doth not alwayes take at first, it doth not returne us alwayes 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.

Simile.

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, envious,

vicious, malicious, contentious spirit, catcheth; Loe, you see his love, his backwardnesse, his sleighting of you, &c.

Thus doe our corrupt hearts and Satan; Look you now, you see how needlesse, how fruitlesse all the care and service of God is; Alas, he thinkes 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 teares, 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 assuredly, here lyes the great spring of doubtings. An erroneous mind is the forge which hammers all our suspicions; it is the wombe which beares and

breeds all our feares; if it doth not finde, yet it makes all our knots for us.

What one speakes of a plaine place of Scripture, This verse, said he, had been easie, had not Commentators made it so knotty; That we say of a Christians condition, It is gracious, happy, cleare, sure, did not erroneous judgements disturbe, 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
 Rom. 14. 1
 22. 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 easily 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 childish-
 Eph. 4. 14
 nessee,

ness, 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 vertue of which they are objected (with ease) unto doubtings: Two things incident to this.

1 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 misbeliefs, or else disturb their true beliefs. You shall scarce heare any new things started, but withall we heare of many persons startled, as if their faith had hitherto been in vaine; for tender Consciences are apt to beleieve the most, and therefore sometimes do beleieve those points which are false. A man must have good eyes to finde out cunning glosses...

Shall

Instances.

Shall I give you instances amongst 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 terrour. 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.

Simile.

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; on that a Schollar must be placed in the upper forme, as soone as he enters the Schoole. Such inconsiderate deliveries as these, they trouble the faith of many (as the Apostle speaks of those

those in 2 Tim. 2. 18.) If faith cannot be without full assurance, then I am no Believer, saith David, for I had my faintings; Nor I, saith Peter, for Christ himselfe 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 substantiall 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 sees 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 swerablenesse in them both, for every method and measure of working grace.

There

An Item
to the
stronger
Christians

Therefore let me caveat a little here, to you who are growne Christians: Remember that there are some who are weak, yet true members of the same body: and doe not you indiscreetly insist upon your only personall 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 aptnesse in tender Consciences to throw downe themselves, and to catch at matters and arguments of trouble. Thou sendest (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 stomachs)

are

are presently oppressed with
meats unusuall : And when we
have mistaken an error for truth,
it may prove to the soule, as the
mistaking of poyson for Medi-
cine, a businesse of troublesome
and dangerous consequence.

2 Ignorance of the Doctrine of Justification; this is another cause of doubting. A ninth
cause of
doubtings

The Doctrine of Justification
is a Doctrine of Life, Rom. 5. 18. *kom 5. 18.*
*The free gift came upon all men unto
justification of life.* And it is a Do-
ctrine of Peace, Rom. 5. 1. *Being Rom. 5. 1.*
*justified by faith we have peace with
God, &c.* And therefore the igno-
rance of it must needs be a cause
of feare and doubting.

Here consider foure things. Foure
things.

1 The Christian condition is
subject to many sensible impres- Sensible
sions : We are seldome without guilt is
assault or combat; and those trouble-
pierce us most which the consci- some, as a
ence throwes up, A man may disease,
beare any wound with more ease, when one
then that which he hath given is awake,
ned.
him.

himselfe. When the Law powerfully reveales, and the Conscience closely applyes the guilt of our nature and lives, now it is a sad and heavie time. Job cryes out in the sense of this sting; Chap. 13.

Job 13. 26

26. Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possesse the iniquities of my youth. Salomon tels 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.

Prov. 18.

David. 14.

Paul.

And Paul cryes out as a man almost lost, Rom. 7.

Some-
thing to
answer &
account
for it.

Simile.

2. The soule makes out at such a time for some stay, and help: It seekes where it may lay his burden, and finde something to ease & deliver it. It is with a sick soul as with a sick body, which turnes 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.

Here is sinne, saith 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 calves 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 righteousness 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

Micha 6,
6, 7.

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 it selfe, and no amends to the many thousands of breaches which I have made.

Nothing
in our
selves,

3 The soule cannot stay it selfe upon it selfe: God calls for satisfaction; I have it not, saith the soule: God will have satisfaction: Lord! what shal I now doe? The Conscience workes upon us, and tels us, God is just, and if these sins be not pardoned, and a righteousnesse found and presented, we are lost. Now the soule is at a stand, seriously and sadly bethinks, What have I? Nothing but sin, yet sin cannot answer for sin: Perhaps some imperfect holinesse, 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 appears to bayle us: when the ship is split, and no rocke is
neare

neare to save us : when the sentence of death is read against us, and none is at hand to pardon us : when the Avenger of bloud pursues us, and no City of refuge opens to shelter us : unrighteousnesse, 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 soule being ignorant, is still perplexed : it cannot conclude its feares, and scruples, and doubts.

What is that ?

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

*Object.
Sol.*

1 Till we know where to lay down our sinfull burden, we must needs be troubled : If a perplexed soule 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 :

As

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 saith 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 be 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 1 Joh. 2. 1. If any man 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 Rom. 5. 19
 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 gar-
 ment of his eldest Brother : Hee
 cannot say, Lord, here is a righ-
 teousnesse in me which hath ful-
 filled thy Law ; here is a righ-
 teousnesse in me, against which
 thou canst make no excepti-
 on ; here is a righteousnesse in
 me, for which thou art to ac-
 count, and pronounce me iust :
 But this he may say, Lord, though
 I have no perfect righteousnesse
 to answer thee, yet thy Son hath
 for me, and he is made unto mee
 from thy self, my righteousnesse, wis-
 dome, 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 feares, and doubts,
 who thinkes to be acquitted, or
 condemned by what is in him-
 selfe :

selfe : If a man thinkes this, The Lord will, or doth enter into Judgement 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 so 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

may be pardoned; those will
now cause doubtings. Untill 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 thicke cloud, as
well as the cloud, Esa. 44. 22. I
have blotted out, as a thicke 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 vertue of the blood
of Christ, which justifies from
great sins, &c. i. not to be told.

1 Cor. 6.
8, 9, 10.
Esa. 44. 22.

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

sol. Ver. pardoning is a gracious
work. God pardons sins, not for
thy sake, but for his owne sake,
Esa. 43. 25. I even I am he that
blotter out thy transgressions for mine
own sake, and for his Christ's sake, Eph. 1. 7.
17. In whom only we have redemption,
even the forgiveness of our sins.

Sol.
Esa. 43. 25.
Eph. 1. 7.

But God will call me hereafter Object.
to account again, though for a
while he seems to be graciously
pleased.

No,

Sol.

Jer. 31. 34.

No, the Lord in his new Covenant of Grace assures the contrary, Jer. 31. 34. *I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sinne no more.* So that you manifestly see, how the ignorance of our Justification leaves the soule in great doubtings, because, 1. A man knowes not where to cast his burden. 2. Where to finde his righteousness. 3. What is the vertue, and fulnesse, and love, and graciousnesse, the fidelity, and irrevocablenesse of God in justifying a sinner by Christ.

A tenth
cause of
doubtings.

10 A tenth cause of doubtings, is disputation against the Promises: You have heard (heretofore) that the ignorance of the Promises is an occasion of doubting; and now I am to shew you, that the arguing of the soule against them, is also another cause.

Object.

But, you will say, Doth any man dare to dispute against Gods Promises?

Sol.

I answer, The Promises may be

be considered, 1. In respect of The Pro- their absolute truth and good-
ness: Thus they are not dispu-
ted against, unlesse by Atheists,
and positive unbeleevvers, as were
those scoffers, 2 Pet. 3. 4. who
said, *Where is the promise of his
coming?* mises con- sidered two waies.

2 In respect of their applicati-
on and extent: Thus many weak
beleevvers are subject to argue a-
gainst them: Not, whether they
be verity and mercy; not, whe-
ther 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 un-
just grounds, thrust away the Pro-
mises from themselves.

And now the soule must needs
be hurried with feares and doubt-
ings, in case the condition be sen-
sible, because

1 The Promises are to faith as Three rea- ground unto the Anchor; cast out
an Anchor, and if it hath not sons of it.
ground to fasten, or hitch in, the Simile.
E Ship

Ship rowls still : This is a truth
 if faith cannot pitch and fix, the
 soule cannot be quiet and set-
 led. *David* in one place useth the
 comparison of a Bird, that his
 soule did bye unto God, as a bird unto
 her nest. Whiles the bird is in the
 ayre, it is hovering, and flying,
 and restlesse ; so is it with the soul
 untill faith can settle it under the
 wings of a Promise.

Noahs
Dove
 found no
 rest for the
 sole of her
 foot;

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

Now when a man will rove
 from this ground of faith, whe
 he will fly from his rest, when h
 refuseth the breasts of consolati
 on, no marvaile if his soule b
 full of doubts and feares : For thi
 is all one, as if a lame man shoul
 throw away his crutches, or
 weak man his staffe, or a sick ma
 his cordials, or a sinking man th
 boug

h bough which holds him up?

The goodnesse of the Lord (promised to *David*) was that which did hold up all his faintings; and for all Gods people have still been held & flattered up by Gods VVord: and therefore that person must needs be full of doubts, who with-drawes his shoulder from such a stay and rock, upon which he should leane and rest himself.

2 This is but selfnesse, which is ever accompanied with unquietnesse; for why dost thou refuse to apply those Promises which God hath made? Is it not because, **Thou** wouldst have more goodnesse first, **2.** Lesse unbelief first? And is not this a self-seeking, yea, in some sort a self-standing? What an odde and unseemly method of worshipping of God is this? Lord, I have but weake graces, and thou hast promised to strengthen it, and perfect, and finish it, but I will not beleve thy Promise belongs to me; untill I have first a greater

Note:

So thou
hast pro-
mised to
pardon
sins, &c.

increase of my grace. Or thus, Lord, *I finde much unevennesse in duty, and thou hast promised to give thy Spirit, which shall cause me to walke in thy way, but I will not beleieve this Promise, untill 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 beleieve this Promise, untill first I see my sins subdued: VVhen I find my graces increased, then I will beleieve that thou wilt increase them; when I finde my obedience continued, and my sins subdued, then will I beleieve that thou wilt cause me to walke, and wilt subdue sins* q. d. *if thou wilt performe thy Promise before I doe beleieve thy Promise, then I will beleieve 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.*

When
thou hast
done it,
then I will
beleieve
that thou
wilt do it.

Simile.

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 soule will doubt and feare.

Let a man bestow himselfe 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 Colledge of Physitians, let them consult upon his estate, prescribe the most fitting potions, and quickning cordials, and when the Patient hath heard them, he refuseth their prescriptions, he will not take them, but saith, These belong not to me ; will his disease at all abate ? *Simile.*

So is it with us ; when we hear, or read, or conferre, and many Promises fall in to our helpe, if yet we put them aside, we now keep up our sinfulnessse, or weaknesses, and therefore keepe up

our doubtings and distrusts.

Object. But you will say, all Promises are not applyable 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 *Raul* complains) 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 weaknesse 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
say-

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 weaknesse?*

So againe, 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 begger should say, What is that to me, that there are bountifull almes at the rich mans 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.

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

Eleventh
cause of
doubtings,

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 soule 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 Christians 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 appears it that this suspension of divine favour should occasion our doubting?

Sol.

Thus :

Four
things.

Psal. 30. 5

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 bet-
 ter then life*, Psal. 63. 3. Therefore *psal. 63. 3.*
 he cries out, Psal. 36. 1. *O how ex- 36. 7*
 cellent is thy loving kindnesse! and
 prayes, vers. 10. *O continue thy lo- 10.*
 ving kindnesse. And Psal. 106. 4. *106. 4*
*Remember me, O Lord, With the fa-
 vour that thou bearest unto thy people,*
5. That I may see the good of thy cho- 5.
sen, &c.

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

2. Againe, In these times no-
 thing can comfort the soule, or
 stay it without much difficulty:
 Our very graces will hardly up- *Simile*
 hold us. You know that if the
 King clouds his countenance,
 they are not the dignities confer-
 red which will content us; they
 are not our revenews and posses-
 sions which wil cheare us; So is it

with us; when God drawes up his loving countenance; they are not our riches, or our gifts, or our graces, or our services, which can delight us; these doe it, whiles in them we see Gods love shining towards us; but if that draw back, these are all put to a strait; All is nothing to David, whiles he is under this enquiry, *Will the Lord be favourable no more? Psal. 77. 7.*

3. God doth seldome draw up his favour, but for some unkindnesse 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 Davids; perhaps some carelesse esteemes of him, speaking in his Ordinances; perhaps some sleight 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 de-meane her selfe? 3. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? At length,*

resolved.

length, though vers. 6. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn 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 enjoyed, 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.

12 And

The
twelfth
cause of
doubtings.

12 Another spring of doubt-
ings is, the crediting of Satans
testimony touching our estate;
when we rest upon his judgement,
and see our conditions through
his informations.

Simile.

You know that objects are di-
versly 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 glasse; now it
doth not appeare in its native co-
lour, but in the likenesse of that
through which it is perceived: So
is it with our spirituall estate.

Sometimes it is represented un-
to us, as it is truly existing; and
thus we shall see it, and judge of
it by the VVord of God: And
sometimes it is represented unto
us, not as it is, but as it appeares
in some corrupt and deceiveable
testimonies, and reports unto us
As *Josephs* chastity appeared to his
Master under the nature of abo-
minable

Josephs

minable uncleannesse, when hee 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 basest hypocrisie, if we put the issue of it upon Satans 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 possesse the minde, that it can hardly see any thing that good is in it selfe, or if it doth, yet it sees so 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

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 fulnesse, and our owne emptinesse, 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 feares ? into what doubts ? VVe shall never set out to beleeeve 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 blesse and prosper his Ordinances unto such ; and in those Ordinances, if any matter of bitternesse, or uncomfortable-
ness be delivered, he brings home
that

that to us, and tels the soule, 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 cleares and e-
videnceth them unto us, there
can be nothing but jealousies,
feares, distractions, and daily
doubtings in the heart.

13 Another spring may be A thir-
some new risings of old sins after teenth
humiliation, and some singular spring
assurance of their pardon.

David gives a touch at this (I psal. 25. 7
think) Psal. 25. 7. when he prays,
Remember not the sins of my youth, nor
my transgressions. So doth Job, 13, Job 13. 26
26. Thou writest bitter things against
me, and makest me possesse 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 ; againe, this will amaze the soule, it will appale it, and startle it, and make us more then once to sigh and inquire, *Why is it so ?*

Two
things.

Two things will now fall into question :

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

doned. 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 (afresh) 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 cleane, put away the evill of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to doe evill*) 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 wooll* : in which words are expressed a plaine change of the sinfull condition ; our finnes shall not be what, and as once they were.

Esay. 1. 16

18.

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

Note.

esse 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 sores, which I feele now to breake out, or that I laid them asleep only, and not dead, because they awake upon me with such terroure and clamor; and if so, then there hath been a long and fruitlesse veine of rotten hypocrisie 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

unt

unto them in their dayes of great losses, or sicknesse, or death.

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

God (you know) hath set in our selves, our Law-giver, our Judge, and our Witnesse; Conscience doth sustaine, 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 rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, &c.

Here consider some particulars:

1 Concerning Testimonie

2 Concerning our Condition;

1 There

A three-
fold testi-
mony.

1 Cor. 2. 12

I There is a three-fold testi-
mony about our estate; 1 One
is from the Spirit, which shines
in the renewed heart by an un-
speakable light, and manifests
unto it the things given unto it
of God, and so seals, and witness-
feth the truth and goodnesse of
our particular interests in God &
Christ, according to the word of
God. 2 Another is from faith,
which doth testifie the interests
of the soule in that happinesse
which it findes revealed in the
Word; for that which faith be-
leeves by a direct act in the Word

it may testifie of the same to the
person by a reflexive act. 3.

* By assu-
rance.

third is from Conscience, which
beholding the simplicity and
godly sincerity of the heart, testi-
fies unto it (against all oppositi-
on) that this blessed frame is in
the soule; and this testimony be-
ing concordant with that of the
Word, the soule is thereby great-
ly sustained, forasmuch as this is
knowne before, viz. A sincere
temper

temper is happy ; and now Con-
science clearing that temper, the
soule hereupon is much cheared.

2 Our condition falls under a
three-fold consideration.

1 Sometimes under the accu- A three-
fold estate
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 acquits, As in
Paul, loc.
cit.
and speakes peace, either about
the frame of the heart, or recti- As in Da-
vid about
Saul.
tude of some particular action
and course.

3 Sometimes under a neutrall
act, or works of the Consci-
ence : (i.) The Conscience (like
Absolom 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
doth

doth not speak terrour, nor doth it speak peace; it doth not charge any speciall guilt, nor doth it give us a particular discharge of any.

Now, this is the time of feares and doubts; I wil shew you why, because,

1 A negative state satisfies not a tender Christian; it doth not satisfie a tender soule, that God lookes not like an enemy, unlesse 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 neutrall estate, because Conscience seemes to behave it selfe as a neutrall, neither against us, nor for us. I call that a neutrall estate which is not eminently evill; it hath some good in it, and doth some good, but is not so good, as to be gracious, therefore the civill estate is a neutrall; it doth
no

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 evill estate, it is an estate in which if a man lives and dyes (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 with-drew himselfe 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 Gods Vice-gerent, it is his Deputy, and therefore in the silences and with-drawments of it, we looke through, and feare the disposition of God himselfe towards us, because the servants doe ordinarily expresse

Conscience is the
looking-
glasse.

expresse 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 feele Conscience to be towards us: This is the glasse 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 remains that I descend to the closing up of these springs, to the cures and remedies of these Doubtings, which is the last thing proposed.



CHAP. V.

*The Cures and remedies of doubt-
ings.*

Here lies our next and greatest work, and therefore as Physicians 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 blesse) 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.

Two sorts
of cures,
Particular,
Generall.

The particular Cures.

The first
cure, an-
swering
the first
cause of
doubtings.

Rom. 8. 13

Simile.

Heb. 10. 22

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 speakes of our persons, *Rom. 8. 13. If yee through the Spirit doe mortifie the deeds of the body, yee 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 severall weeds, the abating of these, the rooting up, and killing of these, contributes the greater reliefe and strengthening to our plants.

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 cast
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 perswaded of Gods 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 evill conscience, q. d.* As long as your hearts are evill, as long as Conscience can charge you for entertained evill, you will be wavering and doubtfull; but if your hearts were sprinkled, if the evill of sin were washed from them, then you might come with a full assurance of faith (i.e.) Then faith might perswade you to come confidently unto God, for Faith cannot well perswade, if Conscience can yet truly charge and condemne.

Therefore saith St. John, *If our hearts condemne us not, then have we* 1 Job. 3. 21

confidence towards God. (i.) If sinne be mortified, if Conscience findes no sin harboured, but condemned, if it cannot condemne 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. *Whatsoever wee*
 22. *aske, we receive of him, ver. 22.*

There are two effects of our sinnes.

Psal. 40. 12
 Two effects of sin.

1 They keep downe our faith. I am so troubled (saith 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 haire 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

They are a hinderance to faith, our naturall inclination is a very clog unto the spirit of faith; and when faith would doe 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 it cannot exercise it selfe without interruption, were removed; would not faith be higher? If the chaine and bolts were off, if the rheume were dryed, 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 sinke? Therefore it is more then evident that our doubtings would sinke if our natural corruption did sink, if our sinfull lusts did sink, which doe breed those indispositions, those interruptions, those continuall difficulties unto our faith. Faith would rise, if its contrarie did abate. *Cast out this bond-woman and her sonne,* (said Sarah to Abraham) *for the sonne of this bond-woman shall not be heire with my sonne: I say I, cast out this bond-woman 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

Gen. 21. 10.

and then it will possesse the Promises (and the soule too) with more quietnesse.

But here the soule replyes, No Object. question but doubtings would sinke, if sinfull corruption did fall ; If the fountaine did decay, the streams would lessen ; but alas, 1. Who can mortifie his sinfull 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. *Sol.*

1 To the first, Who can mortifie his sinfull nature? I answer, Of himselfe, no man can ; naturally he hath neither will nor power thereto : But as *Chrysostome* *Tu non potes, sed Dominus tuus potest.* spake in the businesse of Repentance, Thou canst not turne thee, but yet thy God can turne thee ; That I say here in the businesse 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 Gods; 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 wayes; 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,

fin, yet the renewed person having received grace from God, is by the help of Gods 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 doubtings? 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 the strong 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 ano-

ther, but it will be thy wisdom to trouble all sin: Sins are chained together as well as Graces; and one sin serves to helpe another, and the neglected sinne may perhaps suddenly wound thee, and make thee to stagger. The whole body of sin in every member of it, must be the object of thy mortifying work: This will testifie the truth of Grace received, and the sincerity of thy conscience, and consequently will remove many bottomes of feares and doubtings.

3 Diurnall; (*i.*) 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 should'st live by faith daily, so thou shouldest 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 so believe

leeve still, as if thou never yet hadst enough of Christ; and so live still, as if thou wert 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 Infidelity, 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 remaining Infidelity. Out of it immediately come all thy staggerings, and reelings, and questionings, and doubtings: That is it, (O weak beleever) which disables thy apprehension of the Covenant, of Christ, of the Promises, of thy Title: That is it which perverts thy judgement, and mis-perswades it with cunning reasonings, so that either thou canst not discerne the full truth of Gods Promises, or thou canst not see prevailing reasons to per-

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 plaine-ly, the working of it in thee belongs only to himselfe, and he is also really and graciously willing to bestow upon thee.

3 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

which already thou art false ;
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 a-
ny 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 abun-
dantly pardoning of thee, weaken
sin in thee ? It will doe so still :
Did solemne confessions of sinne,
felse-judgings, speciall mourn-
ings, sufficiently helpe thee with
conquest of sins ? They will doe
so still : Did the humble applica-
tion of thy selfe to the Ordinan-
ces 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 tenderneſſe in
Conscience, any declining of oc-
casions ? Did vehement wraſt-
lings with God in prayer ? Did
serious meditation and confide-
ration ? Did close society with
the Saints ? Did studies of farther
holi-

holinesse? Did frequent reviewings 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 these, any of these, all of these, or any other spirituall course besides these, cause thy sinfulness 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? Goe on with these, & sin wil then be more and more mortified, & doubts wil be more and more weakned: the more that thy conscience is thus sprinkled from dead works, the more shalt thou be able to draw neare unto God in assurance of faith.

2 Particularly, for the mortifying of remaining Infidelity, doe 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 termes

termes of gracifullnesse, futable-
nesse, fulnesse, faithfulnessse, &c.
appertaining to it.

2 Study Jesus Christ through-
ly, know him distinctly as a Me-
diator, and offices, and effects, and
workes.

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

2 The second spring was weak-
nesse and imperfection in faith:
The cure and remedy of which is,
to perfect and strengthen faith;
put more strength, more growth,
more ripenesse 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

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 lesse 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 assents many times shaking, but do thou establish and con-

confirme my heart in thy truths ;
 my embracings, applications, ve-
 ry trembling, and broken, and in-
 terrupted, but do thou guide mine
 eye to look upon my Saviour, do Doe thou
 thou guide my hand to lay hold perswade
 on him, doe thou enable my wil me, and I
 and affections to embrace all shall be
 the goodnesse of thy selfe, of thy perswaded
 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 get-
 tings, and in all our victories o-
 ver 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 ri-
 pen 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 blossome, 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 beleeving 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.

Simile.

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

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.

18.

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, how absolute 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 applyed by us, and possessed of us, we would beleeve more, and doubt lesse. What the Psalmist speaks of God, that same is true of Christ, *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* Hos. 4, 6.
Psal. 9, 10.

Yet take a caution in thy studying

ing of Christ, study him as God reveales him, otherwise thy doubts will stick upon thee; If a man studieth his sins in his owne way, in a naturall way, he shall neither rightly see them, nor yet be freed from them : So if men study Christ their owne way, if they will have him to be such a one as their feareful 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.

A mighty
Saviour
and graci-
ous.

3 Be in the wayes of strength. There are wayes in which God doth reveale his arme; his arme is that which doth strengthen us, and his arme is revealed in his ordinances; for God doth not call us, nor change us, nor strengthen us, nor save us without meanes.

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

Note.

but that person who is weak, and wants strength, if he feeds not, will abate more, and ere long want life it selfe. This is a truth, A new Christian is sometimes full, and a full Christian is al-
 wayes weak; for our spirituall life is like unto our naturall life, both of which are within us, yet neither of them doe rise, but from something without us.

Spirituall
 life like
 the natu-
 rall.

What the impotent person spake, *Joh. 5. 11.* He that made mee whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walke; that we affirme of Gods Ordinances, those his meanes 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 showres which doe 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

God can
answer
that in one
Sermon,
which hath
troubled
us more
then one
yeare.

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

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

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

Fourthly, let faith know its priviledges, and then it wil 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.

Beleevers 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 Beleevers ; see, I Pet. 2. 9. *You are a chosen generation, a royall Priest-hood, an holy Nation, a pecu-*

peculiar people; Nay, 2 Cor. 6. 18. *Ye shall be my sonnes and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty;* and these have those priviledges which the servants have not. They who descended from the blood of *Abraham*, had more priviledges then 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 priviledged; doe you think Beleevers come short, who are not profane, nor civill, nor typicall 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 Beleevers, *Object.*
The Lord doth not respect nor love us.

No? Doth not God love those,
whom (out of his meere love) he

Sol.

he hath chosen ? Doth not God respect the descent, and generation of Christ ? those who come of his blood ? They who come from Christ, and are borne of God, are surely beloved of God.

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

Sol. Yee—are Kings in Gods account, yee have the royall oyntment, 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 Kingdome which consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy, *Rom. 14. 17.* Cannot this stir up faith ?

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

Sol. Are ye not Believers ? And are not Believers the Priests of God ? And are not Priests priviledged by their calling to come before God ? *The Priests might enter in, when none else might.* And is not
Jesus

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 saith, *Mat. 23. 19* *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. *Eph. 2. 13* *Heb. 10. 19*

If therefore wee did once thoroughly 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 accesses, and singular acceptances with God, in and through Christ, O how might we keep down our feares, and our doubtings, and singularly encourage our faith to run, and with fullest eagernesse to embrace our God, our Christ, our Promises!

That
 1. Gods
 1. Love is
 ready.
 2. Eare
 open.
 2. Access
 made.
 3. Special
 Intercessi-
 ons.
 4 Imper-
 fections
 nothing.
 5 Grants
 certaine.

There be other meanes for the

G 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 (saith Christ to Thomas, *Joh. 20. 29.*) are they that have not seen and yet have beleaved.

If a man thinks this, That Christ is not mine, unlesse I handle him; and God is not mine, unlesse I see him; and grace is not mine, unlesse I feele 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 feeles: but the spirituall estate is not alwayes under feeling; we should be

be good and bad, found and lost, cheerfull and sorrowfull, many times in one day, nay in one houre, if that sense gave sentence on our condition.

Beloved, thinke well on this ; There is How can sense reach unto the not a lati-
times of desertion? unto the tude in
times of want? unto the times of sense.
indisposition? unto the times As a rich
where faith doth expresse no acts, mans hand
but such as are pure and cleare, cannot
and only grounded upon the hold all
Promises? In these distracted, his lands,
times Sense findes nothing to so a Chri-
speake to us, to evidence for us, tians sense
for God holds off, and wants cannot
hold up, and dulnesses hold in, compre-
and we have nothing but a word hend all
of promise (all other things seem his condi-
to faile and forsake) to sustaine tion.
and retaine us.

2 The spirituall course many times goes against our sense, and therefore sense must be kept downe. You know that Abraham against hope beleevd in hope, Rom. 4. 18. Faith and sense are Rom. 4. 18

many times at a contradiction; faith will beleeve what sense perceiveth not; and what our sense doth perceive, that same our faith will not beleeve, but the contrary. *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him,* saith Job; and Abraham beleeved his sons safety, in the sacrificing of him; and wee our immortality, notwithstanding our death and corruption. This is very certaine, that when we feele corruptions living, faith will beleeve them to be dying; and when we feele our selves in trouble, faith will then beleeve our comforts and deliverances: Faith usually (I doe not say alwayes) beleeves the contraries unto sense.

For sense goes our way; and faith goes Gods way: Sense allowes and sets it selfe 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 lookes upward;

For your
wayes are
to my
waits, &c.
As the bea-
vens, &c.
Psa. 55.
My times
are in thy
hands

Psa. 31. 15
Heb. 11. 1
The evi-
dence of
things not
seene.

2 Chron.
20. 12
We know
not what to
doe, but our
eyes are up-
on thee.

ward; Sense doth sustaine it selfe by something within us, and Faith sustaines it selfe by something without us, *Psalm*. 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 *fructus fidei*; (i. e.) It is not the ground of beleeving, 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, 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 beleeve; for the sweetnesse of assurance flowes from that faith which by beleeving feeds on Christ. So if thou wouldst have joy, beleeve; for true joy doth not prevent, but attend beleeving.

We are oft times troubled by our owne pride and folly; God sets us a way to beleeve, and we will follow our owne way; Hee gives unto us his Word of Promise to ground our beleeving, 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 beleeve; to whom *Abraham* thus replies, *If they beare not Moses and the*

Eph. 1. 13. After yee beleeved, ye were sealed. 1 Pet. 1. 8. In whom though now ye see him not, yet beleeving, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, &c.

the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead, Luk. 16. 31.

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. Object.

Answer,

I 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. Sol.

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 could be answered without faith, or tooke comfort in that which yet he did not beleieve. For though it be the favour of God which doth properly comfort, neverthelesse it doth not actually comfort, unlesse faith hath taken in that favour.

Object. But are not former experiences (which are nothing else but sensible feelings) grounds to future beleife? 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 intrinsecall grounds, but extrinsecall motives.

Note. You may consider the experiences, either in things granted and performed, or in the manner of their performance. Thou hast had Gods favour, thou hast had an answer, but how didst thou obtaine them? was it not by beleieving? was it not by waiting upon some

some good word of promise? Thy injoying of them did not prevent thy beleiving of the word of Promise, but the beleiving 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 beleive, and from whom (in beleiving) thou receivedst such gracious helps and answers, will againe (he being the same for ever, and his Promises being *Yea* and *Amen*) by further beleiving 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,

Jam. 1. 4. Jam. 1. 4. Let patience have her perfect worke, so let faith ; doe not restraine it, and then you shall be stayed, you shall be freed : The workings of one contrary restraine the other.

Therefore Christ checks his Disciples for their anxieties, for their carkings, and sollicitudes, and would have them to let their faith loose to see a Father who would provide, *Mat. 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 beleieve helps, as well as impatience finde wants ; if they would give way to faith to beleieve Gods 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.*

Three
things
here.

But for the further help in this point, consider,

1. In any occurrence, Faith may
be

be our Agent, it can deale for us, because 1. Our temporall life is by faith; 2 The temporall Promises which reach over all the externall condition, are the bot-tome 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 so-lace and sustaine the soule in his word of Promise.

Suppose a mans meanes begin to shrink, his condition is draw-ing thin, he is neare to want, at such a time this man may keepe 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 sloublings.

Object. I shall be left, sayest thou.

Sol. Thou shalt not, saith Faith.

Object. Not now, perhaps, for yet I have something.

Sol. Nay, never saith 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?

*Psal. 9. 10
Phy, &c.
for thou
Lord hast
not forsaken
them that
see thee.*

So for any crosse and trouble; Not any burthen this way, but faith may be a shoulder to ease 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, saith, the person.

Sol. No? saith Faith, Is not the Lord good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and doth not he know them

Nah. 1. 7

Object.

*Gods arme
is not*

shortned.

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.

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

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

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

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.

He

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

2 Cor. 1.

God doth not alter, neither in his truth, nor in his goodnesse, nor in his power, although our conditions doe 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 beare 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 aske leave of God to touch *Job* any

any way : And when hee doth attempt, the issue doth not depend upon his malice ; the Lord looks on, and subministers marvellous strength, and makes his servants to pray earnestly, and heare earnestly, and apply his Promises, and will deliver. But his actions, and the issues of them are subordinate and under restraint.

We looke upon Satan, and not upon God ; we look upon strong temptations, but we look not upon mighty assistances ; we consider our owne weaknesse, but doe 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 suffers Satan to buffet us, and how his grace is sufficient for us, and how his power will be made manifest in weaknesse ; how he hath delivered, and doth in our very resistance deliver us, and hath promised to
bruise

Note.

In God is my trust, I will not feare what man can doe unto me, said David. **God.**

So here,
&c.

He is in
Egypt, &
in the fier-
ry fornace
and in the
prisons,
&c.

2 For our crosses and losses
There is a providence in them,
God is in all our troubles and
wants : His wisdom is there, and
his goodnesse : 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 faithfulnessse*, 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 con-
dition is not exempted from affli-
ctions, 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 opposi-
tions ; therefore faith is not to be
restrained.

The

The Prophet healed up his servants doubtings, 2 King. 6. 16. 1 Kin. 6. 16. Feare not, for they that be with us are Elishaes servant. more then they that be with them.

And so Christ to his perplexed Christ to and doubting Disciples about his Disci- those exigencies and casualties to ples. which they were exposed; Feare A King- not little flocke, it is your Fathers plea- dome op- surè to give you a kingdome. q. d. Be posed to not so disquieted, so anxious for temporall safety. 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 feare.

So St. John, 1 Joh. 4. 4. Ye are 1 Joh. 4. 4. of God (little children) and have o- Gods Spi- vercome them, because greater is hee rit oppo- that is in you, then he that is in the sed to Si- tans and world. Antichrist.

Once more St. Paul, Rom. 5. 20. Rom. 5, 20 Where sinne abounded, grace did much Grace op- more abound; and 21. As sinne posed to reigned unto death, so grace reignes sin. through righteousness, unto eternall life,

life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

So againe for outward troubles,
 Esa. 41. 14. *Esay 14. 14. Feare not thou worme
 Help to trouble & Jacob, (q. d. Thou art a weake
 weakness. creature, contemptible creature,
 And 2 Cor. 1. 5. As the sufferings of Christ
 abound in us, so our consolation
 also, &c. 2 Cor. 4. 17 Our light
 afflictions, &c. work
 for us a far more ex-
 ceeding weight of
 glory.*

So for outward losses, 2 Chron. 25. 9. said *Amaziah* to the man of God, *But what shall we doe for the hundred talents which I have given to the Army of Israel?* The man of God answered, *The Lord is able to give thee much more then this.*

*My Father
 is greater
 then all,
 saith
 Christ.*

From all which we see, that Faith hath the better grounds to rest on; there are more with faith then against it, for none can bee against it, except the evill creatures, and he who is for it, is the mighty Creator; all his power, and his goodnesse, and his Christ, and his Spirit, and his Word of Truth is for it: He is greater then all, so that faith may have singu-
 lar

last 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 beare downe the contrary.

Satan is against me.

Object.

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

Sol.

Sin is against me.

Object.

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

Sol.

Men in their power are against mee.

Object.

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 balance.

Sol.

Troubles are upon me.

Object.

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

Sol.

Wants are upon me.

Object.

But

Sol.

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.

Note.

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 staves; it staves 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!

Bre-

Brethren, in our Spirituall 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 *Jehu* 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, sinne lyes at the doore, said God to Cain:*

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,

David. 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 what it imports. of it in *Zach.* 12. 10.) imports ;
 1. Anguish. 1. An anguish of spirit ; as *David* said for his *Jonathan*, My soule is distressed for thee ; so here the false 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. Fulness of griefe. 2. A sensible fulnesse of griefe ; as *Joseph* was full of compassion, and his bowels could hold no longer upon the oration of *Judah* ; so

so the false 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 poure 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 naturall Three sorrow, as for the losse of Chil- sorts of
dren, and a Politicall sorrow, as sorrows
was that for the good King Je-
siah, and there is a spirituall sor-
row, which is for our sins: This
must now be exceedingly renew-
ed, and you may raise it by consi-
deration of mercy. O Lord, what How to
have I done? Why have I done raise our
this? Thou shewedst me mercy in sorrow.
opening my eyes, in changing my
heart, in calling me to holinesse,
in pardoning of former sins; yet
after all this, I have sinned a-
gainst thee, I have wounded my
heart,

The doubting Christian.

heart, dishonoured thy Name, turned thy grace into wantonnesse, 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 darknesse, &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 sleight and too quick; if you be, you shall have your doubtings againe. God doth seldome or
never.

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 multiplied; 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 reasonings, which wil rise against faith in its wonted communions and applications.

But you will say, If we should sorrow thus, yet we should still doubt of mercy and Gods favour.

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 apply mercy because I sinned, yet now I may, because I am grieved.

Sol.

A great current wil bear down the dam, and true sorrow will carry away our doubtings.

See Gods disposition to Ephraim, Jer. 31. 18. I have surely heard

- heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, &c.
 19 vers. 19. I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth. But then, ver. 20.
 20. Is Ephraim my deare sonne? Is he a pleasant childe? for since I spake against him, I doe earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.

The Father likes the Sons submission though not his rebellions.

Though God be offended with our sins, yet he is delighted in our sorrowes; and nothing melts him more, then to see us come melting before him. The mournfull behaviour of Josephs 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 prayes, *Regard my teares that fall; and, Are not my teares registred? And, Put thou my teares into thy bottle. Melting teares doe melt a tender God and Father.*

2 To renew our repentance; in which I would comprehend both

both detestations and forsakings. These finnes 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.

Ezek. 36

Rev. 2. 5

St. John, Rev. 2. 5. adviseth decayed Ephesus to remember from whence she was false, 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 molests us not, if yet fire come under, if any notable sin come in, and kindle in the heart; now the boylings,

Simile.

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 stillnesse againe, and by degrees leaves fuming: So will our soules come to a pacified temper, to a settlednesse, if once our sins be removed; leave the sins, and ordinarily the doubts will leave the sinner.

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

3 Sue out a speciall assurance; You may see by *Dauids* disposition, after his speciall sins, that a generall acquittance would not serve the turne; for speciall sinnes you must sue out special assurance of pardon.

Your

The sea
will be
calme, if
the winds
cease.

*Esa. i. 16,
17. Cease to
doe evill,
learne to
doe well.*

*18. Come
now and
let us rea-
son toge-
ther, &c.*

* *Loc. cit.*

Your Consciences will never be quiet else; Nay this will not satisfie 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 sin.

Sin will rise, it will lye uppermost, thou shalt feele it so, it will flye 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 blood upon thy heart, thy doubtings would cease.

But you will say, There is now Object no hope, though we should grieve, though we should repent, though wee 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 ease our soules upon.

Sol. 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 sinners; but inclusive in respect of penitents. not all sinners, but all repenting sinners shall be pardoned.

1 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 againe, 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 saith simply and absolutely, If you repent; So that let the finnes be never so great, never so many, yet if they be sins of which thou now truly repentest, they are assuredly pardoned, *Esa. 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

Esa. 55. 7.

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 forsakes them, the Lord will pardon, and shew mercy.

Againe, because that pardon is promised to actuall 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 renews his true repentance, they shall be pardoned: And the reason is, because it is not sinne simply in such an estate which God pardons, but it is sin repented of, which God doth promise to pardon: And therefore if an evill 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

tance he may confidently plead out Gods promises of pardon, for he shall have mercy upon his repentance, 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.

Simile.

Whence we may infer, that if
God will forgive his enemies, he
will then (upon the same repen-
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, *Si
Deus promittat gratiam nobis offen-
dentibus, quid faciet nobis pœnitenti-
bus?* If he promisseth grace unto
us when wee 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,

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 pacifica-
tion by Christ, of the atonement,
of the propitiation of the satisfac-
tion, 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 com-
mit in thy unconverted estate;
and the rest afterward in thy con-
verted estate, thou art to satisfie
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
restraine either 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 darknesse) upon our repentance to consume away our sins, &c.

The difference of our estates doth no way adde or diminish to the strength and efficacie of his death: His blood can cry as loud now as heretofore, and is not lesse effectually 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 continuall Mediator, and everlasting Intercessor.

Object. But you will reply, These sins

cut

Christ a
pillar of
cloud, and
a pillar of
fire.

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 radicall 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 repentants; you shall read in *Psal. 136.* that his mercy is set downe twenty six times, with the adjunct of everlastingnesse, His mercy endureth for ever. And *Psal. 86. 5.* Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous 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.

Sol.

No sinne
that thou
canst
grieve for,
curs off
our com-
munion
and interest.

Psal. 136

Psal. 86. 5

13

15

— — — — — *— — — — —* — — — — —

Mica. 7. 18. 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 for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19. He will turne againe, he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sinnes into the depths of the sea.

Mercy is not strange unto God, it is his nature, it is his delight, and repentance will not bee 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 everlastingnesse of his mercy.

6. A sixth spring of doubtings was indisposition unto or about spirituall duties: Whence wee feare the truth of grace, which is active and lively, and doubt our acceptance with God, by reason of our dulnesse and deadnesse.

For the curing of this, consider
I That

1 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 averſeneſſe 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.

A dead heart.

The difference twixt a dead heart and a dull heart.

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

A dull heart.

Rom. 7.
21, 22.

Gal. 5. 17.

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 saith 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 alwayes do the work ye would do, and ye cannot do it in such a manner as ye would do it.*

Simile

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 extream wearisomenesse, not of his minde, but

of his body : Or as a lussy and able man escaped out of prison with a great chaine about his leg, he would run away, but the chaine 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. *Plal. 119 25. My but then there is a chaine clogs soule clevenesse, there is a spirituall weak- ness, there is flesh in them as well as spirit, and this doth dull them, as well as to the dust (that this doth indispose them about was low enough) the doing, about the exercise of quicken their intentions and desires. thou me,

Therefore let us take heed of
denying or concluding the ab-
sence of grace, from the infirmity
of working.* *David* prayed often
to be quickned, and so may wee,
and yet be alive. It is one thing
to have life, another thing to
have livelihood: That may be
present, when this is absent: for a
Christian, & may have a dull tem-

per of body, not able to render unto him the spirituall sense of spirituall duties, melancholy doth intercept the vitality not onely of nature, but of grace.

2 He may not so seriously meditate and dwell upon the wayes and motives of livelihood, hee may have but remisse, and unpiercing, or unapplying thoughts of Gods great love and mercy, of Christs blood and intercession, of the Promises's goodnesse, and fulnesse; and therefore his spirit may be dull.

The oyle may not be on the wheel, nor that gale to the ship

3 He may not have such an actuall aid and speciall influence from the Spirit of Christ to excite his spirituall frame and temper; and then if that wind bee more slacke, our ship will move on with lesse forwardnesse.

Or lastly, perhaps he may have over-lasht, he hath been (imprudently or accidentally) in the dulling wayes; he hath been sur-fetting 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 certaine, that Indisposition is not fundamentall; 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 thoroughly do; so in our dullest times, there is not more duty then we would doe.

Indisposition is not fundamentall.

Note.

And this know, that the Christian condition keepes 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 seeke him, though he were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.

2 Chro. 30
18, 19.
Gods eye is more on the intent of the workman then on the extent of the work.

The

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 listens not so much to thy words, but (through these) he considers thy heart; if that come with life, though thy body come with dullnesse, 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.

Simile.

You remember that *Simile* of the Goldsmith, who hath a skillfull eye to finde out the smaller, and neglected wayes 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
coveit our Altar.

Our
groans are
not hid
from him.

Therefore it is *Dauids* 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.

1 Chron.
28.9.

Beloved, we are mistaken a-
bout duty; we judge it not to bee
duty, unlesse 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 ser-
vice with integrity of heart, is
duty.

God can
find duty
in speech-
lesse tears,
and sighs,
& groans.
Rom. 8.

And that is it which God con-
siders, and unto which hee hath
made many promises of ac-
ceptance,

ceptance, and audience, and grant.

Object. This is something to stay us, you will say: But now wee sticke at this, Whether the bent of our hearts bee intire, notwithstanding our indispositions and dullnesses?

That may easily be diseerned:

Sol. 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. I 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.

God knowes the heart, and regards it.

He doth so, and he knows this of thy heart, that it yeelds him lasie service, and dislikes not it selfe therein : but now 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 selfe,
and this doth abundantly mani-
fest its bent.

Simile.

As you know, the weake per-
son he will have one turne more,
and the ingenuous Scholar will
write one line more, and the de-
sirous Archer will make one shot
more; So the sincere heart, hee
will assay yet more in duty, per-
haps frequency in duty (saith he)
may breed fervency in duty. (A
man may get him an heat by
walking, and by rubbing his be-
nummed parts.) Or perhaps,
saith hee, one duty more in
another kinde, may quicken mee
to duty in every kinde; as some
physicke 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 some-
what dull in hearing, I will
there-

Note.

therefore pray more, perhaps God may heare my prayer, and then I may heare 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 saith he, I will even goe to Gods 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,

The doubting Christian

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 accompany thee in thy services: God will drive this sleepe from thine eyes, and these fowles from thy sacrifice. Once againe, though, note that

3 The cause of all acceptance is in Christ: therefore doe not doubt that God will reject thy services because of thy indispositions, but believe hee will accept of thy sincere endeavours, because of his Christ. Beloved, it were good for us to consider all things about duty. A sincere heart must set it out, a gracious 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 fulnesse, nor for our livenessse, but for his Sons worthinesse, 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 righteousnessse.

Note.

Are thy prayers fervent? They are not accepted for their owne strength: Are they weake? They are not rejected for their impotencie. Is thy heart sincere? Then know that Christ hath sufficiency of merits to cover thy (self-blamed) indispositions, and to gaine the acceptance of the weakest (if sincere) services.

Therefore this were a good way, in case of disliked indispositions, not to place the accep-

Rev. 8. 3
The Angel
had a golden
Censer,
and much
Incense:
that hee
should offer
it with the
prayers of
all Saints
upon the
golden Altar.

He appeared
for us.
Heb. 9.

Note. tance in our selves, 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, requests fervent, hearings reverent and delightfull, yet at other times the wheelles are almost downe, the spring moves slowly, our affections turne not so lively, our judgements are barren, language sticks, Requests breath only, but flame not ; wee heare, and give credit, and stocke 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 variety in Christ.

Whence it would follow, that if our duties found grace with God, because of their accidentall 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 acceptance 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 perpetuall 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.

As our persons, so our prayers must stand before God by Christ.

7 A seventh spring of doubtings, was, a conceit of successe 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 wee are not good, or that God doth not in-

tend any good to us.

This is the spring, the cure and remedy of which, may bee made up by these considerations, viz.

1 Service and progresse in duty belongs to us, and their rewards and recompences 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 dost but what thou art bound to doe. It is the

Simile.

Husbandmans part to plow the Land, and to sow the Corne; and it is Gods part to give the harvest. Hereupon, saith the A-

Gal. 6 9 postle, *Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if*

Psal. 65. 2 *we faine not : For God is a God bearing Prayer, and he will be found of*
9. 10, *them that setke him, and will not forsake them.*

2 God is a good Master: Job did not serve him for nought. I

Psal. 118. 5 *called upon the Lord, and he answered me, said David. And in another*

116. 1, 2 *place, He hath heard my voyce, and my*

my supplications, and inclined his eare unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. Not one of the servants who traffiqued with the talents, that could complaine hee was an austere Master. Therefore God takes it to heart, when they in *Malachi* charged him with neglect, and irrecompence for serving of him; Your words have been stout 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 instantly 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, betwixt him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. (i. e.) Then you shall know that it is not lost labour to serve him.

3 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.

Faith hath
a two-fold
office

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

Psal. 123. 2

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

Waiting
doth distinguish
between
desires &
unsettled
humour.

Simile,

And (beloved) this waiting doth notably distinguish betwixt 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 sleight visits with men, knock at doore and if none answer, away we goe
our

our businesse was little, and so our stay is answerable; but in those desires which spring from poverty of spirit, these have faith to beleeve that God is at home, and have patience to wait his answer.

Poverty of spirit.

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 crums 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.

Simile.

But we cannot wait.

Object.
Sol.

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

we could but wait on God, then assuredly we should see that we have no reason to cry out of fruitlesse in seeking.

Object. How may we doe to wait ?

Sol. Thus.

Four motives to wait.

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 appoint-*

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. *Psalm. 27. 14.*

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 walke and not faint. *Esa. 40. 31.*

Micah 7. 7. I will looke unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will beare me. *Micah 7. 7.*

Performances.
Psal. 40. 1

Will you now see a certaint
in performances? Then read *Psal.*
40. 1. I waited patiently upon the Lord,
and he enclined to me, and heard my
cry. Here was waiting, and here
was sure speeding.

Object.

He was but one man.

Sol.

Then *Heb. 6. 12. Be ye followers*
of them, who through faith and pati-
ence inherit the Promises. They did
inherit the Promises, (i. e.) got
all the good out of them by pati-
ent waiting. If we be sons, let us
wait, and then we also shall bee
heires of the Promises; the good
of them shall be settled upon us.

Isa. 49. 23

See also *Esay 25. 9. and Esay*
49. 23. None shall be ashamed who
wait on me. From all which we in-
fer, If God hath made sure Pro-
mises, If he hath hitherto perfor-
med 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.
Simile. You would thinke him a strange
man, who would not wait the
feeling.

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 lyes 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 imployed?

3 The answers will sweeten, and easily 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 to all.

As the Wise men when they saw the star, rejoyced.

Cant. 3, 4.

And Da-
vid doth
forget the
aking of
his bones,
&c. when
God did
answer
him.

all the prayers that ever thou
madeſt in thy life. *I found him
whom my ſoule loveth, I held him, &c.*

Prayers are
our money
to uſe.

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 ſtock;
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 (ordina-
rily) at length diſmiſſe us with
more then what wee aſke; 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.

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

I answer, Perhaps not; God **Sol.**
 doth know that thou hast a proud
 temper, and thou growest bigge,
 and art apt to swell upon enlarge-
 ments; thou art apt to despise
 others, and to make glorious
 conceits of thy selfe, and therefore
 he doth answer thee, not by victo-
 ry, 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 exer-
 cise thee, thou shalt finde matter
 to keep thee low and humble,
 when still thou feelest such rem-
 nants, and workings of corrup-
 tion. 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 holdst 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 watchfulnesse, 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 heavennesse in duty
which

which thou wouldest have? Then thou must use former grace, and sticke 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, saith James 4.*
James.

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 Gods 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, *Simile*
but

but that by this meanes he should the more greedily leap after the bait.

And the tender mother steps aside, not that shee 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 *Jeremy* speaks, *He becomes 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 smels a sweet odour and savour in all our humble sacrifices, hee delights in the broken heart.

2 Hee loves that wee should strive with him for his grants, (that is the phrase *Rom. 7.30.*) and *Ro. 12.3.4* *wrestle with him* (as *Jacob*) and so *Esa. 62.7* *prevail upon him*: And that we should give

He knows
our
thoughts
long before
His earc is
open, and
before they
call I will
answer.

Esa.

Whiles

they are

speaking,

I

will an-

swer.

Loc.cit.

Ro. 15.30

is the phrase

Rom. 12.3.4

wrestle with him

(as Jacob)

and so

Esa. 62.7

prevail upon him

: And that we should

give

give him no rest, (Esa. 62. 7.) untill he hath satisfied our soules with mercy, and establiſhed them with his grace.

3 He would inhance the goodneſſe of the things deſired, and make us to wear the answers with more thankfulneſſe to himſelfe, with more comfort to our ſelves, 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 emptinneſſe 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.

Simile.

Remember this, that the first truths doe support and maintaine the rest, (as the corner-stone the rest of the building) and are as the originall 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.

Simile.

Ergo, saith Paul, Rom 14. 1. Him that is weak in the faith, receive you, but not to doubtfull disputations.

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 heare some arguing of these, who yet are ignorant of the nature of these. But,

Pauls 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 thinke fit for us to learne. 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 maine points of Religion: For besides this, that Primitive truths give an aime to all truths; so likewise they uncase all errours, 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 errorr contrary unto it, it is in the least hazard of doubting; for as much as doubtings ordinarily

Heb. 6. 1.

True knowledge is as the day wherein we walk more steadfastly; and ignorance like the night, in which we are full of fears, and often stumble.

ly arise from some error, or misapprehension in the minde.

Simile. 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 musicke, or some feelings, and annexed posts, yet the house may stand.

So may a Christians 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 perversnesse, but arise only from inevidence and inability.

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

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

Fundamentals, I call those ^{Three} Truths which take up the worke ^{things.} 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 illations 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 intellectus*, in the judgement of the person, as the conclusion is made by such or such a mans conjecturall opinion, to flow from such a principle, or such a Text. Yet actions in themselves

Indifferents, I call those actions which in themselves are neither holy, nor evil; neither is a man by any expresse command from God, (*specificative*) injoynd them, or (*specificative*) prohibited them: Which things considered absolutely, if a man doth use

indifferent in respect of circumstances, may be offensive & sinfull. See Rom. 14. 14, 15, &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 asfoyle 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 Thess. 5. 21. Prove all things : And the Prophet Esaiah, To the Law, and to the testimony, Esa. 8. 20.*

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

Beloved, we may see what weak
crea-

creatures we are, when truths fall downe amongst us, and when we sit in the Tribunall; alas, what distractions, what severall stamps doe our severall opinions set on them? what distinctions, limitations, 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 fancies 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 errours, 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 glosses

The doubting Christian

ses and opinions are like sore eyes, which cannot behold the Sunne without twinckling, 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.

3 *Mortifying of sinne,* Titus 2. 12.

4 *Establiish the minde in declared truths,* Beware, saith the Apostle, Peter, (*seeing ye know these things*) lest yee being led away with the errour of the wicked, fall away from your owne stedfastnesse.

It is not unknown, that some (like Pedlars) wander up and downe, and make a living by their errours; subtill people, and crafty to their owne confusion, who have only a strength of parts to glosse over sins and errours, & to weaken the strength of truths, and wayes to Heaven; most rendering

ring children of Satan, for they
 cease not to pervert the right
 wayes of the Lord, and yet so ar- Act. 13. 10
 tificially 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 tumultu-
 ous and unsetling 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 loo-
 sing the Anchor, and therefore
 the Ship begins to tosse. Men doe
 not establishe their hearts in
 knowne and approved truths;
 they doe not confirme their faith
 to what God saith 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
 K should

should be troubled with doubts and errours.

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

Act. 15. 21
It seemed
good to the
holy Ghost,
and to us,
to lay upon
you no greater
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 Christian should be a Doctor of the Chaire: Some points in Religion are high, and mysterious; others are dark, and lye yet under
predi-

resolved.

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

Busie 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 concernes thee, and then to pray thy selfe into the practise of that. This is a wise way, and settled, and which is exempted from vaine turmoiles and many judicall 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 walke more quietly without feares and doubtings. Shal I give you an hint of some particulars? remember when these Propositions.

Four particulars
worthy of
weak christians
distinct consideration.

Rom. 7.

7. 9.

Rom. 8. 15

Mat. 11. 28

I 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 legall operations, these are preparations; for men must know their sinfull condition, they must have the spirit of bondage, they must be heavie, and weary, before they can lay hold on Christ.

Simile.

Now those legall impressions are different; every Beleever (of ripe years) hath felt them, more or lesse, yet all cannot say alike. Every childe feeles something in his birth, but some children are brought forth with more paines, and others with lesse difficulty; Lydia was quickly delivered, but Paul lyes by it some dayes. 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.*

The

The Lord is pleased (for he is an arbitrary Agent both for the matter and manner in our spirituall alteration) to single out some persons, and to charge their sins deep upon their Consciences, and to pursue them with singular terrours, to sicke his arrowes and their owne sins so close that they know not which way to turne themselves. He doth almost grinde 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 usefull vessell : So doth the Lord many times with some people, he returnes them their old sins, and powerfully mingles the Law and their sins, and their Consciences together, and so with that hammer bruiſeth, and breakes their

Some persons greatly prepared.

sinfull hearts, and with that fire melts them, and dissolves them as it were; yet after a long and tedious time of sensible conviction, and horrible bondage, he graciously formes the Lord Jesus in their hearts, and renews his blessed Image of Grace, and they become the most acceptable Vessels of glory.

Others
gently pre-
pared.

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 release them from their guilt and feares, and to deliver them from the powers of darknesse, 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.

Sol.

I answer, his end is in these legall preparations;

1 To evidence unto a man the foulness of his heart and life.

2 To convince him of a tall unworthiness.

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

4 To make a man willing, upon Gods owne 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 peece of stone or wood will breake with one or two blows, we spare the rest; and if the Masse will yeeld in one dayes firing, wee 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 unyeelding metall must have the greater fire.

From all this, the doubtfull heart may perhaps bee settled about.

The doubting Christian

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 sicke, 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, notwithstanding that Christians may have one common principle, 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 substantiall part of Grace.

2 That many Christians may live under the same meanes 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 exercises of their
K 5 graces.

Simile.

graces may yet be different; As children having the same School, may sit in severall formes, and having the same food, may yet have severall agilities and abilities.

So Christians, who have the same principles of beleiving 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 then another, one may rest upon Gods Promises more then another, one may pray with more fervency then another, one may doe the other parts of duty more then 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 falsnesse of Grace, but sometimes from the variety of particular occasions, sometimes from the variety of

Inequality of holy operation, whence.

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 stock.

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

6 Neither doth every calling
adde.

admit unto every Christian those spaces, and leasures, and remissions, or vacations, which some have to set on their heavenly frame and course.

Simile.

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, Ye

Branches.

Stars.

Sheep.

Ye are the body of Christ, (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. 27.) and Members. members in particular; this was a 1 Cor. 12. 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 Eph. 4. 11. 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, 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, strong men ? There are some young, there are some babes in Christ too. So Heb. 5. 13. and 1 Joh. 2. 12, 13, *I write unto you little.* 1 Joh. 2. 12, 13. *chil-*

As gifts for edification, so graces for sanctification are different.

children, because your finnes 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 doubtings here? Many people, through a weaknesse (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 behindments in faith, and zeale, and sorrow, &c. Ah ignorant people! who are truly industrious after the great measures of Grace, and will not yet quiet their feares, and

resolved.

and still their doubtings with this ;

1 That such earnest pantings, and inquietations, and unsatisfiableness cannot but spring from truth and 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 beleeve in that fulnesse of assurance and reliance as thou dost, and if I cannot, I will yet beleeve 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 misseth of heaven for want of measure, but of truth. Our

CONT

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 occurren-
ces.

I If you compare Christian with Christian in respect of comfortables , it is night with one, when it is day with another : One goes on heavily oppressed, *walking in darknesse*, (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.

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

Yet some others there are who doe beleve, and doe rejoyce in beleeving: They see Christ in their armes, they know whom they have beleeved, and rejoyce with joy unspeakable and glorious, 1 Pet. 1.8.

As Simon
As Paul.

2 Tim. 1. 12
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 thankfull, how patient, how confident? Blessed bee the name of the Lord: And, should wee 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, hee argues it with God, and expostulates 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-

answers him, revives him: yet presently wee shall finde him in his teares, in his suspicions, *Haib 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?*

Psal. 42.

Now this sensible change and contrariety in the soule, doth no more argue the falsenesse of grace, then the goings and comings of cheerfulness in the body conclude the want of true life in it: The comfortables 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 sinnes, undeniable sinnes, and looks all over himselfe, and all abroad, and can finde no comforter, no
one

one able to ſtep 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 beleeving penitents; for to theſe onely I addreſſe 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, bath made him to be ſinne for

2 Cor. 5. 19

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 *Debitor in Law*, are reputed as one person: Now

Simile.

Heb. 7. 22.
Iesus made
a surety of
a better
Testament.

Christ is our *Fidejussor*, He is made sinne for us, saith the Apostle: For us, (*i.*) *vice nostra*, or *loco nostro*, (*i.*) in our stead. A surety for us, one

Fidejussor.

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 up on him the answering of our sinnes, the satisfying of our debts, the clearing of our guilt, and therefore was it that he was so bruised, &c.

Lev. 16, 21
Scape-
goat,

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

con-

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 finnes were laid, and who
alone dyed for the ungodly, and
bare our burdens away. There-
fore the Beleever 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 finnes; I beseech thee ac-
cept of his attonement, for hee
is my Surety, my Redemption;
Thou must be satisfied, but Christ
hath satisfied thee, not for him-
selfe, what finnes 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 woun-
ded 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 forgiveness of sins.*

2 In Justification, the beleev-
ing penitent hath an universall discharge, VVhat is that? That is, when a man is in Christ, when he is a true beleever, he doth not then receive a particular acquittance from such or such sins, but an universall 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 Gods fulnesse, and extent of pardoning, and remitting mercy, he *Psal. 85. 2* saith, *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered*

vered all their sins. *Selah.* VVhich 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 minuunt justificationem*; Though sins be different, yet justification is not. VVhen the Lord God justifies a person; the different qualities and circumstances of former sins doe not hinder their pardon, and discharge. You know that one may with a pen crosse 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 VVrit, that there is scarce a sin in any kind, but we may read the blotting of it unto a beleeving and repenting person, *viz.*

Simile.

Note.

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

Justification reacheth all sorts of debts.

Drum-

The doubting Christian

Drunkenesse, another sinne which the Apostle (in 1 Cor. 6. 8.) raiseth to the height of eternall separation, yet was it pardoned to *Noah*, a beleeving penitent.

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

Incest, that unnaturall commixture, yet pardoned to *Lot*.

Murder, a crying sinne, and Adultery, a fearefull sin, yet both pardoned unto a repenting and beleeving *David*.

Idolatry, that angering and provoking sin, a sin which unthrone God, and makes a god, yet pardoned unto *Salomon*.

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
terme

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

Persecuting of the Gospell 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 bloud and life of others, yet pardoned to *Zachew*.

Nay yet once more, as you may And all see pardon in Justification, releasing all sorts of debts, so you shall sorts of debtors. finde it releasing all sorts of debtours. 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 proclaimes 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.*

L

Then

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

Under which four ranks, he drawes 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 beleeving 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 blood of Christ? Yes: But these 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 for

is to cleare? Or cannot faith receive the acquittance of great sins, as well as indeliberated finnes? 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, saith God: I am, Lord, saith the penitent, I acknowledge my sins, and am sorry for my transgressions, but I intend to run on the score no longer. Thou art a debtor, saith God; I am, Lord, saith the Beleever, and thou hast said, *If any man sin, hee hath an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for finnes, and I beleeve on him Lord; I take him to be my sin-offering, and in his blood 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-*

i Joh. 2. 1

repented of them, and I doe beleev
in Jesus Christ for the pardon of
them, I heare and know that he is
the Mediator of the New Testa
ment, and that his blood satisfies
for all sorts of debtors, and debu
too ; though one sin may differ
from another, yet his merit and
satisfaction differs not from it
selfe, but is all-sufficient ; and
therefore I acknowledge the debt,
and rest on his blood for a full
discharge.

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

pardon, 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 stiled *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, Isa. 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 himselve 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 himselve 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 finnes into the depths of the sea.* If a thing were cast into a river which might be fathomed, then it might be brought up againe; or if it were cast upon the sea onely, yet it might be discerned, and taken up againe; but when it is in the depths, cast into the depths, the bottome of the sea, now it cannot be fathomed up againe.

By which Metaphor the Lord intends to expresse unto us the powerfull energy of pardoning mercy, that our finnes 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 useth another

another phrase to expresse this point, vers. 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 judicall evidences, and to be covered, is to be hid so, and closed, as not to appeare with a judicall guilt upon it.

Now the Lord here is said to cover sinne in Justification: What is that? That is, the Lord will looke on those finnes no more with a judicall 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 beleieve 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 sit 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 given but once, so a mans sinnee's but one to be forgiven, once is enough, because if once, then for ever.

I confesse, that the sense, and fruit, and assurance of a sin pardoned, this may (*redire*) returne; Note. this may be lost and got, and the acts of faith concerning the particular pardon of a particular sin, may do so, but Gods 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.

The apprehension of pardon is variable and yet the pardon it self is immutable...

4 Discharges in Justification reach not onely to the guilt, but also to the consequents of guilt : for it is a true rule, *Justificatio tollit pœnalia*. And, *remittit culpam*; Therefore saith the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 1.* There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. *remittit pœnam*. You know that if the body falls, then the shadow which attends the body, that falls too; and if the debt bee discharged, the prison is discharged. Wee have by the blood of Christ the forgiveness of our sinnes, and therefore the remission of all satisfying.

atisfying 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 exposed 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 fundatur reatus pœne*, saith *Aquinas* well.) Now if Christ hath fully and perfectly satisfied for the guilt, then punishment hath no ground, unlesse we will say that God will punish for that which is already satisfied,
or

For that Christs satisfaction is not totall, but partiall, (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 fore-past guilts, 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 free-man, and that against all Satans accusations; hee 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 Beleevers did skill 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 sinke more. *Be of good comfort, thy sinnes are forgiven thee.*

5 One thing more, which I had almost forgotten, falls in, which is this, That the substantiall part of Justification is alike to all Beleevers. What is that? It is this, God for the blood of Christ doth not onely charge the sins of strong beleevers on Christ; but of weake beleevers 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 beleeve, helpe mine unbeleeve*, 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 Beleever 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 onely for men of stronger faith then mine.

Sol.

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 finnes ; there is yet another part , which respects our graces and duties ; from the weaknesse and mixture of which, doe arise many doubtings, and such as are not to be disputed down by any thing in our selves, but onely to be answered with the doctrine of Justification.

Ob.

O , saith the humbled sinner , and experienced in himselfe, what a broken estate is here ! what an imperfect draught of holinesse ! My very light is dim, and in all my duties there is yet undutifulnesse ; my righteousness

is

resolved.

is defective, in my faith much unbeleefe, in my prayers much coldnesse, irreverence, distraction; and when I have sorrowed for my sinnes, I may even grieve for grieving no more, and may hate my selfe, that I cannot otherwise hate my sinnes: How can I stand before God, who is of purer eyes then to behold sinne? 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 owne righteousness, nor our owne services in their owne strength. Indeed the Lord requires holiness in our natures, and holy duties from us; we are his children, we are his people; therefore wee should bee holy as our Father is holy; therefore the people of his
pasture

pasture should serve him. An unholy Beleever were a monster upon earth, and an undutifull sonne is a plaine unbeleever; 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 cleane, 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 pleasest, I will bee tryed by my owne holinesse.

2. Bug

2 But in the righteousness of Christ, I desire, saith Paul, to be found in him, not having my owne 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 in Rom. 5. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 2 Cor. 5. 21. * So called, not as if the act of faith were our justifying righteousness, for that act is but 1. An imperfect thing. 2. A transient thing. 3. A part of inherent holiness: but because faith only layes hold on, & makes us to fly unto

There is such a thing as the * righteousness of faith; it is none other then the righteousness of Christ: (we thinke little of it, we make little use of it; there is a kind of Popery in us all; wee 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 acceptation, it is in and by that righteousness of Jesus Christ.

VVhence two things arise to keep doubtings and feares off, viz. & relye on the righteousness of Iesus Christ.

1 That though our holiness be weak, yet Christs is strong; that

And so it
must be, or
else we
could not
truly be
reputed
just.

that righteousness which justifies, is
ful. When we look upon our selves,
Ah Lord! thinke we, How shall
we appeare before God! How
will he accept of us! Such poore,
such weak, such sinfull, hollow
people! I answer, Christs righ-
teousnesse is full, his Coate was
seamlesse; ours is made up, and
strangely cut, but his righteous-
nesse is compleat, and, *He is made
unto us righteousness*, yea, and that
of God, 1 Cor. 1. 30. God hath set
him out to be our righteousness,
and he justifies us by it.

2 Though our services be weak,
yet wee are justified by Christs
righteousnesse: *Aaron* was to
beare the iniquity of the holy offerings,
Exod. 28. 38. Their holy offerings
had some unholy mixtures; but
Aaron was to beare them, (*i. e.*) he
was to take the iniquities away
from them, and to make the offe-
rings accepted.

Christ is this *Aaron*, who by his
righteousnesse covers all the ble-
mishes, makes up all the weaknes-
ses

resolved.

ses in holy duties.

Therefore my brethren, in all our approaches to God, we should not doubt. It is the Apostles own argument, *Heb. 10. 21. Having such an High-Priest over the house of God, 22. Let us draw neare 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 hee 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 perswaded of God, when they come and pray unto him.

I remember the Apostle hath an excellent phrase in *Heb. 9. 24.* that *Christ doth appeare 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 businesse, and upon the committing of the Case to him, he appears for his Plaintiffe, 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 beleever 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.) hee moves his Father in his behalfe, brings out his righteousness, his blood and merits, and what hee did and suffered for him, &c. And thus doth Christ for every particular service, duty, and prayer for him who beleeves on him.

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

O, saith 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 goodnesse, 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, doe but track thine owne spirit, or the spirit of any distressed in Conscience, thou shalt finde this to be the last hold usually of unbelieve, namely, a reasoning against Gods Promises; the which reasoning is sometimes through meere tenderesse 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 drawne in to beleave: But sometimes there is a reasoning against the Promises, through

The doubtin Christian

through wilfulnesse of spirit, as when all the arguments of a doubting sinner are so clearly resolved, and answered by the expresse words of God, that the person cannot gain-say it; yet the person rather bends still against the Promises, then labours to honour God in them by beleiving. This later reasoning is an irrational way, and unworthy of our abetting; I should thinke such a Christians doubtings to arise rather from a fixed and heaue melancholly, then any other speciall cause. Neverthelessse, somewhat to help the other Christian, who argues and reasoneth against the Promises, meerly out of tendernesse, and fear of his right & title, I would commend a few things to his consideration.

1 No spirituall good is furthered, nor evill weakned 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 Gods 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 wels? 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 vertue 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 wil never be an helping nor healing plaister. Thou shalt be (*uti eras*) as thou wast, and the promise shall be (*ubi erat*) where it was, it shall never doe thee good till thou dost apply it.

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

First, this is a preposterous course

course, and utterly impossible ; as if there could be any well-grounded perswasion of our interest, before we have any such interest. No, but personall perswasion is a consequent work, it cannot be the antecedent or leading worke. You must buy the Lands, before you can be perswaded that they are yours.

But secondly, if ever you would cleare your title to the promises, you must then beleeve ; for it is faith which doth intitle you, and gives you interest and propriety. As the Apostle spake of a great good, *After yee beleevd, yee were sealed with the holy spirit of promise.* Ephes. 1. 13. that I say in this case. If ever you would be perswaded that God seales his Promises unto you, then doe you first put you seale unto the Promises : Beleeve and then thou shalt see the good of them to be thy good.

3 The ground of a Christians beleeving Gods Promises, must be in him who is to apply them

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

It is said of *Abraham*, when God promised him a childe in his old age, that *by faith he gave glory to God*: But how came he so to doe? the Text saith, *That he considered not his owne 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 perswaded that what hee had promised, hee was able also to performe*; Why? This is the right course to elicit, or draw out our beleeving: We must not consider our selves, but wee must consider him who promiseth: Our reasons of beleeving must be found in him alone on whom we are to beleeve.

Rom. 4. 20

ver. 19

ver. 21

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 beleieve that good. Besides the goodnesse in them which respectively answers our conditions, and the presenting of that goodnesse unto us by way of gift, there is all reason conjoynd with these, to affect our hearts to lay hold on them, namely,

1 A graciousnesse, 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 goodnesse is gone out of his lips.

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

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 worthinesse 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 beleeve on them, and he shall confesse, 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 beleeving in and from your selves, it cannot be that ever your hearts should be free from doubtings ; If either you make your owne worthinesse the cause of beleeving, you shall never come to beleeve : This were not to receive

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 seeth 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 beleeve, 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, saith the Prophet, and he that hath no money : 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.

Isa. 55. 1

4 Another thing which I would commend also to doubting Christians in this case, shall be this: Take some solid paines to cleare your entrance into Covenant with God; thereby you shall cleare your interest in all particular promises upon your occasions.

There is a gracious Covenant (spoken of in the Scripture) twixt God and his people: Hee 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 mutuall acceptation; then the Lord estates 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 entred into a Covenant, Thou art my God, and none else, my heart is thine, my

Jer. 31. 33.
32. 38.
Eze. 36. 28
Hos. 2. 23
Heb. 8. 10

life shall be thine, &c. The Lord saith 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.

If this
door were
unlocked,
all the
roomes
would ea-
sily bee
scene.

I assure thee, O Christian, if this were once out of doubt, that thou and God were entred 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 lyest. *All are yours, and yee are Christs, 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 remember 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

*Luthers
speech.*

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 Chri-
 stian, *Christum habeo*, I have a
 Christ. O Christian, if thou didst
 looke more on thy Christ, thou
 mightst looke more on the Pro-
 mises: When wilt thou remem-
 ber, that as there is no com-
 fortable looking on God with-
 out a Christ, so there will be
 no confident looking on the
 Promises of God without a
 Christ?

No look-
 ing on the
 Promises
 without a
 Christ.

Christ Jesus is thy *Jacobs* lad-
 der, thy prayers get up by him,
 and Gods Promises come downe
 by him: *All the promises of God are*
Yea and Amen in him, 2 Cor. 1. 20.

There was a Book in the Re-
 velation which none of the El-
 ders and Worthies could open,
 but yet the Lambe could open it:

The Promises are a precious Booke, every lease drops myrrhe and mercy, yet the weak Christian cannot open it, nāy hee is afraid to open it, and to read his portion there: Neverthelesse thy Christ can open the Promises for thee, and by thy Christ as thou mayst finde a way for heaven hereafter, 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 receivedst 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-

leeve? Thou seest the worth
 of the commodity, but stickest
 at the price. Did my Father ever
 sell grace or mercy to any upon
 the price of their owne worthi-
 nesse? How canst thou imagine
 him to answer thee in justice, who
 yet deals with thee upon pro-
 mises? And if worthinesse must
 be found, tell me, Who am I?
 Is 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
 by my person, I have made God
 himselfe to bee thine, and there-
 fore his Promises to be thine.

If thou thinkest that God will
 part from his word, O thou erre-
 st. His Promise is made with Good-
 nesse, is sealed with Truth, and
 ratified with my blood.

If thou thinkest it is an inex-
 orable and deafe eare to thy
 prayers, yet consider, it is al-
 wayes an open and plyable eare
 to my merits. Come then, I once
 gave my selfe for thee, and since

resolved.

Here now consider.

I 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 graciousnesse as before, in that lovingnesse, 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 hee 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 Gods 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

resolved.

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with

The doubling 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 heavinesse of heart) that hee had forgotten to be gracious.

2. Neverthelesse in the times of such suspension, it is an error, and a dangerous error, a fruitlesse 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 wayes 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 finnes, which
in-

indeed are as a thicke cloud to hold up the blessed light of Gods 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 *Davids* two great sinnes 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 hee did so earnestly desire to be restored, *Psal.*

51. 11, 12.

2 Remifnesse 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

and calls in the sensible light o his countenance : As a fathe doth alter the set of his looks to wards his childe, who is wanto upon his love, and lets down the diligence of his just obser vance and duty.

See this in Cant. 5.2. *Open to me (saith Christ) my sister, my love my dove, my undefiled.* Here was a gracious intreaty, and full o wooing compellations : What doth the Church now ? Surely she stirs, she riseth, she runneth she easily imbraceth these calls o Christ ; No, vers. 3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on ? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them ?* What is this ? She was carelesse, negligent, full of excuses, so those phrases import, o putting off the coat : For as the keeping on of cloaths was a signe of care and watchfulnesse, [*Nehem. 4.23.*] so the putting them off was a signe of drowziness, 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 delayes; all which did spring from an acquired sluggishnesse and remittnesse of spirit.

Now marke 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 shee 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.

Here

Here you see, that carelesnesse of duty causeth absence of favour : And when men are negligent in the entertainments of the meanes 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, will you say?

I answer :

1 Be affected for the losse; ever 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 sounded rumbled, made a troublous noise. What doe these words intimate but an eminent disquietnesse an hearty sorrow for so great a losse, springing from so great remisnesse? I say an eminent disquietnesse; For where bowels are mentioned, there an eminent degree 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 childe, or of most sorrowfull affliction, as here.

Nay, so great was this sorrow and bewailment, that *vers. 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 Christs 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 griefe 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,

ings, how much more should the bowels be doubled, and the measures of griefe and repentance be swelled, when the suspension of Gods 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 foule iniquities.

Yet if wee can humbly and throughly bemoane our losse, and repent of our sinnes, we shall behold the Lord in mercy and love againe. David could not but yeeld out the countenance of his favour to *Absolom*, 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;

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; *Psa. 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, *Plal. 36. 9.* With thee is the fountaine of life, and in thy light shall we see light. *g. d.* Lord, thou hast comfort and favour enough, thy favour indeed is life, the very fountaine of it, and in the light of thy pathes shall the sonnes 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,

Pla. 17. 15
I will be-
hold thy
face in up-
rightnesse.
Note.

wayes, 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 veine 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, *Esa. 64. 5.* *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy wayes. Walke thou towards God in uprightness, and God will walke 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.*

There-

Therefore let us cast about, not only for our generall, 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 yee 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 herselfe, and say, *Rabboni.* So may it, and so doth it oft-times fall out with us, in our seekings of Gods favour,

favour, The Lord doth meet
and shew himselfe, with his lo-
ving countenance, in his Ord-
nances : For these Ordinances of
God, they are the Exchange, the
heavenly Exchange twixt God
and his people, wherein they pre-
sent 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 !* have returned
with Psalms of joy, *The Lord is my
God, and my Father, I will praise thee.
O Lord my God.*

2 Seeke it by prayers. How a-
bundant is *David* in this kind
Psal. 106. 4. *Remember me, O Lord
with the favour that thou bearest un-
to thy people, O visit me with thy salvari-
on.* 5. *That I may see the good of thine
chosen.* So Psal. 31. 16. *Make thine
face to shine upon thy servant.* So Psal.
4. 6. *Lord, lift thou up the light of thine
countenance upon us : For God hath
promised his favour, and there-
fore his people may seek his fa-
vour. Nay, he hath commanded hi*

people to seeke his favour, and therefore they should seek it. See *Sal. 27. 8.* Thou saidst, *Seek yee my face,* My heart said unto me, *Thy face (Lord) will I seek.* It is an unadvised folly in the suspension of Gods favour, to unsonne our selves, and unpeople our selves, (i. e.) to deny that grace and spirituall relation twixt us and God. This is not the way to gain favour, for when wee have undone our relations of children, we exclude our selves from the expectations of favour; No, the wisest and surest way is to seeke the renewing of Gods loving countenance, and say as *David,* *Lord, thou hast hid thy face, and I am troubled,* yet thou biddest me to seek thy face, and, *Thy face (Lord) will I seek :* Nay I doe seeke 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 ; therefore, Lord, *Make thy face to shine,*
and

and behold me againe, 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.

Two things to be remembered in our seeking of Gods favour.

I. When you seek the light of Gods countenance, doe not blind your eyes; Remember still, that a man who will shut his eyes, shall hardly finde: Now nothing can see Gods 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 alwayes see God, and the reflexive, will at length see God to be my God. When thou comest unto him thus, Lord, I doe need, I doe prize, I doe 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.

the Heavens to open ; you must use the key, as well as the hands, if you will come in and see the rooms : Our hands of Prayer must use the key of Faith, if we 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 feekest, 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, saith he, in vers. 6. of that Psalm, *my soule is cast downe within me* (no question but for the absence of Gods favour, verse 7.

My rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? therefore (saith he) will I remember thee. Remember him, O David. What encouragements so to doe. 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 vers. 8. Yet the Lord will command his loving kindnesse in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

q. d. It is true, these afflictions and sorrows are upon me, and God seems to forget me for present, yet I will remember him, I know hee thinkes on me, he hath loving kindnesse, 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 seeke him, for his loving kindnesse, I will remember him.

Ob. But how may one support himselfe

selfe in the interim of this suspension of divine favour? Can one be good, who is thus? Or will God doe good, or doth hee thinke any good of such a one?

How to support our selves in the interim.

I answer, you may support your selves thus: *Sol.*

1 By remembring the dayes of old, Psal. 77. 7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? 9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? This is mine infirmity. g.d. For me thus to conclude, that God will not be favourable and gracious unto me, because I feele him not so, this is my weaknesse, and sinfull error: But how then will you support your selfe? See vers. 10. I will remember the yeeres of the right hand of the most High, 11. I will remember thy wonders of old. And assuredly the remembrance of what God hath done, is able to support us with a confident expectation of what God will yet doe for us.*

I had his favour once, and am in it still, and shall have it againe.

If wee remember the dayes of

old, the method of Gods 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 happinesse 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 freenesse 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 thinks 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 layes 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 alwayes wee see it not.

3 Thou shalt have favour, though now it bee drawne 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 kin-*
 N 3 *nesse*

nesse will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

Therefore the Church elegantly, Micah 7.8. *Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darknesse, the Lord shall bee a light unto mee.* 9 *He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.* Remember this one thing, Upright, and beleeying persons have alwayes a favourable God, though they have not alwayes the sense of Gods favour; yea though Satan doe testifie 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 Satans testimony about our spirituall 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 Satans testimony is ever directly
or

or obliquely against the truth and comfort of our spirituall estate.

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

I The finall tryall of our eternall estate doth immediately and solely appertaine to the Court of heaven. Indeed the disquisitive part belongs to us, but the decisive part belongs to God : Wee ought to search and prove our selves, 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. A twofold triall of a mans estate.

No subject you know hath this power, to release or binde of himself, but that is the royall prerogative of the King. It is true, if the Word condemne us, then our consciences may doe so.

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.*

Satans
judging is
but usur-
ped.

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 witnesse and judge: And wee may say to him truly, what the Pharisees proudly objected to Christ, *By what authority doth hee 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 unfit for him to decide it; and therefore though he usurps a judgement upon Christians, yet as David spake in another case,

Thou

Thou Lord wilt not leave the righteous when he 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 condition, who dares give in false evidence before God himselfe of Job, and who is said to accuse the brethren before God day and night?

2 No testimony is to bee admitted, 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 usurped, and our owne is oft times erroneous, as in wicked and presumptuous sinners, who sentence well for their safety, although God doth proclaime and pronounce bitter woes unto them.

All judgement of our states being contrary to the Word, is false.

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

times of distresse, suspicuous and hasty : We doe not testifie of our selves 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 Maintaine the judgement of the Word, against all judgement when a man hath thoroughly viewed and pierced into the secrets of his heart and wayes, by the informing light of Gods blessed Spirit, and takes his flesh and spirit asunder, I meane his sins, weakneses, graces and dispositions, and layes 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 soule, 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 eternall salvation; and in case of opposite verdict and testimony, not to molest himselfe with reasoning and doubting, but to preserve the authority of Gods testimony, by beleeving, 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
spiri-

spirituall condition. Now consider,

Five times. 1 There are five times when we
in which and our sins doe meet.

former sins 1 One is the day of our legall
may revive humiliation, when the Law, like
searching Physick, enters deeper,
stirs up the evil humour, casts our
sins into our very faces, and sets
them in order before us, and re-
proves us for them, with undeniable conviction and hor-
rour.

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, teares away our
joyes, crosseth us in our aime
and we see God hewing our
friends from us, our children from
us, our earthly delights and con-
tents : for miserable evils are of
times a cause to make us see our
sinfull evils : We doe many times
come to perceive our faults, by
our punishments : As Pharaoh did
when the plagues were on him,
have done evill in not listening the peo-

goe : And *Balaam*, when he saw the Angel, and heard him threatning, *I will now returne* : And so the children of *Israel*, then saw, and confess their murmuring, and stubbornnesse, when God sent evill Angels amongst them, (*i. e.*) some messengers of his wrath and displeasure.

3 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
feare.

feare lest that judiciall botch should have broken in upon your bodies and houses.

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

This time of meeting, evidently manifests it selfe 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 sicknesse and weaknesse.

5 A last time of meeting is, the day of Judgement; and this is a most certaine and infallible time; It is possible for a man to escape the legall meeting, by conviction; and the miserable meeting, by
am'cl'p

afflictions, judgements, and death it selfe; (for some dye like *Nabal*, 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 bee 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.

Divers causes of sins rising afresh.

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 asunder of soule 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 expresly revives and remembers them in all the acting circumstances, which the sinning person either had, or would have buried in silence and forgetfulnesse.

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 sting of the old guilt; for relapses 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 againe; 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 then we doe voluntarily looke back upon our former accounts, 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.

Though we may not revive sinne to practise it, yet we may to mourne for it.

3 On Satans part, who like an envious and malicious wretch never gives over to throw unto us our errorrs 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,

could, to) despaire our hearts with the fresh memory of former and forsaken sins ; so that we seldome or never lay hand on a blessed promise , or gaine our selves 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 goe 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.

The ends of reviving of sin. Consider therefore, on Gods part , there are severall ends in respect of severall persons why he brings on the sinne againe.

I To make the ground-work more deep and sure : Wee make our tents too short for our wounds

ounds ; We sin much, and defile
ur selves much, and we thinke
hat a little washing will serve
he turne. O ! this businesse of
elfe triall, of laying the axe to
he root of the tree, of diving
into the secrets of sin, of applying
the corrasives unto the core and
heart of our natures, this goes a-
gainst us, we are quickly weary
of it.

Indeed, some trouble, and some
bitternesse we grant to be conve-
nient ; but to be still accusing our
selves before God, stil 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 bo-
dies : O now some Physicke were
good, they finde such aches, such
distempers, surely some Physicke
were good ; and some they take,
which makes them excessively sick ;
but then away with it, no more
physick : yet at length the disease
comes upon them againe, and the
Phyfi-

Physician prescribes more physick, even that which must goe to the root of the disease, which though it makes them more sicke, yet it procures their safety, and better health.

Beloved, God would have men (perhaps) a longer space to sit upon their sins; they stint themselves after great finnes, and make themselves friends with God presently. Now the Lord knows that this skinning of the sore will spoil all, & therefore after a short time he returns 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, and ill set, he breaks it againe, that may be well set.

So doth the Lord, he breaks our soules againe with the guilt 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 not make a reall & lasting peace with

at a sound & solid humiliation.
And truly this is the great mercy of his wisdom to work thus ; or hereby he makes our foundation low, and sure, and hereby he prevents subsequent stirres, 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 easie, 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 againe, 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 waies, and actions ; they shall not so easily
come

come off from their accused transgressions; the Lord will hold up the comfortable answers 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 fitt for Christ.

And that we might bestow our tears, & not our tongues on others sinning.

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

For this reduction of former guilt, it gives up unto us our base and treacherous natures, and the births of our owne hearts; Ah! saith such a person, this heart, this nature of mine, what was it? what is it, if the Lord leave it? See hère the grapes the soure 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 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 *Dauids* phrase, and how brutish we were, that is *Solomons* phrase.

Our present graces make us good, and the sense of former sins keeps us humble

3 To make us more carefull:
For the sharp remembrance of sin.

Remem-
bring the
gall and
the worm-
wood.
Lam. 3.

fin doth in a godly heart worke stronger detestation, and stronger watchfulnesse : 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 againe ? saith 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 acquittance 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 pres-
sings

resolved.

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: firmer 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 alwayes 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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The doubting Christian

miserable, but because thereby they should be made thankfull. 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 wil 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 thanke him, I would speake good of his name, I would say, *Who is a God like him, that forgiveth*

resolved.

*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 forgetfulnesse. 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 cast 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 our selves for our part

be the cause of reviving of former guilt, and sting of former sins?

I answer, If it be by way of humiliation, to seek the pardon, and to make confession to the God of mercy, and to get victory over them, this should no way discourage 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.

Sol.

But if it be by way of commitment, either by relapsing into the same sins, or multiplying of sinne in another kinde (both which will dig up again our buried and forepast guilts) then I know no way of peace and safety, no way to allay these renewed accusations and stings, but by renewed sorrow and repentance. And verily what I delivered unto you heretofore about recovery from relapsing, that is the course presently 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 bitterneſſe of griefe, the art of ſelfe-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, ſhuffe off, cut to thy ſelfe a peace, thou ſhalt never have it; thy ſinnes ſhall ever and anon gall, and vex, and wound thee, until thou haſt renewed thy bitterneſſe, of moſt humbled ſorrow for renewing of thy filthineſſe and baſeneſſe of thy audacious ſinning.

But then ſuppoſe, that Satan *Ob.* 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 *Sol.* things:

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 errours and failings amongst men; a friend, he revives them that you may be bettered, either to reforme, if the thing be evill, or to bee circumspect 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,

How to
know
whether
Satan re-
vives for-
mer sins

finns, 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, doe 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 allayments and cessations of stinging guilt, which they observe in themselves, by their furiousnesse, constant, and hardening revolutions.

O 4

tions, or exercise of the same sins.

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 guilts 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 do 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.

Thy case
is not wic-
ked, be-
cause a

2 Beleeve not a malicious accu-
ser : Satan doth oft-times serve :
Writ in the Kings name, without
the Kings seale ; he forgives where

Goe

God doth not, and he binds where
God hath released : And this
know, *It is God that justifieth, who*
then shal condemn? If the King him-
self hath pardoned thee, how un-
just is, it, for the under-officer to
arrest and challenge?

wicked
Devill
saith so.

3. But in case of frequent in-
quietations, when Satan will not
be answered, but still chargeth,
now make thine appeale from
him to God; and if hee 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 (saith Sa-
tan) and thy Judge doth know
the truth of this indictment. I
have (Satan) I confesse 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 my
selfe, my seekings of mercy and
grace? Lord thou hast known it,

The Chri-
stian must
appeale.

and hast known my soul with thy pardoning and accepting mercy.

4 Rest the soul, and fasten it unto the bloud of Christ, which will alwayes cry downe the testimonies and clamours of guilt; Nothing but that will satisfie God, and vanquish Satan; and then by faith, not only lay hand on mercy, but hold out the stability 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, wil (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 doubtings, observe these particulars in a word.

1 The speech of Conscience, what that is.

2 The speechlesnesse of Conscience, what and how.

3 To make Conscience speake againe

again, what required.

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

1 The speech of Conscience: The speech of conscience, what
 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 naturall 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, acquiting us against all feares and objections that we are the sons of God, that we are truly changed, that we sincerely love him, beleeve in Christ, and walke before him ; for really the voyce of Conscience is but the eccho of the voyce of the Word, and saith that unto us touching our particular, what the Word delivers in the generall. Its voyce is but the Assumption, and the voyce of the Word.

Word is but the Proposition: The Word saith, that should be; and Conscience saith, 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.

The
speechles-
nesse of
conscience
what it is.

2 The speechlesnesse, or silence of Conscience, is the suspension of its determining and acquiting acts touching our estate in generall, or touching some particular doubts: Sometimes Conscience calls upon us, and sometimes we call upon conscience. In matters of direction to practise 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 uprightnesse 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

condition is questioned, but cannot be issued, because conscience holds up, and doth not testifie for us by any sensible approbation and acquittance, which is caused diversly

1 Sometimes through particular mis-behaviours against the directing voyce of conscience, these hold in the acquitting voyce of conscience, for conscience will not speake for us, if we presume to sin against it. Silence in conscience diversly caused.

2 Sometimes through disregard to the voyce 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 then conscience, and that wee might know there is a higher Court to which wee must make our addresses.

4. Some

4 Sometimes Conscience is silent, to make us see upon what bottomes our faith is grounded, whether we can beleewe, because God saith, as well as rejoyce, 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;

The waies
to recover
conscience
to speech
again.

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 imbrace 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

give thee the testimony of his own Spirit, which will draw with it againe the testimony of thine own conscience, *Rom. 8, 16.*

2 Speak to duty : Be sure thou doe not displease Conscience : If thou hast, repent, and adde 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 thy selfe, if

1 The VVord 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 alwayes open and speaking) if it acquits thee, Conscience (though now silent, whensoever it speakes) will cleare thee.

2 Thou hast and dost approve the VVord : How is that ? That is, If the VVord bee thy rule, thy light,

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 answerablenesse to the directions of the VVord.

*An Addition of foure other causes of
Doubtings, with a briefer resolution of them.*

SINCE of sinfull workings. O !
Sfaith a distressed soule, Certainly my condition is starke naught, and I have no right to Christ, nor to any mercy, I may not beleeeve: VVhy? 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.

303.

To a soule in such a condicion, I
would

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

I VVhen grace comes in truth, it is ever of that power to make such discoveries, and to raise such stirrs, as the soule never felt before; for Grace is a new nature, and a new light, and a new active principle. It is put into the soule 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 marvell at the strange workings. VVhen 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 soule, it is not with that soul as in old times. There is that now false in, which must purge thee, and rule thee.

2 If good be wrought, evil wil 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 soule either by a finall and totall cessation of sinne, that there were no sin residing in the soule, into the which grace comes, then thou shouldst feele no stir at all : Thus it shall be in Heaven ; Grace there shall be alone ; Holinesse, and nothing but holinesse 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 soule by a peaceable resignation, if sinfull 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 do good; that would pray, this would not; that would mourne, this would not; that would beleve, 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 in me.* Rom. 7. 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, yee

Gal. 5. 17. could not doe the good which we would; he yet comforteth them in such a condition in the next words, If

Verf. 18. 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 courses 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 condemne that hardnesse which hinders thee from

from mourning, and sheddest many a teare 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 unbeleeving 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 evill 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 beleeving.

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

of God, though with the flesh the law of sin) and sets his faith to work, vers. 24. *Who shall deliver me?* v. 25: *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Marke his practise: This is my condition, I feel rebellious lusts, yea I feel them sometimes captivating of mee, what course shall I now take to be delivered of them? to vanquish them? I conflict with them, but I cannot conquer 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 vilenesse 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
work

works of sin and Satan.

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

This is a notable case, and needs a wary and circumspect resolution: Nevertheless 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
on

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 cryed out, *What shall we do?* felt the wrath of God.

Secondly, such as are unquestionably good; of whom some have felt Gods 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 Gods face hid from him for it, and his moisture turned into the drought of summer.

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

1 Some feel the wrath of God and are either onely intraged against God with blasphemies, or intraging their hearts the more to

resolved.

goe on in sinning against God, thinking at least by the pleasure of sinne to drowne the sense of wrath, or running into absolute despaire of Gods mercy; and therefore never attempting any course of repentance, because they give up all hope of mercy. Where there is such a sense of wrath as this, in all respects, and for ever, the condition is very fearfull,

2 Some feel the wrath of God, and are hereupon (occasionally) induced either to the study and care of a holy reformation of their sinfull hearts and wayes, or to a particular restoration of themselves from grosse sins into which they are fallen, and for which now they feelee the sore displeasure of an angry Father.

If thy condition be either of these, that thou feelest wrath, and that hath driven thee to a search of thy naturall estate, and to the discovery of it, and to an humbling for it, and to all the meanes

P by

by which thou mayest be delivered as well (and rather) from thy sinfulness, as from Gods wrath; or if this wrath felt awakens 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 beleeve on mercy; yea though thou as yet feelest wrath, yet mayest thou beleeve 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 *Esa.* 55.7. *Ezek.* 18.21,22. *Hos.* 14.1,2,4.

3 Though mercy be thy portion, yet know thou, that the sense of wrath will not off, untill thou dost beleeve 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 beleeving thou shalt in due time feele 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 tels me of my sinnings, and of wonderfull sinfulness within me; and God is greater then my conscience who will assuredly condemne me; O I may not beleeve.

This seems to be a knotty case, Whether a person may beleeve Gods absolving of him, though

Conscience in him bee condemning? I will deliver my opinion thus:

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

1 A mans actions; Or,

2 His person.

1 A mans actions are condemned by Conscience, when Conscience being rightly enlightened and informed by the Word of God, pronounceth of them that they are evill, and damnable, that they are contrary to Gods holinesse and glory, and therefore are to be abhorred, and crucified, and forsaken.

2 A mans 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 me in two Conclusion

clusions answerable to these two Propositions :

1 If Conscience condemns thy person, I confesse thou hast no reason to beleave 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 condemne thee.

2 If Conscience condemnes thy actions onely, then thou mayest, notwithstanding that condemnation, beleave 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 condemne these to bee vile; and most fit to be crucified; abhorred; and forsaken; this condemnation hinders not the right

of believing : Nay, no man indeed should beleve, unlesse his conscience doth condemne sinne in him ; not onely shew him his finnes, but assure him that they are evill, and unworthy his love; nay most worthy of his detestation and mortification.

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

1. Some are open and free; Hee is himselfe, and besides that, hee heares both parties, as well what is for himselfe, as what is against himselfe ; yea and weighs matters in controversie in the right ballance of Gods Sanctuary, not in Satans ballance of cunning suggestions. Will conscience condemne 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.

ned, either with melancholy, or afflictions, or temptations, wherein 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 conscience may condemne thee, but this is an illegall sentence, it is a corrupted judgement, and is reversible; God will not judge of thee, as Conscience in such a case doth; Nay he wil repeale it, and disannull 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 inducement to credit this, is, a sinning against cleare knowledge, which is one ingredient in that sinne, Now this is my condition, saith a

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 intrahled, I would wish that such a person would first be informed; Secondly, be directed.

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

First, that the sinne against the Holy Ghost, is not any sinne which a man commits through ignorance: Whatsoever the sinne or sinnes have beene, (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 blindnesse and ignorance, if there is a nescience of the fact; if hee knowes not what he doth, this ignorance priviledgeth the sinnings thus far, that

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 doctrines, nay a persecuting of them, and of the professours of them, yet if these acts of opposition depend totally on error in the judgement, on a judgement mis-perswaded (*i.e.*) rather beleev'ing them not to bee truths, rather thinking those wayes to bee false wayes; I say this mis-beliefe preserves such sinnings yet from being sins against the Holy Ghost, ^{1 Tim. 1. 13} 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 reciprocall 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 sinning 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 *Peters* case against his knowledge denying and forswearing his Master. If *Paul* before his conversion had had *Peters* knowledge, he had sinned this sinne against the Holy Ghost; And if *Peter* in his deniall had had *Pauls* malice joyned with his knowledge, hee 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.

four mis-led the one, and sudden feare surprised the other.

Fourthly, there are three horrible sinnings which doe attend that sin against the holy Ghost; and the Scripture (which wee were best exceeding warily to follow in resolving this case) expressly delivers them.

1 One is, totall Apostasie from the truths of Jesus Christ knowne and tasted. The truths of Christ must 1. be known and apprehended, 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 totall fall, not a falling in the way, but a falling from the way of truth, *Heb. 6. 4. If they were once enlightened and tasted, &c. If, ver. 6. they shall fall away.*

2 A second is, a malicious opugnation of that truth which was once known and tasted, and from which now the person is false, called *Heb. 6. 6. A crucifying of*

And despising the spirit of Grace.

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, finall impenitencie. Whofoever sins the sin against the holy Ghost, he neither doth repent, nor can repent: He is finally and for ever forsaken of God, and given up to a reprobate sense, and a seared Conscience that hee cannot repent; though (perhaps) he may see his course be evill, yet it is impossible (saith the Apostle in Heb. 6. 6.) to renew him to repentance.

F I N I S.
