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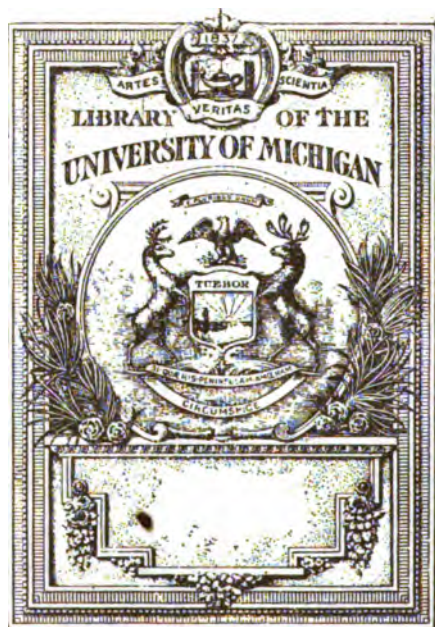
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THE
Humbled sinner
RESOLVED

What he should do to be Saved.

OR

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the only way
of salvation for sensible sinners.

DISCOVERING

The quality, object, acts, seat, subject, inseparable
concomitants and degrees of justifying faith.

The agreement and difference of a strong and weak faith; the
difficulty of beleeving, the facility of mistake about it,
and the misery of unbelief. The nature of living by faith,
and the improvement of it to a full Assurance.

Wherein several Cases are Resolved, and Objections Answered.

By *Obadiah Sedgwick*, Batchelour in Divinity and
late Minister of the Gospel in *Covent Garden*.

Matth. 11. 28.

*Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give
you rest.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by T. R. & E. M. for *Admiral Byfield* at the Bible in
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Thin

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English - H.

2-7-1923



To The
RIGHT HONOURABLE
William
EARLE of
BEDFORD

Barron of *Tbornangb.*



Badiab Sedgwick, in Testimony of his real thankfulnesse for all his singular Respect unto him, and great encouragement in the work of the Ministry in *Covent-Garden*, and of his Pious care in settling so able and faithful a successour to carry on the work of the Gospel in the said place. Presenteth this ensuing Treatise.

417301



TO THE
Reader.

Christian Reader,

I*t is sufficient commendation to the ensuing Treatise to let thee know, that it was Written and compleated by Mr. Obadiah Sedgwick in the time of his health. It hath now pleased God by sicknesse to disenable him for publick service in the way of preaching, and if by Printing that he hath formerly preached, he may become further useful to the Church of Christ, as it will be much comfort to him, so I doubt not but it will be matter of much rejoycing, and great benefit unto many others. These Sermons handle the doctrine of justifying faith, and if they shall prove instrumental, either to work or increase faith in thee, Let God have the glory, and the Author thy fervent prayers for his recovery.*

Thy Servant in the
work of Christ,

EDM. CALAMT.

To the READER.

Good Reader,



His Treatise commendeth it self to thy acceptance upon a *double account*, the one is the *known worth of the Author*; the other is the great usefulness of the *subject matter*: The Authour is Mr. Obadiah Sedgwick, no *novice* in the things of God, but one that for a long time, both *beyond the seas*, and *at home*, in *City* and in *Countrey*, hath kept up the vigour of a convincing Ministry, which the Lord hath abundantly prospered to the converting of some, and building up of others, and no doubt to the *conviction* of many more, who *shall one day know that a Prophet of the Lord hath been amongst them*: Besides, one of an *exemplary godlinesse*, and *long experience* in the ways of God; of whose *excellent spirit* the world hath had a sufficient taste in those *choise Treatises* that are already published under his name; certainly from such an *able head*, and *holy heart*, nothing can be expected that is *cheap* and *mean*.

'Tis a losse, a losse that cannot enough be bewailed, that so eminent and useful an instrument, is now by *bodily weaknesse*, and *prevailing indispositions*, taken off from his publick Ministerial labours: there is no murmuring against the hand of God, but the waiting of the *old stock* of our able Ministers should be more laid to heart; alas we that are to succeed in the Lords work (I am sure I can accuse one) with what a *weak* and *unequal pace* do we follow their *great examples*? and being too too early by the removal of such choise instruments, put upon publick services, no wonder if we faint under the burden.

'Tis some recompense for this losse, that this worthy servant of God is yet alive, not only to *honour his own Ministry* (which was most *consolatory*) by his private discourses, full of *faith* and *spirit*, and *patient*, yea, *cheerful submission* to the Will of God concerning him; but also to single out such Treatises of his own, as may be of most use to publick benefit and edification.

The

7-22-40

Recd. M.P.

To the Reader.

The other reason is the *usefulness* of the *subject matter*. Of all *graces* *faith* is the chiefest, of the most *universal* and *constant* influence on the spiritual life; we *work* by *love*, but we *live* by *faith*; in the chaine of graces described, 2 *Per.* 1 5, 6, 7. the first link is *faith*, as giving *strength* and *efficacy* to all the rest; what is the grace that yieldeth the Lord the glory of his *mercy*, *veracity* and *power*, but *faith*? it honoureth God more then an *unfirmed* entire obedience to the whole moral Law in innocency could possibly have done, and pleaseth him more then he was displeased with the *sin* of *Adam*; All graces keep time and pace with *faith*, if *faith* be weak, *love* cannot be strong, nor obedience carried on in an *eventow*, the back of *patience* will soon be broken, and *temperance* exercise but a weak and feeble restraint on our lusts and passions, till we learn to counter-balance *present delights* with *future enjoyments*. *Faith* is the eye of the soul to see things to come, and the *hand* of the soul, to receive Jesus Christ, and all benefits in him: *Faith*, — But I will not digresse into the common place, certainly no Treatise of *Faith* can be unwelcome to a gracious heart, especially such an one as this is; where matters are carried on with such *evidence* and *demonstration* of the *spirit*, and as to the *style*, with a *sweet* *elegancy*, and yet tempered with *gravity* and *judgement*.

I could speak more, but to avoid suspicion of *partiality*, and *private affection* to my worthy *Predecessour* and *Father*: I shall only adde this, 'twere pity that so excellent a Treatise should come forth in an age pestred with such a throng of *needlesse Writers*, but that it is likely to be found out by its *own lustre* and *brightness*, like a sparkling diamond among an heap of pibbles and common stones; The Lord continue the life of, and (if it be his gracious will) restore so much of strength to the *Author*, that he may increase the Churches treasure by publishing those excellent Discourses concerning the *Covenant of grace*, and other such like spiritual arguments, which he hath in store by him. Reader, I am

Thine in all Christian offices,

THO. MANTON.



The Contents of the Chapters and Sections.

C hap. 1. <i>The dependance of the words.</i>	p. 1
Chap. 2. <i>The words opened with the severall doctrines.</i>	p. 4
§. 1. <i>Change of heart breeds change of estimation towards the Ministers of the Gospel.</i>	p. 5
§. 2. <i>Sensible sinners are ever inquisitive.</i>	p. 8
§. 3. <i>The main and choise thing the troubled soul looks after, is how to save it self.</i>	p. 6
§. 4. <i>Persons rightly sensible are as strongly resolved for the means and wayes, as for the end and scope.</i>	p. 9
§. 5. <i>When God doth strongly work upon mens consciences, personal injuriousness must be forgotten by them who are to deal with them.</i>	p. 10
§. 6. <i>Troubled souls must be directed to Christ.</i>	p. 12
Chap. 3. <i>Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the only way to salvation.</i>	p. 13
§. 1. <i>What Jesus signifies, and what kinde of Saviour Christ is.</i>	p. 14
§. 2. <i>What Christ signifieth, and of his anointing.</i>	p. 18
§. 3. <i>Unto what Christ was anointed, and of his office of a Priest.</i>	p. 20
§. 4. <i>Christ anointed to be a Prophet.</i>	p. 26
§. 5. <i>Christ anointed to be a King.</i>	p. 27
Chap. 4. <i>What believing in the Lord Jesus Christ doth import.</i>	p. 29
Chap. 5. <i>Faith in Christ described.</i>	p. 32
§. 1. <i>The spring or fountaine of faith.</i>	p. 32
§. 2. <i>The Subject of faith.</i>	p. 34
§. 3. <i>The seat or habitation of faith.</i>	p. 35
§. 4. <i>The proper and genuine act of faith.</i>	p. 37
Chap. 6. <i>The object of justifying faith.</i>	p. 40
§. 1. <i>The immediate object of faith.</i>	p. 41
§. 2. <i>The adequate and proper object of faith.</i>	p. 41
§. 3. <i>How faith doth exercise it self about whole Christ.</i>	p. 43
	§. 4.

The Contents.

§. 4. What is the exercise of faith in Christ as a Saviour, King, Prophet, Lord.	p.45
§. 5. Five particulars about taking and receiving Christ as a Lord and Saviour.	p.46
§. 6. The consequent object of faith, remission of sins and righteousness, and how faith is conversant about remission of sins.	p.48
§. 7. How faith looks on Christ for righteousness.	p.50
Chap. 7. How it may appear, that to believe in Christ is the only way to be saved. Where are some particulars premised.	p.52
§. 1. The Argument for the confirmation of the Doctrine.	p.55
§. 2. The second Argument.	p.62
§. 3. The third Argument.	p.63
§. 4. The fourth Argument.	p.63
§. 5. The fifth Argument.	p.64
Chap. 8. Conjectaries from this doctrine, setting out the singular use of preaching and hearing of the Gospel.	p.65
Chap. 9. Our justification to be found only in Jesus Christ.	p.68
§. 1. The word justification explained.	p.69
§. 2. Justification defined and opened.	p.70
§. 3. The person justified is a believing sinner.	p.73
§. 4. The Remission of sinnes belong to justification.	p.74
§. 5. The righteousness of Christ is that by which we are justified.	p.76
§. 6. The justification of a sinner is a gracious and just action.	p.78
Chap. 10. The difficulty of believing.	p.79
Chap. 11. The facility of error and mistake about believing.	p.84
Chap. 12. The sure and dangerous misery of unbelief.	p.87
Chap. 13. Rules for the discovery of faith.	p.90
§. 1. Four things premised for the manner of evidencing of faith.	p.90
§. 2. A true love of Christ an infallible and essential evidence of true faith in Christ.	p.96
§. 3. Inward change and sanctity of the heart an infallible testimony of a living faith.	p.98
§. 4. True faith takes Christ and him only to be its Lord,	p.101
§. 5. Faith makes the heart humble and lowly.	p.103
§. 6. True faith is fruitful.	p.104
§. 7. True faith desires and endeavours after increase.	p.107
§. 8. Faith in Christ and a mournful heart for sin go together.	p.108
	Chap.

The Contents.

Chap. 14. Singular comfort for all true beleevvers.	p.109
§. 1. They are in the way to heaven.	p.110
§. 2. There is areal and blessed exchange betwixt them and Christ.	p.111
§. 3. They are in singular-Covenant with God.	p.114
§. 4. They may now with boldnesse approach the throne of grace.	p.116
Chap. 15. The Agreement and difference of a strong and weak faith.	p.117
§. 1. The habitual unity of true faith, and wherein expressed in four particulars.	p.119
§. 2. The intensive diversities of faith, wherein there is a difference.	p.120
§. 3. Signes of a great and strong faith.	p.125
§. 4. Signes of a weak faith.	p.131
§. 5. Demonstrations of the truth of faith though weak.	p.136
§. 6. The concordance of all faith which is true, whether strong or weak in fundamental comforts.	p.139
§. 7. The inequality of strong and weak faith, in respect of circumstantial comforts, and some other consequences.	p.146
§. 8. Motives to greaten our faith.	p.156
Chap. 16. Exhortation to labour for saving faith.	p.157
§. 1. Motives to get saving faith.	p.158
§. 2. Impediments & hindrances to the getting of saving faith.	p.168
§. 3. Meanes by which God works saving faith.	p.176
§. 4. Objections that kinder from beleevving.	p.184
Chap. 17. Of living by faith.	p.216
§. 1. What it is in the general to live by faith.	p.218
§. 2. To what states of life faith may extend.	p.220
§. 3. What it is to live by faith on Christ.	p.221
§. 4. Arguments to move us to live by faith.	p.229
Chap. 18. The improvement of faith to a full assurance.	p.259
§. 1. What the Assurance of faith is.	p.260
§. 2. Whether such an assurance may be had.	p.265
§. 3. Whether every beleever should strive to the assurance of faith.	p.267
§. 4. Arguments to move beleevvers to labour for assurance of faith.	p.269
§. 5. By what means the soul may get up to this assurance.	p.280.
CHAP.	



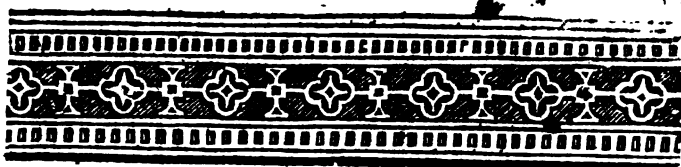
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EDM. CALAMY.

Febr. 27.

1655.





The humble sinner resolved what he should do to be saved.

Acts 16. 30, 31.

Sirs ! What must I do to be saved.

*And they said, believe on the Lord Iesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

CHAP. I.

The Dependence of the words.



Paul and Silas (on their journey) make a step to Philippi, a chiefe City in Macedonia, ver. 12. They had a special call for it, ver. 9. Being there the next Sabbath, they apply themselves to Praying and Preaching, ver. 13. and each of these was crowned with a blessed effect.

By the former, *Lydia is converted*, ver. 14, 15. By the latter, the *Devil is dispossessed out of a Damessell*, ver. 16, 18. The Word and Prayer are the great power of God to change the heart and conquer Satan.

But if we trouble the Devil, the Devil will not cease to trouble us. It hath been the lot of the best Ministers, to do most good, and find most affliction. Look but in the 19. ver. and there you shall see *Paul and Silas* caught and drawn before the Rulers.

Good God ! That *Paul* should be questioned because he did cast out a Devil ! But this is not the matter objected, nor the immediate ground of the trouble (*Her Master saw that the hope of their gaines was gone.*) How far will the love of the world thrust a man against Gods servants, even *Paul* himself is brought to the Bar, when he cuts off the gaines which the Devil brought. *Covetous hearts and good Ministers can never agree.* They will rather sell the *Truth* than lose their *Gain*.

But being now before the Magistrate, what is their accusation? What ! That *Paul* and *Silas* did cast out the Devil ? No. That they who were the Masters of the Damocel were impaired and disadvantaged by their Preaching ? No, though this was the ground, yet something else was the Pretence. This would seeme somewhat too base, and therefore they urge against them another allegation, which they knew would easily take, *vers. 20. These being Iews exceedingly trouble our City, and ver. 21. Teach Customes which are not lawfull for us to receive, nor to observe, being Romans.*

As if he said, they are a couple of factious and schymatical fellows, men of a singular spirit, given to innovation, speak strange things of one *Christ*, and of *Believing*, and of *Repenting*, and we know not what.

They need say no more, presently there is an uprore, and without any more ado, right or wrong, they have Justice. *The Magistrates rent their clothes, and command to beate them.* *ver. 22.*

And this is not enough, besides the whip, they must to the Prison, and be kept safe and close, *verse 23.* *Hatred of goodnesse doth many times precipitate evil men to the acts of injustice;* and he who hates a good man, will many times become a bad Judge.

But in the prison and stocks they are, and the layler is as strict to execute, as they unjust to command, *verse 24.* *He did thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.*

A strange Providence is that of God, *Paul* and *Silas* are sent to prison to convert a layler, to unloose him, who bound them, to heale him, who scourged them, God hath some special ends in the times and places of his servants sufferings. Well, at *Mid-*
nights

night Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God, verse 25. No prison can bolt out our Communion with God. Prayer will get up to heaven in despite of all opposition, and even a suffering Christian may be very cheerful.

But now see the consequents of this, their prayers shooke the Heaven, and the Heaven shooke the Earth, so that the foundations of the Prison were shaken, and immediately all the doores were opened, and every ones hands were loosed, ver. 26. I do not marvel that Prayer can breake the bonds of Iron, when I know it is able to break asunder the bonds of death it self.

The Jayler awakes, sees the prison doores open, and for ought he knew, an escape of all his prisoners, for whose lives, probable it is, that he must pay his own, and therefore in a passionate desperatenesse, drawes out his sword to kill himself.

Paul espies him, and cries out with a loud voice, (hold, hold) Do thy self no harme, for we are all here, not a man of us that hath stirred.

Which when he had searched, and found, O, what a strange alteration is in this Jayler, verse 29. He came in trembling. What he who before made them to bleed, doth he now tremble! he that before cast them into the stocks, doth he come trembling to them! What were they, or what could they do, shackled, and scourged, and imprisoned persons, that he trembled before them! But so he did. Scorners will become Tremblers, when God hath once touched their hearts; yet this is not all. He also falls down before them. He is upon his knees to ask them forgiveness, for his cruel usage. And then he brings them forth.

But what of all this. All this may arise from sparks of pitty and humanity.

Nay, but there is a greater matter then all this: Sirs, said he, what shall I do to be saved? (As if he said) I am in a miserable condition, I have lived wickedly, and done wrong to many of the people of God, and in particular to you; Good Lord, what shall become of me; you are the Ministers of Christ, I beseech you have pity on me, and shew unto me what I may do to save this poore soul of mine.

What does Paul, and Silas Answer him? they said, Believe

Object.

Sol.

in the Lord Iesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. And I beseech you marke it, how immediate their answer is to his question; they do not say, as the *Higb Priests* to afflicted *Indas*, *look thou to that*, they do not upbraid him with his hard and cruell usage. They take not that advantage, and say, nay, now doth thy conscience trouble thee for being so wicked, and scourging us so sharply? yea, and so let it; doest thou come for direction and comfort to us, whom thou hast so shamefully abused?

No, they forget the injuries, and presently pour in the Oyl. They instantly direct him into the true way of life, *Believe in the Lord Iesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*. But more of this anon.

I have chosen this text on purpose, that I may proceed to the next article of the Creed (*I believe in Iesus Christ our Lord*) you see it is exprest in the next.

But before I handle it, give me leave to Analyse the words, and to touch upon some singular conclusions, and then I will set down upon the Article it self more fully.



CHAP. II.

The opening of the words with the severall Doctrines in the text.



He words of the text do containe two parts.

A case of Conscience to be propounded by a troubled and trembling sinner: The case is not for another, but for *himself*, *what shall I do*? And not about his Riches, or wealth, or his body, but about his soul: And that not for mee *speculation*, but for *pratticals*, it is a case about his salvation, and about the meanes which he should take to attaine: *Sirs, what shall I do to be saved*?

Secondly

Secondly, *The case fully resolved: (Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,)* As if he said, *Christ is the onely way to Heaven, and faith is the onely way to Christ; God hath given Jesus Christ to sinners, and salvation in him; And whosoever believes in him, shall not perish, but have eternall life.* Now then, believe in him, and you shall be saved. X

There are many conclusions emergent from these words, I will omit most of them, and onely insist on the latter.

Change of heart breeds change of estimation toward the Ministers of the Gospel. The Jayler a little before had a base and unworthy opinion of *Paul and Silas*, but now *Lords, Sirs, what shall I do?* 1.

As the Heart is, so the Judgement is, and *Newness of Nature*; hath with it *Newness of Lights*. We can now see the men and their authority, and their office, and embassage, and the end of all their reproofes, and instructions, and therefore the very feet of *them who bring good tidings, and publish peace and salvation, are beautiful.*

It argues the heart to be base and sordid, which can slight and scorne the Messengers of Christ; he hath no grace, who can contemne and vilifie a Minister of grace. But two things God ever works, when he confers grace; (*viz.*) A *Love of the word of Grace*, and an *Honouring of the Messengers of Peace*.

Sensible sinners are ever inquisitive. Sirs what shall I do? and so, they in *Act. 2. 37. Even they were pricked in their hearts, they cry out, men and brethren what shall we do?* 2.

There are two sorts of sinners.

First, some are *hardned, unsensible*, wholly overgrown with sin, and are *past feeling*, *Eph. 4. 18.* Their sin is in them, like the waters in the Ocean, under all which if a man doth lye, yet he feels no weight nor burden, because the Elements in their proper places are not sensibly weighty: so where sin is in its center, men are unsensible of the burden of it. They seeke it not, nor their misery, and therefore neither complaine nor enquire.

Secondly, others are *made sensible*, not onely by the ordinary

light of a naturall conscience, but by the contrary principle of new and infused Grace: It is with them like as with a man recovering out of a deep sicknesse, his health comes in, and makes him now sensible of his weakness, and complaining, and desiring help. So when God doth by his blessed spirit work the lively sense of sinne in the heart of a person, the basenesse of it, the danger and misery of it. O he cannot now remaine thus, live thus, he must have a guide, he goes to a *Messenger, one of a thousand*, to instruct and direct him.

For first, conscience truly awakned, cannot beare its own burden, its own divisions, feares, accusations, present condition, and therefore the person will enquire whether there be *no balm in Gilead*.

Secondly, againe, sensiblenesse of sin is *Opus respectuum*, it is a work for further work. God doth for this very end make us sensible of our sin and misery, that we might enquire after the meanes of grace and safety.

Thirdly, once more, scarce one sensible sinner of many thousands that is able to be his own Counsellor, or comforter, we are not able always to apply those sweet directions, those proper and heavenly comforts as God promises, to our own necessities, which yet we may distribute with a full and tender heart to others in their exigencies: for there is a great difference betwixt the *proposing of comfort* and the *applying of comfort*. He who is to propose it, hath a medicine to deliver; He who is to apply it, hath a medicine to take. There be many contrary arguments and risings of an unbelieving and fearful nature, in the person who is to apply the *truth*, and *goodness of Gods promise* to himself, so that he is not always able to see the reach, and compasse of them to himself; and therefore no marvel if he seeks out for direction, in the midst of his own confusions, and for a help to apply, in the midst of his own feares and distractions.

3. *The maine and choise thing which the troubled soule looks after, is how to save it selfe. (Sirs, what shall I do so be saved)*

There be divers sorts of troubles, and according to their grounds and qualities, doth every person lay out for help and remedy. Some are troubled with meer *sickness*, and *health* is the thing which they would have. Some with poverty; and riches are

are the things which they would have. Some with ignominy, and favour, and good opinion is the thing which they would have.

Some with outward affliction and punishment; and exemption is the thing which they would have. Remove from me this Plague, only said Pharaoh.

Some are troubled with meer terrors of conscience; and quiet and ease is the thing which they would have.

Others are troubled in soule for their sinnes, by which God is dishonoured, and their heart polluted; now how these may be saved; This is the thing which these would have.

Come to a soul, sensibly groaning under the weight of sinne, and say, why? Soul be of good cheer, thou hast goods laid up for many yeares: Oh sayes that soul, miserable comforters, are they to me, Lord be merciful to me a sinner. Come againe and say, you have many good and kinde friends, Alas saith the soul, friends are Physicians of no value to my troubled and perplexed soul: Lord be merciful to me a sinner. Come to that soul, and discourse to him of the defect of sin, of the richnesse of divine mercy, of the Grace that God hath promised to give, of that sorrow, of that repentance, of that faith, of that blood of Christ; O now sayes that soul, say on, give not over, mercy is that which I would have, and Grace, and Christ, and Salvation, this is it which I would have, how I may be brought out of this miserable and damnable condition. Suppose a man were very sick, and one should come and tell him many merry tales, to delude the sense of his sicknesse, this were nothing to a man sick indeed; for it is not a tale, but wholesome Physick which would help him; he had rather by much heare the Physician discoursing and counselling, and applying. So it is with the truly troubled soul, yea that is it which he desires and would have, to be set in the right way how to save his soul. Shew us the Father, said Philip, and that is sufficient; so here, shew me the way of salvation, and I desire no more.

And the reason of it is this, because,

There is nothing which suits with the troubled soul, but the way of salvation: the helps and remedies of it are not to be found unless in these wayes.

If a man hath a burthen on his back, take it off, and that is the way to ease him; if a man hath a feavour, cure him of that, and

and this is the way to help him; if a mans bone be out of joynt, set it in his proper location, and this is the way to comfort him. In like manner is it here. The distresses of the soul are spiritual, and only spiritual waies relieve spiritual troubles; I now see God at difference with me, how may I be reconciled to him? I see the dishonour against him, how may I pacifie him? I feel the guilt of sin, who shall take that off for me? I would be a changed and new person, who will work this in me? what course must I take to get God to look graciously on me, to get these sins pardoned, this heart to be sanctified?

I cannot passe over this point without a word of application.

Use.

If salvation be the maine enquiry of a truly troubled soul, then verily many people have not yet been truly troubled for their sinnes; why? Because they strive not how to save their soules.

The Psalmist speaks of some, that *God was not in their thoughts*; and we may say of some, that *Salvation is not in their mindes*. He who hath abundance, hath this question, *who will shew us any good?* and he who is in want, hath this question, *what shall I do?* But, *what shall I do to be saved?* few think of this, it is a marvelous thing that so noble a creature as man, who carries in him the singular stamp of heaven (*a spiritual and immortal soul*) should so infinitely forget both himself and his errand into this world. *I am a miserable sinner* (said Saint Hierome) *and born only to repent*. We are born transgressors from the wombe, and with hell at our heeles; God is pleased to draw out the threed of our life, and to vouchsafe to give us this hint, that we are sinners, and must dye, and if we chinge not our condition we perish forever. And besides that, he hath addressed the wayes of Salvation to our hands, so plainly, that he who runnes may read. Yea, and there is something implanted in men, which secretly inclines them to be affected with a generall desire of Salvation; nevertheless, to observe men how variously they flye off, how little they minde that, which most of all concerns them; how infinitely one drudgeth for riches; how illimitedly another pursues pleasures; so that when we come to dye, we have hardly thought wherefore we were borne. There is a Salvation, and a way tending thereunto, but we forget that all our dayes:

We

We have other employments, but let us soberly recall our selves,

Is there any thing better then Salvation?

1.

Is there a nearer thing then the soul?

2.

Is there not a necessity to be working in the way, if ever we would attain unto the end.

3.

O then let this take us up; let heaven take us up; let our souls take us up; but let not our sins, let not the world take us up.

Ubi pompa (said Saint Augustine) *ubi exquisita convivio? ubi gentiorum ambitio? ubi argenti & auri pondus immensum? Transient omnia ab oculis ejus, putatur requiescere corpus ejus, & habitat in inferno anima ejus, multiplicavit agros, plantavit vineas, implevit horrea, yet saith he. Simile hac nocte.* He enlargeth his Fields, plants his vines, fills his Barnes, loseth his soul. The like saith Saint Bernard. *Dic mihi ubi sunt amatores seculi, qui jam diu fuerint! Dic, quid eis profuit inanis gloria? Brevis latitia? mundi potentia? Quid carnis voluptas? quid falsa divitia? ubi risu? ubi jocu? ubi jactantia? Hic, caro cornu vermium; illic, anima ignibus deputatur infernalibus.*

I say no more, but labour to save that, which if it be lost, the world cannot procure it, and believe it, that the soul can never be saved by that which is not worth a soul.

Another conclusion from the words of the text may be this *That persons rightly sensible, are as thoroughly resolved, for the meanes and wayes, as for the end and scope.*

4.

The *Jaylor* doth not say I desire Salvation barely, but *what must I do to be saved*: as if he said, I desire Salvation, and I do conjecture that it is an end, and therefore means there are leading to it: now whatsoever they are, point them out unto me, that I may apply my self for the prosecution of the end.

There are two things which deceive a mans heart.

One is presumption, which is a skipping over the lesson, and taking forth before we have learned our part; my meaning is this, that it is an opinion of our happinesse, without any use of meanes: As if a man went to heaven as the Ship moves in the Tyde, whether the Master wakes or sleeps.

11

Another is hypocrisie, which is an inequality of the heart to all the wayes of Salvation: No hypocrite will apply himself

to every thing which may indeed save him. But where the heart is rightly understanding, and truly sensible, there is not only a consideration of means, but an illimited resolution for all the wayes of Salvation : whatsoever course God doth by his Word reveale and prescribe, for that it is resolved and purposed, though they may be contrary to my proud reasoning and capacity; though they may be contrary to the bent of my affections; though they may require much time and employment, &c.

What the *Princes* speak with a *dissembling heart*, that the sinner rightly sensible of his condition, affirms with a plaine spirit, of true intention. *The Lord be a true and faithful witnesse between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom we send thee, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the Lord our God.*

He who will be saved must come to this, to deny his own will; to crucifie his own affections; to captivate his own imaginations; to resigne up his own desires and pleasures; to afflict his heart for his sins; to give up himself to the rule and command of Gods Word; to draw off his heart from the world; to settle all his confidence upon Jesus Christ; to watch over his own spirit; To love the Lord God with all his soul, and with all his might : These and other things are required as the way to life, and unto them all, doth a sinner, rightly sensible, yield up himself with all readiness and gladnesse.

For as much as, though there may be some difficulty in these, yet there is Salvation by them; yea, and there is a singular help for them, as well as a special reward, but the present and former condition and way of sinne is engraven with much paines, and sore horror, and death, and hell; But I pass on.

5. Another conclusion from the words is this, *When God doth thoroughly work upon mens consciences, personall injuriousnesses must be forgotten by them who are to deale with them.*

You see here that *Paul* and *Silas* speaks not a word of this cruel usage towards them, but instantly addresse themselves to the direction of his safety and comfort, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*

We

We read of the *Father of the Prodigall*, that when his son came humbling and bewailing his fore-past miscarriages of Prodigality and Luxury. *He saw him a far off, and ran to meet him, and kissed him, and put the raiment on him, and a gold Ring.* He did not rate and upbraid him; Nay, I will not look on thee, I will not accept of thee, go now to thy Harlots, amongst whom thou hast riotously wasted all that goodly portion which I put into thy hands: O, no, he accuseth not him, whom he beares to accuse himself, and reviles not him, whom he seeth to condemn himself. It is enough that his *Son who was lost, is now returned; and that he who was dead, is now alive.*

We must imitate our heavenly Father in this, who in the *Covenant of Grace*, will forgive our iniquities, and remember our sins no more. So in another place, *If the wicked will turn from all his finnes that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, &c. All his transgressions which he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.* Why? Brethren, If God forgives the man, all the wrongs done against him, should not we forgive the smaller trespasses against us? and what have we to do to upbraid, when God is pleased to forgive and convert? and what should we stand upon our respects, when God hath past by all the indignities cast upon his honour and glory?

Jer. 31. 34.

Ezek. 18. 21, 22

There are two sorts of sinners.

Stout, and resolute, who know how to slight mercy, neglect command, and to fear at the threatnings; A severe denunciation of judgment and wrath; a conviction and aggravation of their finnes, are the proper discoveries for them: For where hath God spoken a word of peace, or comfort, or ease to such?

1.

Bleeding and afflicted, who tremble at threatnings, gaspe for mercy, faint for deliverance, and change. Here now *Ministers* must have eyes of pity, and tongues and hands of Oyl; they must not pour in scorpions, nor add terrors to the afflicted, but *Preach liberty to the Captives.* They must *bind up the broken hearted*, and give them beauty for ashes, the Oyl of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. *Heb. 61. 1, 2, 3.* In these cases, we are not to look on our selves, but on our office; not on our own indignities, but on the patients necessities that

2.

Elay 61.

way which God looks, and speaks, that must we speak also. Now God looks on the *Contrite* to revive them, and speaks comfort to the troubled soules, and therefore we must be silent to upbraid; and ready to direct and comfort afflicted souls.

6. *Troubled souls must be directed to Christ*: for this is it which Paul and Silas advileth the afflicted Jayler, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* They do not direct him to any man or Angel, to any pilgrimage or Saints, they set him not up on any selfe-standing project, but, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

But why to Christ?

1. Because none is appointed to relieve a troubled soul but Christ. *Him hath God the father sealed, and he was anointed to preach glad tidings.*

2. Secondly, none is able to pacifie and quiet a troubled soul, but Christ; whatsoever is sinful or imperfect, cannot be a stay to an afflicted conscience; But Christ hath *perfect righteousness*; he hath wrought *full redemption*, he is able to *save to the utmost*.

3. That which cannot satisfie Gods Justice, can never pacifie an afflicted heart; but if God might be fully satisfied, if he might be reconciled, then the conscience would be quiet; now Christ hath done this, he hath *made peace*, and become a *curse*, and is a *propitiation, &c.*

4. He will relieve the afflicted heart. He is called a *merciful High Priest*, and one who is *touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities*, and he will not break the *bruised reed*, and he calls the *heavy laden* to come to him to be eased.

5. There be three things which would marvelously ease and refresh a troubled soul. One, if he could get off the guilt of former sins. Another, if he could get such a righteousness, as with which he might boldly stand before God. A third is, if he could get his heart and wayes to be changed. Now Christ can yield out all this: his blood gets off the gile of our sins, *he is made sin for us*, *that we may be made the righteousness of God in him*; and he can change our natures by his blessed Spirit. Therefore the Apostle saith, *that he is made; redemption, righteousness, and sanctification unto us.*

But

But I passe over all these conclusions, and come to that upon which I must somewhat insilt.



CHAP. III.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the onely way to salvation.



O believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is the onely way of Salvation. The text is cleare for it.

Parallel places are these. Mark. 16. 15. *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,* 16. *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* Joh. 3. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.* Act. 4. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved.*

For the discovery of this assertion, we must open these particulars.

First, the meaning of each of these titles, (*viz.*) Jesus, and Christ, and Lord.

Secondly, what the *believing in the Lord Jesus Christ* doth import.

Thirdly, how it may appeare to be the *onely way of salvation.*

Fourthly, the usefull application of all this to ourselves,

What is the sense and summe of those three titles *Jesus, Christ, Lord,* I shall resolve them distinctly.

1.

SECT. I.

Sect. 1. **J**esus signifies a Saviour: as it was a name imposed from the pleasure of heaven, by an *Angel*, Mat. 1. 21. *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sinnes.* The first name that you read of imposed on Christ in the New-Testament, is this name of Jesus; for the best name that sinners could possibly desire to heare, was this, that God hath provided a Saviour for them. The Prophet *Isaiab* 9. 6. saith, that *his name shall be called wonderful*, and indeed Jesus is a wonderful name: It is a name which breeds just wonder and admiration to all the world, to men and Angels; it may make our hearts to wonder at the

Mirandum A- hyperbole, of Gods love (as one of the Fathers speaks) that he
noris. should (notwithstanding our vile deserts) bestow a Saviour upon us, who else had been lost for ever.

The Apostle saith, *Phil.* 2. 9, 10. That it is a *name above all names*, no name like it, either for the authority which was conferred on him, who bare that name; or for the comfort which that name beares in it, for a sinner.

Therefore said the *Angel to the Shepherds, fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, for unto you is borne this day in the City of David, a Saviour, Luk.*

What kind of
Saviour Christ
5. 2. 11. yea, that is good news indeed. A Saviour for a sinner:
no such news as that!

Now here observe divers things. *The Son of God is a singular Saviour.* No Saviour in all the world like him. *Joshuah* is called a Saviour: and the *Judges* were called so, yet the *Son of God* is a Saviour infinitely beyond them. For,

1. They could save bodies only, they could not save souls, not one of them, not all of them; to ransom, to rescue, to redeem a soul, requires more then an arme of flesh: Flesh may save or protect flesh, but he must be more then flesh who can save a soul: Now *Jesus Christ* is a Saviour of souls, 1 Pet. 1. 9. Rev. 20. 4. the price of our souls is in his blood, with it he bought them and redeemed them.

2. They could save from some outward misery, the tyranny and oppression of the enemy, they have oft-times put back, but from inward

inward servitude and bondage they could never save; they could not deliver the persons from the tyranny of their sinnes, whom they have been able to deliver from the tyranny of sinful men. But the Son of God can save from inward and spiritual miseries, he can save from sinne; Mat. 18. 21. He shall save his people from their sinnes. Sin hath guilt in it, he saves us from that, by shedding his blood, and procuring remission. Eph. 1. 7. And sin hath pollution in it: He saves us from that, by cleansing the heart; 1 John 1. 9. And sin hath dominion with it; but Christ hath assured that he will make us free, Job. 8. And that no sinne shall have dominion over us, Rom. 6. He can save from Satan, Heb. 2. 14. He did through death destroy him who had the power of death () the Devil, and ver. 15. did deliver them who through the fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage.

He can save from the wrath of God, so he did, by becoming a curse for us, by suffering the sensible and marvelous impressions of his displeasure for our sinnes. *Jesus (saith the Apostle) delivered us from the wrath to come.* On me my son (said Rebeckah) be the curse: see Gal 3. 13.

They were such Saviours, as did need a Saviour: Christ was the Saviour of them who were the Saviours of others: Many they did save, but themselves they could not save. 3.

Whiles they lived, they could save, but dying, they could not save any longer; but Christ Jesus saved us by his death, the losing of his own life caused ours; we are saved by his death, the son of man came to give his life a ransom for many. 4. Matth. 20. 28.

He is a general Saviour; Joh 4. 42. *The Saviour of the world: The Saviour of all men.* 1 Tim. 4. 10 Therefore Jude, ver. 4 calls the Salvation by Christ, the Common Salvation. Mistake me not, when I say that Christ is a general Saviour, as if every man in the world should be saved by Christ: He is not a general Saviour in respect of individual persons; but, 2.

First, in respect of successions of persons. That is, there never was any age succeeding a former age, but in every age Christ was a Saviour, *Jesus Christ the same: yesterday, and to day, and for ever,* Heb. 13. 8. He is the Saviour in the daies of old, and in our daies, and in the times after us.

In respect of Nations, He is not the Saviour of the Jewes only, but of the Gentiles also: *He justifies Circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith,* Rom. 3. 30. The Jew cannot boast 2.

boast, nor the Gentile complaine, but there is Salvation for them both in Iesus Christ.

3. In respect of conditions. He is not the Saviour of the great and mighty only, nor of the poor, and desperate only, but the one and the other shall be saved by Christ : The Salvation of the rich is not in his wealth, but in his Christ : Neither shall the poor person be excluded, because of his poverty, but all sorts of persons, high and low, rich and poor may find Christ to be a Saviour.

4. In respect of relations. He is not the Saviour of the Master only, but even of his lowest servant; not of the husband only, but of the wife; not of the father only, but of the child; not of the Prince only, but of the subject also. The Apostle hath said enough, *Gal. 3. 28. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Iesus.*

3. He is a mighty Saviour: he is able to save to the utmost, *Heb. 7. 25.* and this appears if you consider.

1. The *greatnesse of his satisfaction.* That he was able alone to stand before the justice of his father; and to answer and fulfil it, even to appeasment and contentation, yea, so entirely did he answer it, that God is now pacified and become propitious.

2. The *greatnesse of his passions.* That he endured the unspeakable wrath of God; O what a thing was this! that the Lord Iesus could at once be able to bear all our sinnes upon him, and the mighty wrath of God for them, and expiate all of them!

He did stand at the Bar, not to suffer and satisfie for one sin only, nor for all the sinnes of one man only, nor for some sinnes of most men only, nor for all the sinnes of all men in former ages, but for all the sins of all that shall be saved, from the first man that lived, to the last man that shall dye. Yet though he had all their sinnes to answer for, though he had a severe justice to deal with all, though he had a perfect law to fulfil, though four mighty enemies to conquer, Sin, World, Death, and Hell, yet he went through all, satisfied, suffered, conquered.

4. He is a *perfect Saviour*, the perfection of his saving consists in three things. First,

First in the *atonement* of it, whatsoever was required meritoriously to save men is in him alone, there is no other name beside his, nor with his, but he alone is a Saviour, there is *one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*, said the Apostle, 1 Tim. 2. 5. There is no concurrence of any Angel, nor of the Prayers of any Saints departed, and glorified, nor yet in the inherent sanctity in any man living, nor yet of any workes before, or after grace, which comes in with Christ as a meritorious cause of our Salvation: But Jesus Christ alone, is sufficient, and effectual to save the sinner: as the *government is upon his shoulder*, so is our Salvation. Thou canst not come to an Angel, nor to a Saint, and say such and such sinnes are the burden now upon my soul, do you by your righteousness ease me, such and such debts are upon my soul, do you satisfie for me: Thou canst not come to God and say, truly Lord I have sinned against thee, but here are so many floods of teares which I have shed, now for their sakes wash and pardon me; Here are so many prayers offered up unto thee, for their sakes heare and harken, and forgive; here are so many charitable works by which I have clothed the naked, fed the hungry, relieved the poor, for their sakes look upon me and accept of me.

It is very true, that these things are required of Christians, and I shall hereafter shew unto you the necessity, use and efficacy of them; but if we speak of the meritorious cause of Salvation, *None but Christ, Christ alone.*

In the *fulnesse of it*: from whatsoever we need to be saved, from that he can save us, he is not a surety, who undertakes such a number of our debts only, but he is an atonement for all sins: sinnes of nature, and sinnes of life, sins of ignorance, and sins of knowledge, sins before conversion, and sins after conversion, yea he will deliver us (at length) from all the concomitancy and presence of sinne, and intirely from all temptations and all sorrowes, and all diseases; and all death: All these (in his time) will he put under our feet.

In the *efficacy of it*: Being God and man he suffered and dyed, and thereby wrought the works of our Salvation at once; he doth not dye every day to make our peace, but having once offered himself, that was so compleat, and acceptable, that it setves for ever. The repetition of things (in some causes) im-

ports imperfection, for that which is still in doing, is not perfectly done; as the Philosopher speaks of things in motion; that whiles they are in motion they are imperfect, but when they attaine that end and forme for which they move, then they rest; now Christ having once offered himselfe for to save us, he rose againe and *sate down at the right hand of his Father*: he repeates his sufferings no more. Heb. 10. 14. *By once offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, Heb. 9. 28. *Christ was once offered to bear the sinnes of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appeare the second time without sinne unto Salvation*.

Thus, for the importance of the title Iesus the next title is,

SECT. II.

2. **C**hrist, Messiah in the Old-Testament, and Christ in the New, of the same signification, Joh. 1. 41. *We have found the Messiah which is by interpretation the Christ*, and this is a sweet word unto us, that *Iesus was Christ*, that he, who was our Saviour, was anointed. *The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings*, Isaiah 61. 1. *And he was anointed with the Oyl of gladness*, Psal. 45. 7. will you give me leave to let you see much excellencies in this short word? We do speak much of Iesus, and yet we are ignorant of the forme of his saving; and we heare much of Christ, but perhaps we understand not what force, what comfort, what happinesse is couched therein; therefore I will unfold unto you, 1. What this anointing of our Saviour doth import. 2. Unto what he was anointed.

For the first, the anointing of him in whom we are to believe, doth signifie.

1. His *singular and assured ordination* to be our Mediator, and to performe the work of our redemption. When that the Prophet had poured the Oyl on the head of Iohn, they presently blow the trumpet, and said, *Iohn is King*: so when Zadock the Brist took a horne of Oyl out of the Tabernacle, and anointed Solomon, they blow the trumpet, and all the people said, *God save King Solomon* 1 Kin. 1. 39. (as if he said) this is the very person who God hath appointed to rule over us. In like manner, because the

Sonne

Son of God is made a Christ, because he is anointed, we may infallibly conclude, that that person, who was God and man, was appointed, and singularly designed to be our Saviour and Redeemer; so that we may with *John*, point at him, *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sinnes of the world.* And therefore it is said that he was called, that he was sealed, that he was sent; it was the A& of the whole Trinity, to set the son apart, to become our Saviour: So now for Christ to be our Redeemer, is no fiction, but a reall thing; nor was it undertaken presumptuously, without a calling, but by ordination and the institution of God.

An abundant qualification (that is,) that person, the Son of God, being anointed or designed to be our Redeemer, was enabled with all the richnesse of Grace, and fitnesse of gifts, every way required to performe the work of our redemption; *I have laid help* (said the Prophet, *Psal. 89. 19.*) *on one that is Mighty;* so is it here, our Salvation is to be wrought by one who is enabled to compass and performe it.

Therefore we read of the *pouring forth of the spirit on him*, and that *without measure*, in a most eminent fulnesse, even to an overflowing. There was no want of holinesse which the Law could require, either for nature or actions, and no word of power to suffer or conquer. Yea, he was so adorned and beautified with abilities to save; that he did not only at once go through the hard task of our Redemption, but he still distills yett down by his Spirit, to save us more and more from our corruption, &c.

A sweet and pleasant acceptation both to God and man, look as the anointing Oyl which in the Law was reserved and bestowed by Gods appointment, was compounded of the most fragrant and exquisite spices; to intimate the *sweet composition of Gifts and Graces*, to which it was poured forth it did cast abroad a most *delightfull favour*. In like manner doth the anointing of Christ imply, *A most marvelous and gracious acceptation.*

With God, and to his *Sacrifice was a sweet smelling odour*; it was the *Golden Altar with Incense*, *Rev. 8. 3.* which went up to heaven, with a sweet and delightfull well-pleasingness.

2.

With men: This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, Tim. 1. 1. How much is the Church (in the Canticles) affected with the favour of this precious ointment!

O how much more precious then gold, more delightful then all the rivers of Carnall pleasures, is that Oyl of gladnesse where-with the Son of God was anointed: anointed to become the Saviour of my sinful soul!

Solomon speaks of Oyl which did give a cheerfull countenance, sure I am, if there be any thing which can revive the heart of a drooping sinner, which can cheare or quicken his spirits, which can put life into him, it is this, that God hath appointed his Son to dye for him and to save him.

S E C T. III.

2.

NOW for the second question, (*viz.*) *unto what was Christ anointed?* For a satisfaction to this demand, we must know that those who were anointed, by Gods command, were *sequestred to singular and special offices thereby*, and there were three sorts of persons, who were to execute three sorts of offices, who were anointed.

First, the Priest, as we read of *Aaron* and the rest of that order.

Secondly, The Prophet, as *Elisha* by *Elijah*, 1 Kings 19. 16.

Thirdly, the King as *David* by *Samuel*, and *Salomon*, by *Zadock*.

Now *Christ* differs from all others, who were anointed, we read that some were anointed to be *Kings*, but not to be *Priests*, nor *Prophets*; others were anointed to be *Priests*, but neither to be *Prophets*, nor *Kings*: others were anointed to be *Prophets*, but neither to be *Kings*, nor *Priests*.

Again we read of some who were to be *Kings*, and *Priests*, as *Melchisedek*, others to be *Prophets*, and *Kings*, as *David*, some to be *Priests* and *Prophets*, but not any one was anointed a *King*, and a *Priest* and a *Prophet* conjunctively. Now here is the excellency and the eminence of *Christs* anointing, He was anointed to

to all those three offices, not only to be a *Priest*, but also a *Prophet*, not onely to be a *Prophet*, but also to be a *King*.

Had he been a *Priest* only, he might have offered sacrifice, for our sinful guilt. But who should have then been the *Prophet*, to have opened the eyes of the blind, and to give the ignorant knowledge?

Had he been a *Priest*, to suffer and a *Prophet*, to instruct only, who should then have been a *King*, to have abolished the confusions of the Heart, and Life, and to have subdued our sinnes and so to lead captivity captive?

Nay that he might be a compleat Saviour and Mediator. He was anointed to be *Priest Prophet and King*. I will open something in every one of these.

He was anointed, to be a *Priest*. *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek*, Psal. 110. 4. so Heb. 3. 1. *Jesus Christ* is called the *Apostle and High Priest of our profession* ver. 2. He was faithful to him that appointed him, see Heb. 4. 10. 7. 26. There are these things implied in his anointing to be our *Priest*..

1. That he was designed perfectly to fulfil the Law of God for us. He was a satisfactory Priest, there was the ceremonial Law which he fulfilled by abrogation, and there was the Morall Law, which he fulfilled by obedience. Whatsoever the Law of God could require, either for the holiness of nature, or of life, that was to be found in Christ: And such a high Priest became us; who is holy, harmlesse, undefiled, separte from sinners, &c. Heb. 7. 26. Hence is he often called the *holy and just one*; Act. 3. 14. and Chap. 4. 27, 30. and is said to be without sin. He had no sinne at all of which he was personally guilty, but he was every way a righteous person and fulfilled all righteousness.

I say fulfilled it, not for himself only, but for us; so that if you would now look for a righteousness which can every way satisfy, and which is every way punctually exact, and unblamable, you must look out of your selves, unto the righteousness of Christ as Paul did, *Phil. 3.* and therefore he saith, that *Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness unto every one that believeth* Rom. 10. 4.

To make expiation for sinnes: He was an expiatory Priest. There.

There was in the Law, sacrifices offered by the Priest, of which some were *Gratulatory*, wherein God was praised; and others were *Expiatory*, wherein God was appeased; as in the oblations of the Lamb, &c. thus it stands with us. As we are creatures, we are bound to obey God; as *rational and righteous creatures*, we were bound to *obey the Morall Law* of God, and now as *sinful creatures*, we are bound to *answer the transgressions of that Law*, by exposing our persons to the endurance of the great curse of that Law, and the wrath of God: The Law is broken by us, Gods justice is wronged, his indignation moved, and our own guilt, like so many cords hold us fast, and deliver us bound hand and foot to the vengeance and punishment of Gods pure and righteous justice.

X Now suppose you saw a number of Malefactors going to execution, the Kings Son meets them, they are heavy, weeping and sobbing because death is approaching; Why? saith the Kings Son weep not, you have provoked my father, and have deserved death, but fear you not, I will take a course to preserve your lives: How so? Thus, I will lay down my own life for you, I will dye for you, to deliver you. It is even thus betwixt Christ and us, we all have sinned, and by reason of sinne are bound over to death, and hell, how now shall we escape? Thus, God did give his own Son, and he did take our sins on him, and did dye and shed his blood to expiate our guilt and procure our pardon. Hence is he called a *sacrifice for sin*, and he is said to be *made sin for us*. And to *bear our sins in his own body on the tree*, and that *our iniquities was laid on him*, and that the *chastisement of our peace was upon him*, and to be *delivered to death for our sinnes* and that *Christ our Paschever was sacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. 5. 7. And observe the phrase, *Christ our Paschever*, &c. You know that the Paschever had a Lamb, and the Lamb lost his life and blood, and that *blood was sprinkled upon the doors of the children of Israel*, and the destroying Angel did pass by the doors where it was sprinkled, and their lives were preserved, so it is here, we should have been destroyed, but Jesus Christ our Paschever was sacrificed for us, (*i.e.*) he did poure out his own blood, which did answer for our guilt, and so preserved our souls.

Now concerning his Priestly expiation of our sinnes observe,
First,

2 Cor. 3.
1 Pet. 2.
Esay 53.
Rom. 4.

First, the Priest, who did offer this expiatory sacrifice.

Secondly, the sacrifice it self.

Thirdly, the Altar upon which it was offered.

Fourthly, The dignity and efficacy thereof.

The Priest, was Jesus Christ, as God and man, as our Mediator, for that did belong to the Priest, who was to offer sacrifice, to be a middle person: *Aaron* was to bear upon him the sinnes of the people, and to offer for them; so Jesus Christ, as God and man, was he who did offer up that sacrifice, which did expiate our sinnes; *Heb. 5. 5.* He that said unto him, *thou art my Sonne, to day have I begotten thee*, vers. 6. He saith also in another place, *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck*.

The sacrifice it self, was Christ as consisting of soul and body: by reason of our sins we had forfeited both our souls and bodies to the curse of the Law, and to the wrath of God: The arrest and attachment was out against both, but now Jesus Christ became our Priest and offered his soul and body, to quit and release ours. Therefore it is said, that he *made his soul an offering for sin*, *Isai. 53. 10.* And that *his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even to death*, *Mat. 26. 38.* In it he felt the bitter anguish and wrath, which made him to *sweat, even drops of blood*; And, as for his body, that was prepared for him to suffer for us; hence it is said, that he *bore our sin on his own body on the tree*, *1. Pet. 2. 24.* It is very true, that the Godhead formally, was not the sacrifice, that could neither suffer, nor be afflicted, only it did aid and assist the humane nature, which was offered up as a sacrifice.

The Altar on which this sacrifice was offered, which did expiate our sins, was Christ as God; as the suffering did properly belong to the humane nature, so the efficacy of that suffering, did appertain to the divine nature; had he been God only, he could not have suffered, had he been man only, he could not have merited: *The Altar sanctifieth the gift*, not the gift the Altar: for here that which did make up the high efficacy of the sacrifice, was the divine nature of Christ. That Jesus Christ who was God and man did offer up himself as a sacrifice for sinners, was more then if all the holy Angels and holy men in the world had

had suffered; there is now, by reason of the divine nature an infinite dignity to answer for all our sins which else had stood uncanceled.

4.

The efficacy of this sacrifice, which is this, that he took away our sins, blotted out the hand writing, nailed them to his cross, buried them in his grave.

Heb. 9. 28. *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, 10, 11. Every High Priest standeth daily ministering and offering often-times the same sacrifice which can never take away sins. 12. But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.*

He did by his sacrifice take away all the guilt of sin, and all the satisfactory punishment, for all this was charged upon him as our Mediator, our Priest, and our surety, yea and he made a perfect reconciliation betwixt his father and us, and therefore as our Priest he is our propitiation, 1 Joh. 2. 1. and our reconciliator and peace, Eph. 2. 14. and our atonement, Romanes 5. 11.

So that to give the summe of all this, *Iesus Christ was anointed, that is, designed by God the Father to be our Priest, (i.e.) to offer up himself, as a perfect satisfaction to divine Justice, for the remission of all our sins, and punishments, and this he did perfectly performe for us, and this was accepted of God for us.*

I say for us, he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; and who is made righteousness, redemption, and sanctification, and wisdom to us, and that of God, whatsoever he did, or suffered from his Father, it was as our surety, in our stead, and so it is reputed.

3.

A third part of his Priestly office is this, that he doth make intercession, 1sa. 53. 12. *He bare the sinnes of many, and made intercession for the transgressors, so Rom. 8. 34. It is Christ that dyed, or rather that is risen againe, and is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us.* And therefore he is called our advocate, 1 Joh. 2. 1. and is said to appear for us, Heb. 9. 24. He is as it were the Deputy, or rather our Attorney, to Negotiate for us, with the Father.

There is a two fold intercession, one by way of duty, another by

by way of merit, one of charity, another of dignity, When I pray for any man in distresse, I am said to be an intercessor, to deal for him with God, as a matter of my duty, and out of a charitable respect; But Christ he only interceeds *meritoriously*, and by way of *dignity*. His intercession, as I conceive, intimates three things.

The *exhibition of his person before the Father*, as our Surety, our Redeemer, our Mediator, I am he, and I am here to answer.

1.

This *exhibition of his glorious merits*: for he doth not nakedly appeare, who appeares as an intercessor, but he must actively appeare, and so doth Christ. He *went up to heaven with the price of his blood, with the ransom which he purchased, with the righteousness, and satisfaction made with the merits of his oblation and sacrifice*, and there he presents them continually before his father, as if Christ should still say, *Father I am he that dyed for to get pardon, to get favour, to get grace, and to get such or such good things*; this is the blood that I shed, the price that I paid, to satisfy thy justice, to fulfil thy Law, to remit those sins, to confer these graces, &c.

2.

The *ingratiating us with the Father*: which he doth by the continuall application of his own merits; when sin gets up to accuse our persons, and our prayers, then Christ shews himself our intercessor by putting aside the force of the bill of complaint, and answers for our persons, and for our services.

3.

True O Father! this man hath sinned thus against thee, but I am his surety, to satisfy for these his sinnes, and I did shed my blood for them, therefore now look not on him, but on me, and for my sake, accept of him and be propitious to him.

So for infirmities, true O Father! his imperfections in duty are many, but I am to beare the iniquity of the holy offerings: and my righteousness is perfect, and that I present unto thee for him; now notwithstanding his weaknesses, for my merits, accept of his person, grant him his request, do him good. Thus Christ is the Angel, who offered up the prayers of the Saints with incense, Rev. 8. 3, 4. Nay, Father accept and incline thine eares, I have deserved acceptance, and audience, &c.

SECT. IV.

SEcondly, Christ was anointed to be a Prophet, *Deut. 18. 12.* *I will raise you up a Prophet from among their brethren*, the which is expressly interpreted to be Christ, by *Peter*, in *Act. 3. 20, 22.* Therefore Christ is called Counsellor, *Isa. 9. 6.* one who doth advise, and direct his Church; and the *Doctor* or *Teacher*, *Mat. 23. 8.* and the *Apostle* of our profession, *Heb. 3. 1.* and the faithfull witness, *Rev. 1. 5.* And a witness to the people, *Isa. 55. 4.* A Leader and a Commander, yea, he is called the Light of his Church, *Isai. 61. 1.* And the light of the world, *Luke 8. 32.* (that is) it is he who did reveal to the world, the true Doctrine of eternal life, and the *Angel of the Covenant*, *Mal. 3. 1.* and the Bishop of our souls, *1 Pet. 2. 25.* and the wisdom of God, *1 Cor. 1. 24.*

The anointing of Christ to be a Prophet implies,

That he was to *revelate the will of his Father*, and *the wayes of life*, *Joh. 15. 15* *All things that I have heard of my father, have I made known unto you*: So *Heb. 1. 2.* *In these last dayes he hath spoken to us by his Son*, *Joh. 6. 68.* *Master, to whom should we go, thou hast the words of eternall life?* See *Isaiah 61. 2.* *Master* *11. 27.*

There is no person, who must dare to prescribe any other doctrine, but such as Christ hath delivered. He may not coine new Articles of faith nor of obedience; Christ is appointed to be the Prophet of his Church, (that is) to deliver unto them, all such truths from his father, which shall and do concerne their everlasting salvation.

That he is to make us know effectually the things which he doth reveale in his Word. There is no Prophet able to convey his doctrine beyond the ear, though it be as true, as truth it self; and as good, as goodnesse it self; we cannot make men to understand it, nor to believe it, nor to yield unto it; but Christ is that Prophet, whose Chair is in heaven, and whose speaking can yet pierce into the hearts of men: He can make us to know wisdom, he can teach our reines, and truth in the inward parts, there can he write his Law in our hearts; though the minde be

as dark as darknesse it self, yet he can make the light of knowledge to arise in the thickest darknesse of the minde, though the judgment be corrupt, and full of errors, yet Christ can erect a throne of truth, and direct us into the pathes of righteousness; though the heart be dull, yet his words are as fire to quicken that heart; though it be as hard as the rock, yet his word can be as the hammer to break that stony heart: His teaching can soften the most unflexible adamant, he is able to convince, and bend, and alter, and bow it; the very *dead shall heare his voice, and live.* So that if any person doth need any directions, any enablement for heaven, or the way thither, he must know that Christ is the Prophet anointed; whatsoever belongs to an heavenly instructing, and to an heavenly drawing, and obeying, that is to be found in Christ, and had from him who is anointed a Prophet (that is) designed to teach the Church, and furnisheth with all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and ability, &c.

SECT. V.

L Astly, *Christ was anointed to be a King;* therefore *Psal. 2. 2.* he is called *Gods anointed;* and ver. 6. the *King* whom he *Psal. 2. 2.* did *set upon his holy hill of Sion. The King of Kings, Rev. 19. 16.* He shall *reigne over the house of Jacob, Luk. 1. 33. Isa. 28. 18.* *all power is given to me in heaven and in earth.* He hath the *Scepter of Royalty,* and the *Rod of authority,* and the *sword of power,* and the *throne of judgement,* and the *Laws of his lips,* and the *keys of life and death.*

Now this regal office of his, to which he was anointed, imports many things.

First, that he is to *beare rule over all the Nations;* and indeed his natural kingdome reacheth over all the world, from the highest Angel to the lowest Devil.

Secondly, that he is to *Gouverne and rule the Church,* which he hath purchased with his blood; *The Government is upon his shoulders, Isa. 9. 6.* And therefore he is called the *Law-giver, Jam. 4. 12.* and *all judgement is committed to his hand, Joh. 5. 22, 27.* so this end you have the *rod of his Scepter his holy and righteous Laws,* and his

his mighty and blessed Spirit, to give force unto them, even into our hearts, and there to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Thirdly, that he is to maintaine and uphold his Church, therefore he is said to Gird his sword upon his thigh, Psal 45. 3. and to ride upon a horse with his garment dipped in blood and armed, as if he were ready to fight. He is the mighty redeemer of his servants, against all who intrinch upon their peace and safety; and he strikes downe Paul to the earth for persecuting him.

It belongs to the King to be the defence of his subjects; so here, God hath appointed all the Protections, and safeties, and deliverances of the Church to be in Christ.

Fourthly, he is to conquer all his and our enemies; God hath given Christ a Kingdome, but it is such as he must fight for; Not a Subject which he hath, which comes in unto him, but by conquest; If we be in our own hands, *peccatum Hostis est, quam diu est*, said Saint Augustine, and if we be in Satans hands, we are in that enemies hands.

More plainly, there are these enemies of Christ and his Church which he is to conquer for himselfe and them.

First hell, and we read that he hath spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, and triumphed over them, Col. 2. 15.

Secondly death, 1 Cor. 15. 54. *Death is swallowed up in victory; O death where is thy sting; O grave where is thy victory, &c.* 56; 57. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Iesus Christ.

Thirdly sin, and this is, Christ also to conquer; he is to cast down all the strong holds of lusts, and all imaginations, and to captivate the whole man; He is to subdue our iniquities for us, and not to suffer sin to have dominion over us.

Fourthly, wicked men, he will stick his arrowes in the breasts of Princes, and in the hearts of the mighty, and terrible; he is to bruise the Nations with a rod of Iron, and to dash them in pieces like a potters vessell: He will execute judgment upon all of them, and cast them all to the dust, who rose up against his person, or Government, or people. He will set his people at rest from them that rise against them, and will make his enemies his foot-stool.



CHAP. IV.

*What Believing in the Lord Jesus
Christ doth import:*



What doth the believing in the Lord Jesus Christ import?

Q. 2.

Jesus Christ, is like a ring, and faith is like the finger, which wears it. He is like a treasury, and faith like the hand, which draws out thence. As *David* spake in another kinde, *come and I will tell you, what the Lord hath done for my soul* or as *Philip* to *Nathanael*, *can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* *Philip* saith, *come and see*. The same is to be said of faith, God hath done great matters for sinful man faith faith, Why? but can any good be brought by any to us who are so bad? yes, sayes faith, come and see, Christ is very good; he is a Saviour for a poor sinner, but it is faith which finds him so.

Marke the answer of the Apostles here in the text, *what shall I do to be saved*, saith the *Jayler*?

They do not answer, there is a Jesus Christ, take thou no more care; he did dye for sinners, and thou shalt do well enough: Nay, this they answer, thou maiest be saved by Christ, but thou must believe in Christ. Not a medicine is the remedy, but a medicine applyed. Not the man, but the man taken, becomes the husband; So the taking of Christ, the believing in him is the way to heaven.

Because this is an excellent point (for our life lies in it) give me leave to speak somewhat of faith.

First, in the general and there I will be brief.

Secondly in special, as justifying of faith, or faith believing in Jesus Christ our Lord.

First,

First, Generally.

For the generall nature of believing, observe these propositions

First, *that believing is an assent to such matters as are known, only by revelation from another*; there are in the soul of man three qualities by which we came to finde out or perceive things.

First, one quality is *Scientia, or knowledge*, which is a firme assent unto a thing which may be evidenced to the understanding by solid demonstration of infallible principles, or else by the undeniable evidence of sense, and experience: as thus, that every natural body hath power to move, or that the Moon will suffer an Eclipse, or that the fire is naturally apt to ascend, and the water to moisten, &c.

These things have both a naturall certainty and truth in themselves, and there is an undoubted evidence and certainty in the minde of the person, truly knowing them; and so certaine and full is the persuasion of the minde, about them, that there is no scruple of doubt remaining to dispute, as any uncertainty whether the things be so or no.

2.

Another is, opinion, which is an inevident evident assent; if I may so phrase it: My meaning is, the understanding doth so assent, and yield to the things, as that yet it fees some contrary reason to suspect and question whether the thing be so or no; for as much as (in opinion) the grounds are not fully evident to the minde, but they are only probable, and therefore the assent by opinion, is but *conjectural*. As, take a man in a case of a scrupulous conscience, there is to that man some evidence of argument which doth seem to warrant his action or attempt, and yet that argument is not so entirely convincing of his judgment, but on the other side, there starts up a medium or argument, which renders the practice probably sinful; whereupon, if you come to demand of him; May you do such a thing? he answers, I do not certainly know (that is) I am not entirely and absolutely resolved of it, yet I think I may, I think it is lawful; and this thinking (which is opinion) is alwayes accompanied with some fear and suspicion; so that the minde is like a paire of Scales wavering and tilting to either side. Things are partly cleare, and partly-obscure, partly, evident, and partly inevident, and

and therefore the assent of opinion is alwayes doubtful.

Another is belief, which is an assent unto things not from any evidence of the things themselves, but only from the relation, or testimony of another.

3.

If I feel the fire to burne my hand, I do not call this a believing, but a sensitive knowing, if *Abimaaz* comes and tells *David*, that his *Son Absalom* is *hanged and slaine*, though this be knowledge in him who saw it, yet it is belief in *David*, who did heare and credit the tidings; so that (to be brief) belief differs from knowledge in this, that knowledge depends on the evidence of things themselves; but belief, though the things be certainly true to which it doth assent, yet it assents unto them for the testimony or authority of him who relates and reports them. Though this be most true, That *Jesus Christ* was borne of the *Virgin Mary*, and that he is the *Messias* and *Saviour*, yet I believe it to be true because *God* hath given testimony or report thereof in his Word unto us.

Again, *Belief* differs from opinion in this, that opinion is an indifferent, probable, hazzarding, and dissolutely inclinable assent, but in believing the assent is firme, certaine and fixed especially where testimony and authority is sufficient.

Believing as it is restrained to a theological and divine consideration, that is (in the generall) an assent of the soul to the truth, and goodnesse, of all divine revelations upon divine testimony. Here much might be said, as for instance:

2.

First, that all divine revelations are the object of belief, as *supernaturally inspired*.

Secondly, that the ground of believing them is Gods own testimony. Faith hath sufficient reason to believe all things there to be true, in their relation; because of his truth and authority who doth say so (*viz.*) God himself.

Thirdly, of the generall nature of believing; which is an assent unto all spoken by God as most true and credible.

Secondly, particularly, of justifying Faith.

Faith (as you well know) hath a double aspect; one is to the whole revealed Word of God, another is to God in Christ or to Jesus Christ.

II

I am not now to speak of it, as an eye which may see all colours, but as an eye fixing it self on some singular and special object (*viz.*) on Jesus Christ, in respect of whom it is called justifying faith: The believing on whom may be thus described.

CHAP. V.

Faith in Christ, what described.



I *t is a singular Grace of God, whereby the heart and will of a sensible sinner, doth take and embrace Jesus Christ in his person and offices, and doth wholly or only rest on him for pardon of sin, and eternal life.*

There are many things to be opened in this description, forasmuch as all the force of true faith, cannot at once in a few short words be clearly expressed.

SECT. 1.

Causa.

Consider therefore, the *spring or fountaine* of this faith is at heaven: Gods eternall decree, is the radical cause of it: so *Abs 13. 48 As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* And the *instrumental cause* of it is the *Word of God*, *Rom. 10. 17. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* And the *immediate and singular cause* of it is the *Spirit of God*, *Gal. 5. 22. there it is an expresse fruit.* So *Job. 1. 12. speaking particularly of believing on the Name of Christ, he addeth verse 13. men come to this not being borne of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

That

That the will or heart of man should be brought off from it self, and to abhor its own condition and sufficiency, and to take Christ as God propounds him, to be the only rock upon which I must build my salvation, to be the only Lord to whose Law and Will I must resigne up my whole soul, and to cleave unto him in a *conjugal union and affection*; This I say ariseth, not from naturall principles, nor from the wisdom of a mans free will, nor from any endeavour or action which can find footing in man himself.

It is observed that there are two sorts of habits.

Two sorts of
Habits.

1. Some which are *acquired* by the industry of the person, and through a right use of a sagacious and understanding mind, and such may be purchased by practise, and use; as the Scholar by writing, gets the habit of writing, and the Apprentice by his wise and honest observation, and industry, gets into the skill of his trade and calling; Now faith is no such quality, we can send forth no such singular acts or operations, which are able in time to ripen or beget so excellent a Grace in the soul.

2. Others are plainly and entirely infused. Faith is not water in the Earth, which a man may pump out, but it is even in the fulnesse or littlenesse of it, in the allnesse of it, as the drops or showers of raine, which come from heaven: Though the subject of it be below, yet the cause of it is above, it is man who doth believe, but it is Gods Spirit alone who gives him that faith to believe; it is the will of man which doth take and receive Christ; but it is Gods Spirit who doth bestow that grace of faith, by which he doth take and receive.

That a man hath a will, none can deny, who know that they are men; Nay, and that the will is able to send out its own actions, it is willingly confessed; but infinite is the difference 'twixt the naturall actions of the will, and the supernatural qualities and operation of Gods Spirit in the will: It is true, a dead carcase is able of it self to send forth a stinking smell, but it is not able to quicken and enliven it self. That the will can, will I grant, but that the will can (of it self) enliven it self, to that great part of life, I meane believing, it is not only a vehement injury and dishonour to the fountaine and freeness of grace, but also a most foolish, and senselesse error; the will of man being

naturally so opposite to believing, and believing being an act so every way unsuitable, and disproportionable to the inclination and ability of the will. No verily, faith in God comes from God, and so faith in Christ, from Christ; none ever could see Christ in a justifying and saving way, who had not that eye of faith put into him by the Spirit of Christ: No grace comes from any, but the God of Grace. *Unto you it is given to believe, Phil. 1. 29.*

S E C T. II.

2.
subjectum.

THe *subject of this faith, is a sensible sinner*; I do not as yet speak of the immediate subject of inhesion, which respects those parts of the soul, wherein this grace is seated; of this I shall speak anon. But of the subject of denomination, and this subject is a sensible sinner.

Two sorts of sinners, There are two sorts of sinners.

1. Some generally corrupted both in their natures, and in their lives, and they are as unsensible as they are sinful. They do not know in any powerfull degree of true reflection and feeling, their own vilenesse, accursednesse and miserablenesse of persons being so, and remaining so in an unsensible condition of sinfulness, I dare confidently affirme, that though they may have most able and strong pre-umpcions, yet they have not (as yet) the least degree of justifying and saving faith. How can any man by *Faith look upon Jesus Christ as his Physician, who is whole in his own opinion.* The unsensible sinner, as he cannot close with Christ, so he will not care for Christ; for what should now move such an heart, is it this holinesse of Christs person? Good Lord! How ridiculous is that motive to a profane and gracelesse heart, or is it the surablenesse of Christs Office; Why? what is Salvation to him by another, who as yet sees no ground or reason of condemnation in himself.

2. Others sensibly experienced, who know thus much, that they in particular are sinful, and there is no Salvation, no hope of it from themselves, but it is to be found onely in Jesus Christ.

I confess

I confesse there are severall degrees of this sensiblenesse; neither dare I to assigne the height and latitude of it unto the tearmes of horror and terror, (that is) that a person must be alwayes and necessarily anguished with extremities of amazement and dejections, before he can believe in Christ: No, though these sharp throwes are manifest in some, yet I dare not make them a rule for all: only this I say, that the heart believes not, it looks not towards Christ, till it *feel it self to be sinful, and lost by reason of sin*; and that there is no possibility of subsistence in it self: And now there is room for *faith* when I feel my self a sinner; now there is reason for me to look upon a *Saviour*, and when I am *sensible of my own vile nesse*; now is there reason to look upon another *righteous nesse*; and when I perceive my own *lostness*, now is there cause to look after *that salvation which God hath put in the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Me thinks that of Christ, *he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, that he is sent to finde that which is lost, that the whole need not a Physician, but the sick; that he is sent to preach liberty to the captives*, do abundantly confirme this truth: Yea, and our own experiences gives in a clear evidence, that not only in the beginning, but in the progresse of our conversion, our eyes are then most upon Christ, to look after him, and to prize him when we are most sensibly acquainted with our own sinfulness, and miserableness of condition.

SECT. III.

THe *Seat or habitation of faith*, is the heart or will: ^{1. W}Scriptures are copious in this, *Rom. 10. 10. With the heart man* ^{3.} *believeth unto righteousness*, *Acts 8. 37. And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest*, and he answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, *Rev. 22. ver. 11. Who soever will, let him take the water of life freely*.

There be who distinguish 'twixt three kinds of faith.

First, *Credere deum*, which is a universall and large conception of a God, when the understanding is perswaded, (beyond A-

theisme) to believe that there is a God.

Secondly, *Credere Deo*, and this is such a disposition of the understanding, by which it gives credit or belief to that God, speaking and revealing, as to one who is truth, and cannot lye.

Thirdly, *Credere in Deum*, which is not only a credence to God, as true in his Nature and Word; but a reliance on him with the will, and embracing of him and his truth and goodness with the affections.

Now justifying faith, or faith in Christ, is comprehended in this latter kinde of believing. For the better apprehending of this, observe a few things (*viz.*) First, the things which God doth propound unto us are of different ends and uses, some are propounded meerly to be known, of which sort some conjecture many *historicall passages* in the Word, and many *predictions*, and many *Genealogies*; Some are propounded, *not only to be known, but also to be done*, as the *Divine Precepts*, or *Commandments*; some are propounded to be known, and to be avoided, or declined, as all the *comminations* and *threatnings* in the Word against sinners: Some are propounded to be known, and to be embraced with the will and affections, of which sort are all the *Promises of God*, and *Jesus Christ our Lord*. All those parts of the Word which concerne our good, and our good to be embraced. They have a necessary and naturall reference to the will of man, which is planted in us by God, to be conversant about all that which respects our good. Since then Jesus Christ is our good, both personally considered, and also virtually considered, faith therefore as conversant about him, must naturally be planted in the will.

2. That there are two parts (as it were) of faith.

1. One is imperfect, and in compleat, yet is it a necessary ingredient unto faith, and this respects the understanding, when we are supernaturally illightned, to see the Gospel and Jesus Christ in it revealed to be a Saviour; yea, and we do assent or acknowledge the same Gospel to be a word of truth, and that whatsoever it doth affirme of Jesus Christ, it is infallibly true, and divinely certaine. The Gospel as the Word of truth, is the object of this, and therefore the understanding is to apprehend and acknowledge it.

Another

Another is *perfect*, (I speak of an essential perfection, not of that which is gradual, and intensive,) which takes in the formall and vital nature of faith, as justifying: Now this doth not rest in any operation of the minde, or understanding, but immediately in the will, for the Gospel containes both truth and goodnesse; It is the Word of truth, and the Gospel of Salvation. It doth not only make known a Saviour, and that it is most certain that he is God and man, and dyed for sinners, but it doth offer the goodnesse of this Saviour unto me, which to accept, appertaines directly and immediately to the will: That of the Apostle me thinks, gives some light to the matter in hand, *1 Tim. 1. 15. This is a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.*

That Jesus Christ came to save sinners, is a truth not to be questioned, and therefore the understanding is to acknowledge the same: And that he came to save sinners, is not only a truth revealed, but a goodnesse offered, and therefore it is worthy of all acceptation; Now as *credence* of the truth of it appertaines to the understanding, so the acceptance of the goodnesse of it doth appertaine to the will: Yea, one word more: it is the proper work of faith, to conjoyne the soul with Christ, to contract and espouse it, (as it were) but the soul is not conjoynd with Christ by the meer operation of the understanding, but by the consent of the will; *Ergo*, faith as justifying, is immediately and formally in the will, and not nakedly in the understanding.

SECT. IV.

THe proper and genuine act of faith, as justifying, or as conversant about Jesus Christ, is *acceptance, or receiving.* *Alia.*

This Doctrine Christ himself doth teach, and therefore it is true, and sure, *John 1. 12. To as many as received him, he gave power to be the Sons of God, even to as many as believed in his Name.* There you see expressly that believing is the receiving of Christ. As if God came in these termes, I have appointed my Son to be made man, to be a Mediator and Redeemer, and he did live and dye for sinners, to procure their peace and salvation.

on. Now I offer his person unto you, and with it all the merits and benefits purchased by him, take him in his person, in his offices, and in all his virtues, if the heart doth now accept of the Lord Jesus. This is a lively, and justifying, and saving believing.

There are three acts of the soul which are conversant about Christ.

Credence. First, one is, I know assuredly, *That Jesus Christ the Lord is the Saviour of sinners.* The Papists generally make this the Royall Act of Faith, but this cannot be justifying faith,

because { First this as so, is but a truth apprehended, and not a good received.
Secondly, unbelieving hearts may enjoy this historical assent merely as assent.

Acceptance. 2. Another is, *I take this Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Saviour;* I know assuredly he is a Lord and Saviour, and he offers himself unto poor sinners, of whom I am chief, and I do accept of him to be my Lord and Saviour. I cast my soul on him, I rest my self on him, my will and heart doth embrace and accept of him, only to be Lord and Saviour, him I do, and none but him I do accept.

Assurance. 3. A third is, *I know assuredly that Jesus Christ is my Lord and my Saviour.* Many of the Lutherans (and some of our own) bend this way, that the essentiall and proper Act of faith as justifying, is assurance, and so they do define it, that it is *an assurance, a full assurance, a full persuasion;* whence it follows,

That no man believes, until he can truly say I know that Christ I amine, I know that he dyed for me, I know that my sinnes are pardoned.

It is not meet to take Armes, and strike our own brethren; who I think in this rather, aimed to give us faith in its perfection, then in its proper and substantial nature.

These things must needs be confessed:
1. That the assurance of faith may be possibly attained unto: God hath exhorted Christians to strive after assurance, yea, full assurance; yea, the riches of full assurance, and no doubt, that not only

ly Paul, but many a good Christian can say, (some time or other) I am verily perswaded, and *that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.*

2. That the assurance of faith is almost heavenly and comfortable condition. O the heavenly sweetnesse and divine solace, contentment, affection! When I do not only possesse Christ, but I know that I do possesse him. When I do not only take him to be mine, but see him to be mine; when he saith to me, *Be of good cheer, it is I; or, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Thirdly, that believers should strive after this assurance, they should not rest in the meer acceptance, but should contend in prayer, for the evidence, and reflection of this faith, that Christ is theirs, and they know him assuredly to be theirs. For though the estate of meere believing, is sure, yet that of assurance is comfortable. That is a true day, when the sun is rising, but when it cometh to the highest, the day is now glorious. Yet this I deny, that assurance (I mean, that reflexive perswasion that Christ is mine) is the essentiall or proper act of faith, that faith is not faith unless it be assurance.

There are two acts of faith.

One without which faith cannot be justifying faith, and this is the acceptance or embracing of Christ, or that which some call reliance and recombency.

Another, which in time faith may produce; and so assurance is an act of faith, not the necessary act, but the circumstantiall act as it were, not the vitall act, but the eminent act; assurance of faith, is fire blazing, the acceptance of faith is fire truly burning, though not highly flaming; the more high faith groweth, or any time, the lesse doubtings there are, and the more assurance. And yet faith may be in truth, though it hath no reflexive assurance, but many doubtings: *Why dost thou doubt? said Christ to those of little faith.* Faith, though little Faith, and faith, though doubting, as fire, though much smoke; and yet no doubting, if faith were essentially assurance.

O how many souls are there who prize none in the world like Christ, who love him with all their hearts, who honour him with the highest regards of a Lord, who hates the enemies of his Scepter, with a perfect hatred; who would not willingly offend, and grieve

grieve him in the least measure, who cleave unto him as the only rock of their salvation, who would not relinquish their interest in him for millions of worlds. And yet they weep with *Mary*, (because) they cannot see their Lord; they conflict day and night with feares and doubts, they have not this reflexive evidence and assurance, that Christ is their Christ, that Jesus is their Jesus, that this Lord is their Lord. Yet ask them, are you willing to accept of him? O, none in the world rather or more: are you willing that he should be your Saviour, he only is salvation? can you submit to have him to be your Lord Christ? O blessed Saviour (saith the soul) none to rule me but thou; none to save me but thou; thy blood is precious, and thy Lawes are righteous, and I could bestow a thousand hearts, and a thousand lives if I had them, on thee, to be changed, guided, ruled, ordered by thee.

And thus the soul, though it cannot see him, yet it beleeveth on him; it believes on him, though as yet it cannot say, *that my beloved is mine, and I am his.*



CHAP. VI.

The object of Justifying faith.

Objectum.



Now I come to the *object of justifying faith*, and that is twofold: First, *Immediate*, which is Jesus Christ our Lord. Secondly, *Concomitant*, or *Consequent*, which is *Remission*, and *Righteousness*, and *Salvation* for faith: first, takes Christ himself, and then these, in and for Christ.

Sect.

SECT. I.

THe immediate object of faith, as justifying, is *Jesus Christ himself*; as it is in *Marriage*, marriage is an action twixt person and person, not twixt person and estate, that is a resulting thing; so is it in the nature of faith and Christ. Faith doth not match the soul to the portion, to the benefits, but to the person of Christ.

You heare that God hath put salvation into Christs hand, he hath put remission of sins into his blood; there is eternal life to be had by him. Now if a person saith, I will have this salvation by Christ, which he hath purchased, but I will not have his person, I will have the remission of sins by his blood, but I care not for his person, I will have his righteousness by which I may stand before God, but I care not for his person; this now is no faith, it is no justifying faith. For faith, justifieth us, when we *take the person of Christ*. It is true, that we may, and should have an eye to the purchase and benefit by Christ, but Christ himself is that which faith looks upon.

But wherein is the person of Christ the Object of justifying faith.

For the resolution of this I will open two things.

First, that *whole Christ*, is the proper object of faith.

Secondly, *how faith doth exercise it self about whole Christ*.

SECT. II.

Whole Christ is the adequate and proper object; Christ you know (in respect of his person) is God and man, and he may be considered as a *Priest*, or as a *Prophet*, or as a *King*. We usually say as a Saviour, and as a Lord. Now he offers himself in all these to sinners: saith Christ there is *no Name under heaven by which you can be saved but me*, no Jesus but my self, and I have been the *Priest*, who have offered my heart blood to procure the pardon of your sins, and salvation: *I have satisfied my*

Father to the utmost, and have fulfilled all righteousness, Now I am willing to bestow my self on you, as one who can and will assuredly save you. But if you would have me to be your *Priest* to save you, you must also be willing to have me to be your *Prophet* to instruct you, and direct you; and to be your *King and Lord* to command you; you must resign up your selfe to my Scepter and Government; for I am a Lord as well as a Saviour, and I will be taken in both, or else you shall have part in neither.

There be three things which lay hard on us.

One is the *gift of sin*, which expoileth the soul to hell, and wrath, for which Christ is a Saviour and a Priest. *He became a curse for us, and bare our sinnes*, (that is) stood in our stead, and under-went that indignation, which else should have lighted on us.

Another is the *corruption or pollution of sin*, which breeds in-conformity to Gods Will, and depraves the whole nature, for which Christ is a Saviour and a Prophet, (that is) he is appointed to inform the minde, and reforme the heart.

A third is the *rebellion of sin*, rising in sinfull notions, and fordid delights and wayes, for which Christ is a Saviour and a King, (that is) he is to *subdue those iniquities*, to give them the bill of divorce, to *captivate all imaginations*, and to bring the whole man into the subjection of himself; but then he will be Jesus and Lord too; thou mayest not think that Christ must save thee, and sin shall rule thee; thou must not think that he will pay thy debts, if thou wilt give thy heart and service to sinne and the world. How ridiculous is it to conceive that God should raise up Christ, as the Pope raiseth up his indulgences, only to keep or fetch souls out of Purgatory; as if Christ were given only to pay our scores, and not to rule our hearts, for no other end but to keep us out of prison, that we might do nothing but sin against God, because Christ can take away the guilt of sin.

Nay, *while Christ is eyed by faith, taken and received by faith*. Do I feel my sinfull guilt: I now by faith take Jesus Christ, whom the father hath appointed, and offered to be my Priest, to be my surety, to beare my sins, to stand 'twixt God and me? Do I feel my sinfull nature and motions, I now take Jesus Christ, whom the Father

Father hath appointed to be my *Prophet and King* : He hath undertaken to be the teacher of hearts, and conquerer of sin; as so do I take him to be my Lord.

SECT. III.

T Herefore consider in the second place, *How faith doth exercise it self about whole Christ* : if you please I will discover it in the particulars.

For *Christ*, as a *Saviour and Priest* : Thus faith looks on him, not only that he is so, but to be so to me; he was God and man; and dyed, and satisfied, and took away sin; God proclaimes thus much, and offers him to me, here is the *Saviour of the world, this is my well beloved Son*, here is the *blood of atonement and peace*. What doth faith now? O faith takes hold on him; I acknowledge him, I receive him O Lord, to be my Saviour and Priest; not I, O Lord, not I could ever have sustained thy wrath, or satisfied thy justice, I could never have made my own peace, I could never have blotted out the hand writing, I could never have paid my debts, but thou hast *set forth Christ to be the propitiation for sin*. O Lord, I embrace him, my life is in his death, my healings in his sufferings, my satisfaction in his obedience; in none but him; I rest on none but him, on him do I believe, he hath satisfied to the utmost, and I trust on him that he hath done it for me.

Brethren, the case stands thus, a man is borne in sin, and he goes on in much sin, (a long time) at length God awakens his conscience; makes him to *possesse the iniquities of his heels*, of his birth, of his youth, of his age, of his life, and perhaps besets the soul round about with some sensible dread of his infinite displeasure. Now the man knowes not what to do : good Lord faith he, what a miserable creature am I? here's sin committed over and over, the Law broken, God provoked, conscience raging, hell gaping; I am violated faith the Law, wronged faith Justice, thou hast stoned faith Conscience, I will be satisfied faith the Lord, faith the poor soul, what shall become of me? what have I to quiet God? I can finde nothing, what shall I do to

pacifie him? I cannot imagine it: If I say that I have not sinned my conscience tells me I lye, if I say I will not sin hereafter, Why! yet how will this satisfie for former guilt? Itell you brethren that a heart brought to this sensible experience is marvelously oppressed, the very heart cracks, and the sins of that soul snap a sunder, under the sense of manifold guilt, and Gods displeasure.

But then God comes in the Gospel, and calls out to the poor and distressed sinner, come hither saith God, I will shew thee a way of salvation? O how the soul listens to such a message! but how Lord can this be, what am I, or what can I do! Nothing saith God for thou art an enemy, and thou art without strength: But I have laid *Salvation upon one that is Mighty*. Who is that Lord! *It is my own Son*, whom I have out of my love sent into the world to be made man, and to dye, and satisfie for sinners, to beare their iniquities, to answer for all their transgressions, and he is become a *surety*, and a *Priest*, and hath sacrificed his own soul, to be an offering for sin, and I offer him unto thee, to be thy *surety*, to be thy *Priest*, to take away thy finnes: Now take him saith God to the soul and with him the discharge of thy sins. Hereupon the soul being perswaded of the truth of this good testimony, and with many teares admiring at the riches of divine love and mercy, it doth now by *faith close in with Christ*, put it self on him, embraceth him with all the heart, as a sufficient and perfect Saviour. As if the soul now fastning it self by faith on Christ in this respect should thus be speake the Lord.

O Lord, thou art pleased justly to charge my sins upon my conscience, I confesse and am ashamed that I have thus sinned against thee; yea, and I acknowledg that I am never able to answer thee for those sins? But thou hast appointed thine own Son to be my *Saviour* and *Priest*, whose office it was to *beare the sins of the people*, these sins therefore which conscience now chargeth upon me, I do by faith charge upon thine own Sonne, for he was *made sin for us*; thou didst ordaine him to be a *surety*, and therefore I beseech thee Lord look for satisfaction of my debts in his precious blood, and take away thy curse from my soul, for he was *made a curse for us*, he did susteine thy wrath in our stead to deliver from wrath: Now therefore O Lord! I

put my soul only upon thy only Son, whom I take to be my sacrifice, him I offer up unto thee as my propitiation, I have sinned, but thy Son hath dyed for my sins: I have provoked thee; but thy Son hath pacified thee, I have wronged thee, but thy Son hath satisfied thee; he did not die for his own sins, but for my sins, he was not made a curse for himself, but for me, I lay hold on his blood to be my peace, and satisfaction and salvation. As if a man were like to be carried to prison for debt, and hunting up and down for a friend to stand for him, at length he findes one only man and him he brings to the creditor, and saith here's a man will pay you and ransom me; so faith for a troubled and obliged sinner to God, it findes out Christ, and saith, Lo Lord here is thy Son, who is my surety, he will discharge, he is my ransom.

S E C T. IV.

FOR Christ as a Saviour and King and Prophet and Lord what is the exercise of faith there? I tell you what I think of it.

It is a work of a believing heart, whereby it doth accept of Christ, to be the sole teacher and ruler of heart and life, and resigne up himself wholly to him, to be fashioned as it were and guided by him. A man never comes to the truth of beleeving, but he shall finde this, *that faith will change his Master*: For faith changeth the heart, and the heart being once changed will quickly change its Lord: So that to believe on *Christ* as a *King*, as a *Lord*, as a *Prophet*, it is to admit him to give him up the whole man into his hands to his holy and spiritual Government; as if the heart should say thus much, thou art a *Holy Christ* and thou art he who art to *reigne*, now I take thee to be my Holy Lord, and I resigne up my selfe, I passeover my selfe unto thee, I will have no Lord but thee, and I do with all my heart accept of thee to make me *Holy*, as thou art *Holy*, and to subdue this vile heart of mine, and to rule in me, by thy blessed and mighty Spirit.

Sect.

SECT. V.

THis briefly of the *immediate object of faith*, on which faith immediately looks (*viz.*) *the person of Jesus Christ* : to take and receive *Christ*, as *Lord and Saviour*. This is true faith; yet by the way note a few things.

First, that this *taking is with all the heart*; it is not a pretended taking, a dissembled work; there is a taking of Christ with the tongue, and a taking of him with the heart : O no, when true faith takes Christ, it brings in the very strength of the soul : O Lord Jesus; I do embrace thee, accept of thee with all my soul, with all my might, and with all my affections.

Secondly, this *taking of Christ is of all Christ*, of *Lord as well as Jesus*: when the heart is made sensible of sin and Satan, and world, and Christ, and now falls off from them, I will have no more to do with you, I will serve you no longer, *Christ only shall be my Saviour*, and he only shall be my *Lord*; I will put my soul under his Scepter and Government.

Thirdly, this *taking of Christ is only of Christ*. For it is a *conjugal taking*, which consists of unity : one (they say in the Metaphysicks) is divided in it self, and divided from all besides it self; so is it in faiths taking of Christ, *One Faith, One Lord*, said the Apostle *Eph. 4.* It takes Christ so as none with Christ, or besides Christ : The *Patriarchs* had most of them a wife, and a concubine, it is not so here, *Faith* doth match with an absolute exclusion of all other matches. It is not the soul, and Christ, and sin: nor the soul, and Christ, and the world; nor the soul, and Christ, and the Devil: it is not the soul and Christ in chief, and sinne in service as a deputy, or a corrivall, a secondary thing, &c.

Fourthly, this *taking is freed from mistaking*. Faith knows: what it doth, it sees its way it understands, 1. Who that is whom it takes. 2. Upon what termes he will be taken. 3 Its grounds of taking.

First who it is, (*viz.*) *the Son of God, God and man*, a most holy person, a mighty Redeemer, and Saviour.

Secondly, upon what termes, (*viz.*) He will not come in by the by, he will not be taken as a vassalle, as a captive, as a drudger he will not be taken for base and changeable reasons, meerly to stop

stop a gap in the conscience, or only in faire weather, but he will be taken as *Lord and King*, to command all the heart, to dispose all the wayes, to rule our very thoughts, he will be taken for his own sake, out of a judicious love and estimation of his person, he will be taken with all the estates and conditions that befall on the *croffe crucified*, as well as in the way to *Hierusalem magnified*; as one persecuted and distressed on earth, as well as one raised and glorified in heaven; and thus true faith takes Christ.

Thirdly, upon what grounds, *viz. upon Gods offer of Christ and promise, that whosoever believes on him, &c. and on his commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son*; whereupon faith brings in the soul to Christ, it believeth that God saith true, that he doth not call upon men, he doth not command men, he doth not promise men, and all this to delude men; so that if you should ask faith what warrant had you to bring in such a soul to Christ? Why faith faith, God revealed, and offered his Sonne, and commanded me to believe, and promised not to cast off any that come, &c.

Fourthly, this *taking* is resolved against *untaking*. All takings are not of the same force and power; if I take a servant, I take him so, that upon good reasons and occasions I can put him off againe; but if I take a wife, there can be no untaking on my part, unless God takes her, I must never forsake her. Faith takes Christ this way, to be a *Saviour for ever*, to be a *Head*, an *Husband*, a *Lord for ever*: I observe that there are two kindes of taking Christ to be a *Lord*, one is *compulsory* and violent, as when an enemy is made to rule, a man in a sicknesse, in a terror of conscience, in a day of wrath, in an expectation of death, he will take Christ to be his Lord, he will say, Oh sinne is vile, I abhor it, I will become a new man, I will have none but the Lord Christ, and he only shall be my Lord; and hereupon the man sets about the work of shewing that Christ is his Lord, he will command his servants to pray, to heare, to read, to keep the Sabbath, &c. Yet this man as soon as Gods hand is off, as soon as ever he is freed from his bands, he will like a lewd apprentice, break loose from his Lord and Master, he will serve Christ no longer, he will go his sins again, to the world again, to his base society again &c. Why? because this accepting was only violent, and no actions are

are stedfast, or constant, whose causes are compelling and violent.

Another is *ingenious of faith*, and this taking of Christ, is grounded onely in Christ, in its excellencies, beauties, perfections, which are not like the *lights of a candle*, this houre very cleare, and the next, none at all, but like *light in the Sunne*, still abiding and remaining; and therefore, when a man doth by *faith, take Christ*, he *takes him for ever*: for faith can never change for the better, and it sees stedfast reason in *Christ*, to cleave to *Christ*.

Now I come to the *consequent object of faith*, and that is, *remission of finnes and righteousness*, and whatsoever good comes from Christ.

For thus it is, *faith* doth order its motions, or actions according to the *word*; Now the word reveales, and offers Christ first, and then the benefits next. It is not; *whosoever beleeves eternal life shall have Christ the Sonne of God*, but *whosoever beleeves on the Sonne of God, shall have eternal life*; Nor is it, *whosoever beleeves the remission of finnes, shall have Christ*, but *whosoever beleeves in Christ, shall have the Remission of finnes*.

Yet when faith hath made the soule to take Christ, it goes then from the *person* to the *portion*, from *Christ* to the good in Christ, and by him; *for if Christ be ours, all is ours*, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2.

SECT. VI.

I Will therefore speak a word of faith, as conversant about, First, *Remission of finnes*. Secondly, *Righteousnesse*.

For the first of these, *viz.* the pardon or remission of finnes, Consider,

That remission of finnes, is an Action of God, acquitting the guilt and the punishment, so that he will never reckon with the soul any more in a judicial way for those finnes which are pardoned. As when the King throughly pardons a Malefactor, he discharge

chargeth him, and takes off the guilt, (we speak of it in respect of redundancy) that it shall not now prejudice the person any longer; so doth God, when he pardons sinne: Though he doth not in this annihilate the sinne, (that is) make that to be no sinne, which was sinne, yet he doth prejudice sin (that is) he takes off the guilt, that it shall never redound to the damnation of the sinner, no nor to his damage.

Jesus Christ hath procured remission or pardon of sinne for us, hence, *Ephes. 1. 7. In whom you have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of your finnes. His blood was shed for many, for the remission of finnes, Mat. 26.* (that is) he did die, and by his death hath merited, and procured our pardon and discharge: God offering *Christ*, offers with him the purchase of *Christ*, viz. the pardon of finnes; If you will take my Sonne, I will pardon your sins. Now faith inclines the soul, which is sensible of its sinful guilt, to put it self on *Jesus Christ* for the discharge of them: As the wife looks for none, and goes to none but to her husband to discharge her debts; so faith goes to none for to procure remission of finnes, but only to *Christ*, and on him doth it rest. O *Lord Christ*, saith Faith, thou didst take these my sinful debts upon thee, and thou didst undertake to satisfie for them, and to get them to be blotted out, yea, and I know that thou didst make a full satisfaction. Now I renounce all hope of pardon from any thing in me, and do rest my soule on thy precious blood, trusting that it was shed for the remission of my sins; I have taken thee to be my *Christ*, and therefore I commit the answering of my sinful debt, to thy full satisfaction and sufferings. Put the case to a beleeving heart, you have many sinful debts to answer for, finnes before conversion, and finnes after conversion; sins of ignorance, and finnes of knowledge; these finnes have that in them, which bindes you over to wrath and curse, now to whom doth it belong to pardon these finnes; your soul answers, to God, *Who can forgive finnes but God only?* And I, even I am he that blotteth out thy sins, &c. yea, but for whose sake will God pardon them? the soul answers, onely for *Christ Jesus* sake, for he did shed his blood for their remission, and therefore faith goes with the soul to *Christ*, and saith, O blef-

1 John 2. 1.

fed Saviour, thy blood was shed for the remission of sinnes, and thou hast invited all that are *heavy laden to come unto thee*, and *thou wilt ease them*: Thou sayest, if any man *sinne*, *he hath an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*, and *he is the propitiation for sinnes*. Now I am thus and thus sinful, and these guilts lie upon my conscience, I am never able to get them to be pardoned for any thing in me, but I do put my soul upon thee, and do trust to thee to get off these sinnes, I put them on thy account, yea all of them, and do believe that in thy blood they shall be pardoned, &c.

SECT. VII.

NOW for the second thing which faith looks on in Christ, and that is *Righteousnesse*.

Beloved, this know, that God doth never *Justifie* a man, nor will ever *save* a man, who hath not a *perfect Righteousnesse*, for he is a *Righteous God*; and will not pronounce the sinner guiltlesse; his *Law* and *Justice* must be satisfied in all points, or else the sinner shall never come to heaven.

Now the soul of a person is marvellously distressed, when it seriously thinks of this; How shall I stand before the great and holy God another day, being by nature so wholly sinful, and at the best being but defectively and imperfectly good? But faith in this case brings the soul to Christ, and in him it findes a most *perfect* and *absolute* righteousness: For whom saith the scrupulous soul for thee, faith Faith, what for me? yea for thee, for the Scripture saith, *That Christ was made the righteousness of God for us*, and that *he was made sinne for us*, that *we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. So that if thou wouldst have such a righteousness, as may answer the Law, and satisfy God, and which God will accept for Justification: Thou must by faith get out of thyself, and lay hold on that righteousness which is in Christ. As Paul, I account all things but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by Faith. Phil. 3. 8, 9.

There

1 Cor. 1. 30.

2 Cor. 5. 21.

There is a twofold righteousness.

One *inherent*, which is *in us*, and this *imperfect*, it can never justify us in the sight of God.

Another is *imputed*, which is not *in us*, yet it is *for us*; And this is the *righteousness of Jesus Christ*, both in his nature, and in his obedience; *Active*, and *Passive*, which God reckons unto him who doth believe in Christ, of which the Apostle abundantly in *Rom. 4. 12. c. 5. &c.* of this doth faith rest only in the matter of justification. Though inherent righteousness be absolutely required to salvation, yet no righteousness but that only which is Christ's, and is imputed to believers, is the matter of our justification. When a sinner comes to account it with God, he can never say, Lord, Lo here I am, see if there be any sin in my person, or defect in my holiness, I will expostulate with thee upon base termes; I have not offended thee, or if I have, here's grace enough to answer for me, my heart is wholly cleane, my duties at all times in every respect, for matter and manner, have been performed just as thou requirest in thy holy Law, *enter into judgement with me if thou pleasest*; I will be tryed by my own holiness, by my own goodness. O no, there can be no such thing, no sinner can be pronounced just this way, ever the *Saints* must cast their crowns to the ground, and give glory to the Lamb who only is worthy. For when we come to the point of justification before God, we must renounce our own righteousness as filthy rags, we must cry out, *enter not into judgement with thy servants, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.*

But as they who were in danger, fled to the horns of the Altar for their lives, so must we, if we would be justified, fly by faith to the Altar, of Christ's perfect righteousness, and so doth faith, when it would present the person of a sinner perfect and unblameable before God; It doth bring him unto Christ, and saith before God, *I believe in him to be the Lord my righteousness.*



CHAP. VII.

How it may appeare, that to believe in the Lord Iesus Christ is the only way to be saved.



Efore I give you the Arguments or Reasons to evince this, I must premise some particulars, viz.

First, That beleeving, or faith, may be considered four wayes; either,

3. Premisea.

1. *Absolutely*, as a simple habit, or quality of grace, apt to change the unbelievingnesse of the heart, and to send forth the acts of trusting and acceptance. Thus faith is not the only way of salvation, partly because other habits are required as well as faith, and partly because there is not in faith, (absolutely considered) any meritorious dignity (of it self) to challenge salvation. We say that a Ring is worth a hundred pound, not absolutely considered, not that the gold which makes the Ring, amounts to that value, but in respect of the Diamond set in that Ring; so faith is a grace of wonderful price (*much more precious then gold*) Not so much in respect of it self, as if it did by its own natural dignity, cause our Justification, and salvation, but in respect of *Christ*, whose person it takes; and on whose righteousness it doth rely; so though this be true; we are *justified by faith*, yet this is as true, we are *not justified for faith*, but *for Christ*; on whom faith doth trust.

2. *Actually*, (that is) for the very act of beleeving: *Arminius*, and *Bertius*, and some of that cut, do say, That not the righteousness of *Christ* is that which justifieth, but the act of beleeving on it, is that which is imputed in our Justification. A righteousness of *Christ* they do grant, but 'tis the act of our beleeving on this, which (by divine acceptance or favour)

is

is imputed for righteousness; but this is a rotten opinion.

Because first, it makes void the righteousness of Christ: by his blood we are justified, Rom. 5. 9. By his obedience are we made righteous, verse 19. If this doth justify us, then faith as an act doth not, unless we will be doubly justified.

Secondly, no works of ours, before or after grace, do justify us, but the act of faith is one of these. *Ergo,*

3. *Correlatively* (that is) with relation to Christ and his righteousness, and in this respect faith is the only way: one faith well, faith doth not justify as an *action*, but as a *passion*; his meaning is this, not *faith apprehending*, but the thing *apprehended by faith* doth justify: It is true, I must by faith apprehend Christ if I will be saved; but it is not the apprehension which saves, but he who is apprehended is the cause of my salvation. If I were like to be drowned in the water, I must put forth my hand to him, who stands and reacheth out his hand unto me; yet it is not the meer putting forth of my hand which saves me from drowning, but his hand which is laid hold on by mine, which draws me forth, and so I am preserved, both must meet, but the cause is in him. *Bucer.*

4. *Instrumentally*, or in respect of office; you know well how to distinguish twixt *actions* a man doth *as a man*, and *actions* which a man doth *as an officer*: If a man be condemned, and ready for execution, and one comes from the King with the message of pardon, the delivering of this message is an act of his employment and office, not of his absolute nature as a man only. Thus it is with *faith*, it sends out some actions, as an *absolute grace*, and it performs others as a *grace in office*, as an instrument designed and deputed; It justifies us in this latter respect; not that it is the matter or cause which clears all for us with God, but because it is the instrument, laying hold on him who doth this for us: As the hand is laid to cloath the body, not that the hand is any cloathing; (for a man doth not weare his hand) but because it is the instrument to put on our cloathing; or as the cup is laid to quench our thirst, not that the metall of the cup can go down and satisfy that natural appetite, but because it holds that wine or liquor which doth quench; so doth *faith* justify a sinner, not as

the object, not as the cause, but as the instrument (that is) as the hand of the soule, laying hold on the Robes of Christs righteousness, putting on that garment of his, and as an instrument, receiving, and holding, and bringing to the soule that precious blood of Christ, which onely can (immediately) satisfie God, and appease a thirsty conscience.

A twofold reference of things.

2. Againe we must distinguish of the manner and peculiar habitudes, or respect of things unto salvation; some things have a reference to salvation by way of proper causality, which have in them a meritorious reason, for the proper dignity of which a person is justified and saved; And in this respect we say, that *believing in Jesus Christ is the only method, and way of salvation*. Not that faith can (from its own worth) dispute and challenge from God, but because *Jesus Christ*, (who is the object of faith) hath as a cause merited our pardon, justification and salvation.

Other things have a reference by way of order; As suppose a man were to be Knighted by the King, to obtaine this Knighthood, he must come to the Court, and stoop down on his knee, and so receive that honour; This access to the Court, and humbling on his knee, is not a matter of merit or cause, but only of order and condition: In this latter respect, we deny not but *good works* look towards salvation, and are required thereto. Not as any cause (*Christ only is the cause*) but as conditions, and order, steps, and wayes, which we must tread, if we will be saved, *vis ad regnum, non causa regnandi*.

Bernard.

When we say, that *believing in Christ Jesus is the only way to be saved*; you must not understand it so, as if no other grace were required from a man: but *faith only*, but thus, There is no other grace which layes hold on Christ (who is the cause of salvation) but *faith only*. As it was with the father of the Prodigal, when he met his sonne, falling down on his knees, he presently forgave him: but before he brought him into his house, he did cloath him with other garments: So doth God our Father, upon our humbling and believing, freely confer on us remission of sins for his Christs sake; yet before he brings us to heaven, he doth invest our soules with the singular graces of his holy Spirit; yea, though justification be not sanctification, yet where God doth the one, he ever bestowes and works the other.

other. Therefore I pray you remember to distinguish 'twixt these two, justification, and sanctification. The person justified and to be saved. Though this be most true, that there is no other *meritorious cause* of our justification and salvation, but only Christ; and there is no other instrument to lay hold on this, but faith, yet this is as true, that the person justified, and to be saved, hath more graces in him besides his faith; though there be not a co-operation of faith, and other graces, to justify; yet there is an existence of faith and other graces, in the person justified. Thou must have a good heart as well as a good Christ; and an holy life, as well as a precious faith, or else thou shalt never come to heaven. You know that in the body of man, there be Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, and Hands to take; and Feet to go, of all these which are in the body, yet no members are deputed to see, but the eyes, nevertheless the eye must not say of the ears, I have no need of thee, nor the hand to the foot, I have no need of thee: it is granted, that no member sees but the eye, eats but the mouth, walks but the feet, lays hold on but the hands: Their offices are singular, yet their co-operation is necessary. So, no grace but faith, pitcheth on Christ, layes hold on him as the cause of salvation, yet there is deed of other graces in the person to be saved. There must be love, and repentance; and godly sorrow, and true fear, and lively hope, and patience, and zeal, &c. The estate is changed, only by the blood of Christ; but if we will be saved, the person must also be changed by the Spirit of Christ.

SECT. I.

These things being thus premised, I shall now give you some arguments, by which the truth of the assertion shall appear:

First, there is no other way to be saved but this; viz. To believe on Jesus Christ. Ergo, it is the only way. Three things I take as granted Hypotheses.

First, that there is a Salvation for a sinner.

Secondly, that there is a way tending thereto, as a meritorious cause of it.

3. Argument

Thirdly,

Thirdly, that every man is a sinner, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Rom. 3. 22.

Two ways of life. Now then, know that there are but two ways of life, according to which there is a double Covenant. First, one *Legal*. Secondly, the other *Evangelical*. The *Legal Covenant* is, *do this and live*; the *Evangelical Covenant* is, *believe and live*. The *Legal Covenant* grounds salvation in *our own persons*, and the *Evangelical*, in the *righteousnesse of another person*. And these Covenants are opposite, that one cannot consist with the other. For (and mark this) though the *Law* and the *Gospel* may, and do, and shall consist, as the *Law* is a word of rule for obedience, yet they cannot possibly consist, is the Covenant of justification, and salvation: (that is) whosoever will stand to the Covenant of works, to be justified by it, he rejects the Covenant of grace, and so *E contra*.

Well then, this being true, that *our life* is to be had by the *Covenant of Works*, or of *Grace*, I will briefly shew unto you that we sinners can never be justified and saved, by the *Legal Covenant*, which if I clear, then it will be evident, that *our salvation is only by faith in Iesus Christ*.

Thus then, all the possibility to be justified and saved by the *Legall Covenant*, ariseth from one of these grounds (*viz*) either because,

3. Things. That there is a fulnesse and exactnesse in inherent holinesse. That there is a dignity and efficacy in actual obedience, which they call *good works*. That there is a latitude, or sufficiency of duty, to fulfil the *Law*, which may be conceived to be in a regenerate person; but none of these can justify and save; Ergo,

I. For the first, *viz. inherent holinesse*, this holinesse is that which is wrought in our whole soul, by the Spirit of God, whereby, of wicked he makes us good, and of unholy, he makes us holy; and according to the severall degrees of it is the person lesse or more holy. Now this we say, that though the *justified person* hath this *infused inherent holinesse*: Yet this is not that which can justify him before God, (that is) for the dignity of which he can stand so before the judgement of God, as to be pronounced just and righteous, and so acquitted, which I prove thus.

1. That

That can never be the cause of our justification, which is *defective* and *imperfect*, and leaves yet the *person in some measure sinful*. I cannot in the Court of Justice, be pronounced *perfectly just*, for that *righteousness* which is *imperfectly just*, no more then he can in a strict court be reputed to make full satisfaction, who hath not paid halfe his debt, or to be thoroughly well, who is scarce able to walk three turnes in the Chamber: But that *holiness* which is in us, *inherent holiness*, is very *imperfect*, (I speak of that which is in us here on earth) it is not adequate, or parallel to the *whole will of God*, which requires *perfection of degrees*, as well as of *parts*.

That it is imperfect, is as cleare as day.

First, it is at *combate with sin*. *Ergo*, it is not perfect: the argument is good, for whiles one contrary is mixed with the other, there is still imperfection; *Sinne* and *Grace* are *contrary*, and *conflicting* shew *imperfection*, as *victory* notes *perfection*.

Secondly, that which may be *increased*, is not *perfect*, but our *inherent holiness* may receive more increase: Hence those many exhortations to *perfect holiness*, 2 Cor. 7 1. and to *labor after perfection*, 2 Cor. 1. 3.

Thirdly, all the *parts of holiness* are *imperfect*. *Faith* is not so clear an eye, nor *Hope* so fixed an Anchor, nor *Love* so pure a streame, but that each of them need additions of degrees, of strength, of help: the *Moon* when it draweth into nearest conjunction with the *Sun*, and is filled with the longest beames of communicated light, it hath yet her spots, which like so many reproaches stick in the heart of her; so is it with the holiest person on earth, with the largest measures of *inherent graces*, he hath yet great measures of *sinne*, which like so many spots, do blemish and disable the soul to stand perfectly pure and just before the eyes of God.

That *righteousness* by which we are justified is manifested without the Law. See Rom. 3. 21. and what that righteousness is, he expresseth in ver. 22. *even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe*. But *inherent righteousness* is not manifested without the Law? Why? because the Law commands this *inherent righteousness*, (*viz.*) To love the Lord our God with all our hearts, &c.

That cannot be the *cause of our justification and salvation*, upon which the *conscience dares not to rest* in the secret agonies of conflict, or in the eminent houres of death : when the soul is to enter conflict with the wrath of God, being wounded with the sense of sinne, and cited as it were before the tribunal of Gods holy and strict justice, dares it then to put it self seriously, and in good earnest upon its *own holinesse*, to make its peace, to be its *propitiation*, to satisfie the trials and demands of Gods justice? One well observeth of the Papists, that when they are to *dispute with men*, they will plead for *inherent holinesse*, but when they are to contend with God, they will *flie only to Christ*: *tutissimum est*, said Bellarmine. It was no ill meditation, that of Anselme, *Conscientia mea meruit damnationem, & Penitentia mea non sufficit ad satisfactionem, sed certum est, quod misericordia tua superat omnem offensionem* (that is) O Lord my conscience tells me, I have deserved damnation, all the repentance that I have or can perform, comes short of satisfaction; but thy mercy (even thy mercy only) can pardon, and so exceed all my transgressions.

Cheminisme.

Anselme.

4. The most holy persons do every day sin, and need daily pardon, and daily mercy; how then can we be justified or saved, for the merit or dignity of any holinesse in our selves? How ridiculous were it, that he should think himself to stand in great favour and acceptance before his Prince, for the singularity of his continued vertues and performances, who every day breaks out into such acts, which need the Kings gracious mercy and pardon?

2. There is no *dignity or meritorious efficacy in actual holinesse*, or *Actual holiness in good works*, by reason whereof we can be justified and saved. or good works cannot justify.

2. Reasons of it. I know this field is very large, I will not expatiate, but speak in a word of it, with a proper respect to the thing in hand, I prove the thing thus.

1. No man (since Adams fall) can performe works, in that perfection which the Law of God requires, under the paine of eternal damnation. The perfection of good works (according to the strict exigence of the Law, consists especially in two things.

1. One is, that a man be able to performe them with all of his heart,

heart, and with a plenary love, without the intervening, or slipping in of any evil inclination, or motion which abates that due and required intension, or in any measure sprinkleth or tainteth them with any defilement.

2. Another is, that a man is to perform good works in that manner, with a perpetual and constant tenour or course all his life. Those two are the ingredients of perfection, as appears by that of Christ, *Thou shalt love the Lord, &c.* And that of Paul, *He is cursed that doth not continue in all that is written, &c.* Gal. 3. 10. These are the conditions of works legally good, and which must justify a man, if he will be justified according to the legal Covenant. But who can performe such perfect and good works? Adam might have done them, and Christ did; but what one sinner can? who can say, my heart is cleane, and that we do not in many things offend all? Paul cries out, *I am carnal, but the Law is spiritual: The good that he would do, he could not do, and the evil which he would not do, that did he do.* Good Lord! how often are we at a losse in our most retired meditations, and how our hearts lie flat on earth, when our eyes look towards heaven in prayer? For one good work that we do, how many bad which we should not do? like boyes, for one faire line, twenty with blots and blurs; or like the Archers, whereas they hit the mark once, they misse it a hundred times: Let us but cast the accounts of our ill works with the good, and we shall finde with shame and sorrow, that our good works are not equal with our bad in number, nor so strong in dignity to wipe out the bad; but the bad, as they are more for number, so their cry of guilt is more meritorious, to cast both our persons and all our works before the judgement seat of God, then the good to ingratiate or merit for us.

2. What proportion 'twixt our works, and 'twixt our pardon and salvation? If Jacob be lesse then the least of outward benefites, Good God! how far more unworthy are we of the spiritual, yea of the Eternal? When we have done all, we have not done more then duty, and that can never be *merit*, which is but *duty*; nay, when we have done all we can, we have not done our duty, we are but *unprofitable servants*, and that which failes of *duty*, comes short of *dignity* or *merit*.

60 How to believe in the Lord Iesus Christ. Ch. 7. Sect. 1

It is true, that God commands, accepts, delights in, will graciously reward good works; what, for their own sake? No, for his mercies sake he will save the man whose heart is holy, and whose life is fruitful; What, for the *works sake*? No, but for his *Christs sake*.

It cannot be denied, but that there is some relation *'twixt* good works and salvation, as between the *meanes* and the *end*; but there is not that relation as *'twixt* an *efficient cause*, and an *effect*; for the efficient cause of our salvation is only *Gods grace* and favour; Nor, as *'twixt* a *meritorious cause* and the *reward*, for the *meritorious cause* of our salvation, is only the *obedience of Iesus Christ*; Nor, as *'twixt* an *apprehensive cause*, (may I use such an improper speech) for that only is *faith*, the instrument of our salvation, &c.

3. There is not in regenerate men such an adequation or full answerableness of duty, as to *keep and fulfil the Law*, as it is the *Covenant of life and salvation*.
 Noe ability to keep the whole Law wholly.

3. Reasons. There are divers Arguments to cleare this, I will touch one or two.

1. *Imperfect actions do not fulfil a perfect Rule*, no more then a short line answers a long copy, or a line partly crooked doth that which is straight: But the duties which regenerate men perform, are imperfect actions, for as much as they flow from an imperfect agent, *viz.* from the soul of a Christian, which is partly spiritual, and partly carnal not wholly spiritual, nor wholly carnal; even from this doth the Apostle conclude the impossibility (for us) to fulfil the Law, *Rom. 8. 3. viz. from the weakness or infirmity of the flesh* (that is) of the old man not yet fully purged and changed.

2. *If any man could perfectly fulfil the Law*, then *some man had no need of Christ*, either to be his Redeemer, or to be his Intercessor; for a Redeemer and Intercessour is, in case of transgression and failing, and so Christ should be to a regenerate person, at least an idle and fruitlesse intercessour; for as much as it doth appertaine to his intercession, to pacifie, and reconcile, and ingratiate: but what use of this, where all things and services are just already, as they should be without any animadvertency of the Law against them? But *Christ is an Intercessor even for the Saints. He makes intercession for us.*
 faith

saith Paul, Rom. 8. and Saint John implies that an *Advocate* is for a sinner, only for him, 1 John 2. 1. *If any man sinne, we have an Advocate, &c.* If for a sinner only, then for a transgressor of the Law, and if for a transgressor of the Law, then not for one who doth perfectly fulfil it.

3. *If the just must live by faith*, Then he cannot perfectly fulfil the Law; for then he might live by his works, but the just shall live by his faith, Gal. 3. 11. *That no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident, for the just shall live by faith;* Mark the place (*shall live by faith*) If it comes to the matter of life and death, then farewell works, *Cursed is every one that doth not continue in all that is written to do them;* If he will save his life, he must get him faith to fly to mercy and Christ: yea, and mark of whom he speaks this, It is not of a person unconverted, but it is of the just, even the just must live by his faith, (that is) *By Christ*, on which faith doth rest, not by his own merits, works, obedience.

Now, put all this together, there are but two ways to save a man, either by faith in Christ, or else by the observance of the Law, But none can observe the Law, so as to be justified by it; Because, 1. His holinesse is short. 2. His works ineffectual. 3. His performances unanswerable, *Ergo*, to beleieve in Christ is the only way.

Every mouth is stopped (by the Law) and all the world is to become guilty before God, Therefore by the Deeds of the Law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. 3. 19, 20. Suppose a man had many great debts, and several poore friends, and he seeks to one of them, good sir be bound for me, alas saith he, all my estate will not reach or extend to satisfie half of what thou owest; Then he goes to another; Sir be you pleased to engage your self; Alas, saith he, I am so poore that the Creditor will not take my word; Even thus it is when a man will runne to something in himself, to justify him before God; alas, saith holinesse, I am not able enough, and saith good works, God may finde reason enough to discard us: Therefore, saith Faith, *To Christ, To Christ, None but Christ.*

SECT. II.

Secondly, *All that can justify and save a man, is only to be found in Christ*, as in the meritorious cause, *Ergo*, the only way to be saved, is to be belevee in Iesus Christ. Hence is Christ called, *Heb. 2. 10. The Chapta'ne of our salvation*, *Heb. 5. 18. The Author of eternal salvation*.

There be two things, which if a man had, he should be saved, one is the *forgivenesse of his finnes*. *Ergo*, saith David, *Pf. 32. 1. Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*, ver. 2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity*.

Another is, the *possession of a most compleat righteousness*, by which he might stand and appeare perfectly just before the judgement seat of God; so that if divine justice should look on it, with the exactest eye, yet it were every way unspotted and full. Now these two are to be found only in Christ, and by him,

First, *Remission of finnes*. It is the purchase of his blood only, and therefore often in Scripture assigned thereto. Thou canst not with all thy teares wipe off (meritoriously) the least of thy finnes, nor with all thy grace, buy out the pardon of thy present failings. *All Remission is by blood, by the only blood of Christ*.

Secondly, the *righteousnesse* which justifies and saves us, is only in Christ, *He is made righteousnesse to us*, *1 Cor. 1. 30. and Rom. 5. 19. As by one mans disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous*; see verse 21. *Grace reignes through righteousness unto eternal life by Iesus Christ our Lord*.

I know that this Point of *imputed righteousness*, is the great quarrel 'twixt us and the Church of Rome, I shall therefore reserve the handling of it to the Uses, where I may more fitly clear our doctrine.

Now put things together, Whatsoever will save us, is in Christ, And faith is the only grace to conjoyne us with Christ, and therefore, *To believe in Iesus Christ is the only way to saved*.

SECT. III.

THirdly, *Salvation is by grace only*, Eph. 2. 5. Rom. 11. 6. And it is a *free gift*, Rom. 5. 15. *The free gift, the grace of God, and the gift of grace*, which is by *one man Jesus Christ*, hath *abounded unto many*, and v. 16. *the free gift is of many offences to justification*, and v. 18. *the free gift came upon all men to justification of life*. Now if it be so, then here's room for believing; For *Faith brings nothing of its own, but receives all as gift from God*. It is the receiving grace, Lord give me thy Son, Lord give me the pardon of my sinnes, Lord give me a righteoufnesse, Lord give me eternal life, all these things are gifts, and faith only receives these gifts, *Ergo*.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, *Salvation is only conferr'd in such a way; whereby God only may have the glory of it*. Though God doth bestow great matters on us for *our good*, yet all the end of them is for his own glory. To commend the riches of his grace and mercy, Ephes. 2. 7, 8. to v. 9. *Not of works, least any man should boast*; (that is) he should vaunt, and say, I have got heaven by my own merits, I have my wages for my labour, and my happinesse for my penny.

Now the way of believing is the only way of acknowledging a God, and of emptying of our proud imaginations; whatsoever faith hath, it hath taken the same out of a gracious hand; All is almes which comes to faith, and it will confesse, I have nothing, and am nothing; but what I have received, and what I expect, I expect it *for his sake who promisetb it*, not for *my sake who receives it*, and thus faith puts all the *glory on God*.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, neither would our salvation be sure, nor our comfort sure, if we were to be saved any other way then by believing in Iesus Christ.

1. Salvation would not be sure, because, First, our happinesse would be no more sure, now being in *our own hands*, out of Christ, then was Adams, left to himself.

Secondly, we would never be sure of salvation by any thing against which God might take just exception.

2. No sure comfort, because conscience troubled with the *seave* of sin, could never be pacified with imperfections and sins. That which will not satisfy God, can never pacifie conscience. But saith the Apostle, *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God: faith findes one who was delivered for our offences, who pacified God to the utmost, who was without spot, whose righteousness is full, imputed to us, accepted for us, and so here-upon doth graciously quiet and still the heart.*

We must distinguish 'twixt the *root* and *fountaine* and *ground* of our comfort, and between the *testimonies* of our interest in the *root* of our comfort; only Iesus Christ is the ground of a Christians comfort, and therefore saith Paul, *God forbid that I should rejoyce in any thing, but in the crosse of Christ.* If at any time we behold holinesse, or any part of it in our hearts, we take comfort in it, not as the ground, but as in the testimony, because it doth manifest our interest in him, who is *our comfort, our peace, our joy, our salvation, our all in all.*

Thus much for the Explication and confirmation of this great assertion, viz. That to beleve in Iesus Christ is the only way of salvation. Now I descend to the useful Application of all to our selves,



CHAP. VIII.

The preaching and hearing of the Gospel of singular use.

He first Use shall be for Information, which consists in many profitable consecrations or inferences, which will flow from this truth. If believing in the Lord Jesus Christ be the only way to be saved. Then first, hence it will follow;

That the preaching of the Gospel is worthy the while, it is of necessary and singular consequence. Peruse that place, *Rom. i. 16. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,* ver. 17. *for there is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith.* The Apostle presents two arguments of his honourable estimation, and confident preaching of the Gospel.

1. One is, that it is the *power of God to salvation*. (that is) it is the instrument which God useth, and into which he doth imprint a power to save men: It is called the *power of God to salvation*, not only in respect of revelation, because it doth manifest and declare the sole means of reconciliation twixt God and man, but also in respect of *operation and efficacy*, because it doth communicate and produce that *faith in Jesus Christ by which we are saved*.

2. Another is, that it comprehends the *righteousness of God*, which *faith only doth take*: By the righteousness of God, he understands that *righteousness whereby a man is justified in the sight of God*, and it is called the *righteousness of God*, because *God is the Author and giver of it*, it is wrought and given by God in Jesus Christ; and also because it is *approved and of force with God at his Tribunal and judgement-seat*. See another

place, *Ephes. 1. 13.* In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; He in the precedent verses doth ennumerate many singular and heavenly blessings, amongst which *Christ* was one, and he doth in this verse expresse the order and manner how they come to be interested in him, viz. by *trusting, or believing* and they come to that trusting and believing by the Gospel, which he stiles a word of truth, and a message of salvation.

Tell me seriously, is not *salvation* the great scope and aime of your most choise and sober thoughts? and can any attaine that but by *Christ*? and can you have *Christ* without faith?

How preciouslly deare (then) unto you should the *Ministry* of the Gospel be, which is the instrument of God, to produce that faith, which layes hold on that *Christ*, by whom only we are saved! Faith comes by hearing; and hearing by the Word of God, so the Apostle, *Rom. 10 17.* and *John 6. 45.* Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me.

He is an enemy to his own salvation, who fight the preaching of the Gospel; and he is an enemy to the salvation of others, who labours to suppress and extinguish it: for if salvation be by faith in *Christ*, and that faith depends on the Gospel, Then,

For our parts, let us blesse God for his Gospel. Let us for ever honour and respect the message of the Gospel, yea, let us heartily embrace the Doctrine, and power of the Gospel: Let the feet of them which bring the glad tidings of salvation, be acceptable unto us, for as much as salvation, and *Christ*, and faith are all of them annexed unto the Gospel.

2. Then hence it will follow, that a mere hearing of *Christ* and his doctrine will not save, if believing be the only way.

There are divers sorts of hearing.

Three sorts of hearing.

One with *incoherence*, when perhaps the Ear is open, but the minde is asleepe, and heeds not that precious object revealed.

Another with *Resistance*, when the eare is open, and the mind attentive, but the heart striving against the truth and goodness of the word.

Another with *Conformity*: when the ear heares, and the under-

understanding yields, and the heart embraceth. Now it is this latter kinde of hearing, which brings to salvation. That *hearing*, which consists only in the delivery of the message, which brings *something from God to us*, this will not save; but such an *hearing* as brings back *something from us to God*, which is accompanied with *believing*, which turns home the soul to the *acceptance* and *embracing* of *Jesus Christ*, this is the only hearing to save our soules. A motion made and seconded doth not conclude a match, but a motion consented unto and embraced.

3. If believing in *Jesus Christ* be the only way of life, then *Jesus Christ* should be the main scope and mark of all our preaching and studying. 1 COR. 2.2. *I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.* It was the maine theame and subject upon which that blessed Apostle did spend himself: Look as it is with a Physician, that though he doth sometimes lance, and sometimes make very sick, and sometimes restraints to strictnesse of diet, and sometime binde and trouble the patient, and sometimes relieve him with precious cordials; though these actions are different among themselves, yet they do center in one end, which is health and life. So whether Ministers preach the knowledge of sinne, or whether they strive to make men sensible of sinne, or whether they let see the arrows of Gods threatnings upon the conscience of sinners, or whether they touch on the mercy Seat; all the end and scope is, or should be, *to bring men to Christ*, to make *Christ* more glorious in the eyes of sinners, and to incline their hearts to accept and embrace him.

Christ may be preached two ways.

Either *Explicitly*, when he in his person, or offices, or benefits, is the only matter which is handled and published.

Christ preached two wayes.

Or *Virtually*, when he is the end of that matter, which is delivered. One of these wayes, *Christ* still to be preached: Do I meet with a broken and afflicted spirit, groaning under the load of sinful Nature and life, panting after the Prince of life and peace, willing to yield up it self to all the conditions of God in *Christ*? Here now I am to lift up *Christ* on his Crosse to spread his armes, to shew unto that broken Spirit, the very heart blood of *Jesus Christ* poured out for the remis-

sion of sinnes, to be a propitiatory Sacrifice for his soule. Do I meet with an obstinate and proud spirit, which dares to *disse justice*, and *presumptuously* to *avert mercy*. Here I open the indignation of God against sinne, of purpose to awaken the conscience, to cast down the high and lofty imaginations, and for no other end but this, That such a person being now come to the sense of his misery, may fitly be directed, and seasonably encouraged to the sight and fruition of his remedy in Christ.



CHAP. IX.

Justification only in Jesus Christ.



Fourthly, If that beleiving in Jesus Christ be the only way to be saved, Then this Informs us *where to finde our justification, viz only in Jesus Christ;* For there only is the *righteousnesse* which can satisfy justice, and in his blood only is remission of sinnes.

Now, because this is a fundamental point 'twixt us and the Papists, and it is the great bottom of comfort to a beleiving soule; give me therefore leave to improve the remainder of the time in a brief and distinct explication of it: Where

First, of the word and title (Justification.)

Secondly, of the nature and definition of it: together with some Arguments to evince, that it is only by and for Christ; and some Answers to the choicest Objections.

SECT. I.

FOR the word (*justification*) it hath a double acception amongst Writers.

1. One *Intrinsic*, and so it signifies to *make a man just by an act of infusion* (that is) by the implantation of sanctified or holy qualities.
2. Another *Forinsecal*, and so it signifies to *repute or pronounce a man just* by an *act of jurisdiction*, (that is) a judiciary sentence to pronounce him righteous, and free from guilt and condemnation.

And thus is it (for ought I can learn.) altogether used and sensed in the Scriptures, which speak of our justification before God: *viz.* for such an action of God, whereby after the manner of a Judge, he absolveth and acquitteth an accused person. Rom. 8. 33. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? it is God that justifieth;* verse 34. *Who is he that condemneth?* where you have a manifest Antithesis, or opposition 'twixt *justification* and *condemnation*; now as *condemnation* is an action of the Judge, a sentence of his pronouncing the person guilty and obnoxious, so *justification* (being contrary to it) must import an action or sentence acquitting and absolving. Yea, and again, as *condemnation* most improperly and abusively must be interpreted, if we expound it to be a making of a man so, and so sinful by infusion; so is *justification* unrightly conceived, when men make it to be a making of a person just by infusion of holiness.

It is observed, that in this kinde of justification, *viz.* which is *judicial*. There are four persons as it were,

First, the *Agent*. One who begins the suit, accuseth, layeth such and such things to the charge of another, the Apostle said it, Rom. 8. 33. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge? &c.*

Secondly, the *Patient*, the person accused and charged with default, and offence, and guilt.

Thirdly, the *Advocate*, who endeavours to vindicate the party so charged, from the accusation, either by declaring the innocency of the person, or impleading satisfaction.

Fourthly, the *Judge*, who in justification of that person,

gives sentence for the person accused, according to the valid plea of the Advocate, and so absolveth him. It is thus in the point of our justification; there is Satan accusing, and something else. There is *man* accused of sinne and guilt; there is Christ interposing and pleading as an *advocate*, by his blood and righteousness; and there is *God* as a *judge* for *Christ's* sake acquitting, and *absolving* and pronouncing righteous, and accepting to everlasting life. So then the proper and punctual acception of the word *justification*, is not according to *insufion*, but according to *absolution* and *pronunciation*: It is not *Physical*, as when a man is made whole, but it is *judicial*, as when a man is cleared at the bar.

He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, they are both an abomination to the Lord, Proverbs 17. 15. There is the word againe. Not I trust to be expounded by way of *insufion* (that is) he who makes a wicked man a good man, by impression of righteousness, is an abomination to God, but it is to be expounded by way of judiciary sentence (that is) he who pronounceth of a wicked man in the Court of Justice, as if he were just, and reputes him as so, and, accepts him as so; This man is an abomination to the Lord. Now, take one distinction, and then I will to the nature of Justification.

A twofold Justification.

There is a twofold justification.

One of *the cause*, and this is a particular kinde of acquittance, touching such and such things which are laid to a person, perhaps sometimes very unjustly.

Secondly, another of *the person*, when he is thoroughly purged and absolved; now in this respect we speak of justification, which I think for the nature of it may be thus defined.

SECT. II.

Justification of a sinner, it is a gracious and just action of God; whereby he imputing the righteousness of Christ to a believing sinner, absolveth or acquitteth him from his sins, and accepteth of him

as

at righteous in Christ, and as an heir of eternal life.

There are diverse things considerable in this description. 3. Things in this description.

First, *Justification* (immediately) belongs to God, it is his action. It is God that justifieth, saith the Apostle, Rom. 8. 33. And who can forgive sins but God only? Luk. 5. 21. We well distinguish 'twixt officia and beneficia, 'twixt duties and 'twixt blessings: duties belong to us, but blessings belong to God: It is God who is offended, and therefore condemnation and absolution belong to him, to the Judge, not to any other; hence saith the Apostle God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, 2 Cor. 5. 19. not imputing their sin. You do well to distinguish of the causes of our justification. There is first the prime cause, the Author, and this is God the Father, who gave his only begotten Son for us, and set him forth to be a propitiation for sinne, through faith in his blood, that all who do believe in him should be justified, Rom. 3. 25. And who is the Judge absolving all that believe, and pronouncing them just in Christ.

Secondly, *The meritorious cause*, so the Son of God our Mediator, is said to justify us, both as our surety, in paying our debt, and laying down the full price of our redemption, 1st. 43. 11: thereby affording unto us the matter and merit of our justification, and as our intercessor and Advocate, pleading effectually for us, that his merits may be imputed to us. Hence is it, 1st. 53. 11. My righteous servant shall justify many. God the Father justifies as a Judge by way of prime authority, and God the Son justifies as a Mediator. The Son justifies as a surety, paying our debt and giving satisfaction to the Father for us to the utmost, and the Father justifieth us, as a Creditor, fully accepting of that price and satisfaction.

Thirdly, *The applying cause*, and thus the Holy Ghost may be said to justify, inasmuch as he conjoynes Christ and the soul (by faith,) together, whence ariseth a participation of the righteousness of Christ, and the pardon of sin by him. Once more distinguish of justification, it may be taken two wayes, either actively, as a judiciary sentence absolving, acquitting, &c. and so we say God justifieth; Or Passively, as a thing apprehended and rested on, and so we say that Faith justifieth; not as if faith did acquit, but as it takes and receiveth the acquittance; not.

not as if faith did impute a righteousness, but because it receiveth and resteth on the righteousness of Christ, by God imputed to us: now when we say that justification is an action of God, it is meet for you to understand somewhat of the kind of this action. For the actions of God are of different sorts.

2. Sorts of actions.

Some, which are produced within us, and make a real alteration and change in the soul of man; thus *sanctification* is an action of God; (that is) such an action of God as is altering the inward frame, and qualities of the soul: of unholy, making them holy, of unbelieving making them believing, of hard making them soft, of earthly making them heavenly, &c.

Others are wrought for us, but not in us, and though they import a change of the condition, and state of the person, yet, properly, and formally, they imprint no change in the inward disposition; And thus *justification* is an action of God, not an action changing the inward frame of the heart, but an action changing the great estimation of the person; as when one of a bond-man is made free; this alters the state, but not the nature of the person: when a guilty person is pardoned by his Prince, this alters not his nature, but it doth alter his condition; he is now in the state of life, who before was in the state of death. So is it in justification, it is such an action, which alters the state, (that is) the man who is in the state of wrath and condemnation, being justified, is now acquitted, and so passed into the state of life and salvation.

A man who before was guilty of sin and damnation, the same man (remaining a sinner in himself, and in himself worthy of damnation) is in his justification absolved from the guilt of sin, and accepted as righteous in Christ, and is passed into the state of salvation. We deny not but the blood and the water go together; (that is) whom God justifieth by the blood of Christ, him also he sanctifieth, and washeth by the Spirit of Christ; but the action of the blood is one thing, and the action of the water is another thing. The light and heat in the fire go together, yet the action of light is not the action of heat: So here, *The action of the blood is a justifying action*, and this is without us, yet for us, and of us; *The action of the water is a sanctifying action*, and this is for us and in us too.

Sect.

SECT. III.

THe person justified is a believing sinner : the Apostle is clear, *Rom. 4. 5.* *To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* There is great dispute which is first, of Faith or Justification ; to me now it seemes a fruitlesse trouble to molest our selves with priorities in this kinde, I conceive we may distinguish 'twixt the purchase of our Justification, which was long ago in the blood of Christ. He was a Lamb slaine long since for to merit the remission of sinnes, neither doth he now begin his merit, who hath heretofore performed it.

Secondly, 'twixt the imputation of that purchase. It is true, while I am an unbelieving person, my justification is already as a purchase, but untill I believe, *God imputes it not unto me.* My meaning is this, there is a righteousness of Christ, which hath deserved pardon of sinne before ever I believe ; nay, be before ever I was borne, but God imputes this over to me when I believe, as soon as ever I take Christ by faith, God imputes the righteousness of Christ unto me, and will not impute my sinnes to me : And Scripture is open enough for this, we reading so constantly in the New Testament for men to come in and believe that they may have remission of sinnes in the blood of Christ, and through him also eternal life.

I only propound this scruple, whether faith be to deal with the person of Christ first, or with his benefits first ; Surely we say with his person, and then with his portion ; well then, if faith deales with the person of Christ immediately, then it appears that a man must believe, and so be justified, forasmuch as justification is an action of God imposing the righteousness of Christ, and not imputing sin, which are the generall benefits. (as I may so speak) of Christ. It is not handsome to conceive that God should first pardon me, and then I believe, or that I should have the righteousness of Christ before I have Christ himself, which must be, if there be a priority of justification before faith. For my part I conjecture that they are Simultaneous things (that is)

they go both together. If yet any men will be acute, let them be so: The perill is little on either side; so that I have faith, and then am justified; or so that I am justified, and then have faith, or so that I have faith to be justified, will in the substance and event, redound all to one.

SECT. IV.

R *Emission of finnes belong to justification:* (that is) when God justifieth the person, he doth absolve or forgive him his *fin*.

Two things in
fin.

There be in *fin* two things.

One is the *stain*, *pollution*, *defilement* of it, and corrupt inclination; with this *Justification* deales not, but *Sanctification*.

Another is the *guilt* and *punishment*; and with this doth *Justification* deal. Suppose you saw a sick thief, there are two sorts of persons to deal with him; a *Physician*, because he is sick, and a *Judge* because he is a thief; If the *Judge* acquit or pardon him, this clears him as a thief and guilty person, if the *Physician* heal and cure him, this respects him as a sick and diseased person, the case is our own. Now I say that God in justification remits or absolves the sinner. Two things are here considerable, First, *quid*; secondly, *quousque*.

Remission
what,

First, *quid*, what this remission is; I answer, it is an *exempting* of the sinner from *guilt* redounding to *punishment*: If any man *fin*, *guilt* cleaves universally to the *fin*, but then in *Justification* it shall not be *imputed*; it shall be taken away in respect of efficacy and redundancy. Suppose a person areigned, and cast for a murder, and the King graciously steps in and pardons him; though this pardon makes not the murder formally to be no murder, and though it makes not the murder now meritoriously deadly, yet it doth hold off the efficacy of that gift, that now it shall not prove death to this person, because he pardons him. So in *Justification*, where God pardons the sinner, he doth not make *sinne* to be no *sinne*, or that there should not be any *natural* *condemnabilis* in *sinne*, but that it shall not *effectually* redound.

down to the death and damnation and hell of the person, whom he hath acquitted for Christ.

Secondly, *quousque*? How farre remission of sinnes extend in Justification. There is a twofold remission.

One *particular*, which is circumscribed to some particular facts, and is ordinary in the Courts of humane Princes, who limit and restraine their discharges of offenders. A twofold remission.

Another *universal*, which reacheth to the whole estate of gile; now this I take as sure, that whomsoever God justifieth, he will forgive unto him all his sinnes. All his sinnes before conversion, and all his sinnes after conversion, Jer. 33. 8. But whither this forgiving of all, be *once for all*, *simul & semel*, as they speak, I am not able to speak my thoughts fully.

It is true, I confesse, and embrace that opinion, that *justification* is not a *divided act*, it is not repeated over and over and over, but it is one act only, but whither it be *one transient act*, (as if all were dashed out with a pen,) or whither it be *one continued act*, is very disputable. The Scripture leaneth much to this latter, and therefore describes God to be a God forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sinnes, importing a course of pardoning, and not a momentary act.

Again, it is hard to utter how God doth forgive a sinner before he hath sinned, which must be if pardon for all sins be a momentary act.

Yet I had rather captivate my judgment, then occasion dispute; only remember two things.

First, no doubt but the justified person shall have every sin pardoned; not some only, but all.

Secondly, *justification* doth not admit degrees: though it may a continuance: The righteousness and merit of Christ which is our justification, is not more or lesse, but is at all times one and most perfect.

SECT. V.

THe righteousness of Iesus Christ is that by which only we are justified.

The righteousness of Christ is the matter of our justification; not the essential righteousness of his God-head, but the righteousness of Christ, as Mediator both God and man, which was either,

The habitual holiness of his Person, in the absence of all sinne, and in the rich and plentiful presence of all holy and requisite qualities.

Or the actual holiness of his life and death by obedience; the once perfectly fulfilling the commands, and by the passive obedience of the other, voluntarily suffering the penalty, and commination of the Law for transgressions. Now all this righteousness is imputed to us in justification. For

First, no other righteousness can justify.

Secondly, as Christ was made sine for us; so we are made righteousness by him, viz. only by imputation.

The Papists call upon us for a righteousness in Justification, they will bring one forth of their hearts and good works. *Menstruous cloths*, saith the Scripture, but we produce a righteousness most full, perfect, every way exact, not in us, but in Christ, yet imputed to us by God.

How clear is the Scripture for us, 2 Cor. 5. 21. *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, Jer. 23. 6. *The Lord our righteousness*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. *Christ Jesus is made unto us of God, &c. righteousness*. How often doth the Apostle peculiarly interest imputed righteousness, handling the doctrine of Justification, Rom. 4. But the Apostle clears all, Rom. 5. 19. *As by one mans disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Ad peccatum imputabitur mihi & Christi justitia non pertinebit ad me*, said Bernard.

Object. But Christs righteousness is His, and how can it present us righteous before God? It is none of ours.

Sol. First, it is his in respect of Inhabitation, but it is ours in respect of

of *imputation*; His *personally*, ours *meritoriously*.

Secondly, we may be considered two wayes, either *absolutely* and alone, or else *as conjoynd with Christ*: and thus being by *faith made one with Christ*, he makes over his righteousness unto us, upon which God looks as *ours*, in the matter of justification.

As money paid for me.

Ob. But if *Christ's righteousness* becomes *ours* so by imputation, that we may be truly accounted and accepted of as righteous; Then by the like reason, because *redemption is made ours*, we may likewise be reputed *true Redeemers and Saviours*.

Sol. This is one of the arrows which *Bellarmino* draws out of his Quiver against the imputation of *Christ's righteousness*, but it is of no force.

For he is to be termed a *Redeemer* and *Saviour*, not who doth receive, and take the redemption and salvation procured by another, but who brings redemption and salvation; we are by the Redemption of *Christ* truly said to be redeemed, though not our Redeemers, and so by the imputation of *Christ's righteousness*, are we truly accounted righteous persons.

Obj. Again, if the *righteousness of Christ* be so imputed to us in justification, that for it we are accounted perfectly righteous, as if it were our own most perfect and inimitable; Then why may not we be accounted as righteous as *Christ*? yea and having *Christ's righteousness*, why may we not be the *Saviours of man*? Since that is the righteousness which doth save all that are saved.

Sol. I answer,

To compare the same righteousness with the same, is illogical and grosse, for it is one and the same righteousness which is inherent in *Christ*, and imputed to the believing soule.

Secondly, the righteousness of *Christ* is not imputed to any particular believer according to the whole latitude of its efficacy, but according to the particular exigence of the person; It is not imputed to *Paul* as the general price of redemption for all, but as the price by which his soule in particular is redeemed.

These things being dispatched, there is a difference amongst some Divines, about that righteousness which is imputed, some holding the *passive only*, others the *active and passive*.

Sol. The latter seems most solid; Reasons, these

First, there is no *justification* without the *fulfilling the whole Law*, but now to the fulfilling of the Law, (since the fall of Adam) two things are required, one is, *perfect and personal conformity to the Law*, in answering that active condition of it, *Do this and live*. Another is a *plenary satisfaction* to the sentence of the Law, by bearing the penalty therein denounced in regard of sins already committed.

Secondly, Again, *faith doth not abrogate the Law*, but *establish it*, but if it should teach justification without Christs fulfilling of the Law, it should abrogate the Law.

SECT. VI.

THe last thing which I should have inserted before, is this, That the *justification of a sinner is a gracious and just action*. It is a *gracious action*, (that is) the *gracious love and favour of God* was the cause of it; *It was his own free grace and favour that gave Christ his Son* to be our righteousness, and it is his *free grace* to give us *faith* to believe on his Son, and when we do believe, it is *his Grace* which *imputeth unto us* the righteousness of Christ.

Secondly, it is a *just and righteous action*, Rom. 3. 25, 26. *That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*. Gods justice is such, that he will *forgive no man his sinnes*, for which he is not *perfectly satisfied*, neither will he accept of any as *righteous*, who hath not a *personal righteousness*, but having received a *perfect satisfaction*, he will acquit the sinner believing, for he is just and righteous, and his justice will not make a second demand: yet here is the *graciousness of God* which will admit of the satisfaction, and of the righteousness of another for us.



CHAP. X.

The difficulty of beleeving in Jesus Christ.



Second Use from this great assertion, shall be to put our selves to a *Trial* and *Examination*. If to beleeve in Jesus Christ our Lord be the only way to be saved; Then it doth much concerne us to search our selves, whether we do *believe indeed in Jesus Christ.*

Use 2.

There are three things which I will *promise* as so many grounds, why we should put our selves upon this enquiry, and then I will give unto you the discoveries themselves. The premises are these,

First, the difficulty of beleeving in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the facility of error, and mistake about beleeving.

Thirdly, the bitter danger and sure misery of not beleeving in Jesus Christ.

1. The difficulty of beleeving is increased by the singularity of so *strange and wonderful a goodnesse*. It is so great and so unparalleld, that a man can hardly believe it to be true. To have an *estate in Christ*, in God, freely, all at once; How can this be? *The depth of gile*. I am an enemy, God is Just; I have runne into such high forfeitures, so unnecessarily lost my self, provoked God so often, and the threatnings are planted against sinners, there is no hope, no probability, (if a small debt, &c,

But for the difficulty of it, that it is not so easie a thing to beleeve in Christ Jesus, this shall appeare in divers particulars.

First, there is no *natural principle of justifying faith now in man*. An act, or motion, or quality, which hath a rise and bottome.

Simile. bottom within the subject, may spring forth with some ease: a stone having a natural propension and *impetus* to descend, if you do but quit the hand of it, it will down; but now to make a mighty stone to mount the hill, to get up into the air, there being no natural aptnesse to this, it is a hard and difficult attempt.

Obj. 'Tis true, that a man hath an *understanding* and *will*, but the *Mystery of Iesus Christ* is a riddle to the natural understanding the *faculties* naturally considered, have no elevation to this object, unless the Lord by his *Almighty power* begets and works faith in the soul. The soule *clings* not on him,

Simile. neither can it draw it self to him. Like the needle, untill it be touched, it will not start up towards the pole; so unless the Lord doth touch our hearts by his blessed Spirit, we shall never close with Christ.

So then, this is one thing to shew the difficulty of beleeving, the habit of it is out of our power, out of our sphere; it cannot be produced by any *strength of nature*, but by the *sole Arme of God*. Hence that of the Prophet, *Isa. 53. 1. Unto whom is the Arme of the Lord revealed? who hath beleeved our report?* The testimony of the Gospel concerning Christ will not be beleeved, unless the Lord doth reveale his own Arme, (that is) until he doth put forth his own Almighty strength.

2. There is a *natural principle of infidelity and unbelief in every mans heart*. If the paper were faire, if there were no precedent blurs and blots, then it were not so hard to imprint some legible Characters; Or if the wax were soft, and the iron heated, now it were easie to engrave what kinde of armes the Artifier pleaseth; But when the wax and the iron are hard and cold, now the impression is difficult, because the resistance is strong; if there were in our hearts any *obediential principles*, which could before hand temper the minde, and frame the will, then when God offers Christ, little a do would serve the turne; But our hearts naturally bend the other way; there is in us a natural unaptnesse, nay, an enmity to beleeve. *Enmity* to the habit and nature of faith; *blindnesse, error, pride, stubbornnesse, disobedience* in our hearts. We have such slow and untoward hearts, so armed with all sorts of corrupt reasonings, so consulting with sense and rational evidences, so ready on every inevidence,

to mistrust, doubt, question, gainsay, that all Arguments will not perswade us that God will give us Christ, and pardon our sinnes. You know that when the Lord Iesus was personally on earth, and did preach himself, and in that manner, that none spake with that Authority as he, and confirmed the truth of his Divinity, and Mediatorship by Scripture and miracles, yet very few beleeved, (historically) that he was the Christ, that he was the Sonne of God. Take me now a person, who is sensible of his sinful guilt; Tell him of the need he hath of a Saviour, he will grant it, represent unto him the sufferings, the excellency, the tendernesse of the Lord Iesus, that he is the Mediator, the Propitiation for sinnes, that Remission of sinnes is in his blood, both intensively, for the great degrees and aggravations of sinne, and extensively, for the severall kinds of sinne. Tell him, that the Lord Iesus came to seek such a lost person as he, that he came to loose such a captive as he, that he came to binde up such a broken spirit as he is, that he came to ease and refresh such a burdened and laden soul; Yea, and answer objection after objection, doubt after doubt, fear after fear, that the person cannot put by the arguments why he should beleeve, nor urge and reinforce his reasons, why he should hold off from closing with Christ, and putting his soule on him, yet this we finde, he cannot (when all is said) he cannot beleeve. Unbelief doth throw up so many mists, and so many feares, and is (many times) so unreasonable, that yet it will hold off the heart. Neither the goodnesse of God, nor the truths of God, nor the mercies of God, nor the freeness of them, nor the person of Christ, nor the merits of Christ, nor the tendernesse of Christ, nor the gracious offer, invitation, command, threatning of Christ, will make the heart to come in unto him.

3. There is a natural opposition, in the Heart against Christ, and therefore it is hard to beleeve on him. The opposition is manifold.

First, to his Person, the Lord Iesus Christ is an holy Person, and none can take him in truth, but must take him so, to be holy as he is holy. He is the holy one of God, and he is called the holy Child Iesus, and an holy, undefiled high Priest, separated from sinners. Now the heart (naturally) is in love with sinne, and Christ tells us that this very thing is a cause why men beleeve not: See John 3. 19. *This is the condemnation, that light*

A fourfold opposition.

is come into the world, and even loved darkness rather than light. Christ comes thus to a man, I am he who will save thy soule if thou wilt take me, but then know, that I am an *holy person*; if thou wilt have me thou must let go thy sinnes; Now this breaks off the match, binders the bargain, this goes to the heart: A man naturally will as soon part with his life, as with the sin of his love.

A double state
of Christ.

Secondly, *to his condition*: There is a double condition of Christ; one is *Triumphant*, another is *Militant*; *Gloria in excelsis*, that is, the triumphant condition, *Tabulationes in Terris*, that is the militant condition; the *Crown of Glory*, that is the triumphant condition; the *Crown of Thornes*, that is the militant condition.

Now the heart naturally is unsuffering: It is a terrour to it to speak of afflictions, sorrowes, reproaches, losses; We are willing to enjoy the world, to taste of pleasures, to handle profits, to rest in ease, to walk at liberty, to rejoyce with our Friends, to be spread abroad with high estimations. The *young man*, when *Christ* bade him *sell all that he had, and give it to the poore*, (It was *praeceptum experimentale*) he goes away sorrowfull.

Thirdly, *to the Scepter and Government of Christ*; we will not have this man *Reigne over us*, say they; and you reade in *Psalme 2*. How they did *consult to break his bands asunder*. The *Scepter of Christ* is Heavenly, and his *Laws* are spiritual, and his *Wayes* are righteous and straight, they lay injunctions on the inward man, as well as on the outward conversation, and binde the thoughts, and the intentions and affections. Now what do you meane, to pinne up a spirit which would have elbow room? what, would you have a *licentious heart*, and a *turning and winding conscience*, to be precis'd, and narrowed, and restrained, and so every way straitened? You must give it leave to break the Sabbath, to improve its gaires dishonestly, to swear now and then, and to comply, &c.

Fourthly, *to the Righteousnesse of Christ*. O what a do had that blessed *Apostle* with the *Romanes*, with the *Galatians*,

tians, with others, to break them off from *Justification by Works*; And to fasten upon their hearts the *Justification by Faith*.

We are apt to stand upon our selves, and to look for the matter of our acceptance and acquittance in our selves on man; he thinks that his *good meaning* shall make him speed; Another thinks that his *doing no body any harm* will let him into Heaven, or *the God help us*; Another stands on his *devout Sacrifices*; Another on his *charitable bounties*; Yea, and those who should know better in the Doctrine of Justification, how extreemly do they cling to their *inherent Graces*? much a do, before they can be made to *cast their Crowns in the earth, and to give the glory only to Christ who is worthy*. What paines is God forced to take to break us off from our selves? we are so proud, and so unwilling to be beholden to Gods free grace, and Christ, that God is faine to break our hearts to pieces, and to split our ship into shivers, that we might only to Christ.

He must imprint the holy and mighty vigour of the Law on our consciences, to shew us our utter impotency, and sensibly acquaint us with our marvellous imperfections in graces, and interruptions in duties, and excursions of daily sinnings, and all to fetch us entirely, to cast our safeties only on the righteousness of Jesus Christ



CHAP. XI.

*The facility of error and mistake
about believing.*



Secondly, as it is *hard to believe*, so it is *easie to mistake*, and delude our selves in the *matter of believing*: Four things make it to be so.

1. One is the various kindes of faith,
2. Another is the consimilitude of one of the extreames of faith.
3. The easinesse of both. And,
4. the aptnesse in our hearts to be satisfied with these.

First there are *divers kindes of faith*: As the Apostle spake of bodies, *all bodies are not the same bodies*, but there are bodies *Celestial*, and bodies *Terrestrial*; so I say of *Faith*, all faith, (I speak of habitual faith) is not the same kinde of faith, we read of a *Faith* which the *Devils have*, and we read of a *Faith* which the *Hypocrites have*, and we read of a *Faith* which even (*Christ's enemies* (whom he did not dare to trust) had, and we read of a *Precious Faith*, a *Faith of Gods Elect*, a *justifying and saving faith*. Divines ordinarily distinguish of faith;

There is an *Historical faith*, which is a *crediting* the word *relating*, but not an *embracing* of it *promising*; it is like the passing through a Garden, and observing and smelling, but not a flower is gathered, so in *Historical Faith*, the eye of the understanding goes over the Word of God, and hath some apprehensions, and general grants, and intellectual submissions, that God doth not lye, but what he saith is true. Neverthelesse, there is not that quality of justifying faith in this which makes the heart to close.

close with the goodnesse of truth, and to embrace Christ.

2. There is a *wonderful faith*, a *faith of miracles*, to remove mountaines, to raise the dead, which had some special and immediate promise, and yet it was a gift bestowed on those who had no faith to save themselves: Many who have *cast out devils*, may at the *last day be cast among the devils*: Lord, Lord, have not we *Prophefied in thy name, and in thy name cast out Devils*? And yet Christ bid them depart, *Nun novi vos*.

3. There is a *temporary faith*: which hath in it some great apprehensions of the truths of God; yea, and reverent assents; yea, and some delightfull contentations in the same; yea, and some fruitfull expressions, and with all these, a singular degree of profession, even to a zealous forwardnesse, and notoriquines, so that a man may be in the eye of others like a tall Ship, and yet there is a haake in the bottome, which on the sudden sinks all.

This *temporary faith* though in many respects it handles the same object with saving faith it is tampering much about Christ, and the promises, yet it is intrinsically, and extremely different from it.

It doth not differ from it in respect of *eminency*, or *degrees*, nor in respect of *existence*, or *duration* onely, (for the one is a living Spring, and the other is a decaying Flood,) but in respect of *formal nature* also: The *temporary faith* doth not indeed bring all the heart and settle it on Christ.

4. There is this *justifying and saving faith*, which bestowes the whole heart on Christ, and takes Christ unfeignedly to be Lord and Saviour. Now where there are so many sorts, it is not a great difficulty, nor an impossibility to mistake, *error is many-fold*, (said the Philosopher) but the *truth is single*, and there is but one line to hit the mark, but many to misse it.

Nay, secondly, there is a *great similitude of one of the extremes of faith, with faith it self*; viz. *credulity*. It is strange (yet ordinary) that a man should make a heaven of his own, and a God of his own, and a Christ of his own, and a faith of his own, and a way to heaven of his own. *Presumption* is a work.

much of an idle fancy, and a graceless heart, like a thief, very apt to finger the Kings coin, but without a warrant. But to the thing: Is there knowledge in faith? why, presumption pretends to this: Is there confidence in faith? why, presumption is bold then: presumption: Is there any sweet assurance in faith? why, presumption never doubts, but could believe ever since a man was borne: Is there any joy in faith? why, presumption is as jocular and carelesse, as if there were no heaven to be got, no sinne to be bewailed, nor course to be reformed.

3.

Lastly, these are easie and we are apt to content ourselves with these, instead of a true believing in Jesus Christ. To get a little seeming knowledge, to carry Religion upon the lip, and Christ on the tongue, to be bold upon Gods mercy, and Christs death, and wish all those, to have a heart glued to the world, folded up in the love of sinne, resolved against all hazards, to shift off all profession rather then to endure any shame, what so great a task is this? But to have a minde taught of God, and to have an understanding bowed with the strength of Divine light, and inward change to the obedience of truth, and to have a will sweetly renewed, and with an holy trembling, humbly receiving Christ in his person, and offices, and bestowing the whole soul and body on him againe; here the work stirs.



CHAP. XII.

*The sure and dangerous misery
of unbelief.*

he last thing which may stirre us to try our selves, is the consideration of that amazing danger, and unspeakable misery, to which the soul is assuredly obnoxious in case of unbelief.

Why, will you say? What danger if we believe not?

Obj.

I answer, there are three special dangers.

First, *all thy finnes stand upon record against thee*, like so many sad debts which thou hast run thy self into, from thy conception to this very day. They are all written with the pen of a Diamond; there is no blotting out of a mans finnes, but by the blood of Christ, and the unbeliever hath not his portion in that blood, and therefore there are all thy finnes uncanceled, thy finnes of nature, and all thy finnes of life; such a sin, and such a sin, then and there, and againe, committed, &c. O how great is the volume of them, the number of them cannot be numbred, and the guilt of them cannot be conceived, if one sin binds thee over to hell, Godd God! To what flames of vengeance and horrible degrees and intensiōns of misery and wrath do all thy finnes oblige thee?

Yea, and as Solomon said in another case, Prov. 9. 12. *If thou scornewest, thou alone shalt beare it*: so I say here, if thou remain an unbeliever, thou alone must answer for all thy finnes. Whatsoever the wrathful displeasure of God is; whatsoever the horrors of conscience are; whatsoever the gnawings of that worm are; whatsoever the heat of hell flames are; Whatsoever the doleful separation from God is; Whatsoever curse the Law implies for sin, that maist thou expect, who wilt not believe in Christ. O! if that
wrath

wrath was so hot, when it (obliquely as it were) *fell on Christ* (where it had no unholy and self-guilty quality to admix with it selfe) that he *sweat drops of blood*, and cryed out, *my God, &c.* How wilt thou with any patience, ease, possible quietnesse; susteine the exream wrath of the Almighty Judge, who art vile, and filthy, and hast a conscience with all thy torments, to gall and vex thee with the stings of misery, guilts, and self-accusations? tell me how art thou able, what canst thou say, how canst thou beare up before the Lord, if he should arise, if he should terribly arise to judge the nations? He is the *Holy God* and *Just*, and is *True* and *Great in power*. What satisfaction canst thou bring, where are thine oblations, or with what wilt thou reconcile thy self to the Lord? Whereby canst thou either make thy former sins, to be no sins, or perswade the Lord to be propitious to thee without Christ?

3. Nay, verily, he will *judge thee as an unrighteous person*, for if thou hast not Christ, what righteousness hast thou? there is *no hope* for thee to be *acquitted*, nay, nor *hope to be saved*, nay, thou art *sure to be damned*.

Mark 16. 15. *Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.* 16. *He that beleeueth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that beleeueth not shall be damned.*

John 3. 18. *He that beleeueth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Sonne of God.* 36. *He that beleeueth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that beleeueth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Rev. 2. 8. *The fearful and unbelieving are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.*

Obj. But you will say, Why? This is strange! Why such extreame misery for not beleeving? what sinne is it?

Sol. It is *one of the greatest sins in the world*, not to believe (that is) not to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Because,

It is a sinne against the *greatest love to the world*, Joh. 3. 16. *God so loved the world that he gave, &c.* Rom. 5. 8. *But God commendeth his love towards us, that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ dyed for us.*

God shewed the *greatnesse of his love*, to bestow his *Sonne*,
and

and Christ shewed the greatnesse of his love, to dye for us. Greater love (said Christ) can no man shew, then to lay down his life, &c. Now for the Lord to finde out a way of Salvation, and in love to our soules to offer this Son of his unto us, and to beseech us to be reconciled, and then for us (like them who were envited to the supper) we cannot come, we will not come. O this, &c.

It is a sin for which there can be no remedy for asmuch as it is a sin against the only remedy of a sinful soul. The sentence of the Law may be repealed by the Gospel, but not *à contra*. There is no plaister for the soul but the blood of Christ, which yet unbelief will not take and receive. 2.

It is a sinne which (as much as in it lies) makes void and vaine all the Covenant of Grace, turning all the goodnesse of it into nothing, and all the truthe of it into lyes, and makes the blood of Christ to be shed in vaine. He that beleeveeth not makes God a liar, because he beleeveeth not the record that God gave of his Sonne, 1 John 5. 10. 3.

It is a sin which directly murders the soul: because it doth wilfully hold it off from Christ, who would upon believing pardon and justifie and save. 4.

All these things being premised let us now descend towards the triall or evidences of true faith in Christ, where I beseech you observe.



CHAP. XIII.

Rules for the discovery of faith.

wo things.



First, some *Rules of Direction*, for the manner of evidence and testifying of faith, that you may neither be *deceived* by *presumption*, nor *perplexed* by *error and doubting*.

Secondly, *some lively instance* of true faith, as the Word of God doth clearly represent them.

The Rules of discovery and finding out faith, which are these.

SECT. I.

There are some things without which faith cannot be in the heart, and yet they do not necessarily and infallibly conclude that a man hath faith.

They do well distinguish in the Schools 'twixt an *Antecedent*, and a Cause, a Cause is such a thing as is before the effect, and which being put, the effect also is put, one will not go without the other; But an *Antecedent* is that which must go before another thing; yet it is not necessary that if it be, that the other thing should follow. The *rising of the Sunne* is a *cause of day*, and therefore this will alwayes hold; If the Sunne be up, it is day; But this now; *Learning*, is (or should be) an *Antecedent to preferment*, it should go before it, yet it is not an infallible truth, that every one who gaines learning, should enjoy preferment: Thus is it in the *nature of faith*.
There

There are some *Antecedents*, there are some things which must of necessity go before faith, yet they alone do not formally and assuredly conclude that a man hath faith, as for instance;

A man cannot *believe in Christ*, he cannot receive *Jesus Christ* with all his heart, he hath some *historical* evidence of Christ, he must have some *knowledge of Christ*, what he is, and what he hath done, or else he cannot take him to be his Lord and Saviour; Yet *this knowledge* doth not infallibly conclude *justifying and saving faith*; for as much as the *Devils* and *Hypocrites* may see much of Christ, they may have a high degree of intellectual apprehension.

Again, a man cannot by *faith take Christ* to be his Lord and Saviour, unless he hath some *sensibleness* of his sinful condition; our heart will not look towards Christ, it cannot conceive of his excellencies, nor of his own necessity, until we feel our sinfulnesse, and lostnesse, and vilenesse; The *whole* neither *meed*, nor *look for a Physician*, yet a person may be *sensible of his sinful condition*; he may not only by the light of *natural conscience* apprehend some broader and stirring enormities, but he may by a *smart and quick light* let in by the *Ministry of the Word*, discern heaps of wickednesse in his *life and heart*, for which his conscience may sting him with wonderfully bitter accusations, and yet such a person (possibly) may not rise from trouble to faith, as is evident in *Cain and Judas*. So then remember this, that in the searchings and trials for *faith*, you do not conclude the *presence of the habit* from the *common antecedents of faith*, for as much as faith is but a contingent consequent of them, sometimes it doth follow, sometimes it doth not. As in *Marriage*, sometimes it doth follow the motion which is made, and sometimes it doth not; so the *assuaging of our sorrows to Christ* by faith, sometimes it doth follow *knowledge*, sometimes it doth not, sometimes it doth follow the *preaching of the Word*, and yet sometimes it doth not; for *all have heard*, yet *who hath believed*, said the Apostle? *Rom. 10.* sometimes it doth follow the *motions*, and *inward exertions of the Spirit*, and sometimes it doth not.

2. There are some things which *faith only doth produce*, yet because it doth *not produce them always*, a man therefore must

not negatively conclude from the absence of them, the absence of faith.

You know that *holy and spiritual joy*, it is the sole fruit of faith, therefore faith the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1. 8. *Beleeving, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and glorious*. There is nothing which can present to the heart of a Christian, such full cause of joy as faith, such a God, such a Christ, such a love, such a blood, such a mercy, such happinesse, such unmixt, and proper, and suitable good. There is a *carnal joy* which sparkles from the cup of pleasure, and there is a *glistening joy* which the raies of gold may produce, and there is a *beastly joy*, which the fulfilling of sinful lusts may send forth, and there is a *flashing and transient joy*, which the pride of hypocrites may dart out, but *sound*, and *weighty*, and *holy*, and *pure*, and *spiritual joy*, which is a well grounded, and not to be repented, affecting of the heart, that comes only from faith: Yet it comes from faith as a separable effect; look as trouble and sorrow is a Contingent antecedent, so evn in *actu imperato*, true joy is a separable fruit of faith. Though the branches and green leaves do sprout out of the living root only, yet this color doth not appeare at all times; Though the blade comes only from the graines cast into the earth, yet you cannot alwayes observe the blade. Though the flesh and natural complexion flows only from health, yet there may be sad occasions, which though they do not extinguish health, may yet fowle and blubber the complexion. So even the beleeving person may sometimes have a tear in his eye, an handkercheif in his hand, a sigh in his breast, and yet have faith in his heart. He may *sit down in ashes*, and *feed on tears*, as David did, and for all this he may be a true beleever: He is not alwayes able to see the causes of his joy, nor to break through the contrarieties to his faith, nor to remove the quashings of his comforts. Therefore when you are to try your selves about your faith, do not make a negative inference from separable evidences.

3. There are some things which faith only doth produce, not as essential properties, but as magnificent testimonies.

The moral Philosophers distinguish twixt the effects and acts of liberality, as it is absolutely considered, and as it is eminently considered, being raised to magnificence. To give a far-

farthing according to the rules and circumstances of morality, even this is an act of liberality, but to build a Colledge, this is now an act of *liberality* grown into the *greatnesse of magnificence*. So is it in the matter of *faith*, there are some *fruits of faith* which come from it, *absolutely considered* according to the *vital constitution* of it: And there be other *fruits* which come from it *eminently considered*; *faith* is come to an height, to a strength, when it sends them forth. Though a child cannot bear a burden of an hundred pound weight, yet he can desire the breast and suck; the bearing of such a burden belongs to strength, and yet the very sucking shews that he hath life. Though a Christian be not able in all respects, at all times, with all moderation and silence, to passe presently through *every heavy occurrence*, which shews *strength of faith*, yet his heart may most *affectionately* cling about Christ which shews the *truth of faith*.

Assurance is a fruit of an eminent faith, and so is a more *habitual steadfastnesse of quiet submission*, and confidence in all estates & conditions, and so is that maintenance of the *heart upon Gods promises* in the times of *strong contrarieties*. Now as Divines should warily open their lips, so should you *wisely distinguish* of the evidences of a true faith, some being (if I may so terme them) *essential*, and others being *eminent*, some there are which discover the *truth*, others which testify the *strength of faith*: It is one thing to shew unto you the *properties of a man*, another thing to shew unto you the *properties of a strong man*. Many a poore Christian hath been deeply gravell'd by others, and extremely afflicted by his own spirit for want of this distinction of the properties of faith. Because he reades, and hath heard what admirable and singular fruits, and effects faith hath sent out as *Assurance*, and *full assurance*, and with these some *glorious acts of self-denial*, as in *Abraham* and his *unsfaggering embracing of a promise* against which both *reason and sense*, and *nature* might have disputed and urged. O say they, we have no faith, *Abrahams faith* wrought *full assurance*, removed all *staggerings*, our hearts are still *doubting*, we can hardly be perswaded, we reel and stagger like the waves now on the shore, and then instantly off; now we beleeve, anon we let go our hold, and doubt: And hence they uncomfort-

3. Eminent fruits.

ably conclude against their own souls, the utter absence of faith from the defect of some particular and eminent expressions of faith, not absolutely *as faith*, but of faith *as strong and exceedingly ripened*: we must not conclude negatively, from the degrees to the habit:

As if one should conclude that he hath no silver in his purse, because another hath a bank of many thousands; or that he hath no legges to go, because he is not so swift as *Asahel*; or that the Sparrow flies not, because he cannot mount up to the Sonne with the Eagle; or that a child is no man, because he cannot expresse the acts of a strong man.

4. There are and will be many inward contrarieties to the intrinsecal acts and fruits of faith, notwithstanding faith be truly in the soul, and works there. Faith, though it hath the preeminence of other graces in respect of its office, being the only Embassador (as it were) of the soul to Christ, yet it hath no privilege above them in respect of the subject, (that is) in respect of the act and workings of it there; but look as every other Grace hath some or other particular corruption opposite to its particular nature, and its particular usings; So even faith it self hath infidelity, and unbelief opposing it, both in the quality, and in the several exercisings or usings of it. There may be flame of the smoak, and a hand with shaking, and a tree trembling, and a faith of doubting.

Yea, if any grace hath the hardnesse of a more general and strong opposition, then faith is it, it being a grace of general help and use to fetch in more grace, and more strength against all sinne. Now in our trials for faith, it will be with us as with the Artificer, in his search for the little rates of gold; It's true, he shall finde much drosse here and there, and yet if he can finde a very little peece of gold, (though amidst an heap of drosse) he will say this is gold, and will preciouslly esteeme of it and lay it up. So when we are searching our hearts by the light of Gods Word for true faith, without all doubt we shall meet with many doubtings, much unbelief, yet if we can finde any one degree of true faith (which is more precious then gold) we may not cast it away, because it is found amongst its contraries, but we must cherish and embrace it, because the touchstone of the Word hath approved it to be a precious faith.

For

For (and mark this) we are not able to give you any evidences of faith, or any other grace by way of abstraction, but by way of existence, (that is) not ~~what~~ may discover faith in a notional and the most singularly conceivable profession of it; but such testimonies you have to discover faith, as faith is now abiding in sinful persons, who though they may have true faith, yet as long as they live in earth, will have many things in them contrary to faith.

There is a double contrariety to faith.

A double contrariety.

One is *natural*, and this more or lesse will be in the soul of any beleiving person, tell you can utterly raise the heart, and eject sinne by the alteration of glory: So long as we have *flēsh* and *spirit*, there will be a conflicting 'twixt *faith* and *unbelief*. As there was a mixture of *joy* and *sorrow* at the *erecting* of the *Temple*.

Another is *approved* when a man neither doth, nor will believe, he neither doth accept of Christ, nor will he *have Christ to reign over him*, and he *likes his unbelieving condition*, this is a fearful estate: But though the contraries to faith do arise, yet if they be not *approved*, yet if they be *resisted*, we must not conclude that we have no faith, because of the opposition, but rather *assure* our selves that we *have* it, because of the *resistance of abas opposition*. We must not conclude against faith, because of opposition inward or outward.

This inequality of acts conclude not an absence of the habit of faith. Distinguish of,

1. Radical habits.

2. Actual exercisings, which are, sometimes more, sometimes lesse, sometimes clear; sometimes interrupted, sometimes the soul is free, sometimes oppressed, and violently carried by temptation to misjudge the condition.

The censure of our faith must not be allowed, as is given in the time of our temptation and passion, &c. *I said in my haste*, Psalm 116.

Obj. But you will say, we grant all this; But how may a man know that his faith in Jesus Christ is a true and lively faith.

Sol. I answer

SECT. II.

First, *A true love of Christ is an infallible and essential evidence of a true faith in Christ.*

4. Things.

There are foure things which will clear this as a lively testimony of true faith: If we can prove,

1. First, that love is not separated from faith.

2. Secondly, that there is no beleever in any degrees of faith, but he hath a love of Christ.

3. Thirdly, That there is no time, or circumstance into which the beleeving soul is cast, but still he loves Christ.

4. Fourthly, that no unbelieving heart can, and doth love Christ; I say, if we can prove these foure conclusions, then it will be most evident and certaine, that the love of Christ is an infallible Argument or Testimony of a true faith in Christ: Thus then,

1. *Love is not separated from faith,* If you peruse the Scripture, you shall finde them go hand in hand. *Gal. 5. 6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love;* (that is) Christ is not mine, because I am a Jew; nor is he mine, because I am a Gentile; but he is mine, because I am a *Believer*, and if my *Faith* in him be true, it will expresse it self by *love*. *1 Theſ. 1. 3. Your work of faith, and labour of love in our Lord Jesus Christ; Faith and love are like a warm hand; faith is the hand, and love is the warmth in it; faith cannot be the hand to take Christ, but love will be the warmth to heat our affections unto Christ. 1 Tim. 1. 14. The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Faith and love are like the husband and the wife, and faith and love are like the mother and the daughter; See 2 Tim. 1. 13. and Phil. 5. And indeed it stands with unanswerable reason, that faith and love cannot be divided; for as much as faith in Christ,*

First, represents the absolute and effectual cause of love to Christ. It doth see such a measure of goodnesse and mercy from God through Christ, and such a height, and depth, and breadth

of

of love to us in Christ, and such an excellency of holy perfecti-
ons, and amiableness in Christ, which draws the soul with
strong affections of love to Christ againe.

Secondly, if faith might be without love, then a person in
Christ might be *Anathema-maramatha*,² forasmuch as he *who*
loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, is, &c. but it is a monstrous
wickednesse to conceive that a beleever in Christ should be
so.

Secondly, there is no *believer* in any degree of faith, but he
hath a love of Christ. The *weak Christian* as well as the *strong*,
the *plant* as well as the *cedar*. The *Father of a child* who cryed
out, *I believe, help my unbelief*; as well as *Abraham the father of*
the faithful. Though one Christian may produce some testimo-
nies, which another cannot I though every one cannot say with
Paul, *I am fully persuaded*; yet every one can say with *Peter*
when Christ demanded of him, *Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* Joh. 21. 17.
He said unto him, *Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I*
love thee.

Yea, thirdly, whatsoever *fruits the believing soul* is cast into
when it is in death, in flames for Christ, yet it can love Christ
when it is under the crowd of temptations, when it is in the bit-
ter dayes of desertion. When the Skirmish of reasonings do
prevaile upon the soul so highly and strongly, that the heart is
ready to conclude against it self, that God looks not on it,
Christ will not be mine, yet even then however, *I love the Lord*
Jesus Christ, I love him, though I can see no sensible testimony of
love from him, my heart is still towards him, he is my Center and
Loadstone.

No meerly *unbelieving person* can love the Lord Jesus Christ.
For, what is love? Love (you know) it is the *feeling and trans-*
planting of the heart: It is such an affection as *knits the soule to*
Christ, but it is impossible that this should be whiles the heart
hath no faith. So then love of Christ is an infallible testimony
of faith in Christ.

But you will say this is strange, that *love of Christ* should be so
lively and so distinguishing a testimony of *true faith*; why doth
not many a man; yea, every man professe that he loves
Christ?

Beloved; What men professe is one thing, and what they
affect

2

3

4

Obj.

Sol.

affect and love may be another thing; the semblance of love is a thing distinct from the *sincere affection of love*. If your love be true and sincere, never question the matter any further, assuredly thy faith is right.

Obj. But this is the doubt, this is it we question as much as the former, whether we truly love Christ or no.

Sol. A word to it, and so an end of that triall. If the love be true which is to Christ. Then

1. It will *bestow our hearts on Christ only*: Nothing is too good for him, whom we heartily love: in true love the heart is in him who is loved, and not in him who loves. *Anima est ubi amat, non ubi quirit*; and which way the heart goes, all shall go that way.

2. It *pitches on the person of Christ*. Love is base, if it be *twixt person and estate*, but pure love is *twixt person and person*: I confesse that a wicked man, an unbelieving person may have a *tooth at the portion of Christ*, he may marvelously desire the *merits of Christ*, pardon of sin, exemption from hell, but faith is it which draws out such a love, as makes the soul to admire it, and so cleave unto the person of Christ.

3. It is *sincere and conjugal*: It is not an *adulterous love*, which is divided amongst several Paramours; O no; True love of Christ, knows no husband but Christ, and no Lord but Christ, he is the *covering of our eyes*.

SECT. III.

A Second trial of our true faith in Christ Jesus is this *inward change and sanctity of the heart*, is an infallible testimony of a living faith. Divines distinguish of a *common faith* and of a *special faith*, and according to their nature so are their effects; a *common faith* may elevate the minde to singular apprehensions, notable expressions, outward conformities, in matters either not difficult or dangerous. But *special faith* hath a distinguishing operation, it works that which no false or pretensive faith can; What's that? This is it, it doth change the heart, and is ever a companion with inward holiness.

There

There be three things which I will shew you about 3. Things, this.

First, *that true faith doth produce a change*, there is a twofold change, 1. One of the *condition*, which is, when a man once in the state of *death*, is now passed over to the state of *life*, once in the terms of *condemnation*, is now translated to the state of *absolution*, and this change faith findes for us in *Iesus Christ*, the *imputation of whose righteousness in justification* changeth the state, so that our guilty debts are taken off, and we are reconciled: 1.

Secondly, which is of the person, and this change is the alteration of a mans nature, for faith is not only a *justifying grace*, but it is also a *sanctifying grace*: Hence these phrases, *Acts. 15. 9. purifying their hearts by faith*, *Acts 26. 18. that they may receive forgiveness of sinnes and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ*. As the blood of Christ is a pure blood as well as a precious blood, and as it is a *cleansing blood*, as well as an *expiating blood*; so faith is a grace, not only to *acquire*, but also to *purge* and *renew*; It is not onely an *emitting grace*, (that is) that grace which doth interest us into Christ and his benefits, but it is also a *conforming grace*, (that is) such a grace as works into us the virtues and holy qualities of Christ. And therefore you read that it doth *engraffe us into the similitude of his death*, *Ro. 8.* and into the *fellowship of his sufferings and resurrection*, *Phil. 3. 10.*

Secondly, observe, *that every believer hath a changed and a lively heart*, *2 Cor. 5. 17. If any man be in Christ (and you know that it is faith which unites to Christ, and plants us into him,) he is a new creature*, (that is) that a man is altered in his inward frame, in his faculties, in his inclinations, all over.

There is a change, either in the *cessation of some particular affections* which an unbeliever may attaine; and there is a change in the *newness of nature* when the soul is turned, and biased, and enclined quite another way. I confesse, the Apostle doth not say, *if any man be in Christ he is a strong creature*, yet he saith he is a *new creature*, for though every believer hath not that maturity, and ripeness, and strength, yet he hath a *newness* in his nature, an holy change wrought in him throughout. Look at the:

the first *Adam* derived guilt and corruption to his posterity; so the second *Adam* derives pardon and holinesse, therefore he is called a *quickning spirit*, 1 Cor. 15. It is not 'twixt Christ and believers, as 'twixt a root and a dead limb, which hangs on, but hath no life, nor sap: Christ hath really no such members in his body, he is not like *Nebuchadnezzars image*, whose head is of gold, and the feet of clay; for a man to boast much of his head, of Christ, of gold, and yet he to remaine a piece of clay; he to have a nature utterly heterogeneous unto Christ, this man deceives himself. For every plant, every grasse that is inserted into Christ hath the alikely of his nature. Hence those who in *John* 1. 12. are stiled *Believers*, they are said in the next ver. 13. to be borne of the Will of God; Now as in the natural birth there is a new forme, so in the heavenly there is a supernatural and holy frame of grace ingenerated.

Thirdly, *No man hath a changed nature but a Believer*. Why? Because no man hath grace but from Christ, and none have Christ but Believers: Again, it is impossible for a man to be lovely in the eyes of God without faith, but if any man might have a changed and sanctified heart, and yet want faith, then one might be lovely in Gods eyes wanting faith, for as much as God loves and delights in an holy heart. So then this is most evident, that if faith goes not without a change, and if every Believer hath a change, and no unbeliever hath it, I say this will follow, Therefore if a man can finde a change of his heart, he then hath the truth of faith.

Now then enquire, is there vertue gone from Christ to make thy dark minde seeing, thy stubborn judgement yeilding, and prizing thy proud heart, humbling thy filthy heart, cleansing thy hard heart, relenting and mourning, thy carnal affections to be heavenly, thy sinful soul to be holy; be confident of this that it is sound faith. Though there be yet remainders of corruption, yet if the inclination of the soul be changed by grace, doubt it not, thou hast faith: But for such as talk of a faith which stands in opposition to holinesse, and please themselves in a *gracelesse faith*, in such a faith as hath no society or company of graces in the soule; O farre be such a faith from any one of us. An *unholy believer* is as proper a phrase as an *holy devil*. *Presumption* is a most confident work, but it is a very loose

loose quality, 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind; Verſe. 10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunken, nor revilers; nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God. Verſe. 11. And ſuch were ſome of you, but you are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God. Do not abuſe thy ſoul with a conceit of faith and juſtification, if thou haſt no change of heart by ſanctification.*

SECT. IV.

THirdly, a third tryal of true faith in Chriſt Jeſus is this, *It will ſleep to Chriſt as well as riſe to him; It enters the ſoul into a new ſervice, it takes Chriſt and him only to be its Lord.* You read that there was a *Marriage feaſt*, to which ſome did come, and there was the *Kings ſent out to rule and ſerve*, but few yeilded unto him. Many men will come to Chriſt to finde a feaſt, but few come to Chriſt to *beare his Scepter*; they would come under the *ſafe-guard* of his blood, who ſie the *Authority and dominion* of his ſword; they like Chriſt the *Prieſt*, but not Chriſt the *Lord*.

I will briefly ſhew you two things to clear this tryal.

First, no unbeliever will accept of Chriſt to be his *Lord only*; becauſe,

1. His heart hath another Lord; It hath ſet up ſome ſinne or other, or ſome part of the world or other, to which it gives ſervice as to his Lord. He is our Lord to whom we give ſervice, and *his ſervants we are whom we do obey*; Now the unbelieving heart either ſerves the world, or obeys ſinne in the luſts thereof. Let the commands of ſinne and Chriſt come into an ordinary and uſual competition; let the commands of profit, or pleaſure, and Chriſt come into competition. Now you ſhall ſee, that the unbelieving heart will go after its Lord, it will not hearken to Chriſt, it prefers ſin before him, it will eaſily adventure Chriſts diſpleaſure to fulfil its own luſts.

2. Things.

1. Again, his heart cannot *choose Christ*, it cannot like him for a Lord, Why? because the *dominion of Christ is holy and heavenly*, and directly opposite to the sordid principles and affections and ways of an unbelieving heart: It is a burden, yea, a very vexation to such a heart, to heare but the report of the holy Laws of Christ, and of their power and authority to oblige the inward man, and the outward conversation, *Psal. 2. 2. They take counsel against the Lord, and against his anointed sayings*, ver. 3. *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

* Fir true, whether wicked men will stoop or no, *Christ is a Lord* in respect of designation, but he is not their Lord in respect of approbation; *They will not have this man to rule over them.*

2. Secondly, *Every Believer admits of Christ to be his Lord*; as *Thomas said, My Lord and My God*, John. 20. 28. see Ecc. and so

1. Faith sets up the *Scepter of Christ*, and sweetly frames the soul to a *willing subjection*.

2. Again, *faith takes notice of Christ*, and therefore Christ is the only *King and Lord* to faith.

3. Again, *faith knows that the whole person is Christ's purchase*, his blood hath bought us, and so passed us into the entire dominion of Christ; *ye are bought with a price, ye are not your own*, said the Apostle, 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.

Now then try your selves in this, who is your Lord? why brethren? Thus it is, faith gives the propriety, and title, and disposition of our hearts and ways to Christ.

Obj. *Tis true, before we were called to faith in Christ, we were *disobedient, we served divers lusts*, we set up our sins and the world.

Sol. But now being made partakers of rich mercy and grace in Christ, we shall surely rebel against other Lords but Christ, (that is) against all other Lords whose commands are contrary to Jesus Christ; Our hearts are his, and our affections his, and our strength his, and our service and submission his.

Obj. I deny not but sinne will be sinning, even in a believing heart, it will be assaulting, it will now and then assault upon

upon the soul, and vex, and captivate.

Sol. But the rebellion of a sinful nature is one thing, and the dominion of it is another thing: Sinne will stir as an enemy where Christ doth reign as a Lord: But it is one thing for thee to be a combatant with sinne, another thing for thee to be a *servant* of sin. Not who assaults me, but whom I love and serve, he is my Lord. When the heart goes off from Christ to the approbation, and love, and habitual obedience of sin: now sin is thy Lord. But if by faith thou hast sworne fealty to Christ, then though all temptations beginn thee, though the insolencies of corrupt nature break in upon thee, to captivate, or to alienate thy heart from service to Christ, yet amidst all oppressions, yea under all the knocks and buffetings, and interruptions by sinne, the heart cries out, I acknowledge no Lord but Christ, him I would obey, him I honour, I love, his I am, and I yet hate those sins which yet I cannot conquer.

SECT. V.

Fourthly, a fourth tryal of true faith is this, *It makes the heart humble and lowly.* Every unbelieving heart is proud, and hath high imaginations, and stands upon its own bottom; It hath no found experience, either of God or of it self. But true faith casts a man quite out of himselfe, it sees no ground of confidence and excellency from any thing in our selves.

Faith hath a double aspect, 1. One is upon us. 2. Another A double aspect: is upon God and Christ: When faith looks down upon us, alas of faith. it findes no matter of boasting in the world, for either it findes *finnes*, which should abase our hearts; or else *imperfections*, which should curb our pride, or *wants*, which should shew unto us our indigence and dependance. The *Evil* which it findes may *cast down* us, and the *good* which it findes may make us *ashamed*; not only because it is so short, and defective in what we ought to have, but also because we have not answered the giving of that good with just thanks, or we have not improved that good to the advantage as we might have done.

When

When faith looks upward to God and Christ, there it sees all the causes of all our mercy, and of all our happiness; have we pardon of sinnes? why, saith Faith, the cause of this is in Gods *merits*. Have we righteousness? why, saith Faith, the cause of this is in Christs *merits*. Have we any gifts, any acceptance, any remembrance from heaven? why, saith Faith, the cause of this is only in Christs *blood*. All that I have is given me, and the cause of all that giving, is utterly out of my self, so that the soul sits down, now, and sayes, O Lord in my selfe I am nothing; nay, of my self worse then nothing; but what I am, I am that by thy *grace*. All I have is thine, my bread, my health, my life, my body, my soul, all thine; If any love, if any mercy; if any Christ, if any grace, if any comfort, if any strength, if any steadfastnesse, if any performances, if a good work, if a good word, if a good affection, if a good thought, why, all is thine, thou only art the cause, I am lesse then the least of thy *merits*, and what is thy servant that thou shouldst look on such a one as I am? Thou madest me, and thou boughtest me, and thou calledst me, and thou justifiest me, and thou savest me. Though faith makes thy condition high, yet it makes thy person low: Thou shouldst by faith, be not high minded, but *feare*, Rom. 11. 20. why, not high minded, because standing by faith: Because this standing of faith is not of our selves, but in God, but in Christ, Faith is the foot of the soul, but heaven, the grace of heaven, the strength of heaven is, the ground upon which the foot doth stand.

SECT. VI.

5.

Fifthly, true faith is fruitful, James 2. 18. *I will shew thee my faith by my works*, ver. 21. *Was not our father Abraham justified by works?* ver. 22. *seest thou how faith wrought by his works and by works was faith made perfect?* The Apostle in

A double faith, that Chapter speaks of a double faith.

One was a counterfeit faith, a shadow as it were, which had the looks, but not the substance; it was a dead faith, which hath the limbs, but not the soul and life.

But

But how did it appeare that this *faith was dead*? did it not speak many good words? yes, saith Saint *James*; It gave good words, & *prateria nihil*, no good works; It could say to the *poore*, *be ye clothed*, and *be ye warme*, but gave nothing to cloath or to feed, why? saith he, *this mans faith is vaine* (that is) he hath not the true quality of faith, and it will stand him in no stead.

Another was a *lively and justifying faith*, It had in it the true nature and property of faith, but how did that appear?

The Apostle answers, *by Works*. You know that there is a great difference twixt these two, *viz.* the *justifying of a mans person before God*, and the *justifying of a mans faith before the world*: That which justifies my person before God, is only *faith in Jesus Christ*; and that which *justifies* (as one particular) *my faith before men*, not to be a *dead*, but a *living faith*, is the acting of *good works*. Hence that of *Paul*, Tit. 3. 8. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirme constantly, that they which have beleevd in God might be careful to maintain good works, these things are good and profitable unto men.* Right is the speech of Saint *Augustine*, *sequuntur justificatum though non precedunt justificandum*. As in a clock, the finger makes not the clock to go, but the clock it, and yet the motion of the finger without, shews whether the clock goes within. *Austin.*

So although works do not cause or infuse justifying faith, nor yet cause our Justification, yet they do cleerly manifest, whether we have such a faith as doth indeed justify, or not.

Obj. You will say the work of Faith is to look up, and to come and to deal with God only; and therefore to breath out good works which respect men, seems not to be any testimony of faith.

Sol. I answer,

1. The Apostle there expressly distinguisheth the *lively* and the *dead faith by works* (as if he said) it is so.

2. There is (if you will let me distinguish so) as it were a double act of faith.

One is *proper and personal*, and this is circumscribed to that

Heavenly employment of receiving or presenting in and through Christ.

Another is *Grateful*, and this is extended to the sending forth of good works. Not as if it were a work of *supererogation*; for faith shades the doing of good works under many commands, and also the rewards of them under many promises, but because faith sees also a sweet and reasonable equity, that if God be good to me in Christ, I should be good to some for Christs sake. And verily, as the worklesse person doth not now own Christ by faith, so hereafter Christ will not own him by mercy, *depart from me.*

Obj. But yet you will reply, good works cannot be a sure testimony of faith, because many evil men may performe them, and some beleivers have not wherewithal to do them.

Sol. I answer.

1. *Good Works* may be so stiled, either, First, *materially*, because they are such things as may do good. Secondly, *formally*, being sealed with all the circumstances which are required to make them good, both for spiritual composition, and *Divine acceptance*. Now though wicked men may performe works good materially, yet formally they do not, for to make a work *formally good*, there must be the concurrence of all circumstances, the person must have a good heart, and a good ground, and a good end, and a good Christ, &c.

2. Though every *Believer* cannot actually do every good work, yet some good works or other he can do: though he cannot give money, yet he can give prayer, &c. Now think on this ye who have riches and wealth, and professe faith on Christ, and yet scarce a person, a poor distressed person can bless God for your *fruitful faith*; nay, the very doing of a small good work, sometimes doth even try all the faith in the soul; a man doth many times beleieve he shall surely want, and impoverish his estate, if he should be rich in good works.

SECT. VII.

Sixthly, true faith doth *desire and endeavour after increase*: *Help my unbelief*, said the unbelieving father, *O Lord increase our faith* said the Disciples. I pray observe a few things.

1. That *true faith begins in weaknesse*. Like a childe at the first, very tender; or like the light, at the first very broken. Presumption being a work of fancy, and borne with its strength and perfection, it is fully assured and utterly confident at first. But *Jacobs ladder* hath many steps.

2. That though it hath weaknesse, yet it hath life: as the spark of fire, though it be little, yet it is hot, and though the childe be weak, yet it can suck; even the *weakest faith in Christ* will be much about Christ, it will be weeping at his grave, or washing of his feet, or looking on his person.

3. There are yet *many degrees wanting to faith*, either thou canst not be perswaded, or not fully perswaded, or not constantly perswaded.

4. If the *faith be true and living*, it will bend after a *rising*; and that,

First, in respect of its *acts*, of *receiving*, *trusting*, *perswading*.

Secondly, in respect of its *object*, It would yet apprehend more, and feel more of the communion and vertues of Christ. All the preaching in the world doth not increase a false and presumptuous faith, nor doth the administration of the Sacraments adde thereto. But the living, they grow, and he must have more faith, who hath any; *Paul would apprehend even as he is apprehended*. The soule which hath true faith, would have yet more victorious yieldings, more stedfast embracings, more confident restings, &c. like the childe which sucks and thrives.

SECT. VIII.

7.

Seventhly, true faith in Christ and a mournful heart for sinne go together, Zach. 12. 10. *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourne for him as one mourneth for his only sonne.*

There are two things which faith will fetch up in the soule, one is love to Christ, another is sorrow for sinne. There may be a terror without faith, the conscience may be crackt and wounded, but till faith comes, there is no sorrow, the soul is not altered nor melted; that which melts the soul is kindnesse and mercy, and that which sees them is faith; if thou dost cast an eye of Faith on Christ, that eye will have some tears for forced sinning against Christ. You shall finde in Scripture, that true believers are characterized by this, *I hat they be mourners in Sion, and they return with weepings and supplications, and they poure out waters before the Lord: and unbelieving persons are described by hearts of Adamant, of rocks of stone, by hardened, by unfeeling, by irrelenting hearts; The text saith, that when Christ looked on Peter, he went out and wept bitterly.* there is a piercing vertue in a gracious look from Christ. The soule which hath been long humbling it selfe, and much in seeking for mercy, and a good look from heaven, *It is* (when any gracious manifestation of favour darts down) *even resolved into tears:* never did the child weep more soberly upon his reconciliation to his loving father, then the believing Christian doth mourn in sober sadnesse, when his faith gets to see God reconciled to him in Christ, he reades his pardon with tears of joy.

There are two parts of sorrow.

One is *essential*, which consists in a strong displeasure of the will against the soul, for sinning against a good God.

Another is *contingent*, which consists in those dreary teares flowing into the eyes; now this is contingent, for when the heart is many times filled with teares, like Davids bottle, yet it may so fall out, that the eyes may be silent in such expressions, &c,

CHAP.



CHAP. XIV.

Singular comfort for all true Beleevers.

IF to beleeve in Jesus Christ be the only way to be saved, then here is *singular comfort to all true beleevers.* What Solomon spake of wisdom, that I say of faith, *her wayes are wayes of pleasantnesse; and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.* If this be a happy thing to have *the Lord to be our God,* (and David judged it to be a superlative happinesse) If this be a blessed thing not to be *offended as Christ,* O how sweetly and greatly blessed is the condition of a beleeving soul, which hath *God to be its God, Christ to be its husband,* and *heaven to be its portion.* Faith and Christ! why! they are the *ring,* and the *diamond;* they are the *way* and the *life;* the soul cannot have such a prize as *Christ,* nor such a *hand* as *faith;* such a *match* as *Christ,* nor such a *grace* to contract it as *faith.* Now *testify thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,* said *Simion:* He may cheerfully lay down his body in the dust, who hath by faith given up his soule to Christ.

But to descend to some distinct particulars of comfort to the soule which beleeves truly in the Lord Jesus Christ, observe.

SECT. I.

I.

First, this is one comfort in the Text, *that they are in the way to heaven*. Naturally we are out of our way as soone as we enter into the world, as *soone as they be borne they go aside*, said David, and, *the way of peace they have not known*; and nothing sets us in the right way but faith, for Christ is the way, and it is faith which findes a Christ: It was not Philips natural eye, but his spiritual faith, which spied the Messias: Christ is the way to heaven, and faith is the way to Christ. Salvation, it is the great object of the greatest desire, and indeed I know no more excellently desirable thing then God, in a glorious union with whom is the perfection of our salvation. Now if thou be a true beleever, thou art in the way to salvation.

1. Not in a By way in a false way, but in a true and direct way: If God doth skill the way to heaven, if he hath laid out to sinners the right way, then believing it is, Eph. 2. 8. *By grace you are saved through faith*, Heb. 10. 39. *We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul*.

2. Not in an uncertaine, but firme way; It's an infallible way of salvation: Heaven is the assured mansion for thy soul, if thy heart be the true lodging of faith. 1 Pet. 1. 4. *To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*.

Object. True, that may not fade away, but we may fall away; that may remain, but we may be lost?

Sol. No faith the Apostle, but as that is reserved for you, so you shall be preserved unto that; as mercy and truth will keep your portion sure, so truth and power shall keep your persons sure. Ver. 5. *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*, therefore he addes a word more, ver. 9. *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*. Now is not this a comfort to a man, that he is in the true and sure way to heaven? Every man is in a journey, in a way; wicked men have their wayes, but the end of them is bitterness, and hell after all their jollities and pleasures, yet their wayes

Wages are the paces of death. But the believing soul is in the way of life, and therefore he is said already to have eternal life, John 3. and to be saved. O what is this, I am going to my God, to my Father, to my inheritance.

SECT. II.

Secondly, here is another comfort to true believers, there is a *real and blessed exchange* 'twixt them and Christ. As upon the conjugal knot, there is a mutual reinsurance of communion: The wife partakes of the estate of her husband, and the husband (interchangably) of the estate of his wife: for the *personal union* draws with it the *real union*; If thou be mine, thine estate is mine; So is it in the spiritual espousing of the soul and Christ by faith, Christ partakes of our estate, and we shall partake of his estate: He is ours, and all his are ours, we are his, and therefore ours are his.

2.
Simile.

This exchange consists in these things.

1. Christ doth take our sins and debts upon himself. Look as the man who marries the woman, if he take her person he must take her debts, and satisfaction too: So doth Christ, when he takes us to be his, he takes our sinnes also to be his; How to be his? not by way of *infusion* and *infection*, as if our sinful qualities were transmitted from our persons into his nature, (O no, he never takes upon him our sinnes to make his nature sinful,) but by way of *imputation*, and of *satisfaction*. The *guilt* of our sinnes is *imputed* unto him as to a *willing surety*, who doth present himself in our stead, to make payment and satisfaction. 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 penitent and believing soul, if thou hast any guilt and debt to be answered for unto God, put them all upon my account, if thou hast wronged my Father, I will make the satisfaction to the utmost; for I was made *surety* for thee; 2 Cor. 5. 19; 20. I poured out my sin for thy transgression; It cost me my heart blood to reconcile thee.

Philem. 18.

thee to my Father, and to *slay enmity*. And as *Rebekah* said to *Jacob* in another case, *upon me, my sonne, be the curse*, so saith Christ to the believing soul. Why, thy finnes did expose thee unto the *curse of the Law*; but *I was made a curse for thee*, I did bear that burden my self upon the crosse, and upon my shoulders were all thy griefs, and sorrows borne; I was *wounded for thy transgressions*, and *I was bruised for thy iniquities*: And therefore we are said to have redemption and remission of sins in his blood, *Eph. 1. 7.*

Now what a *comfort* is this to a *Believer*, that Christ hath eased him of his great debts, that he hath laid down the price for him, he is his surety, and hath discharged and hath cancelled the *Law of Ordinances*, and hath *blotted out the hand-writing*. *God was in Christ* (saith the Apostle) *reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their sinne unto them*, mark it, *not imputing their trespasses unto them*; what is the not imputing of sinne, but the not charging of it, the not reckoning for it: And what is it which he saith (*unto them*) trespasses were not imputed unto them, as if God should say, let them go, I have nothing to say unto them, my Sonne hath satisfied my justice fully for them. Now, saith *Paul* (out of *David*) *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sinne*. Yea, he is blessed indeed, for if the Lord should single out the most able transgressor for the least moiety and scruple of guilt, and arreigne his conscience with a judicial and straight severity; O how the sinews of the soul would flie assunder, and eternal despaire of ever satisfying so great, and pure, and infinite a justice, would swallow up the thought and imaginations? Till a man knows where to lay down his sinful burden, his soul will be miserably afflicted; but now, if a man *believes in Jesus Christ*, Christ will take off his burdens; I will answer for thee saith Christ, I will satisfy for thee. As *David* spake in another case, when *Goliath* presented himself against the *Host of Israel*. *Let no mans heart faile because of him, thy servants will go and fight with his Philistia*. So saith Christ to the believing soul, be not dejected, do not despaire, though thy sins be many and great, yet I have overcome them, I have discharged them, my Sacrifice was presented, it was sufficient, it was effectual, it was *accepted for thee*.

Second-

Secondly, *Christ doth bestow his righteousness upon us.* This is a great comfort to a sensible and understanding soul, that there is a righteousness for it, which it may safely and confidently present unto Gods justice.

These things are most true.

First, that we are by *nature* all of us *wretched sinners, the whole world is guilty before God.* Rom. 3. 19.

Secondly, *Divine justice hath a quarrel against every guilty soul,* and will have compleat, and full, and perfect satisfaction.

Thirdly, no, not our *best graces & performances* are commensurate and square payment in the eyes of pure justice: all of them as *inherent* in us, and *acted* by us, are but *imperfect excellencies*: No man hath so much holiness as is required, nor doth he so much as he is obliged. Every particular grace, though it be of an *heavenly and divine original*, yet it is like the starres twinkling, though placed in the heavens; and every duty though it be a motion, yet it is like that of *Jacobs thigh*, which was *touched, and baled* to his dying day. So that if God should enter into judgement with the righteous person, even the righteousness that is in him, would not be safety and defence unto him. As a man that hath a precious lading, dares not so adventure it in any crackt and broken vessel, so no Christian may or can dare to adventure the safety of his soul upon the leaking vessels, and bottoms of his own holiness or services. This very *smoak of doubtings* which still mount up with our *flames of faith*, and the *gross affections* which cling to the root of our most *heavenly love*, and part of that *rock of hardness*, is seated and complanted with the *freest spring of senseness*, and mournings, and those infinite and frequent *interruptions*, both of our *prayers, and hearings, and readings*, and any kinde of dutiful doings, that we are so thrust away from our devotions, by the invasions and entertainment of strange thoughts in the times of our devotion: I say, those and infinite emanulations or spots, do so adhere and cling about, and defile our selves and that which comes from us, that (in proceeding of pure justice) we may cast down our selves on the ground, and *beg for mercy*, much rather then to stand at the barre, and *plead for reward*: But now here is the great stay of a

believing soul, (which hath truly received Christ) that Christ will find a full, exact, compleat, most acceptable righteousness for it, in which the soul shall stand boldly before the judgement seat.

Rom. 3. 19. *By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. *We are made the righteousness of God in him.* 1 Cor. 1. 30. *Ye are of him in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, &c.* Jer. 23. 6. *In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby they shall call him, The Lord our righteousness.*

The righteousness of Christ is therefore called the righteousness of God, Rom. 8. 17, because it is it which God hath designed, and which God doth accept for us in our justification; and for, and in which he doth acquit and pronounce us righteous. Now in this lies our comfort thus, viz.

1. That though our inherent holiness be imperfect, yet Christ's righteousness is absolute.

2. That as it is a full righteousness, and every way answerable, so it was designed by God, to be that which should justify the believing sinner.

3. That God accepts of that righteousness, and will clear any who hath it.

4. That, if by faith we have taken Christ, Christ doth assuredly bestow his righteousness on us, not by putting it into our persons, but by improving it to our good; It is, though not infused into us, yet imputed unto us, and God will through it pronounce us clear.

SECT. III.

3.

Thirdly, a third comfort to a believer in Jesus Christ is this, That he is in singular Covenant with God: for the Covenant is with faith in Jesus Christ, it was to Abraham and to his seed (that is) to all the faithful.

Observe a few things here.

1. The Covenant of grace (in the offer and revelation of it)

is the *treaty of eternal happinesse 'twixt God and sinners*; whatsoever good a soul can desire to exempt it from misery, and to make it truly happy, there it is.

2. The *Covenant of Grace*, in respect of our entrance and admission into it, is a *most gracious, and spiritual, and firme engagement of God to be our God*, and to performe all the good which he hath there undertaken. *I will be a God unto you, I will shew mercy unto you, you shall have loving kindnesse, I will give you grace in all kindes, I will not faile to assist, and guide, and lead, and uphold you, I will be a father to you, a rock to you, a Sanctuary, an allsufficiency, an exceeding great reward.* So that if you need any thing, come to me, I have it for you, and do not fear to come, for I will assuredly do you good, I am willing to do it, for I have promised it, and be you confident to possesse, for I have obliged my self by Covenant to performe.

3. He that *beleeves in Iesus Christ* is assuredly in the Covenant; for Christ (on whom he beleeves) is the *Messenger of the Covenant*, and his blood is the blood of the Covenant, and in him all the *promises of the Covenant are Yea and Amen.* If thou hast given thy consent to Christ, if thou hast bestowed thy heart on him, if thou hast truly received him to be thy Lord and Saviour, undoubtedly God is become thy God, and all those ample and rich, and congruous, and blessed undertakings in his Covenant, they are all for thee, thou art the man to whom God saith, *I will surely have mercy on him*, and to whom he saith, *Sin shall not have dominion over him*, for he is under grace, and to whom he saith, *I will hear him, and heale him; and guide him; and keep him.* Thou mayest go to all those treasures of divine promises, as to thy own garden, and take of any flower, lay hold on any promise, respecting thy particular exigence, and say, *this is mine.* When thou lookest down into thy self, thou mayest reade many wants with wet and sad eyes, but then if thou look up to the Covenant, thou mayest by faith espy all thy supplies with a glad heart. Why? God did put thy good into the Covenant, and there thou shalt assuredly finde it: Dost thou read of any *altering grace*, of any *pardoning grace*, of any *enlarging grace*, of any *preventing grace*, of any *assisting grace*, of any *preserving and upholding*

grace, of any recovering and raising grace, of any pacifying and comforting grace? why all this is for thee, and all that God hath there undertaken is thine.

SECT. IV.

4.

Fourthly, if you do beleve in the Lord Jesus Christ, you may then *with boldnesse approach the throne of grace.*

Ephes. 2. 18. For through him we both have accessse by one Spirit to the Father. Heb. 10. 21. Having an high Priest over the house of God. Ver. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. 1 John 5. 13. Those things I write unto you that beleve in the Name of the Sonne of God. Ver. 14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

Obj. You shall finde in your heart many sinful modesties; you are afraid to be so bold with God, and whether God will do such great matters for you, yea, and there are many unbelieving fears our broken services shall never be accepted, and who are we that the Lord should regard our prayers?

Sol. But if a man doth truly beleve in Jesus Christ.

1. His way is open to Heaven.

2. He hath a friend, and not an enemy to deal with: It is thy Father to whom thou art bending the knee.

3. He hath a mighty intercessor; look as *Jesus Christ* is the mighty Redeemer for the persons of men, so he is the mighty intercessor for the services of men, and he *ever lives to make intercession*. If thy wants be never so great, yet thy God is able to supply them, and if thy infirmities be never so many, yet thy intercessor is able to cover and expiate them. Thy services (as thine) carry with them a prejudice, there was iniquity in the holy offerings, but then Aaron did bear the iniquity of them: so thy Priest, thy Christ, thy intercessor, he doth take off by the Application of his merits, whatsoever is amiss and offensive, and he doth ingratiate thy requests, and procures audience and acceptance for thee.

Therefore now, if thou be a belever then in thy prayers
come

come confidently to God; if thou canst finde a promise, and a Christ, and a faith, thou mayest cheerfully put up thy petitions to heaven. What should hinder us from being confident? Is God unwilling? No, he hath engaged himself unto thee. Is God unable? Why, *He is able to do abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think.* Dost thou feare thy own distance? Why, but thou comest to a Father, and thou comest by the blood of a gracious, of a beloved, of a powerful Mediator and Intercessor. *Hebrews 4. Having such an High Priest, we may come boldly to the throne of grace, See Heb. 10.* Dost thou feare because of enmity? *Christ hath slain that;* or because of infirmity? *Christ will cure that.*



CHAP. XV.

The Agreement and difference of strong and weak faith.

Ut now some may reply, These are sweet comforts to beleivers, but as the Eunuch to Philip, *of whom speaks the Prophet this, of himselfe or of some other?* So here, why? to whom are these comforts, to all, or to some choice beleivers? are they common comforts to every beleever, or peculiar to the eminent and strong only?

This scruple hath made way for a singular point; I will satisfie it by opening four particulars.

Obj.

Sol.

1. The common unity of all true faith, in respect of the habit, yet the intensive diversity in respect of acts and degrees.

2. The proofs of a strong faith, with the instances of a weak faith in truth.

3. The concordance of faith in all fundamental Comforts.

23

4. The

4. The inequality of strong and weak faith in many true, yet not essential consequences and consolations.

Concerning the first, which respects the *common unity of faith* in respect of the habit, and the *diversity of it*, in respect of the *acts and degrees*.

Observe these things for the unity of faith.

SECT. I.

1.

First, that all *true faith*, though in a comparison of faith with faith in several subjects, it may admit of several diversities and differences, yet they consent and agree in these things, *viz.*

First, in the *immediate and special cause*: weak faith, as faith, comes not from one cause, and strong faith from another cause, but both the one and the other *from one and the same cause*, *viz.* the blessed *Spirit of God*. Not onely the flames, but the sparks of fire are kindled by that Spirit which *blows where it lists*. As in the Orchard, the tree which stands strong, and the tender plant which stands trembling, both of them were at first set by one and the same hand, so the faith which is now well grown, and that faith which is as yet tender, and full of doubtings, both of them are the peculiar fruits of *Gods sanctifying Spirit*.

Though this childe in the cradle cannot runne and move as well as that in the field at work, yet the father begat the one as well as the other, and owns them both by vertue of one equal relation. *The day of small things are not despised by God*, who sees *weakness in the strongest Faith*, and *Truth in the weakest*, and is the Parent both of this and that.

2. In the *remote and singular cause*. You know that Gods free grace and love is the first wheele of all singular good unto men; out of it came that great gift of *Christ*, and that great work of *Election*, from whence doth flow all the graces which sanctifie and bring to glory. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*. Now all faith is a drop out of this fountaine, the weak faith is a fruit of that great love of God

Acts 13. 48.

electing

electing us in Christ, as well as the strong, and is, though not so sensibly evident, yet as *really a true testimony of our election*: The reason whereof is this, not *grace* restrictively considered, but *grace* in the whole latitude of it is the fruit of Gods *election*: my meaning is this, not only *Graces* as *eminent*, as raised and elevated to some more perfect quality and pitch, but *grace* in the whole compass of it, from the conception of it to the perfection of it, from the dawning to the full day, from the nature to the act; from the acts to the degrees; all of it in nature, in parts, in *totum & solidum*, all of it whether more or lesse, strong or weak, all is out of the same grace of Election.

It was not one love which elected him, who is therefore now strong in believing with *Abraham*, and another love which elected him, who is now weak in believing with the father of the child; No, but it was one and the self-same love which produced this, and that faith; yea, that electing love was intensively one in producing of both. It was as equally high towards this person as towards that, and was as equally causative of the faith that is weak, as of the faith which is strong, being habitually considered, and also in relation to the grace of Gods love in election.

3. In the *ordinary and usual instrumental cause*: the same womb of the word brought them both forth, being efficaciously assisted by that *Almighty Spirit*. That word which discovered misery, and impotency, and necessity to the one, did so to the other. That word which revealed the Covenant of grace and mercy in Christ to the one, did so to the other believer also. That word which did assure the one, that if he would come in and accept of Christ, he should be saved, did also of this assure the other. That word which did excite the heart of the one to trust upon Gods promise, and so to accept of Christ, did likewise (*being quickened with the same Spirit*) draw, and persuade the other.

4. In the lively nature of believing: look at the strong and weak man, though they do differ in the measure of power, yet they do agree in the nature of man; though they differ in respect of working, yet they agree in respect of being. And as the sick man, and the healthy man, though they

they vary in their temper, yet they agree in their nature; though they differ in livelihood, yet not in life. So, though the strong and weak faith differ exceedingly in respect of particular abilities and exercises, yet there is a true nature of faith in the weakest as well as in the strongest. There is as true a knowledge of the sinful and miserable condition in our selves, and of the blessed condition in Christ, in the one as well as in the other. There is as true an assent to the *word of grace, the Gospel of salvation*, revealed in the one as well as in the other, I say, as true, though, perhaps not *equal and full*. There is as true accepting and embracing of Christ, to be *Lord and Saviour*; the will doth as truly receive Christ offered, though perhaps there be not such a strength of adherence at the first. There is so much in the weakest faith as makes up the match 'twixt Christ and the soul, nay, there is not any thing in the strongest faith, which is an effectual ingredient to espouse the soul with Christ, but the same also is in the weakest faith. Doth strong faith take Christ? so doth the weakest; doth it acknowledge him the only Saviour? so doth the weakest; doth it embrace him as its Lord? so doth the weakest; doth it breed union? so doth the weakest; doth it make a man a member of Christ, and heire of promises? so doth the weakest.

Thus you briefly perceive the habitual unity of all true faith.

SECT. II.

2. Secondly, now a word of the *intensive diversities of faith*. How faith differs from faith, I do not mean a *true faith* from a *false*, but a *true faith* from *true faith*. As one man truly living may differ from another truly living, notwithstanding they agree in the common nature of man, and life; Or to use the Apostles Simile, as one *star* may differ from another *star* in glory, though all be in the heavens. The rounds in *Jacobs ladder* are not all at the top, yet are they every one of them steps to heaven; so of faith, every *faith* is not *triumphing*, yet every faith is mounting up to the *Lord of life* and King of glory.
- The

The severall and particular habits of faith, though they consent in one truth of nature, yet they differ in many things.

First, in the *Strength of the parts and acts*: As in the eyes of men, though the visive faculty be equal in all, yet vision, or the act of seeing, is diverse, one sees the colours more clearly than another.

So is it in faith, (which is the eye of the soul,) Though the nature be common, and equall, yet the act of beleeving is different.

There are three *acts of faith*, and in respect of all of them, there Three acts may be a diversity among believers.

1. *Knowledge and apprehension*, this is as it were the ground work of faith; for *believing* is not rooted in *ignorance*, but in *light*. Now every believer hath not so full and distinct a knowledge as another. *Divine revelations* (which are the generall objects of faith) are not clasped alike by all : No, nor yet the *promises*, (which are the special objects of faith) they are not so equally apprehended. There are severall promises, and in them severall parts, and degrees of goodnesse and truth ; now, it is possible for some believers, not to be acquainted with all their *treasuries*; they have not been so long acquainted with the word as to know all the good which doth concerne them; And that special good which they do apprehend, one believer reacheth the large compasse of it more than another : All (even in Christ) is not equally known by all, who believe in Christ. Hence it is, that age, and time, and communion, and study, and use of meanes, and experience do raise the apprehension, and knowledge to farre more degrees and strength then at the first; and the believing soul, which at first saw things (as the man whose eyes were touched by Christ) dimly, at length riseth by degrees to a more perfect light of the same truthes, and to a more full and enlarged apprehension of other truthes, which he was ignorant of before.

2. *Assent*, even in this also may one beleever differ from another : I confesse, the usual and palpable diversities of faith be most in things as *good*, rather then in things as *evill*.

Nevertheless, every believer, as so, assents to all revelations,

as in particular to those of *Christ*, as *true*, yet the assents in believers may very much, not only in the circumstances of the assent, but also in the immediate workings of the assent. The Judgement is not equally captivated in all, or else why do some believers question and scruple more then others? yes, and why else needs there a farther evidence and demonstration, to establish some indoctrinall truths, if all believers were equally grounded, and rooted in the word?

Yea, and why are some good people more apt to errors then others? no plausible error can be taught, or spread with the speciousnesse of taking reason, but presently they are questioning their *old truths*, for *new opinions*, which shews, that *all assents to divine truths are not alike in all believers*.

Nay, and this appeares to be so by the severall instances of *diabolicall temptations*, which in some are of that great force, as to make them not only *question their particular interests in God and Christ*, (which may befall the highest believer) but also to question the *first principles of Religion*; whether *there be a God*, and whether *the Scriptures are his Word*, and whether *true or false*.

3. *Reception*, embracing or consent: though it be hearty and sincere in all, yet one believer cannot so rest on Christ as another, nor doth every one take Christ by the hand alike. Like a child who gives out a trembling hand with some shuggings, even to his Father; so the believer may put forth his hand of faith, even to Christ, with many feares and shakings; O that I may have him, that I might receive him, that he would be mine, that I could lay hold on him; O that God would pardon my sinnes, saith one; yet another raiseth up the soul, I will rest on his promise in Christ to pardon all.

2. In the *measure of degrees*: Hence you read of that by Christ, *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel*, and, *O woman great is thy faith*, *Abraham stood in faith*, *Paul perswaded*, &c. and *Job I know that my*, &c. In a comparative opposition to which you read those phrases, *O ye of little faith*. *Why dost thou doubt*, *O thou of little faith*, and of the weak i faith.

The degrees of faith are many (viz.) the *habitual inclination* of the heart toward Christ, the *actual laying hold on him*, & *stro*.

Simile.

strong embracing of him; reflection of the act, that I know I take him, as Lord and Saviour; reflection of the object, I know that he is my Lord and Saviour; then, a fulnesse of this reflexive assurance, I doubt it not; then the reasons of this full assurance (which, whether it meane the great continuance, or the great abundance of the measure of assurance, is disputable) Againe the longer duration of this full and great assurance. Now in all these respects (except the first) faith in one may differ from faith in another: How many hearts are set only towards Christ; O that I could apprehend him, but I cannot believe: How many souls do apprehend him? yet, O that we were apprehended by him; how many are apprehended by him, (that is) know him to be theirs, by some gracious and firme evidence? yet by and by with Mary weeping, they have taken away my Lord.

Yet some others rise high and stay long in restings, in persuasions in affirmings, that it is heaven with them many dayes together.

You may see one Christian look up to heaven with *teares of joy, (as Job, I know that my redeemer liveth.)* Another looking up with *teares of grief, (Lord be mercifull to me a sinner)* You may see one sitting down with *thanks, (who gave himselfe for me.)* Another falling down in *Prayer (I beseech Lord help my unbelief.)* You may see one triumphing above all feares and scruples, *(I am perswaded that nothing shall separate me from the love of God in Christ)* and yet another combating with many feares, *(but will the Lord be favourable unto me?)* One blesteth God for assurances, another cries unto God against doubtings: one is like *Mary rejoycing in God my Saviour,* another like *Hester,* in ventring towards the Soepter, and, *if I perish I perish.* One saith, *thou art my rock, my fortress, my strong tower, my portion for ever, and the house of my salvation,* another sighes and breakes out, *O that salvation were come unto us.* *Sion,* O that I could believe, O that I were once perswaded. Thus it is with severall believers as with severall children: one lies in the cradle, another is led by the nurse, another is going by the chaires, and another can run. Or as it is with a flock of sheep, some are strong and bearing, others are young, and must be gently led or carried; Or as with an Orchard, some trees are able and well limbed, others are tender plants, and are weakly rising.

Causes of it. Reasons of which diversity may be either the *different ages of faith*. In some it hath had a longer time of strengthening, in others it is but seed newly sown, or else *different external helps*; some believers are brought up in a more fertill soyle; under powerfull ministries, which are experimentally acquainted with inward conflicts, and therefore are more suited to weak consciences to understand and remove their feares and doubts, and to answer objections, either arising from natural unbelief, or from Satans subtilties; others live upon a more hard hand, and want those directions and counsells.

Inward assistances. Or else *different assistances of Gods Spirit*; for as that *Spirit breaths where he lists, so he blowes where he lists*; some he is pleased to assist more in a way of combate, others more in a way of conquest; though he be the *Spirit of life* to all that believe, yet he is the *Spirit of assurance*, to some of those more then to others.

Services. Or else the *different employments and services*; all believers meet not with equall conflicts, either within or without, they are not put upon the same trialls, the same crosses, the same difficult duties; Now the Lord is wise as well as good, and therefore proportions different measures of faith, according to the diverse degrees of exigencies. A man can do and suffer much after a day of gracious assurance, whose heart perhaps would have trembled, if his doubts and feares had been yet to be answered.

Pride. Yes, and some hearts are more apt to *Pride* and *forgetfulness*, which are therefore kept shorter, lest they should *swell by multitude of revelations*.

Former sinings. To all which if we adde, that sometimes *former sinings* may justly make the soul to tugge long for assurance, because the Lord will not give easie and sweet answer, before we know that it is *an evil and bitter thing to sin against him*.

SECT. III.

NOW I proceed to the second general, viz. the proofes of a *strong faith*, with the instances of a *weak faith in truth*.

Three queries, how to know, 1. Whether our faith be great, 2. or little, 3. and yet true.

You see there are two parts of this, I will begin with the first, which respects the discoveries of faith in strength.

Concerning which take these things briefly. *Signes of a great and strong faith.* Signes of a great and strong faith.

1. *Confidence of easie answers for great matters* is an argument of a strong and great faith. As in the Centurion, who came to Christ for the *healing of his servant*, who was sick of a *palsey* and grievously tormented, *speak the word only and my servant shall be healed*, (that is) Though he be very weak, yet I am confident that thy power is very strong, thou needest not to trouble thy person, one word from thy pleasure will heal him, *Matth. 8. 6, 7, 8.* What faith Christ now of this faith? *Secv. 10. Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* The more difficult we esteem things to be in God or Christ, the weaker is our faith: If we impose a different readinesse of help, or mercy, or pardon, on God, according to the different matter which we are putting up unto him, this argues want of strength: For it is all one with God to *pardon abundantly*, as to pardon singly; and *his power*, is as able for the *greatest difficulty*, as for the least trouble. But when the soul draws neer unto him, and can beleve great matters, as well as small things; that he will be *merciful to great transgressions*, as well as *compassionate to ordinary infirmities*; that he will subdue *strong temptations*, as well as *weak glancings*; that he will in time conquer the busiest inclination to sin, &c. this shews that faith is come to some strength.

2. Againe, a *repetition of adherence* and a *stedfast following of Christ*, notwithstanding the *discouragements*, which the soule may be apt to take from Christs behaviour towards it, argues their faith to be strong, and great, *2 Sam. 23. 16.* They were the
three.

three mighty men that brake through the Host, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, Matth. 15. 22. As in that Woman of Canaan, who came to Christ to heal her daughter; *Have mercy on me O Lord, thou sonne of David*; how did Christ entertaine her? (the text saith, *he answered her not a word*) yet in the same verse it is said, *she cryeth after thee*; (Christ's silence raised her voice the higher) Againe, *she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me*, how is she now answered? (*It is not meet to take the childrens bread and to cast it to dogs*) such an answer to some spirits, had been far worse then silence; But mark it, her faith followed Christ still, and that very word which would discourage another, encouraged her; (O, that faith is strong which can urge Christ from a small hint) *Truth Lord, said she, yea, the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Masters Table*. As if she might say, Be it so Lord Jesus, I am no better then a dogge, an unworthy creature, yet let me have the compassions to a dogge, though not plenty, yet the crumbs. Now, what saith Christ of her? *Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith*. Remember it, that the faith which can bring up the soul, which can lead it up to heaven against discouragements. Though God doth not answer, yet I will seek; though he *kill me*, yet *I will trust in him*: I say, such a faith is strong; an *expressing faith*, a faith which will make the soul to presse on after denials, after suspensions; it is come to a great measure of faith, which will not be answered, or will not be gone; a faith that will not let God go, or Christ until it speed. *Jacob* was as a wrestler, he would not let God go *except he blessed him*. A faith that can *dispute* it much with God, which will in a holy reasoning, take and urge God with God, and will so enforce the promises on him (which he hath made) that God is even faine to yeild, *Be it unto thee as thou wilt*, this is *faith ripened*.

Job.

3. The more entirely the soul is carried to expectation from the sole strength of a Divine promise, the greater and the stronger is that faith. As in *Abrahams* case; He wanted a sonne, and God promised him an *Isaac*; *Abraham* did not now stagger through unbelief, he did not consult the truth of it from his own natural abilities; How unable he was, that he

be neglected, but *how able God was to perform his own word*, upon this his faith did pitch. And for this the text faith, that *he was strong in faith*, Rom. 4. 20. Remember this, that the more sensible helps the soul needs to draw out the act of believing, the weaker is the faith; as the man is judged to be very weak, who cannot go without many crutches and holdings; But the more strength a naked promise hath with the soule, when it alone puts life and quietnesse into us, now faith is grown; As David said, *The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me.* So when we can quash all our troubles with the sight of a promise, I have Gods word for my pardon, his word for my help, his Word for my comfort, I desire no better pay-master then God, no better security then his own promise; though all things stand contrary in sense and feeling, yet all is sure in Gods promise, and there I will settle, this argues a great faith.

4. The more ability a man hath to deny himself in neere and great occurrences, the greater is his faith: *Abraham in leaving of his countrey, parting with Isaac*: The more easily we can beleieve great things, and part with great things, the stronger is our faith. There is nothing more hard then to give up a mans self.

There is a threefold self.

First, his *sinful self* in respect of old and dear sins.

Secondly, his *natural self*, in respect of the separation of soul and body.

Thirdly, his *temporal self* in respect of the comforts of this life. And it must be a *strong faith* which must enable to strong denials of our selves, when a thing comes nearer to the quick, either when God denies a man a special comfort, or draws off from him a special comfort; now to submit, now to be quiet, *I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me*, said Paul; *I know how to want, and how to abound, to be exalted and so be abased, I have learned in whatsoever state I am there with to be contented.*

To have the heart pleased with Christ alone, and satisfied with his presence, mark it, the more entirely that the soul makes up its state in Christ, and the lesse power that the world imprints upon the heart in its changes, this imports the faith is come

come to strength. Strong faith is like a strong tree, which holds its body unmovable against great tempests, but weak faith is like a plant which every winde makes almost to touch the ground.

Fifthly, *the weaker the arguments of distrust grow in the heart; this is a signe that the faith is got to a strength.* This I conjecture, that the strength or weaknesse of faith is not to be judged by the *multiplicity of distrustful arguments*, but by the *force and efficacy of them*; It is possible that manifold arguments of feare, and doubts may present themselves to the minde of a strong beleever, as well as unto the judgement of a weak beleever, but then, if faith be strong, it doth weigh them down, it doth prevaile over them, (that is) it brings the soul to Christ; it cleaves still unto him. The soul maintaines its title to Christ, and owns God in his promises, it will not cast away its hope, nor its strength, wherein the soul can habitually foyle the reasonings which crosse its way, and can cleare up and vindicate its state, what God is to it, and Christ is to it, and what it hath received from them; this is an argument, that it is not weak but strong.

Sixthly, *the more easie compliance with change of a mans condition* is an evidence of a faith which is more strong. There are several changes incident to mans temporal life, the Moon sometimes is full, and anon it is in the Eclipse; our sea doth ebb and flow; sometimes prosperity (like the *sunne of the Lord*) shines upon us; by and by adversity (like the winde) blows out the candle; sometimes we abound and our mountaine seems strong; anon we are stript and our mountaine is shaken; one while health and presence of friends; another while sicknesse and losse of all. Now in these changes, not to be changed, like the shipright up in a calme, but tossing and reeling in a storme, but to be as the rock fixed and setled, holding up, and *rejoycing in the God of our salvation, and encouraging our selves in the Lord our God*, and willing to be any thing; in any condition, yea, to *blesse God for all as Job did*. If I die, I shall go to God; If I live, I will serve my God; If I enjoy, I will be fruitful; If I want, I will be thankful; The more *Passive* the heart is, the more *active and strong* the faith is. Paul had been learning that lesson; *In every state, therewith to be content.*

O when a Christian can comply with contrary states, not through an *insensiblenesse of Spirit*, but from an apprehension and approbation of *divine wisdoms, goodnesse, love and austeritie*, his faith is singularly cleared and well improved.

7. The more *satisfaction and quiescence that the soul hath in Christ alone*, the greater is the faith; when a *naked Christ*, is the centre and loadstone, and the *All in all*, As the Sunne to make day. *I desire to know nothing but Christ crucified*, said Paul, 1 COR. 2. 2. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee*, said Asaph, Psalme 73. 25. *I cannot all things but losse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*, saith Paul again, Phil. 3. 8. *Lord, let thy servant now depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*, said Simeon, Luke 2. 29, 30. As when we come to heaven, we shall be so heavenly, that *heaven alone* will be enough to us, and this shews perfection; so whiles we live on earth, if *Christ alone* be heaven and earth to us; if he can *fill our hearts*, and *satisfie them*. O Lord Jesus, thou art righteousness enough, satisfaction enough, wisdom enough, peace, and comfort, and pleasure enough to my soul: O this comes from great strength.

8. The more that *the body of sinne decayes in strength*, the lesser prevalence of it, this shewes that faith is strong. When sinne becomes more dead in its *actions*, or more *ineffectual* in its *temptations*; When a man can walk and not stumble, and reele and fall; he is now out-grown his former weaknesse; It shews weaknesse, when every stone makes thee apt to fall; It is a signe the army is strong, when the enemy many of them are slaine, and the rest are easily discomfited. Sinne is our enemy, and Christ is our general, and faith is our champion, and the more that sinnes fall, it is an argument that faith is become stronger. The *victorious* faith is much more then the *combating* faith: Sinnes go down by believing; the more that any grace is in victory the more it is in strength. Indeed it argues truth of faith to resist, but to conquer sinnes, this shewes strength, to wrestle is something, but to overthrow is more; to oppose sin, is not so much as to vanquish it.

10. The more fruitful a Christian is in his graces and exercises of them, the stronger is his faith. You know that the extension of the branches ariseth from the intention of the sap; if the branches grow big, and yeild more fruit, it is because the root is more full and filled. Faith is (well filled) the radical grace; though the habits of other graces grow not out of it, yet the measures and exercises do exceedingly depend upon it. And, according to the latitude of faith is the latitude of other graces; as the dayes receive shortnesse or length from the Sunne. A weak faith is attended but with a weak love, and a weak patience, and a weak hope, and a weak joy. But if the faith becomes strong, now it is spring with our graces, they revive and shoot out themselves, there will be much love, and much labour of love, and strong hope, and the better heart and life.

11. The more able a person is to live upon Christ, or Gods promise in the times of desertions and contrarieties, the faith is certainly the greater. The more use any can make of God or Christ at all, his faith is greater; for the more that any soule beleevs, the more is his faith enabled thereby.

But then this is yet more strength, even against hope, to believe in hope, to look up for that God that hides himself; to venture on an angry God, one who seemes to shut out our prayers, one that speaks bitter things unto us, like Levi, not to observe our own children, but to keep the Word and Covenant of God, Deut. 32 9.

12. The more able the soule is to wait on God; to pray and wait, the stronger is the Faith. A waiting faith meets with more difficulties, and contrarieties, and is upheld by the strength of a meer promise. That man not only hath faith, but lives by faith, if he can wait Gods time, &c.

13. When you can glorifie many promises at once by beleiving; yea, when every promise can be trusted on upon gracious termes, the more fully you can glorifie them by trusting for pardon of great finnes, subduing of strong corruptions, deliverance out of great distresses, the stronger is your faith. The lesse difficulty you conceive in God to perform his Word; when you can come for great matters, with great confidence, lesse

lesse doubts, exceptions, feare, the lesse power discouragements have. If you can beleieve against sense, reason, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him.* These are discoveries of faith in strength.

SECT. IV.

THe second part of the second general point at the instances of weak faith in truth. Here are two things which I will touch.

One is, some demonstrations that faith is weak.

Another is, some directions of truth with that weakness.

Concerning the first, observe these things.

i. The more that doubtings stagger the heart, its is a sign that the faith is weak. As the more smoke goes up with the fire, it is an argument that the fire is little, or as the more a person halts and reels in his motion, it discovers the impotency of his strength and joynts. You read in *Rom. 4. 20.* That *staggering at the promise by unbelief*, is opposed to a strong faith: observe that word (*staggering*) it is such a temper of the soul, wherein it doth suddenly and easily change its thoughts; and acts: As a man who is staggering, his foot checks (as it were) it self, and alters its pace and place, so when a mans heart is giving on, and then falling off, may I take? may I not? I will lay hold, I will not; God will be good to me, he will not; I shall have mercy, yet I shall not; this is staggering.

Signes of a weak faith.

The soul lets go its hold, doubtings prevail against actual beleieving; the beleieving soul sees strong arguments to draw it to fasten on Christ, and on mercy, and then it is putting forth the hand; but then unbelief thrusts forth contrary arguments of suspicion, and feares, so that the soul is in doubts; may I indeed lay hold, but will the Lord be merciful to me? *Why didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith,* said Christ to Peter and this stands with reason; for the stronger that quality

is which is contrary to faith, the weaker is that faith which is contrary to that quality, as the stronger sickness is, the weaker health is, &c.

2. The more easily a man can suspect Gods favour and Christs love; this is a sign that faith is weak. See *Psalmes* 77. 7, 8, 9. and then 7. 10. They say of *Idols*, that the more pure love hath least feare. *1 John* 4. 18 and multitude of jealousies is an argument of mixture in the affections. So it is of faith, the more stedfastly it can hold up the immutability of Gods love and kindnesse, and his ancient grants of favour, the stronger is the faith: But the more apt it is, to question the loving kindnesse, which hath been ever of old; now it is the weaker, *Luke* 24. 21. *We had trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, and besides all this to day is the third day.*

There be two things which a weak faith is very apt to challenge.

One in God for kindnesse.

Another in its own estate for soundnesse. As *Gideon* said in another case, *If the Lord be with us, why is all this evil befallen us?* so where the faith is weak, the soul is often in suit with God; yea, but if God were my God; had I an interest in Christ, were my estate good, could it be with me thus, could it be thus within me, thus without me, thus upon me? &c.

3. The more quick and hastening that the soul is for answer and satisfactions, the more impatient of Gods delayings, this is a signe that it is now weak in faith. For did it thoroughly beleve, it would not make haste, were it perswaded fully of Gods goodnesse, which makes the promise of his wisdom, which will take the fittest time for the grant, it would now quietly wait and expect: But an over-hastening, when the soul will scarce allow any time 'twixt the petition and the speeding of it, but I must presently have it, or else God is not my God, or else my state is bad. Ifay; hasty eagerneesse to be answered, and quick conclusions from Gods silence, do shew much weaknesse of faith in the soul; There is an importunity which may come from faith; and this is a holy pressing of a promise, yet with submission and patience; And there is an hastynesse which comes from

from *fears*: As if God would not alwayes be in a good mind towards us, as if the present testimonies must be the only arguments of his love and intentions.

These two things will usually meet in a man whose faith is weak.

One is, he will be *hasty* to be answered.

Another is, he will be *faint* if delayed.

4. The more *inclining the heart* is to the *life of sense*, the weaker is the faith: like *Thomas*, unless he *seeth the print of the nails*, &c. he will not believe, John 20. 25. So unless Christians have *promises budding*, they will hardly believe that there is *fruit growing on them*; unless I *feele the sensible favour of God*, I will not believe that he loves me; unless I *reade my pardon*, I will not believe mercy; unless I *discerne sensible means*, I will not believe helps; unless I *feele sin slain in me*, I will not believe that God will subdue it; All these in promises affect not, and support not the heart. It is a *signe of a weak childe*, that must still be carried in the armes. When a mans persuasions cannot be wrought by the *naked word of promise*, without some sensible pledges and pawns, he is very weak. When he is *puzzling his heart in an endlesse maze of disorder*, viz. he would have the things of the promise, and then believe the fidelity of the promise, this argues weakness. The *abstractions of things from sense*, when God gathers up all a mans estate, or any particular good, only into his promise, into his own hand, and saith, now canst thou believe that I will be good unto thee? I promise thee to be thus and thus, wilt thou now trust me, wilt thou adventure thy soule now upon my word of pardon and mercy, upon my word of grace and help? so to do would evidence much strength.

Now you may observe a manifest difference 'twixt strong and weak faith; If strong faith *seeth its estate in the promise*, it hath enough, it goes away rejoicing; if weak faith hath not some of the estate in its own hand, as well as in Gods hand, it is troubled and afraid.

5. The more *hardly a believer comes to be persuaded and assured of Gods undertakings in Covenant*, his faith is weak. When one word of God is not enough, but God must say it once and againe, and yet againe more clearly: As *Gideon* would have one

signe, the fleece must be wet, and the earth dry; and then another signe, the fleece must be dry, and dew lie upon all the earth, Judges 6. 37, 39. This shewed weaknesse in his faith; so doth it in a Christian, when not one or two promises, and scarce all of them, with all the arguments in God and in Christ, can perswade him that God will be merciful to him, or that Christ belongs to him.

6. The more easie the soule is to let go that assurance, the weaker is faith in it; when a soul is like a weak hand clasping a staff, and the staffe is easily wristed out; so the soul lets go that promise, which did revive it, and that Christ, which seemed to embrace it, this argues weaknesse; as in Peter, when he beleaved that it was Christ on the sea, upon Christs Word he ventures out, but when the waves met him, he begins to sink, his faith was weak, Why didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith, said Christ to him? Though Christs Word drew him out of the ship, yet it did not hold him up all alone; And the Disciples, We trusted it had been he who should have redeemed Israel. So when temptation comes upon a soul, and the soul is ready to be led by it, to credit it against Gods promise, and Gods testimony in the conscience, this aptnesse to let go our hold argues much feare, and much feare argues weak faith.

7. The more apt the soule is to insist on personal and inherent qualitates and abilities, as *media fiducia*, meanes of perswasion, this sheweth that the faith is weak: when something in us makes us the more confident, as when it is unapt to beleieve, unlesse it can discerne such an inherent strength of graces, to mourne, and to pray, or to keep down sinne, or keep off temptation.

Objct. It is true, these abilities are testimonies, but yet they are not *Media*.

Sol. They are evidences of a solid Faith, but they are not meanes or causes of beleieving. The meanes or causes are Gods promises, which ought (alone) to be our foundations and encouragements. Now when a person is unapt to beleieve that God will do these things for him, unlesse these things be done, this is weaknesse. Good things, when they are done, they are matters of thankfulness, and when they are promised, they are

are matters of faith. They say in Logick, that *demonstratio à posteriori*, is the weaker demonstration, that *à priori* is much stronger: for this depends on the *cause*, and that on the effect. So is it in beleeving. A beleeving, *à priori*, from the perswasion of what God faith, (from his goodnesse and truth) is more strong then a beleeving *à posteriori* (that is) from a fruition or apprehension of what God doth.

8. The more *dull and uncheerful the heart is*, this shews the faith to be weak: A *sad Spirit* and a *weak faith*, usually are companions: for a strong faith breeds much peace in the conscience, *Rom. 5. 2. and rejoycing*, *1 Pet. 1. 8. In whom* (though now ye see him not) yet beleeving ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory: such a faith as this hath god to much assurance; but uncheerfulnesse of heart argues either, as yet the want of all assurance, or assurance very weak.

9. The more *anxious and careful the soule is*, it is a signe of a weak faith. *What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and what shall we put on?* This our Saviour faith in *Matthew 6.* shewes little faith. For the lesser the things are for which we are to trust, the more weaknesse is there if we do distrust, especially where the helper is sufficient and willing, and hath past his promise: Now, God is willing to do for Believers more then all the earth is worth, and hath done greater matters for them; And therefore a suspicion of him for small matters, shews but a small perswasion.

10. The more *apt the heart is to be offended at the estate of Christ*, it is a signe that faith is weak. This is evident in the Disciples who being weak in faith, Christ was forced to keep many things in, because they were not able to bear them; and when he spake of his sufferings, and departing from them, they were much amazed and troubled.

SECT. V.

THus for the discoveries of faith in weaknesse: Now follow the demonstrations of the *truth in faith though weak.*

The truth of faith hath a great latitude, it is not confined to such an height, to such a point of eminency, as some conceive: Look as heat hath severall degrees, and as health hath many *species*, and as life hath many steps within which the true nature of them may be seated, so is it with faith, the true nature of it may be in a great measure, and yet in a lesser measure, and though weak faith be not strong, yet it is faith: weaknesse is not like death, which is opposed to life, but like infirmity, which is opposed to strength. Strong faith is weak faith more perfected, and weak faith is strong faith in disposition, in tendency; it is within the compasse. Negation is one thing, imperfection is another thing; no faith is quite opposite to faith, but weak faith if it be opposed to strength, yet it is not opposed to truth.

5. Demonstrations of the truth of weak faith.

Now the truth of weak faith may appear in these things.

First, though weak faith be not sure that *Christ is its Saviour* yet weak faith will honour *Christ as its Lord*: though it cannot see Christ, bestowing it self on the soul, yet it will make the soul to resigne up it self to Christ: Though it cannot finde comfort, yet it will oppose sin: though it cannot comprehend Christ, yet it would not willingly offend Christ. *Faith in strength can put out it selfe in perswasion, I know that my redeemer liveth, Job 19. Yet faith in weaknesse, (as was that of Thomas) can put forth it self in subjection, My Lord, and My God; I will have no Lord but Christ, Jo. 20.*

The *visall act* of faith is not reflexive but direct. It is not this Christ is mine, but this I receive, and embrace Christ, now the weak faith cannot settle its title to Christ, so as strong faith can do, yet it can vindicate the title that Christ hath to the soul, though it cannot see its own propriety in Christ, yet it can maintaine Christs propriety to it, it doth acknowledge, it doth yield unto no Law, or power, or right, over the soul but Christs: it looks

looks on sinne as an enemy, though it cannot see Christ as a friend.

2. What weak faith doth want in the *breadth of persuasion*, that it makes up in the *depth of humility*. A weak believer, though he cannot see himself *great in Gods eyes*, yet he doth appear *low in his own eyes*: it will not quarrell with God, because he opens himself no more, but abaileth it self, because it is most *unworthy of the least of truth and goodnesse*.

There be two things which all true faith will work.

One is to *value Christ*.

Another is to *under value our selves*; It can put glory on Christ, and take shame to it selfe; He is the sweetest Saviour, and I am the greatest sinner.

Faith usually acts in one of these, either in receiving or in abasing: For either it makes the soul to see its happinesse in Christ, which breeds joyfulnessse, or to see its own unworthy vilenesse, because of sin, and so it causeth lowlinesse of spirit. Strong faith (like *John*) can be in Christs bosome but weak faith, (like *Peter*) will fall down at Christs feet; strong faith may be seen by the eye, and weak faith by the knee, that stands up and blessed God for Christ, this falls down and begs of God for Christ. And this, not for my sake O Lord, (for to me belongs nothing but shame and confusion,) but for thy goodnesse sake, O Lord, (for to thee belong mercies and forgivenesses)

3 Weak faith, though it hath but tender confidences of its interest in Christ, yet it hath strong dislikes, and combates with that unbelief which hinders his persuasion. Though weak faith cannot see Christ as its ease, &c. yet it can feel unbelief as its burden and trouble.

There are two things (if I mistake not) which accompanie all true faith, and the weakest.

One is to *magnifie the state in Christ*.

Another is to *dislike the state out of Christ*: O happy is that man, who can comprehend, as he is comprehended, with weak faith, and what shall I do with this unbelieving heart, this doubting, suspecting, fearful heart? shall I alwaies question, shall I alwaies find these disputings, carnal reasonings, reelings, staggerings? Lord help this unbelief, Lord perswade this heart of mine,

cause it to trust in thy salvation in Christ, *say unto my soul; that thou art my salvation.*

The *weak beleever* hath many prayers in his heart, many tears in his eyes, and many conflicts in his minde; he believes and doubts, he prayes and doubteth, he mornes and doubteth, yet though he doubts he will believe, and though he doubts he will pray, and because he still doubts he will therefore still morne. He looks often towards Christ, O that I could believe, he looks often on his own heart, why wilt thou not yet believe, he looks up to God; O make me to believe, sometimes he spends his time in prayer for more faith, sometimes in dispute with his weak faith, one maine difference 'twixt him and the strong believer is this, that the strong believer hath got into Christs armes; and this weak beleever is fighting for the way unto him.

4. *Weak faith*, will not rest in weaknesse, if truth be in it. In a weak child; well and living, there are two qualifications of life, one is this, that it is *Active*; another is this, that it is *Progressive*, it will be doing, and it will be encreasing. So it is with a true faith, though weak; it is a drawing of the soul unto Christ, yea it is a drawing of something more from Christ unto the soul; what hinders it, that grieves it, and what it wants, after that it longs and craves. No grace is right which is idle, or labours not to exceed it self. *Lord help my unbelief*, said that weak beleever. *O Lord encrease our faith*, said they of little faith. The *weak cripple*, he would be *lying at the Pool*, and so will weak faith, it will be at the *meanes of strength*: It loves to be doing about Christ, and to be where the strength of Christ is revealed.

Luke 9.

It is wise to observe the grounds of its fears and doubtings, and carefull to remove them. O how earnest is the weak beleever to heare what God will speak unto him, and if at any time the soul can get by the assistance of the Word, to close with mercy and Christ, it is revived with joy of tears, and falls down with thanks, *Lord what is thy servant!*

Nay, if it hath apprehended but a hint, but a crevice, if it is enabled but a little to step above its dark doubtings, to apprehend but a darting beame, any perswasion that all is well or will be so, it is refreshed, and saith that *God is good*. I observe that the weak childe will be much after the breasts, and the weak man

will

will handle his staffe much, and the weak believer will be much at the places and ordinances, and wayes of more strength.

It is with faith, as it is with a blade of corn, at the first the eare of graine is quite skinned over, yet it breaks open aside and at length is the very top of the stalk. So faith at first is swathed over with doubtings, (none but a tender and merciful God can see that little mustard-seed) but at length, it opens to more adherence on God and Christ, and promises, and in time it can triumph against its former feares and suspitions. Or it is like a weak man recovering: if he can but stand, its well, then if he can set on in a few paces with his staff, then if his motion can be single, then if longer, then if stronger; so is it with faith, if it can make the soul to look upon Christ, then if it could look on him as mine, then if so without fear, then if so with joy, then if so with strength, and stedfastnesse.

It will not rest in weakness, though it begins in weakness, but like the weak Ivie which is winding up the tree, so will faith be winding up the soul higher and higher into Christ by the help of his Spirit, of his Promises, of his Word, and of his Sacraments.

5. Weak faith will yet venture the soul upon Christ, though it cannot cleave its title, nor answer its feares, nor (to its own sense) rely on Christ; yet if the soul be put and determined to one of these, either to renounce all hope in Christ, and so to be lost, or to put it self upon Christ, though it hath no inward encouragement from it self: I say at such a time, even weak faith will discover it self, it will not renounce its hidden interest in Christ, but will roule the soul on him; *If I perish, I perish*, yet I will cleave to Christ, yet I will cast my soul on him and on his blood, and righteousness.

SECT. VI.

The third general which we observed to the former scruple was the concordance of all faith which is true (whether strong or weak) in fundamentall comforts.

6.

The concordance of all faith in foure things.

T 2

First,

First, every believer hath a *sure interest in Christ*; It is with the members of Christ, as with the members of the body, though they are not all of *equall strength*, in a comparison one with the other; yet they are of *equall conjunction* in a relation of all of them to the head.

So one believer exceeds another in a special measure of faith, yet every believer is a member firmly and surly knit to Christ, the head of all believers. Christ is not the *Saviour and Lord* only of the strong, but also of the weak, not only the old man, nor only the young man, but also the children, the little children, (to whom Saint John wrote) they are all in Christ: 1 *Job. 2.*

There is a wide difference 'twixt *reflexive certainty*, and 'twixt *real certainty of interest*, strong faith hath the pre-eminence of weak faith, in respect of a reflexive and sensible certainty, but not in respect of a real certainty, this is univocal, the union 'twixt Christ and the soul, doth not depend upon the strength, but upon the truth of faith; If my will consents unto Christ, if my heart accepts of him upon his own tearmes, if I take his whole person and his whole condition, the match is truly made 'twixt Christ and me, he is surely mine, and I am surely his. Although I am not in an assured condition, yet I am in a sure union, Christ doth certainly own that soul, which by faith doth truly embrace him: *All mine are thine, and thine are mine*, saith Christ, *Job. 17. 10.* He speaks of the Disciples, and of all the Elect, who were the fathers in respect of a gracious election, and gift, and Christs in respect of a *tender affection and union*. So that here is one concordance of all faith in respect of fundamental comfort, *viz.* that the *objective unity* is one and common, the weak and the strong eye meet in the same colours as the object, and weak and strong faith, are two different hands, yet both of them upon one and the same Christ.

Secondly, every believer hath a *beneficial interest in Christ*: (that i.) weak faith hath an interest in the benefits of Christ, as well as the strong faith.

I will instance in some special and choise benefits.

First, *Redemption from the Malediction of the Law*, Christ took that off, *He was made a curse for all that believe on him*: He did

did not stand in the room only of eminent, but of every believer, and endured the wrath to the utmost for every one who doth believe on him.

Thou art freed from a cursed estate by the least faith; every degree of true faith makes the condition to be a state of life, and *passeth us from death and condemnation. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1.*

Secondly, *Remission of finnes*, what Christ said to that impotent person, *Sonne be of good cheer, thy finnes are forgiven thee*, that is true of every beleever, Christ hath purchased a pardon for him, *Acts 13. 38. Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of finnes. Ver. 39. And by him all that beleve are justified, &c.*

If any believer went without his discharge, then probable it is that the weakest should be he, but the Scripture speaking of the *weakest faith*, makes it an hand holding a pardon in it. *1 John 2. 12. I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his Names sake*; though children, though little children, yet pardoned children, and mark it, the cause of that pardon was common to them with the stronger men (*viz. for his Names sake*;) a man is not pardoned for the strength of his faith, nor debarred of it for the weaknesse of his faith, but both th'one and the other enjoys it for his Names sake (that is) *for Christs sake*.

Nay, observe it, that though weak and strong faith may vary much in the manner and degree of the apprehension, or persuasion, or reading of the pardon; yet they both agree in the strength, and in the latitude of pardon. The weak believer hath as an effectual, and as ample, and full remission as the strongest believer; for Christ did not become an unequal surety, or an uneven Sacrifice for sinne; my meaning is this, that he did not only undertake the debts of some believers, but of every one; nor did he undertake some debts only of some beleevers, but all the debts of all beleevers. Therefore it is said, *Esay 53. 6. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; and Jer. 32. 8. I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned*, which words extend to all beleevers, because to all that are covenanted.

Thirdly, *Justification by imputed righteousness.* There is a common equal interest in this by all believers: It is but one garment for every believer, it is an entire thing. One believer hath not one righteousness to justify him, and another believer another, but all are justified by the same righteousness of Christ; neither is the imputation of this righteousness partial, or unequal, but alike to all that believe. *Rom. 3. 21. The righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. Ver. 22. Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference.* Therefore God is said (in v. 26.) *the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*, if any man doth truly believe in Christ, God justifies that man, and Christ is made righteousness unto him, (that is) the Lord will reckon unto him the righteousness of Christ, he will in Christ pronounce him just and acquit him.

The most elevated believer cannot be presented in a judicial way before Gods justice safely, in the strength of his own perfections, and therefore hath no reason to glory or boast, and the most weak believer is not excluded, but adorned with the robe of Christs complete righteousness, notwithstanding his own manifold imperfections, and therefore hath no reason to be discouraged or dismayed, for as much as Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believes, *Rom. 10. 4.*

4.

Fourthly, *the inheritance of glory*, even those weak Disciples who were oft rebuked for their fears and doubtings, were commanded by Christ to rejoice; because their names were written in the book of life.

If we be Believers, we are sonnes, and if sonnes, then heirs; heirs of life, and co-heirs with Christ in glory, *Rom. 8. 16, 17. Gal. 4. 26. Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Vers. 29. And if ye be Christs, then are ye Abrahams seed, and heirs according to the promise.* John 3. 16. *Whoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life*, for eternal life is founded in Christ, God hath put all life in him, from him we draw our life of grace, and by him we possess our life of glory. 1 John 5. 11. *God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life*

is in his Sonne. Verse 12. *He that hath the Sonne hath life.*

Obj. Yea, but who are they who have the Son?

Sol. See ver. 13. *These things I have written unto you, that believe on the Name of the Sonne of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life,* as if he should say, every believer is he who hath the Sonne, and by him that eternal life.

3. Every beleever hath vertual interest in Christ (that is) he shall partake of the vertues, and graces, and strength of Christ.

The vertues of Christ are many; I will touch at some, viz.

1. A *crucifying vertue* which subdues the love and dominion of sinne, now every beleever shares in this, though one beleever be more troubled with the insolent motions of sinne, then another, yet no believer shall lie under the dominion of sinne, *Rom. 6. 14. Sinne shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace. Gal. 5. 24. And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.* Every beleever is gathered under the rod and Scepter of Christ, and is made alive to Christ, and dead to sinne, yea, and Christ will more and more mortifie his corrupt heart; He will be made death to the strongest lust in the weakest believer.

2. An *assisting vertue*, which aides the soul in matter of duty and service; now Christ will not only guide the strong, but also lead the weak believer: He will lend forth his *enabling strength* for all the services which he requires, *2 Cor. 12. 9. He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weaknesse; most gladly therefore will I glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* As if he should say, there was weaknesse and infirmity on Pauls part, but there was strength and power on Christs part, and this strength would Christ make to appear in Pauls weaknesse (that is) though Paul saw and felt his own strength sufficient, yet he should find Christ sufficient, sufficiently in-
ing him in that particular. *Rom. 8. 26. Likewise, the Spirit to helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray as we ought; but the Spirit is selfe maketh intercession for us*

as with groanings which cannot be uttered. Mark that place, though we are very infirm, very weak to any holy duty, to prayer and the rest, yet Christ will help, he will come in with his Spirit which shall enable us with supplications, so that even very weak believers may take comfort in this, that Christ will strengthen and aide them by his Spirit in duties as well as the strongest.

The greatest believer cannot performe service by *his own strength*, and the *weakest* shall be *enabled by Christs*.

There be three things which Christ will communicate to every believer, even to the weakest, about duty.

One is, *an affection and heart.*

Another is, *strength and assistance.*

The last is, *pardon and acceptance*; what is amisse, and wanting, shall be pardoned, and what is imperfectly, and weakly good, shall yet through his intercession be accepted.

His Father (for his merits) will *not despise the day of small things.*

3. *Persevering vertue*, by which the soul comes at length to cast Anchor and to be safely landed. Now the strong faith hath (in a sort) heaven already, yet weak faith shall also make a saving voyage: as it was with them in *Pauls shipwreck*, some of them could swim, and quickly, and better get to shore, others were more unskilful, and therefore laid hold and made use of broken boards, yet the text saith, *That they all came safe to land*: That I say of strong and weak faith, though the strong believer can better cut through the manifold oppositions of the world, though he can rise more easily above the waves of Satans temptations than the weak believer, yet both of them shall hold out to the end, and meet at heaven. You see several bottoms at sea, one makes more speed than another, and perhaps is better ordered; but those duller and slower bottoms follow after, and at length they come to the same Haven, and so cast Anchor together. So, &c.

That *Christ*, who is the *Author*, will also be the *finisher* of all true faith, and though faith may be very weak, yet the *weakest* faith is invincible: *The gates (no not) of hell (and they* import

import the strongest opposition) *shall not prevaile against it.* It is, confessed, that *Satan* may much assault and batter; and the world may oppose and totter, and *sinne* may weaken, interrupt and stagger even the foundations of the truest faith; but to be oppressed is one thing, and to be suppressed is another thing; to be wounded is one thing, to be killed is another; For faith to fall in its strength is one thing, for faith to faile in its being, is another; *Simon, Simon* (said *Christ* to *Peter*) *Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith faile not:* O malicious devil, who hath strong temptations to weaken faith! O gracious Saviour, who hath stronger intercessions to preserve faith! even the weakest faith is wrought by a divine hand, and is kept by an almighty guard; See *1 Pet. 1. 5. Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation;* Answering the prayer of *Christ, John 17. 11. Holy Father keep them through thy own Name, those whom thou hast given me.* Verse 20. *Neither pray I for these onely, but for them also which shall beleve on me through their word. Whosoever beleves on me shall not perish,* said *Christ.*

Againe, this is a sweet comfort, that the weak believer shall hold out as well as the strong, and that *Christ* is the Guardian of both; verily, that must needs be good which *God* gives, and that must needs be sure which *Christ* keeps; the weakest believer is held by a strong hand, and is secured by an inseparable arme.

4. Every beleever is in the same fundamental league with *God*, he is reconciled unto him, and hath a true (nay for ought I yet understand) an equal interest in his special love and tenderness: It is freely confessed, that the strong believer hath more Love. sensible discoveries of the streames, yet the weak believer is as deep in the fountaine. They say in *Logick*, that *substantial relations* do not admit of degrees of more and lesse, as the Father is an equal Father to every child, his paternity, and their filiation are indivisible things; So is it I am sure in this businesse, *God* is one and the same Father to all that beleve; his radical love is alike, his fundamental gifts (which testify that love) are all alike one and the same Word, one and the same *Christ*, one and the same Sacraments, one and the same Spirit. And for his

Tenderness,

Isa. 66. 11,

Is. 12, 13.

Is. 40. 11.

*tenderneſſe, why? If any childe findes the gentle voice and caſie hand, it is the weak childe; If any believer findes ſoft and encouraging expreſſions from God, it is the weak beleever. God would have them comforted, yea he hath prepared the ~~breſts~~ of conſolation for ſuch ſucklings; yea, and the ~~knees~~ to dandle them; yea, the ~~hands~~ to lead them; yea, the ~~armes~~ to carry them; And Chriſt will not ~~quench~~ the ſmoking flax, nor ~~bruise~~ the broken reed. How often doth God call upon the weak ones, to ~~look up and behold~~ their King, and their ſalvation; and to ~~truſt upon him, and not to fear, nor to be diſmayed~~; nay, for his ſake doth he often double and treble the promiſe; yea, he confirms the promiſe, *I will ſurely have mercy on him*; yea, he takes his oath, he ſwears by himſelf, that he will not ~~lie unto them, nor fail them~~; yea, he ratifies and ſeals his word with blood and truth.*

O how doth God condeſcend in his nature, in his Word, in his wayes, in his dealings, in his forbearances towards weak beleivers? how hath he prevented and answered all objections to their hands? all which ſhews his ſingular love and tenderneſſe unto them.

SECT. VII.

Now I proceed to the fourth and laſt diſcovery, *viz.*

The inequality of *Strong* and *Weak* faith in reſpect of circumſtantial comforts and ſome other conſequences; thus they differ exceedingly, though both be in a ſure and ſaving condition.

1. The *weak* beleever falls ſhort of that joy which the *ſtrong* beleever poſſeſſeth.

Joy three wayes
conſidered.

Joy may be conſidered three wayes, either in its cauſe, which is the love of God and the blood of Chriſt; or in its title and claim, which belongs to faith receiving Chriſt; or in its actual preſence and feeling, which depends upon a beleiving apprehenſion and perſwaſion. Now, though the weakeſt beleever hath
cauſe

cause of great joy, for as the *Angel* spake to the shepherds, that may be said to him, *Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, for unto you is borne this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,* Luke x. 9, 10.

And though he hath a true title to the sweetest joy, for faith doth unite him to Christ, and Christ entitles him to joy, yet he hath not such an *actual presence of joy* as the strong believer. Every faith is an hand, holding, but the strong faith is the mouth, tasting that sweet wine. He hath not such full apprehensions of his own state, he doth not yet so clearly conceive of that great love and goodnesse which God hath put in Christ for him; He hath not such an evident view of his own particular interests in God or Christ, but is infinitely tossed with doubtings and suspitions, whether he may yet *take Christ* as his, whether he may own the *promises* of mercy, and appropriate the *great loving kindnesse of a Father*. Now ignorance is apt to breed suspitions, and doubts are apt to raise fears, both of which keeps off or under, actual joy: No man can well joy in a *concealed* good, or joy much in a *questioned title*: All the good which God hath firmly and largely made over unto me in his Sonne; it doth not affect my heart with gladnesse and rejoycing, whiles I am in dispute with it, and am rather apt to conclude, it is not for me, then that it is my portion. The strong believer therefore hath this advantage of the weak, he is more acquainted in particular about his good, and so his heart *rejoyceth with joy unspeakable and glorious*, his soul *doth rejoyce in God his Saviour*, but the weak believer cannot yet see his pardon, yea often suspects whether it shall be drawn or no: one is in a faire day, the other in a wet; It is day to both.

The matter is cleare to the strong believer; and therefore his heart goes away rejoycing, the matter is doubtful to the weak believer, and therefore his soule goes away weeping. One of them hath a good Christ, and a glad heart too, the other hath a good Christ, but yet a very heavy heart: His possession is doubtful, and therefore his heart is sorrowful.

2. The weak believer hath not that *sweet peace* that the strong believer hath; where faith is weak there the conscience is not thoroughly settled.

Peace, what.

Peace in the conscience is, as it were, the *harmonious tuning of the soul*, it is a *heavenly tranquility, a serenity, a gracious quieting and pacifying of the spirit of man, springing from a persuasion of Gods love in Christ*: Now, the weak faith hath strong scruples, it hath many troubles, it is not sure that all is right, and all is cleare, It may be, that God is my God, and it may be he is not; it may be Christ is mine, and perhaps not; it may be my sins are pardoned, and it may be they are not; it may be that God is my friend, and reconciled, and it may be he is not. You know that the peace of a Christian must be seen ratified in a double Court, or else the soul will not be quiet; One is in the Court of heaven, another is in the Court of conscience; Nay, and the peace in this lower Court is not cleare till it comes from the higher Court; conscience cannot be quiet till God be quiet, it cannot give testimony and discharge, untill God hath begun: If God hath not yet dismissed the soul, if he holds up the case of a sinful soul without release, conscience cannot acquit and free that soul: But weak faith sees its suit and tryal yet depending in the high Court of heaven; a weak believer doth not yet see or know that God will assuredly pardon him, that God is reconciled to him, that God will indeed do good unto him, here are his doubts and fears, and therefore here are his troubles and perplexities.

The strong believer is like David in *Psal. 4. 8. I will not lay me down, and sleep, for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety.*

The weak believer is like David in *Psal. 41. 11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou thus disquieted within me.*

The one is like the Mother which hath the child in her armes, or at her breasts, with many smiling delights and satieties; the other is like the mother now in labor, and travaile with the child which hath many bitter throwes and panges one succeeding the other: The one is like a man standing upon a rock, where his foot stands unmoved and steady; but the other is like a man in a safe ship, upon unquiet waters, tossed up and down: Weak faith is in a safe ship, (which is Christ) but tossed upon variety of waves, (which are our doubtings;) sometimes faith and hope, anon faith and feare; sometimes I may have confidence, anon I am cast out of his sight; now I will look up to God as
mine

mine in Christ, by and by, surely this is presumption, God will not accept of me.

Such a storme, and such a calme is there in the weak believer, such an unsettled settling: The day of his small comforts doth easily sit, and the night of many troubles abide long upon him. You shall seldom see a weak believer without a teare at his eye, a sigh in his breast, and a fear in his heart, yet I fear all is not sure, O that God would once assure me that he is my God! I know not what to do, or what to say, or what to think, I cannot see the *hand writing yet blessed out*, nor the *heavens opening*; and do you think there is any hope for me? Thus the weak believer. But strong faith can answer many arguments, and uphold its evidence against many temptations: It can more easily place and stay the soul upon its rest, it hath seen and tasted more then weak faith, it knows whom it hath trusted, and that he will be its God and guide for ever; that he hath pardoned transgressions, and will remember iniquity no more; where faith is great, there the war is strong with sin, and the love high to God, and the peace more large and settled in the conscience.

The weak believer hath not that *sweetnesse in communion with God* as the *strong believer hath*. Take him in the way of Ordinances, or in the way of Duties; in both, his conversings with God, are more brackish and flat. When any threatening is opened and applyed, his heart presently misgives him, may not this concerne me? and, I fear this is my portion. When any precepts and graces are revealed and differenced, he is usually apt to charge *want of them*, or *hypocrisie under them*, upon himself, either I am not thus as God requires, or if so, yet not in truth.

3.

When the Box of ointment is opened, I mean the *blood of Christ*, and the tender of rich mercy, and spacious promises of God, yet the favour of them is mixt to his soul, he doth more dispute his right, then can close with their goodnesse; yea, but how know I that I am intended? and answers, I am not ripe for such consolations, my wounds have not bled sufficiently, I am not fitted, I doubt I should presume, if I should apply.

Again, in *matter of duty*, here he hath not a sweet communion with God neither. Sometimes so over-borne, that he thinks

For duties.

is in vaine for him to pray or look up, and therefore is ready (in a fit of temptation) to lay aside the work, yet he cannot but pray, but then the knee is bended with such suspitions and conclusions, perhaps this shall be but to harden me more, and God will not heare me; or if the soul can gather any degrees of better confidence, that it shall finde some grace, and acceptance, then instantly it questions all this, and *inspects* even the *very grants*, and *answers*, as well as *its own heart* and petitions; conjecturing them to be rather, the *deluding favours* of a *deceitful heart*, wishing well to it self, then the *sincere resolutions* and *satisfactions* of a *good and gracious God*, who *heareth prayer*.

And thus is the weak believer (for a long time) kept in bitterness, he cannot *taste the goodnesse of God*, which he desires to embrace, nor relish those promises which he desires to apply; but in all communions with God, either dis-heartens his way before, or displaceth his comforts afterwards, either he is not fit to pray or else not fit to enjoy, either he cannot *desire* what is good, or else still he is questioning what is true. So that oft-times, even the *wayes* of his own comfort, are uncomfortable to him, and the *very method of peace*, is his usual trouble and vexation.

The reasons of all which may be,

Not only the *nature of unbelief*, which is an uncomfortable ingredient, and disquieting impedient to the soul in all holy communion; But also the *properties of this unbelief*, causing the soul to look more on it self then God, and raising more feares for present want, then hopes for assured and promised helpes, besides the *limitings of God* to present satisfaction, or else concluding, *no interest in his favour* and gracious intentions; besides, forgetting usually the *mediation and intercession of Christ*, in whom alone the soule and petitions are worthy.

4. The *weak believer* hath not that *successfulnesse in communion with God* as the strong believer hath.

For all doubtings do prejudice our suits: There is not a more sure and compendious way to non-suit our suits, then by delivering them out of an unbelieving heart: No faith may be sure of denial, and he who delivers up his requests to God with one hand, and an hand, with an hand of faith, and a hand of doubting; either he hath a longer or else a shorter answer. *According to thy faith*

faith be it unto thee, said Christ; strong faith brings God much glory, and doth fetch in much good to the soul, but the lesser faith, the lesser good; as according to the largeness of the vessel or strength of the hand, &c. The higher the Sun is, the more light is in the Horizon, so the greater the faith is in our requests, the sooner and the larger shall be our promised answers. You remember what *Elisha* said unto *Joash* King of Israel, *take the arrows* and he took them, and he said, *smite upon the ground*, and he smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wrath with him, and said, *thou shouldst have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.* Prayer is the arrow of the soul, it is the swift messenger sent up to heaven, and faith is the hand which dispatcheth it, now according to the strength of faith is the greatness of prayer in success. Thou didst pray (though) with much weakness of faith, and hast got a little comfort, why didst thou not smite the ground six times? why didst thou not double thy strength in believing thou shouldst then have had comfort? like a river, whereas now thou hast only the smaller drops. Thou hast prayed, (though) with much weakness of faith, and hast got a little power over thy sinful and rebellious heart, why didst not thou smite the ground six times? why didst thou not abound in more believing? for then thou shouldst have had a fuller victory over thy corrupt lusts and inclinations. Herein hath strong faith the preeminence of weak that the one hath not that full speed at heaven as the other; not that God will not answer the faith that is weak, but that its answers are not so full, because it is accompanied with doubtings. This we finde experimentally, that our helps (much of them) yet stick behinde in heaven, and our corruptions (much of them) yet insult below in our hearts, not that we do not hate them, nor that we do not pray against them, but because our faith is new or weak, we rather think that God will not help, then that he will indeed answer or do us good.

5. The weak believer is more under the power of the creature then the strong. My meaning is this, that his heart is more apt to sink, and faile, and perplex, and disquiet him in the changes of outward things; a crosse cannot come but he startles, and if the affliction be close, he can hardly hold up; if he hath

hath not some friends to smooth and cherish him, some calme estate to maintaine and uphold him: If the tyde comes not in, if the winde doth not blow, if the *fig-tree* doth not *blossome*, if God puts him upon an unusual way, if he toucheth him in his Name, ease, advantage, any neer outward support, if the crosse be long now *I am cast off, I shall perishe, what shall I eate, what shall I drinke, what shall I put on?* we and ours are undone, *there's none cares for my body*, as *David* spake for his soule. The heart gathers into many agonies, many prognostications, many challenges of God, many impatient vexations, perhaps *murmurings*, repinings, and discontents, and distempers; yea, and hath sometimes vile and inglorious thoughts of the *fruit-lesse-ness of serving God*, &c. I think there is scarce any one of these, which the weak believer doth not sensibly feel in the times of his straits and exigences, (which may exceedingly humble and abase his soul therefore:) But the *strong believer* is a better Sea-man, his soul is more quiet in the *absence*, because more loosened by faith in the *presence of the creature*. In a faire day God was much better; though others break with joy in the fruition of wine and oyle; yet Lord, saith *David*, *lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me*. As if he should say; I prize and joy in that more then in any thing else.

In a Fast day God is enough, Psal. 23. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*. Verle 4. *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will feare none evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me*. Verle 6. *Surely goodnesse and mercy shall follow me all the dayes of my life*. So Psalm. 93. 3. *The floods have lifted up O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their waves*. Psalm. 93. 4. *The Lord on high is mightier then the noise of many waters, yea then the mighty waves of the Sea*. So Psalm 118. 6. *The Lord is on my side, I will not feare what man can do unto me*. Ver. 10. *All Nations compassed me about, but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them*. Ver. 11. *They compassed me about, yea they compassed me about, but, &c.* Ver. 12. *They compassed me about like Bees they are quenched as the fire of thornes, for in the Name of the Lord, &c.* So Psal. 48. 14. *This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death*.

(Sin

(Sin is a greater trouble, and the world is a greater burden to the weak, then to the strong believers.)

6. The weak believer cannot bring God so much glory as the strong believer.

God hath Glory from us many ways.

Glory to God

By acquitting his fidelity, and truth, and power, and other attributes, Rom. 4. 20. three ways.

By a bearing, and fruitful heart and life, John 15. 8.

By thankful praises and acknowledgements, Psal. 50. 23.

Now the weak believer he doth not acquit God so in his Attributes; It is often with him, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be gracious, or will he be favourable no more? if thou wilt thou canst do this for me: It doth not so clearly justify God in the greatness of his power, in the readiness of his mercy, in the immutability of his truth.*

He is not so fruitful: for where the root is weak, there the branches are not so strong, or full; the fruitfulness of the heart consists in the rich increase of all graces, and in the enlarged heavenliness of the affections, and the fruitfulness of the life depends upon the inward enriching of the heart, as the streames on the Spring, or the beames on the Sun, and the fruitfulness of both depends upon the richness of faith.

Though the habits of grace depends immediately on Gods Spirit, and not on faith, yet the measures of grace depend (instrumentally) very much on faith, it being the Conduit pipe, that which draws grace for grace from Christ. A weak believer cannot have such a strength of affection, nor vigor of actions as the strong.

He is not so thankful; you shall for ever finde this to be true, that what is a weakening to faith, that is a lessening to thanks. No mans tongue is more in praise then he whose heart is filled with perswasion: God hath but cold thanks from him, who is yet disputing and questioning his receipts; where the mercy is fully cleared, there the heart is exceedingly enlarged: But till the soul sees it self indeed a debtor, it will prove but an ill and slow pay-master; How can I fully thank God, that he hath expressed that *Mirandum* of love, to

give Christ to me, when yet I do in my soul suspect and question whether this be so or no?

How can I fully bleſſe and praife God for his rich mercy in the pardon of my finnes, whiles my ſoul doth yet ſuſpect that the book is uncroſſed, and the controverſie of guilt is not yet taken up 'twixt God and me? But where faith is ſtrong, there *praiſe is great*; when the Moon is fullſt of light, then the tydes are higher in their returns; ſo the more clear apprehenſions of Gods love to us in Chriſt even raiſeth affections to a greater flow of thankful retributions. *Pſal. 103. 1. Bleſſe the Lord O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſſe his holy Name. Ver. 2. Bleſſe the Lord O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefites; See how he chargeth and rechargeth his ſoul to praife; but why? Ver. 3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities. Ver. 4. Who crowneth thee with loving kindneſſe and mercies.*

7. The weak Believer will be more *puzzled to die* then the ſtrong believer. It is with the ſtrong believer as with *Simcon*, who held Chriſt in his armes, Now (ſaid he) letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation: He may eaſily deſire death to let him out of a miſerable world, who hath aſſuredly got, and hath Chriſt, the Author of a better life. Or as with *Paul*, having a deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt, which is far better, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We know if our earthly houſe, &c. we have a building of God.* For the ſtrong believer knows, that Chriſt is to him in life and death advantage; By him we ſhall go to the God of all mercies, and to the Father of all conſolations. He ſhall go to that manſion which his Saviour hath provided, and there have a glorious union with God, and ſociety with Saints for ever. But the weak believer will perhaps ſagger, and his heart will divide it ſelf; I would not yet die, if I muſt, what ſhall I do? Chriſt is he whom I have loved and ſerved, but I am not ſure that he is mine; Heavenly glory is the wages for our ſervice, but I am not ſure that I ſhall go into it, matters are yet doubtful, and my heart is yet fearful, I know not whether ſuch finnes are yet taken off, and how will God look upon me if I die, of whoſe loving favour I have not been aſſured, whiles I have lived? I hope the beſt, and yet I ſee cauſe to fear; death may do me good, yet I had rather live to clear accounts 'twixt God and my ſoul, that ſo then I might give up, &c.

8. The

8. The weak believer hath not such cheerful expectations, nor quiet submissions as the strong believer.

The strong believer is at it as the Church in *Micah*, *My God will hear me*, and if he denies a particular good, yet he can sit down and sing; when he is going to prayer he cheers up his heart with a confidence on God, and when he finds God determining and revealing his will, there he bleisseth God; and follows his calling. But the weak believer is apt to forget a mercy, he cannot see a plain way for his grant; nor can easily quiet heart after his denial.

9. The efficacy of temptations doth more intangle the weak believer than the strong, like the weaker vessel at sea amidst the greater waves; Satan doth loosen his soul with ease, and ever and anon disrobes him of his comforts like a sly subtle enemy, he forceth the weak believer often to cry and curse his tithes, and increaseth mistakes in all passages 'twixt God and the soul.

1. If he doth cast himself on mercy, then it is presumption; If he holds off, then it is infidelity and rejecting of Christ.

2. If he doubts, then it is despair and forsaking of God.

3. If he sinnes, then it is unpardonable, because since knowledge and mercy.

4. If he finds distractions in time, then this is hypocrisy in the heart.

5. If he wrests with base suggestions of which Satan is only the Author O then, who could be in Christ and have such abominable thoughts.

6. If the Ordinances do not presently comfort O then, they are sealed up, and there is no faith; else the Word would profit.

7. If every corruption be not subdued in every degree and manner and all, O then, virtue is not gone from Christ; the heart is still sought, and thy faith is sound.

8. If not the same constant terror of sinners affections, why then, there was never any true love of God, no reverence of him now, nor fear, nor duties, but the soul is dead, utterly hardened, and God hath no pleasure in it.

9. If God doth answer the soul, yea, but that is but an imagination. If he doth not answer, why? then it is cleare that God neither doth, nor will ever regard you.

10. If I do not give the Sacrament, why? then thou slightest Christ, and his blood: If I go and come away with tears, O then thou wast unbelieving, or else thou hadst been sent away with joy and increase.

11. If I do not put on for grace, then thou art wicked: If I put on for grace, then thou art so wicked that God will not bestow it on thee. Thus doth Satan involve, and distresse, and set the soul of a weak Believer (like a man at chess) forward and backward; she makes him to suspect every mercy, and every grace, and every affection, and every duty, and every promise, and every Ordinance; so violently doth he assault, though he cannot really sink the heart of a weak Believer.

SECT. VIII.

1. *God will strive to increase thy faith.*

1. **T**his is a *signe of truth*. True grace is rising, dead things do moulder, and artificial things remaine the same; but the living child is growing to a full stature. *Phil. 3. Not as though we had already attained the graine of mustard-seed growe, and the smacking flaxe will flume.* Presumption hath all its perfections at first.

2. This is a *right answer of great means*. To whom much is given, of the same much is required. *What able sheepe have are called ill-servanted, because in a great and large pasture.* All is not right when the breasts are full, and the child is still weak. The Gospel should be revealed from faith to faith, Rom. 1.

3. The greater faith is, the greater perfection: every degree of farther grace is like a star of greater magnitude, which differ in glory from another; an addition of faith to faith is an adding to the treasury, an enriching of the soul, a farther clarifying of it. The lesse of grace, the more of corruption, and the more of corruption the more of imperfection.

4. The

4. The *greater faith*, the *greater comfort*; the *Minde* will have fewer doubts, *Will* hath fewer fears, *Conscience* more settledness, the soul more sights of God, And tastes of Christ, Experiences in life, and confidence in death.

5. The *greater faith* will be the *greater help* in times of desertion, in times of tryal, in times of temptation, in times of affliction, and greater help to all *active duty*, and *passive changes*. Thou knowest not what may befall thee in evil times, then thou wouldest be able to commit, to submit, to conquer, to suffer, to do much better, if thy faith were much greater.



CHAP. XVI.

Exhortations to labour for saving faith.



Fto beleve in the Lord Iesus Christ be the way to be saved; Then be exhorted to labour for, and to get this saving faith. Let not the consolations of God seeme small unto thee, said he to Job; so say I, let not the salvation of thy soul seem a light thing unto thee. If a man were wounded deeply, and there were but one plaister which could cure, and this were presented unto him, would he not put out his hand to receive and apply it, the love of life would easily incline him.

Why? brethren, not a man of us but hath a deadly wound by *sinne*, and there is no remedy for the sinful soul, but in the blood of Christ: O, if the love of life will constraine us much, let the love of eternal life, the love of our souls, of our salvation perswade us much more to get faith, which gets Christ, who gets salvation for our souls.

There are divers things which I will touch upon in the finish- 4. Branches:
ing of this Use, viz

1. The *Motives* to persuade and draw the heart to put out for this saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The *Impediments* and hindrances; which stop the soul from believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, which we must assay to answer and remove; as he did the *body of Asabel* which stayed the people in their pursuit.

3. The *means* or adjuncts, and furtherances to breed this believing quality in the soul.

4. The *resolutions* or *answerings* of several doubtful grounds and arguments which intangle the heart of a sensible sinner, and which he holds out as strong pretences, why he should not by faith close with Jesus Christ.

Now that great and holy God, who is the *Author* of faith, and finisher thereof, whose word is the word of faith, and by whose Almighty working the hearts of men are persuaded to believe, let him so direct me in speaking, and all of us in hearing, that after all his gracious and manifold revelations and offers of our Lord Jesus Christ, our unbelieving hearts may be subdued, and true faith may be wrought in us all to receive the Lord Jesus Christ to our eternal salvation.

SECT. I.

First the Motives.

I speak this day to an understanding and sensible people, to whom the doctrinal parts of our natural misery, and of our purchased felicity are not hidden mysteries; and therefore I trust that the succeeding arguments and motives shall find little stop in your understandings, but shall the more easily and powerfully pass down into your hearts and affections, to persuade and excite you to lay out all your strength, and that speedily, to get this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: Thus then

First, sadly and seriously consider the state of *Positive infidelity*. Divines observe a *twofold infidelity*.

One is *Negative*, which is amongst the *Heathens* to whom Christ

A twofold infidelity.

Christ is not revealed, and therefore they do not believe; it consists both in the absence of the quality of faith, as also in the *object and doctrine of faith*. This Sinne of the Gospel hath not risen unto them, and therefore they sit still in the regions of darkness, and (for ought we know) in the valley of death.

Another is *Positive*, which is incident unto us Christians, to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed; Christ is manifested as the body of the Sun by the beams of light, so he by the brightnesse and evidence of the Gospel, and yet the soule knows him not, receives him not, doth not take him both as *Lord and Saviour*.

Of this there are several degrees, and all of them fearfully dangerous, to speak the truth plainly, damnable.

1. A *carelesse neglecting of the Lord of life*, a not minding of that singular mercy and goodnesse which God hath treasured in Christ, and reveales and offers to sinful men.

2. A *slighting of him and his excellencies*, which is a preferring, as it were, *Barabbas* before him; a bestowing of our hearts, and studies, and labours, and delights, and services, not on him, but either on our sinnes, or upon the world, in the rivers of its pleasures, and in the mountaines of its profits.

3. A *refusing of his Articles and Covenants*, which is a breaking off, and vile disliking of those terms upon which he offers himself to be ours: we would bring him to termes of competition with sinne, or the creature; we would abridge his holy and *Lordly* Scepter, like what we please, do what we list, have him to be our *Saviour*, and sinne to be our *Ruler*, we would bestow our *safeties* on him, and our *services* upon the world, we will not freely and fully consent to all that he is, nor submit to all that he proposeth, or may befall us with him and for him: And so like the vaine Merchants, we misse the pearle, because we will not go to the price: We enjoy our selves still, and our sinnes, and our world too, but we forsake our mercies for lying vanities; the soul is *Christlesse* still, because thus sordidly unbelov'ing.

1. But then know, of all estates in the world, none so *fearful*, so *damnable*, as the *unbelieving estate*. A man may lose every farthing of his inheritance, and yet faith will bring him to heaven; he may lose every friend that he hath, and yet faith may bring him to heaven; He may lose every spirit in his members, and every drop of blood in his body, and yet faith may bring him to heaven, He may be as *poor as Job*, as *distressed as David*, as *sick as Lazarus*, as *forsaken as Paul*, as *derided as Christ*, and yet faith may bring his soul to heaven. But if a man had as much wisdom as *Solomon*, greatness as *Nebuchadnezzar*, strength as *Sampson*, days as *Methuselah*, riches as *Dives*; were his dwellings like the doors of the Sanctuary, and shaped into the most imaginable Paradise of all exquisite and earthly delights. If yet his soul remained, and expired unbelieving, if he had not faith, *His unbelieving soul shall be cast out into the lake which burnes with fire and brimstone*, Revel. 21. 8.

2. Nay again, A man may (perhaps) be *guilty of many sins*, and those very fowle, high, and crying, he hath perhaps been an *Idolater*, or else an *Adulterer*, or else a *Blasphemer*, or else a *Persecutor*, yea even of Christ, yet upon his *repentance* and *faith in Christ* his *soul shall be saved in the day of the Lord*. For no former sinnes shall prejudice the soul, which is now truly turned from them, and hath by faith yeilded up it self to Christ: But the *unbelieving person*, hath *every sinne and every guilt* upon a severe and sure account; he rejects his own satisfactions by refusing Christ: The *Law of God* will *sue him out* for every rebellion, and the *justice of God* will break out upon him for all his *iniquities* and *conscience*, will give up all his *guilts*; and because he is unbelieving, *vengeance to the utmost shall cease on him*, and there is *none to deliver him*, nor he ever able to deliver himself. *Unbelief* is *bindes all the sinnes upon the soul*, and condemnation fast unto the sinnes: It leaves the *sinning soul naked* to the eye of divine Justice, neither hath the soul any *shelter* which is *out of Christ*. O thou who wilt not *kisse the Sonne* now, who wilt not *have Christ to rule thee*, who *despise* the tender love of God, the precious blood of Christ, who wilt receive him for thy *Priest*, for thy *Prophet*, for thy *King*; In the last day thou shalt curse thy heart, and accurse thy sins, and

and cry to the mountaines, but they will not cover thee, to mercy, but that will not pity thee; to Christ, but he will not regard thee; to Justice, but it will not heare thee; thou wouldst not believe, thou wouldst not receive Christ as Lord and Saviour, but thou wouldst have the love of sin, and therefore thou shalt have the portion of a sinner, thou shalt not see life, but the wrath of God shall abide upon thee.

Nay, if the father hath given and offered unto thee his own Sonne, and thou harden thy heart by unbelief, thou wilt not take him upon those termes, I tell thee in the name of the Lord Jesus, that if thou wilt thus bid Christ farewell, thou dost bid God farewell, all mercy farewell, all salvation farewell, all hope of it farewell: and thou bindest all thy sinnes upon thy soul, and all the curse of the Law upon thy soul; Woe unto thee, *is better thou hadst never been borne?* If thou hast any sense as an ordinary creature, any reason as a man, any understanding as a Christian, any true estimation of an immortal soul, any conceptions of heaven, or hell; if salvation be any comfortable thing, if damnation be any miserable thing; then, I beseech thee, I beseech thee, labour for faith, get out of an unbelieving condition; thou perishest if thou stay'st there, thou art lost for ever, *he that believes not shall be damned* said the Prince of salvation, *O repent and believe, why will you die, O house of Israel?*

Consider, throughly of the love of God in giving Christ, and of 2. Motive. the love of Christ in giving himself, and perhaps this may perswade thee to labour for faith.

The love of God in giving of Christ. See Joh. 3. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17. For God sent not his Sonne into the world to condemne the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

O this love of God to sinners: To give his Son, and not a servant, his own Son, and not another, his only Son, and not a second, his only begotten Son, and not an adopted child, and that not for any ill, but for good; he did not send him as an enemy, but as a friend, not to deliver a poor and mean good, but the best and highest good, to save us; not to deliver us from an ordinary danger, but from condemnation; Yea, and he is sent, and

given, he was not bought by us, but given by him; Yea, and no way deserved, but freely given; yea, and given to us, not friends, but enemies.

Thou hast shewed this day (said Saul to David 1 Sam. 24. 18) How that thou hast dealt well with me, forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. 19. For if a man finde his enemy, will he let him go well away? Thus here 'twixt man and man, but (saith the Apostle) God commendeth his love towards us in that whiles we were yet sinners Christ dyed for us. Now, shall all this love be in vaine? Shall God think of a Christ and we pass by him? shall he give a Saviour, and we reject him? shall he bring salvation to our doores, and we not accept of it? Why? you need my Son, and you are damned, if you take him not, and I freely offer him unto you, that you may be saved, and shall not we strive for faith to receive him?

2.

The love of Christ: O, how wonderfull was his love to us! it was not a love to the fallen Angels, but to fallen man, and such a love to fallen man as the like cannot be found. He laid aside his glory to do us good; he humbled himself to raise us, he became poor to enrich us; he fasted and prayed and endured the contradiction of sinners, Reproaches, Crucifying, Wrath, Bloody agonies, Conflicts with Satan, sorrows in his soul, piercings in his body, and a bitter death to satisfie for us, and to reconcile us, and shall we not accept of him? shall all this be in vaine? Why! dost thou not heare Christ calling and crying out unto thee, never were any sorrowes like my sorrowes, never was any love like to my love. O unbelieving and sinning soul! look upon me, why dost thou passe by? why dost thou hide thine eyes from me? why dost thou stop thine ears at me? I am the Saviour of sinners, and there is none else besides me; thy own miseries might cause thee to look up and embrace me; And let my love unto thee a little draw thee, move thee, mek thee. Hast thou not heard of the revilings and scoffes which I sustained? my love to thy soul made me a willing patient; Hast thou not heard of the agonies of my soul, which made me to sweat drops of blood, and my soul was exceeding heavy even to the death? yet my love to thy soul made me willing to drink that cup: Hast thou not heard of that desertion, and of that wrath which made me to cry out, my God, my God, why hast thou for-
saken

taken me? And yet my love to thy soul made me to passe through it: Hast thou not heard of that *accursed and despitfull death* which I was put to; *numbered with transgressors*, cast out of the City, nailed to the crosse, pierced through the heart? and yet my love to thy soul, made me to *pour out my soul an offering for thy sins*. Why! and shall I *veile my glory* under the *candition of a servant* in vaine? Shall I *combate*, and *conquer Satan* in vaine? shall I beare the *seorne of men*, the *wrath of God*, the *terrors of death*, the *curse of the Law*, in vaine? was not all this for thee, shouldst not thou have sustained all this, if I had not? and must thou not, if thou refusedst him who hath done it? and yet wilt thou prefer thy sins before me? yet wilt thou not accept of me? yet wilt thou not get faith to receive me? have I sought thee freely, bought thee so dearly, and thou neglect and refuse me so easily?

Thirdly, consider, *thou hast extreame need of a Lord Iesus* 3. *Motives*
Christ.

Excellency prevails much with an ingenious nature, and *necessity* with the worst: when the *Lepers* saw that they must either *venture their lives or die*, they would out *into the Camp*; when the *Prodigal* saw he must *famish abroad*, or *repaire home*, he would then *back to his fathers house*. Why Brethren! the *Captive* doth not more need a *Redeemer*, and the *sick* doth not more need a *Physician*, then the *sinners* doth need a *Christ and a Saviour*.

Were we in *Adams created innocency*, then we need not to look after a Saviour, but we are fallen, but we are broken, but we are *sold under sin*, but we are *transgressors from the womb*, but we are by nature the *children of disobedience and wrath*.

Had we any stock left in our hands to set up our broken souls againe, had we any strength to repaire our losse, to recover our good, to purchase our own peace and salvation, but we are *dead in trespasses*, Eph. 2. 1. *we all fall short of the glory of God*, Rom. 3. 23. *we are all without strength*, Rom. 5. 6.

Could any thing be a *Plank* to the *Shipwrack*, but *Christ*, or an *hand* to lay hold on the *rock*, but *faith* then we needed not to give such diligence for faith to believe; but there is *no salvation*

in any other name, and there is no quality but faith to get us into Christ.

It is not the *confidence* which thou mayest put upon the *faith of another*; which will do it: as every mans soul is for his own body, so every mans faith is for his own soul; the wise virgins had no more oile then would serve their own Lamps; and no mans faith is more then enough for himself: Though Christ can save many, yet faith saves him only who hath it.

It is not the confidence of a naked decree which will do it, if God hath decreed to save me, I shall be saved; O no his decrees are his own secret wayes, and the way which he hath opened to us, is to get *faith* and to *believe in his Son*.

It is not an empty profession, nor the worthlesse accessse of all the creatures that can ensue or save thy soul. Only Christ, none but Christ, thou art wounded, and Christ is thy plaister; thou art dead, and Christ is thy life; thou art sold, and Christ is thy ransom; thou art an enemy, and Christ is thy peace. The debts are infinite, the curse great, the justice of God pure, thy strength nothing, and nothing satisfies and delivers but Christ, and none hath Christ but the believer, why then wilt thou not labor for faith?

Motive. Fourthly, consider, *Christ is every way fitted to thy need*: Why! Brethren, gold will ransom a debtor to man, it will not ransom a sinner from the Law, an offender against God. Why! look upon your need aright, and then judge, who but Christ for a sinner.

There is guilt, much guilt lying upon thy soul, and who is the Priest to suffer, to offer, to satisfy, to take away transgressions but Christ? None can blot out the guilt of sin for us, but he who had not a spot of sin in himself.

There is filth, much filth defiling our natures; poysoning our actions, and who is the Prophet to enlighten, to teach, to change, to cleanse from sinfulness but Christ? None can teach us holiness, and obedience, but he who was *Holy undefiled separated from sinners and was obedient to the death*.

There is dominion, much dominion of sin, prescribing a *Law to our members*, sending out all insolent inclinations, holding us in

in a willing subjection to every base lust; and who is the King to conquer the heart, to subdue iniquities, to lead captivity captive, to spoile principalities and powers, to bid the captive go free, to erect a thorne of righteousness and peace in the soul but Christ? So that the wise love of God hath prepared and fitted Christ in all respects suitable to the exigencies, and straits of a sinful soul, and hath appointed faith to be that which shall put on this Christ upon the needy soul; why then will we not labour for faith.

Fifthly, God hath not only fitted a Saviour for thee, but he *comes near unto thee with him*, he deales mightily with thy soul to beleeve on him. *5. Motive.*

Thou hast the word of revelation (to this very day) wherein the mystery of thy salvation is made known and cleare unto thee. Thou needest not to say in thine heart, *Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deeps to bring up Christ againe from the dead?* But the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confesse with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, Rom. 6. 7, 8, 9.

Thou hast the word of gracious proposition; God hath offered Christ with all his plentiful redemption, with his strong salvation unto thee: yea, he hath assured thee by his Word of *John 3.* truth (which cannot lie nor deceive) that if thou believest on him, thou shalt be saved by him.

Thou hast the word of injunction which layes a bond of duty upon thee, *This is his Commandment, that we beleeve on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.* *John 3: 23.*

Nay, thou hast the word of penalty and correction. God hath said that he will judge thee for not believing, and that in the sharpest method of expression, *He that believes not shall be damned.*

Nay thou hast the word of obsecration and gentle intreaty, God stoops infinitely below himself he doth streine curtesie with thee, *God doth beseech you by us, and we pray you in Christs stead to be reconciled to God.*

Nay thou hast the word of exhortation; why will you not be-

believe? why will ye die in your sins? why will ye not come to me that you may be saved? How often would I have gathered thee? All the day long have I stretched forth my hands.

Nay, thy unbelief grieves the very heart of Christ, (he grieved at their unbelief) he complaines of that slownesse in thy heart to believe (*O slow of heart to believe, &c.*) nay, and he sheds tears, because thou dost not believe, and receive him, *When he came near the City, he wept over it, O Hierusalem! thou that, &c. How often would I, &c?*

6. Motive.

Sixthly, consider how unreasonable, and unequal, and sottish a thing it is not to receive Christ, being thus revealed and offered.

1. There is none who have right to thy soul but God and Christ; our souls are Gods workmanship, and Christs purchase; Why then should we not give to God that which belongs to God, and to Christ that which is his own; *Ye are not your own,* saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 6. 19. 20. for ye are bought with a price.* God put forth his own power to make thy soul, and Christ shed his heart blood to redeem thy soul; and yet wilt thou through infidelity with-hold it from him, and passe it over into the possession of a stranger, an enemy?

2. Christ out-bids all Merchants for thy soul, he out-bids sin, and he out-bids all the world, and he out-bids Satan. *Can the Sonne of Jesse give you vineyards,* said Saul? can sinne give thee that which Christ can? can the world? let them now appear and declare their strength and treasury; Is there any one of them that presents redemption unto thee? Is there any one of them that can procure remission and pardoning mercy for thee? Is there any one of them which can satisfie the wrath of God for thee? which can make thy peace, which can present thee righteous before the judgement seat? which can settle eternal life upon thee? All this can Christ do, none of this can they do.

3. Thou canst not possibly be a loser by receiving or believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Suppose it cost thee many tears, and many prayers, and many searchings, and many waivings, yet Christ will recompence all these

these in a moment, one word, I am thy salvation; Is it I, be not afraid; I am thine, as thou art mine, thy sins are forgiven thee, will be a day for all former nights.

Suppose that the world doth cast thee off, as they cast him out of the Synagogue who believed and professed Christ, yet Christ will come unto thee as unto him. And as Elkanah said to Hanna, 1 Sam. 1. 8. *Am not I better then ten sons?* or as the Prophet answered the King for the hundred talents, *God will be better unto thee*, 2 Sam. 20. 9. So will Christ, he will supply all thy losses, he will be better unto thee then houses and lands, then father and mother, an hundred fold better in this life, and a thousand fold better in the life to come.

4. What just extremity of shame and blacknesse of confusion will befall thee, if thou be so wickedly unreasonable to keep off thy soul from Christ. When thou art cited before God and Christ, and the holy Angels and just men, And God shall demand of thee, why? whom hast thou served? upon whom hast thou bestowed thy soul? who was it that made thy soul? Thou Lord, who was it that purchased and redeemed thy soul? Thou Christ, and who beseeched thee to bring back thy soul? Thou by thy servants in thy Word? And what did they say unto thee, which should have prevailed upon thee? They did assure me in thy Name, that if I would come in, and accept of Christ, I should have favour, and pardon, and eternal life; and what did keep back thy soul from accepting of this? O it was such a lust that I loved, and it was the world which I preferred. And wouldest thou prefer earth before heaven, thy profit before thy soul? nay wouldest thou prefer a base sinne, before a merciful God, and a blessed Redeemer? Thy own mouth doth testifie against thee; was not my mercy better then a sinne? was not my Sonne better then a sinne? take him all ye children of darknesse, sease on him my wrath to the most, close him up in the lowest pit of hell, conscience law on him, and sting him for ever, fire and brimstone come and torment him eternally, he shall never have part in my mercy; he shall never have portion in my Sonne; He shall never see my face nor heaven, who preferred his sinne; his delights, his profits, before my love, my mercy, my Christ, and his own soul.

Lastly

Lastly, *faith would do great things for thee*, and *Christ would do wonders for thy soul*, if once *thy heart could be persuaded to consent unto him*, and to accept of him as *Lord and Saviour*.

SECT. II.

Secondly, the impediments and hindrances.

Obj. **B**Ut now, as the *Eunuch* said, *There is water, what hinders me that I may not be baptized?* so you may say, why? her is *Christ* set out to the life, here are arguments faire enough to draw on my soul, what hinders that we do not believe and receive *Christ*?

Sol. After all these discoveries, yet the heart stands off, and why? because there are yet many cords with which the soul is held, there are yet several impediments which do intangle and seduce the heart, which keeps it down from mounting and rising up to the Lord of life, against which we must earnestly labour if ever we would beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I will touch some of the choicest of them.

1. One impediment to faith is that *natural Atheisme* in the sons of men. You know that as in the concoction or digestion of meats, that which is a prejudice to the first concoction or digestion of meats, is a hindrance to the two other, and as in points of demonstration, that scruple which weakens the apprehension of the truth of the principle, it ever disable the strength of assent to the deduced conclusion. So is it in divinity, whatsoever vile quality in the soul prejudiceth the reverent respects of the most common and *first truths*, it doth hinder is much in the embracing of the *depending truths*, which receive much authority and strength from the grants of the former.

Now *Atheisme*, it is a slighting quarrel with the *first truths*: An Atheistical spirit, it hath most sordid and loose concei-
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ons of God and of his Word; it doth not set up God in the greatness of his nature, and Majesty of his Attributes, and Authority of his Word; God looks not like a God unto him; nor doth the Word of God work upon him like the Word of God. *God is not in all his thoughts*, he doth not really conceive of him, as one who indeed is omnipotent, and so holy, and so just, and so merciful as he reveales himself: Those sweet truths of favour, and kindness, and mercy, and the blood of Christ, they are either nothing to him, or as empty notions. Those sharp threatnings against an unbelieving person, with condemnation, and wrath, and hell, they are as terrible fables and scarecrows to him; He doth not believe any such displeasures, nor torments, that thus it shall be indeed. Now how can the soul be inclined to believe in Christ, to part with its dearest lusts, with its worldly advantages and pleasures, and to submit it selfe to the Lawes and Scepter of Christ, when as it doth expressly or virtually deny the nature of God, and the power of his truths?

Didst thou indeed beleeve that *there was a God*, didst thou indeed believe that his revelations of mans sinful misery, and of his singular mercy in Christ were true and real? Didst thou believe that God hath wrath, and blacknesse of darkness, and vials of vengeance for ever to be poured on the unbeliever, and that the lake which burnes with fire and brimstone must be thy assured portion, (as God hath spoken?) how couldst thou sit still, content thy heart, neglect thy salvation by Christ, stand off from the wayes and endeavours for faith?

Therefore to remove this impediment, beg of God to forgive, and cure the *Atheisme of thy Spirit*. Strive to set up the *true God* in thy understanding, and to believe that he *is the Lord who will not lye*. Whatsoever he hath revealed himself to be and to do. Why, that he is, and that he will performe; that it is thy duty to return from sinne to him in Christ, and if thou dost returne, he will in mercy spare and deliver thy soul from the pit, because he hath found a ransom; but if thou wilt not return, he will bathe the sword of his flaming justice for ever in the blood of thy soul.

2. A second impediment to the getting of faith is *grosse ignorance*.

norance. Whatsoever is contrary to knowledge, that same is contrary to faith; for though faith sees not its ground in natural reason; yet it must have divine evidence to shew it its object; and way, and causes, or else it cannot be wrought in the soul.

The soul must have *light* for all its *apprehensive operations*, for the *eye* to see, and the *understanding* to perceive, and for the *heart* to embrace.

Now this is it which keeps men off from beleeving, they are *extremely ignorant*.

1. First, of their own *sinful condition*, they do not know their nativity and conception; what sin is, nor what belongs to sinners; how abominable and vile their natures are, without all good, and like a fontaine full of all wickednesse; how *dead in trespasses and sins*; how totally defiled, from the *crown of the head to the sole of the foot*; How perpetually rebellious against every precept of heaven, and how slighting of the tenders of salvation and mercy.

2. Secondly, of *Gods just disposition towards the sinful person*. They see him not armed, and setting out against them in all the *threatnings and curses of his Law*; as Balaam in his passage, he adventured on, for he *saw not the Angel of the Lord with a sword in his hand ready to cleave him asunder.* So men rest securely in their natural state; talk what you will of Christ, and of God, and of sinne, and of faith, they are not moved, they know not the fearful issues of a natural and unbeleeving condition, they know not that God will judge them and condemn them for ever.

3. Thirdly, of the *excellencies of Christ* what he is, whither God, or man, or both, even as it pleaseth him, but favourly what he is in respect of his Natures, in respect of his Offices, in respect of his Actions, in respect of his Passion, in respect of his Benefits, in respect of his Vertues, they understand not these things. How God hath manifested love in Christ, how Christ manifested love to them, to what end he was made man, why Ministers preach him so much, what is more in him then in any other; Alas they think not of these things, they know them not. Now brethren, how is it possible for the soul to believe, or to be perswaded to believe in Christ, or to labour.

labour for this *precious faith* which is a stranger to it self, to God, to Christ?

Didst thou indeed know thy condition to be the condition of death, wouldest thou not make out for the Lord of life? didst thou indeed know thy condition to be the condition of enmity, wouldest thou not strive to get unto the Prince of peace?

So againe, as Christ spake to the woman, *If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water*, John 4. 10. O if men did know what a gift Christ was; If heaven and earth, men and Angels had studyed the help of a poore sinner, they could never have imagined such a remedy as God found in giving his own Sonne; Now, if men did know him aright, what a Redeemer, what a Lord he is, what *living water* is in him. That in him only there is life for the dead, recovery for the sinner, satisfaction for guilt, sanctification for the soul, atonement for trespasses, comfort for distresses, balm for wounds, salvation for their persons: Why? how could it be but that they should ask of him for a drop (at least) of water; for some faith to receive him who is the fountain of grace and life?

3. A third impediment to the endeavours for faith, is a *vain confidence of natural righteousness*: This was it which kept off many of the Pharisees, the Text saith, *That they trusted to their own righteousness*. Yea, this is called the *stumbling of the Jews*, it cast them flat, that they doted so on legal abilities. When a base heart hath proud-imaginations of Christ, and peace, and safety from something within it self, why? It will never look after Christ. A proud person who hath money in his house, he scornes to be beholding to his neighbour; the proud sinner, who conceives that all is well 'twixt him and God, and that he hath done no man wrong, and none can say black is his eye, he is neither whore nor thief, and his heart is as good as the best, and his meanings are alwayes honest, and none can tax him for injustice, and he hath kept all Gods Commandments as well as ever he could, and he hath had a good belief, (he thanks God) ever since he was borne. I tell you such a person will not be beholding to God for Christ, for he (in his opinion) being so whole, needs not the

Physician neither shall you perswade him to mourn for his finnes, or to repent, and to part with all for Christ, to deny himself and all his own vaine confidences, and to put himself only upon Jesus Christ; he trusts to be saved by his good deeds, and by his good meanings.

Ah foolish and seduced soul! Who hath bewitched thee to forsake thine own mercies? Thinkest thou that God would have sent his onely Sonne, and to poure out his own soule for sinners, if that yet there had been ability in sinful man to have purchased his own safety and happinesse? And dost thou see no sinne in thy self, which may therefore for ever thrust thee off from resting upon thy selfe? and are thy works such absolute bottomes and foundations, when the *Heathens* can match them and exceed them? or cannot God espy a flaw in thy Ship, and much false conveyance in thy title, and much defect in thy deeds, who can charge folly upon the *Angels*? And are thy meanings and works so good, while thy heart is yet so ignorant, thy life yet so prophane? Can what thou dost finde acceptance or merit, when yet thou trustest not on him who only is the *maris* for a sinner? Thinkest thou thy meanings can be good, which dishonour the *Redemption by Christ*, and the *freenesse of mercy*. O no my brethren, the soul is the passenger, graces are the sailes, the Spirit is the wind, but Christ, only Christ is the bottom which carries all safe and sure to heaven.

Nay, if thou canst see a Saviour in thy own good meanings; if a Saviour in thy own good works, a Saviour in any part or degree of inherent righteounesse, either inward, for the change of nature, or outward for the improvement of life; this, this will keep thee and Christ asunder. No man will labour for faith in Christ, who hath a faith in himselfe already as his own Saviour. Therefore as they in the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, burned their books when they came to believe in Christ, so must we unbottom our selves of our selves. Renounce our monstrous rage, abhor our selves in dust and ashes; lay flat before the mercy-seat, cry out with the *Lepre*, I am uncleane, unclean; with *Daniel*, To us belongs nothing but confusion, for we have sinned; with *David*, enter not into judgement with thy servants, for in thy sight shall no flesh righteous be justified; with the

the *Publican* stand afar off and say, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*; with *Paul*, *I count all things but as dung and drosse in comparison of Christ*, and, *I desire to be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is of faith*, with those *Elders*, cast (if we had them) *our very crowns to the earth before the Lamb*, and say *he only is worthy*.

If ever thou wouldst get to believe in Christ, labour to get the mountaines to be levelled, the high imaginations to be cast down, to cast thy self out of thy self: There is nothing that I have been, or have done, or do, or can do, which I can trust to; I seek for the living among the dead, whiles I look for a Saviour in my self. He is farre enough from safety, who rests on the arms of his flesh, and we shall never close with, or magnifie Christs righteousness, until we can (in matter of merit or justification) deny our own.

Do not stand
in thy own
light.

4. A fourth impediment to beleeving is, the league of the heart with sinne: *Light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather then light*, John 3. 19 Sinne absolutely doth not prejudice the contract of the soule with Christ, for Christ doth not negotiate for any soul, but the sinful soule; He doth not come to a person, and say, if thou hast no sinne, I will bestow my self on thee, or if thou hast not committed sinne, I will be a redeemer, a Saviour unto thee. O no, the offer of Christ is only to the sinner, and it is none but the sinner who is to beleeve in Christ. But that which hinders the contract 'twixt men and Christ, it is the love of sin: Christ comes in the Ministry of the Gospel unto us, and reports unto us our own exceeding sinfulness, and then his exceeding graciousnesse, and invites the soule (by many sweet and tender arguments) to accept of him, to be Lord and Christ, and assures it of pardon, and righteousness and salvation. Now saith Christ, that which I require of you is this, leave but your sinnes, your sinnes which will damne you, and I will be yours. Why? saith the soule, this is but reason, and I will hearken to it, well then saith Christ, go and quit such a lust, thy uncleanness, or thy Sabbath breaking, or thy drunkenness, or thy lewd society, &c. Why, now the base and foolish heart falls off, I cannot live without my nature, I must and will be allowed in such a course; The heart riseth up, O, *Benjamin* shall not go, nay any thing but

this lust, I will never be divorced from it, if I may have Christ and this sinne too, well and good. Thus the love of sinne steales away the heart, it bestows the heart else where, nay it inflames an opposition against the Lordly power of Christ; the soul will never yeild to the dominion of Christ, which delights in the subjection to sin.

Brethren, if we could but rip up the secrets of mens hearts unto you, you should clearly discern, that it is the love of some sin or other which mars all; men (oft-times) can make no exception against Christ, they see reason enough to come in unto him; they know they cannot be saved without him, but then they will not leave their sinnes, it cuts their soules to think of such a divorce, come on it what will they will take their pleasure, and hold fast their wickednesse.

5. A fifth impediment is the world: The honours of it; how can you believe who receive honour one from another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? John 5. 44. The profits of it, He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions, Mat. 19. 22. The Examples of it, Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? John 7. 48. The terrors of it, the feare of the Jews kept off many from coming to Christ. The losses of it, and crosses, He that will be my Disciple must deny himself, and take up his crosse and follow me. The cares and thoughts of it, when a man mindes earthly things, and will be rich, and devours all his precious thoughts, to compass that which will be but a feather, a thorne, vanity or vexation. Presse men to labour for Christ, why? we have no lease: presse to frequent the wayes of getting faith, why? we must not neglect our callings. Urge them to embrace Christ as Lord, to shape and fashion their hearts and ways according to his rules, after his righteous Laws, and to deny themselves in some sinful compliances, O then we shall not be esteemed of, we shall be derided and scoffed at as vaine and singular.

O these sensible things, which we can see with our eyes, and grasp with our hands, they put us off from the great moments of our best and eternal good.

And what are the honours of this world, but as the shade of the Sunne which every discontented cloud and frown removes? and

and what are the profits of it, but heapes of chaff, which any winde from heaven may scatter? and what are the friends of it, but a gourd, which any worme may gnaw out and shrieve?

And why dost thou fear man, whose utmost power exceeds not *thy body*, and fearest not that God whose vengeance can *seize on thy soul*? and why wilt thou bestow the *strength of thy time*, to get no more then nothing, and in the mean time to lose eternity, a soul, a Christ, a heaven? yet thus it is, the poor creatures (at the best) but our servants have got our hearts, whiles Christ complains against us, we withhold our souls from him, our just Lord and best Master.

But if there were not more glory in Christ, then honour in the world, if there were not more gaine in Christ, then profit in the world, if there were not more love in Christ, then friendship in the world; if there were not more comfort in Christ, then discouragements in the world; if there were not more safeties in Christ, then dangers in the world; nay, if the real and true exceedings of infinite betternesse, were not on Christs part, I durst not so to encline your hearts for faith in him, &c.

Sixthly, the *cunnings of natural unbelief*, are a great impediment; I will not speak of al of them, only I wil discover a few, all which are hindrances.

6.

Imaginations of impossibility: it cannot be, that if I should labor for faith, that ever I should get it, the intentions of mercy lie not that way, nor do the streames of graciousness run towards such a deeply sinful and guilty soul; my sins are grown to such a vastnesse of provocation, as if all the Angels in heaven should be sent unto me, I could never credit their relation of hope or peace unto me.

1.

Now when the heart is thus forestalled with a strength of conceit, that God never did, nor will bend the cunctment of the blood of Christ towards the soul; Why! the hands sink, no man will be perswaded to compass impossibilities.

Apprehensions of difficulty. Unbelief sets up a *Lion in every path*, and so keeps off from all endeavour: First, I shall never be able to spare time, I shall never be able to pray, I shall never be able to keep on in such a course, I shall never be able to leave such

2.

such society, I shall never be able to deny the world, I cannot take such paines, I cannot waite, I cannot tell how to get off these sinnes, to change this heart, to bring it to yield to Christ.

3. *Discourse of carnall reasonings*, which try all the promises of God at a humane bar, disputings against just precepts by unjust practices, and the undertakings of a great and faithful God, by the shallownesse of a blind and proud and weak understanding, throwing up infinite exceptions.

4. *Instances of sense and feeling*; Why if a man will judge of God, by what he alwaies hears and feels within himself, he shall never believe.

Yea, if I were now sure, I should have mercy, that Christ were mine, that my sins were pardoned, if I could see my heart changed, and sins dispersed and subdued, then I would put out for faith, and then I would look up to Christ. And wouldst thou have thy cure before thy plaister, thy health before the Physick, thy life before thy soul, the portion before the person, thy nonefast before thy meal, the benefits of Christ, the virtues of Christ, before Christ himself.

SECT. III.

Thirdly the Means.

NOW I come to direct you unto the use of such meanes by which God workes this saving faith in the hearts of men.

Where, premise with me some particulars.

1. There is no natural power in man to produce a cause within himself; *This great grace of faith* is no fruit of the wisdom of the flesh, nor is it the birth of a corrupt will, if it were possible for a natural heart to see all the excellencies of Christ, if it were possible for him to draw out and behold all the arguments of Scripture, yet could he not by his own strength make his owne heart to believe.

2. The immediate and sole cause of faith is the Spirit of God: He
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it is who is greater then the heart, and who can perswade, and draw the heart, and who can change and renew the spirit, which will it be renewed by him, will never be moved to beleve in Christ.

3. There are *meanes appointed by God*, and which God doth ordinarily blesse, for the production of faith; as he hath ordained meanes, for the revelation of Christ, so he hath likewise consecrated meanes, to lead the soul unto him, to implane faith.

4. Now the *great and ordinary meanes* by which God *workes faith* in the hearts of men (I speak of such as are come to ripeness of years) is the *preaching of the Word*.

So *Acts 13. 48. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Rom. 10. 17. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, Eph. 1. 13. In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.*

That the *Word is the Ministerial instrument*, which God useth to beget faith in Christ, may thus appeare.

1. It is that which *discovers unto the soul its extreame misery and great need of Christ*; nothing quickens the conscience to that *reflexive evidence*, to the cleare and true sight of the natural state, which pricks the soul, which in a sort compels the soul to look after the Redeemer of the world, as the Word doth. You see it hath been thus formerly, that when men have heard it, it hath unfolded their state unto them, it hath broken all their proud imaginations, it hath driven them to their feet, it hath made them to cry out, *men and brethren what shall we do to be saved?*

Yea, and we find it in experience to be so, that the preaching of the Word, it opens the eyes of sinners, it frames in them the sense of sinfulness, and accursednesse, it makes them indeed to feel the need of a Physician of such an one as Christ.

2. It is that which *discovers a shore for a broken ship*; which doth reveale, and proclaime to poor sinners Articles of peace in Christ; it makes known the great love of God and Christ, and how that Christ is the Sonne of God, and was sent by God, and

satisfied for sinners, and this was *accepted*.

3. It makes the soul to confesse those things as *most true and good in themselves*: It convinceth a man, that of a truth God meanes graciously to men, that his Sonne was a Sacrifice, was a propitiation, that he did purchase pardon and salvation for sinners.

4. It is that which casteth down all the reasonings, arguments and disputes of the minde against the conditions of Christ, and renders all the termes of Christ upon which he will be taken, as most equal, and faire, and reasonable.

5. It is that which clears the way for the soul against all its feares and unbelceiving doubts, from the freeness of Gods mercy, from the fulnesse of Christs redemption, from the willingness on Christs part, and requests unto us to accept of him.

6. It is that which doth powerfully renew the disposition of the understanding and will, and so incline them to esteeme of Christ, as the highest truth, and to bend after him as the chiefest good.

7. It is that which stirres up the heart with a choice of Christ, and resolution to have him what ever may befall it.

8. It is that which makes the heart to cry *seruently* to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to work his blessed grace of faith: Yes, which draws out of us strong supplications with many teares and longings, and to implead all the promises of making mercy good, and Christ good, and faith good unto us.

9. It is that which establisheth the soul to a patient expectation for ever to lie at the poole, for ever to attend the doors of the Sanctuary, till the soul can take and close with Christ by true beleeving.

But then to open unto you the way more distinctly, I would commend this course unto a person, that he may at length get a believing heart.

2. Things.

1. *Study thy natural condition thoroughly*: The right sense of this, though it doth not formally cause faith, yet it may have a compelling force to make us look after Christ, and to strive for faith.

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The *Apostle* calls the *Law* a *Schoolmaster* to *Christ*, Gal. 3. why? because it doth reveal such a smart and strong evidence of the sinful condition, that it scourgeth a man out of himself to look for a Saviour; yea, it helps much to cast the proud soul down, and to break and crush his natural bottom; which otherwise would stave off, and hinder a man from believing. Therefore study thy natural condition: O I would believe, and I would have Christ: yea, but why? what need seest thou in thy self of him? I tell you, that the more desperate the soul sees its own natural condition, the more willingly may it be drawn to apprehend, adore, and embrace its remedies and safeties.

Now there are three things to convince our selves of, about our natural condition, I meane the state without Christ.

First, the *ugly vileness* of it. That it is sinful and stark naught, it is no such thing as God doth like or approve, but his *soul* abhors and hates it. For it is compounded of nothing, but want of good, and inclination to evil to all that is opposite to God and holiness: That thou art in it, *poor*, and *blinde*, and *miserable*, and *naked*, an ignorant, opposing, unconceiving creature of any spiritual good, proud, and sensual, and vain, and earthly, loathsome and dead.

1.

Secondly, the *sure and fearful misery* of it: Thou art *without* God, *without* Christ, *without* the *Covenant*, not a drop of mercy for thee, whiles thou remain'st thus; but all the wrath of God is against thee, and thou art under the dominion of sinne, and terrible curse of the Law; all the threatnings in the book of God are ever ready to sease on thee, and how soon may they arrest thee, if God gives them commission?

2.

Thirdly, the *utter insufficiency* to deliver thy self out of this state: Thou art never able to merite the least mercy, nor to answer the great justice of God; Though thou shouldst offer thousands of lambs, and ten thousand rivers of oyle; thou art so totally broken in thy strength, that thou canst not pay a farthing, and never canst thou be a Redeemer to thy self, from thy sins, or Gods justice.

3.

Now drive and fasten these things as real and experimental truths into thy heart, till thou art *sent up under sinne*, as the

Apostle speaks, *Gal. 3.* (that is) so convinced on all sides concerning thy *natural self*, that thou art faine to fall down and cry out, *O Lord, I am unclean, I am unclean, I am unclean, a miserable wretch, a lost person for ever, unlesse thou shew great compassion to my poor soul; This condition is deadly and barren, I am full of sinne and without strength; and this condition is so fearful, that verily I will not rest in it, Men and brethren what shall I do to be saved? Is there no balm in Gilead for a wounded soul? no City of refuge for a distressed sinner? no Rock of safety for a shipwrackt person? no hope of salvation yet left for me?*

2. Then *study the hope; of a sinful soul.* Why; though thou hast been very wicked, and hast exceeded in transgressions, yet there may be hope. The Gospel; it is the *cape of good hope*, it is that which thrusts out some sight of land to a tossed sinner; It is a message from heaven, proclaiming both the hope and possibility, and also the way and method of salvation for a sinful person: Look, as the Law points out a way of salvation for a righteous and innocent man, so the Gospel doth for an offending and sinful man. Therefore study it much, take some accurate paines to be thoroughly and really informed and convinced, what Gods dispositions are therein revealed towards sinners.

Now here are two things which I would commend.

1. One is *the Study of Christ*: Study him all over, perhaps thou mayest see that in him, which may answer many, yea all thy feares. Perhaps thou mayest see so much in him as may win much upon thy heart, to come in and accept of him by faith.

Therefore peruse him well. First, that he is *God and man*, and as so, a Mediator, and because so, therefore an Almighty, and a *compassionate Redeemer*. Secondly, that it proceeds from the *love and Counsel of God* to give him to be the Saviour of sinners: God did see the fallen state and great misery of men, and his absolute insufficiency to recover himself, and therefore his own love moved him to give his *own Sonne* in whom he did ordain the salvation of sinners. Thirdly, that *Christ was willing to become a Mediator*, yea, he did freely give his life to make peace and procure salvation; and this sacrifice of his

his was both acceptable and effectual. Fourthly, that God would have thee to come unto him for life, and that Christ is the surety, and Mediator, and only hope of sinners. Fifthly, that Christ bath in him all, and enough to make up thy state, and to reconcile thee and God, and to get full pardon, and to present thee righteous, and to procure for thee eternal life. Sixthly, that Christ seeks even after thee by the Ministry of the Gospel, and both offers himself with all his purchase unto thee, and hath, and yet doth beseech thee to accept of him: I say, study these things; who knows how the great studies of Christ may be at length blessed with faith in Christ? This I am sure of, that the ignorance of the nature, and offices, and works, and benefits, and insufficiency, and marvellous affections, and readinesses in Christ is a notable strength to unbelieve; Ergo, on the contrary, the knowledge of them is a good means for faith.

2. Another is the study of the new Covenant: Why, what mayest thou not there see to draw on thy soul to Christ? yea, what arguments doth God there fill thy mouth with to conquer himself? He gives thee in that Covenant, ample and prevailing grounds by which thou mayest with an humble confidence even plead with him for Christ and faith: Thou shalt see there all thy good set freely open, that God stands not for this, nor for that, and it matters not what thou hast been, there is mercy enough for what is past, and there is grace to renew thy heart for the present, and strength for the future, and thou mayest sue out the Lord for this faith (of which we now speak) and he will surely give it unto thee.

3. Study the main hinderances of distance 'twixt Christ, and the Covenant, and thy soul. There is one thing (above all the rest) which keeps thee off, and that is unbelief: For God doth not require any other thing of thee in the entrance of Christ; but only to accept of him. He doth not say, if thou hadst never offended me, then I would have bestowed my Sonne on thee; or, if thou hadst not offended me so much, or if thou canst bring any singular nature, and excellent qualities of thine own, then I will give my Sonne unto thee, or then I will give thee leave; No, but all that he requires is this, Believe and accept of my Sonne to be thy Lord and Saviour, and I will in him give thee pardon.

Why, now brethren, ~~this~~ is the last and fore check of the match, our hearts are unbelieving, we will not condescend to this condition, but fly hovering after some unknown and devised method of our own.

4. *Study much the sinfulness of unbelief*: that it is a sinne, and a great sinne, and that in thee: What! after all sense of misery to hold off from remedy; not to close with Gods great love, as if God were not wise enough to shew thee the way of salvation, or as if he were not true, that thou dar'st not to venture and fasten thy soule and state upon his Word..

Obj.
Sol.

5. *Study well wherein the nature of faith doth consist*: Many persons seeme to complaine that they have no faith, and cannot believe: Why? they are not right in the doctrinal part of faith, they mistake faith exceedingly, thinking it to consist in a full assurance, and in a sensible taste of Gods love in Christ, and in a sensible and clear perswasion that their sins are pardoned, which, because as yet they never had, they therefore perplex themselves much about faith.

Therefore inform thy self what faith in Christ is; It is the hearty accepting of Christ upon his own conditions; if thy heart and soul are willing to accept of Christ as the only Lord to rule thee, and as the only Redeemer to save thee, and to cleave unto him for better for worse, through all the changes which may befall thee for Christs sake, why this is faith, viz. An accepting of his person, and a reposing of the soul upon him for its safety, and a cleaving to him upon all states. If thou canst finde thus much, that there is no one sinne which shall rule thee, to the love and obedience of which thou wilt resigne thy selfe, but Christ is he whom thou choos'est for to be thy Lord; And there is no Name in heaven and earth upon which thou wilt put confidence for thy righteousness and discharge, and salvation, but only in Christ. And upon him thy soul entirely and unfainedly desires to rest it self, thou hast true faith.

6. *Know this and convince thy self of it*, that thou shalt never hurt thy self, nor offend God if thou couldest believe; wherefore hath God given Christ? and wherefore hath Christ given himselfe? and wherefore is he now offered to sinners? and wherefore are we commanded to believe, if yet

yet to beleieve (that is) to accept of Christ, to consent to the acceptance of his person upon his own condition were a sinne?

7. Withal this *beg fervently of God*, that he would perswade thy heart to *beleieve* (that is) to accept of Christ to be thy *Lord and Saviour*, and to rest thy soul upon him: *No man comes to me* (saith Christ) *except the Father draw him*, Now then, *O Lord draw me*, and *I shall runne after thee*, O subdue this unbelieving heart, and give unto me the Spirit of faith, and love, and obedience.

Lastly, look for *this gift of faith* to be wrought in thee *by the Spirit of Christ in the Ordinances*, and *wait upon God there continually*. Thou shalt in time (perhaps sooner, perhaps later) finde thy soule touched, and thy feares answered, and thy soule made exceedingly willing to accept of Christ as thy Lord, and to put it self upon him as thy Saviour.

Yea, *hold on in waiting and seeking*, and thou shalt not only have Christ formed in thee, and *faith* formed in thee, but thou shalt come to know him, whom thou hast accepted and trusted.

This is a sweet and safe course for a sensible sinner, *viz.*

1. To *present up his request unto God in the Name of Christ*, earnestly beseeching him to declare this Almighty working of his Spirit in causing the heart to beleieve.

2. Then to *stand in the wayes of grant*, and come to the *Ordinances* wherein God doth *revel his arme*, and give faith, and so encline and unites the soul with Christ. What thou doest earnestly seek in a *private way*, that God doth ordinarily answer and bestow in a *publick*.

3. Then *wait and expect*, not to *limit God* just to this time, nor to this preacher, nor to cast off all confidence of answer, upon present denials, but to look up from day to day, from week to week, if at length God will give thee faith. I never reade or heard of any whole hearts were thus set; but God hath found a time to give unto them the desires of their souls: He hath replenished their souls with his *truth* and loving kindness: Therefore go on cheerfully in the use of these means.

meanes whatsoever befalls thee, yet it shall be well with thee; He that hath found Christ, cannot but say, that this way is good, and he who is thus seeking of him shall say, it was not in vaine to follow it.

SECT. IV.

Fluribly, The Objections.

NOW I proceed to the resolution of those *Scruples* which do *entangle the soul of a sinful sinner*, and *hinder him from believing*, which beget extream fears and doubts, that he may not lay hold on Christ, and that God will never bestow Christ on him, neither would he take it well of the soul to be so *haste* and forward.

Obj. 1. Why, saith the sensible sinner, my sinings have been so great, and transgressions so mighty, that I may never look up with any confidence upon the rock of salvation; nay, it is not Satan onely, but my own conscience which doth testify against me, the manifold numbers, and the high exceedings of my rebellions. I tell you, you would tremble to think of such lewdnesse whereof I have been and now do stand guilty, and the sensible consideration of them makes my heart to sink, and checks me with shame and blushing, when I think of laying hold on Christ.

Sol. For the affoyling of this Objection, consider these particulars.

1. First, the *greatnesse of sinning* should be a strong reason to compel in the soul to Christ: Great sinings are never eased, either by dispaire, or by unbelief: But two things they should cause. 1. One is *great humblings*, and sorrow. 2. Another, is *great desires, and beseechings for Christ*. Suppose a man owed his whole estate, his only way was to beg a whole discharge: suppose a man had many wounds, and deep ones too, for this reason should he go to the Chyrurgion.

Why Brethren, what would you alone do with great sinings?

nings: Can you ever discharge them? can you ever satisfie for them? Nay, do they not open unto thee thy great need of Christ, and point the way to him? 1. *God hath greater mercies then we sins.* 2. *Christ hath stronger merits, and satisfactions to the utmost.* 3. Greater sins should hasten us into the mercy-seat, the greater wounds to the Physician. 4. The greatest sinners, when humbled, have been accepted and pardoned, *Marcus, Mary Magdalene, Paul.* Some great sinners have miscarried, because they never came to Christ.

6. Hadst thou lesse finnes, wouldst thou not come in? Why then? &c.

7. The greatest sinner never miscarried by coming to Christ, and the least sinner doth, for not coming to Christ. Thy not coming to Christ bindes all thy sins on thy soul.

Thy unbelief is a worse *sin then all the rest*: and that shall appear unto thee thus.

First, it is a *refusal of all thy remedy*, as if it were a small thing to provoke Justice, thou dost now provoke mercy too.

Secondly, it is that which besides its own guilty qualities keeps *all the former guilts upon the account*: Every sin that thou hast committed heretofore, it doth keep its sting, its accusation, its force against thee if thou wilt not beleave; so that this can be neither safety, nor wisdom for thee to hold off, because of the greatness of thy sins.

Christ is a great Saviour: He is called a mighty Saviour, and the salvation in him is called, a great salvation, and the redemption in him, a *plenteous redemption*. 1 Joh. 2 1. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* v. 2. *And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

I remember, in the *Levitical Law* there were sacrifices for all sorts of sins; what did they prefigure, but the ample efficacy in the death of Christ, which was an atonement for sins of all kinds, and was, as the daily sacrifice for the expiation of the continued and augmented number of transgressions?

Why! what are thy thoughts of Christ, and of redemption in him? dost thou not know?

First, that the sinner must find his full discharge in his blood? thou must be beholding to Christ for the payment of the smallest, as well as of the greatest debt.

Secondly, That the strength and merit of Christs death exceeds the merit of all sin? where sin abounded, there grace abounded much more: If it had not, then the sinner could not have been pardoned, for then justice had not been satisfied.

Thirdly, What the extension of Christs death may be, I will not dispute; but this is clear, the intension or merit of his death, is infinite, and exceeds the greatest sins.

Why! if sins had not been great, or if the greatnesse of them did prejudice from Christ really, God would never have given so great a Saviour as Christ, the Apostle saith, *Heb. 7. that he is able to save to the utmost.* And, that he redeemes us from the law, *Gal. 4. From all transgressions*, whatsoever committed against the Law, and from all the curses of the Law against them.

Fourthly, Christ hath already answered this scruple, by giving instances of mercy to great sinners; was not David a murderer of Uriah? was not Mary Magdalene a foul sinner? was not Zacheus a griping oppressor? was not Paul a bitter and sore persecutor? were not those amongst the *Corinthians* sinners in the highest forme: and yet Christ called them; and washed them, and justified them.

Fifthly, the matter is not 'twixt thee and Christ, about the greatnesse or littlenesse of former sinnings, but about the present disposition and affection of thy soul; not what thou hast loved heretofore, but what thou wilt now love; not what thou hast followed, and served heretofore, but what thou wilt now chuse and obey. Though the *Jews* had been a *sinful Nation*, laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, corrupters of themselves, *Isa. 1. 4, 5, 6. Forsakers of the Lord, provokers of the holy one of Israel, Apostates, Revolters, putrified from the sole of the foot, even unto the head, stark naught.* Yet God comes unto them, and Articles thus with them, ver. 16. *Wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil,* ver. 17. *Learn to do well,* as if he should say, though you have been thus abundantly evil, yet now harken unto me, let your hearts be turned from sins, and bestow them on me and my service.

Object.

Object. But what shall we do for pardon of the former sins?

Sol. Why saith God, do not you trouble your selves for that, only hearken unto me, and be willing and obedient for hereafter, and as for former sinings, *though your finnes be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,* ver. 18. The same I say in this case, Christ will finde blood enough to get the pardon of sins, if thy heart would come off from sin to accept of him: I stand not saith Christ upon what thou hast been, I can easily discharge thee, only that which I require, is this, leave thy sins and accept of me. I beseech you take heed of two things, one is a *secret Pride*, that you will not be brought to be beholding to God for great pardons. Another is a *present love of sin*. This and not the former sinings prejudiceth from Christ.

Obj. But God is just and he will not hold the sinner guiltlesse, and he hath revealed his wrath from heaven against all unrighteousnesse, and therefore if I should flye to the City of refuge, yet from thence would he withdraw me, and be avenged of me.

Sol. I Answer.

1. Even this also should *constraine thee to believe*, forasmuch as by unbelief thou becomest a great rebel against the Gospel, and he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, 2 Thes. 1. 8.

2. Unless justice be satisfied, assuredly it will never spare thee, for Justice will have either thy obedience, or thy satisfaction.

But then the way to present satisfaction to Gods justice, is to believe in Christ, forasmuch as God was in Christ reconciling the world to himselfe, not imputing their trespasses.

It was Jesus Christ who performed full obedience, and endured an accursed death, to satisfy Gods justice, and this not for himself, but for the believer, and for none but for the believer.

So that there is no other way comfortably to answer justice, but by believing in Christ. For now thou hast a sure

ry one who stood in thy stead, and answered Justice for all thy sins.

3. *Divine justice will not desire a double satisfaction*: It will not require satisfaction from thee, and from thy surety too: The quarrel ceaseth 'twixt thee and God, for Christ hath by his own blood taken that up. As *Elibu* spake of uprightnesse, that I say of believing in the Lord Jesus; if thou doest, then the Lord will be gracious unto thee, and will say, *deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ranfome*, Job 33. 23. 24.

Obj. But I, who am I? so rotally unworthy; there is nothing in me to move Christ to engratiate me, he will never bestow himself on such an one as I am; will ever Christ look on such a *dead dog* as I am?

I answer to this.

7. Things.

1. *Personal unworthinesse, it is no prejudice*: You read in *Mat.*

8. 8. *that the Centurion came to Christ for his servant, and believed on him, and sped well.*

Obj.

Yea, will you say, but he was worthy? nay, he professeth the contrary.

Sol.

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: as if he should say, I have nothing in me to demerit and challenge this gracious act of thine; nothing, and yet I believe that thou canst, and wilt heal my servant: so the Prodigal, *I am not worthy to be, &c.*

2. Nay, the *humble sense of our unworthinesse, it is a furtherance*; Christ doth not expect any excellencies, and meritorious motives from thee, thou must come unto him as an empty vessel, the full soul and the sound spirit is not for him; bring a soul to Christ which is spread all over with misery and need, why such a soul is a proper object for mercy to deal with; bring a soul to Christ which is all over with lostnesse, with poverty, with sicknesse, with unworthinesse; why, this is the soul upon which Christ will look. Its never well with a man untill he can take Christ upon his knee, upon a bare knee, with an empty hand, (that is) till he be brought to be *poor in spirit*, that he is *nothing*, and deserves *nothing*, and *begs of Christ* to accept of him, *even for Christs sake*. The Lord be merciful to me a *sinner*, went home justified, when the thank God, I am not as other men, returned as he same, a *proud Pharisee*.

Yours

You shall finde it thus, that God looks most on him who looks least on himself. The humble and contrite spirits, which are broken out of themselves, and can cry out, O Lord, I am really vile, and mostly unworthy; These the high God (who inhabits the lofty places) doth behold. And Christ is ready to take him by the hand, who thinks himself unworthy to touch his feet. There are two tempers which like Christ well. One is a believing heart, and another an humble soul.

3. *Personal worthinesse is not the motive nor designed ground for faith in Christ;* The ground of belief, that which invites the soul to draw on it self to Christ, is no deserving or eminent quality in our selves, but the goodness and fidelity of the promise, and the gracious offer of Christ himself to the soul. Behold, he calls thee, why, this is enough; if thou canst finde God holding forth the golden Scepter, offering Christ unto thee, upon such and such termes, and thou consent unto them with all thy heart, thou mayest confidently close and lay hold on Christ by faith.

This is the wise skill of a Christian, truly to observe the proper rise of faith.

When God promised Abraham a son, the text saith, he did not consider his own body, Rom. 4 19. (that is) he did not consult with the strength of his own nature, what an able principle there was in himself to compais such an effect, but he was fully persuaded that what God had promised, that he was able to performe. The ability and fidelity of Gods promise exceedingly enclined his heart to believe. So is it here about faith in Christ; if thou dost consider thy own body, thy own deserts, thy own excellencies, thou shalt never beleever, for faith can finde no ground in these to encourage the soul; but the ground of faith is without our selves: Why; God offers me Christ, and Christ calls me unto him, being heavy laden, and he saith, that he, who beleieves in him, shall have eternal life. Now this is a word of truth, and this word of his is worthy of all acceptation, I will venture my soul upon it.

It is with faith as with a bird, cast him into the water he cannot flie, that element is too grosse for him, he cannot gather and beat his wings there, and therefore is kept down, but cast him into the aire, which is a more pure element; then

he can clap, and spread the wings, and mount: why, *faith* is the wing of the soul, and the promise is that spiritual element, that aire which breaths a life and motion to faith; *faith* is raised by it alone, and it is checked and hindered whiles the soul would force it to act it self upon those poor and grosse excellencies in our selves. Faith desires no better object then *Christ*, nor surer pawns then Gods promises.

Fourthly to receive *Christ* by *faith*, it is not a matter of merit, but a point of duty.

When God commands a sinner to repent, and to forsake his sinnes, and take him, he shall have mercy if he will do it: This may not now be said, *O Lord I am not worthy to obey thee in this duty*, if I were worthy to repent, I would repent; nay, but O man, *divine commands are to be obeyed*, it is thy duty to repent. So God commands the soul to believe in *Christ*, to accept of him. The soul now looks on the excellencies of the gift, but forgets the obligation of duty: Its true, *Christ* is a most excellent gift and blessing, there is not such a thing in all the world for a poore sinner as *Christ*, but then know, that his excellencies may not take thee off from thy duty; This is his Commandment, *that we believe on the Name of his Sonne*.

Brethren, you are mistaken, to believe in *Christ* being proposed unto us in the Gospel, it is not a matter of indifferency, I may, or I may not; nor is it a matter of curtesie, as if we did a work of supererogation more then God requires; nay, but it is a matter of conscience, a man sinnes he violates a command, an evangelical precept, if he doth not believe; It is not a dispute of worthinesse or unworthinesse, but it is obedience to the Command which thou art to look upon.

5. *Christ* is given out of rich grace, and mercy, and love, and therefore none can receive him but the unworthy. There is this difference 'twixt the reward of Justice, and the gift of graciousnesse; Justice hath an eye upon the disposition and acts of the person, and according unto their qualities and degrees doth it commensurate reward or punishment. But graciousnesse hath an eye only upon it self, the free bountifulesse of its own nature is the reason of its gifts and acts. Suppose that

that a King executes a malefactor, this is an *act of justice*, and findes cause in the rebellion of the offender; Suppose that a King pardons a malefactor, this is an *act of graciousnesse*, and findes its reason only in the breast of the King, and not in the worthinesse of the delinquent. Thou stand'st upon thy worthinesse, O, if I were worthy of Christ! why; but is not Christ a gift? he is often said to be *given*; yea, but is he not a gracious gift? See *Ephes. 2. 7.* *God did shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindnesse towards us through Jesus Christ:* As if he should say, if ever there were a gift free-given, it is Christ. If Christ be a *gracious gift*, then he is not bestowed on the *worthy*, but on the *unworthy*: not on him who can challenge and say, Lord there is good reason why I should have Christ, and thou shouldest do me wrong if I have him not; O no, but he is a gracious gift, and therefore the broken sinner may come in and say, O Lord, though I am *unworthy*, yet give me Christ; graciousnesse doth not expect any motion out of itself, and therefore, though in respect of my desert, shame and confusion be my portion, yet thy *gifts of grace are free*, for thy exceeding riches of grace, and mercy, and love, give me thy Christ.

If I meet an old decrepit poor beggar, and seeing misery and poverty in his face, I freely draw my purse, and say, there is a shilling for thee; O no, saith he, Sir! I am not worthy, I am a poor man and ready to starve, give it to that Gentleman yonder who is in gay cloathing, and hath thousands in his chests, for he is worthy, what a proud folly were this? why? my almes was a gracious dole, and if any man in the world had it, he had, who doth need, but doth not deserve it: So, &c.

6. *Christ is worthy your taking, though thou be unworthy of receiving,* 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* As if he should say, this is so necessary a thing so good a thing, so admirable a thing for a sinner, so meet for him to hearken unto, and to embrace. What, if the choicest Prince in the world should this day present himself to the foulest, ill-favouredst, neglected woman, one without all beauty, without all parts, without all estate, and assure her, if she will,

will consent to his termes; he will bestow himself upon her? Though she be totally unworthy to heare of such a thing, yet the person is worthy, and the acceptance of the motion is worthy, all the world sees reason enough that she should hearken. So it is, *Jesus Christ* the Prince of peace, the Lord of life, the Author of salvation comes to a sinful soul, utterly naked, and void of spiritual excellencies, over-runne with all the spots of inglorious deformities, exposed to all kindes and degrees of present and future miseries, calls and invites that soule to accept of him upon his own termes, yet that soule stands off and excepts, I am not worthy; Thou worthy, saith Christ! what do I esteem of thy worthinesse? *Not for thy sake he is known unto thee, is it that I offer myself unto thee*; not for any beautiful, or ingrating ornaments and gifts is this, but *for my own sake*. Am I worthy the receiving? if so, then accept of me: Christ hath worthinesse enough, and as our helps in the promises, draw us thither, so the treasures in Christ should do.

Obj. But you will say, Christ hath let fall a word, which tels me, that there must be a *subjective* worthinesse, as well as an *objective* worthinesse in me, as well as a worthinesse in him, *Matthew 10. 13.* If the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it.

Sol. I answer, that there is indeed a double worthinesse.

First, one of the *object*, when it is so every way excellent, and necessary, and sutable to the exigencies of a person; so Christ worthy.

Secondly, another of the *subject*, which (to restraints it now to the place alledged) is a worthinesse of judgement and affection, not a worthinesse of qualities and action. Then a man is said to be worthy, in reference to Christ, not because he hath any taking and inviting qualities, but when he judgeth worthily of the Lord Jesus, and his affections draw after him as most worthy of all acceptation.

7. Lastly, *what is that which makes thee unworthy?* It is nothing in the world but *sinne*, all the debasings of the soul are our finnes, and so, there is a twofold unworthinesse. 1. Meritorious. 2. Excluding.

But

But then, mark, two things could never be, if meer sinninge did effectually prejudice the soul with an *excluding unworthinesse*; one is, That *Christ could never have been a worthy gift*; Another is, That *faith could never have beleaved truths in Christ*; It could never take Christ as a Saviour, nor beleave in him for the sure pardon of sins, if that sinnes absolutely did involve the soul with such an unworthinesse as should for ever exclude it from partaking of Christ. O no: Though sinnes make unworthy, yet *Christ came to call sinners*; and though ungodlinesse makes unworthy, yet *Christ justifies the ungodly*.

4. *Obj.* But I am not sure that Christ is willing to bestow himself on me, or that I should lay hold on him, else I should (I think) be able to beleave.

Sol. To this I will returne two things.

1. One is clearing Christs willingnesse.

2. The order of a Christians assurance.

First, *That Christ is willing*.

I shall but light a candle to the Sunne in endeavouring to manifest the willingnesse of Christ to accept of sinners; Why? what can possibly expresse a willingnesse which is not espiable in Christ. 8. *Things.*

First, when thou wast a sinner and an enemy, yet then did Christ shed his blood and die for thee, Rom: 5. 8, 10.

Nay, he did not do this through *constraint*, but through *consent*, it was a *free-will offering*, therefore is he said *to offer himself, and so I come, and to give himself, and to lay down his life, and to pay a price*; nay, to be *straitned till it were accomplished*, Luke 12. 50.

His death was the putting of the *seal* to the bond. It ratified all the Covenant which it had not done, had not Christ been willing. Why? he knew thee long before, and *saw thee in thy blood*, before he shed his own: and had he been unwilling to have done thee any good, or that thou shouldest have received any good from him, he would never have clothed himself with such a nature, as he did assume, neither would he have anguished his righteous soul, nor have suffered such a tormenting and accursed death. Verily, if I would lay down my life for a person, this would sufficiently argue

and declare that I were willing to bestow my self on the person. So, &c.

2. Secondly, consider his many personal invitations: he hath from his own mouth both counselled and envited the poore sinner unto him. *I counsel thee to buy gold, and raiment, and eye salve, Rev. 3. 18. The Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say, come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, Rev. 22. 17. He! every one that is thirsty come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price; hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in faires; Encline your eare, and come unto me, and your soul shall live; And I will make with you an everlasting Covenant, even the sure mercies of David. Isa: 55. 1, 2, 3. Behold, I have given him for a witnesse to the people. Ver. 4. Iesus stood and cryed; saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink, John 7. 37.*
3. Thirdly, consider, he hath assured thee of acceptance: *Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out, John 6. 37. He will not shut the door against thee when he hath envited thee; but thou shalt be a welcome guest; nay, he will surely do thee good, Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*
4. Fourthly, there was never any one who did come unto him, but speed well. Thou canst not finde any one Iota of unwillingnesse, nor of his disregard, but all have found him to be a merciful High Priest, and a compassionate Saviour, who have accepted of him.
5. Fifthly, consider, that he doth still negotiate with thee: Though he be returned to the highest heavens; yet he hath dispatched *Embassadors in his Name*, to publish, and to call upon thee, and to beseech thee, *2 Cor. 5. 19. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Ver. 20. Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead be ye reconciled to God. V. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Object. If there were any hope of reconciliation (may a man reply) then I should believe.

Sol. Why, saith the Apostle, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*

Object. But if God had commanded any in his Name to publish this :

Sol. He hath committed to us the word of Reconciliation.

Object. But you may do it out of your compassion, not from a commission.

Sol. We are Embassadors for Christ, and pray you in Christs stead.

Object. But our sin will prejudice the Reconciliation.

Sol. He hath made him to be sin for us.

Sixthly, consider his marvellous patience : If he were not willing, he would never have re-inforced his suit, but would have taken the first denial. 6.

But he hath followed them, who have fled from him : He hath gone after the sinner, who hath many times turned his back, Rom. 10. 21. *All the day long have I stretched out my hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.* In this sense we may apply that of the Prophet ; *He doth wait that he may be gracious,* and yet continues his Embassadors to bring thee home unto him.

Seventhly, consider His sad complaints for thy holding off and not believing : when he came near to Hierusalem, he wept over it, and said, *How often would I have gathered thee ?* Matth. 23. 37. *And O if thou hadst known, even thou, at the least in this thy day, the things which concern thy peace,* Luke 19. 41, 42. *And why will you not come unto me ?* John 5. 40. As if you did see a tender father pursuing a rebellious childe, and working upon him by counsel and entreaties, and by hands of bounty, and he will not yet hearken, the father step to a friend, and powers out tears, O I cannot win him, I cannot turn him, doth not this shew a willingnesse ? So, &c.

Lastly, consider his Will is exhibited to us in all the kindes of willingnesse : I observe that his will may be manifested three wayes. 8.

First, in commands, and there is a preceptive will, and Christ commands thee to beleeve.

2. Secondly, in *promises*, and there is a *gracious and encouraging will*, and Christ hath promised himself and all that he hath done and suffered, if thou wilt beleeve in him.

3. Thirdly, in *threatnings*: and there is a *just and vindictive will*, and Christ hath pronounced an abiding wrath, and an everlasting death against him that will not beleeve; So that this is most clear, that Christ is most willing that a poor sinner should come in, and embrace him, and be saved by him.

Secondly, *The order of assurance.*

But then for the order of assurance, that Christ is willing.

Observe that there is a double assurance.

1. One which is *precedent*, and grounds the soul to beleeve.

2. Another is *subsequent*, and attends the soul after its beleeving. That *precedent assurance consists in a clear and convincing demonstration, that Christ is willing to be taken by the sinner.* This *subsequent assurance consists in a reflexive persuasion, that he is my Christ and Saviour, being by faith taken and accepted.*

Now if a sinner expects this latter assurance before he will beleeve, he doth preposterously and vainly perplex his soule; nay, it is an impossibility to lead on the soul this way; nay, it were a falshood and a delusion to the soul, if it had a reflexive assurance, that Christ and his benefits are mine, before the heart did by faith beleeve in him, and accept of him: I did couzen my soul with a lie, for Christ is not that mans who doth not yet beleeve on him; the ways of this kinde of assurance, is as it were the eccho of the original wayes of faith a consequent of it, but never an antecedent. For a man to solace himself, that the estate is his, before the person is his; or that the person is his, before he hath accepted of the person: Why, this is but the fruit of a vain and idle fancy. But the former assurance that is a sweet inducement unto the soul to beleeve, viz. when the soul can get three things cleared and resolved. 1. *The certainty of a Saviour.* 2. *The aliusiciency of him.* 3. *His willingness to embrace and accept of a beleeving sinner.* Now this assurance is to be drawn from the very nature, and offices, and dispositions of Christ, and from the command, and invitations, and

and promises of the Gospel; which when the soul hath thoroughly perused, and scanned, it shall clearly see and freely acknowledge, (if it wil not blasphemously suspect Gods own truths for lies) that *Christ is both an able and also a willing Saviour*, not only willing to lay down his life, but most willing that sinners should come to him and believe in him, and so find eternal life.

So that you may from this take notice of three things.

One, That *to be assured of Christ, as mine*, is no ground for to move a man to believe, but it is a *consequent of it*.

Another, that *to be assured that Christ is willing*, and ready to be mine, and to accept of me, this is a *sweet motive*, and an *encouraging ground* for the soul to believe.

A third, there is no better way to *feel the sweetnesse of Christs being willing* to bestow himself upon a man, then *by believing first on him*, for it is faith in Christ which opens to a man all his interests in Christ: And if this be sure, that Christs willingnesse prevents thine, if therefore thou be willing to accept, the very nature of the treaty and match assures thee sufficiently that Christ was ready long ago.

5. *Obj.* But then saith the sensible sinner, I am not prepared and humble enough: Christ is to *binde up the broken hearted*, but *my heart is still hard*, and *Christ is to open the prison for them that are bound*, but I am not (at least) in *sufficient bondage*, and he is to give the oile of joy for mourning, but I have no melting, nor mourning spirit, and therefore I may not believe on him, nor take him, for I am distinguished.

Sol. I shall not need to say much to this, because I have touched heretofore upon in the Exposition of *Mal. 1. 1.* yet I will touch a little at this time.

1. There is a *twofold humbling* according to a *double cause of it*. One is in the *exceeding beatings of the conscience*, with inward terrors and feares, springing from the *Power of the Law*, which quickens the conscience, and wounds it with the expresse sense of former guilt, and which presents God in all the glories and terrors of his justice, and as the great and sure avenger of an unrighteous person. When the soul is in this kinde of humbling, it is filled with exquisite sense, and exquisite torment, like a man with a burning arrow in his thigh, or like a thief hearing the sentence of death pronounced upon him by the judge. Now this *Kinde*

of humbling, though (sometimes) it may be an antecedent to faith in Christ, (for God doth many times bring a man to heaven by the gates of hell, he doth bruise, and wound, and even kill him by the terrors of the Law, and then revive him with the workings, and tender goodnesse of the Gospel) yet it may be (possibly) without any future accessse of the soul to Christ: For this, mark, that though God doth many times graciously supersede another work of conversion, to this of legall affliction, yet he may and doth many times distribute these sorrows in wrath, and they are but the testimonies of his pure and displeased justice, even in this life, to begin an hell of anguish in the conscience of a proud and daring sinner.

Another is in the tender washings and sweet bathings or warmings of the affections; when there is a fountaine of sorrow set open within the soul, giving out it self in severall streames of melting, because of sin and transgression. Now this latter is not an antecedent, but a consequent of faith in Christ, as you shall hear presently.

A man cannot rightly judge of his fitnessse to lay hold on Christ by the meer strength or measure of any legall humbling, but by the Issue and event of them.

If instead of one scold from conscience, thou shouldst now heare an hundred; and instead of one lash from conscience, thou shouldst now feel a thousand; though thy heart were broken into as many pieces as the glasse which is dashed against the wall; though thy spirits did even fry within thee, for the heat of horror, and that thou didst roare day and night for the disquietment of thy guilty conscience, yet couldst thou not confidently affirme by all this, I am now for Christ, and Christ will assuredly accept of me, I shall not misse of him.

Reasons whereof are these:

1. Because these may be Gods tokens of just vengeance on thee, meer punishments and judicial acts.

2. The soul under these may be rather taken up with the stinging guilt and feares of sin, then with the soul vilenesse, and base nature, and acts thereof (standing in contrariety to the holy and good will of a gracious God.)

3. The thus afflicted soul may cry out for Christ, meerly out of self-love, to ease the burden, but not to cure the nature, to deliver

ver it from paine, but not to heal it of the sinfull inclination.

Therefore this I would say to any *legall broken spirit*, do not judge of fitteste meerly by the strength or depth of teares; there is a threefold enough, 1. Intensive for the degree. 2. Extensive, for the time. 3. Dispositive for the efficacy; therefore do but observe what disposition attends and follows these: There be five things which if they follow upon legall humblings, may be subordinate encouragements to the heart, to put it self upon Christ.

First, if *quite driven out of ones self*.

Secondly, if *sin comes to be felt as the basest evil*, as the guilt of it hath been, found the forest paine.

A third is if the *heart* finds it self any way *loosened from the league of iniquity*; yea, and that a secret war is begun now 'twixt the soul and the sinner.

Fourthly, an *high estimate and valuation of Christ*, as the only and choicest good of my soul and hope, &c.

An *active and fervent desire to put the soul under the Government of the Lord Jesus*.

Whether thy legall humblings be great or small, long or short, more or lesse, that's not the thing; but if they be thus attended, thou mayest safely venture thy soul upon the Lord Jesus, thou mayest believe, and he will in no wise refuse thee.

3. Faith in Christ will not hinder the humblings or meltings of thy soul.

I observe when there is a Thunder clap, then there is such a hurry in the cloud, that fire flasheth out, and the cloud is brust insunder, and a mighty deluge of water is thrown down; and you may likewise observe that the Sun doth (though there be no storme) draw up and sweetly open and pierce the clouds, which thereby give down the most seasonable and refreshing showres of rain. The Law is like a Thunder-clap, it doth many times to rattle, and hurry, and vex the conscience, that inspire sighes, and feares, and teares gush out: But then faith makes the *Saw of righteousness* to arise within the soul, and nothing melts the heart more then Christ apprehended by faith.

Zach.

Zach. 12. 10. They shall look upon him whom they pierced, and they shall mourne for him as one mourneth for his onely son, and they shall be in bitterneſſe for him as one that is in bitterneſſe for his firſt-born.

For faith.

3. Reasons of it. First, *ſets the greateſt love, the ſweeteſt kindneſſe, the freeſt pardons, the readieſt acceptations; all which do even melt the heart into a river, and works the greateſt mournings.*

I doubt not but the very behaviour of the *father of the Prodigal*, brake the heart of him with more thawings and kindly mournings, then ever did his former miſery and hardſhip; O this, that though he was an ungracious ſpend-thrift, a ſtubborne childe, a lewd companion, *Luke 15.* yet *his father ſhould run to meet him*, that he ſhould *fall upon his neck and kiſſe him*, the kindneſſe of thoſe lips wounded his heart with the deeper ſenſe and judging of his own unkindneſſe. So when a ſinner ſhall by faith ſee Chriſt ſteping forward in the Goſpel, putting forth the hand to him, calling him, come, *thou haſt done evil as thou canſt*, haſt wronged my father, me, my ſpirit, my ſervants, thy ſelfe; I will get thee pardon for all, feare not, nor be diſmayed; I will take upon me the diſcharge, I will be thine, my blood thine, my righteouſneſſe thine; O, this melts the heart: thou canſt not take Chriſt, but thy heart will break, nor read thy pardon, but thine eyes will melt; what for me, Lord; yea, for thee, what after ſuch deep rebellions; yea, after all, and that moſt freely and willingly; Good Lord, how the ſoul weeps now, &c.

Secondly, *faith ſees ſin in the greateſt vilenefſe*: It is one thing to ſee ſin, *Hell-gates*, and another thing to ſee ſin (if I may ſo allude) *as Heaven-gates*, there I ſee it in its reward, which cauſeth feare, here I ſee it in its proper nature, which cauſeth hatred. When I can ſee ſin as the wrong of a righteous and holy will, as a rebellion againſt a holy and juſt Law, as a provocation of a great and holy God; as the ſpeare thruſting through the *heart of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as the baſeſt quality, and vileſt abuſe, and indignity to love, and mercy, and blood; now, now I begin to melt, to grieve, a God is wronged, a Father is wronged, a Saviour is wronged.

3. Faith melts the promiſes, and the promiſes melt the heart: Why Brethren,

brethren, our soft and mourning hearts are not first in us, and then in the promises, but first in them, and from them they come down into us. *The heart of flesh* is first in that promise, *Ezek. 36. I will take away the heart of stone, and give you an heart of flesh,* and thence it comes to the person for to fashion and mollifie his heart. But what draws the promises? Is it not faith? It is the only hand which reacheth out unto them, and receives them; whence it doth fully follow, that beleeving will be no prejudice, but a great furtherance to thy mournful humblings and softnings.

Obj. I grant it, when a man can indeed beleeve; this beleeving will much abate, and perhaps remove the actuals of an horrible stumbling; (that is) a man shall not now feel such a desperate terrifying, bitter, hopelesse anguish as before, but yet it doth open a full veine within the soul, which drops with vitall sorrows, with gracious lamentings, with hearty displeasures, with hopeful tears; and though under them the soul is not so hurried, yet it weeps bitterly, as the wife which holds the lately reconciled husband by the hand, or as the child, which is newly pardoned and embraced.

This is a truth, that faith can heale the teares of a slave, and breed the tears of a childe: It can *rebuke* the ragings of the sea, and yet continue its *flowing courses*; It can still a raging conscience, and yet beget a streame of godly sorrow; it can both *quiet a troubled spirit*, and *raise within us a soft and mourning heart*. Yea to speak plainly, a man never till then begins to mourn as a childe, till he hath faith to see God as a father, and the gracious looks of Christ (which only faith espies) they upbraid our sinings more, and no such springs of grief as they.

6. *Obj.* But I have *stood out my day*, and have *refused many invitations*, and *offers*, as, now I may not beleeve. I am sure that Christ will never regard me, because of my former proud refusals of him in his gracious offers and invitations: Now the day is gone, it is too late.

Sol. To this I answer.

1. That not only the *positive refusals*, but also the *slighting pretermissions* of the voice of the Gospel, are (undoubted) *sinful*, for if disobedience to the Law, then much more unto the Gospel.

put is very bad; no man can refuse his remedy, but he makes his wound the greater.

2. Again it is granted, the greater *kinde of refusal*, adde a greater *measure of guilt*: the refusal's of *light against light*, is a more dark condition: (that is) when a man knows the Gospel to be the voice of Christ, and to propound heaven and mercy upon the only termes, and yet he is not gathered, this is sinne in more degrees then the passing over it, then ignorance, and inobervation: againe, the more *wildly* a man refuseth his *opportunity* and invitations, this also makes the refusal more *hainous*, and calls upon the soule for greater humblings.

55 Things.

But then know,

1. That *Christ is not alwayes so quick to break off* (for ever) for *some refusals*: It is not an incapable condition, (a sealed state) if a man hath stood out against many particular invitations. This simply is not the sinne against the holy Ghost, and therefore it is pardonable, and if the sinne be pardonable, then the sinner is capable of Christ, in whom alone sin is to be pardoned.

2. *Scarce any beleever*, (who is called after the ripenessse of yeares) but *hath often refused* (before his conversion) many *invitations by grace and mercy*. It were an horrid harshnesse for any Minister to send all them to hell, who once refuse the news and tender of heaven: Nay, we see that Christ hath several seasons of conversion, some he brings home to himself at the *nights*, at the *later end of the day*, who questionlesse refused him in the *former part of the day*; nay, that *grace which doth gather a man to Christ, conquers our refusing hearts*, Ergo, meer refusing is not an eternal prejudice. It is true, that whiles I do refuse, I cannot beleieve, yet though I have formerly refused, I may yet beleieve.

There is a *double refusal* of Christ, and the invitations of the Gospel; one is *malitious*, this is *fearful*; another is *temerarious*, and this is *pardonable*: That is accompanied with a *despisefulnesse of spirit*, this depends much upon *reasonesse*, *temptations*, *inadvertency*.

Again, there is a *double refusal*; one is *total*, but *temporary*; A man doth not hearken, though Christ doth call, he will
not

not subscribe, though Christ propounds, but goes in his own way and course, yet at length with *Paul*, he may be *struck to the ground*, and yeild up himself to Christ.

Another is, *total and final*, which is an *impenitent rebellion*; A man holds out against the voice of Christ for ever, there is no hope for such a person.

2. No broken and *grieved heart for former refusals* can justly say, that it hath *stood out its day*, and it is *too late to believe*.

This is a thing of some concernment, and many are very strick in it; I will only present my thoughts amidst the crowd of conjectures.

First, how *punctual Gods day of grace* is in the offer of Christ; so that if a man doth not take it in the first moment of tender, *I think, none can tell*.

Secondly, to say of this or that particular man, that he is gone *beyond his day*, for ought I know, goes beyond our commission.

Thirdly, that *at any time* when the Gospel is published, then it ought presently to be embraced, *To day if you will heare his voice, &c.*

Fourthly, God doth not take away from a man his day *always immediately upon his first refusal*, if so, perhaps it would have been night with all the world ere this.

Fifthly, it is probable that the *day of grace* is not closed against a particular person, when *his heart begins to be broken for former refusals*: for when men out-stand this day, usually they are given up to a seared conscience, to a *reprobate minde*, to a *sensible stupidity*, and to the works of sinne with *guerdinesse*; they grow worse and worse, being not only destitute of all softning qualities, but being more hardened by the Gospel, which they refused and despised. The man who out-stands his day, is either *deprived of the sound of the Gospel*, or else he hath only the *judicial power of it working upon him*.

3. The *sense and grief of the heart for former standings out*, this, I say, *proclaimes that thy day is not set*, nay, this is thy *singular and special day*.

D. vines do distinguish of the day.

One is *General*, like the rising of the Sunne, the re-

rising and publishing of the Gospel makes a day.

Another is *special* which is like one of the twelve hours in the day, when the Spirit of God begins to make day within the heart, and Christ is dealing and secretly parling with the soul, by conviction of its former refusals, by sweet humblings and meltings for such proud and erroneous denials: That the *Prince of my peace* should be refused, that the *Lord of my life* should be refused, that the *termes of righteousness and mercy* should be refused, O how the heart judgeth, condemns rents, and afflicts it self for it; falls down at the feet of Christ, *not worthy O Lord* to look upon thee, whom I have so often undervalued. This is a special day, here's a season for thee, thou mayest go to Christ, Christ hath dealt with thee effectually, this is the acceptable time.

4. If thou *hast stood out against Christ hitherto*, thou hast therefore now the *more reason to come in*, and not to refuse the offer yet continued.

Observe two things.

First, that *former rebellions* are never taken off by *by new and continued*: For this is to make sinning much the worse; perhaps thou didst refuse Christ heretofore through ignorance, (thou didst not see his excellencies, nor thine own necessity) or perhaps through *inadvertency* or *carelesnesse*; thou didst not wisely and seriously heed that great salvation in him: But now thou art convinced, now thou seest thy refusals and carelesse pretermissions to be sinful: Why; is this the way to cure the former by adding more refusals? Didst thou well to refuse him upon his own termes? if thou didst ill then cease refusing; labour to accept of them: Thou canst never *please God* by continuing in a sin, nor *help thy self* by pleading against thy duty.

Secondly, thy *obligation* and *present duty* ceaseth not because of *former refusals*: It was thy duty to have received Christ at the first, and to this very day doth that duty lie upon thee: former miscarriages should *cause our humblings*, but they never *disannul our duties*: Why; the Gospel is yet in its revelation of Christ, and yet in its tender of Christ unto thee, and yet in commanding of thee to refuse him no more, but to hearken and to believe; (that is) to accept of Christ to be thy Lord and Saviour.

Obj.

Obj. Oh why, what should I do saith a sou^t that hath stood out?

Sol. I answer, thou shouldest *look back on thy withstandings with hearty grievings*, and shouldest presse on towards thy *duty with fervent requestings*; now lay down thy weapons, and strive to give up thy self to Christ, not to harden thy heart any longer, but beg of God day and night to forgive thy refusals, and to give thee now a heart to beleieve and to yield.

5. *Christ will accept of any man who is willing to lay down his weapons.*

Object. 'Tis true that Christ saith, *These mine enemies who will not have me to reign over them, bring them forth and slay them before me*; If a man will be still an enemy, if he will not accept of Christ to be his Lord, to govern him, then Christ will be a Judge and enemy to that man, he shall perish.

Sol. But it is as true, that if we accept of reconciliation, if we would lay aside former enmity, if we come unto Christ and cast our selves down at his feet, and give up the sword which fought against him; if we confesse our rebellions, and beseech him to accept of us into his service, and into mercy; If we heartily desire now to be the servants of righteousness, to take Christ to be our Lord, and to serve him alone, assuredly he will not refuse us. Therefore, if any here this day have their spirits entangled with this scruple, that they now have refused Christ, and are past their day, but withal they finde their hearts bleeding for this, and they do now judge of Christ as the *chiefest of ten thousands*, and it is the desire of their souls to be reconciled, and to put themselves under the government of the Lord Jesus, I say unto such, fear not, come and accept of Christ, he will be reconciliation to thee; Though thou hast been an enemy, yet if now thou wilt accept of the termes of peace, the Son of peace will certainly accept of thee.

• 7. *Obj.* Yet the sensible sinner is not satisfied for all this, I am afraid, Why? because I finde not only former *guilt* in a manifold number, but *present corruptions in exceeding strength*, no man living hath an abominable heart as I, surely the Lord Jesus will loath me, and depart from me, a sinful wretch, I

cannot think otherwise, how then should I believe?

Sol. For some resolution of this scruple, observe a few particulars.

First, the *sense of the strength of sinne* is no *unhopeful symptom*, nor prejudice to faith. Of all tempers, the *hardned* is most dangerous, and *sinne* hath the *greatest strength*, where there is the *least sense*: A man seems to be nothing else but a lump of sinne, when he is so wholly leavened and sowed, that not a part in him can reflect upon it self, and feel its filthinesse; where the guilt of sinne is no burden, and the nature of sin is no trouble, that soul is in an ill case.

But the sense of the strength of sinne imports something else in the soul besides sin: When the patient is deadly sick, he saith he is well and feels no paine, but when a patient is recovering, he is full of sense, and complains his head is weak, his stomach sick, his bones lame, all is amisse. There is more hope of one sensible sinner, then of a thousand presumptuous and hardned wretches; And God seldom or never gives a man a sense of Christ, who hath not had first a *sense of his sinfulness*.

There is a double *sense of sinne*.

1. One is merely *judicial*, which is the feeling of the guilt of sinne when God awakens the conscience to apprehend its former sinnings, and imprints some degrees of wrath upon it as the fruits of guilt; and now the sinner is broken and crushed, for he feels a kinde of hell in himself for his former sinnings.

2. Another is *more than judicial*; It is something more grievous, and that is, when a man doth not only feel the guilt of sinne as pressing, but the nature of sinne as an oppressing burden; He sees and feels the inclinations and motions of his heart as most repugnant to the will and glory of God, and therefore is exceedingly afflicted and disquieted: This now is an admirably hopeful Symptome.

Secondly, *Unbelief is no cure to the strength of sinne*: whether thou conjecture the *strength of sinne* to consist in *hardnesse of heart*, Why, *unbelief* will never soften thee; or whether thou conjecture the strength of it, to consist in the *approbation of sinne*; Why, *unbelief* will never condemn and disapprove it;

or whether thou conjecture (though not rightly) its strength to consist in meere inclinations; why? why *unbelief* will never alter them; or whether thou thinkest its strength consists in frequency of actions or motions; why, *unbelief* will never remove or lessen them; or whether thou thinkest its strength consists in commands and power, why, *unbelief* will never conquer them.

Unbelief is a sin in itself, and therefore can be no cure of sinne, (for no hing cures the sinner, but that which is contrary unto sin :) Nay, *unbelief* keeps off the soul from its cures; from its helps; the help of a sinful soul is in heaven, but *unbelief* knows not the way upward, the heart of *unbelief* will depart from the living God.

Thirdly, *Christ* is a Physician for a sick sinner, and he hath said, that *the whole need not the Physician, but the sick*. Why? The sick person is no unfavourable object or present for a Physician, his calling is to heale distempers and sicknesses; and thou mayest confidently go to *Christ* to have thy sick soul healed. We cannot brethren, we cannot, and *Christ* knows it well enough, we cannot come to *Christ*, but we must be beholding to him for two things, One, his *merits* to get our sins pardoned; Another is *his Spirit*, to get our sinful natures changed. And therefore *Christ* is appointed of God, not only to be Redemption, but also to be Sanctification; as he is the Author of salvation to us, so he is the Author of Sanctification in us; We cannot come to him and bring good natures; O no, the grace which we want, is in *Christ*, in our Head, as water in the Spring, and from *his fulnesse* must we receive grace for grace. None can change that vile heart of thine but *Christ*; *His wings are healing*, and to him art thou appointed to come as the sick person to the Priest in the Levitical Law.

The Covenant of grace (you know) is an undertaking, not only for pardon, but for changing, and all the Covenant is made good in *Christ*: As if God should say unto a sinner, I know thou art a guilty person for well, and besides that, thou hast a filthy and abominable nature, but go to my Son, accept of him, there is thy pardon in him, and there is thy change in him, he shall justify thee from thy guilt, and he shall sanctifie thy nature from its vile corruption.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *Jesum* will not loath thee because of thy sinful nature, but will help thee because thou art a sick person. Remember it for ever, the more vile thou art in thine own eyes, the more precious thou art in Christs opinion; I never read of any person who came to Christ, thou Lord heale me, but he was sent away cured.

Fifthly, *What doest thou think of beleeving?* what is thy opinion of faith? what? as if faith were an enemy or hinderance to holinesse? That it will either increafe, or suffer lewdnesse in the heart? far be it from thee so to think; O no. Faith is the singular way of encreasing and getting all grace to thy soul, it deals altogether with holy principles, God, Christ, the Spirit, and with *holy wayes*, the Word, the Sacraments; Faith engageth all the goodnesse and strength of heaven for thy change, and for the renewing and subduing of thy sinful heart. *Rom. 6. 14.* *Sinne shall not have dominion over you*, saith the Apostle, and why? *for ye are under grace*: Mark it, *under grace* (that is) under a *gracious Covenant*, wherein God and Christ have engaged themselves to their ayd and strength; yea, but what makes us to be under this grace? Verily it is faith in Christ, in whom all grace is ensured to the soul.

Nay, if thou couldest, by faith accept of Christ to be thy Lord and Saviour, now mightest thou confidently go unto him to expresse the vertues of his Sovereignty and goodnesse to thee; Now mightest thou plead with him for the excellencies of his Spirit; Lord Jesus, I have bestowed my self on thee, and thou didst invite and assure me, that thou wouldest be, not only righteousness, but sanctification also unto me, I beseech thee, send forth the rod of thy Scepter, the *vertues of thy grace*, and change by thy *holy Spirit* this unholy heart of mine, *subdue mine iniquities*, cast down every imagination exalting itself against thee, bring into captivity (O my soul desires to) be captivated to thee, yea, by the) every thought, &c.

There is a pregnant difference 'twixt *presumption* and *faith*, *presumption* is but the birth of an idle fancy, like a dreame of great matters, which yet hath no real bottome, but only flies out of a multiplying imagination which is full of deluding acts.

But *faith* conjoynes the soul with a lively principle, with a
true

true fountaine of grace with a root of holinesse, even with Jesus Christ himselfe, without whom we can never be made holy, and by whom (being *ingrafted into him by faith*) we shall be sanctified throughout.

Look as the *defiling qualities of our nature* are first in Adam, and then in us his posterity, so *changing and sanctifying qualities* are first in Christ, the second Adam, and from him derived to us his members.

And then know that there is not such a *Ligament* to tie us in *Union with Christ*, as *Faith*, nor is there any such instrument to draw out the vertues of Christ into the soul as faith.

You read of those in the Gospel who brought *diseased bodies to Christ*, and yet when they believed, they went away with *cured and healed tempers*; what doth this intimate unto us, but that the sensible sinner weary of his sinful nature, should make his addresse unto the Lord Jesus for cure, and health; and that he should by faith accept of him, and trust upon him for the healing of his soul, and the subduing of his sins, and then verily you shall finde *virtue to come from Christ*, raising a greater hatred of sin, war with it in the very fountaine, watching and praying against it, and the power of the ordinance successively weakening and crucifying the power of sin.

Lastly, know this *that the time of contrariety is the time for faith to work*. When a man sees *death*, then is it the time for faith to believe *life*? When he sees the *grave*, then is it the time for faith to believe a *resurrection*; when he sees guilt, then is it the time for faith to believe *pardoning mercy*; when he sees himself a sinner then is it the time for faith to believe a *Salvour*; when he sees strong corruptions, then is it the time for faith to believe *great grace*; when he sees great discomforts, then is it the time for faith to believe *strong consolations*; the *exigences of sense*, and the *relieves of the promises* are quite contrary; what I feel is one thing, what God doth promise is another thing. That which the patient observes in himself, is sicknesse; and that which he hopes for in the medicine is health. Hath God made thee sensible of thy sins, dost thou finde thus much, that al that thou canst do will not become a rebuke of corruption, thou art able now to see the strength of thy sinfull nature, but to remove it thou art utterly

unable? Why, what is now to be done? truly, as in the sense of the guilt of sin, we must then flye by faith to God, and put our soules upon his free mercy for pardon, so in the sense of the filthy strength of sin, we must to heaven by faith, and put our soules on Gods faithful promises in Christ, for the healing and subduing of it. This is the way, and therefore strive to walk in it, you may try other waters, but they shall not help you, and perplex your own thoughts, but they shall not availe you, the cure of the sinful soul is only in heaven, and it is faith only which can lift up a soul to God and Christ, which puts it into the Boole. When sin is felt, then let faith work; If thou canst finde any one promise which God hath made of sanctifying and healing, and subduing; Why, here's ground for faith; yea, for thy faith, for in these promises are the cures of thy sinful nature, and faith it is which will apply the healing medicines to thee.

8. *Obj.* Yet I am not satisfied, saith the sensible sinner and fearfull soul; Why, Because, First, *I cannot finde an heart to duty*, to pray and seek of God, and surely if God did purpose and mean any good to me, he would in some measure frame, and encline, and excite my heart towards him. Secondly, yea, and againe, though I do sometimes seek and entreat, yet I observe that what I was, that I am, nothing comes of it, how then can I, may I, should I be endued to believe?

Sol. Here are two sore and real scruples which do indeed vehemently beat upon a sensible sinner, I shall endeavour to assoyle them successively.

1. I cannot finde an heart to any duty, to pray for faith, &c.

I Answer.

1. As the inability to *holy duties* depends on *natural corruption*, so the *indisposition towards them* depends exceedingly upon *unbelief*: There is nothing disheartens a man more towards God then it: For besides this, that unbelief in its own nature is a departure from God, (it is a bias drawing the soul downwards.) This also is true of it, that it *represents God to the soul in all the appearances and methods of discouragements*. It makes the soul to see nothing in God, or from God, which might encline it to him: O, faith unbelief, there is such *boldnesse* and *purity* in him, that he will never endure there

there is such truth and justice in him, that he will surely be avenged of thee.

There is such *strength and power in him*, that he will certainly meet with thee, and lay load on thee: There is, I confesse, a *mercifulnesse in him*, but alas his tender bowels of compassion, his ready forgivenesse extends not to thee; there are many sweet intimations in his promises, but they concern not thee; there is a *mighty salvation in Christ*, and powerful intercession to ingratiate some persons and their services, but what of this to thee? He is a *God hearing prayer*; yea, but he will not regard the cries nor tears of some, but their *Sacrifices are an abomination unto him*: And thus doth unbelief set up God utterly against the soule, so that the poor soul conceiving of God as an enemy, dares not come near it, flies off it, is even afraid to speak to him; It is perswaded by unbeliefe, that God will frowne upon all that is done, whereupon the spirit sinks, the affections are flatted; I have no minde, nor heart, am like a lump, a stock, a stone.

Secondly, *it is faith which will fetch up the soul*, Psal. 27. 13. *I had fainted, unlesse I had beleaved to see the goodnesse of the Lord, &c.* As if he should say, my spirits were even breathing themselves out, I was even sinking down, giving up all, unlesse I had beleaved, but that confidence of Gods goodnesse towards me, that did put life into me, that did fetch me again, that did put heart into me.

2.

You see now the spring is coming on, that those (seemingly) dead branches of the trees, they begin to thrust out some hopeful sprourings, and put on another colour of freshnesse, why? because the root is now more fed and warmed. It is faith which will put colour into our faces, and spirit into our hearts, and life into our duties.

For,

1. *Faith sets open the mercy-seat*: It represents God to the soul in all his attributes of graciousnesse, not as an hard ty. of it. rant, but as a good God, willing to give audience to the humble requests, and suit of a poore sinner: Nay, willing to dispatch, and grant his requests: *What is thy request*, said *Abasuerus* to *Queen Ester*, *it shall be granted thee, &c.* So saith

1.

the Lord, What wouldest thou have of me? Is it *mercy*? I do promise it unto thee; Is it *grace*? I promise that unto thee; Is it *strength*? is it *comfort*? is it deliverance? whatsoever it be, if thou beleve on me, I will not fail to give to thee. Nay, I will do it freely, nay, cheerfully, with all my heart, and with all my soul. *Jer. 32.*

Yea, this makes the soul to come unto God, as the ship into the haven with full speed, and stretched sailes: O the soul bends the knee with cheerefulness, when it sees it shall be raised up with kindnesse; a man may have some heart to pray, when he knows, *My God will hear me*, that God hath a readinesse to answer.

2. *Faith sets the soul in the prevailing wayes*: it puts the soul to seek and pray with such motives, as it is most sure shall make it so speed.

There are many motives which men take to prevaile with God; O, they can do nothing, God regards them not, the strength of a mans excellencies, of his own worthinesse, of his own abilities and frame, alas, *these are not the prevailing and kind'g motives*, all these import that thou wouldest speed for their own sake. But *faith* layes these aside, it hath motives from Gods own heart and mouth, with which it teacheth the soul to urge God, the Name of Christ, the gracious goodnesse of God himself, the fidelity of his promises, his own word; Now God hath said, that these shall prevaile with him, and faith knows it to be infallibly so, and hereupon drawes on the soule with marvellous cheerefulness to seek the Lord.

3. Know this, that no man shall in good earnest set upon God for faith, and other grace, but Satan will set upon his heart, and his heart will set against his wayes in this. This were a wonder indeed, if a man could get into Christs armes without any more ado: That he should instantly have an heart (in all imaginable respects) sweetly and totally framed with the strength, and un-interrupted gales of heavenly inclinations and performances. Alas! poor soul, thou must by *weak faith* fight hard to get *strong faith*, and thou must by *any duty* make way for clearer duty: well is it with thee, if instead of words, thou canst sometimes seek God with *figts*, and when sighes faile,

faile, if yet with *groanes and desires*. When thou wouldest do good, thou shalt finde evil present with thee; when thou feelest an heart to pray, perhaps even that motion is almost struck out by another heart in thee, which is most unwilling to pray; when thou feelest any climblings of thy soul by faith in thy heart, even these will be opposed by strong doubtings and suspicions by another heart of unbelief within thee. Nevertheless remember this, that this particular opposition being resisted, disliked, bewailed, doth only declare that there is in thee, that which is contrary to thee, and that *Satan dislikes thy way*, it doth not testifie that *God dislikes it*, or will not accept of thee.

If God hath given unto thee any desires towards him, O cherish them as one would a spark; The beginnings of a Christian are in much weaknesse, and manifold distractions and oppositions, but *there is a God* who gave unto thee those breathings, and can understand secret groans; and there is a Christ, who can and will make weak services acceptable, and in time will give the *victory* after the combate.

Secondly, *Many seekings, but nothing comes of them.*

This doth exceedingly distract the soule, *the un/sensible alteration of the soule after many seekings*, usually raise a prejudice against God and our selves, but for this observe some particulars.

1. The efficacy of *seekings*, consists not in the quantity or number, but in the quality and manner. Have you offered unto *one Sacrifice and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?* Amos 5. 25. So I say, hast thou offered prayers unto God in these many dayes of thy distresses? nay, thou hast come before him *with words*, but not with prayers.

What? thinkest thou that the Lord is pleased with all thy teares, and with all the humblings of thy Spirit, and with all the importunities of thy requests, whilst under them all, thou doest not stick to tell God to his face that he is a *dissembler*, and *liar*? In all these thy sacrifices and approaches unto the great and high God, thou didst not believe any one promise which he hath made, thou hast thought that God would not do thee good; and is it likely that thou shouldest speed well at his hand, who reproachest the true and faithful God?

Obj. I do indeed pray, because I must, I am commanded, but I verily beleve it is in vaine; tush, what tell you me o' Gods promises, he will never perform them to me?

Sol. Good God! what, shall the Lord not only command by a righteous word, but assure and invite by a good and faithful word, a word is true as truth it self, and is it but a tush with us? is it not o' any more account with us? nay, not of so much account as the word of a poore man? No marvel that nothing comes after many seekings, such seekings of pride and unbelief, infidelity, for the pardon of which I advise thee to speed up many more seekings of faith.

2. Right seekings shall alwayes come to something; Though the proud and impatient persons said, *It was in vaine to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord?* Mal. 3. 14. Yet God assures them, that the day should come that they should returne and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not, Ver. 18. Sweet is that place of the Prophet *Esaiah*, *Mine Elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands*, Isa. 65. 22. *They shall not labour in vaine, nor bring forth for trouble*, Verle 23. *It shall come to passe, that before they call, I will answer, and whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear*, v. 24.

And the reason is, because God is faithful who hath promised, and he will never suffer his truth to faile. If there be any good thing which he hath commanded thee to pray for, and which he hath undertaken for thee in his promises, and which thou dost humbly sue out in the name of Christ by faith; I say, rest upon it, it shall be given to thee if thou canst but wait on God in the use of the means.

3. There is a double answer to the seeking of the soul, one is real, another is sensible: As when a request is presented to the King, either for pardon or settling; if he accepts of the request and puts his seale to the authorizing of the grant, the request is really done though (perhaps) the petitioner knows it not: So it is with the Lord many times in his answerings; he doth the things really for us, though we be not presently sensible of it: we beg for mourning hearts, and for hearts to hate sinne, and for hearts to pray unto him, and then we feel our hearts

hearts hard, and our corruptions bursting forth upon us, which makes our hearts bitterly to grieve, and stirres up extreme loathings of our vile natures, and causeth the soule to lie groveling with most striving and fervent importunities at heaven gate; Why, here are now the very things that we would have, yet we are not many times sensible that these things are answers.

4. We must distinguish 'twixt *nothing absolutely*, and *nothing comparatively*. Why, it is true, that the Holy heart hath such an extreme abomination of sinne, and such an high thirst of grace, that the present answers from heaven seeme as *nothing* (that is) there is yet something more and more which I would have, the present grants are not satisfying of my desires, yet *something is got* by every faithful seeking; there is not one faithful prayer, which thou hast dispatched to heaven, but it delivers thy message, and is returned with a blessing.

Either it gets more additions to some grace or other, or more alienation from some sinne or other, or more disposition to some duty or other, or more resolution to seek, or more strength to wait. Like the many Bees which go out, every one comes home with some thing, one with honey, another with wax, so every faithful prayer flies up to heaven and gathers something or other from the good promises, and though not *so much* as thou desirest, yet alwayes more then thou deservest, though not *so much* as to satisfy, yet as to help.

5. Suppose that yet you are not answered, it is then a sinne to murmur and quarrel, but it is thy duty to wait.

I observe this,

1. That God never gives thee so large an almes, but that thou needest the next houre to become a farther Petitioner.

2. That God is pleased to make the beggar to stay sometimes at door; he doth not alwayes presently give what he intends certainly to bestow, but as his own free grace is the treasury of our gifts and supplies, so his own wisdom is the dispenser of the time and season.

Now then, as the goodnesse of the promise should draw us to holiness, so the fidelity and certainty of it should cause us to wait

wait and expect: God doth give thee leave to *urge him*, but he likes it ill to *hasten him*; if God doth promise, then it is thy duty to believe, and if he stayes, then it is thy duty to wait, for *God doth wait that he may be gracious, and blessed are all they that wait for him.*



CHAP. XVII.

Of living by faith.

Use 5.



Having formerly shewed unto you what it is to beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and earnestly pressed upon you to get faith in him. I now proceed to another Use, which (supposing that by this time you have attained unto faith) shall be to excite and perswade you then to live by that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved, there be two offices of faith.

One is to breed *conjunction* and *acceptance*, and this is done when the heart is upon good, and choise, and deliberated grounds effectually inclined to consent and take whole Christ upon his own terms.

Another is to breed *dependance*, and this is done when the beleeving soul makes continued use of that fulnesse and vertue which is in Christ touching the continued exigencies of its state and condition in this life. As it is with a woman, she first gives her consent, and becomes a wife, and then being a wife, she looks upon her husband as the onely person to supply her; direct her, comfort her, provide for her and hers.

So is it with faith, first it doth espouse the soule to Christ, it takes him as Lord and husband, and then it casts all the provisions of the soule upon him, all the supplies and helps, it trusts on him for righteousness, on him for pardon of sinnes, on him for grace, on him for strength,

strength, on him for comfort, on him for eternal life, &c.

Now because this is a point of singular consequence, give me leave therefore (and it matters not, if now and then I make a little digression) to unfold these particulars, that you may the better understand and be assisted, how to use that faith in Christ, which you have to live upon him by it.

1. What it is (in the general) to live by faith.
2. To what *states* the life of faith may extend.
3. What it is more particularly to live by faith on Christ.
4. What *arguments* and *endowments* I have to presse, not only the *getting* of faith, but also the *living* by faith on Christ.
5. In what particulars the *Believers* should live by faith on Christ.
6. What things *oppose* the life of faith.
7. *Tryals*, if so that we live by faith.
8. What *good helps* may be found out to assist, and more and more to *encline* and *enable* the *believing heart* still to live by faith.

If any other profitable and pertinent enquiry may hereafter fall in for the better information and direction, besides those particular heads which I have now propounded unto you, you shall have a view of them likewise, but for the present I can think of no more: Now the God of mercy, and Father of all consolations, direct and blesse their deliveries so unto you, that you may not only have that *precious faith*, but *live by faith*, nay, and *die in faith*, and so receive the *end of your faith*, even the *salvation of your souls*.

SECT. I.

Quest. 1. **W**Hat it is (in the general) to live by faith.

Sol. I will not now stand on the several kinds and sorts of life, viz. That there is a life of vegetation which the trees and plants do live, and a life of sense, which the beasts and cattle do live; and that there is a life of reason and knowledge which man doth live; and that there is a life of faith which the Christian either doth, or should live.

Neither will I stand upon the opposition 'twixt the living by faith, and living by works; one being a legal life, and upon our selves; the other being an evangelical life, and upon Christ.

Nor now of that opposition 'twixt the life of faith and the life of sense, the one being a life in hand, the other in promises; That depending upon our eye; this upon our ear; (that is) sense dwelling on what it can see, and faith on that good word which it doth hear.

These things being passed over, I conjecture, that to live by faith, may be thus described.

To live by faith, what.

It is an heavenly and durable committing of our whole persons, and of our whole affairs unto God; with a most depending upon his faithful and good promises in Christ; for such able and seasonable supplies in all our exigencies, occurrences, and changes whatsoever.

Here are divers things observable.

First, to live by faith, is to commit all to God: It is as it were to intrust him with our selves and ours: *Utrum* (saith Paul) whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, 2 Tim. 1. 12. As if he should say, I have put my very soul and life into the hands of Christ, who I know will look to it, take care of it for ever. David makes this to be the putting of our selves under God, as our Shepherd, Psal. 23. 1. and as our Keeper, Psalm. 124. 5. Mark this; a man lives not by faith when he undertakes to be himself, the Lord of himself, or a God to himself, when he

he trusts to his own heart, or will subsist by his own arme, or when he puts his confidence in any arme of flesh. O no, *faith gives God the honour of our beings and saviours*, and resignes up all to be, and to be disposed as the Lord pleaseth; If he will have me to enjoy, well; if to want, well; if to abound, well; if to be abased, well; I would be as he would have me to be, and I would be estated as he would have me to be estated; If he thinks good to bestow a faire estate upon me, I desire to be *humble* and *thankful*; If he thinks good to limit me to a meane estate, I desire to be *humble* and *contented*; If he keeps me in a free condition, I desire to *love him*; if in a perplexed condition, I yet desire to *fear* and *serve him*: though I would be careful and diligent, yet I would not be anxious and vexing; I dare to trust him with my soul, to preserve, sanctifie, uphold, comfort, save it; I trust him with my *body*, to preserve, enable, change, and dispose it; I trust him with my whole *estate*, to give it, alter it, increase it, lessen it, keep it; *Blesse it*, as may make most for his glory and my good.

Secondly, To live by faith, is to depend upon God for all. You all conjecture, That

First, God is an *all-sufficient* goodnesse, he is goodnesse in selfe; And whatsoever good the creature is capable of, or doth actually participate, he is the sole cause thereof; meanes which be next at hand and neare our eyes, are but pipes and Rewards, but God he is the fountaine and Lord.

Secondly, he hath put all Covenant good for his servants in *so promises*. The promises are nothing else but a deed of gift, sealed with the truth of God: There hath God freely undertaken whatsoever belongs to grace or glory; to this life, or to that which is to come; dost thou want this or that, Why, whatsoever is fit for thee to have, that I promise in the Name of my Sonne to give unto thee, saith God.

Now to live by faith, is to cast anchor at heaven gates, it is to cast the soul upon Gods promises in Christ; to rely on God for any good which God hath promised, and undertaken, this I want, and this God hath promised; he hath under-

taken the supply, and I will trust upon him for it.

Though I feel no such thing; nay, though I feel the contrary, yet I do not cast away my confidence: *Though fig-trees blossome not, though olives faile, and bindes are gone*, yet if my supply appears in any word of promise, I take heart and say, yet my condition is good, all is well and sure; My God hath undertaken it for me, and in his Word will I trust, which is good and true, he will not faile me, I shall have whatsoever is good, and that too in a good time: This only in general.

SECT. II.

Quest. 2. **T**O what states the life of faith may extend.

Sol. You know that there are two eminent states of our life.

1. One is *spiritual*, which respects all the exigencies, varieties, windings, turnings, changes, defections, eclipses, trials, and hardships of the soul: Whatsoever accidents may befall an holy soul about the heavenly condition, that appertaines to the spiritual state; all the supplies of grace, of strength, of comfort, of assurance, of assistance against temptations, corrections, troubles, all enlivements and quicknings of the Spirit about all sorts of duties and services, active or passive.

2. Another is temporal, which is not onely the terme of our natural breathings, but also the sundry and manifold occurrences which befall us in the employments of our life; all the accidents, and interruptions, crossings, checkings, contrarieties, either in our bodies, or calling, or wealth, or persons, or children, or servants, or good name.

Briefly, the temporal state comprehends all whatsoever may weaken; or wast, or distract: All or any of our temporal contentments, delights, desires, ends; as also all our temporal supplements for the being, or well-being of this poore and short life of ours, as health, strength, friends, food, li-

liberty, estate, peace, and quietnesse, &c.

Now then living by faith extends to both: *The just shall live by his faith*, said the Prophet, Hab. 2. 4. of the Jews in the temporal state; and, *I live by the faith of the Sonne of God*, said Paul in Gal. 2. 2. speaking of his spiritual state.

So that faith bears up soul and body, and is both for heaven and earth: It serves to fetch in the blood of Christ, the redemption by Christ, pardon of sinne, Gods favour, all grace and comfort to the soul: And it serves to fetch in al-to health to the body, riches to the estate, plenty, peace, friends, what not? When I am sick, I yet trust in God for health, when poor, I yet trust on God for sufficiency, when under reproach, I yet trust on God to clear my innocency, when under discomforts and forsakements, I yet trust on God for favor and countenance: In all my distresses and reproaches, I have yet his Word for my supplies and helps, upon which I rest, and thus I live by faith: so far as the promises extend, so far doth living by faith extend.

SECT. III.

Quest. 3. **N**OW more particularly *what it is to live by faith on Christ.*

Sol. I will tell you what I think of it, *to w. an holy work and course of a beleeving person, wherein he doth depend on Christ, and make use of him for all the conditions and exigencies of the soul about its spiritual state.*

To live by faith in Christ.

For the opening of this description, I will touch upon three things.

1. The particular conditions and exigencies of the soul by reason of which it hath need to live by faith. Three things.
2. The fulnesse and finesse and fidelity of Christ, for the supply and help of a beleeving soul.
3. The conjunction of both these together, which is the very living by faith on Christ.

First, the particular conditions and exigencies of the soul: you must know this, That to live by faith presupposeth two things on our part, defect and insufficiency.

There is something lay upon us which should not, and we cannot help our selves, and therefore we go abroad by faith; this is to live upon the market.

Now there are many things which lay upon our souls.

1. The *sense of guilt*; this is a great matter, it makes the very heart oftentimes to tremble; it is an heavy burden when a man sines against an holy and just God, the least of them provoking and damnable. This is a time of trouble, for a man sees much in debt, and nothing in stock, he is not able to pay a farthing, altho' he is br'and'd, can never answer divine Justice. This is one exigence now which makes a man capable to live by faith, to look out to Christ, and to try what he will do for him, a miserable sinner, as you shall heare anon.

2. The *sense of unrighteousnesse*. Why, God requires an holy conformity to his divine will, in heart, and in life, that our nature should be as he requires, and our wayes as he commands, but when the soul is able actively to reflect on it selfe, and look on God, and then to compare what it is and hath done, with what it should be, and should have done; It is amazed at its own unrighteousnesse, and this is much increased, for it knows that no *unrighteous person shall go to heaven*; It knows that God will not pronounce unrighteous judgement; He will not acquit a man as righteous who hath not righteounesse, nor shall he ever stand in judgement before him. Now this is another exigence which puts the soul upon the life of faith.

3. The *times of desertion*, when all the comfortable evidences of the Christian state are drawn off, as it were, when the Lord confines himselfe and all to his promise: The poor soul hath no spark of comfort, hath no glimpse of divine favour, if it can finde God to be his God, and Christ to be his Christ in the promises, well and good, but there is no feeling, nor handling any sensible tokens. This is another exigence.

4. The *times of contrariety*; when the Sunne seemes to be darkened, and when mercy seemes to be angry, and when fidelity seemes to cast off, when mercifullnesse seemes forgetful, God seemes not to regard us, but to fight against us, and Christ who did call to us to come unto him, doth seem to go away from us.

O this

Other is a strong exigence of the soule, and if ever, now must it live by faith.

5. The *time of weaknesse*: when a man sees that his work is great, and his strength is small, duties many, power little, affections dull, not able to do for Christ, not able to suffer for Christ, cannot pray, hear, receive, obey as he should, as he would. This is also an exigence of the soule wherein it needs to live by faith on Christ.

6. The *times of corruption*: when a man feels sinne afresh, he had thought sinne had been dead long ago, and all conflicts had been past, but now he perceives sinne to rise like an armed man, and like a flood, even ready to beare down the soule with that hideous insolency, and violence of wicked thoughts and inclinations; yea, so great is this storme, that as they said to Christ in another case, so here, *Master help, or else we perish*.

7. The *times of temptation*, which like a crosse winde, beares the ship almost under water. The gates of hell seems to open themselves against the soule, and the powers of darknesse fall in upon it with all the cunning of unbelief, and excitation to blasphemy. To deny God, to slight his Word, to let go our confidence in Christ, so that the poore soule is almost brought to duff and death by reason of them. This is also another exigence for the soule to make use of Christ, and to live by faith.

8. The *times of contradiction*: when the mouths of wicked and foolish men, like sharp rasors, wound and cut off a mans good Name; when their hands, like claws of Lyons, reare away the prey, they take away the innocency of the upright, and the estates, liberties, friends, all the earthly encouragements of the righteous. I say, this may also be an exigence, for the soule to live by faith in Christ, and to make up all in him alone.

2. Now, as he who lives by faith is (in the acting of that life) still sensible of some, one of these exigencies or straits of his soule; so in the second place he must be able to behold a suitable fulnesse in Christ. He must know two things.

First, that Christ hath enough in him to answer all these.

Secondly, that *Christ is appointed of God, and willing to do it*; therefore I pray you remember.

First, that *Christ hath enough in him to answer all the exigencies of the soule*: Thy soule cannot be cast on any sea, but he is there as a sure ship and harbour; It cannot be cast upon any streight or trouble whatsoever, but Christ is able to relieve it.

1. For the sense of guilt: Why, in this, there is that in Christ which can take it off: *His blood is good payment*, and it was shed for the remission of sins; He can make perfect peace, and satisfy to the utmost: As the least sinne needs his merit, so the greatest doth not exceed it: If Christ would but offer up his soul for thine, his merits for thy trespasses, his precious blood for thy bloody crimes; Why, God will be pacified, for his blood is the blood of agreement of reconciliation, of blotting out, of peace &c.

2. So for *unrighteousnesse*: Why, there is that in Christ which can present the righteous unspotted, unblameable; which can present thee glorious without spot or wrinkle, as the Apostle speaks *Eph. 5.*

He can finde an ample garment without any rent, an obedience which was perfect, which God will accept, for which he will justify thee; Though *thine own righteousness* (for matter of judicial Justification) be as filthy rags.

3. The like may be said in a proportion to all the other exigencies. Though thou be weak in grace, feeble in duty, yet he can make all grace to abound, and he can strengthen the feeble knees, and he can comfort the mourning spirit, and he can open heaven againe: He can open thy eyes that thou shalt see thy God again; yea, and as thou hast done formerly, as thy God, yea, he can conquer the busiest corruption, and put by thy strongest temptation, and stand by thee in the bitterest opposition.

2. Nay, and Christ is both appointed of God to be, and do all this for the beleever, and is very willing. He is made unto us of God, (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 1. 30.) *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*: therefore is he called the *horn of salvation*, the *Justifier of his people*, the *Standard to which we should reape*, the *strength of them that trust in him*, in a word,

word, he was invested a Mediator with his triple office, of Priest, and Prophet, and King; to be, and to do all this for such as are believers.

Thou dost not mistake thy self, nor misconceive of God or Christ, when thou goest to the Lord Jesus in any of thy streits, then to be a Priest for thee, or to be a Prophet for thee, or to be a King unto thee. O no, God hath appointed him to be the Saviour of his body, to be the head of his Church, and Christ, who was thus ably invested, is as willing and faithful to discharge and performe.

3. These things being to be known and granted, there follows in the third place the *conjunction of these two together*, which indeed is the *very living by faith upon Christ*.

When the soul is in any exigence, and comes to Christ, and puts it self upon him, and trusts to him for help, this is to live by faith on Christ. Suppose a person sensible of much guilt, many sinful commissions, or omissions lay heavy and sore upon him; he is grieved at heart that he hath so dishonoured God, take them off he is not able, and therefore he renounceth all in himself, to Christ he goes and saith thus, O blessed Lord Jesus, thou didst shed thy precious blood for the remission of sinners, thou hast offered me thy self, and all thy precious purchases and benefits; I have by faith accepted of thee, of thee alone, with all my soul to be my Lord and Saviour. Now none in heaven or earth can procure me the pardon of these sins, but thy self, and thou canst do it; I beseech thee that thy blood may be mine atonement to thy father; yea, I will, and do cast my soul upon thee, thee alone, for the pardon, and I will trust unto thee for the discharge, of my many, of all my transgressions; Thy blood is the price that I will trust to, and rest upon. This is to live by faith in Christ in that particular; yea, though the sense of guilt be great, and the truth of it undeniable, yet to believe the pardon in Christ, and to offer his satisfactions; yea, to adventure, and to roll the soul upon him for it, for Christ hath called me, and he hath said that he will ease me, &c.

So againe, suppose that thou feelest corruptions strongly working, and temptations grievously assaunting, now to live by faith on Christ is to come unto him, (knowing the Kingly power of his grace) and to beseech him to subdue iniquities for thee,

thee, and to send forth the rod of his Scepter, the power of his gracious Spirit, to mortifie thy lusts yet more, and to trust upon him, that he will do this for thee, and therefore thou wilt apply thy self, with patience and confidence to the use of all consecrated wayes and meanes, through which Christ will manifest that power unto thy soul. *I thank God through Jesus Christ said Paul,* Rom. 7. As if he should say, I am not able for my life to root out, to beat down these vile motions, but I cast my self upon Jesus Christ, I trust unto him, and verily belevee he will deliver me; the like may be said of all the other exigences, but I cannot repeat all.

Consider that the habit or quality of faith is one thing, and the use or exercise of faith is another thing; the soul then lives by faith on Christ, when it improves its interest in Christ, when it can trust to him to supply all its wants; a man is said to live by bread, not when he hath it in his Cupboard, but when he takes and eats it; and a man is said to live upon his money, not when he lets it to lie dead in his chest, but when he turns and windes it for his benefit and support. So here, to live by faith on Christ, is to put faith to work, my works are in my self, but the supplies of my soul are in Christ; as I go to divine providence, and put my self on its faithful powerful goodnesse for my body, so I must go to the Lord Jesus, and put my self on his gracious and certaine fulnesse for my soul.

4. Things.

Yet observe a few things, for the clearer opening of this.

1. To live by faith on Christ, it is more then a mere complaining of our wants, or an acknowledging of his sinnesse. To see scarcity in the house, and plenty in the Market, this may be, and it may be vaine, unlesse we go forth to fetch in the promises.

Whiles the soul keeps home, it lives not by faith: *The life of faith lies abroad*: a man may have grace to see his wants, and yet he lives not by faith, till he can get out unto Christ. *I will go to the Prophet, to the man of God,* said the woman who had a troubled spirit for her dead child: Yea, this recovered her child againe: *If I can but touch the hem of his garment I shall be whole,* said she in the Gospel; you must bring the pitcher to the well, if you will have water; and the childes mouth must be applied to the

the breast, if it would have milk; and the soul must go unto Christ, it must approach unto him, or else it is but a fruitlesse trouble, it is not a living by faith on him.

2. To live by faith on Christ, it is more then a meer going to Christ, though the motion of the soul out of it self be required, yet that alone is not sufficient. If I go to a man for to lend me an hundred pound, if either I will not speak to him, or trust him, this is labour lost; so, though we do addresse our selves to Christ for help, but will not trust upon him for supply, this is not yet to live by faith. For,

The life of faith on Christ is raised by three things.

First, *his fulnesse.*

Secondly, *his goodnesse.*

Thirdly, *his faithfulnessse,* and all these enduce the soul to trust unto him; he is *able enough*; Ergo, I will trust him; he is *ready enough*, therefore I will trust him; he is *faithful*, and will certainly do me good, therefore I will trust him. So that to live by faith, it is to live by trust; one is said to live by trust, when he hath nothing from another, but his word, or his bond, I think him honest, or I have him fast bound, therefore I will trust him. Thou hast the Word of Christ, and the Promise of Christ, which is a sure truth; to which, if thou doest trust, thou doest live by faith. We feel and do not complaine, if I complaine and do not pray, if I pray and do not trust, this is not yet to live by faith; so farr as I can trust upon Christ, that he will supply and help my soul, so farr I do live by faith.

3. Nay, Thirdly, to live by faith, is not onely to trust upon Christ for supply, but it is to expect the performance.

There is a great difference 'twixt the *life of sense*, and the *life of faith*: Sense is opposite to expectation; it is only for the present; what it hath, that makes it up, it lives upon no stock but that in hand, but faith reckons its estate more from what lies in bonds, then what the person findes in the purse: It findes the greatest part of the souls estate, yet in the promises, and yet in Christ, and in both graciously, and assuredly undertaken; whereupon it doth make the soul not only to go to Christ, but to trust him, and not only so; but to expect and waite patiently; he doth hear me, he will do me good, he will not suffer sin to have dominion;

he will send forth the rod of his power, he will make all grace to abound, he will not leave nor forsake me, he will satisfie for me, his intercession shall be effectual, I shall yet feel the power of his death, the virtue of his resurrection.

As to pray and not to trust, so to trust and not to expect, to trust and then to murmur, to trust and to untrust, whiles we are speaking, to get the soul to put it self upon Christ, and before we have done speaking, to pluck of the soul againe, to deface our own sealing, to cast away our confidence, this is ill, very ill.

It is true that the *acts* of faith are capable of *weaknesse*, and also of *opposition*, one man may more confidently trust and expect, and another lesse; sometimes the same man is more pure and high in the act of trusting, and sometimes he hath much ado with his heart, to get it to roll it self on Christ; but yet he doth do it against many feares, and against many corrupt reasonings; now he lives by faith, but then know it is an ill businesse instantly to reverse the acts of faith, faint in it, or but to suspect Jesus Christ himself, either in his power, or goodness, or truth.

Fourthly, to live by faith on Christ, it is an *extensive work*, it is to trust on him, not for one thing only, but for every thing; which concerns the state of the soul. The soul is a needy thing, naturally it is so, and so it is spiritually; either it needs grace, or more grace, or strength, or comfort, or peace, or mercy, and pardon, some thing or other it wants; now Christ is an *adequate supply* to the soul, he hath grace enough, and righteousness enough, and power enough, and peace, and plenteous redemption: Now then as our wants appear, or as they multiply, so must faith appear and abound in its acts, if we will be said to live by faith.

I will be righteousness to thee faith Christ, and I will trust upon thee for it faith faith; I will be sanctification to thee faith Christ, and I will trust upon thee for it faith faith; I will be redemption to thee faith Christ, and I will trust unto thee for that too, faith faith; yea, I will trust upon thee to be my continual propitiation, continual intercession, to be my continual sufficiency and strength, for more grace, for quickning, for comfort, for salvation, for all.

Doth.

Doth corruption work against? and I will to Christ againe to subdue it, he will do it for me; doth Satan renew his temptations? and I will renew my addresses to Christ, who will againe (I trust) *bruise him under my feet*; my comforts are gone, but I will to Christ, I will live upon him, he will come againe and then my joy shall be full.

And indeed the life of faith, as it is a multiplied work, (for it makes the soul to live upon Christ for its manifold grace,) so it is a repeated work, it leads on the soul often and often even, for the same kinds of supplies.

Obj. O faith the soul, I did go to Christ, and did beseech him to rebuke Satan, and I trusted on him, and followed my suite, and found it so; but now Satan tempts againe, now sin works againe, now my heart is down againe, dull, and dead, and feeble againe.

Ans. I say to such an one, to live by faith, is to keep house with Christ, it is to be a daily guest, it is to rely upon him, it is so often to come as we have need, it is to draw water often from the same fountain: As if Christ did say to a person, whatsoever thy soul needs, come to me for it, and whensoever, yet come I will do it for thee, and the heart goes confidently to the Lord of its life, and hopes of its salvation.

SECT. IV.

Quest. 4. **W**HAT Arguments to move us, not onely to get faith in Christ, but also to live by it?

Sol. They are so many, that I know not well where to begin.

First, *if we consider our own condition*, this might put us upon the life of faith.

First, the life of faith is congruous to our condition; for what is our condition, but a depending being, such a being as subsists upon, and by another?

Take us, as creatures, and so we are but *beames of light*, which the sunne lets forth, supports, contracts, draws in; We are like

like a glasse which God doth frame, and hold in his own hand, or else we cannot stand; or like the flowers, they must be set in the ground, and then watered, and senced; or else they live not: our whole being, and working, and maintenance is from him that made us; *In him we live, and move, and have our being.*

And, take us as new creatures; so shall we find that not only our natural breath, but our spiritual being, not only life, but grace too, depends not on him who hath it, but on God who gave it; Grace is a sweet streame, but that flowes and runnes still, because it is fed by a living spring. It is a fruitful branch, but that branch doth stand and bear, because upheld and supplied by a more fruitful root: Hence is it that Christ is called the head, and we the members; he is called the root, and we the branches; he the foundation-stone, we the building; he is called the rock, we the house built on that rock; he the husband, we the wife and spouse; he the Lord, and we the servants; he the Shepheard, and we the sheep; he the nurse, and we the babes; All which do evidence this much, that our life is in him, upon him, for we are dependants, from him we live, therefore upon him we should live.

Secondly, the necessity of our condition: our condition here below doth so shift, and vary, and faile, go and come, that if we do not live by faith, we cannot (honestly) live at all: *Helpe failed me on every side* said David, *all men forsook me,* said Paul: *We know not what to do* said Jehosaphas: God is pleased to call off all our comforts, to gather up into his own hands of promises all our supports. It is with us many times as with a Ship laden, but on a sudden broken to pieces, now the persons of necessity must swim towards the shore, and to the rocks: So God doth dash in pieces our lower confidences: he cracks a false state, he separates very friends; he gives not a heart to people to shew us compassions: and sorrowes on all sides poore in themselves, a man hath nothing in all the world left him, but Gods bond, is word of promise.

So for the estate of the soul, It is frequently so clouded, so darkened, so checked, so distressed, so assaulted, that all the meanes under heaven do not relieve it; If the Lord doth not help, if Christ be not the rock, it cannot be delivered or supported:

Now

Now in such cases, where the condition is wholly reduced to the promises, or unto Christ, there can be no living but by faith: The heart of a man is either broken with despair and griefs, or will break into the waves of wickedness, if it lives not by faith in the cases of all sensible sequestrations: For,

1. It is only faith which can *spy something for the soul now: Who is he that sits in darkness and sees no light, for him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon him God? Isa. 50. 10.* Faith can see the stars in the thickest night of darkness; there is nothing but faith, which can tell the soul of rich mercy in the times of greatest sense of exceeding guilt; and there is nothing but faith which can finde outfulness of grace in Christ for a soul which is bitterly sensible of its wonderfull and continual emptiness. Till the Angel came and opened *Hagar's eyes to see the fountains*, she gave up her child for dead, so unless we have faith to open our eyes to see the fountain of grace and mercy in God and Christ, I tell you that in many of our exigencies we shall throw away all, all as dead, and lost, and hopeless.

2. Again, It is nothing but faith which gives spirit unto us from a bare promise: one word of God is security enough to faith. If a Mariner can get to the top of the Mast, and descry but a point of land, he is now glad, all is well; faith is said to *see the promises afar off*, Heb. 11. well faith faith to the soul now, as *Paul* to them which *sayed with him, be of good cheer, thou shalt yet do well, grace, and mercy, and help will come, God hath promised it, and Christ will make all the promises, Yea and amen*, and now the soul lives because of that good and faithful word, &c.

Secondly. If we consider *God himself*, there is sufficient reason why we should live by faith.

There be six arguments which we may behold in God, to en- 6 Things.
vite and perswade us to live by faith.

First, his *self-sufficiency*, *I am God self-sufficient*, said he to *Abraham*, What's that? That is, I am an absolute and independent essence in respect of my self, infinitely perfect and enough, and have enough and enough to satisfy all the world. Take all the particulat creatures in the world and view into their

their natures and conditions; you shall finde every one of them to be imperfect; to be depending; to be replenished with wants: even one man for his own particular is covered over with innumerable wants, the wants of his soul are many, so of his body, so of his estate, what then, and how many are the necessities of every man? But now God is *alsufficient* (that is) he hath enough to supply every man; He can *open his hand, fill every living thing. I have opened thy hand* (said David, Ps. 145. 15.) and *satisfie the desire of every living thing*; and he is able to *make all grace abound*; saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 9. 8. He is *rich to all that call upon*, Rom. 10. 12. He is *able to do* (Eph. 3. 20) *exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think*. *My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ* (Phil. 4. 19. The Same you see hath light enough for a whole world, and a fountaine hath water enough for a whole countrey; Why, all good is in God; both originally, and eminently, and causally, (that is) he is goodnesse it self; and all goodnesse, fulnesse, without want, strength; without weakness, holinesse, without blemish, yea, and the universal cause of goodnesse, and therefore infinitely able to supply, and help, and do good: there is no one necessary, but he is able infinitely to succour it, and many; yea, all necessities are not to be compared to the unfathomed greatnesse, and exceedingnesse of his fulnesse and alsufficiency.

2. *His Command*: As God is an absolute and full good, (all out helps do center in him as in their complement-cause) so he hath commanded us to live upon his alsufficiency by faith. How often do you read those charges, *Trust upon the Lord, commit thy way to the Lord, rest upon him, stay upon the God of Jacob, cast thy care on him*. As if God should say unto the sons of men, I am he, and there is none else besides me who can do you good; there is not any good in all the world which you want but I am able to supply it, I am alsufficient for wisdom, for holinesse, for mercy, for power, for grace, for comfort, for peace. If you want water, you would go to the Spring, and if you want light, you would look up to the Sunne, and if you want any good, why will you not look up to me who am goodnesse it self? I tell you, that I am a God, and have the greatnesse and the fulnesse of a God; Nay, and I charge and require

require you, when you need any thing, come to me for it: I am the Master of all the families of the earth, and the Lord of all good; It is my expresse will, that you come unto me, and that you put your trust on me, that you beleieve on my aliusufficiency, that you live upon that stock which is in my fulnesse: Nay, I shall take it exceeding ill, if you rest your selves, or live on any other.

3. *His Promises*: Consider this two wayes.

1. Generally, *his promises of good*, wherein is ground to trust.

2. Particularly, *His promises to them that will and do trust*, Psal. 37. 3. *Trust in the Lord, and verily, &c.* Isa. 26. 3. *Then will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee*: So, Isa. 57. 13. This puts life to all the rest, for though God were never so able to do good, and though his commands were never so urgent to live on him for all our good; yet if he had not made over this good unto us, we might maintain secret feares and discouragements. But now God hath promised all good unto us, (that is) he hath firmly and graciously made it over; As if he should say, all the good that I can do, I will do it for thee; all the ample fulnesse in me, is to replenish thee, it is to supply thy wants and necessities; and I assure thee in the Word of a God it is so. *Psalm 84. 11. The Lord is a Sunne and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* Yer. 12. *O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.* There is not any one particular want (which is fit to be stiled a want, and fit to be supplied in this life, for soul) but God hath by promises particularly engaged all his sufficiency to help and supply it. Doest thou want an *holy heart*, a *returning heart*, an *heart to hate sinne*, to *mourn for sinne*, a *believing heart*, an *upright heart*, a *meek and patient heart*, a *joyful heart*? doest thou want any *grace*, more *grace*, *pardon of sin*, *assurance of pardon*, *strength against sin*, *strength for any duty*, *active*, or *passive*? wantest thou any *convenient and fit good for thy body*, for thy *name*, for thy *estate*, for thy *children*, for thy *family*? any good for *life*, at *death*, after *death*? Not any one of these which God hath not distinctly promised. If you knew a man to be sufficient,

to have an estate worth ten thousand pounds, and all free, you will presently trust him for an hundred pounds, or if such an one should command any in his need to come to him, and borrow, this would draw many to him; but if he should take a man out particularly, and say to him, Friend, my estate is thus great, I have a great estate, and I pray thee if thou needest any thing at any time, repaire to me, I give thee my word, and if that be not enough, thou shalt have bond and seale that I will help thee; it were enough, he needed not to say more, he will to him I warrant you. Thus saith the Lord to a beleever, to one who hath accepted of his Sonne Jesus Christ, saith God to him, I tell thee by my Word, (which is truth it self and cannot lie, nor deceive) that I am a great God, alfficiency, goodnesse is in me in infinite perfection, and I am able to do thee any good; now my will is, that thou shouldest come unto me at any time, in any of thy distresses, and I do promise thee, that I will not withhold any good thing from thee; As true as I am God, I will not leave thee nor forsake thee; should not this encourage us to live by faith?

4. His *power* and *ability*; as we want much good, so God doth undertake all good: And this is another encouragement, that God never over engageth himself; he is able to make good all his understandings: Many a man is undone by suretiship, he suffers himself to be bound beyond his ability; it is not so with God. ●

This is granted, that at the least a proportionable power is necessary to give being to all promises and undertakings, *goodnesse* and *kindnesse* are enough to make a promise but *ability* is also required to make good that promise. If a subject promiseth to release, or pardon a Malefactor, why, this is nothing, he is not to be trusted; why? because he hath not power of life or death; if a poore man promise to discharge a debt of four hundred thousand pounds; why; no man will trust to his undertakings: why? because he hath no ability, he hath not an estate answerable, he is not able to pay twenty shillings; so that power gives ground to *trusting*, because power is a necessary ingredient to all.

Now then, God hath ability enough to make good all or any of his promises.

Obj. You will say, his *promises* are many.

Sol. I answer, as our needs are many; so his promises are many; But then, as his *promises* are many, so his *goodnesse* is great, and his *power* infinite; now an infinite goodnesse, and an infinite power, are able to make good, not only many, but infinite promises.

Object. You will say; that the things promised are great.

Sol. I confesse they are, God hath undertaken great matters to pardon great sinnes, to convert great sinners, to conquer great temptations, to convey great consolations, But is he not a great God? *Is any thing too hard for him? nothing is impossible with God.*

Obj. But you will say, that particular wants still increase, and renew themselves.

Sol. So they do, as the vessels which we fill to day, require a new filling to morrow, and the stomachs which we seem to satisfie now, within few houres they are empty and craving; But then, though the vessel may be dry, yet the fountaine is not, though the vessel may be empty, yet the fountaine is full and still streaming. As Gods goodnesse is a living fountain, so his promises are a perpetual bond; They are continued undertakings, and depend upon an unexhausted and infinite depth of goodnesse, *Isa. 4th. 3. O house of Jacob, which art borne by me from the belly, and carried from the womb. Ver. 4. Even to the old age I am he, and even to hoary haire, I will carry you.*

Obj. But yet you will say, yea, but God is engaged to so many, there is not a beleever, but God hath bound himself by many promises to him.

Sol. I confesse, with man often-times this is something; He hath but a particular ability and therefore may overshoot himself by general engagements; But with God it is not so, in whom power and ability to make good what he undertakes, is not contracted, broken limited, depending, but ample, illimited, and allufficient from himself. Therefore he is said to *reserve mercy for thousands*, and his promises runne to *Abraham and to all his seed*. Why, the *power of God*, by which he is able to make good all his promises; It is a *creating power*,

such a power as can (upon the pleasure of his will) command things into being; and it is an *over-topping power*, God alone can command our helps, he needeth not the assistance of any to make good his undertakings; and it is an *enduring power*, it abides for ever, *His hand is never shortened, that it cannot save. Is the Lords hand waxed short* (said God himself to Moses? Numb. 11. 23.) *thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to passe or not.* So then, as God hath engaged himselfe to do us good, so he is able enough to make that good.

5. *His fidelity and truth*: As the promises, so the matter of them are full of goodnesse: so for the forme of them, they are sealed with truth: God who cannot lie hath promised, said the Apostle, *Titus 1. 2. and it is impossible for him to lie*, Heb. 6. 18.

Truth and fidelity may be conjectured to consist in three things, I speake now of them as applied to promises.

1. *In reality of intention*: where the declaration is a faire letter, and the intention is a blur, when that is large and this is nothing; this may be a complemental lie, but it is not truth; the expression must be but the intention, cloathed in words; It must be the purpose of the heart transcribed, if we will stile it truth and fidelity. Now when God promiset any good to a beleever, this is not *vox & prateria nihil*: a meer showre of eloquent and comfortable words; O no, it is his will, and intention, and very purpose made known: He doth indeed intend that good which he undertakes, and speaks of in his promises.

2. *In a constancy of resolution*: As falsehood is placed, not only in present *incongruities*, (when heart and tongue are at variance) but also in *subsequent inconstancies*: As when, though my present intention and expression were parallel, yet afterward, like a rotten bottome which slips aside from the house, so my heart breaks away from it self, it becomes *an heart*, and *an heart*, as in *Sauls* promise to *David*, which changed presently, &c. On the contrary is it with truth, and in particular with Gods truth about his promises to beleevers; His word of promise doth answer his purpose at first (for as he thought and intended

tended, so did he speak) and that purpose still answers it self, and therefore he hath sworn by himself, *that he will not alter the thing that is gone forth of his lips: My Covenant shall stand fast; Pl. 89. 34 28.*

3. In a *certainity of execution*: As when a person hath promised to lend, or give an hundred pounds, he being free to take his own time; comes and layes it down, and saith, Lo here is the money which I promised to lend or give, take it; this is fidelity or truth. Such a truth is there in Gods promises: This is not all the truth of them, that for certain God hath spoken such good things, but further, that he will assuredly performe them: *Behold the dayes come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and so the house of Jacob, Jer. 33. 14.*

6. *His performance of them to them that have lived by faith.* When persons have committed themselves and their conditions unto him; when they have trusted upon his word, he hath not failed them, he hath made it good. *Abraham*, he did live by faith, when God promised him a Son, the text saith, *that he did beleve, he did not consider his own body, but gave glory to God,* resting upon the sole goodnesse, fidelity, and strength of his promise, and God did indeed perform the same unto him. Not any of the *Kings of Israel and Judah*, but expressely *Spedwell*, when in their exigencies they did trust unto God. *Our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them, they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. Plal. 22 4. 5. The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusted in him and I was helped; saith David, Plal. 28. 7. The Lord shall help thee, and deliver thee,* (speaking of the righteous) *and save thee, because they trust in him, Plal. 37. 40.* Now put all together, should we not live by faith, trust upon God in Christ (and through, and for Christ) for all our helps of soul, who is, 1. An al sufficient fountaine. 2. Who commands us in unto himself for our helps. 3. Who hath promised all good unto us if we will but trust him. 4. Who is able enough to make good whatsoever he promiseth. 5. Who cannot, and will not lie, deceive or faile us. 6. Who hath given testimony of his truth in all ages, *Who hath performed his oath to Jacob, and remembered his mercy to Abraham, who hath been ever in all ages mindful of his Covenant to such*

as dust by faith live upon him and trust in him.

Thirdly, consider the *qualities of this life of faith*, and these may much prevaile with us to labour to live upon God in Christ by faith.

There be foure ingredients in this kinde of life, all which are admirable, and indeed they are peculiar priviledges of it.

1. It is the only Christian life.
2. It is the only comfortable life.
3. It is the only getting and thriving life.
4. It is the only certain and stedfast life.

Four excellencies of this life.

1. *The life of faith, it is the only Christian life.* The Christian hath a life common with many creatures, his life of eating and drinking, of nourishing and growth; it is such a life, as the beasts live as well as he; his life of reason and labour, that also is such a life which all men live as well as he; but thee life of faith, that is singular and proper to the beleever; for no man hath that faith which the true beleever hath, and no man hath his estate so in heaven, so in Gods hands, so inclosed and treasured in the Covenant of promises, as he. What Christ spake to his Disciples about this very matter, *Mat. 6. 31. Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewith shall we be clothed?* Ver. 32. *For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:* As if he should say, it is enough for meer sinners, for such as have not God to be their God, who cannot in Christ call him Father, it is enough for them to lead such a vexing and distrustful life. That I say here, Why, it is enough for men of this life, the men of this world, for them who have their onely portion here, to live the life of sense, to be scrapping, to be plodding, to be vexing their thoughts and hearts, how to compasse, how to fetch in, how to lengthen an estate; To have a God, and yet to live without him, a Christ, and not to live upon him, as if either were nothing in this Christian; But for the beleever, who hath a God, and a Christ, and all good undertaken for him by a full and faithful Covenant; It is his life now to trust upon his God, to rely upon his Saviour, to quiet himself in Gods Word of promise. As Christ spake in another case, *If you love them that love you, and if ye do good to them that do good unto you, what singular*

thing do you? do not even the Publicans and sinners the same? That I say in this case, if ye will make up your own estate, if ye will live upon what you see, and what you taste, and what you handle, and go not above, and beyond these and your selves; do not sinners, do not the worst of sinners do the same? If the vilest person can rejoyce when his table is full, and hang down his head when sensibiles go off; wherein doth the beleever exceed him, who is merry and cheerful only in a sensible plenty, and his heart is ready to break in the ebbe and subtraction of that, by the dayes or years of scarcity and sensible distresse? If thou didst look upon God as thy Father, and Christ as thy plentiful redemption, and the promises as a goodly portion, and thine inheritance; then the dayes of tears to others, would be houres of thankfulness unto thee; and the nights of fears to others, would be times of sweet repose and contentment unto thee: When the spiders web was swept away, yet thou couldst see the house standing and sure; even in all sensible abstractions of the olive, and vine, and stables, thou couldst yet rejoyce in the God of thy salvation. For the place of thy defence is the munition of rocks, bread shall be given unto thee, and thy waters shall be sure, Isaiah 33 16.

I observe a threefold difference twixt an unbeleever and a beleever.

One is *in the very estate*: for the beleever hath a far better portion then the unbeleever; he hath a portion set out for this life, and a portion also for a better, he hath food for his body and grace for his soul.

Another is in the *manner of settling the estate*: for general providence relieves the one, and special affections provides for the other.

The one is helped by common goodnesse of universal kindnesse, and the other is undertaken for, and secured by a singular bond of Covenant. God hath made over himself and all his goodnesse unto him in his Sonne Jesus Christ: He hath taken upon himself all the care, and all the good, and only wills the beleever to be upright, and diligent, and so to trust upon him; he hath settled all his grace, and strength, and comfort in Christ, &c.

Paul.

A third is in the manner of managing : The unbeliever, he will, like the prodigal, have all the estate into his own hands, he will trust upon himself, he dares not settle on God, for he feares him, he suspects him, he thinks verily God will not do him good, but he will faile : But the beleever *knows whom he hath trusted*, God is his God ; and hath undertaken for him ; and he *who hath promised is faithful who will also do it* : Now though I have not in hand, yet I have in promise, though I have not in the coffer, yet I have in the bonds ; my estate is even all that is good for me, and it lies in a sure hand, in the hand of my good God who will not faile ; Hereupon I live, to this I trust, though others vex, and fret, and curse, yet I sit down quietly ; Why ? because faith goes about what we see, and it is able to see the estate large enough, though lying in divine promises ; and this is to live like a Christian, for this is to acknowledge a God, and a Christ to some purpose.

2. The life of faith, it is the *only comfortable life*.

It is with our life, as it is with fire, which if it burnes faire and clear, then is it pleasant and delightful, but if it be dull and smoking, it makes us weary both of it, and the roome. Whiles faith doth guide our lives, (by settling our thoughts and desires on God and Christ) then the lamp is cleare, life feels like life, we can pray with joy, and hear with delight, and follow our callings with cheerfulness, and lie down in peace ; But if you sever faith from the life, that we dare not to trust on God, nor rest on Christ ; we must possesse, or else we cannot trust ~~nor~~ live ; Now the chimney smoaks, the soul becomes displeasing to it self ; the soul craves help from the body, and the body from the soul, but neither is able to help either, and therefore that is wanting, and this is vexing. The waves now get over the ship, and sinks it with a load and deluge of worldly, endless, fruitlesse, anxious, vexing cares, and feares ; And in sober-sadnesse tell me, what you think of such a life ; wherein the *head* is disturbed and curiously tortured with variety of manifold, and exquisite suspitions, and thoughts, and the *heart* is deeply racked with the continual breakings of trembling sighes and griefes ? That a man is not able to get, nor yet patient to want, he can neither give himself help, nor will he trust him who can ; That his estate is burdened, with
many

many wants, and all this is made unspeakably grievous by another worse burden of unbelieving thoughts; that a man sees he cannot beare, and yet will not ease his shoulder by trusting. That a man cannot begin to think, but his thoughts throw him into a way of what ifs? What if the Lord will not do me good? what if I cannot have that? what if such an one faile? or, what if it comes not on such a day? &c. So that he cannot think without tumults; nor speak without discontents, nor eat without dislike, nor walk without slavishnesse, nor work without distrustfulnesse; nor sleep without terrours, nor awake without bitterness, nor rise without carefulnesse; and amidst all this, he hath no heart to duty, nor no God, nor to heaven, nor earth, nor to Christ, nor to himself, nor his; for either he hath no faith, or else will not live by it: He dares not trust God, or Christ.

There be three things which concur to make the life uncomfortable;

1. One is a *sense of want*: A man hath an extreame feeling of need, no sense, or slight sense, availe not to break our spirits.

2. Another is a *strong desire*, the heart pants and reacheth after the supply, and this multiplies thoughts and cares.

3. A third is palpable *insufficiency*; that a man cannot for his life compasse his desires and supplies, and therefore like *Ahab*, who was impeached for *Naboths vineyard*, he is dejected and grieved; all which fall ordinarily into the life of unbelief.

But now to wheel about on the contrary, the life of faith is sweet and comfortable.

Four things wou'd make a mans life very comfortable.

4. *Things.*

1. One is if he were eased of all burdens.

2. Another: If he were secured from all prejudices.

3. A third: If what he had were very good and enough.

4. A fourth: If he were assured that whatsoever good he should need, of that he should be without fail supplied in a fit time.

Now then the life of faith produceth all these.

1. *It easeth a man of all burdens*: There be but two burdens which we can well think of, 1. One is the sinful burden, 2. The other is the earthly burden: The burden of guilt, and the burden of cares: But faith (if a man could live by it) takes them both off: It lives upon *Christ* for the one, and upon Gods providence for the other: It sees a sufficiency and an accepted price in his blood, to remit our guilt, and it sees an al sufficient, careful, faithful providence to remove our care: And I tell you, that the soule comes to great ease which is released of both these: *Sonne, be of good comfort, thy sinnes be forgiven thee.* Sonne shall be discharged, therefore I am comfortable; cares are gone, therefore I am cheerful.

2. *It secures against all prejudices*, and why? because it states the person in goodnesse it selfe, in him who is nothing but goodnesse, (that is) who is in respect of himselfe good, and who will order all things for good to the Believer, say, and in his hands who is an absolute Lord.

'Tis true, that one change in our estate may be contrary to another, and because we esteeme one of them to be good, therefore we judge the other to be evil: but then, though changes be opposite in sense, yet they are concordant in issue, in the event all falls out for good: As sicknesse, though opposite to health, yet it may fall out for the further preservation of life; sometimes the Christian is high, sometimes low, sometimes he is in a freed state, sometimes in a clouded state; sometimes he is in conquest, sometimes he is in conflict; sometimes he is oyled in the mouths of men, and sometimes traduced and torne in pieces, as if the tongues of Christians were the teeth of Lions: (*Paul* gives a Catalogue of his changes in these and the like cases;) yet in all and after all, the Christians condition is not prejudiced, God still owns the person, watching over his safeties; Keeps all poyson from the heart, and like a ship (sometimes by a fair wind, sometime by a rough storm) he still brings him safe to harbour. As *Paul* spake even of his bonds, that they fall out to the furtherance of the Gospel; So I say of the calamitous occurrences, the sense sees nothing but misery, yet faith can see the good end which God made

made with Job, and therefore to rejoyce in troubles.

3. It makes the present condition good, and enough. I will tell you one reason why the life of sense is uncomfortable; namely, because it is grounded on a short and empty good; that which a man can see with his eye, and hold in his hand, is not halfe of that which he can desire with his heart, no worldly thing can ever be enough to an unbelieving heart. But faith makes the soul well pleased, because it presents the soul with such a good, as cannot only satisfie, but also exceed it. God is an infinite goodnesse; he, who can satisfie more then a world, may well content one mans heart; and Gods favour is a satisfying good, (*I shall be satisfied with thy favour*, said David); and to this doth faith enuile, yea, this it doth reveale to the soul; And I will tell you one thing, that he who cannot be contented with a God, and his favour; with a Christ, and his blood; with a Covenant, and its fulnesse; he will never be content with any thing: if all sufficiency be not enough to thee, when can emptinesse and vanity please and satisfie thee. What if a man hath but a little Garden, yet if he hath a large Parke, and ten thousand Acres of Arables, and the Kings royal favour to grace all this? I tell you this would sparkle his spirit, it would breath a well-pleasednesse in him. Thou complainest that thou hast but little of earthly things, I grant it, and a little may be enough: (enough depends more on quality, then quantity) but then, though the Garden be but small, yet the Park is large; though thy portion in externals be not so great, yet this with a great and all sufficient God, and a blessed Saviour, and a heaven to boot, is enough, and enough. If the wife saith she hath but a small joynture, yet if she hath a rich and tender husband, she is to be blamed if she saith she hath not enough: Faith viewes the Christians estate, not as it is in its hand, but as in her husbands hand, in Christs, and then all is well enough.

4. It assures of universal and reasonable supplies; *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*, so David Psal. 23. 1. follow him a little in that *Psalm*, and you shall see what God hath done for him; he made his pastures green, and his waters still, vers. 2. O, what a freshnesse, and what a calmnesse doth faith make in the state! His soul is taken care for, and at the worst; when he was in the valley of the shadow of death, yet he was quieted from

Time past.

Present.

fear, because his faith saw God there; yea, and found him there to uphold and comfort: That for what was past; Then for his present condition See ver. 5. *His table is prepared for him*, as if he took no care (*no anxious care*) he needed not to trouble himself, (*thou preparest a table for me*) and not a mean table neither (*my cup runneth over*) nor yet a dull and uncheerful table, (*thou anointest my head with oyle*;) so that faith for the present findes food, and cheer enough too; But then for the future condition, will this hold out? See what faith findes in reversion,

Future.

ver. 6. *Surely goodnesse and mercy shall follow me all the dayes of my life*; (*Goodnesse!*) perhaps that respected his temporal estate, (*Mercy!*) perhaps that respected his spiritual, 1. *One his body*. 2. *Another his soul*, and both these (*shall follow him*) as the shadow that followes the body, they should be still at hand; but how long? not for a day only, but (*all his dayes*) not all the dayes of his dignities, abilities, health, but *all the dayes of his life*.

Nay, yet againe, (*surely*) they shall follow me: It was not a speech of fancy, but of certainty, it was out of all doubt, and peradventure, *surely mercy and goodnesse shall, &c.* So Psal 84. 11. *The Lord God is a Sun, and a shield*; the sun is the pitent of light, so is God of all good; The Sun is the cause of all fruitfulnessse and cheerfulnessse, so is God of all blessings; and he is a shield to a Sunne for the doing of good, and a shield to secure and protect from evil. *The Lord will give grace and glory*: *Grace* is the best thing which a man can have on earth, and *Glory* is the highest thing which a man can have in heaven: But these he will give, they shall not be bought, but freely bestowed. *No good thing will he withhold, &c.* As if he should say, if grace be not enough for earth, if glory be not enough for heaven; think then of any other good thing, there is not any other good thing, which shall be withheld (that is) which shall not, like the rain, (which ceaseth to be withheld) poure down upon you.

Will you heare the Prophet say a word to this to this future supplies for them who live by faith: then read Jer. 17. 7. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is*: Here we finde the beleever at his work of trusting, or living by faith, and at his wages too: *Blessed is the man that trusteth, &c.*

In

Indeed the Prophet speaks a great word, *he is blessed*; more cannot be said; but let's see how he proves that? *ver. 8. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river; and shall not see when heat cometh, but his leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of droughts, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* If faith plants the tree in a springing soyl, if it beholds the tree to spread, and grow, and bear in all weathers, *though heat cometh* in all times, *though drought cometh*, yet the leaf is green and fruitful and ceaseth not to yield; doth it not then assure us of supply for the future? hath it not a good Store-house, an ample treasury for the beleever?

What should I say more! may not faith say that to the soul, which God hath said to faith? if so, then we may well rejoyce for the present, and be void of care for the future; for God hath said *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, H. b. 13. 5. Thou hast mercy, and shalt still have mercy; Thou hast grace, and shalt still have grace; Thy part in Christ, and still shalt have it, supplies of all good, and still shalt have them.

3. *The life of faith is the only getting and thriving life.* What the Apostle spake of godlineesse, that we may say of Faith; *It is great gaine, for it hath the promises of this life, and of the life which is to come.*

Profit is that which most men look upon, it is the cry of most, *who will shew us any good?* and faith hath a singular art of getting. I observe that the good of a Christian, in some respect, hangs in the promises, as water doth in the clouds; and look as the boysterous windes rather drive away the clouds and rain, (though a few drops may slip down) but it is the sweet heat of the Sunne which makes the cloudes to open themselves, and give out their store.

So the only way to drive away the promises, (as it were) to remove them with their blessings, is not to believe, not to trust; and the only way to make them to yield out their precious treasures, is to believe, to live by faith: Take a place for either, *Ier. 17. 5. Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his gaine, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.* As the Lord of Samaria. *ver. 6. For he shall be like the*
beast.

breath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places, in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited. Psal. 37. 39. The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, he is their strength in the time of trouble. ver. 40. And the Lord shall keep them and deliver them, &c. and save them because they trust in him.

The soul oft-times bitterly complains, that as yet it hath not that good thing, it sticks yet in the hands of God, Christ can do it if he will. Why; but if ever thou wouldest speed, thou must trust; I dare not trust though, saith the soul, how then canst thou speed? Why then doest thou complain; God and Christ undertakes thy good; but then he requires this of thee, do but trust me for it and thou shalt speed, I will not fail thee, *I have sworn by my self that I will not alter, nor repent.* The poor man comes to Christ and cries out for help, *Mark 9. O Lord, saith he, if thou canst do any thing, &c.* Why; saith Christ, I can do any thing, I am able enough, and willing enough, that's not the thing, this is it which will make thee to speed; canst thou believe, darest thou to trust upon me? he answered *Lord I believe, I do trust,* and you know that his son was presently healed. The child comes to the father, father supply me, I will saith the father; but I will have it instantly; if he had asked and trusted his father, he might have sped, but because he doth ask and murmur with his father, he is therefore justly denied.

There are two things which mightily oblige a person to the doing of a kindnesse; one is *his own promise*, another is *his friends confidence*, who hath upon the security of his word adventured; so here, besides the very inclination of the divine goodnesse to make good its own undertakings, this also adds not a little to our speed, and furtherance, that we rely onely on God. It is a common complaint, that we cannot be answered: I reply, it is a common fault, that God nor Christ can be trusted. It is not how many wants thou feelest, nor how many promises thou readeest, nor how many prayers thou makest; If with all this thou doest not ask in faith, think not (O man) to receive any thing from the Lord.

I will give you three reasons why the life of faith is the only way to thrive.

First

First, because it *puts a man upon the only way of blessings*. As none can bless but God, and he can bless; so the blessings of God are to be expected only in the wayes of God, and nothing so skilful in Gods wayes as faith.

Secondly, *it makes all the promises to yield*: It is true, as God is infinitely above all, and his power is great; so faith (in a qualified sense) is above God himself; he is not able to stand against it: *Be it to thee as thou wilt*, said Christ to the believing woman: *Thou shalt have the desires of thine heart*, said David, *Psal. 37. 3. 4.*

Thirdly, *God himselfe, and Christ, and all, become ours*, If we dare to trust and live by faith: Thou wants outward supplies, I require no more of thee faith God, but to walk uprightly and diligently, and to trust on me, and thou shalt have it: Thou wants spiritual supplies for thy soul; I require no more of thee but to come to me, to trust to me, and go to my Ordinances; stand in my wayes and thou shalt have them.

Fourthly, *it is the only steadfast and abiding life*; when other lives are broken and crushed, they are gone down; yet this life by faith (like the Starres which shine in the night) remains firme, I will clear it by Argument; The stability of all sorts of lives is according to their principles and motives. The life which depends upon a failing cause, it is a fading life, and the life which depends upon a constant cause, is a constant life.

Now the life of faith is bred by a living principle, and is fed by constant and abiding motives; you know that the grounds of this life of faith, are in God and Christ, and the promise; now all changes reach not to them, our changes are below in other things, but they are not in the promises, nor in God above; as changes are not in the heavens, but in the aire. Look upon things at hand, and so they appeare with variety, and with much unlikenesse, but eye them in the Covenant, in the Promises, there you have the same faithful God still, tender father still, all sufficient Saviour still, the Promises are *you and Amen*, Christ is the *everlasting father*, the *Covenant of God*, an *everlasting Covenant*, Gods love and immutable love, he is as able still, as willing still, *his bow abide in strength, and underneath are his everlasting armes*.

Though

Though *David's* father and mother forsake him, yet the Lord will take him up; and though all forsook Paul, yet God stood by him: so true is it that faith can cast a sure Anchor in all states and in all changes, it can look upon the same God and the same Christ, and the same promises. Though the Mariners, when they put to sea, quickly lose sight of Land, yet they never lose sight of heaven; how far soever they saile, and in what tempest soever, yet still they may look upon the heaven, the same heaven.

Faith never loseth sight of its rock, of its salvation, of its helpe; that which it eyes, it may eye for ever; and that upon which it trusts, it may trust upon for ever; thou hast friends, and this springs up thy spirit; thy friends dye, and now thy spirits sink; thou hast parents; and children; in these thou rejoicest, and settlest thy confidence: both the one and the other embrace the dust, and thy heart is utterly broken for help and comfort, O Lord what have I more. *E contra*, thou hast a God, and he is the same for ever, a Christ, and he yesterday, to day, and the same for ever: *Promises*, and they are a word settled forever in heaven; But when all sensibles flie off, yet if we live by faith we are at no degree of losse; what can he lack, who hath him, who is all in all, and what can he lose; who hath him that knows no change at all?

Fourthly, let us consider *Jesus Christ himself*; I here are diverse things which should perswade us to live by faith upon him.

There are nine things in him which may move us.

1. The exceeding plentifulness of our supplies in him: Thou art not approaching to a dry Cistern, but to a full fountain; what may do thee good, he hath, and he hath that in a most eminent fulness.

Is it the good and vertue of his redemption, which thou needest. Why; in him is plenteous redemption, and in him is *Ang salvation*, and therefore his blood is called a precious blood, *Per. 1. 19.* His blood had not been able to have discharged the least sinne, unless it had exceeded the merit of the greatest; yes, it is as able to crosse many debts, as any; sins may be distinguished into great, and little; into many, and few; but the blood of Christ

Christ, the virtue of that is singular and infinite in the price and value of it.

Is it the good and virtue of his holiness which thou needest? *Sanctification.*
 Why; *Job. 1. 16. There is a fulnesse of grace in him. 3. 34. He hath the Spirit without measure.* Therefore the holy virtues of Christ are filled unsearchable riches, *Eph. 3. 8.* You cannot comprehend the depth of them; when you can easily come to the bottome of a thing, then it is not unsearchable; but where you sound and fathom, and yet can feel no bottome; so here, &c. yea, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, *Col. 2. 3.* The Apostle hath said all that need to be said, *Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save them to the utmost which come unto God by him.* (that is) *Col. 2. 3. Intercession. Heb. 7. 25.* if you need his intercession to implead acceptance of your persons, or of your requests; Why; there is none like him, come unto God by him, he is able to dispatch the greatest request.

Or is it sufficiency for duty which thou needest? Why; herein *Obedience.*
 is Christ most able to supply thee. If the duty be active, he can enable thee to abundant fruitfulness, *Job. 15. 5. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.* If the duty be Passive, I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me, said Paul, *Phil. 4. 13.* Be it that thou of thy self art weak, yet Christ is strong, and he hath said my Grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness, *2 Cor. 12. 9.*

2. The ordination of Christ to this very thing, viz. to supply the state of a believer.

God did purpose him, and intend him, and sent him, and he came for this very end to do us good, and to help us in time of need, *Eph. 1. 22. He gave him to be the head over all things to the Church. ver. 2. Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

The Head (you know) is a thing for office, and the offices of it is both dominion and influence; for these was Christ given to the Church to rule the Church, and to supply the Church. *1 Cor. 1. 20. He is made unto us of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and Sanctification, and redemption.* *Heb. 7. 22. He was made a surety of a better testament.* *Joh. 6. 27. Him hath God the father sealed.* *Mat. 61. 1. The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings*

things unto the meek. He hath sent me to binde up the broken brea-
sted to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison
to them that are bound, &c. Christ, you will grant that he is an
able Priest, and an able Prophet, and an able King, he is sufficient
enough to pacifie by his Blood, to purifie by his Spirit, to conquer
by his Word; yea, but then consider yet further, that he is ordain-
ed of God to be this; and to do this for the believer. If the
King commits a mighty stock to a mans hands, and sets him in
the place of a treasurer, and confirms him by seal, and all for
this very end, that he should supply such and such persons, would
they not come unto him for their supplies?

Thou art never able to be *righteousnesse to thy self*; thou art
never able to *give grace* unto thy self, thou art never able to *give*
strength to thy self; but Christ is, and God is, even that God to
whom thou doest so earnestly cry, he hath ordeined his own Son
for thy help, even for thy help. As if the King should say to a
poor man petitioning; Why; Go to my Treasurer, I have gi-
ven him order for thee; so the Lord to the beleever; Go to my
Sonne, I have ordeined him to give thee grace; I have ordeined
him to plead thy suits, to rule thy heart, to conquer thy sinnes;
and thy temptations, I sent him into the world for that very
end and purpose, that he might be all in all unto thee, I purposed
his blood for thee, and his righteousness, and his fulness, and his
intercession, all for thee.

3. *His services*, what he hath done in the behalf of a belie-
ver.

Give me leave in this a little, and you shall see what reason
we have then to trust upon Christ.

First, though he was *equal with God*, yet made *he himself of no*
reputation; and took upon him the *form of a servant* and was made
in the likeness of men, Phil. 2. 6, 7. he laid aside his glory as it were,
and stooped down infinitely below himself into our nature, to do
service for us.

Secondly, he was made *under the Law*, (obedient thereto in ful-
filling all righteousness,) to *redeem them that were under the Law*,
that they might receive the adoption of sons, Gal. 4. 4. 6. he did in our
stead, and as our surety, perfectly satisfie the whole Law in all its
commandments for us.

Thirdly, he *laid down his life for us*; he *humbled himself*,
and

and became obedient unto death, even the death of the crosse, Phil. 2. 8. he did shed his heart blood to make our peace, and to reconcile us unto his Father; and have we not then reason to trust him, and to beleieve that he will do us good? Why; single out a person who professeth sincerity unto us, that he would lay out half his estate to do us good, we would repose some confidence on him; but if we knew that he did so heartily affect us, that he would die for our good, O say we, you may trust on him, you need not fear to go to him, to request him for this or that courtesie. Now then, Christ hath not nakedly *professed*, but hath *really acted this*; he entred into bond, as it were, to satisfie for us; he did shed his very blood, and offered up his very life and soul for the beleever, and yet wilt not thou, (for whom he hath done and endured all this) yet wilt thou not trust in him for merit, for righteousnesse, for grace, for strength, &c.?

4. *His disposition.* Though a person were very able to do us good, yet if he hated us, we should (I confesse) have small encouragement to build our hopes upon him; for two persons are not to be trusted, viz. the *professed enemy*, and the *false friend*. But far be the thought of these things in us, touching Jesus Christ; He is graciously and lovingly affected towards beleivers. Eph. 5. 2. *Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.* Ephel. 3. 19. *To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulnesse of God.* Yea, *Paul* himself doth suggest unto us this love of Christ unto him, as the singular ground, why he did by faith live upon him, Gal. 2. 20 *The life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Sonne of God, who loved me and gave himselfe for me.*

Though I dare not trust an enemy, yet I dare to trust my friend; though I will not depend on him for help, yet on my friend I will: Why, a *friend loves at all times*, and love is the principle of bounty and of kindnesse: He that loves much will do much, beneficence and readinesse to help, they grow in love as the branches in the root, and therefore Christ is ready to help, because exceeding in love to his members. Observe the Apostle to this very thing in another place, Heb. 4. 16. *Let*

we come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtaine mercy; and finde grace to help in time of need.

There is need in us of mercy, (for we sinne dayly) and need in us of grace, (for we are still weak) but in heaven there is a throne of grace; there is mercy enough, and giace enough to help.

Obj. I confesse there is so, saith the beleeving person; but I am afraid to approach thereunto.

Sol. No, be not afraid, but *come boldly unto the throne of grace*; saith the Apostle. There is a twofold boldnesse; There is a *boldnesse of ignorance*; of this the Apostle speaks not: There is a *boldnesse of holy affiance*; of this he speaks: Thus he comes boldly, who presents all his needs and requests in the Name of Iesus Christ, and confidently relies upon him for supply and acceptante.

Obj. But, may the soul reply, what encouragement have I to raise this confident affiance?

Sol. See the Apostle, *ver. 15.* *For we have not an high Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.* As if he should say; I beseech you but to remember what your Christ is, and then you may boldly come; you are sensible; why; he is much more sensible of your infirmities, he knows your wants, yea, he feels them; feels them, how? there is a *feeling by way of passion* and change, so indeed he does not feel them; and there is a *feeling by way of compassion*, so he feels them (that is) he is tenderly sensible of them, he is very compassionately ready to help them: As a mother, she feels the want of bread; of heat, of cloaths, of liberty, in her child, she is infinitely ready to relieve him; such a kinde of feeling is there in Christ to his members in their need; *Ergo*, come boldly to him, crave of him, trust and rely on him for help.

Why else is he called a *mercifull High Priest*? What is mercifullnesse? If you look upon it in man, it is the *sounding of his bowels*, it is a *compassionate sympathy joyned with a singular readinesse to relieve*. And if you look upon it in God or Christ, it is a *most tender sense of mans infirmities and necessities*, accompanied with an *exceeding propension or readinesse to forgive the repensing sinner*, and to *help and succor and comfort the Beleever*.

Obj.

Obj. Thou art truly grieved and humbled for thy sinnes, and yet darest not to live by faith upon Christ, that he will get thee the pardon:

Sol. Why O man; Christ is a *merciful high Priest*; Here am I saith Christ, I am very ready to offer up the vertue of my blood for thee.

So, thou art much distressed about the want of grace, and the infolency of sin and Satan; why, saith Christ, loe here I am, I am very willing, very ready to do thee good, to give thee more grace to conquer thy sins for thee, and Satan for thee, I am a merciful high Priest, my bowels are troubled for thee, I love thee earnestly, I remember thee still.

5. *His conjunction and relation.* I pray you consider of this, How stands it 'twixt Christ and a beleever? what union is there? what relation? hath Christ no reference unto him? or hath he none unto Christ, that he is afraid to live upon him? To trust, to depend on him for his supplies.

Two things I will briefly touch,

1. The nearnesse of their relations.
2. The ground from thence to live by faith.

First, *there is a neer relation*, 'twixt Christ and a beleever, see *Cantiles* 6. 3. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.* Why; this is a neer relation indeed; a relation of mutual propriety that Christ doth say of a Beleever, Thou art mine, and the beleever can reciprocallly affirm of Christ, thou art mine; As *Adam* said of his wife, *Gen.* 2. 23. *Thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of flesh,* that same doth the Apostle apply back from the Church to Christ *Eph.* 5. 30. we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Of all rational relations, none so neere, so dear, so tender as that of a man and his wife, yet in such a relation doth Christ and a beleever stand.

Again, he is the *head of his body the Church*, *Ephes.* 1. 22. the whole Church is his body; every Beleever a member, Christ the Head. I spare the citation of more, as of the *tree* and the *branchet*, the *foundation* and the *building*.

Secondly, Now this relation is the ground of *affiance*,

a direct reason why we should live upon Christ by faith. For,

First, doth not *special relation give special title*: If a man becomes an husband, hath not the wife hereupon a title to the benefits and comforts of his estate, his riches are for her good, and his houses are for her good, and his land for her good; It holds just so here; faith espouseth a man to Christ, now *Christ is mine, and I am his*, and then the Apostle inters the title presently, 1 Cor. 3. 21. *All things are yours. Ver. 22. Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. Ver. 23. For ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods.*

Secondly, hath not *special relation a special obligation*? Why, though a man be not bound but in a bond of charity to relieve and help a woman before he is married; yet when once he is married, then by vertue of that relation, there lies upon him the bond of plaine and particular duty; he is bound to *love his wife as himself*, Eph. 5. 28. and to *nourish and cherish her*, v. 29. Mark now how the Apostle states our matter, even here too; (*Even as the Lord, the Church*) as if Christ were the very pattern of *this love*, of this *cherishing*, and of this *nourishing*, of this supplying and helping.

Thirdly, hath not *special relation a special affection*? I will do much for my servant; I will do more for my childe, but I will do most of all for my wife: Why? because she is neerer then all, she is my very selfe: Christ doth much for professed enemies; he leaves not himself without some testimonies of much kindnesse even to them; What; will he do much for strangers, much for enemies, and nothing for beleevvers, for his own members, for his own spouse? Will he *heal the care of one who came to take away his life*, and will he not (think you) *heale the heart of him who hath accepted of him unto life*? would he *pray* for them that nailed his hands, and pierced his heart, (*Father forgive them*) and will he not do much more for thee, who grieveest for thy sins, prizest him in thy judgement, embracest him with all thy heart, wouldest serve him with all thy might? For thee, who art *bore of his bone*, will he not *pray for thee*? *Father forgive him*, *Father supply him*, *Father comfort him*, *Father sanctifie him*, *Father strengthen and preserve him*.

6. *His invitation.* This adds to all the rest: Behold he calls thee, Rev. 3. 18. *Any of you gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.* Rev. 22. 17. *Let him that is a thirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely.* Heb. 10. 22. *Draw near in full assurance of faith.*

But this I have touched heretofore, therefore I spare to insist, proposing onely one thing; that the invitation of Christ is not onely to faith, but to the life of faith; not only to acceptance, but to dependence also; not only to take his person, but to trust, and rest upon his merit, and to serve our selves of his fulnesse. As if Christ should say unto a beleever, I am thine and all that I have is thine; now I pray thee in all thy necessities, come unto me, live upon my stock, draw from my fountaine; when guilt is upon thee, make use of my blood; when wants are upon thee, make use of my treasure; when temptations are upon thee, make use of my power; when infirmities are upon thee, make use of my intercession, &c.

7. *His assurances.* What is that will you say? Why; this it is, he doth assure the beleever, that if he will make use of him, he will not faile him, but will be effectual unto him.

See a place or two for this. Mark 11. 24. *What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* Joh. 14. 13. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that your Father may be glorified in the same.*

There be foure things by which we may be perswaded that Christ will do us good, if that we will live upon him by faith.

First his expresse promise; which you see in that place alledged, Joh. 14. 13. *Whatsoever ye ask in my Name, that I will do:* Observe it well he saith not, ask one particular onely, but *whatsoever ye ask in my Name*, be it mercy, or be it justification, or be it holinesse, &c. again; *I will do it*, as if he should say, ye shall not need to trouble your selves; and do not you fear, by reason of your unworthinesse; I will take the matter

upon my self, I will see it done: now brethren, when he that can help saith, I will help; when he that can do all things, promisetht us that he will do any thing for us, have we not cause to trust?

Secondly, *his sealing of the promises*: The promises (you know) do plentifully undertake all the latitude of the soules estate, and of the bodies too: There is *mercy* for *transgressions*, *grace* for *sinfulness*, *comfort* for *teares*, *peace* for *trouble*, *strength* for *weaknesse*, *victory* for *assault*, &c. All which promises Christ hath sealed and ratified by his blood, and therefore his blood is stiled the *blood of the Covenant*. See Heb. 9. 15, 17. 13. 20. The principall reason whereof is, to settle the hearts of beleevers, and to encourage their souls to live upon him for the performances of them, they being *all in him*, *Ten and Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20.

3. *His actual impetration* of all that good which now we do enjoy. Why O Christian, art thou afraid to live upon thy Saviour for more good? who was it that procured unto thee that same heavenly condition which now thou doest enjoy? hast thou any relation to God as thy God? Christ did procure it: Is any one sinne subdued? Christ hath done it: Is any one sinne got off and pardoned? Christ did procure it: Is there any melting in thy breast, any hatred of corruption, any desires of grace, any endeavour, any strength? Christ wrought them, Thou doest seek them, but Christ did work them.

Now this is to be learned, that what special thing Christ hath done, that is a pledge and an assurance that Christ is willing to do more: Every gracious fruit and work points us to him the fountaine and cause upon whom we are to trust, not only for the entrance, but also for the progresse and complearment of our spiritual estate.

4. *His personal donation*: He hath given himselfe unto thee, and will he not do other things for thee which is greater.

5. *His offices*: All of them call upon us to live upon Christ by faith. To what end was he *Priest*? was it to satisfie for himself? He needed not to satisfie for his own sinnes who was without all sinne: Nor doth he make his own peace, whom the

the father did, and doth ever love: Verily his satisfactions were for transgressors, and if there be any scope and intention of the vertues of that satisfaction, assuredly they look directly upon penitentiall beleivers: so likewise his *intercession* (which is another part of that office,) why? is it, think you, for himself? nay, in that he is a Mediator, and a Mediator is an Agent twixt two persons, he hath no wants to be supplied, he needs not to ingratiate himself, assuredly brethren, *he ever lives to make intercession for us*, for us, saith the Scripture, and He ever lives to do that work; He is continually offering and presenting the efficacy of his merit, which, as a sweet incense perfumes our continual Sacrifices, so making them acceptable, &c.

The like may be said of his *Prophetical* and *Kingly* offices: he was invested with them as our *Mediator*, and therefore for our good.

Now say, what a blasphemous absurdity were it to conceive, of Jesus Christ as of an *Idol*, which hath *eyes*, but *sees not*; which hath *ears*, but *heares not*; which hath *hands*, but *handles not*; which hath *feet*, but *walks not*. That he should be a *Priest* to offer for sinne, and yet we will not trust upon him for the pardon of the least; that he should *live to make intercession*, and yet we will not deliver any one request into his hands, or rely on him to obtaine us any one good thing which we need or crave: That he is a *King*, able to subdue all his enemies; a *Prophet*, and able to teach any mans heart; but we will not credit our souls upon him, we will not repose the victories of our corruptions upon his mighty arme, nor the reforming and beautifying of our spirits upon his singular wisdom and holiness. Why? what didst thou think or mean, when thou didst accept of him to be thy Mediator? didst thou conjecture that if once thou gavest thy consent to take him, that never after thou shouldst need him? or if so, wouldest never make use of him? Well, no more; what the Apostle said in another case, that I say in this, if we will not *live by faith* upon Christ, we do what in us lies *make void the Redemption of Christ, the intercession of Christ, the holiness of Christ, the glory and power of all the offices of Christ*.

9. If all this will not move us to live by faith in Christ, (that is) to trust upon him for the help and supply of our spiritual estate; then take one thing more, there is an *impossibility of supplies for thy soul any other way*; go and think, and act any other course to do thy soul good, besides this, and it shall be fruitlesse, after many years industry; as thou art, so still shalt thou be.

Obj. Thou wilt say, I will never leave complaining of this nature till it be bettered.

Sol. Thy nature is not bettered by complaint, but by grace, and that is in Christ, and never had, till we can trust.

Object. Thou wilt say, I will never leave grieving, nor praying, nor hearing, nor reading, nor fasting, nor conferring, till, &c.

Sol. 'Tis true, these are meanes, but where is the *cause*? What if a man should say, I will stay here all my life at these conduit pipes, but I will have water, whiles in the meane time the fountaine yields not forth. I confesse the Christian must apply himself to the Ordinances, but then it is Christ who sends forth the help, and then do the Ordinances deliver us our helps from Christ, not presently when one hears, but when effectually they have enabled us to beleeye. If thou canst heare and beleeye, pray and beleeye, mourne and beleeye, fast and beleeye, &c. Then good shall come unto thy soul.

Draw a thousand bonds, yet if they be none of them sealed, nothing is yet legally and forcibly made over and conveyed: many prayers availe little or nothing till they are sealed with faith, and now God will acknowledge our demands as authentick, and Christ will deliver unto us our hearts desire.

I had thought to have handled the *opposites of the life of faith*, with the *evidence of a true living by faith*, and also the *meanes* which might assist us to the life of faith: But I recal my self, I may not expatiate so farre, sufficient hath been touched for this Use, perhaps the subject may be more amply treated, if ever I should come to set down before that theme directly and intentionally: I therefore proceed to another Use.



CHAP. XVIII.

The improvement of faith to a full assurance.

Will yet advance on to one Use more; Since *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved*; therefore not only to labour for that faith, but to exalt *that faith*, my meaning is to improve this faith also, yet further to *strength and comfort*.

Divines observe a double act of faith.

One of adherence, by which it cleaves unto Christ, and relies upon him alone for righteousness, pardon of sin, grace and salvation.

Another is of evidence, by which it cleaves unto the soule its interest in Christ, and his righteousness and merits.

In the former, the soul renounceth all other corner stones, all other rocks of salvation; and trusts only upon the Name of Jesus Christ, accepts of him as the only Lord, and relies on him as the only Saviour, casting or rolling its heavenly and eternal safeties into his blessed armes.

In the latter, the soul feels it self reciprocally embraced by Christ; I have *accepted of him to be my Lord*, and he saith, *I am thy King*.

I have *relied on him to be my Saviour*; and he saith, *I am thy salvation*; For *pardon of sinnes*, and he saith unto me, *Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee*.

Now to this part of faith do I desire to mount the soule of a true beleever, viz. not only to apprehend Christ, but to know himself to be *apprehended by him*; not only to believe, but to know him whom he hath believed. To rise thus far by faith to

an assurance, that *Christ is my Christ; my Redeemer liveth, who gave himself for me; My Lord, and my God*, that he is my righteousness, my redemption, my propitiation.

For the better settling and exciting of you in this particular, I will briefly touch at these things.

1. What the assurance of faith is.
2. It may be had.
3. It should be had.
4. The Arguments to stir us up to labour for it (that is) to know our riches, and to know our possessions.
5. The means to get it.

SECT. I.

Quest. 1. **W**hat the assurance of faith is.

Sol. It is a victorious conclusion against the strength of doubts, whereby the minde of a believing person is ascertained and perswaded, and upon good ground settled, concerning his personal interest in Christ and his benefits.

For the better opening of this description, be pleased to observe these subsequent propositions.

1. That the assurance of faith, it is the conclusion of an evangelical syllogisme: The syllogisme is this, *Whoever repents and believes in Christ, Christ with his benefits are his, and he is Christ; but I do truly repent and believe in Christ, therefore Christ and his benefits are mine, and I am his.*

In this Syllogisme there are three propositions.

The first is, a Proposition of most infallible certainty, it being expressly the voice of Jesus Christ himself, and of it the minde hath no doubt, but fully assents unto it as a principle of Divine truth, *viz. That he who repents and believes in Christ, is his, and he is Christ.* And of this the minde of a believer may be abundantly perswaded without questionings, and doubts, for as much as it is a part of the Word of God, to whose absolute truth it doth plentifully subscribe.

The

The second is a proposition, carrying with it the direct act of faith, in which the believing soul doth accept of Christ, or receive him, and trust upon him, by vertue of which there ariseth a most real and true union 'twixt Christ and the believer.

The third and the last, which is the conclusion or inference drawn from both the former, comprehends in it the *formal assurance of a believing heart*, that therefore Christ is mine and I am his.

That he who beleeveth in Christ, hath Christ, and shall be saved; this is not yet that *subjective assurance of justifying faith*, for as much as many an hypocrite may beleve that truth, and yet have no personal interest in Christ.

Againe, that I do beleve in Christ, neither is this *essentially assurance*, for as much as to beleve is one thing, and to be assured is another thing; many a good heart may accept of Christ upon all his termes, and articles of peace and life, and may cast and repose it self on him as the only rock and hope of the soul, and yet it may be so farre from assurance, (even at that time when it doth so earnestly cleave unto Christ) that instead of assurance, it may be both tossed and prevailed upon by doubtings, suspitions, and feares, concerning its particular and personal propriety in Christ and in his merits.

But the last of the propositions, *I am Christs, and Christ is mine*, this is *formal assurance*: for this concludes the dispute of the heart, and hath in it particular and personalevidence.

2. It is a *victorious conclusion* against the strength of doubting: you know that in the minde of man, there are three kinds of working about an object comprehending goodnesse and truth.

One they call *peremptory assenting*, and *peremptory dissenting*; in which the minde doth yeild plainly, or else refuseth to subscribe, and grant the matter proposed to be true and good.

Another they call *doubtings*, which are the wavering acts of of the minde, wherein it doth not absolutely grant or deny, it doth not absolutely conclude, that so it is, nor absolutely,

that so it is not; yet rather outlines (for want of further evidence in the soul.) that it is not so, then that it is so.

The third they call evidence or assurance, which is such a work of the minde, wherein, against all doubtings and suspicions, the minde sees clearly the thing to be so, or not to be so. And thus is it here in the assurance of faith, it hath such a light, the minde hath that it is able to rise beyond, and against doubtings, and to convince the soul against all suspicions, that Christ indeed is mine, and I am his.

Where, by the way observe thus much, that assurance doth presuppose some doubtings, for if the mind of a believer had not doubtings about its personall interest, it could not well be said to be now assured. Doubtings did verily, and do, and may work in a believing soul; yea, but am I sure that Christ is mine, is it certain that my sins are pardoned? I trust they are, but I fear they are not.

Now assurance comes and conquers those workings, and clears all the doubting arguments, and convinceth the minde, that of a truth Christ is mine, and my sins are pardoned.

There are two degrees of doubtings.

One consists in the *questioning of our believing proprieties*, is Christ mine, is his righteousness mine, &c?

Another exceeds this, and consists in *doubtation*; when the soul is suppress'd by the strength of these doubtings, to side with it, and still to hang in suspense.

Now this latter degree (especially) is assurance opposite unto; namely, it conquers our doubtings, answers our arguments, clears it unto the soul against the many suspicions which did arise, that Christ doth indeed owne it, that he is the Saviour thereof, and therefore I call it a victorious conclusion.

3. *Assurance of faith*, it is an *ascertaining or perswading* a; and that is proper and inseparable from assurance; therefore is it so expressed in Rom. 8. 38. *I am perswaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor. 39. Nor Height, nor Depth, nor a*
other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which

is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Yea, and it is expressed by a word of personal certainty, 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed*: In knowledge there is alwayes a certainty, for that is one of the maine differences 'twixt it and opinion, that the one leaves the minde uncertain and wavering, and the other determinates the minde with certainty, and infallibility.

Whiles the minde remains like a paire of indifferent scales, which bend this way and that way, or like a boat in the river, now floating up, and then sinking down; now reeling to this side, by and by to that side; it cannot be said to be assured, perhaps Christ is mine, perhaps I am his; this is a plaine uncertainty, for the minde is not perswaded. But in the assurance of faith the minde is like a scale that weighs down, it is perswaded, and ascertained, there is a prevalent evidence of the thing. Not only in *absolute termes*, that Christ belongs to a believer, but in *reflexive termes*, that Christ belongs to me, he gave himself for me, and he is my redeemer, and this particular, or personal perswasion is assurance.

4. Assurance is not all kinds of perswasion or ascertaining, there are two kinds of assurance or perswasion of the minde touching a mans personall interest in Christ.

One is *imaginary* and *deluding*: for as the heart of a man may deceive it self about the habit of faith, (or any other grace); so it may delude him about the acts, and degrees of the same; doth the true believer believe in Christ? so thinks the Hypocrite, that he doth too: Hath the true believer a perswasion of his personall propriety in Christ, which cleares the minde of doubting? so hath the Hypocrite too, a most exalted confidence and iron faith that would never bend, nor bow by doubtings. It may be with him as with a poore man in a dreaime; what the rich man hath by propriety, and in possession, that same thing may the poorest man have in a dreaming fancy, and imagination.

But then ask the Hypocrite, by what grounds art thou thus confidently perswaded; what did encline thy mind hereto, what promise hast thou found that Christ is, and will be his, whose heart was never humbled for sin, whose heart still retains love of sin? Now, as the man who being demanded

how.

how he came without his wedding garment, he is speechlesse.

The fool (saith Solomon Prov. 14. 16.) *rageth and is confident,* and so the presumptuous person, He sinneth, and yet is perswaded he walketh in his sinnes, and yet is assured.

I pray you remember that the assurance of faith is no such absolute and boystrous feeling of the minde, that Christ is mine however, though I be never so ignorant and wicked, and though I live never so wretchedly and profanely; yet Christ is mine, and God is my mercifull Father, and my sinnes are pardoned: O no, this is a *Diabolical* assurance, it is no *Evangelical* assurance.

Another is *grounded, and divinely rational*, and it alwayes followes sound repentance and faith: That assurance which goes before these, is false; absolutely I am bound to repent and to believe, but I cannot be assured, but in a conditionall order: If I should be assured that Christ were mine before, before I did believe, this were a lie: forasmuch as Christ is not mine, untill I do by faith accept of him, and if I should be assured that my sins were pardoned before I did repent, I did in this delude mine own heart, forasmuch as sin is not pardoned, unlesse it be repented of. No, but I must repent of my sins, I must accept of Jesus Christ offered unto me in the Gospel, to be my Lord and Saviour, and now I labour to be assured, now I come to be perswaded, having subscribed to all the propositions, and articles of the Gospel, that now Christ is mine, and I do by the Word convince my soul that so it must be. For thus I argue with my soul, whosoever repents, and believes, and endeavors to walk in Christ, assuredly Christ is his, and he is Christs; but I do this, *Ergo*, Christ is mine.

I cannot make so short a cut as the presumptuous person doth, Christ died for sinners, therefore for me; God is mercifull, therefore my sins are pardoned without any more ado. O no, there is an orderly progresse in true assurance: It doth not (*saltem facere*) stride over to extreames; As if a man should see a Lease drawn, and presently concludes the houses are mine, the lands are mine; No, but he must hear, and understand, and weigh things, and subscribe, and seal to the conditions, and then he may

may safely and boldly say that they are his. So must the soul *bearken to the tenor of the Gospel*, understand both the precious offer, and the peculiar conditions of Christ; then he must consent unto them, and accept of Christ to be Lord and Saviour, and resolve to forsake every sin, and to yield up his heart and life to the obedience of Christ, and earnestly *seek the Lord* by his Spirit, *to persuade him of his particular interest in Christ*, and look up steadfastly, and wait upon the Lord in the use of the ordinances; and other consecrated means; Thus is the assurance of faith wrought in the soul; and upon these grounds doth it settle the mind.

5. Lastly, *Assurance of faith* (concerning which we speak) directs man, even to a *personal evidence of his particular interests in Christ and his benefits.*

There is you know a double evidence.

One is *real*, and respects the thing, or object to be believed;

Another is *personal*, and respects the state of him who doth believe;

Now assurance of faith, consists in the determining of the mind, about the particular goodnesse of that thing, which it assents unto in the general as most true, *viz.* That Jesus Christ is my Lord, and my God, that he is salvation for me; it opens the eyes as it were to see, what Christ is to me, and what he hath done for me, and what he will do to me.

And thus briefly have you had a short explanation of the nature of this assurance: a most heavenly thing it is, and only believers have it, though all reach not yet unto it; I now proceed to another enquiry.

SECT. II.

Quest. 2. **V V** *Hether such an assurance of faith may be had?*

Sol. The Papists will not hear of it by any means, (some of them) unless in an extraordinary way: They conceive that faith is notable to raise the mind beyond a moral hope, and

conjecture, and many lewd and lazy Protestants shake hands with them in that opinion. But I will cleare it unto you, *that every believer may come to this assurance*: It is a possible thing, I dare not say that every believer *de facto* is assured, yet he may be assured of his particular interest; and this I will evidence easily.

1. *The believing soul is not incapable of persuasion*: They say that faith doth not destroy, but elevate the understanding, and that same is a truth, for it doth new temper the understanding, and the will, but not overthrow their substantial natures and abilities. Now this is undeniable, that the power of reflexion is natural to the understanding: It is such a faculty which is able to look upon its own actings, and its own state; yea, and *persuasion by way of certainty*, the understanding is capable of it; forasmuch as it is by knowledge, and sense, and experience made most assuredly certain, about many objects and conclusions;

Now because faith doth not destroy, but elevate the minde, it may by faith come to a persuasion and reflexion.

2. Again, to urge things (as yet) in a rational way; *Faith can see as strong reason, and argument to persuade and settle the minde, and assure it, as the Philosopher can to raise the minde to a certainty of his conclusions*; The mindes persuasion depending naturally upon strong evidence and the power of argument;

Now faith can bring as strong arguments to convince and persuade the minde: for its arguments depend upon two strong testimonies, One of the *infallible Word of God*, the other on the *voice of a renewed conscience*; Ergo,

3. *God would not promise that to a believer in this life, which is impossible for the believer to rise unto*: Forasmuch as promises are of things as future, they are the undertaking of good things, which shall come to passe, and be performed, now every future thing is a possible thing, that which shall be, we may confidently affirme of it that it may be; But this personal evidence or assurance, it is a thing which God hath promised, *Exch. 34. 30. They shall know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel are my people*, *Hos. 2. 19. I will be-
troth*

ereth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will, &c. Verſe 23. I will ſay unto them, thou art my people, and they ſhall ſay, thou art our God.

4. I ſpare to add the ſtrength of the divine Spirit in its reflections on the ſoule, as alſo that perſwaſive virtue in a renewed conſcience; and the many experiences in many Chriſtians who have attained unto this aſſurance; all which doth clearly evidence that it is a thing poſſible: That which the Spirit is able to force in a believing ſoul; that which many a believing ſoul hath attained unto; that ſame is a poſſible thing, but, &c. Ergo.

SECT. III.

Queſt. 3. **V** Hither every Believer ſhould ſtrive to the aſſurance of faith?

Sol. I will promiſe onely a thing or two.

One is, that ſome duties concerne all men at all times, and immediately, as to repent and to believe.

Other duties concern ſome men, and thoſe in an order and mediately: As to be aſſured of a mans particular intereſt in Chriſt, it is not an immediate duty, it doth not concern a man meerly, as an abſolute ſinner: for a man who is unconverted and yet unbelieving is not bound to be perſwaded that he is Chriſts, and Chriſt is his, unleſſe we will ſay, that he is bound to be perſwaded of a lie; no, but he muſt firſt be a believer, he muſt accept of Jeſus Chriſt upon his own termes, and being a believer, I ſay, he is bound to labour for particular aſſurance: Not to let the real intereſt of Chriſt in him, and of his ſoul in Chriſt, to hang hovering and in diſpute, but to determine them by particular and perſonal evidence.

Againſt, promiſe this, it is one thing to ſpeedily ſatisfie: whatever believer hath, and it is another thing to ſpeak at juſt; what every believer ſhould have: It is true, that every one

who hath Christ, cannot be yet assured, and say, that Christ is mine, but then, as Christ is really his (as certainly he is thine, as thy husband i. thy husband) so the Christian is obliged to assure his heart thereof.

Which I shall easily clear by Argument.

1. We are bound to *draw near unto God in the full assurance of faith*, Heb. 10. 22. Which is, as I conceive, in a cleare perswasion that we shall not faile, but enjoy the good which he promisseth; now this cannot be, unlesse a man be assured and perswaded that God is his God, and Christ is his Christ: for as much as *perswasion of audience* doth always arise from a presupposed *perswasion of personal and mutual interest*; I cannot by faith be perswaded that God will give such a good thing, or such, unles I am first perswaded, that he is my God, that God is my God, or Christ is my Christ; It is a fundamental perswasion, upon which all others are built; for this gives life and settlement to my doubting soul; I many times doubt, but shall I have this thing which I ask? yes, sayes the beleieving heart? but how are you assured of it? I reply, because God is my God, he hath given himself unto me, Ergo he will give this, but how know you that God is your God? Upon good ground; why; saith the beleieving soul, of that I am abundantly perswaded, I doubt it not, hereupon the soul raiseth it self to that other assurance, of *acceptance and audience*, why; then I will not doubt of this, I will be confident that then the Lord will heare, for he is my God; and David goes this way very often.

2. We are bound (all our dayes) to give God thanks for his greatest mercies, now I think that the bestowing of Christ upon the soule is as great a mercy as ever poore sinners had.

Obj. It is so, but what of this?

Sol. But we cannot give God hearty thanks whiles we are doubtful of our particular interest in Christ: Can'st thou go unto the Lord, and say? O Lord, I blesse thee from my soul, for all the mercies which thou hast conferred on me; health I have, and I know it, for which I do thank thee; riches I have, and friends, and this I know too, and for them I thank thee

thee too; I thank thee also exceedingly from the bottome of my soul, for that thou hast given thy own Sonne to me, Jesus Christ, but truly, I know not whether thou hast given him to me, or no: I thank thee exceedingly for the pardon of my vile sinnes in this blood, but verily I am not sure of this, I rather think they are not pardoned. Nay, this will not runne smooth, and the reason is, because so much particular evidence as God gives a man of his personal interest in himself, or Christ, or his merits, so much (and no greater) thankfulness will the soul be brought unto.

SECT. IV.

Quest. 4. **W**HAT Arguments to move beleivers to labour for the assurance of faith?

Sol. There are many.

1. As he said to Job, *Do the consolations of God seem small unto thee? That I say here, doth assurance seeme a small thing unto thee?*

Consider (seriously) the matters and things about which this assurance is conversant, and thou shalt finde them of the greatest consequence in the world.

What doest thou think of Jesus Christ for a sinner? Can there be a more excellent good then Christ? *I count all things but drosse and dung for the excellency of Christ,* said Paul, Phil. 3.^o or can there be a more necessary good for them that have Christ? Tell me in sad thoughts, that if thou hadst all the pleasures of the world, and all the honours ours of the world, and all the riches of the world, and yet wast Christlesse, that is, thou hadst no portion in Christ; why, what avails all this, as long as thou art Christlesse? as Abraham said, *seeing I am childlesse?* In whom is God reconciled unto thee but in Christ? and how wilt thou stand before God, if thou have not Christ? by whom canst thou get salvation, but by Christ? and why then wilt not thou force thy soul to give all diligence to make thy part in Christ sue to thy soul, that thou

thou mayest come in all cases to that of *Job*, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and with *Paul*, He loved me and gave himself for me.

Again, what dost thou think of the pardon of sinners? verily the time was once, even then when thy spirit did roare all the night, and thou foundest no quiet in the day, when thy misery was turned into the drought of Summer, and thy soul was disquieted within thee; I say in that time, thou couldst with many teares break out, and say, with *David*, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sinne is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* O what wouldst thou have given to have believed, that thy sinnes should be pardoned? thou couldst then discover death in so unpardoned a state and life, then in a discharged and absolved condition. Why I pray you, is pardon of sinne so precious a thing? and is the assured knowledge thereof a small thing? Is it not enough to have the pardon passe, not onely the scale of the King, but the eye also of the malefactor?

Psal 32. 1, 2.

Yea, yet farther, what think you of eternal life? what is it? O, I cannot reach it by thoughts, much lesse by words; *Life*! no such thing on the earth as it; *eternal life*, what thing in heaven more then it? To see my God, my Christ, to be gloriously united to them, to be filled with the perfections of holinesse, brightnesse of glory, to know him as we are known, to love him in the transcendency of love; I know not what I say; for I speak of eternal life: O! if the glimpse of divine favour here be the admiration of our soules, the perfection of our joyes, the heaven on earth! tell me, what is the futnesse of his favour? what is the full evidencie of his favour? what is the everlasting evidencie of his favour? Now, eternal life is all this, all this; alas I have said nothing of it yet; *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God hath, &c.*

And is not this a matter to be determinised and ascertained to our soules? what, to let eternal life hang in suspense; verily, though until we do mount and rise to the assurance of faith, we leave (for our part, though the thing may be sure in it selfe) even

even this also, our eternal life as a thing doubtful. Thou wilt not hold the least quillet of thy land, upon unevident and unsure term, yet wilt thou &c.

2. Assurance will marvellously settle and quiet the soul. David expresseth so much, *Psal. 4. 6. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Ver. 7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more then in the time that their corn and wine increased. Ver. 8. I will lay me down and sleep.* The ship at anchor is safe, but in a calme it is quiet; faith makes our state sure, and assurance peaceful.

Two effects he there delivers of this blessed assurance; one is a transcendent joy, and another is a compleat peace: It gladdens the heart, and it pacifies the heart: It is most true, that faith in its vital act (of acceptation) intitles us to both. Every beleever hath cause of great joy, & sweet peace; but it is faith in this eminent act (of assurance) which replenisheth the soul with actual joy, and actual comfort; For now the beleever sees and knows his happiness; He hath a Christ and knows it; he hath pardon of sinne, and knows it; he stands in favour of God, and knows it: that which held up his soule, is now opened; all the causes of his comfort shine, as it were, and clearly discovers themselves in a way of well grounded propriety. As David said concerning his enemies, *Psalme 27. 1. The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?* So the afflicted soule in this case can exyle, God is my God, Christ is my Christ, they have pardoned my sinnes, accepted of my person, what should trouble me? What should disquiet me? my soule doth now rejoice in God my Saviour. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died;* Romans 8. 34. sinne, that is pardoned; Justice, that is satisfied; my soul, that is reconciled; my person, that is justified; my prayers, they are answered; my heart, that is pacified, for God is mine, and Christ is mine, and I am his. Before I am assured, I see my sinnes, look up to Christ, and adventure my soule on him for pardon, I trust on him; yet I may feare; but when I am assured

faired, I see my finnes look up to Christ, and my soule is quiet and rejoyceth. As it was with the *Israelites*, when they were *Nearer the red sea*, they looked back on their enemies, and looked up to God, but yet they were *exceedingly afraid*: Afterwards, when they had *past through the red sea*, and *stood upon the shore*, they looked back upon the same enemies, but now as *drowned*, and then their *fignes* were turned into *joyes*; and their *feares* into *peace*: They *exceedingly rejoiced*. Why; in assurance, though we look upon the same finnes, yet not in the same manner: Now we look upon them as *drowned enemies*; as iniquities *cast into the depths of the sea*, as pardoned iniquities: Now, though sin doth grieve the soule, yet sinne pardoned doth quiet and rejoyce the soul.

3. Assurance doth arme the heart against future temptations.

There are two sorts of temptations, against both which the assurance of faith doth arme the beleever.

1. To sinne: Though assurance be a kinde of heaven upon earth, yet in this doth the *beatifical vision* differ from a *beleeving assurance*, that the one leaves no sinne at all, but the other is a day of great comfort to a beleieving sinner; yet even an assured person hath yet much of a sinning nature remaining in him.

Neverthelesse, though assurance doth not wholly *cast off feare*, yet it doth exceedingly *keep off sinne*: A beleieving person shall not easily sinne whiles he is reading his pardon, and looking his Christ in the face. *How can I do this great wickednesse and sinne against God?* If the meere respect of a God was so prevalent with *Joseph*; O how much more powerful is the propriety in a God? How can I do this great wickednesse and sinne against my God? *Should such a man as I flee*, said *Nebemiab*: so the assured Christian, should such a man as I sinne!

Nay, remember it: Sinne is never more odious to the heart, then when the heart is most assured: The great and rich mercy of God in Christ, it is the principal bane of a temptation: The man who formerly would have slept out a
 against

against the threats of justice, having now obtained mercy, trembles at the very thoughts of sinning.

2. *To despair*, it is possible for an assured person to sinne, and then this is probable, (and more then so) that new *sinings* will quickly cloud *old assurance* : Though a beleever looseth not his life, yet he may looke his health; and though he hath a Father still, yet by sinning he looseth the sight of that Father; and is hereupon exceedingly humbled and repents, and yet perhaps cannot read his former Evidences, he feares that he is cast off for ever, and shall be remembred no more. But yet an ancient assurance well grounded may assist the soul, and preserve the soul against despairing throwes; That God will not cast off the soul, *Jer. 31. 3. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindnesse have I drawn thee. Ver. 4. Again, I will build thee, and thou shalt be built. So Psal. 80. 30. If his children forsake my Law and walk not in my judgments. Ver. 31. If they break my statutes and keep not my commandments. Ver. 32. Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Ver. 33. Neverthelesse my loving kindnesse will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to faile. Ver. 34. My Covenant will I not break, &c. Sure mercies of David, Isaiah 55. 3. So for Christ, Ioh. 13. 1. Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.*

4. *Assurance by faith sweetens all other blessings to us* : Job speaking of many outward mercies, in his children, in his plenty, his honours, *Job 29. 5. 67. and ver. 3.* he recounts one which shadowed all of them, (*his candle shined upon my head.*) As if the evidence of Gods favour were like the light which gives life, and beauty to all the colours in the roome, and without which all our blessings lay dead and dark. O what an enlivening matter is this to all that I enjoy! and God is my God too, and Christ is my Christ too, and my sins are pardoned? too here is a dear and loving husband; yea, and God is my God too; here are tender and observing children; yea, and Christ is my Christ too; here is plenty of food, and raiment, and friends; yea, and my sins are

pardoned too. But the want of this may check all our blessings, and is able to marre the very comfort of our comforts; I am exceeding rich, yea, but I cannot yet say that God is my God; I am greatly honoured by man; yea, but I cannot yet say that Christ is my Redeemer; I have health and marrow in my bones, and want not for any outward mercy; yea, but I cannot yet say that my finnes are pardoned; for ought I know that may yet stand upon record, which may lose my soul for ever.

5. Nay, again, *it is able to sweeten all our crosses*; a crosse is more or lesse heavy, (to the Christian) by how much the more or the lesse God appears to the soul; The Disciples may even in a storme rejoyce, if Christ be in the Ship.

It was an excellent speech, that of Job 29. 3. *By his light I walked through darknesse*; and David answers him in Psal. 23. 4. *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evill, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staffe they comfort me*; How triumphant is Paul, and beyond both himself and all crosses, and all because of his assurance, and perswasion? Rom. 8. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distresse, or persecution, or famine, or nakednesse, or perill, or sword.* Ver. 37? *Nay in all these things we are more then conquerors through him that loved us.* Ver. 38. *For I am perswaded that neither Life, nor Death, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come.* Ver. 39. *Nor Heights, nor Depths, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.* Can more be said? need we to adde; See him againe in Romans 5. 2. *We rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God.*

Objection. Who would not, may some reply? in so great a good.

Sol. 3. *And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also*; and who can do this but he who hath some measure of assurance.

Indeed faith can make the soul to submit in a crosse, but

but it is assurance which makes the soul to rejoyce and to triumph.

What the Apostle spake of death, that is true of all afflictions, *the sting of them is sinne*: where the conscience is wounded, and the sight of heaven is darkened, there the crosse is heavy and bitter; A man hath a burden on his shoulders, and a burden on his conscience, and yet a burden that he cannot see any to smile on him, and comfort him;

But now when the spirit of a man is sound, and the evidence of faith is cleare, when a man feels all to be right within, all to be peace abroad, that all stands faire 'twixt him and his God; Nay, and he can see God as his God, the strength of this assurance, doth not onely allay a burden, but raiseth the heart exceedingly above it: *yet God is good to Israel*, and though I see *the Olive to faile*, and *the Fields not to yield*, and *the flocks to be cut off*, yet *I will rejoyce in the Lord*, *I will joy in the God of my Salvation*. *The Lord God is my strength*, Hab. 2. 17, 18.

Sixthly, *it makes all kinds of duty to flow and to rise*, I will instance briefly in some.

1. In the *Active*.

2. In the *Passive*.

1. *Active*.

1. *Praise and thankfulness*, Psal. 103. 1. *Blesse the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me blesse his holy Name*. Ver. 2. *Blesse the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits*. Verse 3. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities*: Nay, he is at it againe, Psal. 116. 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me*; *I will take up the cup of salvation*, &c. O the evidence and apprehension of so great a mercy and salvation! it fills every vaine of the heart, &c. Musick is highest and sweetest in the fairest weather. He who disputes his mercy can hardly blesse for it.

Now I see much forgiven, and therefore I blesse much: What! and all this forgiven to me, and so freely, and so

fully also, so many transgressions, yet to cover all, yet to be reconciled; yet to put down the gracious pardon before mine eyes.

2. *Prayers*: There are two properties in these, which will surely arise out of assurance.

One is *confidence* and *boldness*: A man will come boldly to the throne of grace who is once assured by faith: Now that of *John* comes in indeed, *1 John 5. 14.* *This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us*: Christ (I remember) teacheth his Disciples, (and in them all Believers) to pray for many excellent things, both for soul and for body, but then he preferred, he set this in the front, *Our Father*, as if he had clearly suggested this unto us, that the assurance of God as our Father, is that which gives unto the heart a strong confidence in all petitions; why; who will not come freely and confidently to a Father, to his Father, to his reconciled Father?

Another is *quickness* and *life* in the affections, *Psal. 63. 1.*

O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. Observe it; I will seek thee, there is now diligence; early will I seek thee, there is *quickness* of affection: and why I will seek thee early? because *O God, thou art my God.*

3. *Ordinances*: Now a man will flie to them, as *the Doves to the windows* (it is the Prophet *Isaiah's* expression;) A man hath an heart to bow the knee when he knows that my God will help him: A man hath an heart to *bear the Word*; when he knows my God will teach him to profit, and will speak peace unto him: A man will with cheerfulness address himself to the *Sacrament*, when he knowes this is the *blood which was shed for the remission of his sinnes*, and his salvation is there sealed. The Apostle hath an apt passage in *1 Pet. 2. 2.* *As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word*, and surely that is with much delight; and with much earnestness. (for so do babes desire the milk of the breasts) But what might stirre up this. *Ver. 3.* *If so be that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious*? a taste of God, of God as gracious, yea, this is it which whets the appetite, this sets on the heart to the ordinances indeed.

4. *All obedience*, actuating the whole kinds of duty.

Why, assurance in the soule makes all duty both *cheerful*, and *steadfast*, Psalme 26. 3. *Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes* (therefore) *have I walked in thy truth*.

Why is duty to good hearts sometimes so weary-some, so slack, so troublesome? verily, faith is weak, doubts are strong, feares are many; could they once see God to be their God, Christ to be their Lord and Saviour; sinnes pardoned in his blood, and all this to them. Now even the lame would walk, and the weary would runne, the heart would set upon obedience with all its strength, and all its care.

2. The like may be said for *passive obedience*: assurance enables it exceedingly: *The love of Christ constraineth us*, said Paul, 2 Corinth. 5. I remember the Apostle hath a notable passage, *Romans 5. 7. For a good man some will even dare to die*: That is for a bountiful man; a man of eminent and singular good to preserve him, for his sake, a private man would lay down his life: If the goodnesse and kindnesse of a man hath sometimes such a force with us, what influence then hath the goodnesse of a God upon a beleieving heart: the kindnesse, the blood of a Christ upon a beleieving and an assured heart? Who would not suffer reproach for Christ, who suffered death for him? who would not kiss the stake to bring him honour, who shed his blood to get his pardon, and to crown him with eternal glory? Beleeve it, assurance will make thy life more fruitful, and thy heart more suffering. Faith will make holy duties to be no burden, and assurance will make it a delight: Faith will make a man to bear the Crosse; and assurance will make a man to triumph under it: *We are more then conquerours*, said perswaded Paul.

Seventhly, *Assurance of faith*, it is a *bathing spring* to all our graces: Shall I instance in some?

1. The *mourning heart* doth much depend upon the assured minde: No man ever did, or ever shall take God by the hand, as reconciled to him, or look on Christ as redeeming him, or read his pardon with assurance, but his heart shall be

full of joy, and his eyes full of teares. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourne as a man mournes for his only child*, Zach. 12. 10. There is nothing softens the heart so well as faith, and which melts it so much as assurance. The powers of the greatest kindnesse, and most gracious love, do open the fountain of godly sorrow within the soul.

2. *Love kindles in the heart upon assurance. To whom much is forgiven, the same will love much*, said Christ, Luke 7. 47. *We love him because he loved us first*, said John. The love of God to us is the cause of our love to him againe, and againe, and the more that love is cleared to us, the more is our love rekindled to him; goodnesse is a cause of love, here it is; bountifullnesse is a cause of love, here it is; knowledge of both a special provocation of love, in assurance here it is.

What a thing is this! that God should give his Covenant to me, his Sonne to me, his Mercies to me, his loving kindnesse to me, his glory in heaven unto me! I love a man who defends my Name, I love a man who gives me a book, I love a man who gives me my ransom, I love a man who gives me a meales meat; Ah! poore things in comparison: how do I then infinitely exceed in love to my God, who I know hath pardoned, hath justified, hath accepted, will save me for ever?

More might be said of all particular graces whatsoever.

8. *Assurance by faith doth but ease us of the world, and mounts the soul above it.*

1. *It easeth us of the world*: How can he walk with cares, who is indeed perswaded that God is his Father; he that gave him Christ will give him all other things freely: God will not stand for a little earth, who hath bountifully given a whole heaven; and he will surely finde me food and rayment for my body, who found mercy and the blood of his own Sonne for my soul.

2. *Nay it mounts us above the world; they do observe that these lower things grow little and lesse, by how much the high-*

er a man is seated : If a man could be elevated to one of the celestial orbes, the whole world would seeme but a narrow spot of ground unto him. In one point this is most true, the neerer God draws unto the soule, the more nothing doth this world appeare.

O the blessed favour of God! the evidences of our union with Christ! This is like the light of the Sunne, which puts out the light of ten thousand candles: Thou wouldest never complaine of too little in the world, if thou haddest so much as made up a true assurance of heaven.

9. Lastly, *Assurance will breed comfort in life and confidence in death.*

Object. Why! are Gods people afraid many times to die? they cannot say with Christ, *I will go to my Father.*

They have the bond, but see not the seale: They are not assured of Reconciliation, of pardon, of salvation.

But if they could with *Simeon*, Take Christ into their armes; if once they could be assured, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

He who by assurance looks Christ in the face, may with cheerful confidence look death in the face: *I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ*, said Paul, Phil. 1. 23. How so verse 21? *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain:* But how knows he that? 2 Tim. 1. 12. *For I know whom I have believed, and I am perswaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* So, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

SECT. V.

Quest. 1. **N**OW I come to the last inquiry, by what means the soule may get up to this assurance?

Sol. I shall only prescribe such rules as reach a beleieving person. Therefore thus,

1. If thou be a beleever and wouldest be assured, then preserve the sense of thy own natural wretchednesse, and of the darknesse of thy soules state without assurance. Christ came to Mary when shee was weeping; and the Great God looks down upon the broken Spirit. The highest mountaine hath the first sight of the Sunne, but the lowest Christian hath the first sight of God. When the people of God were mourning, then saith God, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, and say unto them your sins are pardoned.*

Note.

You shall finde this, That the truely sensible heart hath three properties in it, which envite the Lord much to gratifie it with assurance, viz.

One that is very humble.

Another that is much in the prizing of Gods love and mercy.

And a third, that it is exceeding thirsty after a good look from God, after some taste of Christ, and God will satisfie all these.

2. *Be no strangers to the Ordinances:* you shall finde this, that the ripening of faith belongs to them as well as the seeds of it.

The word you know is the soule of faith, it was that which did incline the heart to yeild, which did make it to accept of Christ, and it is that also which can make us to know our possessions: 1 John 15. 13. *These things have I written unto you that beleeve on the Name of the Sonne of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.* So 1 John 1. 4 *These things we write unto you that your joy may be full.* More plainly: In whom, after you heard the Word of truth, ye beleaved, in whom also, after that ye beleaved,

ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1. 13.

For, look as the Word hath promises which draw the soul to Christ, so it hath promises to clear the soul in its interest in Christ, to answer all doubts and feares, and to answer the feare about acceptance, so it removes doubts which strive against evidence and propriety.

The Sacrament, you know, it is the *Seal of righteousness* which is by faith, Rom. 4. 11. Look, as a Seale doth distinguish, and confirme, and settle the minde, so is the Sacrament ordained to satisfie, and perswade the heart of a beleever. God appointed this Ordinance, as for other ends, so for this, That the matter might be out of doubt, out of controversie, that Christ is ours, and sinne is pardoned in his blood.

3. *Be much in prayer*: If a man would gaine assurance, he must be much in prayers, to perswade and assure the heart: *David found marvellous loving kindnesse*, but then he cried in supplications, Psalme 38. 21, 22.

Thou must pray earnestly for mercy, earnestly for pardon, and most earnestly for Christ.

And thou must use diligence. Remember this, that in all thy endeavours for assurance, thou must use diligence, a cold hearing, a cold reading, a cold praying will not bring the soul to it: No, you must be most diligent and fervent in them, and so, &c.

4 Again, with all these there must be joynd strong upright care to please God.

This know, that sinne separates, but uprightnesse gathers God and the soule together. *To him that ordereth his conversation aright, I will shew the salvation of the Lord*, Psalme 50. 23.

Why? *Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart*, Psal 97. 11. See that of the Prophet, *Isa. 64. 5. Thou missest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways*. Unevennesse of heart or way, it is a flaw, and it is that which cuts us off after many prayers, it renews our doubtings again, and we are as far to seek as at the

first, but if the heart be pained, if it be sincerely set for God, desirous to please him in all things, this a compendious way of assurance: the Word falls in directly to settle and confirm such a soul: The steps of the Words direct us to the sight of our God.

5 Lastly, *you must be much in the exercise of faith.* There be two parts of it which you must improve. One is, *you must against all sense and feeling, and against all the contradictions of reason and unbelief, cast the soul on God in Christ, and rest on him to be your God, and on Christ to be your Lord and Saviour, and that your sins shall be pardoned.*

Then you *must wait*, you must not limit God, but seek still, *I will hearken, said David, what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his Saints.* Psalme 85. 8. See Isa. 64. 4. *Since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ears, neither hath the eye seen, O God besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him. The Lord will wait that he may be gracious: blessed are they that wait for him,* Isa. 50. 18: so Isa. 25. 9. *It shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, &c. This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his salvation.* For Psal. 147. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*

So that this is the summe of all, walk with all uprightness, and with an humble, penitent, and believing soul, cast your sins upon God in Christ, trusting in him alone for the favour of God, pardon of sinnes, and eternal salvation, and wait upon God for all this in the use of the means, and constant diligence in prayer; you shall at length have your hearts desire, you shall hear from God thus much, *I am thy salvation;* and from Christ as much: *Be of good cheer, thy sinnes are forgiven thee.*

FINIS.



A N ALPHABETICAL Table.

A Affiance.

THe neer relation betwixt
Christ and a beleever is
the ground of Affiance.

p.254

Anointing, *vid.* Christ.

Antecedent.

The difference betwixt an Ante-
cedent and a cause.

p.90

What antecedents go necessarily
before faith.

p.91

There is no concluding the pre-
sence of the habit of faith, from
the common antecedents of
faith.

p.91

Assent.

Assent, how one beleever differs
from another therein.

p.121,

122

Assisting

Assisting.

Assisting vertue from Christ. p.
143

Assurance.

Three things granted about assu-
rance.

p.38,39

How assurance is an act of faith.

p.39

Assurance of Christs willingnesse
an encouraging ground to be-
leeve.

p.196

A double assurance of Christs
willingness.

p.196

Assurance, a fruit of an eminent
faith.

p.93

Assurance easily let go, argues a
weak faith.

p.134

The improvement of faith to a full
assurance.

p.259

What the assurance of faith is.

p.260

Assurance is the conclusion of an
evangelical syllogisme.

p.260

O o 2

Assu-

The Alphabetical TABLE

Assurance is a victorious conclusion against the strength of doubtings. p.261

Assurance is an asserting or persuading act. p.262

Two kinds of assurance touching our personal interest in Christ, and the difference of them. p.263

Assurance if faith directs to a personal evidence of particular interest in Christ and his benefits. p.265

Every believer may be assured thereof. p.266

Arguments to evince it. Ibid

To be assured how far it is a duty. p.267

A Christian is obliged to assure his heart that Christ is his. p.268.

Arguments to evince it. Ibid

Want of assurance hinders thankfulness. p.268

Arguments to persuade to labour for assurance. p.269

The things about which assurance is conversant, are of greatest consequence. p.269

Assurance will marvellously quiet and settle the soul. p.271

Assurance arms the heart against future temptations. p.270

Assurance sweetens all other blessings to us. p.273

Assurance sweetens all our crosses. p.274

Assurance makes all kind of duty to flow and to rise. p.275

Assurance is a bathing spring to all our graces. p.277

Assurance doth ease us of the world, and mounts the soul above it. p.278,279

Means by which the soul may get up to this assurance. p.280

Atheisme.

Natural Atheisme a hindrance to faith. p.168

How to be removed. p.169

Atheisme, what it is. p.168

B

Beleever, Believing.

Believing in Christ, what it doth import. p.29

The general nature of believing in several propositions. p.30

The difference betwixt knowledge, opinion and belief. p.30,31

Believing, as restrained to a divine and theological consideration, what it is? p.31

Vid. Faith.

In what sense beleeving in Christ is the only way to be saved. p.34

The difficulty of believing in Jesus Christ. p.79

The facility of error and mistake about believing, and what makes it so. p.84

Comfort for all true believers. p.109

Believers are in a true and sure

The Alphabetical T A B L E.

sure way to heaven. p.110
Every Beleever hath a sure interest in Christ. p.140
Every Beleever hath a beneficial interest in Christ. What these benefits are. p.140,141
Motives to beleeving. p.158
God deals mightily with the soul to believe in Christ. p.165
We are no losers by beleeving on the Lord Jesus Christ. p.166

Boldness.

Beleevers may with boldness approach the throne of grace. p.116
This boldness cures sinful modesties and unbelieving fears. p.116

C

Certainty.

The difference betwixt reflexive certainty and real certainty of interest. p.140

Change.

An inward change an infallible testimony of a living faith. p.98
There is a change produced by faith. p.99
How faith produceth a change of the condition, and how of the person. p.99
Every beleever hath a changed and holy heart. p.99
Wherein this change lies. Ib.
No man hath a changed nature but a beleever. p.100
Enquire after this change in thy self. p.100

Change of condition easily complied with, an evidence of strong faith. p.128

Christ.

What it signifies. p.18
Christs anointing doth import his assured ordination, abundant qualification, sweet and pleasant acceptation both with God and man. p.19,20
Unto what Christ was anointed. p.20

Vid. Priest, Prophet, King.

Christs and his Churches enemies, who they are, and how conquered by him. p.28

Whole Christ the adequate object of faith. p.41

Whole Christ taken and received by faith. p.42

How Christ is taken by faith as a Saviour and Priest. p.43

How Christ is taken by faith, as a Saviour, and King, and Prophet. p.45

Taking and receiving Christ as Lord and Saviour, hath many things in it. p.46

Vid. Taking.

All that can save and justify a man, is only to be found in Christ as the meritorious cause. p.62

Christ should be the main scope of our preaching and studying. p.67

Christ may be preached two ways. p.67. Qo 3. Plen-

The Alphabetical T A B L E.

*Plentifulnesse of our supplies in
Christ encourageth to live by
faith on him.* p.248

*The ordination of Christ to supply
believers, encourageth trust.*

p.249
*Christs services done in behalf of
believers encourageth trust. p.*

250
*Christ is given out of rich grace,
mercy and love.* p.190

*Christ is worth your taking,
though we be unworthy of recei-
ving.* p.191

*Christs disposition encourageth
trust.* p.251

*Christs conjunction and relation
encourageth trust.* p.253

*Christs imitation encourageth
trust.* p.255

*Christs assurances that he will not
fail him that lives by faith on
him.* p.255

*Four things by which we may be
perswaded that Christ will do
us good, if we live by faith on
him.* p.255

*Christs offices, encouragements
to live faith on him.* p.256,
257

*Impossible to have supplies for the
soul any other way, then by
faith in Christ.* p.258

.Comfort.

*Comfort, not sure, but by belie-
ving.* p.64

Distinguish betwixt the ground

*of our comfort, and the testi-
monies of our interest in them.*

p.64

Communion.

*No prison can boult out com-
munion with God.* p.3

*Communion with God in Ordi-
nances and duties, not so sweet
in a weak believer, as in a
strong.* p.149

Reasons of it. p.150

Confidence.

*Confidence of easie answers for
great matters, an argument of
strong faith.* p.125

Covenant.

*A double Covenant, and for two
wayes of life.* p.56

*Impossible to be saved by the legal
Covenant, whence it is so.* p.
56

Vid. Holiness.

*Unbelief makes void the Cove-
nant of grace.* p.89

*A true believer is in singular
Covenant with God.* p.114

*Covenant of grace, what it is in
the offer and revelation of it,
and what in respect of our en-
trance and admission into it.* p.
114,115

*Happinesse of being in Covenant
with God.* p.115

Every

The Alphabetical TABLE.

Every beleever in the same fundamental Covenant with God.

p. 145

Crucifying.

Crucifying vertue from Christ.
p. 143

D

Day.

*Day of grace, fear of having out-
stood it, diuers considerations a-
bout it.* p. 203

Debts.

*Christ takes our debts upon him-
self, the comfort of it.* p. 112

Degrees.

*Degrees of faith, what they are,
and how beleevers differ in
them.* p. 122, 123

*Reasons of the diversity of degrees
of faith.* p. 124

Delay, vid. Hasty.

Desertions.

*In times of desertions to live up-
on Christ and the promises, an
argument of a great faith.* p.

Discouragement.

*Stedfast following Christ notwith-
standing discouragements ar-
gues a strong faith.* p. 125

Distrust.

*Arguments of distrust, when they
grow weak, faith gets strength.*
p. 128

Doubtings.

*Doubtings argue weaknesse of
faith.* p. 131

Doubtings prejudice our suits.
p. 150

*Doubts of the weak beleever a-
bout his title, and mistakes in
passages betwixt God and the
soul.* p. 155

Duty.

*Want of a heart to duty, should
not discourage from beleeving.*
p. 210

*Faith puts life into our duties, the
Reasons of it.* p. 211

E

Exchange.

*A real exchange betwixt Christ
and beleevers, and wherein it is.*
p. 111

F

Faith.

130

*Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
the only way to salvation.* p. 13

Faith in Christ described. p. 32

*The spring and fountain of justify-
ing faith.* p. 32

The subject of faith. p. 34

The seat of faith. p. 35

Three

The Alphabetical T A B L E.

Three kinds of faith distinguished,
viz. Credere Deum, Deo,
in Deum. p.36

How faith is seated in the will,
how in the understanding. p.
36,37

The proper act of faith as justifying.
p.37

The object of justifying faith. p.40

The immediate object of justifying
faith. p.41

Vid. Christ.

The consequent object of faith. p.
48

Faith may be considered,

Absolutely,

Actually.

Correlatively,

Instrumentally.

How faith justifieth, p.71,72

Whether faith deat with the per-
son of Christ, or the benefits of
Christ first. p.73

Divers kinds of faith. p.84

Historical faith, what it is. p.84

Faith of miracles, what it is. p.85

Temporary faith, what it is. Ib.

How temporary faith differs from
justifying faith. Ibid

The consimilitude betwixt faith
and presumption. p.86

The easinesse of faith, short of
justifying, and of presumption,
and our aptnesse to rest in that.
Ibid

Rules for the discovery of faith. p.
90

Some things faith doth produce,

not as essential properties, but

as magnificent testimonies,
and how we must distinguish be-
twixt them. p.91,93.

Some things faith doth produce,
yet not alwayes, therefore we
may not conclude a waist of faith
from the absence of these. p.
91,92

Many inward contrarieties to the
intrinsicall acts and fruits of
faith. p.94

Evidences of faith cannot be gi-
ven by way of abstraction, but
by way of existence, how to be
understood. p.95

A double contrariety to faith. Ib.

Faith endeavours after increase,
and wherein. p.107

Wherein true faith in one differs
from faith in another. p.120,
121

Signes of a great and strong faith.
p.125

Signes of a weak faith. p.131

Vid. Weak.

The vital act of faith is not ra-
flexive, but direct. p.136

Motives to greaten our faith. p.
156

Exhortations to labour for faith
p.157

Impediments and hindrances to
faith. p.168

Means whereby God works faith.
p.176

The proper rise and ground of
faith is without our selves. p.
189

To receive Christ by faith, is not
a mat-

An Alphabetical TABLE.

a matter of merit, but a point
of duty. p.190

Faith no hindrance to holiness. p.
208.

The time of contrariety is the time
for faith to work. p.209

Two offices of faith. p.216

Vid. living by faith.

Faith of adherence, and faith of e-
vidence, the difference betwixt
them. p.259

The frequent exercise of faith im-
proves it to assurance. p.282

Fruitful.

True faith is fruitful.

The more fruitful, the stronger
faith. p.130

G

Glory, *vid.* Salvation.

The inheritance of glory, all be-
lievers have a like interest in
it. p.142

How many wayes God hath glory
from us. p.153

God.

The actions of God of several
sorts. p.72

How many things in God encou-
rage to live by faith, as Gods
al sufficiency. p.231

Gods command. p.232

Gods promises. p.233

Gods power. p.234

Gods truth and fidelity. p.236

Gods performance to them that
have lived by faith. p.237

Goodness.

Lured of goodnesse precipitates e-
vil men to acts of injustice. p.2

Gospel.

The preaching of the Gospel is
of necessary and singular conse-
quence. p.65

Ghost.

Holy Ghost, how he may be said
to justify. p.71

Grace.

Salvation is only by grace. p.63
The best graces are but imperfect
excellencies. p.113

H

Habits.

Two sorts of habits acquired and
infused. p.33

Hasty.

A stout hasty to be answered, is
weak in faith. p.132

Heart.

Heart or will the seat of faith. p.
35

Hearing.

Meer hearing of Christ and his
Doctrine, will not save. p.66

Divers sorts of hearing. lb.

Historical, *vid.* Faith.

Holiness.

Inherent holiness cannot justify
and save. p.56

Inherent holiness is defective and
imperfect. p.57

The conscience dares not rest upon
it. p.58

Actual holiness, no meritorious
efficacy in it. p.58

Humble, humbled.

Faith makes the heart humble.
p.103

P p

A

An Alphabetical TABLE

<i>A soul that thinks himself not humbled enough, answered.</i> p. 197	<i>Christ's intercession, what is meant by it.</i> p. 25.
<i>A twofold humbling according to a double cause of it, and the workings of each.</i> p. 197, 198	<i>Inherent.</i>
<i>Fitness for Christ not to be judged by the measure and strength of legal humblings: the reasons of it.</i> p. 198	<i>Inherent qualities and abilities insisted on as means of persuasion, argues weakness of faith.</i> p. 134
<i>Some things, which if they follow upon legal humblings, may be subordinate encouragements to the heart to put it selfe upon Christ.</i> p. 199	<i>Joy.</i>
<i>Humblings and meltings of soul not hindered by faith.</i> Ibid	<i>Spiritual joy the sole fruit of faith.</i> p. 92
<i>But furthered by it.</i> p. 200	<i>Several sorts of joy, whence they spring.</i> p. 92
	<i>Joy an inseparable fruit of faith.</i> p. 92
	<i>Joy three ways considered.</i> p. 146, 147
I.	<i>Justifie, Justification.</i>
<i>James.</i>	<i>There is not a co-operation of faith and other graces to justify, yet there is a co-existence of them in the person justified.</i> p. 55
<i>James, what kind of faith he speaks of.</i> p. 104, 105	<i>Justification only in Jesus Christ.</i> p. 68
<i>Ignorance.</i>	<i>Justification, the word opened.</i> p. 69
<i>Grosse ignorance an impediment to getting faith.</i> p. 169, 170	<i>The nature of it designed.</i> p. 70
<i>Ignorance of our sinful condition, of Gods justice, and of the excellency of Christ, impediments to getting faith.</i> p. 170	<i>Justification an action in God.</i> p. 71
<i>Imputed, vid. Righteousness.</i>	<i>The kinde of this action.</i> p. 72
<i>Infidelity.</i>	<i>The meritorious cause of it.</i> p. 71
<i>The dangerous state of positive infidelity.</i> p. 158	<i>The applying cause of it.</i> p. 71
<i>The degrees of positive infidelity.</i> p. 159	<i>Whether Justification be before faith.</i> p. 73
<i>Intercession, vid. Priest.</i>	<i>Justification not a divided act.</i> p. 75
<i>A twofold intercession.</i> p. 24, 25	<i>Whether it be one transient act, or one continued act.</i> p. 75
	<i>Justification of a sinner a gracious and just action.</i> p. 78
	<i>Ju.</i>

An Alphabetical TABLE.

Justification by imputed righteousness, all believers have an equal interest in it. p. 142

Justice.

Gods Justice should constrain us to believe. p. 187

K

King.

Christ anointed to be a King. p. 27

His Kingly office, what it imports. lb.

Knowledge.

Knowledge, how one believer differs from another therein. p. 121

L

Law.

No ability to keep the whole Law wholly; Reasons of it. p. 60

Life, Living.

A heart inclined to the life of sense is weak in faith. p. 133

Of living by faith. p. 216

What it is in general to live by faith. p. 218

To live by faith, is to commit all to God. lbid

To live by faith is to depend upon God for all. p. 219

Living by faith extends to two sorts of life. p. 220

To live by faith on Christ described. p. 221

The several exigencies and conditions of sense, in which we

had need to live by faith. p. 221, 222

Encouragements from Christs fulness to live by faith in those exigencies. p. 223, 224

The conjunction of our own exigencies and Christs fulness, is the very living by faith upon Christ. p. 225

To live by faith on Christ, is more than a meer complaining of our wants, or an acknowledging of his fulness. p. 226

To live by faith on Christ, is more than a meer going to Christ. p. 227

To live by faith on Christ, is not only to trust on Christ for supply, but to expect performance. p. 227

To live by faith on Christ is an extensive work. p. 228

Arguments to persuade to live by faith. p. 229

The life of faith is congruous to our condition. p. 229

The necessity of living by faith in all sensible sequestrations. p. 231

Six arguments from God himself to persuade to live by faith. p. 231

The life of faith is the only Christian life. p. 238

The life of faith is the only comfortable life. p. 240

What things make the life uncomfortable, and what makes it comfortable. p. 241

Pp 2 The

An Alphabetical TABLE.

The life of faith rideth of all burdens, and secures against all prejudices. p.240

The life of faith makes the present condition good enough, and assures of universal and reasonable supplies. p.244

The life of faith is the only getting and thriving life. p.245

The Reasons of it. p.247

Divers arguments from Jesus Christ himself to persuade us to live by faith on him. p.248
Vid. Christ.

Lord.

True faith takes Christ only to be its Lord. p.101

No unbeliever can accept of Christ to be his Lord only, Reasons of it. p.191

Every believer admits of Christ to be his Lord, Reasons of it. p.102

How to know whether Christ or sin be our Lord. p.103

Weak faith will honour Christ as a Lord, though it be not sure that he is its Saviour, p.136

Love.

True love of Christ an infallible evidence of true faith, p.96

Love is not separated from faith. p.96

Reasons of it. p.97

True love to Christ, three trials of it. p.98

Every believer hath an equal interest in Gods special love. p.145

The love of God in giving Christ, and the love of Christ in giving of himself. p.161

M

Ministers, Ministry.

The best Ministers do most good, and finde most affliction. p.1

Good Ministers and covetous hearts cannot agree p.2

Ministers better esteemed when the heart is changed. p.5

Ministers must forget personal injuries when they deal with sensible sinners. p.10

How Ministers must deal with stout and resolute, and how with bleeding and afflicted sinners. p.11

How preciouslly dear the Ministry of the Gospel should be unto us. p.68

Miracles, vid. Faith.

N

Natural.

No natural principle of justifying faith now in a man. p.79, 80

A natural principle of unbelieve and infidelity in every mans heart. p.8c

There is a natural opposition in the hearts against Christ. p.81

Natural condition throughly studded, a way to get a believing heart. p.178

Our natural condition, what

An Alphabetical T A B L E.

so be convinced of about it. p.
179

Need.

We have extream need of a Lord
Jesus Christ. p.163

Christ is every way fitted to our
need. p.164

O

Offended.

A heart apt to be offended at the
estate of Christ, shews faith is
weak. p.135

Opposition.

A manifold opposition against
Christ, his person, condision,
Scepter and government,
and his righteousness. p. 8.
82,83

Ordinances.

Ordinances are meanes to grow
up unto assurance. p.280

P

Peace.

Peace in the conscience, what it is.
p.148

Peace of a Christian must be rati-
fied in a double Court. p.148

The difference betwixt the peace
of a strong and weak believer.
p.148

Power.

No natural power in man to pro-
duce faith. p.176

Persevering.

Persevering vertue from Christ.
p.144

Preaching.

Preaching the Word the ordinary
means by which God works faith.
p.177

Prayer.

Prayer a meanes of assurance. p.
281

Priest.

Christ anointed to be a Priest.
p.21

A satisfactory Priest. p.21

An-expiatory Priest. p.21,22

Christ, how the Priest and Altar.
p.23

The efficacy of his Priestly sacri-
fice. p.24

Christ a Priest, by way of inter-
cession, vid. Intercession.

Prophet.

Christ anointed to be a Prophet.
p.26

What it implies. p.27

Presumption, vid: Faith.

Presumption a most confident
work, but a very loose quality.
p.100,101

A pregnant difference betwixt
Presumption and faith. p.208,
209.

Promise.

A Divine promise entirely rested
on, an Argument of strong faith.
p.126

Many promises believed at once,
the stronger is our faith. p.
130

Discouraging objections about the
promises answered. p.235

Vid. Truth.

P. p. 3.

R.

An Alphabetical T A B L E.

R.

Receive.

It is very unequal and unreasonable not to receive Christ so offered. p.166

Redemption.

Redemption, all believers have a share in it. p.140, 141

Refusal.

Former refusals of Christ should not keep us off from present accepting of him. p.20

The sinfulness and danger of such refusals, yet even such have encouragement to believe. p.201, 202

Such have the more reason to come in, and not to refuse any longer. p.204

Relation.

A near relation betwixt Christ and a believer. p.253

A special Relation gives special title, and a special obligation, and hath a special affection. p.254

Remission.

Remission of sins, what it is. p.48, 74

The soul sensible of sinne, puts it self on Jesus Christ for remission of sin. p.49

Remission of sinnes belongs to justification. p.74

How far remission of sinnes extends in justification. p.75

Remission of sinnes, every be-

liever hath an interest in it. p.141

Righteousnesse.

A twofold Righteousnesse, inherent and imputed. p.51

Faith rests only on imputed Righteousnesse for justification. p.51

The Righteousnesse of Jesus Christ is that by which only we are justified. p.76

What is meant by the righteousness of Christ. p.76

Several objections against the imputation of righteousness answered. p.76, 77

Whether this righteousness imputed be the passive, or active and passive reasons of the latter. p.78

Christ bestows his righteousness upon us, the comfort of it. p.113

Confidence in natural righteousness an impediment to faith. p.171

S

Sacrifice, vid. Priest.

Sacraments.

Sacraments meanes of assurance. p.281

Salvation.

Salvation, some things have reference to it by way of proper causality, and some things by way of order. p.54

Vid. Grace.

Salvation is conferred in such a way whereby God only may have the

An Alphabetical T A B L E.

the glory of it. p.63
Salvation is not sure, but by be-
lieving. p.64

Sanctity, vid. Change.

Satisfaction.

Satisfaction of soul in Christ a-
lone, an Argument of a strong
faith. p.129

Saviour.

Christ is a singular Saviour, how.
 p.14

Difference betwixt him and other
Saviours. p.14

A General Saviour, in what sense.
 p.15

A mighty Saviour, how this
appears... p.16

A perfect Saviour, in what this
consists. p.16

The aloneness, fulness, and effi-
cacy of his Salvation. p.16

Scorners.

Scorners will become trouble-ers.
 p.3

Seeking.

Many seekings, and yet nothing
comes of them, should not dis-
courage from believing. p.

213

Efficacy of seeking, wherein it
consists. p.213

Right seekings shall alwayes come
to something. p.214

A double answer to the seeking of
the soul. p.214

Nothing may come in upon eve-
ry faithful seeking. p.215

Self-denial.

A denial in near and great oc-

currences, an argument of
strong faith. p.127

A threefold self to be denied. p.
 127

Sense, Sensible.

A double sense of sin. p.206

Sensible sinners are inquisitive.

p.5

Reasons of it. p.6

Sinners, some hardened, some made
“sensible.” p.5

Sensible sinners are resolved for
the means, as well as for the
end. p.9

Two sorts of sinners generally cor-
rupted, and sensibly experien-
ced. p.34

Several degrees of sensibleness in
sinners. p.35

Some sensibleness of our sinful
condition must go before faith,
taking Christ as a Lord and
Saviour. p.91

What is a sweet and a safe course
for a sensible sinner. p.183

The truly sensible heart hath
three properties in it that do in-
vite the Lord to gratifie it
with assurance. p.180

Sick.

Christ is a Physician to a sick sin-
ner. p.207

Christ will not loath thee because
of thy sinful nature, but will
help thee because thou art a
sick person. p.208

Sin, Sinning.

When sin decays in strength, faith
is strong. p.129

The

An Alphabetical T A B L E.

The league of the heart with sin,
an impediment to beleeving.

p. 153

Greatnesse of sinning a strong
reason to compel the soule to
Christ.

p. 184

Sorrow.

Sorrow for sin, and faith in Christ
go together.

p. 108

Soul.

None have right to thy soul but
God and Christ.

p. 166

Christ out-bids all Merchants for
thy soul.

p. 166

How shameful and unreasonable
it is to keep the soule from
Christ.

p. 167

Spirit.

Spirit of God, the immediate and
sole cause of faith.

p. 176, 177

Studied.

What things to be principally stu-
died by him that would get a
beleeving heart.

p. 178, 179

Strength.

Present corruptions in exceeding
strength, no prejudice to faith.

p. 205, 206

Suspect.

To suspect Gods favour, and
Christs love, a signe of weak
faith.

p. 132

T

Taking.

Taking of Christ, is of all Christ.

p. 46

It is only of Christ.

p. 46

This taking is freed from mis-

taking.

p. 46

Upon what grounds the soul takes
Christ.

p. 47

This taking is resolved against
untaking.

p. 47

Two grounds of taking Christ to
be a Lord, compulsory and in-
genious.

p. 47, 48

Thanks.

What is a reckning of faith, is a
lessning of thanks.

p. 153

Temptations.

Two sorts of temptations; against
which assurance doth arme a
beleever.

p. 272

Temporary, vid. Faith.

Tenderesse.

Gods tenderesse most towards
weak beleevers.

p. 146

Troubled.

A troubled soul looks mainly
how to save it self.

p. 6

Reasons of it.

p. 7

They are not troubled for sinne
who do not strive to be saved.

p. 8

Troubled soules must be directed
to Christ.

p. 12

Reasons of it.

Ibid

Truth.

Truth and fidelity, as applyed to
promises, consists in three thing.

p. 2.

V

Vertue, Virtual.

A vertual interest in Christ
very Beleever partakes of.

14

Ever

An Alphabetical T A B L E.

*Every Beleever partakes of
Christs crucifying vertue p.*

143

*Every beleever partakes of pre-
serving vertue from Christ.*

p.144

*Every beleever partakes of
Christs assisting vertue. p.*

143

Uncheerfulnesse.

*Uncheerfulnesse of heart shews
faith to be weak. p.135*

Unbelief.

Dangerous misery of unbelief. p.

87

*Unbelief leaves all our sins upon
record. p.87*

*The unbeliever must alone answer
for his sins p.87*

*The unbeleever judged as an un-
righteous person. p.88*

*The greatnesse of the sinne of un-
belief proved. p.88*

A sinne against greatest love. Ibid

Against the only remedy. p.89

*Makes void all the Covenant of
grace. p.89*

Directly murders the soul p.89

Unbelieving state dangerous. p.

160

*Unbelief binds all our sins upon the
soul. p.160*

*Unbelief grieves the heart of
Christ. p.166*

*The cunninges of natural unbelief
hindrances to faith. p.175.*

What those cunninges are. p. 175,

176

Unbelief is the worst of finnes. p.

185.

*Unbelief is no cure to the strength
of sin. p.206,207*

*Unbelief breeds an indisposition to-
wards holy duties. p.210*

*A threefold difference betwixt
an unbeleever and a belee-
ver, p.210*

Unholy.

*An unholy beleever is as pro-
per a phrase as a holy Devil.*

p.100

Upright.

*An upright cure to please God,
a meanes of assurance. p.*

281

Unworthinesse.

*Unworthinesse should not keep us
off from Christ. p.188*

*Personal unworthinesse is no
prejudice but a furtherance. p.*

188

A twofold unworthinesse. p.

192

Unity.

*Habitual unity of all true faith
in four particulars. p.119,*

120

W

Waiting.

A waiting faith is a strong faith.

p.130

Way.

*Way of beleevers is not a By-
way, nor an uncertain way p.*

110

Weak.

*An anxious and careful soul is
weak in faith. p.135*

Q q

A

An Alphabetical TABLE.

*A weak faith, though not sure
that Christ is its Saviour, yet
will honour Christ as its Lord.*
p. 136

*A weak faith, what it wants
in breadth of persuasion, makes
up in depth of humility.* p.
137

*A weak faith, though it have
but tender confidences of
its interest in Christ, yet it
hath strong dislikes and com-
bates with unbelief.* pag.
137

*A weak faith will not rest in
weakness, if truth be in it.* p. 138

*A weak faith ventures its soul
on Christ, though it cannot
clear its title, nor answer its
fears.* p. 139

*A weak believer falls short in
joy.* p. 146

*A weak Believer hath not that
sweet peace a strong believer
hath.* p. 147

*A weak Believer hath not
that sweetness in com-
munion with God.* pag.
149

*A weak Believer hath not
that successfulnesse in com-
munion with God.* pag.
150

*A weak believer is more un-
der the power of the crea-
ture than the strong.* pag.
151

*A weak believer cannot bring
God so much glory as a*

strong. p. 153

*A weak believer will be more
puzzled to die.* p. 154

*A weak believer hath not such
cheerful expectations, nor qui-
et submissions,* p. 155

*A weak believer is more entan-
gled with efficacy of tempta-
tions.* p. 155

Will.

*The Will cannot of it self en-
fiven it selfe to that great
part of life believing.* p. 33,
34

*Christ is willing to accept sin-
ners proved.* p. 193

*Christ's Will to save sinners,
manifested three wayes.* p. 195,
196

Vid. Assurance

Word.

*The Word and Prayer, the great
power of God to change the
hearts and conquer Satan.* p. 1.

*What word a sinner hath to
induce the soul to believe.* p.
165.

*The word is the Ministerial i-
strument to beget faith.* p.
17.

*The word a meanes to make us
know our interest in Christ.* p.
280.

World.

World.
*The world an impediment to be-
leeving.* p.174

Works.
*In what the perfection of good
works doth consist.* p.58,59

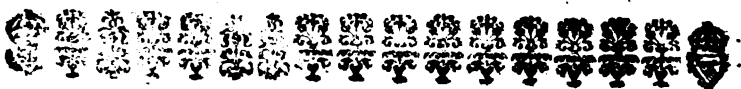
*No proportion betwixt our works
and our pardon.* p.59,60

*What relation there is betwixt
good works and salvation.* p.
60

Works justify our faith. p.105
*How works can evidence faith,
since evil men may performe
them, and some beleivers have
not wherewithal to do them.* p.
106

Worthinesse.
There is a double worthinesse.
p.192

Vid. Unworthinesse.



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QUESTIONS
CONCERNING
JESUS the Son of GOD
FREELY PROPOSED:

With a HUMBLE ATTEMPT to Answer them
according to SCRIPTURE.

QUEST. I. What is the true Meaning of the Name
SON OF GOD, given to *Christ* in the New Testa-
ment, and especially where the Belief of it is made
necessary to Salvation?

QUEST. II. Did the Disciples of *Christ* certainly believe
that *Jesus* was the True and Eternal God during his
Life-time, or not 'till after his Death and Resur-
rection?

QUEST. III. Could the *Son of God* properly enter into a
Covenant with GOD his Father before the Creation,
to do and suffer what was necessary to our Redemp-
tion without having any human Soul which might
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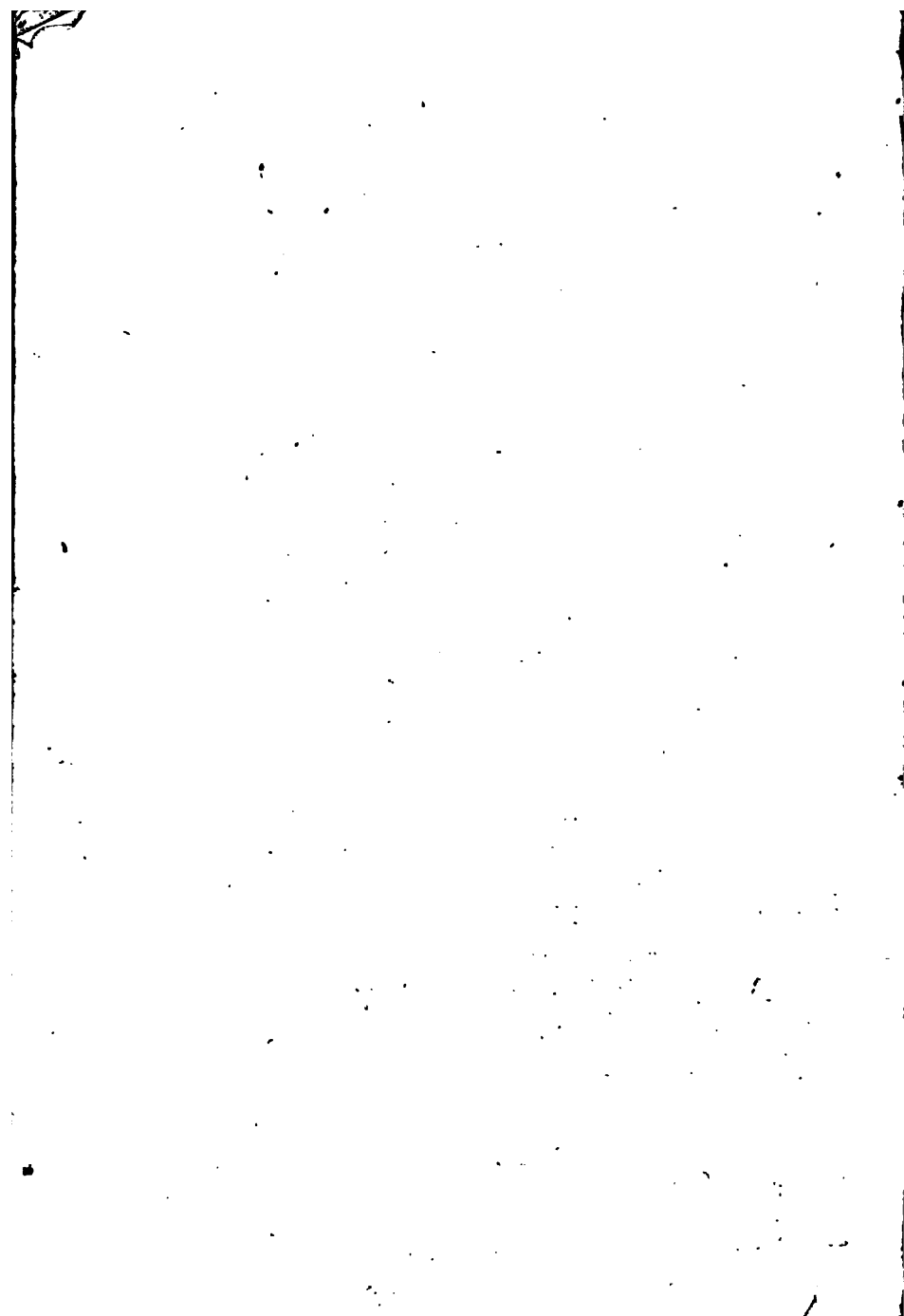
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On the true Importance of any Human Schemes to
explain the Sacred Doctrine of the TRINITY.

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THE
PREFACE.

IT cannot be of much Importance for the Reader to be informed who was the Writer of these Papers: Yet if it will be any Satisfaction, the Author himself presumes to say, It is one who has spent many Years of his Life in diligent Inquiries into the sacred Doctrines of the Gospel, by a constant and laborious Search of the Holy Scriptures, nor is he ashamed to add, with continual Application to the God of all Light and Grace for the Instruction of his Holy Spirit, that he might better understand the Things discover'd in his
A 2 *Word.*

iv P R E F A C E.

Word. He also takes the freedom to say, these Papers are the Product of that part of Life when his Powers of Mind and Body were in full Vigour.

The Author has sometimes been ready to suppose, that several of the Questions here proposed, may be very useful towards the further explaining some of those Parts of Scripture which have been less studied, especially concerning God the Father, and the Divine and Human Natures of his Son Jesus Christ, whom to know, to trust in, and to love, is eternal Life: and he thinks he can safely appeal to God concerning the Honesty and Sincerity of his own Endeavours, to give a faithful Answer to all these Enquiries, according to the clearest Light he could find in the Holy Scriptures.

He has one Favour to beg of his Readers, and that is, that they would not examine any of these Papers by the mere Dictates

P R E F A C E. v

Dictates of their own reasoning Powers, for the Subject is a mere Matter of Divine Revelation ; nor that they would take the Sentiments or Schemes of elder or later Writers, whether Schoolmen or Fathers, or Divines of any Party, for a perfect Test of Truth and Orthodoxy in these sacred Subjects.

Yet he freely and delightfully confesses these following Articles borrow'd from the Athanasian Creed, (viz.)
 We believe and confess the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, is both God and Man ; God of the same Substance with the Father, and Man of the Substance of his Mother, *born* into the World ; perfect God and perfect Man ; of a reasonable Soul, and human Flesh subsisting *together* : Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, and yet inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood : One, not by Conversion of the Godhead into the Flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into
God,

vi P R E F A C E.

God, so as to become one personal Agent, or one Person: and as the reasonable Soul and Flesh is one Man, so God and Man are one Christ, who suffered for our Salvation, &c.

Tho' I freely and chearfully acknowledge all this, yet I take no human Writings for a Test of the Divinity or Truth of my Opinions: And I could wish all my Readers would lay aside all other Teachers, besides the mere Writers of the Holy Scriptures, in such Enquiries where the Light of these Divine Truths will also shine brightest, which are not to be known by the mere Light of Nature, but are intirely to be learned by the Revelation of God to his Son Jesus Christ, and to his holy Apostles.

And if this Practice be sincerely pursued, the Author humbly hopes these Papers may find Acceptance among the diligent and honest Enquirers

P R E F A C E. vii

quirers after Truth, so far at least as to have his unwilling Mistakes pitied and forgiven, and his sincere Endeavours accepted, to make known the Scripture to his Fellow-Christians in those important Articles that relate to God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which are of so much Importance toward our Salvation.

Yet finally to avoid all Objections and Dangers of Mistake, I think it may be proper here to take notice, that there have been generally two ways among our Protestant Divines allowed to explain the Filiation or Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his Divine Nature; the one is, the Real and Supernatural, which is granted to be utterly incomprehensible, relating chiefly to the Nature of the Father and the Son; the other is Scriptural and Oeconomical, relating chiefly to their Characters or Offices in our Salvation, which is more easy to be understood:

stood: I must acknowledge I incline most to the second, because this allows the most perfect Equality, even Oneness or Sameness in the Godhead, whether applied to the Father or the Son, and thus it maintains the true Godhead itself to be underived and self-existent in both; and upon this Supposition I believe the second of these Writers have been always esteemed perfectly sound and orthodox, as well as the first.



THE



QUESTION I.

*What is the meaning of the Name
Son of God, as given to Christ in
the New Testament, where the Belief
of it is necessary to Salvation ?*

INTRODUCTION.

TIS of some Importance in the Doctrines of the Gospel, and especially in the great Article of the blessed *Trinity*, to know the meaning of the Name SON OF GOD, which is so often given to our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the New Testament : for hereby we shall be better able to understand the chief Import and Design of those Places of Scripture.

But here I desire my Reader to observe, that I am not enquiring into the highest and most sublime Sense of which 'tis possible that our Lord himself might have the Idea when he used that Word ; but what is the Sense that *Christ* or the Apostles and Writers of the New Testament

B

more

2 *Of the Name Son of God,*

more directly designed to convey to those who heard them, and in what Sense the People generally could and did understand this Name.

'Tis evident from several Expressions of *Christ*, that he well knew that his own Words sometimes carried in them a much nobler and sublimer Signification, than barely that which he designed to convey to the *Jews*, or even to his own Disciples at that Time : As when he says to the *Jews*, *Before Abraham was I am*, John 8. 58. And so when he says to his Disciples, *John 14. 10. I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, they could not know that glorious and sublime Relation of *Christ* to the Father, and his intimate *Oneness* with the Father, which he himself was perfectly acquainted with.

My chief Business in this Discourse therefore is only to show what is the true Idea or Meaning of the Word *Son of God*, which our Saviour or the sacred Writers designed to convey to their Disciples thro' all Ages and Nations by this *Name*, and in which 'tis possible their Hearers could understand them, or we who read the same Words.

And in order to find this Sense of it, let us consider those Texts of Scripture wherein the Belief of *Christ* to be the *Son of God* is made the great Requisite in order to Salvation, and a necessary Ingredient of Christianity. For in these places of Scripture, these two Considerations will offer themselves, (1.) That

the Sense of these Words must be *plain, familiar, and easy to be understood*; otherwise it could not be made a necessary Article, or a *Fundamental* of the Christian Faith. It must have also (2dly) *some apparent Connexion with and Influence into our Salvation*; otherwise the Belief of it would not have been made so grand a Requisite in order to be saved; for it is scarce to be imagined that the blessed God would appoint any mere arbitrary and unoperative Speculations to be the Terms of our enjoying his favour. Now, both these Considerations will give us some Assistance toward our finding out the true Sense of this Title.

The Texts of Scripture, wherein a Belief of *Jesus* to be the *Son of God* seems to be made the great necessary Term of our Salvation, are such as these. *John 3. 18. He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. John 20. 31. These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name. 1 John 5. 13. These things have I written to you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God. 1 John 4. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God*

4 *Of the Name Son of God,*

dwelleth in him. 1 John 2. 23. *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.* Acts 8. 37. *And Philip said to the Eunuch, if thou believest with all thy Heart, thou mayst be baptized; and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God: and he baptized him.*

Now if *believing or not believing Christ to be the Son of God* has Salvation and Damnation annexed to it by the sacred Writers, then surely 'tis of considerable Importance to know what this Name means, that we may not include *too little* in it, and by leaving out some important Part, expose *ourselves* to that Anathema; nor include *too much* in it, and so be tempted to lay our *weaker Neighbours* under the like Condemnation for want of sufficient Knowledge.

But blessed be God, since it is a Name of such Importance, he has not confined this Name precisely to one single, narrow, abstruse and difficult Idea, but has affixed it to several Ideas in Scripture, that so if we receive it in the most important Senses, we may be secured from the scriptural Condemnation, tho' we should not happen to understand and receive it in all the sublime Senses which may be applied to it.

Let it be noted also, that perhaps the various Imaginations and Reasonings of Men may have affixed more Senses to this Phrase than
Scripture

Scripture has ever done : Yet, in order to give this Enquiry a fuller Consideration, we will survey the several Senses which have been usually put upon it ; and this shall be the *first Argument* which I shall use toward the Proof of the true Signification of this Name in the New Testament, *i. e.* by way of a disjunctive Syllogism, proposing several and excluding some of them.

SECT. I. *The first Argument toward the Proof of the Sense of this Name, Son of God.*

THIS Name, *Son of God*, hath been supposed to be given to our Lord *Jesus Christ* upon some or all of these five accounts. (1.) Because of an eternal and unconceivable Generation by the Person of the Father in the Sameness of the Divine Essence. (2.) Because of the glorious Derivation of his human Soul from God before the Creation of this World. (3.) Because of his Incarnation or coming into this World by an extraordinary Conception, and Birth of a Virgin without an earthly Father, by the immediate Operation of God. (4.) Because of his Resurrection from the Dead, and high Exaltation. (5.) In order to point out that glorious Person who had in general some sublime and singular Relation to God, and who also was to sustain the Cha-

6 *Of the Name Son of God,*

rafter and Office of the *Messiah*, the Saviour of the World.

I. The *first* of these Senses is patronized by many Writers, *viz.* *That an eternal unconceivable Generation of the Person of the Son by the Person of the Father in the Sameness of the Divine Essence, consubstantial, coequal and coeternal with the Father,* is included in the Name SON OF GOD.

But I am persuaded this can never be the Sense of this Name in those several Texts before cited : They can never signify, that it is necessary to Salvation to believe *Christ* to be the *eternal Son of God as a distinct Person in the same Divine Essence, proceeding from the Father* by such an *eternal and incomprehensible Generation*. For,

1. If this be never so true, yet it is confessed to be unconceivable. Now, if it be so very unconceivable, so mysterious and sublime a Doctrine, then I do not think the gracious God would put such a difficult Test upon the Faith of young Disciples, poor illiterate Men and Women, in the very Beginning of the Gospel, and exclude them from Heaven for not believing it,

2. Nor indeed is this *eternal Generation and consubstantial Sonship* clearly enough revealed in Scripture for us to make it a *fundamental Article* in any Age, and to damn all who don't receive it. I cannot see Evidence enough in the Word of God to make the
the

the Salvation of all Mankind, the Poor and the Ignorant, the labouring Men and the Children, (even in such a Day of Knowledge as this is) to depend on such a Doctrine, which the most learned and pious Christians in all Ages have confest to be attended with so many Difficulties, which, after the Labour and Study of near 1400 Years, is so unconceivable in itself, and was at first so obscurely revealed; much less can I suppose this notion of the *Son of God* could be made a necessary and fundamental Article in those Dawnings of the Gospel-day.

Besides, 3. There have been some very pious and learned Men in several Ages, who have acknowledged *Christ's true Godhead*, and yet have supposed that the *Sonship* of *Christ* referred rather to his *human Nature*, or to his Office of *Messiah*, than to such an *eternal Generation* and *consubstantial Sonship*: And there are some in our Age who have given sufficient Proofs of their good Learning and sincere Piety, who heartily believe the *eternal Godhead of Christ*, and yet doubt or disbelieve this *eternal Generation and Derivation* of his Person, as God, and I will never pronounce an *Anathema* upon them.

Object. But some will say, "If the Name *Son of God* doth not signify *eternal Generation by the Father in the Sameness of the Divine Essence or Substance*, yet

8 *Of the Name Son of God,*

“surely it must at least import *Christ's true and eternal Godhead.*”

Ans. 1. This Name *Son* and *Sons of God* is often used in the Bible, and applied variously to *Men* and to *Angels* as well as to *Christ*: but 'tis never used in any one place to signify *true and eternal Godhead* that I can find, unless it be in those very Places which are at present under Debate. And therefore when *Christ* is called eminently and absolutely *the Son of God*, the Meaning of it does not necessarily rise higher than that he is the most eminent of all other Beings (Men or Angels) that are called *Sons of God*, without a certain Determination whether he be *true God*, or no, by the mere use of that Name.

Ans. 2. This Name *Son of God* cannot necessarily signify his *true Godhead* any otherwise, than by supposing it *primarily* to signify his *coessential Sonship*, or that he is a *Son* of the same Nature and Essence with the Father, even as a Son among Men has the same *specific Essence* with his Father, and then consequentially that the *Son of God* is *true God*, because his *Father* is so. Now, we have before proved, that this Name cannot necessarily signify his *coessential* or *consubstantial Sonship*, and therefore it cannot necessarily signify his true Godhead.

Ans. 3. It is evident from some Parts of the Conduct of *Peter* and other Disciples during

during the Life of *Christ* on Earth, that they did not heartily believe they had the true and eternal God among them, and that their Master was the true and eternal God, as when they rebuked him, when they questioned his Knowledge of some things, when they wondered, and were so astonished at his working Miracles, &c. as I shall shew hereafter : Yet 'tis plain that they then believed him to be the *Son of God*; for this was made necessary to their Salvation in that day, and they profess this Belief roundly, that he was the *Son of God*. Therefore this Name does not certainly declare his Divine Nature.

Obj. 2. It will be said then, How comes it to pass, that when the High Priest asked our Saviour, *Art thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus answered, I am,* Mark. 14. 61, 62, in *v. 64.* he charges our Saviour with *Blasphemy*, if his calling himself the *Son of God* did not imply his *true Godhead*?

Ans. It is evident that the Design of the wicked *Jews* was to fix the highest and most criminal Charge they could against him : But there was no sufficient Foundation for this Charge, which our Saviour in another Place fully proves, *John* 10. 33, 34. as I have shewn elsewhere, in what follows. Thus it appears, that tho' it be fully agreed that *Jesus Christ*, the *Son of God*, has true Godhead belonging to him, because divine

10 *Of the Name Son of God,*

Names and Titles are given him, yet this Name *Son of God* does not necessarily and certainly discover or imply it. Thus much for the first supposed Sense of this Name.

II. Some may suppose the Name *Son of God* relates to his *human Soul*, and signifies the *glorious peculiar Derivation of it from God the Father* before the Creation of the World, and that in this Sense he is called *the first-born of every Creature*, and the *Beginning of the Creation of God*. Col. 1. 15. and Rev. 3. 14.

Answ. Tho' I am very much inclin'd to believe that *Christ* is in this Sense the *Son of God*, and that his human Soul had such a glorious Derivation from the Father before the Creation of the World, and that he is the *first-born of every Creature* and the *Beginning of the Creation of God*, as in Col. 1. 15. and that his human Soul had as noble a Pre-eminence above other Souls in its Origin, as his human Body had a Pre-eminence above other Bodies, that so *in all things he might have the Pre-eminence*, Col. 1. 18. Yet I cannot think this precise Idea is the very thing designed in those Texts of Scripture, wherein our Salvation is made to depend on the *Belief of Christ being the Son of God*; for,

(1) Tho' the Apostles *Paul* and *John*, and perhaps the rest of them, arrived at this compleat Idea of his *glorious pre-existent Human Soul*

Soul in due time, yet it doth not appear evidently that the Disciples had all attained such an Idea so soon as they believed that he was the *Son of God*, in a sufficient manner for their attaining the Favour of God and a State of Salvation *.

(2) There have been thousands of Christians in several Ages of the Church who have been saved, and yet have not entertained this Opinion concerning the *Soul of Christ*, that it had a Being before the World was created, and and that it was the *first-born of all the Creatures of God*; and therefore this cannot be the Sense of that Title in those Texts.

III. I say therefore, in the *Third* place, that this Title, *Son of God*, is given to *Christ*, sometimes upon the account of his *Incarnation and miraculous Birth*. Luke 1. 31, 32. *Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call his Name Jesus: he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.* v. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon Thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow Thee; therefore also that Holy thing that shall be born of Thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD.*

Tho'

* I will not deny but that one considerable Ground on which *Christ* was called the *Son of God*, at first, and for which he eminently merited that Name, was the Dignity of his human Soul both in the native Excellencies of it, and in the original and early Generation, or peculiar Way of Creation of it before all other Creatures: But as the Belief of his, being the *Son of God*, is made a Requisite to Salvation, I suppose the Idea of that Title *Son of God*, arises no higher than to mean in general some glorious Relation to God, partly *natural*, and partly *oeconomical*, without a precise Determination how far this Relation reach'd, as will appear more particularly afterward.

12 *Of the Name Son of God,*

Tho' God be the *Father* of all Men by *Creation*, and the *Father* of all the Saints by a *New Creation* or *Regeneration*, yet in a more especial manner he is the Father of the Blessed *Jesus*; because his Body was so formed or *begotten* by him, in so peculiar a manner, as no other Man ever was.

But this cannot be the chief Meaing of the Name *Son of God* in the Texts before cited; For surely the Belief that the Man *Christ Jesus was begotten of God and born of a Virgin without an earthly Father*, was not made the Term of Salvation any where that we can find in the *New Testament*. 'Tis not this sort of *Sonship* that *Christ* and the Apostles lay so great a stress on, nor make the matter of their Sermons, and the Labour of their Arguments, to convincethe World of it in order to their Salvation. This Circumstance of his extraordinary Birth, doth not seem to have any such special Connexion with the Redemption and Salvation of Men, as to have it made the peculiar Matter of their Faith and the very Article on which their Salvation was to depend.

Doubtless many a poor Creature might become a true Believer in *Christ* when he was upon Earth, by the Sight of his Miracles, and hearing his Doctrine, without the Knowledge of this *particular Circumstance of his Incarnation or Birth*; and doubtless many a one was converted by the Apostles without any
Notice

Notice of this part of the History of *Christ*; for we scarce find so much as the Mention of it in their Preaching or Writings. This therefore cannot be the Meaning of this Name, in those Scriptures.

IV. In the *Fourth* place, *Christ* may be sometimes called the *Son of God*, because of his *Resurrection from the Dead*, and his *Exaltation to universal Dominion*, by the peculiar Favour and Power of God. In this Sense *Christ* is said to be *begotten of God* when he is raised from the Dead, *Act. 13. 32, 33.* *And we declare unto you glad Tidings, how that the Promise which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto their Children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And 'tis upon this account that he is called *the first-begotten of the Dead*, *Rev. 1. 5.* and *the first-born from the Dead*, *Col. 1. 18.* tho' the Greek Word is in both Places the same (*viz.*) *πρωτότοκος* *ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν*, because he was raised immediately by God himself from the Earth into eternal Life.

His Exaltation to the Kingdom as Heir of all things, is suppos'd to be a farther Ground of this Title. *Heb. 1. 2.* *His Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things.* *Pf. 89. 27.* *I will make him my first-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth.* And some Divines are ready to think, 'tis in this Sense he is called
the

14 *Of the Name Son of God,*

the *first-born of every Creature*, Col. 1. 15. because he is Heir and Lord of all the Creation. And some join his Exaltation together with his Resurrection in that Prophecy, *Psal. 2. 7. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; because 'tis the chief Sense in which the Words of the *second* or of the *eighty-ninth Psalm*, now cited, could literally be applied to *David* in the Day of his being raised from the Earth and Obscurity, unto a Throne: Now *David* in this his Exaltation to the Kingdom of *Israel* was a Type of *Christ*, and was said to be *the Son of God begotten that day*, as a proper Type and Figure of our blessed Saviour.

But whatever may be the propheticall Sense of those Words of the Psalmist, 'tis certain that the Name *Son of God* cannot directly and chiefly signify his *Resurrection and future Exaltation* in all those Places of the Gospels, where the Belief of it is made the Term of Salvation.

(1.) Because he is very often called the *Son of God*, long before his Death, Resurrection, and Exaltation, to describe the Person who was to be thus raised and exalted. He is called by the Apostle *John, the only begotten of the Father, who lay in the Bosom of the Father*, John 1. 14, 18. and *Paul* calls him *God's own Son, who was delivered up to Death for us*. Rom 8. 32. as a Name that belonged to him long before his Death, or
indeed

indeed before his Birth into this World : For when he was first sent into the World he was then the *Son of God*, John 3. 16, 17. and 11. 27. and as such he was *appointed the Heir of all things*, Heb. 1. 2. .

(2.) This Title the *Son of God* in those Texts of the Gospel does not depend upon his *Resurrection and Exaltation*, because the *Jews* were required to believe him to be the *Son of God* long before his Death and Resurrection. Nor did *Christ* himself in plain Language openly and publicly preach his own Death and Resurrection to the Multitudes. Therefore the Belief of *Christ* to be the *Son of God* in this Sense of the Words could not in his Life-time be made necessary to Salvation.

(3.) And let it be noted further, that at this time even the Apostles themselves, who were true Believers in the *Son of God* did not know that he was to die and to rise again, for *Peter began to rebuke him*, when he spoke of his own dying, Mark 8. 32. *And they knew not what Rising from the Dead should mean*. Mark 9. 10. yet they all believed him to be the *Son of God*.

(4.) I might add, that it is abundantly evident from Scripture that he was the *Son of God*, before he died or rose again, because he was only *proclaimed or declared to be his Son* by his Resurrection and Exaltation : The Apostle *Paul* explains it thus, Rom. 1. 4. *He was declared to be the Son of God with Power, by his Resurrection from the Dead.* Nor

16 *Of the Name Son of God,*

Nor is it any wonder that *Christ* in some Scriptures should be represented as born or begotten of God at his Resurrection, since 'tis the way of the sacred Writers sometimes to represent a thing to be transacted or done in that Day when 'tis *published* or *proclaimed*; and upon this account *Christ* may be said to be *born* or to be *begotten*, or to be *made the first-born of God*, in the Day of his Resurrection and Exaltation, because he was then proclaimed and published to be the *Son of God*; even as a King may be said to be *made* that Day when he is *proclaimed* or *crowned*.

V. The last Sense in which *Christ* is called the *Son of God*, is to signify that *glorious Person who was appointed to be the Messiah, the anointed Saviour who was derived from God, and did bear some very near and extraordinary Relation to God above all other Persons*; and therefore he is called *his Son, his own Son, his only begotten Son, his beloved Son*. And since the several other Senses cannot be admitted to be the precise Idea and common Meaning of the Name *Son of God* in the New Testament, I take this to be the true Idea of it, as it is generally used in the New Testament, and especially in those Scriptures where the Belief or Profession of it is made necessary in order to the Salvation of Men in the Writings of the Apostles.

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 17

It includes some special and glorious Relation to God; but whether that Relation belongs to his Flesh, or his human Soul, or his Divine Nature, or to all these, is not so directly determined in those Texts, because the chief Design of them is but to point out the Person and Character of the *Messiah*.

Now let us consider the Reasons to prove this to be the true Sense of the Name.

That the Name *Son of God* doth originally respect the Glory and Excellency of his Person, and his near Relation and Resemblance to God, appears from the use of the word *Son* and *Son of God* in other Places of Scripture.

Son or *Daughter* or *Child* in the *Hebrew* Tongue implies eminently two things. (1.) It notes some *Derivation* of one thing from another. *Men* are frequently called *Sons of Men*. *Israelites* are called the *Sons* or *Children of Israel*. So *Sparks* are called the *Sons of the burning Coal*, Job 5. 7. to signify the Derivation of one from the other.

(2.) It is also an Idiom of the *Hebrew* Language, and a peculiar way of speaking much in use among the *Jews*, to call one Person *the Son* of any other Thing or Person whose *Quality* and *Likeness* he bears. So wicked Men are called the *Sons of Belial*, or Wickedness, 2 Sam. 13. 6. So young Men that were instructed and prepared for the Gift of Prophecy

18 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

are called the *Sons of the Prophets*, 2 *Kings* 2. 3, 5, 7. Proud Men are named the *Children of Pride*, Job 41. 34. *Child of the Devil*, signifies a very wicked Man, one a-kin to the Devil in Malice and Subtilty, &c. *Acts* 13. 10. So the word *Sons of God* signifies Persons who in a peculiar Manner were derived from God, and had some Resemblance of him.

Adam was called the *Son of God*, Luke 3. ult. because he was formed in the Image of God, and in an immediate manner derived his Being from God without human Generation.

Angels are called *Sons of God*, Job 1. 6. & 2. 1. & 38. 7. because they are glorious and excellent Beings, with spiritual Powers and Perfections, in some measure like to God, and were the chief Rank of his Creatures, and not derived from each other by successive Generations, but all created immediately by God himself.

Saints are called *Sons of God* in *John* 1. 12. and many other Places, both because they are like God, or *created a-new after his Image in Knowledge, Righteousness and Holiness*, Col. 3. 10. Eph. 4. 24. and because they are said to be *new created*, or *begotten and born of God*, John 1. 13. & 1 John 5. 1.

Magistrates are called *Gods*, and *Sons of the most High*, Psal. 82. 6. partly to denote that they are raised by God to that Dignity; (so *David* in the Letter and Type was the
Son

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 19

Son of God, Psal. 2. 7. and was made *God's first-born*, Psal. 89. 26, 27. as a Type of Christ;) and partly also to denote that in their Authority and Majesty they resemble God the supreme Magistrate and Ruler.

The *Son of God* who was with the three Children in the fiery Furnace, *Dan. 3. 25.* is so called, to signify a glorious and excellent Being, that had something Divine or God-like in him; for this is the Expression of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who is not supposed to know any thing of *Christ* or the *Messiah*.

Now 'tis evident that our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the *Son of God*, in a Sense superior to Men and Angels, for he is called *God's own Son*, Rom. 8. 32. *his only begotten Son*, John 1. 14, 18. and his *First-born*, the Image of the invisible God, the first-born of every Creature, &c. Col. 1. 15, 16. The Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, made so much better than Angels, and has obtained a more excellent Name than they, Heb. 1. 4. For in all things he must have the Pre-eminence, Col. 1. 18. These scriptural Expressions plainly imply both *Derivation* and *Resemblance*.

Yet here I ask leave to insert one Caution, and that is, Tho' 'tis sufficiently manifest from the New Testament, and especially from *Heb. 1.* that *Christ* is the *Son of God* in a sense far superior to Angels, yet I am in doubt whether the Disciples at first could have such an Idea

20 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

of his Superiority to all Angels : Perhaps their Idea of the *Son of God* arose no higher at first than to suppose him superior to all their Prophets and Kings, who were called *Sons of God*, tho' afterwards it grew up to an Idea superior to all the Angels of God.

But let us raise this Idea of the Name as high as we can suppose any of the Disciples had attained before the Death of *Christ*, or as high as could be requisite in order to Salvation in that Day, and I think it must be granted that this Name *Son of God* (so far as it denotes the *Nature of Christ* distinct from his *Offices*) can necessarily be construed to rise no higher than to denote some peculiar and glorious Likeness to God, some more near and excellent Relation to God the Father, or some special Derivation from him, some divine Character more eminent than belongs to *Men* or *Angels* when they are called the *Sons of God*, without any precise Determination wherein this peculiar Relation to God consisted.

Now to proceed :

This *Glory and Excellency of the Person of Christ*, which is originally denoted by the Name *Son of God*, is part of his Qualification for the Office of the *Messiah*, part of the Foundation of his Office, and what made him a proper Person to undertake, sustain and fulfil it.

Yet this *Excellency of his Person*, this *Likeness and Nearness to God*, is not the compleat

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 21.

compleat Sense and Meaning of the word *Son of God* in those fore-cited Texts of the Gospel; but it includes also a *Designation to his Office*, viz. that glorious Person of extraordinary Nearness and Likeness to God, who was ordained to be the Saviour of Men: And tho' the Name *Son of God* signifies and includes both these, yet sometimes the Scripture in using this Name seems to have a more special Regard to the *Excellency of his Person*, and sometimes to *his Office*, and perhaps for this Reason, that a Belief of his *Sonship* in one of those Senses, but especially the latter, in that Day might be a sufficient Ground for the Faith and Hope of Sinners.

1. It may seem to have some special regard to the *Excellency of his Person*, where it is joined by way of Exposition to the word *Messiah* or *Christ*, as a further Description of the Person who sustained that Office; as in these Scriptures, viz. *Mat. 26. 63.* the High-Priest adjured *Jesus* to a Confession, and said, *Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?* *Mat. 16. 16.* *Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, or Messiah, the Son of the living God.* *John 11. 27.* *Martha* confessed, *Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.* Which Expressions mean thus much, Thou art the *Christ* or *Messiah*, that glorious Person of peculiar Relation to God who was ordained to this Office.

22 *Of the Name Son of God,* Qu. I.

It seems also to signify more specially the *Excellency of his Person* in those Scriptures where he is called *God's own Son, God's only Son, God's only begotten Son, his beloved Son, his first-born, &c.* because these are Words of Relation and peculiar Indearment, and we cannot well say *the only-begotten Messiah, the first-born Messiah.*

2. Yet there are many other Places where in the Name *Son of God* seems to have a more special regard to his Office as the *appointed Saviour*, tho' it is inclusive also of the peculiar *Excellency of his Person*, which makes him fit for his Office. *John 10. 37. Do you say of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?* His being thus sanctified and sent by the Father is sufficient to give this Name.

This is evident also where the word *Christ* or *Messiah* is not joined with it, and yet the Design of the Expression seems to be entirely the same as if the word *Christ* or *Messiah* had been used there; as *John 1. 34. John the Baptist saw and bare witness that this is the Son of God, i. e. this is the great promised Saviour. So v. 49. Nathanael said, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel, i. e. thou art the Messiah, the King. So John 9. 35. Jesus asked the blind Man who was healed, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? i. e. Dost thou believe on*

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 23

on the *Messiah*, the appointed Saviour? for as such he was the proper Object of Belief. So 1 John 4. 15. *Whoso shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* i. e. He that confesses him to be the glorious appointed *Messiah*, and receives him as such, *he dwelleth in or with God.* The same is the Sense of that Word 1 John 5. 5. *Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God,* i. e. the *Messiah*. And 1. 20. *We know the Son of God is come;* i. e. the glorious Person who was ordained to be the *Messiah* is come into the World.

As in these Places where the word *Christ* or *Messiah* is not mentioned, *Son of God* signifies more directly the *Messiah* or appointed Saviour, so there are other Places wherein the word *Christ* is joined with it, where *Son of God* hath the same Signification, and intends chiefly the Office of the *Messiah* or Saviour; because in those Texts the word *Christ* doth not properly signify a Character or Office, but the proper Name or Surname of the Man *Jesus*, who was generally so called after his Resurrection †. The Eunuch's Confession must have this Sense, *Acts* 8. 37. *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

C 4

i. e.

† This is a common thing in our Nation and Language, where the Surname of a Man and of his Family is *Smith, Taylor, Clark, Dyer, Steward,* &c. being drawn originally from the Trade, Office or Employment which perhaps the first of the Family enjoyed or practised.

24 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

i. e. This Man named *Jesus Christ* is the promised and appointed Saviour.

And in this same Sense did St. *Paul* preach *Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God, Acts 9. 20. i. e.* That the Man *Jesus Christ* is the promised Saviour. For the grand Question of that Day was not whether *Jesus* were eternally begotten of the Father, nor whether he was the true and eternal God himself, nor whether he were formed in an extraordinary and miraculous Manner as to his Soul or his Body, but *whether he was the promised Messiah and Saviour of the World?*

And if we consult the Writings of the New Testament, especially the Gospel and Epistles of St. *John*, we shall find the Name *Son of God*, and the Name *Christ* (which in *Hebrew* is *Messiah*) used very promiscuously for one another, and sometimes with a design to explain each other, and both to denote the *great promised Redeemer, the Saviour of the World*. This will appear, if we read the following Verses, *John 11. 27. Martha* confesses, *I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the World.* 1 *John 4. 14, 15. And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* 1 *John 5. 1. Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ,*

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 23

Christ, is born of God. And a little after, He that is born of God overcometh the World. And then, *Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* 1 John 2. 22. *Who is a Lyar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Anti-christ that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.* And that awful Text *John 8. 24.* is certainly to be interpreted the same way, *If ye believe not that I AM HE, ye shall die in your Sins.* That is, as *Christ* himself explains it in the next Verse, that *I am the same that I said unto you from the Beginning*; that is, the *Christ*, the *Messiah*, the *Son of God*, the *Saviour of the World*. Nor is the Absence of the word *HE* in the *Greek* any Bar to this Interpretation, for the Expression is the same, *John 4. 29.* ἐγὼ εἰμι, and *John 9. 37.* ἐκεῖνος ἐστίν, where we are sure that *Christ* means that *he is the Messiah*.

It is well known that the *Jews* generally, and very justly, believed the Person who was to be their *Messiah* and Saviour was to bear some very extraordinary Relation to God, and to be *his Son* in a sublime and uncommon way and manner, tho' what particular *sort of Sonship* it was, they could have but very dark and confused Ideas; yet they used the word *Son of God* emphatically to denote this glorious Person: And the common Purpose for which

26 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

which they used it, was to signify this *great promised Deliverer*.

Now 'tis very easy to account for this, *viz.* that the *Son of God*, which originally signifies a *glorious Person near a-kin to God*, might in common use come to signify *his Office*, or the *appointed King and Saviour of his People*; just as the Name *Cesar* was originally the Surname of a Family, but afterwards came to signify an *Office*, and to denote the *Emperor*: and perhaps the same might be said of the Name *Abimelech* King of *Philistia*, or *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*. So the word *Israel* at first was a Name given to *Jacob*, thence it was derived to signify *all the Jewish Family or Nation*, and afterwards it came to signify the *Character* of that Family, *viz. the Church of God*; and so 'tis used in *Gal. 6. 16. Peace be on the Israel of God.*

Thus I have gone over the several Senses of the Name *Son of God*, and there is the greatest Reason to believe that it most usually and directly signifies that *Person who has in general some peculiar and sublime Relation and Likeness to God, and is appointed to be the Messiah or Saviour of Men.*

SECT. II. *Other Arguments to confirm this Sense of the Name SON OF GOD.*

THE next Argument I shall produce for this Sense of the Name, is this: 'Tis most reasonable

Quest. I. as given to Christ. 27

reasonable to suppose that *Son of God* signifies the *Office of the Messiah*, together with a Connnotation of his *peculiar Relation to God*, or his *being born of God in some eminent and transcendent manner*, because the other Name of Christ *Son of Man* signifies the same *Office of the Messiah*, together with a Connnotation of his *being born of Mankind*, or his *Relation to Man in some Way of Eminence*.

That the Name *Son of Man* may properly denote the *Messiah*, there are some Hints given in the *Old Testament*. I will mention four Places.

I. The very first Promise of the *Messiah* calls him the *Seed of the Woman*, who was appointed to *break the Head of the Serpent*, Gen. 3. 15. i. e. one derived from Mankind, or a *Son of Man*; which is interpreted, 1 John. 3. 8. The *Son of God* was manifested that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. The *Messiah* was to be the *Son of God* and the *Son of Man*, to undertake this glorious Service.

II. See Psal. 8. 4. *What is Man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the Angels, &c.* which is interpreted concerning *Jesus* the promised *Messiah*, Heb. 2. 9. and so the literal and typical Sense of the Psalmist is this: What is the *first Adam*, with all his Seed, that thou art mindful

28 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

mindful of him? or what is the *second Adam* that thou visitest him? &c. since he is made a little lower than the Angels by his coming into the Flesh, and becoming a *second Adam*.

III. Read *Psal. 80. 17. Let thy Hand be upon the Man of thy right Hand, upon the Son of Man whom thou madest strong for thy self.* Whether this refers to the hard Work of Atonement, which the *Hand of God* would lay upon him, or whether it means the *Hand of God* shall be with him, to support and establish him in his Kingdom, may be doubted: Yet 'tis generally agreed, that the Person here designed, is the promised *Messiah*, that *Holy*, that *Mighty One*, upon whom God devolved the Care of our Salvation, *Psal. 89. 19.* when he says, *I have laid Help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the People;* i. e. one who is to be eminently the *Son of Man*, chosen out of Mankind.

IV. Look into *Dan. 7. 13. I saw in the Night Visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days——and there was given to him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, &c.* which represents in Prophecy, *Christ's* Ascension to Heaven in the Clouds, and his receiving the Kingdom from the Hands of the Father.

I grant that in some of these ancient Texts, the Design of Scripture is to represent this,
that

that the *promised Messiah* was to have the Nature, Form and Fashion of a Man, but still his Character as *Messiah* is also included or declared in the same Text. And this is particularly remarkable in this Verse of *Daniel*, which, as Dr. Sykes has abundantly shewn in his *Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion*, is always supposed to be in view where-soever this Title is given to *Christ* in the *New Testament*.

This is the Name indeed, whereby *Christ* most frequently speaks of himself in the *New Testament*, and (as some have remarked) that as the sacred Writers generally call him the *Son of God* to express his sublime Relation to the Father, so he generally calls himself the *Son of Man*, to signify his condescending Relation to Mankind.

It may be said concerning this Name *Son of Man* as is said before concerning the Name *Son of God*, (*viz.*) As there are some few Places where the *Son of God*, chiefly denotes his *sublime Relation to God* distinct from his Office; so there may be a place or two where the *Son of Man* chiefly signifies *Christ's Relation to human Nature*, and his *Derivation from Mankind*, distinct from his Office. Yet as the most general Sense of the word *Son of God* is to denote *that eminent that peculiar Son of God who was to be the Messiah, or Saviour*; so the most general Sense of the Word *Son of Man* is to denote *that eminent and peculiar*

30 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*
culiar Son of Man who was the Seed of the
Woman, and was appointed to that Office of
a Saviour.

First, I shall mention one Text (for I can think of but one in the *New Testament*) where the *Son of Man* may be supposed chiefly or only to signify *Christ's Relation to Mankind*, without including his Office or referring to it.

Matth. 16. 13. Whom do Men say that I, the Son of Man, am? i. e. Whom do Men say that I Jesus am, who appear in the common Form of Mankind? and v. 16. Peter gave his Opinion, Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God; i. e. Thou art the Messiah, who hast a sublime and glorious Relation to God, who art by way of Eminence God's own Son.

Yet even this Text may be also explained so as to include the *Messiahship*, or the Office of *Christ* thus, "*Whom do Men say that I am? What do Men think concerning me, who am indeed the great Son of Man, the Messiah who was to come?*" What do they think of my Person, who am the *Messiah* by Office?

But in the next place let it be observed, that there are a multitude of Scriptures wherein this word is plainly and certainly used to signify *that eminent Son of Man*, who is the *promised Messiah*. I shall mention only *those four*, wherein it is evident that the Scripture
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Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 31

hath chief Respect to his Office; and where the meer Signification of his *human Nature* cannot answer the End and Design of the Text.

I. *Mark 9. 12. Elias verily cometh first and restoreth all things, &c. And it is written of the Son of Man, that he must suffer many things and be set at nought; which refers to the Prophecies of Isaiah, David and Daniel concerning the Messiah. Isa. 53. Dan. 9. and Psa. 22.*

II. *Luke 17. 22. The Days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the Days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it; and they shall say to you, See here, or see there; Go not after them, nor follow them. Which is parallel to Matth. 24. 23. If any Man shall say to you, Lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not; for there shall arise false Christs, &c. Then it follows both in Luke and Matthew, As the Lightning cometh, &c: so shall the coming of the Son of Man be; and as it was in the Days of Noah, and (Luke adds also) in the Days of Lot, thus shall it be in the Day when the Son of Man is revealed: i. e. when Jesus shall appear as the Messiah for the Conversion of the Gentiles, or for the Destruction of the Jews, or for the final Judgment of the World.*

III. *John 5. 26, 27. As the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself, and hath given him*
Autho-

32 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

Authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the Son of Man: that is, because he is the Messiah; therefore, in order to sustain and fulfil the Character of Messiah, 'twas necessary that he should have Power to give Life to the Dead, and to execute Judgment on the World.

IV. *John 12. 34. The People answered him, We have heard out of the Law, that Christ [or the Messiah] abideth for ever: and how sayst thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? 'Tis as much as if the People had said, We know of no Son of Man besides that Messiah or the Christ, who is to have a glorious Kingdom, and abide for ever: What other Son of Man is there, or can there be, that must be lifted up or put to death? Is there any other Christ or Messiah besides him who is to abide for ever?*

I might cite several Scriptures more to this Purpose, but these are sufficient to shew, that as the *Messiah* is sometimes called the SON OF MAN, to signify *his Office with a Connotation of his Relation to Mankind*, and being in an eminent Sense *the Seed of the Woman*, or the *Son of Man*, the chief of all the *Sons of Men*; so 'tis exceeding probable that he is also called the SON OF GOD, to signify the *same Office*, and withal to shew his sublime *Relation to God*, or his being in a peculiar and transcendent manner THE SON, by way of absolute Eminence, above all Men or Angels who are *Sons of God*; even his *first-born*, his *only begotten Son*.

Obj.

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 33

Obj. But if it be allowed, that there are any Places of Scripture where the Name *Son of Man* denotes the *human Nature of Christ*, or that he was *really and truly Man*, why may not the Name *Son of God* as well signify *his Divine Nature*, and denote that, he is *true and real God*?

To which *I answer*, that the Case is widely different; for the Name *Son of Man* is never applied to any Person who is not *true and real Man*; and the Scripture applying it absolutely and eminently to *Christ*, shews him to be the *chief of the Sons of Men*: But the Name *Son of God* is applied often in the *Old Testament*, and in the *New*, both to *Angels* and to *Men*, who are called the *Sons of God*, and yet they are not *true and real God*; and therefore when this Name is given absolutely and eminently to *Christ*, it can necessarily be construed to signify no more, than the *most eminent and chief of all who are called the Sons of God*, or *one who is above them all*, in Character and Office.

It may be observed also, that the Name *Son of Man* or *Sons of Men* is given sometimes to any of the Children of *Adam* or the Race of Mankind, and at other times to some eminent Person among Men, as *Ezekiel* the Prophet is often spoken to, *Thou Son of Man*; but the Name is much more abundantly attributed to our blessed Saviour, as he is the most eminent of all that ever had that Appellation given them.

34 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

I acknowledge it is a great Truth, that this glorious Person the *Messiah* hath two distinct Natures united in him, even the *Nature of God* and the *Nature of Man*: and that *Christ* is *true God* and *true Man*. But when he calls himself *Son of God* and *Son of Man*, surely an *eternal and consubstantial Sonship of Christ*, or even *his eternal Deity united to Man*, seems more than could be certainly collected from these Names in that Day, and more than *Christ* himself directly designed by the use of those Words.

The *last Argument* that I shall mention to prove that the Name *Son of God* denotes the *Character of the Messiah*, including also his *divine Original and sublime Relation to God*, which renders him an all-sufficient Saviour, is this, That Salvation is annexed to the Belief of *Jesus being the Son of God*, in several Texts which I have cited at the beginning of this Discourse: This *Sonship* therefore must necessarily signify and carry with it some Ideas, or Characters that are directly suited to the sinful and miserable State of Mankind, and that render him *a proper Object for their Desire, Dependence and Hope*.

Now 'tis not the meer Belief of his having a divine Nature, nor of an eternal Generation by God the Father, nor of his having a most glorious human Soul, nor a miraculous Birth, nor a Resurrection from the Dead, that renders him so directly suitable to the
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Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 35

State and Case of convinced Sinners, and fit for the proper Exercises of their Hope and Dependance, as the various *Offices and Characters* which he sustains as the *Messiah*, the *Saviour of Mankind*, together with his *all-sufficient Capacity* to fulfil those Offices.

A poor convinced perishing Sinner beholds him as a glorious Person near to God, appointed to be a *Prophet* to enlighten his Darkness, a *Priest* to atone for his Sins and intercede for him, a *King* to rule and influence and defend him against all the Powers of Sin and Hell, and all-sufficient for these sacred Purposes: And thence I infer, that a *divine Person who is the promised Messiah, the all-sufficient Saviour*, is the most natural and probable Sense of this Title, the SON OF GOD, in all those Places of Scripture where *Christ* is proposed to our Faith under this Name; however some of the other Senses may be more remotely and indeterminately included therein. And tho' the *Deity of Christ* is not directly signify'd by this Name, yet by a Comparison of it with other Places of Scripture, I think it may certainly be deduced by just Consequences; for 'tis sufficiently manifest to us, who have the whole *New Testament* to compare with the *Old*, that the *Messiah* must be the *true God*, or that Godhead must be united to human Nature, to make up the complete Person and Character of the *Messiah*.

SECT. III. *Objections against this Sense of the Name answered.*

Obj. 1. THE word *Son* among Men properly signifies one of the same Nature with the *Father*; and therefore *Son of God*, when 'tis applied to *Christ*, must signify one of the same Nature with God the *Father*, *i. e.* one who is true and eternal God; and it has been generally so taken in this Controversy by our Divines. Now this Sense implies much more than a mere *Likeness to God*, or a *Derivation from him*, or *Deputation to an Office*.

Answ. 1. The word *Son* taken in its common Senses and Uses among Men may be applied to several Ideas, *viz.* a *Derivation from the Father*, a *Likeness to*, or *Imitation of the Father*, a *Subordination*, or some sort of *inferior Relation to the Father*, or a *Being of the same Species, Kind or Nature with the Father*; and an *individual Being distinct from the Father*.

Now 'tis plain that when *human Words* and *Similes* are used to represent *Divine Things*, there is no Necessity that those Words should include all their original Ideas, nor indeed is it possible: 'Tis enough to support the Analogy, if but one or two of the same Ideas are denoted by the use of the same Word. Why may we not then suppose that
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Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 37

the Name *Son of God*, when applied to *Christ*, may signify his *peculiar Derivation from the Father as to his Soul, or as to his Body, or his subordinate Character in his Mission by the Father, or his being appointed by the Father to be his Vicegerent in the Kingdom, or his Likeness to the Father in his natural Qualifications and Powers, or in his kingly Office, together with his being another Individual distinct from the Father?* Why may not one or two of these Ideas, and much more all of them, be sufficient to account for the Use of this Name *Son of God*, without making it necessary that the Word *Sonship* in this Place must include a *Sameness of Nature?*

Besides, it is evident that the word *Son of God* is applied to *Angels*, *Job* 1. 6. and to *Men*, *Phil.* 2. 15. 1 *John* 3. 1, 2. and even the Term of *begotten Son* is applied to *Men*, 1 *John* 5. 1. Yet neither *Men* nor *Angels* are of the same *Kind* or *Nature* with *God* their Father, and in these Instances 'tis impossible that the Idea of *Sameness of Kind or Nature* should be included.

Ans. 2. The word *Son* in the Language of *Men*, wheresoever it means a *Sameness of Nature*, it always means the *same specific Nature*, or a *Nature of the same Kind and Species*; but it never means the *same individual Nature*, for it always denotes a *distinct individual Being*. Therefore, in order to

38 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

keep this part of the Idea of *Sonship*, and to maintain the Parallel in this Point, if we will have the *Son of God* to signify one of the *same Nature with the Father*, it must mean one of the *same specific Nature*, that is, a *distinct individual Being of the same kind with the Father*; and thus we shall be in danger of making two Gods *. But it is plain, that in order to support the Analogy of the Name *Son*, we can never make the word *Son of God* to signify one of the *same individual Nature or Essence*, because it never signifies so in the Language of Men; and therefore there is no Necessity that it should signify one of the *same Nature* in any Sense when applied to *Christ*.

Ans. 3. There are many places of Scripture wherein Christ is called the *Son of God*, and *the Son* absolutely, and where God is said to be *his Father*, wherein we cannot suppose the *Godhead of Christ* is or can be designed in the most just and natural Interpretation of the Text; such as are most of these which follow, *viz.*

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* That it cannot mean *one of the same specific Nature*, and that *Christ* is not another individual Spirit *specifically the same* with the Father, I have proved at large in other Places: For it belongs to the very Nature of a *Father* to be self-existent and underived, and it belongs as much to the Nature of a *Son* not to be self-existent, but to be derived: therefore their Natures cannot be specifically the same. A Nature which is not self-existent and self-sufficient, nor could exist but by Derivation, is not the same specific Nature with that which is self-sufficient and self-existent, and which cannot be derived.

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 39

John 5. 18, 19. When the *Jews* had made a strange Inference, and charged *Christ* with making *himself equal to God*, because he called *God his Father*, he answered, *Verily, verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, &c.* This is not an Expression which represents the Son as the true and eternal God, or that grants their Inference; for it is plain that this Expression represents him under a Degree of Impotence and Dependence, that he could do nothing of himself. Nay this contradicts their Inference, and denies his Equality with God, rather than confirms or allows it.

The Sense of this Expression may be learn'd from *John 8. 38.* *I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and you do that which ye have seen with your Father. &c. 44. Ye are of your Father the Devil, &c.*—Now 'tis plain that the *Jews* had never seen the Devil do those Things which they did, but it signifies only that by the Devil's Influence and Direction they practis'd evil Actions: And so also, that *Christ* doth all by God's Influence and Direction, is the plain Meaning of *Christ's speaking or doing what he has seen with his Father.*

Nor will the following Words destroy this Interpretation, *Whatsoever things the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise*; that is, whatsoever things the Father contrives and

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appoints,

40 *Of the Name* Son of God, Qu. I.

appoints, the Son executes and performs as commissioned by the Father, or the Son performs them by the Father's Influence.

Then it proceeds, *ſ. 20. The Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth, and he will ſhew him greater Works than theſe, that ye may marvel.* Hence it follows that the Father had not then *ſhewn to the Son* theſe greater Works, or given him Commiſſion and Power for the Performance of them. But this can never be ſaid concerning the Divint Nature of *Chriſt*, which can receive and learn nothing new.

And tho' there are ſome Expreſſions in that Paragraph of Scripture down to the 30th *ſ.* which ſeem ſuperior to the Character of any mere Creature, and which would have been hardly applied to *Chriſt* the Man, if not united to Godhead; yet *Chriſt* conſidered as the *Son of God* throughout that Paragraph, is repreſented as dependent on the Father for all, and receiving all from the Father, which is hardly conſiſtent with the Idea of ſupreme Godhead, if that were included in *Sonſhip*.

Whereſoever *Chriſt* calls God *his Father*, he himſelf ſtands under the ſpecial Character of a *Son*. Now *John* 5. 30. when he ſays, *I can of myſelf do nothing, I ſeek not mine own Will, but the Will of the Father which hath ſent me.* And *John* 6. 38. *I came down from Heaven not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me; that is,*
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Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 41

the Father, as *ψ. 39.* This does not sound like the Language of Godhead, which is supreme and independent, and can do all things of itself, and by its own Will.

John 14. 28. My Father is greater than I. 'Tis hardly to be supposed that *Christ* here intends to speak of his Divine Nature. The Expression itself, as well as the Context, would lead one to think that *Christ* considered as a *Son* is not here spoken of as the true and eternal God, who is the *greatest* of Beings, and can acknowledge no greater than himself.

John 14. 31. As the Father gave me Commandment, even so I do. This does not seem to be the Language of supreme Godhead, which receives no Commandments from another.

John 17. 5. Father, glorify me with thy self, with the Glory which I had with Thee before the World was. Surely *Christ* as God does not offer up Prayers to the Father, and much less could he pray for the Restoration of a Glory which his Divine Nature once had, of which he seems divested at present. All this is hardly consistent with supreme Deity belonging to his *Sonship*, *i. e.* either to be divested of Glory, or to pray for the Restoration of it.

John 20. 17. Christ says, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. So *2 Cor. 11. 31.* and *1 Pet. 1. 3.* the *Father* is called *the God and Father of our Lord*

42 *Of the Name Son of God, Q u. I.*

Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Father cannot properly be *the God of the Deity of Christ*, i. e. his Creator, his absolute Governor, and his Object of Worship, which is the proper Sense of *my God* in all other Scriptures. Nor is there any sufficient Reason then why we should construe the Words *my Father*, as relating to the *Deity of Christ*, since the Words *my God* cannot be so construed, and since both these Titles seem so intimately connected and referring to one and the same Subject.

Mark 13. 32. Of that Day and Hour knoweth not the Son, but the Father. I confess it may be said in that Paragraph he is called *the Son of Man*, *ŷ. 26.* yet it must be granted that the more natural Sense of the Words is, *Of that Hour knoweth not the Son of God, but only God the Father.* This Text does so plainly shew *Christ's* Ignorance of the Day of Judgment as he is the Son, that tho' it be granted the *Divine Nature of Christ* knows the Day of Judgment, yet as a Son he does not: therefore as a Son he hath not a Divine Nature, or true Godhead.

John 3. 35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. ŷ. 34. God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. All this implies an Inferiority and Dependency. As a Son he receives all from another, which Godhead cannot do,

Luke 23. 47. When the Centurion or Captain saw the Miracles at the Death of Christ, he

Quest. I. as given to Christ. 43

he cried out, *Verily this Man was the Son of God.* He cannot be supposed to mean that this Man was the true and eternal God, but only that he was a great and glorious Person, *like God*, or some way related to God: or he was the Person whom the Jews expected for their *Messiah*. This Roman Captain could not imagine *Christ* to be God himself.

1 Cor. 15. 28. *Then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that has put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* This is a Character of too much Inferiority for true Godhead. The Argument stands thus: If the Son of God be *true God* considered as a Son, then he is originally and necessarily Lord of all, and then it must be said 'tis by his own voluntary Condescension that he is so far depressed and humbled by the Oeconomy, as to become the Father's Deputy and Vicegerent; and when that Oeconomy ceases, he is of course exalted to his Equality with the Father, and to his essential and natural Lordship over all. But the Representation of St. Paul is just the contrary: In many parts of his Writings (particularly *Phil. 2.*) he shews us, that the *Son of God* is not deprest but exalted by the Oeconomy to the Kingdom. And he tells us in this Text, that when the Son gives up this Oeconomical Kingdom, he comes again into Subjection; *Then shall the Son himself be subject to the Father*; which plainly shews, that considered as a Son, he is naturally subject

44 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

ject to the *Father*, and that at the end of this economical Exaltation he shall return to his natural Subjection, and shall be so for ever when *God* appears *all in all*. This is most evidently the meaning of the great Apostle.

This Text will not prove that *Christ* is not God, for he is so by personal Union to the Divine Nature, he is *God manifest in the Flesh*, he is God and Man in one complex Person. But this Text (I think) does prove that his *Sonship* doth not include *Godhead*. And not only in this Text, but in most or all these Scriptures it is manifest, that the Character of *Christ* as a *Son* is set far below the *Father*, not only in Order or in Office, but in Knowledge, Power, Sovereignty, Self-sufficiency and Authority, which would naturally lead one to believe that his *Sonship* in Scripture cannot refer to his *Godhead* or *Divine Nature*, wherein he is by our greatest Divines acknowledged to be *equal* to the *Father in Power and Glory*.

Now while we maintain the true *Deity of Christ*, and that his compleat Person is God and Man united; I see no Necessity of applying all these Texts to his *Godhead* where his *Sonship* is spoken of, since his *Sonship* may be better referred to his inferior Nature, or to his Offices. And this will free us from those Embarrassments and Hardships to which we have been driven to keep up the sublime Idea of *Godhead* in these Scriptures which call him a *Son*, and which at the same time carry so much

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 45

much of *Dependence* and *Inferiority* in them.

Obj. II. Tho' it should be granted that there are several Texts wherein *Christ* is called the *Son of God*, which cannot so well be referred to his Divine Nature, yet there are several other Texts wherein *Christ* is represented as the *Son of God*, *begotten* and *born of God*, which seem much more naturally to refer to his Godhead, and can hardly be construed into a lower Sense, *viz.*

1st Text, Prov. 8. 24, 25. Where *Wisdom* says, *Before the Hills was, I brought forth, &c.* which whole Chapter is generally interpreted concerning the Divine Nature of *Christ*.

Ans. 1. 'Tis not the Design of my present Discourse to prove that the divine Nature of *Christ* has no sort or manner of Derivation from the Father, real or relative: I neither affirm it nor deny it here. But that the Name *Son of God*, in the *New Testament*, does not generally (if ever) signify his divine Nature; this is my present Theme: and therefore the Allegation of this Text out of *Proverbs* is not to our present Purpose, nor is the Name *Son of God* there used, nor is God called *his Father*.

Ans. 2. I dare not deny this Chapter to relate to *Christ*; yet it does not follow, that it refers only to his divine Nature, as I shall shew immediately. And it must be acknowledged

46 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

ledged that 'tis very hard to prove, that this 8th of *Proverbs* does certainly denote the Person of *Christ*. *Athanasius* himself sometimes explains it another way. Bishop *Patrick*, that noble Commentator, will scarce allow it; and many others have been of the Opinion, that *Solomon* means only *Wisdom* as a Principle of Contrivance and Counsel, whether human or divine; or at most, the ideal World in the Mind of God, tho' he uses such sort of *personal* Characters in his Description of this *Wisdom*, in the *Hebrew* Idiom.

'Tis granted that many of the Ancients explained it of *Christ*, but some of the Fathers supposed it to mean the *Holy Spirit*; and all Men know they were but very poor Expositors, who dealt much in Allegory, and in straining of plain Texts to their Purposes: and since they can't tell whether the *Son* or the *Spirit* be meant here, 'tis possible it may mean neither of them, by all the Arguments which they have produced; for none of them are very conclusive.

Ans. 3. Supposing the divine *Wisdom* in *Prov. 8.* primarily to signify the Idea of the divine Counsels and Decrees about Creation and Redemption, it may be properly said, This *Wisdom* was *begotten* or *brought forth* before the Creation, and all this System of divine Counsels being deposited with the pre-existent Soul of *Christ*, (*in whom are all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge,*) this human

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 47

human Soul of *Christ*, thus vested with divine Ideas, may be included in *Solomon's Idea of Wisdom.*

And those who believe the Doctrine of the *pre-existent Soul of Christ*, have made it appear that if it refer to *Christ*, it is very probable this *pre-existent Soul* considered as having the *divine Nature united* to it, is here represented as commencing its Existence, its Union with Godhead, receiving its Commission, and beginning its Office. And the learned Dr. *Thomas Goodwin*, (tho' he firmly believed the eternal Generation of *Christ*, as the Son of God) yet he supposes this Chapter to relate to *Christ*, as *God Man*, and not merely to his Godhead.

2d Text, is that remarkable one, *Psal. 2. 7. Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*; which has been usually interpreted by our Divines, to signify the *eternal Sonship of Christ* as God.

Ans. 1. 'Tis evident that in *Act. 13. 33.* St. *Paul* applies this to the *Resurrection of Christ*, and the beginning of his Exaltation, and not to any eternal Generation; so that we have a divine Interpreter giving quite a different Sense of it.

Ans. 2. Besides, *Christ* is here said to *become a Son by a Decree* which cannot signify eternal Generation, but must relate to his Office.

Ans. 3. Again, 'tis spoken *literally* concerning the Exaltation of *David* as the
Type

48 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

Type of Christ to his Kingdom, and not concerning the natural Production or Generation of *David*; and therefore in the *Antitype* it must signify *mystically* the Exaltation of *Christ* to his Kingdom, and not his natural eternal Generation.

Ans. 4. Let it be farther remembered that the word, *This Day*, never signifies *Eternity* in Scripture in any other Place, and why then must it do so here?

Ans. 5. I add also, that this Text is cited in *Heb. 1. 5.* where it is joined with God's Promise in future times *to be a Father to Christ; I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son*; which does not signify eternal Generation. But of this Verse I have spoken more largely in other Places; and shewn that Bishop *Pearson*, Dr. *Owen*, and other zealous Trinitarians do not construe this Text to mean the eternal Generation of Christ.

3d Text, *Matth. 28. 19. Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* Why is the *Son* joined with the *Father* and the *Holy Ghost*, who are confessedly divine, if the Name *Son* does not include the Godhead of *Christ*?

Ans. If *Christ*, considered as the *Son of God*, be personally united to the divine Nature, or the *Eternal Word*, he has Godhead belonging to his complex Person; and therefore the Name *Son*, which signifies his personal Character and Office, may be well joined with

Quest. I. as given to Christ. . 49

with the Father in this initiating Ordinance, the whole complex Person of Christ, who is the *Son of God*, including true Godhead.

4th Text, Rom. 1. 3, 4. *His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the Seed of David, according to the Flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holiness by the Resurrection from the Dead.* Now some say, here is a plain *Antithesis* between the human Nature and divine Nature of *Christ*: the human Nature, which is called the *Flesh*, and the divine Nature, which is called the *Spirit of Holiness*, and according to this divine Nature he is declared to be the *Son of God*.

Ans. 1. There are several Criticks who believe the eternal Generation of Christ, who yet don't suppose there is such an exact *Antithesis* here; but they construe the *Spirit of Holiness*, to signify the *Holy Ghost* who raised *Christ* from the Dead, and who manifested, testified and declared him to be the *Son of God with Power by his Resurrection*.

Ans. 2. There are others who chuse to support the *Antithesis*, and make the *Spirit of Holiness* to signify the glorious human Spirit of Christ replenish'd with all Holiness; and suppose that the Name *Spirit of Holiness* is here given to this human Soul of Christ, not only to aggrandize its Character above all other holy Creatures, but also to intimate that this Spirit governed the animal Nature, and kept

50 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

it pure, as well as to distinguish it from the *Holy Spirit*, which is the third of the Sacred Three. But I am not so well satisfied in this Exposition, and therefore I dare not venture to maintain it. But there is a third Answer, which I prefer to both these.

Ans. 3. This Text may be thus paraphras'd : *Jesus Christ our Lord, who was derived from the Seed of David, according to (his fleshly Original, or) the Influence of the Flesh into his Birth, but was declared powerfully, by his Resurrection from the Dead, to be the Son of God, according to (his supernatural and holy Original, or) the Influence of the Holy Spirit.* So that the *Flesh* here, does not mean any constituent part of *Christ*, or his *very Flesh or Body*, but the Operation or Influence of the *Flesh*, or share that *Flesh* of the blessed Virgin had in the Conception of *Christ* : And so the *Spirit* does not mean *any constituent part of Christ*, but the Influence or Operation of the *Holy Spirit* in his first *Conception*, or in his *Resurrection*, on both which accounts he is called in Scripture the *Son of God*. See *Luke* 1. 35. and *Act.* 13. 33. and both are ascribed to the *Holy Spirit*. There is a large Confirmation of this Exposition, in some Notes on *Rom.* 1. 3, 4. wherein it is shewn how the Antithesis of the Apostle is preserved, and that the Apostle always uses κατὰ σάρκα and κατὰ πνεῦμα in an Antithesis, to signify the Influence of

Quest. I. as given to Christ. 51

of each Principle, rather than for two constituent parts of a Person.

5th Text, Heb. 7. 3. *Melchisedec was without Father, without Mother, without Descent, having neither beginning of Days, nor end of Life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a Priest continually.* Now this historical Eternity of Melchisedec, whose Father and Mother, Life and Death are not recorded, is made a Type of the real Eternity of Christ, considered as he is the *Son of God*.

Ans^w. 1. Since Melchisedec is represented here *without a Father*, and yet as a Type of the *Son of God*, it would destroy the Doctrine of Christ's eternal Generation from God the Father, rather than support it, since the very Type here has no Father.

Ans^w. 2. This Place refers more naturally to the Priesthood of Christ than to his Nature or Existence. His Priesthood was not derived by genealogical Succession as Aaron's was: He had no Father, no Mother of the *Levitical* Tribe, or of the Family of Aaron, from whom his Priesthood could descend; nor did he die and leave it to others by way of Descent; but was constituted a single Priest himself, without a Predecessor, without a Successor: and herein the Priesthood of Melchisedec and the Priesthood of Christ run very parallel, and greatly answer the Apostle's Design. And I think this Sense is patroniz'd by some Expressions in Dr. Owen's Comment.

52 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

6th Text, Heb. 1. 6. *When he bringeth in his first-begotten into the World, he saith, Let all the Angels of God worship him ; i. e. Let all the Angels of God worship the first-begotten; now this first-begotten is Jehovah, Psal. 97. 7. for thence the Apostle cites it.*

Answ. This first-begotten Son of God has true and eternal Godhead personally dwelling in him, and united personally to him, and one with him ; and therefore the whole complex Person is called *Jehovah*, and is entitled to divine Worship from Angels and Men. God united to the Man *Christ* : *God manifest in the Flesh was seen* of Angels, 1 Tim. 3. 16. and worshipped by them. This Text does not prove that the first-begotten is God, any otherwise than by personal Union with that *Jehovah* who is spoken of in the 97th Psalm. The first-begotten Son of God is to be worshipped by Angels, because of the indwelling Godhead, the great *Jehovah*, with whom the Man *Christ* is one.

The last Text, and which affords perhaps the most important Objection against my Sense of the Name, is *John* 5. 18. compared with *John* 10. 23, &c. If the Title *Son of God* did not signify true Godhead, why did the *Jews* charge *Christ* with Blasphemy, and say, that he *made himself equal with God*, and seek to kill him, because he had said, *God was his Father, his own Father*, and as they confuted it, *making himself equal with God?*
John

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 53

John 5. 18. And why do they charge him again with Blasphemy, when he said, *I am the Son of God?* *John*. 10. 33. *because that thou being a Man, makest thyself God.* How could this be, if the Name *Son of God* did not signify *Godhead*?

I have given some *Answer* to that Text in the 5th of *John*, in some of the foregoing Pages. But to make it yet clearer, I proceed :

Ans. 1. It is possible that some learned Men among them might have a confused Notion from the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, that the *Messiah* or the *Son of God* was to have true and real Godhead in him, which *Godhead of the Messiah* is a certain Truth, and hath been sufficiently proved. Now, because he called himself the *Son of God*, and represented himself as the *Messiah*, therefore they might infer that he assumed that *Godhead* to himself which belonged to the compleat Character of the *Messiah*, and upon this account might charge him with *Blasphemy*, by way of Consequence.

Yet I have much Reason to doubt, whether the Scribes and Pharisees did certainly know that the *Messiah* was to be the *true God*; for the whole Nation of the *Jews*, with their Priests and Doctors, were most stupidly and shamefully ignorant of the true Character and Glory of the *Messiah* and his Kingdom. Had the Pharisees themselves any notion that *Christ* was to be the *true God*, they would

54 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

never have been puzzled and silenc'd at that Question of our Saviour, *Matth. 22. 43, 44, &c.* If *the Messiah be the Son of David, how could David call him Lord?* or, *If David calls him Lord, how is he his Son?* Their Supposition of the Godhead of the *Messiah* would have easily answered this Difficulty, if they had had any such Opinion.

Besides, we have little Reason to suppose that the Pharisees knew more of the *Divinity of the Messiah* than the Disciples themselves did during the Life of *Christ*. Now it appears from many Parts of the History of the Gospel, that they did hardly believe at all that he was the *true God*; or if they did, yet their Faith of it was very low, wavering and doubtful; and yet doubtless they firmly believed *Jesus* to be the *Messiah* and the *Son of God*, in a Sense sufficient for Salvation.

When *Peter* in the Name of the rest had made so glorious a Confession, *Matt. 16. 16. Thou art Christ the Son of the living God*, he could not mean that *Christ* was the *great and glorious God*; for in *v. 22.* he took up his Master very short, and *began to rebuke him*. Surely he would not have rebuked the *Great God* his Maker, at least not immediately after such a Confession of his Godhead.

Now, if the Apostles themselves were in a State of Grace and Salvation, when they can hardly be supposed to believe *Christ to be the true*

Quest. I. as given to Christ. 55

true and the eternal God, and yet they believed and professed him to be the *Son of God*, then that Name *Son of God* doth not necessarily imply and include his *Divinity*.

But to return to the *Objection*.

That which I take to be the plainest, the clearest, and the most scriptural *Solution* of this Difficulty is this which follows,

Ans. 2. 'Tis evident that the Design of the wicked *Jews* in these Places of the History was to bring the highest Accusation against our Saviour, and to load him with the grossest Calumnies that all their Wit or Malice could draw from his Words or Actions, *Luk. 11. ult. laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his Mouth, that they might accuse him.*

If ever he spake of his *Kingdom* (tho' he own'd his *Kingdom was not of this World*) yet they in their Malice would construe it into *Sedition* and *Rebellion*, and make him an Enemy to *Cæsar*. And so when he called *God his own Father*, and declared himself to be the *Son of God*, they in the Fury of their false Zeal construe it into *Blasphemy*; as tho' to own himself to be the *Son of God*, were to *assume Equality with God*: whereas *Christ* shows them plainly, that these Words did not necessarily imply such a Sense; and this is sufficiently manifest by the Defence which *Christ* made for himself in both those Places of the History. Give me leave to repeat briefly what I said before.

56 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

If we look into *John* 5. 18. when the *Jews* accused him that by calling *God his Father* he *made himself equal with God*, he doth by no means vindicate that Sense of his Name *Son of God*, but rather denies his *Equality with God* considered as a *SON*, *¶. 19, &c.* *Verily, verily I say - - - the Son can do nothing of himself: The Father sheweth the Son all things that he doth, and he will shew him greater Works than these.* Thence I infer, that he hath not shown him all yet; and *¶. 30. I can of myself do nothing - - - I seek not mine own Will, but the Will of the Father who hath sent me, &c.* All which Expressions sufficiently evince, that he did not intend to signify his own Godhead, or Equality with God, when he called himself *the Son of God*; for in his very Answer to their Accusation he represents himself inferior to and dependent on God the Father.

Now let us look into the other Text where our Saviour is thus accused, and defends himself, (*viz.*) *John* 10. 30—39. He saith, *I and my Father are one.* 31. *Then the Jews took up Stones again to stone him.* 32. *Jesus answered them, Many good Works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those Works do ye stone me?* 33. *The Jews answered him, saying, For a good Work we stone thee not; but for Blasphemy, and because that thou being a Man, makest thyself God.* 34. *Jesus answered them, Is it not*

Quest. I. as given to Christ. 57.

not written in your Law, I said, ye are Gods? 35. If he called them Gods, unto whom the Word of God came, (and the Scripture cannot be broken) 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the World, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God?

In which Portion of Scripture we may observe these three things.

(1.) That *Christ* doth neither plainly and expressly own nor deny himself here to be *the true God*, for this was not a proper time to satisfy the Curiosity of the malicious *Jews* in such a sublime Doctrine, in which he had not as yet clearly and fully instructed his own Disciples.

Yet (2.) he gives several Hints of his *Godhead*, or his being *one with the Father*, when he says, *I and my Father are one*; and when he says, *ψ. 38. I do the Works of my Father, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him*; by which he secretly intimated that the *Man Jesus* had also a divine Nature in him, and was personally united to *God*, tho' he did not think fit to preach his own Godhead plainly at that time.

And indeed if he had not been the *true God*, and in that Sense *one with the Father*, we may justly suppose, that he would upon this occasion have denied himself to be *true God*, and thus roundly renounced the *Conclusion* itself which they pretended to draw from his

58 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

his Words, as well as he did deny the *Justness of their Consequence*, from his calling himself the *Son of God*. And therefore since he did not renounce the *Conclusion*, we may reasonably infer that he was the *true God*: But since he does deny the *Justness of their Consequence*, we may as reasonably infer that his meer calling himself the *Son of God* does not prove nor include his *Godhead*; which appears plainer under the next particular.

I say therefore (3.) The chief Design of his Answer, was to refute the Calumny of the *Jews*, and the Weakness of their *Inference*, by shewing that the Name *Son of God*, doth not necessarily signify *one equal to God*; but that the necessary Sense of it here can rise no higher than to denote one who was nearer to the Father, and was *sanctified, sealed, and sent* by the Father in a way superior to all former Prophets, Kings and Magistrates, to whom *the Word of God came*, and who, partly on this account, might be called *Gods*.

Prophets or Kings, Judges or Doctors of the Law were called *Gods*, and *Children* or *Sons of the most High*, in *Psal. 82. 6.* and in other Places of Scripture, because they came from God, they were commission'd by God, and carried with them some Representation of the Wisdom, Power, Authority, and Dominion of God in the sight of Men. Now our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Messiah, the great Prophet, Judge, Doctor or Teacher, and King
of

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 59

of his Church, *came forth from God* in Heaven, in a literal and more eminent manner, *was sent by him into this World* with a higher Commission, and represented more of the Wisdom, Power, and Dominion of God than any former Kings or Prophets ever did; and if they upon this account were dignify'd with the Name or Title of *Gods*, or *Sons of God*, much more right has the *Messiah* to this Name or Title.

The Argument which our Lord uses is *à minori ad majus*; he puts the Reason of his more unquestionable and superior Right to this Title, upon the Superiority of his Character and Mission, or his more immediate Commission from the Father. His Words might be paraphrased thus: They who were *originally in and of this World* were made Prophets, Teachers or Kings, meely by the *Word of God coming to them*, and giving them Commission, either by the ordinary Directions of the written Word, or (at best) they received their Authority from the *Word of God coming to them* * by some Voice or Vision,

* Our Lord knew that he himself was the divine *Logos* or *Word of God*, and 'tis likely that he used these Words, *To whom the Word of God came*, with this View and Meaning in his own Mind: "Surely if those are called *Gods*, to whom the *Divine Logos* or *Word* made a Visit from the Father, the *Divine Logos* himself who came from the Father may be well called the *Son of God* without Blasphemy." But he did not think fit to express himself so plainly to the *Jews* at that time, tho' he has left it upon Record in his Gospel for our Observation and Instruction.

60 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

sion, some divine Message or Inspiration, and yet they had the Title of *Gods* given them. Therefore the *Messiah* who was *not* originally of this World, but *was with the Father*, who *was sanctified*, i. e. anointed with the Spirit, or set a-part by God himself, who *came forth from the Father* in Heaven, and was *sent immediately by the Father into this World*, may surely be called the *Son of God* without danger of Blasphemy. If they are call'd *Gods*, the *Messiah* may well be called the *Son of God*.

And he confirms the Argument thus : *The Scripture cannot be broken*, ἡ δύναμις λυθῆναι, cannot be contradicted. As he who acts contrary to a Precept is said to *break it*, λείπει, see *Matt. 5. 19. John 5. 18. and 7. 23.* So he who *contradicts* an Assertion of Scripture is properly said λείπει, to *break it*. Therefore, since the Scripture which can't be contradicted, calls those ancient Rulers, Teachers or Prophets *Gods*, as well as *Sons of God*, he who is appointed the most glorious Prophet and Ruler, might have been justify'd by the Language of Scripture, if he had assumed the Name God to himself, in direct and express Language, and much more abundantly is he justified when he has only call'd himself the *Son of God*.

And indeed 'tis worth our Observation here, that tho' the *Jews* built part of their Accusation upon his saying, *I and my Father are*

one,

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 61

one, Jesus does not directly answer to those Words, nor undertake to vindicate or explain them; because he might design in those Words to intimate his *Godhead* or his *Oneness with God the Father*: Therefore he neglects and drops this part of the Ground of their Charge, and applies himself intirely to answer their Accusation, as it was built upon his calling *God his own Father*, and himself *the Son of God*: And this he did because he knew that this Name did not necessarily imply *Equality with God*, and so he could boldly refute their Inference and renounce the Charge.

Yet it should be observed also, that before *Christ* leaves them he leads them to his Godhead, *i. e.* to his most intimate Union with the Godhead of the Father, *†. 38. That ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him; that he and his Father are one*, as he before exprest his Godhead. .

Thus I have explained myself at large in what I think to be the very Scope and Force of our Saviour's Argument; and indeed if we take the word *Son of God* to signify necessarily in that place *an Equality with the Father*; we plainly take away the Force of our Saviour's Argument and Defence, and we leave the Accusation of the malicious *Jews* in its full force against him *.

In

* The Learned Dr. *Waterland*, whose Zeal for the Deity of Christ, and whose Skill in the Defence of it, are sufficiently known; himself confesses that the *Jews could not from Christ's*

62 *Of the Name Son of God; Qu. I.*

In short, our Saviour's Answer must necessarily mean one of these two things, (*viz.*)

Either when he called himself *the Son of God*, he did design to let them know that he was *equal to God*, but that he was no Blasphemer, because it was a great Truth :

Or he designed to tell them, that his Words did not necessarily signify that he was *equal to God*, and therefore he was no Blasphemer ; that their Inference was not just, and that they carry'd the Charge further than his Words would bear. One of these two must (I think) be our Saviour's Design.

Now that he did not design the first of these, *i. e.* to shew that he was *equal to God*, seems evident to me, because his Answer cannot reach this Sense ; and if strained to this Sense, 'tis very obscure and far-fetch'd : It might also have been spoken in much plainer Language twenty ways, if it had been his Design to tell the *Jews*, that he was *equal with God* ; and he would doubtless have proved it by plainer Citations out of the *Old Testament*, which assert the Divinity of the *Messiah*, had it been his Design to declare and maintain his Godhead at that time.

But if we suppose his Design was only to shew the *Falshood of their Inference*, and that they had strained his Words too far, then the whole

Paragraph

Christ's own Expression clearly convict him of meaning more than that he was GOD, in the improper Sense of the Word, as it had been used, *Psal. 82. 6.* See his *Vind.c. of Christ's Divinity*, P. 55.

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 63

Paragraph is natural, and easy to be understood, in the manner I have explained it.

From all this it will follow, That the *Belief of Christ to be the Son of God* in some more eminent Sense than all the ancient Prophets and Kings were, *i. e.* to be the glorious *Messiah*, is all that *Christ* directly and plainly designed in calling himself the *Son of God*; and this must be all that was made necessary to Salvation in those Scriptures which required their Belief in him as the *Son of God*.

Thus I have made it appear that the Name *Son of God* cannot necessarily imply his *divine Nature*, much less the incomprehensible eternal Generation of the Son in one Essence with the Father. For tho' I firmly believe him to be *true God*, and in that Sense *one with the Father*, yet I would not place the chief weight of this Doctrine on such Arguments as will not support it, nor build so important a Truth on an insufficient Foundation.

But this Thought leads me to the next Section.

SECT. IV. *What advantage is there in not applying the Name Son of God to the Divine Nature of Christ?*

AFTER all, many a pious Christian will be ready to enquire and say, Since you acknowledge *Jesus Christ* to have a *Divine Nature*, and to be truly and properly *God*, why

64 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

why have you taken so much pains to shew that his Name *the Son of God* in Scripture does not necessarily signify either his *Godhead* or his *Coeternal Generation* and *Sonship*?

To this *Enquiry* I hope I can give some satisfactory *Answers*, and offer such *Reasons* as may justify and support this Attempt, and guard it from the just Censures of every reasonable and intelligent Reader.

I. I was willing to *search the true Sense of Scripture in this Point, and to understand the Meaning of God in his Word.*

Where any Expression is used so very frequently in the Bible as this Name *the Son of God* is, and that in Texts of awful and solemn Importance, which determine the things necessary to our Salvation, 'tis of great moment to know the Meaning of that Expression, that we may not include too little or too much in it: and this in order to understand the Scripture aright in things necessary to Salvation, and to have a true Idea of what the Spirit of God means and intends; that we mayn't flatter careless Hypocrites with vain Hopes of Salvation, by setting the Mark too low, nor discourage humble Believers by setting it too high: and that we may not abuse ourselves by false and mistaken Notions, and imagine that we derive them all from the Word of God.

II. I was afraid to *build my Belief of the Deity of Christ upon feeble and insufficient Foundations*, and therefore I thought it necessary

Quest. I. as given to Christ. 65

cessary to examine this Argument which is drawn from his Sonship.

The great Doctrine of the *Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and Faith in him as the *true God*, has been by many Persons built chiefly on this Name which is given him, *viz. the Son of God*; and that upon this bare Presumption, that as a *Son* amongst Men has the same *specific Nature* with his Father, so the *Son of God* must have the same *individual Nature* with his Father; but how weak this Argument is to support such a Doctrine, appears in the foregoing Discourse. Now I would not have the Faith of Christians in any important Doctrine, that is divinely true, built upon a Supposition that is feeble or false, lest the Adversaries take occasion to insult the Faith of Christians, and to decry the Doctrine itself, as tho' it had no better Arguments or Foundations to support it.

Besides, when Christians have built their own Faith and Hopes upon a Foundation so feeble and uncertain, they are more liable to have their Creed shaken, and to part with the glorious Doctrine itself; and therefore I would persuade them rather to build their Faith on such Arguments as will stand the Test against all Opposers: And I think most of those which I have made use of in the *eighth* and *ninth* Propositions of the Treatise of the *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity* may lay a claim to this Character, and will better support

F port

66 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

port this Faith than any Argument derived from his mere *Generation* or *Sonship*.

III. 'Tis necessary as far as possible *to remove all Cavils from every important Doctrine of Christianity*, and such is that of the *Deity of Christ*.

Now, if the Doctrine of his *Deity* be built on his *Sonship*, then he must be *true God* considered as he is a *Son*; but the Notion of a *SON* in all Languages of Mankind importing some sort of *Derivation* and *Dependence*; and the Notion of *Godhead* importing *Independence* and *Self-existence*, seem to carry a sort of Contradiction in them. And this becomes a mighty Prejudice to the Minds of Men against their Belief of the *Deity of Christ*, when they are told, that he is *God* as he is a *Son*, or that his *Deity depends on his Sonship*, i. e. his *Deity* is included in his derived and dependent Character.

Tho' I will not here assert that *absolute Self-existence* and *Independence* belong to every thing *in* and *of* God, (for I know not what Powers or Properties of *Godhead* depend on each other) yet I would not willingly prove the *Godhead of Christ* from the very Name which seems to exclude *Self-existence* and *Independence*, since there are many other and better Proofs of it.

And tho' I dare not utterly renounce all those Schemes of explaining the Trinity, which make the Divine Nature of *Christ* to be in any way

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 67

way or manner whatsoever *derived* or *communicated from the Father*, (for I must own myself lost in these Unsearchables) yet I would not make the necessary Proof of the *Divinity of Christ* to depend on such a Notion as in the common Language of Mankind implies *Derivation* and *Dependence* : and by this means, I think, I better guard this sacred *Truth* from some of the *Cavils* that have attended it.

Now if by this Exposition of the Name *Son of God* I remove any of the great Impediments out of the way of the *Arians* or *Socinians* from believing the *true Deity of Christ*, then I shall account myself to have done Service and Honour to that glorious Article of our Faith.

IV. I would do something *to take away that Anathema and damning Sentence* which some Parties of Christians who believe the Divinity of Christ have thrown on others, who also believe his Divinity, merely for *not explaining some particular Scriptures in the same way and manner that they do*, or for not using the same Arguments to prove his Divinity.

Since 'tis made a *Test* for our eternal Salvation in some Places of Scripture, whether we believe *Jesus to be the Son of God*, or no; and since there are now, and have been in former Ages, many Christians of great Piety and Worth who doubt of the *consubstantial Sonship of Christ*, and the *eternal Generation*

68 *Of the Name Son of God, Qu. I.*

of his Person, even tho' they believe *his true and proper Godhead*, I would not willingly encourage the Scripture to be interpreted in such a mistaken Sense, as should exclude all these pious and excellent Persons from Salvation, and forbid them the Kingdom of Heaven. For they may believe him to be *true God*, and to be also the *Son of God*, tho' they do not believe his *Godhead* to be owing to his *Sonship*.

There are some Persons who have been so severe as to pass a condemning Sentence on all those who deny *Christ the Son*, considered *as the Son*, to be *the true God*. I hope they have done it merely thro' *Inadvertence*, or because they thought it to be utterly impossible to maintain the *Godhead of Christ* upon any other Foot but that of his *co-eternal* and *consubstantial Sonship*. But whatsoever be their Reason for such unjust Censure, yet I must confess I don't love to see Condemnation and everlasting Death thrown upon Persons who believe the same scriptural Doctrine of the *Deity of Christ* that we do, but choose to explain it another way.

Thus some of my *Motives* to this Enquiry are to do *Justice to the Truths of God*, and some arise from *Charity to the Souls of Men*. Nor is my Zeal for the Honour of my Lord *Jesus Christ* in the least abated; for while I believe him in his complex Person to be both the *true and eternal God*, and also the
only

Quest. I. *as given to Christ.* 69

only begotten Son of the Father, and while I profess him to be withal the *great Prophet* and *Teacher*, as well as the Saviour of his Church; I conceive that more Honour is done him by searching out that true and exact Meaning of his own Words which this heavenly Teacher designed to convey to us, than by persuading the World to read his *eternal Godhead* in those Places where he did not design to reveal and express it to Men.





Q U E S T I O N II.

Did the Disciples of Christ fully believe that he was the true God during his Life-time, or not till after his Death and Resurrection ?

IN order to solve this Question, let us make these following Enquiries, *viz.*

I. What *Notion* the *Jews* had of their *Messiah* in general.

II. What *Ideas* or *Notions* *Christ* taught his Disciples concerning himself.

III. What *Apprehensions* or *Notions* the Disciples received and imbraced concerning *Christ*.

IV. What *Indications* they may be supposed to give tending toward the *Belief* of his Godhead.

V. What *Indications* they give of their Ignorance or Doubt of it, or at least what Evidences there are of the *Fluctuation* and *Uncertainty* of their Faith in that matter.

Now, by balancing these things one with another, we may at last come to form some true Judgment about the present Question.

S E C T.

SECT. I. *The Jews old Opinion concerning the Messiah.*

I. *WHAT* Notion had the Jews in general concerning their Messiah?

Ans. Tho' the Old Testament furnished them with sufficient Prophecies concerning his divine and human Nature, his spiritual Kingdom, his Sufferings, his Death and Resurrection from the Dead, yet so wretchedly blinded were they with the corrupt Glosses of their Teachers, and with their own foolish Prejudices, that they did agree in no Notion concerning the *Messiah* more universally than in these false and mistaken ones, *viz.* That he was to be a glorious temporal Prince, that he was never to suffer, nor to die, and consequently not to rise again, and that he was to exalt their Nation equal to or beyond its ancient Grandeur, and to raise them to a temporal Sovereignty over all the Nations of the Earth.

And the Disciples themselves were so rooted in these mistaken Notions, that nothing could quite cure them but the actual Death and Resurrection of *Christ*, his Ascent to Heaven, and his pouring down the enlightning Spirit at the Days of *Pentecost*. For we find it evident enough, that the two Sons of *Zebedee*, *James* and *John*, hoped to be made great Ministers of State, and sit at his Right-hand and at his left in a temporal Kingdom, Mat. 20. 21. We read that when our Lord spoke

of his own Death and Sufferings, *Peter rebuked him* for it, *Math. 16. 22.* And none of them *knew what his rising from the Dead should mean*, *Mark 9. 10.* for they thought, together with the rest of the People, that *Christ* or the *Messiah* *abideth for ever*, i. e. must never die, *John 12. 34.* And even after the Resurrection of *Christ* they expected with some Impatience the same temporal Glory and Grandeur when they said, *Acts 1. 16. Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom unto Israel.*

But to descend to Particulars, and enquire What opinion the *Jews* had of the Nature of their *Messiah*, Who or What he was to be.

1. They generally believed he should be a *Man of their own Nation*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, of the Seed of *David*, born at *Bethlehem*, who was to be the *King of the Jews*, and their *Saviour*. When *Herod* demanded where the *Messiah* the *King of the Jews* should be born, the *chief Priests and Scribes* told him, at *Bethlehem*, *Mat. 2. 5.* And they said to him, *In Bethlehem of Judah*, for thus it is written by the Prophet, *And thou Bethlehem in the Land of Judah art not the least among the Princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my People Israel.* And when *Jesus* asked the *Pharisees*, *Whose Son is Christ*, or the *Messiah*? they roundly answered, *The Son of David.*

Yet

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 73

Yet others of the *Jews* were so very ignorant and doubtful in this matter, that they refused *Jesus*, and denied him to be the *Messiah*, for this very Reason, because they knew his Birth and Parentage. *John 7. 27. We know this Man whence he is, but when Christ cometh, no Man knoweth whence he is.*

2. They believed that he had an *Existence before he came into the World*; for we can hardly suppose that the Scribes and Priests should be so ready in citing one part of this Verse, *Micah 5. 2.* which shews him to be *born at Bethlehem*, and take no notice of the other part of it, *a Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* Yet it may perhaps be doubted whether this Opinion was universal, because in some Instances they were stupid enough to believe one part of a Chapter or Period concerning the *Messiah's* Glory, and neglect another part which related to his Sufferings.

3. They believed that he had some *glorious and eminent relation to God*. This appears from the Name of Honour that the *Messiah* was universally known by amongst them, *viz. The Son of God*. The Scribes, the Pharisees, the Priests, and all the *Jews*, talk'd with our Lord *Jesus* freely about the *Messiah* under this Name and Title, as being the common Name of the *Messiah*, and perfectly well known amongst them, *viz.* that the *Messiah* was the
Son

74 *Was Jesus in his Life* Qu. II.

Son of God in some superior and more excellent way. When *Philip* told *Nathanael*, *John* 1. 46. *We have found him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write*, that is, the *Messiah*; *Nathanael* being convinced that *Jesus* was he, presently saluted him by this Name, *Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*.

4. The Prophets in the Old Testament frequently intimate the *Divinity of Christ*; and some few of the ancient *Jews* might probably believe that he was the *Memra*, or Word of the Lord, the *Shekinah* or glorious Habitation of God, of which the *Chaldee Paraphrast* sometimes speaks. Dr. *Allix* in his *Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians*, seems to be too positive and triumphant in this point, that this *Memra* or *Logos* to which the *Chaldee Paraphrast* ascribes the Creation of the World, and the Government of it; and particularly of the *Jewish Nation*, is the *Messiah* in their Sense. Mr. *Nye* and others utterly deny it. But the excellent Mr. *Robert Fleming*, in his *Discourse of Christology*, Vol. I. p. 136, — 144. very judiciously follows a middle Path, and tells us, “That he did not find one of the
“ many Citations used by Dr. *Allix* that
“ seem’d to necessitate our Judgment this
“ way. Therefore he run thro’ the *Targums*
“ himself in those Places where he thought
“ it most probable to find what he sought,
“ and

Quest. II. owned to be True God? 75

“ and yet could find but few Passages that
“ seemed very plainly to relate to the *Messiah*.”
Upon which he concludes, “ That tho’ the
“ word *Memra* is sometimes used for the
“ *Messiah*, yet ’tis much more frequently used
“ in other Senses, and that the *Jewish Memra*
“ and *Messiah* are spoken of sometimes as two
“ distinct Beings or Persons *.”

But what doubtful Hints or plain Evidences soever there might be from the Books of the Prophets or these Paraphrastical Authors, that *Christ was to be the true God*, yet the *Jews* in *Christ’s* Time did not generally believe it: And tho’ some learned Authors have asserted it, yet I never saw it proved.

Surely if the *Pharisees* had but embraced this Opinion, they could never been at a loss to have answered our *Lord Jesus*, when he ask’d them, *Mat. 22. 43, 45, 46. If Christ be David’s Son, how doth he in Spirit call him Lord?* It was plain by their Silence and Confusion, that they did not believe his *Godhead*.

* Mr. *Fleming* in that place tells us, that tho’ he could not find the word *Memra* and *Messiah* used as explicatory of one another in those Places which are plainly prophetic of *Christ*, yet he supposes the Reason might be this, that *Memra* denotes *Christ* with relation only to his Divine Nature before his assuming human Nature, and *Messiah* denotes him only as he was to appear visibly and become Man; therefore it was hardly possible that both these Words should be used of him at once. See *Christology*, Vol. I. p. 143. Thus ’tis evident that Mr. *Fleming* searched after this Notion with a seeming Inclination to find it true, yet he could not find so great and uncontested Evidence of it, as to suppose that the ancient *Jews* generally embraced this Opinion; that the *Memra* or *Word of God* was the same with the *Messiah*.

76 *Was Jesus in his Life* Qu. II.

head. Bishop *Bull* is of this mind as well as Dr. *Whitby*. See *Bull's Judic. Eccl. Cath.* &c. c. I. §. 13. and *Whitby's* Comment.

In short, their Notions of this Matter were so very confused, so uncertain, so inconsistent, and so various, that they cannot be reduced to any certain or settled Scheme of Sentiments.

SECT. II. *What Ideas did Christ give his Disciples of himself.*

II. I Proceed now in the *second* place to inquire, *what Ideas or Notions our Lord Jesus Christ taught his Disciples concerning himself.*

1. He takes particular Pains upon many Occasions to shew that he was *sent from God*, or *received Commission from Heaven* to teach the Doctrines which he taught, and to perform those glorious and surprizing Miracles which he wrought, to confirm both his Doctrine and his Commission. This is so largely insisted on in the fifth, sixth, and following Chapters of the Gospel by St. *John*, that I need not cite particular Instances.

2. He proves by most infallible Evidences, that *he was the Messiah, the Saviour of Mankind*: and he endeavoured to lead his Disciples out of their own national Prejudices, and to give them a juster Notion of the Office of the *Messiah*, and his spiritual Kingdom. This he did in several of his Discourses.

But

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 77

But as to the Proof that he himself was the *Messiah*, he did not labour this Point so much by any long or direct Discourses on this Subject, as by his preaching Grace and Duty, so as never Man spake before ; by his Miracles and his Appearance upon all occasions, with the Marks and Characters of the *Messiah* upon him. To prove this, I shall give but one Instance instead of many: When *John the Baptist* sent his Disciples to ask him whether he was the *Messiah* or no, *Matth. 11. 3.* *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* our Lord answered them only, by bidding them tell *John* their Master, that *the Blind received Sight, the Lame walk, the Dead are raised, and to the Poor the Gospel is preached* ; and let *John* and his Followers judge by these Characters whether I am the *Messiah* or no. Tho' I confess there are two or three Occasions also which he took to profess himself the *Messiah* in direct and plain Words, *John 4. 29.* and *9. 37.*

3. He often takes occasion to declare, that *he had a Being before he came into this World.* *John 3. 13.* *No Man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, &c.* *John 5. 38.* *I came down from Heaven not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me.* &c. *51.* *I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven.* *John 8. 14.* *I know whence I came and whither I go.*
John

78 *Was Jesus in his Life* Qu. II.

John 16. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World; again, I leave the World, and go to the Father.* And his Disciples understood him in the plain literal Sense, *†. 29.* for immediately his Disciples said unto him, *Lo, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no Parable.* John 8. 58. *Verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* And in his Prayer to his Father, *John 17. 5. Now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was. †. 24. My Glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World.*

4. He assumes to himself the Character of the Son of God, and that in a more eminent and superior way than Men or Angels are the Sons of God; for he calls himself *the only begotten Son of God*, John 13. 16, 18. *The beloved Son of God*, John 5. 20. which he also took care that his Disciples should know, twice by a Voice from Heaven; *Luke 3. 22.* at his Baptism, and *Luke 9. 35.* at his Transfiguration. He told them also that he was such a Son of God as knew the Father so as none besides knew him, *Luke 10. 22.* such a Son as that *the Father shew'd him all things that himself did*, John 5. 20. and that *whatsoever things the Father doth, these doth the Son likewise, †. 19.* that the Father has committed all Judgment to him, that all Men should honour the Son as they honour the

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 79

the Father, &c. 22, 23. and that the Dead should hear the Voice of the Son of God and live; and as the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself: which things cannot be supposed to be spoken of any meer Creature, and therefore by this sort of Language, he gave some Intimations of his Union with Godhead, or his Divinity, tho' the meer Name Son of God be not construed to so divine a Sense.

5. He sometimes takes opportunity to acquaint them with his *most intimate Union or Oneness with the Father, and his peculiar Communion with him.* For when he says, *John 10. 29. My Father, who gave me my Sheep, is greater than all; yet he adds in the next Verse, I and my Father are one:* which I think are Intimations of a superior and inferior Nature, and that the divine Nature of the Father was in him. This also he discovers in some other places. *John 10. 38. Believe the Works that I do, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him. John 14. 7--11. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;*

Father ; and how sayst thou, Shew us the Father ? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? The Words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself : but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ; or else believe me for the very Works sake.

6. There are also several other Intimations that our Lord gave of his *Divinity*, tho' it was not the Doctrine that he thought fit at that time to teach in plain and express Language.

When he tells them, that *where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* Matt. 18.

20. the Greek words are *ἐν ἐμοὶ εἰμι*, which seem to denote a divine Omnipresence. When he says to Peter, *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,* Matt. 16.

14. it sounds God-like. When he promises the Disciples, *I will give you a Mouth and Wisdom, which all your Adversaries shall not be able to gain-say,* Luk. 21. 15. When John 2. 19. *Destroy this Temple and I will raise it up in three days ;* he imitates divine Language so much, that it might have led the Disciples onward to the Belief of his Deity.

His *active Behaviour* and *Conduct* in several Instances was such, as there is some reason to think he would scarce have practised, had he not been *true God* ; such as his taking frequent

Quest. II. *owned to be true God?* 81

frequent occasion to shew that he *knew their Hearts and their secret Thoughts*; his *God-like way in working some of his Miracles*, which seems to be the very same which a God incarnate would have used: his *Sovereign and Godlike manner in casting out Devils*, and his *conveying miraculous Gifts, in the same Way that God himself would probably have done*; and his *giving the Holy Spirit to his Disciples*, in such a manner, *John 20. 21, 22. As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*; and when he had thus said, he *breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*, which seems to be an Imitation of God creating the human Soul of *Adam, Gen. 2. 7. He breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul*. Tho' it must be noted indeed that this was after his Resurrection, and so comes not within the reach of my present Enquiry.

His *Passive Behaviour* also was such as we can hardly suppose he would have practised, had he not been God; for he *admitted Persons on several occasions to worship him*, which we find both Angels and Apostles always forbid, lest they should seem to assume the divine Prerogative and Honour: He did not deny his Godhead when the *Jews charged him with assuming Equality with God, &c.* several of which Circumstances, both of the active and passive Conduct of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, are set in the fairest and strong-

est light towards the Proof of his Divinity, by Mr. *Hughes* in his *Two Essays* on that Subject. And some Parts of the Argument seem to carry great Weight and Force with them; but I would not venture to lay the whole Stress of the Cause there.

Thus tho' our Blessed Saviour did not plainly and expressly declare that he was the *true and eternal God*; for his divine Prudence did not think it proper to express his Godhead in such direct and glorious Language at that Season *; yet by all these Methods of Speech, and by this divine Conduct of his, which I have described in the three last Particulars, he seems to have given abundant Intimations that his *human Nature had a peculiar Union to, and Communion with Godhead*: But since the *New Testament* is compleat,

* 'Tis no wonder that our Saviour did not freely and publicly declare his *own Godhead* in plain and express Language, when he did not choose to declare himself the *Messiah* in such an evident manner of Speech, but very seldom, and that privately too; tho' the Doctrine of his *Messiahship* was then of so much more Importance.

But there are many special *Reasons* also which might be given, why our Lord *Jesus* did not proclaim his *own Godhead* during the time of his Ministry on Earth. I shall mention but one that is evident and sufficient, (*viz.*) that he must have done it either *with plain and convincing Proofs* of it or *without them*. If he had only asserted it plainly, *without convincing Proofs*, he had hasten'd the Malice of the *Jews* to put him to death for Blasphemy, before he had fulfilled all his designed Ministry upon Earth. On the other hand, if he had given *most convincing Proofs* of it while he asserted it, the *Jews* and *Gentiles* had been restrained from putting him to death at all; for St *Paul* tells us expressly, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. *Had the Princes of this World known it, they would not have crucify'd the Lord of Glory.*

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 83

complicat, we can understand those Hints better than his Disciples could in that day.

And tho' he did not use these Words, that *Jesus the Son of Man is personally united to the divine Nature*, yet he said so much as in our Apprehension now amounts to this Sense, when he said, *I and my Father are one. I am in the Father, and the Father in me. The Father who is in me doth the Works. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father, &c. i. e.* he hath seen the Glory and Power, and Grace of God the Father, whose divine Nature or Godhead is also in the Son, and *dwells* in me bodily. And tho' we can never tell exactly what makes the *personal Union* between the divine and human Natures in *Christ*; yet perhaps this may be a just Evidence of a *personal Union with the Godhead*, (viz.) when the Actions and Characters and Sufferings which *Christ* performed and sustained, might be properly said to be performed and sustained *immediately* by God himself. But I much question whether his Disciples in that day did certainly infer so much from these Words.

SECT. III. *What Idea the Disciples had of Christ.*

I Come now to consider *what Apprehensions or Notions the Disciples did receive concerning our Lord Jesus Christ in his own Life-time.*

'Tis not enough for me here to repeat the foregoing Heads, and shew what *Christ* told them ; for we cannot say the Disciples understood and effectually learn'd all that our Lord *Jesus Christ* taught them. 'Tis evident in many Places of the History of the Gospel, that he spoke several things to them which were above their present Apprehension ; the *Spirit of God* which was promised to descend upon them, was not only to *bring to Remembrance* the things that *Christ* had spoken ; but to give them a *fuller Understanding* in the Meaning of them. And as there were many things which *Christ* had to say to them, but forbore in his Life-time *because they could not bear them yet*, John 16. 12. So there were some things which he did speak to them in a more obscure manner, by Hints and Intimations, which they could not at that time bear in the full Light and Glory of a divine Explication.

But if we search the evangelical History, I think we shall find that they received and entertained the following Sentiments concerning him.

1. They firmly believed *that he was sent of God*. Our Lord *Jesus Christ* himself was Witness to this their Faith, John 17. 8. *I have given unto them the Words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

2. They

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 85

2. They were convinc'd that *he was the true Messiah*: John 6. 69. *We believe and are sure Thou art that Christ.*

3. That *he had a peculiar and glorious Relation to God*, that he was the *Son of the living God*, which primarily referred to the Dignity of his Person, and oftentimes included in it also his Character, or Office as the *appointed Saviour*. This was the Substance of Nathanael's Confession, John 1. 49. *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.* This was also Peter's Confession, Matth. 16. 16. *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God*, which he spake in the Name of the rest, as well as John 6. 69. where the same Words are repeated.

4. They believed also that *he had an Existence before he came into this World*. When the Disciples told him, John 16. 30. *We believe that thou camest forth from God*; 'tis evident from the Context that they did not only mean that he *received his Commission from Heaven*, and was sent by God to preach to the World; but that he had a Being with the Father before he came into this World, as he himself expresses it, *John 8. 28. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World; again, I leave the World, and go to the Father*: which they understood in the literal Sense, without Metaphors, as they themselves express it; *Now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no Parable or Metaphor*, *John 8. 29.* And

our Lord *Jesus Christ* in his Testimony concerning them, seems to make these two distinct Articles of their Belief, (*viz.*) his *Pre-existence* and his *Mission*, John 17. 8. *They have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

5. They believed also that *God was in a most eminent and peculiar manner present with him*, according to the Multitude of Expressions he had used to that purpose, of his *Father's being with him*, and of the *Father's dwelling in him*: and this was the Language of their Sermons at first, *Acts* 10. 38. *Jesus of Nazareth did great things, for God was with him.* But they did not seem to have any fixed and certain Belief of such a peculiar and personal Union of the Man *Christ Jesus* with the true *God* during his Life-time, as to give him the Name and Title of *God*. They had heard him say, that *he and his Father were One*; but they did scarce understand his *Oneness* with the Father, and *Communion in the Godhead* in so sublime a Sense, as was afterwards revealed to them, for they never called him *God* before his *Resurrection*. Which brings me to the next general Head.

SECT. IV. *What Evidence they gave of believing his true Deity.*

THE fourth thing I proposed was to shew *what Indications the Disciples may be supposed to give tending towards a Relief of his Godhead.*

1. Upon some special Occasions *they worshipped him.* The *Leper* that was cleansed *worshipped Christ*, Matth. 8. 2. The *Ruler* that sought the Life of his Daughter, *worshipped him*, Matth. 9. 18. The *Woman of Canaan* *worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me*, Matth. 15. 25. But all this was before he wrought the Miracle in their favour; and probably it signifies no more than a great degree of Humility in the manner of their Petition, perhaps a bowing the Knee, or falling on the Face at his Feet.

The *blind Man*, who was healed, *worshipped him* also, when he profess himself to be *the Son of God*, John 9. 38. and his Disciples that *were in the Ship* *worshipped him*, when he walk'd on the Water and suppress the Storm, Matth. 14. 32, 33.

But it may be doubted whether all this arises to the Notion of *Religious and Divine Worship*, since this Word is sometimes used in Scripture, referring to *moral or civil Honours* paid to our Fellow-Creatures, 1 Chron. 29. 20. *They bowed their Heads and worshipped the Lord*

and the King, Matth. 18. 26. The Servant fell down and worshipped his Lord. Rev. 3. 9. where Christ himself says to the Church at Sardis, I will make them to come and worship before thy Feet. And perhaps some that knew not that Christ was God, might pay this sort of Worship to him here on Earth, i. e. a meer high degree of Reverence and Obedience under the surprizing Influence of the Miracles which they heard of, or which they saw.

When one of the *ten Lepers* which were healed, came back, *Luke 17. 15.* it is said, *with a loud Voice he glorify'd God, and fell down on his Face at the Feet of Christ, giving him Thanks, and he was a Samaritan.* Now it may be observed here, that the cleansed Leper first *glorify'd God*, as the great Author and first Cause of his healing, and then *fell down on his Face* in a worshipping Posture at the Feet of *Christ* to *give him Thanks*, as the glorious Means and miraculous Instrument of his Deliverance, not knowing that *Christ* who healed him, was himself the *true God*.

Thus these Persons did not seem to worship our Lord as the *true and eternal God* with proper *divine Worship*. Yet it seems probable that he would have scarce accepted of any such Imitation of divine Worship, or indulged any thing that had the Appearance of it, if he had not been *true God*. Many Persons might pay *Christ* this high Degree of Honour

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 89

Honour and Prostration without Belief of his Deity, tho' perhaps he would have refused it, had he been a meer Creature; even as *Cornelius* worshipped *Peter*, Acts 10. 25. when we have no reason to believe that he thought *Peter* was the true God: Yet *Peter* forbid it, lest it should have any Appearance of assuming divine Dignity to himself.

2. *Simon Peter* was greatly surprized at the multitude of Fishes taken at once, when he let down his Net at the direction of *Christ*, Luk. 5. 4. &c. When he saw it, *He fell down at Jesus Knees*, saying, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful Man*, O Lord. Which Expression may seem to import, "Thou art so holy and pure, O Lord, and hast something so divine in thee, and so much like God, who hates all Sin, that such a poor sinful Wretch as I am; have too much Defilement in me to come so near thee, and may have just reason to dread thy Presence." Whether he might at this Season have an overwhelming Glimpse of his Divinity, it is not easy to say: But it may be easily said, that this Miracle alone was not sufficient to give a just convincing Proof of his Godhead.

3. The Apostles seem to make a Petition to *Christ* for spiritual Mercies in a way of divine Worship, *Luke 17. 5.* and the *Apostles said to the Lord, Increase our Faith*; which Address seems to have more of the Appearance
of.

90 *Was Jesus in his Life* Qu. II.

of Religious Worship paid to him by them, than any other Expression I know of before the Resurrection of *Christ*.

Yet some would question whether this Petition did evidence their firm Belief of his Godhead: For when they had seen him put forth his miraculous Power on the Bodies of Men in such a glorious manner, when they found that he *knew the Thoughts of their Hearts**, and had an inward acquaintance with their Souls, which appeared in several Instances, and when they had seen and heard him *forgive Sins*, Matt. 9. 2. and Luke 5. 20. perhaps they might imagine that God had given him this spiritual Power over their Souls, and that he was commissioned to exercise this Power (even as he commissioned his Disciples to *heal the Sick, to raise the Dead, &c.* Matt. 10. 8. and to *forgive Sins*, John 20. 23.) tho' he were not in his own Nature *the true and eternal God*. For it is remarkable, that when he *forgave the Sins of the Man whom he healed*

* The meer Knowledge of their Thoughts was not sufficient to prove the Divinity of *Christ*, since God has been pleased in former times to communicate this Knowledge to his Prophets; so *Ahijah* knew the Thoughts of *Jeroboam's* Wife, for God had told him. 1 King. 14. 5, 6. *The Lord said to Ahijah, Behold the Wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee, &c.* And much less can we suppose the Disciples in that day of Darkness and Ignorance did from thence infer his Deity. Yet I think that Expression of *Christ*, Rev. 2. 23. *Ye shall know that I am he which searcheth the Reins and the Hearts*, compared with Jer. 11. 20. & 17. 10. gives us a good Argument for his Deity, or that he is one with that God who *searches the Heart*, as his peculiar Prerogative; but this was long after his Ascent to Heaven.

Quest. II. owned to be True God? 91

healed of the Palsy, tho the Scribes and Pharisees said, *Who can forgive Sins but God?* and so charged him with Blasphemy; yet the Multitude only *marvelled and glorified God who had given such Power unto Men*, Matt. 9. 8. Now the Multitude spoke honestly the Sense of their Hearts, but the Scribes stretched his Conduct to an Accusation of Blasphemy.

There is a parallel Case in *Mark 9. 22.* where the Man brought his *Son who was possessed with the Devil*, to our blessed Lord; *Master*, says he, *if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us.* Here it is evident that the Man had not so much as a firm Belief whether *Christ could work this Miracle* or no, much less can he be supposed to believe that *Christ was the true and eternal God*: then presently afterwards he cried out, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief.* Now the utmost that we can reasonably imagine his sudden Faith arrived at, was a Belief that *Christ was able to cast out the Devil and cure his Son*; yet he desires *Christ to help his Unbelief.* Now the meer sudden Expression of this Request will hardly prove the poor Man was convinced of the Godhead of Christ; for 'tis possible he might mean only, *Shew thy power, and give some further Testimony to assist my Faith.* But if he did believe *Christ's Deity*, then we must suppose him transported by a sudden divine Impulse beyond

beyond the general Faith of the Apostles themselves, and carried above the Dispensation of that Day.

4. The Disciples may seem to own his Omniscience *John* 16. 30. *Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, &c.* but probably at that time they understood this *all things* in a limited Sense (as *2 Sam.* 14. 20. where the Woman said the same thing to David; so *1 John* 2. 20. *You have an Unc-tion and know all things,* and *1.* 27.) For the utmost Inference the Disciples make from it was, that *Jesus came forth from God. 1.* 30. not that he was God himself. It may be another Reason also to think the Disciples understood this Word *all things* in a limited Sense, because *Christ* himself had told them but a very little before this Time, that he himself did *not know the Day of Judgment.* *Matt.* 24. 36. and *Mark* 13. 32.

Tho I think it reasonable for us to go farther than they did, and to apply several of the things I have mentioned to his *Godhead (viz.)* his *knowing Their thoughts,* his *forgiveness of Sins, &c.* because we have a full Account of these and many other Transactions of *Christ*; and we know so much of his *Divinity* and Glory from other parts of the Bible; yet whether the Disciples in that Day did infer his *Divinity* from any of these foregoing Occurrences, and applied them to him as to the *true God,* may bear a just Doubt and Enquiry.

5. They *believed that he was the Messiah*; and the *Messiah* is spoken of in several Places of the Old Testament under the Character and Titles of the *true God*. But as we cannot find that the learned Doctors of that Age did generally understand those Prophecies, or believe the *true Deity of the Messiah*, so neither do we find any Hint in the History of the Gospel that the Apostles themselves before the *Death of Christ* understood these Prophecies, so far as to apply them to the *Messiah* in that Sense; but only thought him to be the greatest of Prophets, and to be the appointed *King of Israel* and their Saviour.

6. They *believed and confessed him to be the Son of God*: but this Title does not necessarily amount to any more than a glorious Likeness to God, a nearer and more peculiar Relation to God, a special Office of *Messiahship*, and a more eminent Derivation of his human Nature from God than any other Creatures, either Angels or Men; who are called the *Sons of God*, could ever pretend: This I think is made pretty evident in another Dissertation.

Thus I have mentioned the fairest and strongest Evidences that I can find of any Degree of Faith or Belief that the Disciples had of the *Deity of Christ* during his Life, and 'tis possible they might sometimes have a Glimpse of that glorious Doctrine.

S E C T. V.

THE last thing I proposed, was to shew, *What Indications the Disciples gave during the Life-time of Christ of their Disbelief of his Godhead, or at least of the Uncertainty of their Faith in that Matter.*

1. If they had a firm and steady Belief that he was the true God, surely we should have found them upon some occasion or another *evidently expressing their Faith in this matter*, both for their own and their Master's Interest and Honour ; since we never find that he forbid them to publish this to the World, tho' he did forbid them to publish some of his Miracles, his Transfiguration, his own Prophecies of his Death, Resurrection and Ascension, &c.

And if they had not thought proper to publish to the World, that *their Master was the true God*, yet we have much Reason to suppose that, if they had believed it, they would upon some Occasion or other before his Death, have address him as *Thomas* did after his Resurrection, *My Lord and my God.*

We cannot but suppose also, that amongst their many Doubts and Queries, they would have asked him this obvious and important one, *How could he be God, and his Father be God also, and yet not two Gods ?* But we find nothing of this kind, tho' they put many

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 95

a Question to him both of less Difficulty and less Importance.

Nor do we find that they talked of him to the World *under any Character of Godhead*; But on the contrary, we always find them speaking of him *as a Man*, and that not only in his Life-time, but just after his Death too, as *a great Prophet that was risen up amongst them*, Luke 24. 19. *Jesus of Nazareth a Prophet mighty in Word and Deed before God and all the People.*

2. If they had believed him to be the *true God* that made the Heavens, and the Earth, the Winds and the Seas, they *would never have exprest so much Surprise and Wonder at his rebuking the Wind and bidding the Sea be calm.* Luke 8. 24, 25. *They being afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of Man is this? for he commandeth even the Winds and Water, and they obey him.* I confess the word *Man* is not in the Original; but still their Wonder at the Obedience that was paid him by the Elements seems an Argument that they did not believe him to be the *Almighty God that made them.*

Now this is not the first time they were thus astonish'd and surpriz'd; for when *Simon Peter*, a good while before this *let down his Net*, at the Command of Christ, and *inclosed a great Multitude of Fishes*, he was *astonished and all that were with him*, Luke 5. 9. And if any of them may seem to have a Glimpse of his
Divinity

Divinity on this Occasion, yet they had forgot or lost it again, when in *chap. 8.* they were as much surprized at his rebuking the Winds and the Waves.

You have another Instance of this kind, *Matth. 21. 19, 20. And when the Disciples saw that the Fig-tree which our Lord cursed, presently withered, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the Fig-tree withered away!* And this was not long before his Death neither, when we may suppose their Knowledge was most advanced; whereas the Disciples would never have marvelled that he could destroy a Fig-tree *by a Word*, if they had believed him to be that God who made all things *by his Word*.

3. If they had believed *Christ* to be the great and glorious God, they would not have treated him with such an indecent Roughness, as they did upon some particular Occasions; as *Matth. 15. 33.* when *Christ* said, *he would not send away the People fasting, lest they faint in the way,* the Disciples made him a very rude Reply (to say no worse of it) when they answered, *Whence should we have so much Bread in the Wilderness to fill so great a Multitude?*

Another Instance of this kind appears in their free and unbecoming Address to *Jesus*, *Matth. 15. 12. Then came his Disciples and said to him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this Saying?*

Qu. II. *owned to be True God?* 97

Saying? without so much as *Sir*, or *Master* to preface it. Whereby it is plain, they either at that time *doubted* whether he knew what Offence the *Pharisees* took, or else they gave him a *Reproof* for speaking such things as should offend the *Pharisees*, and a *Caution* lest he did it again. But either of these Suppositions sufficiently manifest they did not believe him to be the *true God*.

So when he spake of his Death and Resurrection, *Matth. 16. 22.* it is said, *Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, This shall not be unto thee, Lord.* Now we can hardly suppose that *Peter* would have been so free as to take up such Language to his great Creator, and to give such a rebuke to his God.

I might add also, that tho' the *Virgin Mary* under the Influence of Rapture and Inspiration expresses herself thus, *Luke 1. 47. My Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour*, yet if she had firmly believed her Son to be her God, she would not have chid him so severely when he was twelve Years old, *Luke 2. 48. Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us?* because he stay'd in the Temple, and was left behind, when they travelled homeward.

4. If they had thought *Jesus Christ* was the true God, they would never have tried to entertain the Curiosity of their Master, by showing him how magnificent the Buildings of the Temple were, *Matth. 24. 1. His Disciples*

Disciples came unto him for to show him the Buildings of the Temple; and one of them said to him, Master, see what manner of Stones and Buildings are here, Mark. 13. 1. and as St. Luke expresses it, How it was adorned with goodly Stones. They must needs know this was but a poor Entertainment to please that glorious Being, who had formed and built this Earth, and had spread abroad the starry Canopy of the Heavens.

5. They had frequent Opportunity of observing that *Christ* knew their Thoughts, and on this occasion they once took notice, *John 16. 30. and said, Now we are sure that thou knowest all things.* Now if they had been convinced that he was the *true God*, they would certainly have declar'd their Sense and Faith of his Godhead, and *not have contented themselves with this poor Inference; By this we believe that thou comest forth from God, i. e. Thou hadst a Being, or didst dwell with the Father, and art come from him.* And even when they arose to this degree of Belief, our Lord takes notice, that their Faith had not been very long advanced so far as this, or at least, it had not been long establish'd and firmly rooted in this Point: For *Mat. 31. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?*

After all, I might observe this also concerning *Martha* and *Mary*, who were well acquainted with *Jesus*, and for whom he had a peculiar and special Affection (as well as for
Lazarus

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 99

Lazarus their Brother) *John* 11. 6. and he had so far acquainted them with his Person and Office, that they *believed him to be the Christ, or-Messiah, the Son of God which should come into the World, &c.* 17. Yet neither of them speak of any Faith they had, that he had Power in himself to raise the Dead, tho' *Jesus* seems to have urged them to it, &c. 25. The utmost Faith which they express is this, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not died.* &c. 21, and 32. and &c. 22. *I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*

Upon the whole Survey of things it appears that the Disciples during the Life of *Christ* had not arrived to any firm Belief of his Godhead: And if at any time they had a Glimpse of his Deity, it seems rather to be under the Influence of a *Surprize and Rapture*, beyond the level of that imperfect Dispensation, and beyond the common Exercise of their Faith in that day.

And indeed *Thomas* seems to be under the Power of such a *divine Rapture*, when even after the Resurrection of *Christ* he was favoured with so sensible a Conviction, and he cried out, *My Lord and my God*; which is the first plain and certain Indication of any of the Apostles believing the *Deity of Christ*.

These things will give occasion to three or four more *Questions*, (viz.)

Quest. I. *Did the Disciples believe him then to be a mere common Man?*

H 2

Ans.

100 *Was Jesus in his Life* Qu. II.

Ans. 1. *No, I think not* : For tis very probable that they were informed of his *extraordinary Conception*, and his *Birth* of the Virgin *Mary* his Mother, so that he came into the World in a diviner way, and superior to other Men, having God himself for the Father even of his Flesh : And thus *the Holy thing that was born of the Virgin was call'd the Son of God*, Luke 1. 35.

'Tis probable also that they believed that sublime and near Relation in which his Soul stood to God, being the *Son of God* in a superior Sense to all other Men, even before his Incarnation ; and that he had a *pre-existent State*, where he dwelt *with God*, and whence he *came forth from God* when he *came into this World* : Thus he was eminently the *Son of God*, as to his *Body* and his *Soul*.

They also believed him to be the *Messiah*, their *anointed King*, and the highest and greatest of all the *Prophets*, the *Redeemer of Israel*, and their *Saviour*, and that in this Sense also he was *the Son of God*.

They knew him also to be *indued with the Spirit of God* in a most glorious and eminent degree ; or as *John the Baptist* expresses it, to have the *Spirit given him without measure*, John 3. 34.

And they knew the *peculiar and intimate Presence of the Father* was with him, which he so often taught them in express Words, that *the Father was in him and He in the Father* ;
and

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 101

and that *He and the Father were one*: yet they did scarce arrive at the Belief of a *personal Union* of the Human Nature with the Divine.

All these things joined together exalted his Character in their Esteem, far above the common Level of Mankind.

Quest. II. If they did not believe the Godhead of *Christ* who had such special Advantages above other Men, *may it not well be doubted whether there were sufficient Proofs of his Divinity ever given to Mankind before his Death?*

Ans. 1. By several Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, I think the Godhead of the *Messiah* might have been proved, and when they had compared these Prophecies with the Actions and Life of *Christ*, they had plain Evidences that he was this *Messiah*: The Disciples therefore might have had reasonable ground to have inferred this Doctrine of his Deity. But so ignorant was that Generation, so overrun with national Mistakes, so unacquainted with Scripture, and the true Meaning of it, that the Apostles in that Day did not believe many other things concerning *Christ*, which were written in the *Old Testament* in as plain and express Language as his *Godhead*. Such were the Predictions of his Sorrows and Sufferings, his Death and his Rising again, and his final Exaltation: But we have *Christ's* own Word for it, even after he rose again, that they were

102 *Was Jesus in his Life* Qu. II.

Fools and slow of Heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken, Luke 24. 25.

Ans. 2. Some of the Speeches which *Christ* made concerning himself do certainly represent him in too sublime a Character *for any mere Creature*; which I have mention'd before: and by some Circumstances of his Conduct, they might have found out *his Godhead*, especially if they had compared them with his Character as *Messiah*. But they labour'd under the Power of many Prejudices, and as our Lord often charges them, that they were dull of Apprehension, hard to be instructed, and slow to believe.

Ans. 3. Tho' there might be a bare external Sufficiency in the Notices that *Christ* gave of his own Godhead for their Conviction, yet these were made more abundantly clear and evident to them, when according to the Promise of Christ, *his Spirit brought to Remembrance*, and explained the things that he had before said to them: then he *took of the things* of Christ, and revealed them to his Apostles as he promised, *John 14. 26. and 16. 14.*

I might add also, that all these Notices and Evidences of the *Divinity of Christ*, stand in a much fairer Light before us who have the whole History of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of *Christ*; and the Writings and Sermons of the Apostles, to compare with the Writings of the Prophets; which it was not possible

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 103

possible the Disciples should do in so compleat a manner, and to so great Satisfaction during the Life of *Christ*, had they been never so sagacious, and never so well prepared.

Quest. III. *How could the Disciples trust in him as their Saviour, and commit their Souls to him for Salvation in his Life-time, if they had not a firm Faith in his Godhead?*

Ans. The way whereby the Fathers before *Christ* were saved, was not so much by a direct Act of Faith on the Person of the *Messiah*, who was to come, as by the *direct and immediate Exercise of Faith or Trust on the Mercy of God, as it was to be revealed in and thro' the Messiah* in due time. Now the Dispensation of those three or four Years which past during the Life of *Christ*, was a sort of *Medium* between the Law and Gospel: and the Acts and Exercises of the Apostles *Faith or Trust and Dependance*, like that of the Patriarchs, might be more directly placed *on the Mercy of God himself for Salvation*, as it had begun to manifest itself in and by *Jesus the Messiah*, now come into the World. So St. *Peter* expresses it, 1 Pet. I. 21. *You who by him do believe in God.*

Tho' they were frequently called to *believe in Christ*, yet you find they were so unskilled in a *direct Act of divine Faith on him*, that our Lord was fain to repeat the Command with great Solemnity but just before his Death. *John 14. 1. To believe in God, believe also*

104 *Was Jesus in his Life* Q^U. II.

in me: as if he should have said, “Ye have
“ a long time trusted and profest your Faith
“ in God, and his Mercy, make *me* now also
“ the direct Object of your *Faith* or *Trust*,
“ as ye have made *God the Father*.”

Ans^w. 2. Under the great Darkn^ess and Confusion of their Notions in that Season of Twilight, they sometimes paid too little Honour to *Christ*, because they had too low an Esteem of him; and sometimes the Honour they paid him thro’ the Influence of Rapture and Surprize (tho’ not too high in itself) yet it might be above and beyond the clear Discernment of their Understandings and their own settled Judgment concerning him. Thus they might now and then exert some faint Acts of divine Faith on him, while in the main they were doubtful of his Godhead. But a gracious God makes great Allowances for such Weaknesses in Faith and Practice, where the divine Discoveries which he makes to Men, have but imperfect Degrees of Light and Evidence.

Quest. IV. *Does it not follow then, If the Disciples were in a State of Grace, and yet doubted of the Deity of Christ; surely the Deity of Christ was not a fundamental Article in that Day?*

Ans^w. 1. *Fundamentals* are different in different Seasons and Times, Nations and Ages; for as God makes more or less Discoveries of divine Truth to Men, so more or less is necessary to be believed in order to Salvation.

Quest. II. *owned to be True God?* 105

Surely it was not a fundamental Article for *Peter* to know, and believe *the Sufferings and Death of Christ as a Sacrifice for Sin, and his Resurrection from the Dead*, at that time when he rebuked our Saviour himself, because he spake of his dying, *Matth. 16. 22.* And when none of the Apostles *knew what rising from the Dead should mean*, as *Mark 9. 10.* yet the *Belief of the Death and Resurrection of Christ* was certainly a *fundamental* Article, and necessary to Salvation in a little time afterward; and is become necessary to Christianity itself, *1 Cor. 15. 14, 17.* *If Christ be not risen, then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain, ye are yet in your Sins.*

The Doctrine of the *Divinity of Christ* therefore may not be supposed to be a *fundamental Article* in the time of *Christ's Life*, because we have Reason to believe the Apostles were in a State of Grace and Salvation, before there is any sufficient Evidence of their Faith therein: But it will not follow thence, that the same Doctrine either is or is not a *Fundamental*, after it has been more fully and clearly revealed by the compleat Writings of the *New Testament*: And indeed a Truth ought to be revealed very plainly and with convincing Evidence, before it can be ever called a Fundamental.

It has been the constant Method of Divine Wisdom in all Ages, to communicate to Man the
the

106 *Was Jesus in his Life* Qu. II.

the glorious Discoveries of the Grace of God by slow and gentle Degrees, and not to overwhelm our Faculties at once with a Flood of divine Light. He knows the Weakness of our Frame, he knows how dark are our Understandings, how feeble our Judgments, how many and great our natural Prejudices, and how hard it is to surmount them ; and he demands our *Belief* in Measures answerable to his *Discoveries*. It is according to the *growing Evidence* of any divine Revelation, and the *gradual Advantages* that any Man has to know and understand that Revelation, that God justly expects the *growing Exercises* of our Faith.

Thus that Faith which is necessary to Salvation, consists of more or fewer Articles, according to the different Ages of the Church, and different Degrees of Revelation and divine Light.

Thus tho' our Lord *Jesus Christ* was true *God* when he came first to be *manifest in the Flesh*, yet the compleat Glory of his Person and the Beams of his Godhead did not discover themselves in a triumphant and convincing Light during the Days of his Humiliation : and tho' it was necessary then, to all those who had clear Knowledge of his Doctrine and Miracles, to believe that he was the *Messiah* (*Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your Sins*, John 8. 24.) yet it doth not seem at that time to have been made necessary to believe *his Deity*, since the Discoveries of it were

Quest. II. - *owned to be True God?* 107

were but imperfect, and 'tis plain that his own Apostles hardly believed it.

It is certain, that after the Resurrection of *Christ*, and the Days of *Pentecost*, the Apostles by degrees had more divine Light let into their Souls by the Holy Spirit, whereby they arrived at a fuller Knowledge of the Glory of *his Person* and *his Godhead*; yet 'tis very probable that the *Idea* which I have before described, is the highest they attained in his Life-time; and that not only on the account of the Arguments I have used already, but because this Notion was so fixed and rooted in their Minds, that they generally described our Lord *Jesus Christ* in this manner, in all their first Ministrations of the Gospel, and they thought it proper to teach others in the same Manner as they had learned. So St. *Peter*, *Acts* 2. 22. tells the *Men of Israel*, *Jesus of Nazareth* was a Man approved of God among you by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know, &c. 24. whom God has raised up, having loosed the Pains of Death.

Again, *Acts* 3. 13. The God of our Fathers hath glorify'd his Son *Jesus*, whom ye delivered up, &c. And he cites *Moses* to shew what he was, &c. 22. A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your Brethren, like unto me. So when he preach'd to *Cornelius* a Roman, *Acts* 10. 38. God hath anoint-

108 *Was Jesus in his Life* Qu. II.

ed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with Power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppress'd with the Devil, for God was with him, &c.

And St. Paul himself preached *Christ* under this inferior Character at first, tho' he came not a whit behind the chiefest of the Apostles in Knowledge, 1 Cor. 12. 11. and Gal. 2. 6. In his Sermon at Athens, he says, *God hath appointed a Day in the which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead, Acts 17. 31.* Thus they begun with the human Nature and the Offices of *Christ*, and the peculiar assisting Presence of God with him, before they taught any thing of the Mystery of his own Godhead or personal Union with the Divine Nature.

And indeed there is a good deal of Reason, why they should not at first reveal and display the glorious *Doctrine of the Trinity* and the *Godhead of Jesus*, though they had known it never so well. It was not fit they should break in all at once upon the blind *Jewish Nation*, nor upon the blinder *Gentiles*, with the Blaze of *Christ's Divinity*. For (to speak humanly) it would have fill'd the Minds of Strangers with surprizing Doubts and Scruples, and rais'd in them an utter Prejudice against all further Attention to the Gospel, if they had been told

Quest. II. *owned to be True God ?* 109

told at first of *Three Persons who were each of them the true God, and yet all Three but one God* *. This was not proper to be the very first Lesson in Christianity. The great Work of the Conversion of the World was done by degrees, as human Nature could bear. Thus God hath treated Men in all Ages, and led them on *from Faith to Faith*, Rom. 1. 17. Thus our Lord *Jesus Christ* treated his Disciples, *John* 16. 12. *I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now.* And thus the *Apostles* treated the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to whom they preached, 1 Cor. 3. 2. and fed them *with Milk and not with Meat*, for they were

* *There is a remarkable Instance to this purpose in the Conferences of the Danish Missionaries with the Heathens of Malabar. The Missionary speaking of the Son of God, the Malabarian reply'd; Who is his Son ? and is he also God ? Miss. He is God blessed for ever. Malab. But pray Sir, recollect yourself, have not you been just now inveighing against Plurality of Gods ? And now I find, you have yourselves more than one ; the Father is God, and the Son is God, then you have two Gods. Miss. We do not believe two Gods, but one only God ; tho' at the same time, we firmly believe, that there are three Persons in one Divine Essence ; and yet these three Persons are not three, but one God : And this we believe as a great Mystery, &c. And then he goes on to explain it by the Understanding and the Will proceeding from the Soul, which are yet really one and the same thing with the Soul. Upon which the Malabarian makes this Reply ; I find, said he, that you, with your subtil ways of arguing, can make a Trinity consistent with Unity ; and if your Explication is absolutely necessary to make others understand what you mean, pray, allow us the same Advantage of explaining the Doctrine of our Religion, and putting it in the most favourable Light we can, for the excluding of the Absurdities imputed to us ? And this once granted us, 'twill follow, that our Plurality does not destroy the Unity of God, no more than your Trinity does. We worship the Gods upon no other account, than because they are the Vicegerents of the Almighty, whose Admi-*
nistration

110 *Was Jesus in his Life, &c. Qu. II.*

were not able to bear it. Thus by slow degrees they led them from the Knowledge of Jesus, the Son of Man, to the Knowledge of Jesus the Son of God; from the Discovery of Jesus the Prophet, to the Discovery of Jesus the Messiah, the Priest and the King; from the Revelation of Christ the Saviour of Men to the Revelation of Christ the eternal Life and the true God; from the Doctrine of the Presence of God with him, to the Doctrine of the personal Union with Godhead, in whom dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily, and who is God over all blessed for ever by virtue of this glorious and personal Union with the eternal God.

nistration he employs in governing the World, as he did employ them at the beginning, in creating and forming the same. And our God appearing among Men at sundry times under different Shapes, had at every Apparition a different Name given him, which contributed very much to the multiplying of the Number of our Images; whereas in truth, they are but different Representations of the same God, under different Aspects and Appearances. See Conference Numb. 11. Now if the Apostles had dealt so imprudently with the Heathens or with the Jews, by preaching the Doctrine of the Trinity at first in the fullest Expressions, they had embarrass'd the Minds of their Hearers, and exposed themselves and their Doctrine of Salvation by Jesus the Messiah to such Difficulties and wrangling Disputations. But you find no Controversies of this kind raised in their first Preaching.

QUESTION



QUESTION III.

Could the Son of God properly enter into a Covenant with his Father to do and suffer what was necessary to our Redemption, without a human Soul?

SECT. I.

IT is granted that the Generality of our Christian Writers believe that 'twas only the Divine Nature or *Godhead of Christ* had an Existence before he was conceived by the Virgin *Mary*, and became incarnate ; yet whenever they would represent the exceeding great Love of the *Father* in sending his Son into our World, that he might suffer and die for us, and when they would describe the transcendent Love of *Christ*, in his coming into our World, and his submitting to Death for our sakes, they usually represent it in such Language as can never agree to his *Divine Nature* in any Propriety of Speech, but only to the pre-existent *human Soul of Christ*, with its Descent into Flesh and Blood, and the Sufferings

112 *Could Jesus consent to suffer* Q.III.

ferings of this *human Soul* for us. And 'tis evident that the Scripture itself leads them plainly to such a Representation of things ; so that while they are explaining the transcendent Degree of the Love of *God* and *Christ* to Sinners, according to Scripture, they are led by the Force of Truth into such Expressions as are indeed hardly consistent with their own profest Opinions, but perfectly consistent with the Revelation of Scripture, and the Doctrine of the *pre-existent Soul of Christ*.

I was lately looking into the Sermons of that most excellent practical and evangelical Writer, the late Mr. *John Flavel*, in his Treatise call'd the *Fountain of Life opened*, or a *Display of Christ* ; where I found the following Expressions.

Serm. 2d. p. 13. in Quarto, where the excellent Author is describing the glorious Condition of the *non-incarnate* Son of God, he says, " Christ was not then abased to the Condition of a Creature, but it was an unconceivable Abasement to the absolute independent Being to come under the Law ; yea, not only under the Obedience, but also under the Malediction and Curse of the Law, " *Gal. 4. 4. God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law.*"

Pag. 14. " He was never pinched with Poverty and Wants while he continued in that Bosom, as he was afterwards. Ah blessed *Jesus* ! Thou needest not to have
" wanted

Qu. III. *without a human Soul?* 113

"wanted a Place to have lain thine Head, hadst thou not left that Bosom for my sake." And here the Author quotes Mr. *Anthony Burges*, in his Lectures on *John*, *He that was in the Bosom of the Father and had the most intimate, close, and secret Delight and Love from the Father, how unspeakable is it that he should deprive himself of the Sense of it, to put himself, as it were out of Heaven into Hell!* Mr. *Flavel* then proceeds, "He never underwent Reproach and Shame in that Bosom: There was nothing but Glory and Honour reflected upon him by his Father, tho' afterward he was despised and rejected of Men. All the while he lay in that Bosom of Peace and Love, he never knew what it was to be assaulted with Temptations, to be beset and batter'd upon by unclean Spirits as he did afterwards: The Lord embraced him from Eternity, but never wounded him till he stood in our Place and Room. There were no Hidings or Withdrawments of his Father from him; there was not a Cloud from Eternity upon the Face of God till *Jesus Christ* had left that Bosom. It was a new thing to *Christ* to see Frowns in the Face of his Father. There were never any Impressions of his Father's Wrath upon him, as there were afterward. There was no Death to which he was subject in that Bosom. All these things were new things to *Christ*; he was
I "above

114 *Could Jesus consent to suffer. Q. III.*

“ above them all, till for our sakes he voluntarily subjected himself unto them.”

Then, after the Author has shewn how great was the Intimacy, the Dearness, the Delight, which was between the Father and the Son, considered in their divine Nature, he draws some Inferences, p. 17.

“ 1. *Infer.* What an astonishing Act of Love was this, for the Father to give the Delight, the Darling of his Soul out of his very Bosom for poor Sinners! Never did any Child lie so close to a Parent's Heart as Christ did to his Father's; and yet he willingly parts with him, tho' his only one, the Son of his Delight; and that to Death, a cursed Death for the worst of Sinners. O matchless Love! a Love past finding out! if the Father had not loved thee, he had never parted with such a Son for thee.”

“ 2. *Infer.* Adore, and be for ever astonish'd at the Love of Jesus Christ to poor Sinners, that ever he should consent to leave such a Bosom, and the ineffable Delights that were there, for such poor Worms as we are. O the Heights, Depths, Lengths, and Breadths of unmeasurable Love! *It is admirable* (says Mr. Burges on John 17.) *that Christ should not only put himself out of Comfort, but out of that manifested Honour and Glory he might have retained to himself.* If ever you found by Experience what it is to be in the Bosom of God by
“ divine

Qu. III. *without a human Soul?* 115

“divine Communion, would you be persuaded
“to leave such a Bosom for all the good that
“is in the World? And yet *Jesus Christ*, who
“was embraced in that Bosom after another
“manner than ever you were acquainted with,
“freely left it, and laid down the Glory and
“Riches he enjoyed there for your sakes.
“What manner of Love is this? Who ever
“loved as *Christ* loves? who ever deny’d him-
“self for *Christ*, as *Christ* deny’d himself for
“us?” Then, after the third *Inference*, he
adds:

“4. *Infer.* How worthy is *Jesus Christ*
“of all our Love and Delight! he that left
“God’s Bosom for you, deserves a Place in
“your Bosoms.”

“*Exhortation.* If *Christ* lay eternally in
“this Bosom of Love, and yet was content
“to forsake and leave it for your sakes, then
“be you ready to forsake and leave all the
“Comforts you have on Earth for *Christ*.”

Again, *Serm. 4. p. 35.* “Consider how
“near and dear *Jesus Christ* was to the Fa-
“ther: He was his Son, his only Son, saith
“the Text: The Son of his Love: The Dar-
“ling of his Soul: His other Self; yea, one
“with himself: The express Image of his
“Person: The Brightness of his Father’s Glo-
“ry: In parting with him, he parted with his
“own Heart, with his very Bowels, as I may
“say. Yet to us a Son is given, *Isa. 9. 6.*
“And such a Son as he calls his *dear Son*.”

116 *Could Jesus consent to suffer* Q. III.

Now if we suppose the human Soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to have had a pre-existent State of Joy and Glory in the Bosom of the Father through all former Ages of the World, and even before the World was created, then these Expressions are great and noble, are just and true, and have a happy Aptness and Propriety in them to set forth the transcendent Love of God the *Father* in sending his Son, and the transcendent Love of *Christ*, the Son of God, in coming from Heaven, and leaving the Joys and Glories of his Father's immediate Presence in Heaven, to take on him such Flesh and Blood as ours is, and in that Flesh and Blood to sustain Shame, Sorrow, Pain, Anguish of Flesh and Spirit, sharp Agonies, and the Pang of Death.

And this Love is exceedingly enhanced, while we consider that this human Soul of *Christ* was personally united to this divine Nature; so that hereby God himself is joined to Flesh and Blood, *God* becomes *manifest in the Flesh*.

But on the other hand, if we suppose nothing but the pure *divine Nature of Christ* to exist before his Incarnation, then all these Expressions seem to have very little Justness or Propriety in them: for the divine Nature of *Christ* (how distinct soever it is supposed to be from God the Father) yet can never leave the Father's Bosom, can never divest itself of any one Joy or Felicity that it was ever possess'd of,

Qu. III. *without a human Soul?* 117

of, nor lost even the least Degree of it : nor could God the *Father* ever dismiss the divine Nature of his Son from his own Bosom. Godhead must have eternal and compleat Beatitude, Joy and Glory, and can never be dispossess'd of it. Godhead can sustain no *real* Sorrow, Suffering or Pain. The utmost that can be said concerning the *Deity of Christ* is, that there is a *relative* Imputation of the Sorrows, Sufferings and Pains of the Human Nature, to the Divine, because of the Union between them ; so that the Sufferings acquire a sort of divine Dignity and Merit hereby : 'Tis granted indeed that this *relative* and *imputative* Suffering may be sufficient in a legal Sense to advance the Dignity of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, to a compleat and equivalent Satisfaction for Sin ; yet the exceeding Greatness of the Love of the *Father* and the *Son* does not seem to be so sensibly manifested to us hereby, for all this Abasement of the Godhead of *Christ* is merely *relative* and not *real*.

And as 'tis plain that the *divine Nature of Christ* could not be separated from the Bosom of his *Father*, when he came into this World and took Flesh upon him, so neither could the *human Nature* leave this Bosom of the *Father*, if it had no prior Existence, and was never there. Therefore in the common Scheme all this glorious and pathetic Representation of the *Love of Christ* in leaving the Joys and Glories of Heaven when he came to dwell upon Earth,

§ 18 Could Jesus consent to suffer. Q. III.

has no Ideas belonging to it, and it can be true in no Sense, since, it can neither be attributed to the human nor to the divine Nature of *Christ*, nor to his whole Person. I grant that by the Figure of *Communication of Properties*, what is true of one Nature may be attributed to the whole Person, or sometimes to the other Nature; yet that which is not true concerning either Nature of *Christ* separated, nor concerning the two Natures united, cannot be attributed to him at all: So that *parting with the Bosom of his Father*, and *for-saking the Joys and Glories he possessed there*, are, according to the common Scheme, Words of which we have no Ideas.

But now if we conceive the *Soul of Christ* in its *pre-existent* State, as the *first-born of every Creature*, the Darling of the Soul of God, who (as it were) *lay in the Bosom of the Father*, to come forth from the Father and come into this World, John 16. 28. to part with the Joys and *Glories* it was possessed of there before the Foundation of the World, John 17. 5. to dwell in a feeble Mansion of Flesh and Blood, Pain and Sorrow, to be cramped and confined in human Limbs, and to sustain the Pangs and Punishment of a cursed Death on the Cross for the sake of rebellious Creatures. This is amazing Love indeed; this has a surprising and sensible Reality in it, and should awaken all the Powers of our Souls to admire and adore both God the *Father* for sending his Son *Jesus Christ*, and *Christ* himself for consenting to such an Abasement. SECT.

S E C T. II.

IT has been made evident in the foregoing Section that our best Divines following the Track of Scripture Light and the Sacred Dictates of the Word of God, have set the transcendent Love of God the Father in sending his Son, and the Love of *Christ* in his Incarnation and Death, in a most beautiful and affecting Light, if we suppose the *Soul of Christ* to have had a *pre-existent State* of Joy and Glory with the Father before the World was. But I fear their Expressions are scarce consistent with any clear or just Ideas or Conceptions, while they deny each part of the Human Nature of *Christ* (i.e. his Soul as well as his Body) to exist before his Incarnation.

There is yet another and a very remarkable Instance wherein our Protestant Divines in a very just and affecting manner represent the *Covenant of Redemption* between the *Father* and the *Son* according to Scripture, upon the Supposition of the *Pre-existence of Christ's human Soul*. But according to the Common or *Scholastic Explication* of the Distinction of Persons in the *Trinity*, and the Denial of this *Pre-existent Soul of Christ*, we can have no Ideas under all their glorious and affectionate Representations of this Transaction between the *Father* and the *Son*. Let us enquire a little into this Matter.

120 Could Jesus consent to suffer Q. III.

The Common or *Scholastic Explication of the Trinity*, which has been long universally received by our Protestant Writers, and has been called *Orthodox* for these several hundred Years, is this, (*viz.*) That God is but one simple, infinite and eternal Spirit: Thence it follows, that the Divine Essence, Powers, and essential Properties of the *Father*, the *Son* and the *Spirit* in the Godhead are Numerically the very same Essence, Powers, and Essential Properties: That 'tis the same Numerical Consciousness, Understanding, Will and Power which belongs to the *Father* that belongs also to the *Son* and to the *Holy Spirit*: and that the *Sacred Three* are distinguished only by the superadded Relative Properties of *Paternity*, *Filiation* and *Procession*; but their Thoughts, Ideas, Volitions and Agencies, according to this *Hypothesis*, must be the very same Numerical Thoughts, Ideas, Actions and Volitions, in all the *Sacred Three*.

Now having these excellent Sermons of Mr. *Flavel* before me, who has well represented this Doctrine of the *Covenant of Redemption*, and the Transactions between God the *Father* and his *Son* before the World was, I would cite some part of that Discourse, in order to shew how well his Representation of this Matter agrees with the Doctrine of the *Pre-existent Soul of Christ*, tho' it can never agree to the common Explication of the *Trinity* without it. See Sermon III. p. 23. &c.

Qⁿ. III. *without a human Soul?* 121

“ 1. Consider the *Persons* transacting and dealing with each other in this Covenant: These are God the Father, and God the Son: the former as a Creditor, the latter as a Surety: the Father stands upon Satisfaction, the Son engages to give it.”

“ 2. Consider the *Business* transacted between them, and that was the Redemption and Recovery of all God's Elect.”

“ 3. The Manner or *Quality* of this Transaction: It was Federal, or in the Nature of a Covenant: It was by mutual Engagements and Stipulations, each Person undertaking to perform his Part in order to our Recovery. The Father promiseth that he *will hold his Hand and keep him*, Isa. 42. 6. The Son promiseth he will obey his Father's Call to suffering, *and not be rebellious*, Isa. 50. 5. and having promised, each holds the other to his Engagement.”

“ 4. Consider the *Articles* to which they both agree: God the Father promises to invest him with a three-fold Office, (*viz.*) to make him a Priest, Psal. 110. 4. *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedec.* Heb. 5. 1. Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him *thou art my Son.* God the Father promises to make him a Prophet, Isa. 42. 6. *I will give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, to open blind Eyes.*
And

122 *Could Jesus consent to suffer* Q. III.

“ And to make him a King: Psal. 2. 6, 7. *Ask of me, and I will give thee the Hea-*
“ *then for thine Inheritance.* Further the
“ Father promiseth to stand by him, assist him,
“ and strengthen him for his Work: Isa. 42.
“ 5, 6, 7. *I will hold thy Hand,* that is, I
“ will underprop and support thy Humanity
“ when it is ready to sink under the Burden.
“ He professeth to crown his Work with Suc-
“ cess, to accept him in his Work, and to
“ reward him for it with great Exaltation:
“ Psal. 2. 7. *I will declare the Decree, the*
“ *Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son,*
“ *this Day have I begotten thee.* This spoken
“ of the Day of his Resurrection when he had
“ just finished his Suffering, and so the Apostle
“ expounds and applies it, *Acts 13* and in
“ *Heb. 12. 2.* This was the Joy that was
“ set before him, which encouraged him to
“ *endure the Cross and despise the Shame.*
“ In like manner Jesus Christ restipulates
“ and gives his Engagement to the Father,
“ that upon these Terms he is content to be
“ made Flesh, to dye himself as it were of
“ his Glory, to come under the Obedience
“ and Malediction of the Law, and not to
“ refuse any the hardest Sufferings it should
“ please the Father to inflict on him. Psal. 40.
“ 6, 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come, I delight to*
“ *do thy Will, O God.*
“ 5. These Articles were by both Parties
“ performed precisely and punctually.”

“ 6. This Compact between the Father and
 “ the Son *bears date from Eternity*; before
 “ this World was made: while as yet we had
 “ no Existence, but only in the infinite Mind
 “ and Purpose of God. 2 Tim. 1. 9. *The Grace*
 “ *which was given us in Christ before the*
 “ *World began* was this Grace of Redemption;
 “ which from Everlasting was thus contrived
 “ and designed for us. Then was the Coun-
 “ cil or Consultation of *Peace between them*
 “ *both*, as some take that Scripture; *Zech. 6. 13.*
 “ P. 28. God the Father and God the Son
 “ do mutually rely and trust to one another
 “ in the Business of our Redemption: The
 “ Father relies upon the Son for the Perform-
 “ ance of his Part. The Father so far trusted
 “ *Christ*, that upon the Credit of his Promise to
 “ come into the World and in the Fulness of
 “ Time to become a Sacrifice for the Elect, He
 “ saved all the Old Testament Saints: And so
 “ doth Christ in like manner depend upon and
 “ trust his Father for the Accomplishment of
 “ all this Promise; that *he shall see his Seed*;
 “ and that all the Elect that are yet behind, yet
 “ unregenerated; as well as those already cal-
 “ led; shall be preserved to the heavenly
 “ Kingdom.”

P. 29. This excellent Author, represents
 this Transaction between the Father and the
 Son before the World was in a way of *Dia-*
logue: He supposes the Father to say, “ My
 “ Son, here be a Company of poor miserable
 “ Souls

124 *Could Jesus consent to suffer* Q. III.

“Souls that have utterly undone themselves,
 “and now lie open to my Justice; Justice
 “demands Satisfaction for them, or will sa-
 “tisfy itself in the eternal Ruin of them.
 “What shall be done for these Souls? And
 “thus *Christ* replies: O my Father! Such
 “is my Love to, and Pity for them, that
 “rather than they shall perish eternally, I will
 “be responsible for them as their Surety;
 “I will rather choose to suffer thy Wrath
 “than they should suffer it, charge their Debt
 “all upon me, I am able to discharge it: And
 “tho’ it impoverish all my Riches, and empty
 “all my Treasures, (for so it did indeed,
 “2. Cor. 8. *Tho’ he were rich, yet for our
 “sakes he became poor*) I am content to
 “undertake it.”

Here I again desire my Reader to observe;
 Let it not the Words of that great and excellent
 Man to refute them, for I greatly approve of
 almost every Expression; much less would I
 expose that venerable Author, whose Memo-
 ry and Writings I sincerely reverence and ho-
 nour: but my design is to shew what is the
 usual Language of our best Divines on this Sub-
 ject, for I might cite Passages of the like na-
 ture out of a Multitude of excellent Writers;
 This is only a Specimen of one for the rest.

Now in reading over such Accounts of Sti-
 pulations and Contract between the *Father*
 and the *Son* before the Foundation of the
 World, what proper Conceptions can we
 frame

Qu. III. *without a human Soul?* 125

frame, or what clear Ideas can we possibly have, while we suppose nothing but *Christ's* divine Nature transacting this Affair with the *Father*; and while at the same time we believe the divine Essence, Perfections and Powers, the Understanding, Will, Thought and Consciousness of the *Father* and of the *Son* to be numerically one and the same, since in the Godhead or divine Nature, they are but one and the same infinite Spirit? The mere Personalities, (*viz.*) *Paternity* and *Filiation*, cannot consult and transact these Affairs in a Way of Contract, Proposal and Consent: It is nothing but two distinct Consciousnesses and two distinct Wills can enter into such a Covenant; but in the *common Explication* of the Trinity, the distinct *Personalities* of the *Father* and the *Son* do not make any real distinct Consciousnesses or distinct Wills in the one infinite Spirit.

And let it be further noted also, that according to several of the Articles of this Covenant, one of these Beings or Persons covenanting, seems to be inferior to the other, and to be capable of receiving Orders, Commission, Support and Recompense from the other: But if only the *Deity of Christ* existed at that Time, and the *Deity of Christ* and of the *Father* have but one and the same numerical Consciousness and Volition, one and the same numerical Power and Glory, what need of Orders and Commissions, what need

126 *Could Jesus consent to suffer* Q. III.

of Promises of Support and Recompence! How can the pure *Godhead of Christ* be supported, or be recompensed by the *Father*, who has eternally the same numerical Glory and Power?

In short, all these sacred and pathetic Representations of Stipulation and Articles in the common Scheme, can amount to no more in our clear Ideas, and in a proper Conception of things, than the *simple Decree or Volition of the one eternal, infinite Spirit*.

I grant we may suppose the great God in a *figurative* manner of Speech consulting thus with his own *Wisdom*, with the divine Powers or Principles of Agency in his own Nature, as a Man may be *figuratively* said to consult with his own Understanding, or Reason, or Conscience: But in literal and proper Language, it seems to be nothing else but an absolute Decree of the *Great God*, that the Man *Christ Jesus*, when formed and united to Godhead, should undertake and fulfil this Work four thousand Years after this World was made. And thus, according to the common Hypothesis, that very intelligent Being which was to come into Flesh, and to sustain all the real Sufferings, gave no such early antecedent Consent to this Covenant. 'Twas only the Godhead of Christ, which is impassible and could really suffer nothing, did decree that the human Nature should exist hereafter, that it should be united to the Godhead, and should sustain Agonies and Death for the Sins of Men. I

Qu. III. *without a human Soul?* 127

I would enquire farther also, according to this Explication of things, what possible Difference can we conceive between the Love of the *Father* in sending his *Son*, and the Love of the *Son* in consenting to be sent on this compassionate Errand, if there were not two distinct Consciousnesses, and two distinct Wills, if it was only one simple numerical Volition of the Great God? And how doth this abate our grand Ideas of the distinct and condescending Love of our blessed Saviour, in his Consent to this Covenant, since that part of him which really suffered, *i. e.* his inferior Nature, had then no Existence, and therefore could give no Consent to this early Covenant of Redemption.

If *some* of these Difficulties may possibly obtain any tolerable Solution, by introducing many Figures of Speech, and be thus explained, according to the common *Explication* of the *Trinity*, without supposing the *Pre-existence* of the human Soul of *Christ*, yet I am much inclin'd to think they can never be all solved or explained upon that *Hypothesis*.

But, on the other hand, if we give ourselves leave to conceive of the human Soul of our Lord *Jesus Christ* in its pre-existent State as the *πρωτότοκος*, the *first-born of every Creature*, Col. 1. 15. as the *αρχή*, *i. e.* the *Beginning* or the *Chief of the Creation of God*, Rev. 3. 14. *lying in the Bosom of the Father*, John 1. 18. and intimately united to the eternal

128 *Could Jesus consent to suffer* Q. III.

eternal God, then here are proper Subjects for these federal Transactions in the Covenant of Redemption before the Foundation of the World: And a most glorious and divine Covenant it was, between the *Father* and the *Son* in this View of things for the Salvation of poor ruin'd Man.

Tho' this blessed *Soul of Christ* were united intimately to the *Divine Nature*, yet God the *Father* might part with it (as it were) out of his own Bosom, *i. e.* divest it of heavenly Joys and Glories * by its own Consent, without dissolving the Union: God the *Father* might prepare a *Body* for it, and send it to dwell in *Flesh and Blood*: God might inflict the Punishment of our Sins upon this blessed *Soul of Christ* incarnate, and afterwards give it an *high Exaltation*, not only as the *Glory which it had with the Father before the World was*, but to superior Joys and Glories as the Reward of its Sufferings, according to Scripture, *John* 17. 3. and *Phil.* 2. 9.

And this blessed *Soul of Christ* united to Godhead, is a proper Subject to enter into these Articles, to accept of the Terms of this Covenant

* *Note*, This divesting of the *Soul of Christ* of its primitive Joys and Glories does not require a Dissolution of its Union to the *Divine Nature*; for the Godhead may be still united, and yet may influence the human Soul in greater or less Degrees, and in various Manners, as to Light, Support, Joy, Glory, &c. according to different Occasions and Circumstances, which may be exceeding different in a State of Humiliation and of Exaltation; and the Manner and the Degree of Influence must always be determin'd only by the Divine Wisdom,

Qu. III. *without a human Soul?* 129

Covenant of Redemption, to consent to part with the Bosom of the Father, &c. And thus *Christ*, when *he came forth from the Father, and came into this World*, John 16. 28. laid aside *that Glory which he had with the Father before the World was*, John. 17. 3. and *he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor*, 2. Cor. 8. 9. And thus the *Father* and the *Son* manifest their transcendent Love to poor rebel Sinners in this federal Transaction, this Covenant of Redemption before Time began, which is the Foundation of all that was ever done in Time toward the Restitution of the Posterity of *Adam*, to the Favour and the Image of God, and to everlasting Happiness. Every thing coincides admirably well in this Scheme, and answers the various Expressions of Scripture on this Subject, without straining the Words by needless Tropes and Figures: It becomes so plain that *he that runs may read it*, and every private Christian may understand these early Grounds and Foundations of his Hope.

ADVERTISEMENT.

NOTE, in a few Months will be published a large and more compleat Treatise on this Subject, (*viz.*) *the Pre-existent Soul of our Lord Jesus Christ*.



QUESTION IV.

Is the Godhead of Christ and the Godhead of the Father one and the same Godhead?

THERE are several Considerations which lead me to agree with this general Opinion of almost all our Divines in the two last Centuries, (*viz.*) that *the Godhead of Christ is the same individual Godhead with that of the Father*; and that his divine Nature is not another infinite Spirit distinct from the Father, whatsoever sublime Distinctions there may be in that one infinite Spirit, one of which, (*viz.*) the *Word* or *Wisdom*, may perhaps have a more peculiar Respect to the second Person in the Trinity, (*viz.*) the Son; and the other, (*viz.*) the *Power of God*; to the Holy Ghost.

I. If the divine Nature of *Christ* be another distinct Principle of Self-consciousness and Volition, another distinct spiritual Being, or another Spirit, this approaches so near to the

Q. IV. *and of the Father the same?* 131

the Doctrine of *another God*, that it is very hard to distinguish it. For so far as our Ideas of Arithmetick and Reason can reach, this seems to be a plain Truth, *If one infinite Spirit be one God, two or three infinite Spirits must be two or three Gods.*

And tho' the Patrons of this Opinion suppose these three Spirits to be so nearly united as to be called one God merely to avoid the Charge of *Polytheism*, yet it must be granted, that this *one God* must then be one *complex infinite Being, or Spirit*, made up of three single infinite Beings or Spirits; which is such a Notion of the *one true God*, as I think neither Reason nor Revelation will admit. And yet if this were the true Notion of the *one God*, 'tis very strange that Scripture should not clearly and expressly reveal it.

2. The *God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, the *God of Israel*, the *Almighty*, and *Jehovah*, is the proper Style and Title by which God the *Father* was known under the *Old Testament*: and 'tis under these Titles and Characters that he often appeared to the Patriarchs: yet it is agreed by all *Trinitarians* that it was *Jesus Christ* appeared to the Patriarchs, and assumed this Style and these Titles of Godhead; which we justly suppose he could not have assumed if he had not had true Godhead belonging to his complex Person. And not only so, but this true Godhead must also be the Godhead of the Father, otherwise he

132 *Is the Godhead of Christ* Qu. IV.

could not have assumed those very Titles by which *God the Father* was always known to the Church, and by which they worship'd him as the God and *Father* of all. If the Deity of *Christ* were another distinct Essence or Spirit, his assuming those Names whereby *God the Father* only was known to the *Israelites*, would lead them into Mistake and Confusion.

I know it may be *objected* here, that *Christ's* assuming the Names and Titles of God the *Father* would lead them into as much Confusion and Mistake by leading them to believe that *Christ was God the Father*; and it may be urged yet further, that these Titles thus assumed, would prove that *Christ was God*, no more than that it does prove that *Christ was the Father*.

Ans. If *Christ* has the same Godhead as the *Father*, and if in these ancient Appearances *Christ* came in the Name of the *Father*, as his Representative, there is no great Inconvenience nor Confusion if he were taken for God the Father, speaking and acting in and by the Angel of the Covenant, or *Jesus Christ* in his pre-existent State: But there would be great Confusion and Inconvenience in *Christ's* assuming these divine Names, if he had not *Godhead* belonging to him, for then we should take a Creature for God.

3. Several Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, which are cited by the Writers of the *New Testament* and apply'd to *Christ*, do most evidently

Q. IV. *and of the Father the same?* 133

evidently refer to the Great One God, the God of Israel, the Almighty, the Jehovah in the Old Testament, whom all that read the Old Testament before the Days of Christ must suppose to mean *God the Father of all*, such as Psal. 68. 18. *Thou hast ascended on high.* Cited Ephes. 4. and Psal. 97. *Worship him all ye Gods.* Cited Heb. 1. 16. and Psal. 102. 24, 25. *O my God, of old thou hast laid the Foundations of the Earth.* Cited Heb. 1. 10. and Isa. 40. 3, 4, 5. *Prepare ye the Way of the Lord.* Cited Matth. 3. 3. and Joel. 2. 32. *Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be delivered.* Cited Heb. 12. 26. and Isa. 8. 13, 14. *Sanctify the Lord of Hosts, and he shall be for a Stone of stumbling.* Cited 1 Pet. 2. 6, 8. and several other Places.

Now we cannot suppose, that all the holy Men before *Christ* were utterly mistaken in their Application of these Texts to God the Father, since there is a plain and proper Sense wherein this Application is true. And yet these Texts are properly applied to *Christ*, if we suppose the Godhead of the Father and of *Christ* to be the same, and that the Man *Christ Jesus* was the *Shekinah* or Habitation of the great God intimately and personally united to him, and so made one Person with him, but still under the Character of *Filiation* or *Mediation*. And in this Sense *Christ* was *Emmanuel*, or *God with us*, Matth. 1. 23.

134 *Is the Godhead of Christ* Qu. IV.

Besides, let it be further considered, that the Design of the Apostles in the Citation of these Texts, and the Application of them to *Christ*, was to prove the Glory, Dignity and divine Grandeur of the complex *Person of Christ*: But this Citation of these Texts, and the Application of them to *Christ*, will scarcely prove the *Godhead of Christ*, unless he has the same Godhead with that of the *Father*: nor indeed will they prove the Dignity or Glory of the *Person of Christ* any other way, but as they shew that what was spoken of old concerning the Godhead of the Father must necessarily belong also to *Christ*.

If *Christ* considered as God were another distinct Spirit from the Godhead of the *Father*, I think these Citations of the Apostle out of the Prophets would hardly prove his Godhead; nor do I see how they could prove the Grandeur and Dignity of his Person, unless it were granted that the Godhead of the Father was his Godhead, that *Christ and the Father are one* in this respect.

4. When *Christ* expresses his own Godhead in the *New Testament*, 'tis by declaring his *Oneness with the Father*, that is, the Union of the Man *Christ Jesus* with the same Godhead that is in the *Father*. *I and the Father are one. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father in me. The Father in me doth the Works.* And it must be observed that there

Q. IV. *and of the Father the same?* 135

there is not any Place in the *New-Testament* where the miraculous Works of *Christ* are ascribed to any distinct Godhead of his own, different from the Godhead of the *Father*, or the Godhead of the *Spirit* of God that dwelt in him: And 'tis not reasonable to suppose that *Christ* would have always used these Modes of speaking, and attributed his own Works to the *Father* and his *Spirit*, if he himself had another Godhead or Divine Nature different from that of the *Father* and the *Spirit*: For why should his miraculous Works be attributed to the Aids of another infinite Spirit which was not united to the Man *Jesus*, and never be ascribed at all to that distinct Spirit which is supposed to be united to him? I am sure this sort of Representations lead our Thoughts away from supposing *Christ* to have any Godhead at all, if it be not the same as the *Father's*.

5. If the Godhead of *Christ* be another distinct spiritual Being different from the Godhead of the *Father*, I do not see any fair and reasonable manner, how the *Trinitarians* can solve the Difficulties which arise from those Scriptures, where God the *Father* is represented as the *only true God*, and under that Idea distinguished from *Jesus Christ*; as *John*. 17. 3. *To know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* 1 Cor. 8. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jesus Christ,*

136 *Is the Godhead of Christ* Qu. IV.

Christ, by whom are all things. Ephes. 4. 5, 6. *There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all.* Now we can scarce suppose the highest Nature of *Jesus Christ* to be another infinite Spirit distinct from God the *Father*, without excluding it from Godhead by these express Scriptures: but they may easily be explained to admit *Christ's* Godhead, if we suppose *Christ* to be spoken of in these Places chiefly in his inferior Characters as *Man* and *Mediator*; and yet he may be united to, and inhabited by the one true and eternal God, who is at other times called the *Father*, as being vested with different relative Properties, and first in the great Oeconomy, as I have sufficiently shewn in other Papers.

I add also, those Texts in the Prophets, where it is said, *I am God, and there is none else, there is none beside me, I know not any*, Isai. 44. 6, 8. and 45. 21, 22. give a further Confirmation to this Sentiment. For,

Whether we suppose the *Father* or the *Son* to be the Speaker here, 'tis still with an Exclusion of any other Being, any other Spirit from the Claim of Godhead besides the one infinite Spirit, the one true and eternal God, the *God of Israel*; and if our Saviour *Jesus Christ* be not that one true eternal God, that one and the same infinite Spirit with the *Father*, these exclusive Sentences would hardly admit *Christ* and the *Father* too, to be the one true eternal God.

It

Q. IV. *and of the Father the same?* 137

It is granted indeed that *Christ* is another Spirit as he is Man, and that other (*viz.*) the human Spirit, is not in himself properly God; but only by being united to true Godhead, even the Man *Jesus* may be so called by the Communication of Properties. But since the Godhead of *Christ* is still the very same Godhead with that of the *Father*, *Christ* is not excluded from Godhead by these strong exclusive Expressions.

6. When our Saviour foretold that his Disciples should leave him alone, he adds, *John* 16. 32. *And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.* Now if his Godhead had been distinct or different from the Godhead of the *Father*, he needed not the *Presence of the Father* with him for his Support; his own Godhead would have been all-sufficient: But if his own Godhead be the same with that of the *Father*, then there is no difficulty in the Expression.

7. There are several Places in the *New Testament*, where the words *God*, *Christ*, and *the Lord* in the same Paragraph are used very promiscuously, so that one can hardly tell where *Christ* is spoken of, and where *God the Father*; particularly, *Rom.* 14. 6—12. Other Places where *God the Father* and *Christ* are called *our Saviour* promiscuously, and perhaps *God our Saviour*, &c. *Tit.* 2. *Jude* 4. 25. at least there is some difficulty in such Places to determine which is meant; which would

138 *Is the Godhead of Christ.* Qu. IV.

would hardly have been left liable to so promiscuous a Construction, if *Christ* had not been *true God*, and if his Godhead had not been the same with that of the *Father*.

8. That the primitive *Christians* worshiped *Christ*; is sufficiently evident from the sacred History: Yet we never find that the *Jews* of that Day, who were implacably set against them, ever accused them of Idolatry, or Creature-Worship, tho' that Charge would have best served their Purpose to blast and destroy this new Religion.

Nor can we reasonably suppose, that if the *Jews* had made this Objection, the sacred Writers would have omitted to tell us so, because this would have been so important and forcible an Objection against Christianity, that it would have required a very particular Answer, that so Christians in all Ages might have been taught to defend their Practice.

Thence we must infer, that when the primitive *Christians* worship'd *Christ*, they cannot be supposed to worship a mere *Creature*, or any other but the *true God of Israel*; for the *Jews* would then certainly have charged them with Creature-Worship or Idolatry. Now this *true God of Israel* was God: represented as the Creator, the Author, and the Father of all; it was that God who sustains the supreme Character of Dominion and Majesty, and maintains the Dignity and the Rights of Godhead;

Q.IV. *and of the Father the same?* 139

Godhead; it was that God who so often foretold the sending of his Son *Jesus Christ*, and this is *God the Father*. 'Tis therefore this one Godhead, which is in the *Father*, which is the same with the Godhead of his Son *Jesus Christ*, but under a distinct Personality: 'Tis the same one God whom the Christians worshipped, when they worshipped *Christ* as *God manifest in the Flesh*. It was the same Divine Nature or Godhead which the ancient *Jews* had been used to worship, as dwelling in the *Cloud of Glory* upon the Mercy-Seat, and was now come to dwell in Flesh and Blood, to become *Immanuel*, God with us, to become *God manifest in the Flesh*. Now there is such a mutual Inhabitation and personal Union between the one eternal God, and a Creature in the Person of *Christ*, as renders this complex Person a proper Object of Worship, and this stands clear of Idolatry, even in the Sense of the *Jews* themselves, who were wont to worship God as dwelling in the Cloud.

And indeed this is the only Notion of the Worship of *Christ* that could possibly agree with their own Law, and with their first Commandment given in *Sinai*, and with all their own former Ideas of Worship, as due only to the one God: and 'tis the only Notion that could have been received by them without Difficulty and Opposition. If therefore the *Son* or *Word* be truly God, this Godhead must
be

140 *Is the Godhead of Christ* Qu. IV.

be *the same in Substance* with the Godhead of the *Father* whom the *Jews* worshipped, otherwise he would be another God, and the *Jews* could not have failed to charge the Christians with gross Idolatry.

Upon the whole therefore there seems just reason to conclude, that whatever sacred and unknown Distinctions may be in the Divine Nature itself, and however these Distinctions may lay a Foundation for God's Discovery of himself under three Personal Characters, as the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*, yet the Godhead of the Father seems to be the same one infinite and eternal Spirit which in some particular Principle or Power of its own Nature, or under some peculiar Distinction or Relation, is united to the Man *Christ Jesus*; and hereby *Jesus* becomes one with God, one complex intelligent Agent or Person, and hereby *Christ* comes to have a Right to those divine Titles, the *Lord God*, the *Almighty*, *Jehovah*, the *God of Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, &c.

And by this means the great and fundamental Article of all Religion, the *Unity of the true God*, is maintained inviolable: And thus we most effectually preclude all the Objections and Cavils of the *Arian* and *Socinian* Writers against the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and the Deity of Christ, as tho' this Doctrine introduced *more Gods than one*. For if we suppose the Man *Jesus Christ*

Q. IV. and of the Father the same? 141

Christ in his Soul and Body to be both an *intellectual* and *corporeal Shekinah* or Habitation of the one God, the God of *Israel*, we may justly call *Jesus Christ, God manifest in the Flesh, a Man in whom dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily, a Man of the Seed of David, and yet God over all blessed for ever.* Nor is there so much as the Appearance or Shadow of our owning two or three Gods, which has been too often, and with some Appearance of Reason charged upon some other Modes of explaining this sacred Doctrine.



QUESTION



QUESTION V.

Is there an intimate Union between the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father?

TH O' I don't remember that the Words, *Unite*, or *Union**, are any where found expressly in the Writings of the New Testament, yet the Idea which is design'd by these Words is often found in Scripture: and 'tis the usual Custom of the sacred Writers to express this Idea of the *Union* of several things together by *being one with another*, or by *one being in another*, and sometimes by *each being in the other* mutually.

The Union between the *Body* and the *Soul* is represented by the Soul's being *in the Body*, 2 Cor. 5. 6. at home in the Body; and 12. 3. *whether in the Body or out of the Body*, &c. The Union of *Saints* to God is expressed

* 'Tis granted that *ἑνότης* or Unity is twice found in the New Testament, (*viz.*) Eph. 4. 3, and 4. 13. but *ἑνὼ* or *ἑνωσις* is not used by the sacred Writers: nor is *ἑνότης* used to signify the *Union* of two things together into one.

Q.V. between Jesus and his Father? 143

preſt by mutual Inbeing : 1 John 4. 16. *He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him.* Our Union to *Chriſt* is often expreſt by *Chriſt being in us* and our *being in Chriſt*, John 15. 4, 5. Rom. 16. 7. and *being in the Lord*, 1. 11. and in many other places.

Sometimes *Union* is expreſt by *both Being One* : ſo the *Saints* who are all united in one common Head are called *one Body and one Bread*, 1 Cor. 10. 17. And as the Union between *Man* and *Wife* is expreſt by their *being one Fleſh*, 1 Cor. 6. 16. *ſo he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.* 1. 17.

The Union between *Jeſus Chriſt* and God the *Father* is expreſt by all theſe Ways, (*viz.*) by an *Inbeing* of *Chriſt* in the *Father* and the *Father* in him, and by *Oneneſs* with the *Father*, in the Writings of the Apoſtle *John*. See John 10. 3. *I and my Father are one.* John 5. 38. and 14. 11. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*

But let it be always remember'd that *our* Union to *God* or *Chriſt* is but a meer faint Shadow or Reſemblance of the Union of *Chriſt* to *God the Father*; which vaſtly ſurpaſſes ours, and is of a ſuperior kind. This Union between *Chriſt* and God the *Father* is ſo near, ſo intimate, ſo peculiar, as gives occaſion for the New Teſtament to cite and apply to *Chriſt* many Paſſages out of the Old Teſtament : which relate to the *God and Father*
of

144. *Is there an intimate Union Q. V.*

of all. The Names, the Characters, the Properties, and the Actions of the Father are given to Christ in several Instances and Forms of Expression, which are not true nor can be admitted concerning *our* Union to God.

Tho' there be but *one* Godhead, and *one* God, even the Father, 1 Cor. 8. 6. yet by the intimate Union of the Man *Christ Jesus* with this one Godhead or Divine Nature which is in the Father, *Christ* is the Lord *Jehovah*, He is *God manifest in the Flesh*, he is *God over all blessed for ever*; which would be Blasphemy to say concerning Christians. So *Christ* is *he that searches the Hearts and the Reins*. Christ is the *Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*. What the Father doth, the Son doth also in many respects: The Father created all things, so did the Son: and what the Son doth, the Father is said to do, John 14. 10. *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works.*

It may not be amiss here to transcribe a few Verses from this Chapter, *John* 14. in order to give us a clearer Idea of this Union and Communion between the Father and Christ; since 'tis the design of our Lord in this Place to instruct *Thomas* and *Philip* in the knowledge of God the Father and of himself. *John* 14. 7—11. *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: And from henceforth ye know him and have seen him.* 8. *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us*

Q.V. between Jesus and his Father? 145

us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?

10. Believest thou not, that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The Words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: But the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very Works sake. Upon this Scripture I beg leave to make these three Remarks.

Remark I. This is not spoken concerning the Union, the Inbeing, or Indwelling of any distinct *Divine Nature of Christ*, in the Divine Nature of the Father, but rather concerning the Union of his *Human Nature* to the same Godhead that is in the Father; and that for these three Reasons.

1. Because the Disciples at this Time were not particularly acquainted with any distinct Divinity of Christ, and therefore he can't be supposed to speak to them of this his Divinity, and tell them where it was, (*viz.*) in the Father. It was as Man that he conversed with them; but as a Man who had God ever with him, and he is now further explaining the Intimacy of this Union between God and Man in his own Person.

2. Tho' the Deity of Christ considered as

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146 *Is there an intimate Union* Q. V.

the *Eternal Word* or *Wisdom of the Father* may be said to be or dwell in the Father, yet God the Father is not said to be in his *Wisdom*, or to dwell in his *Wisdom*; whereas this *Inbeing* and *Indwelling* of Christ and the Father are mutual in the Text, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*: it denotes the Union of two really distinct Beings in one.

3. Because *Christ* makes this his Union with the Father an Exemplar or Similitude of the Union of the Saints with God. John 17. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* The Union and Communion between the Man *Jesus* and *God the Father*, tho' 'tis vastly superior to that of the Saints, yet 'tis still voluntary and of meer Grace, and in this respect it may be properly made use of as a very glorious Exemplar of *our Union to God and Christ*: But the Inbeing of the *Eternal Word* or *Wisdom* in the Father is so essential to Godhead, it so infinitely transcends all his voluntary and condescending Union to us, and is so infinitely different from it, that it does not seem to be a proper Exemplar or Pattern thereof. I much rather conclude therefore, that the Union here described is the Union between *God the Father* and the Man *Christ Jesus*, or between the same Divine Nature which is in the Father and the human Nature of *Christ*.

Remark

Q.V. *between Jesus and his Father.* 149

Remark II. Jesus Christ neither in this Place nor in any other doth ever ascribe his divine Works to any other divine Power of his own, or to any other Godhead of his own, distinct and different from the Godhead of the Father. *I live by the Father:* John 14. 19. *The Father is in me, and it is the Father in me that doth the Works.* John. 14. 10. It is but one Godhead of the Father and the Son; not two divine Natures or two Godheads, for this would seem to make two Gods. Nor has the *Holy Spirit* to whom sometimes *Christ* ascribes his Works, any Godhead different from that of the Father.

Remark III. Let it be observed further, that when our Saviour tells his Disciples, and particularly informs *Thomas* and *Philip*, that by *seeing and knowing the Son, they see and know the Father also*, he does not give this Reason for it, (*viz.*) that he is the *very Image* of the Father, or the *Representative* or the *Vicerent* of the Father, tho' those are great Truths: but he gives this Reason, that there is a most intimate *Union* or *Oneness* between the Father and him. *I am in the Father and the Father in me:* and so near and so intimate is this Union, that he attributes the *Words* which he speaks and the *Works* which he does to the Father, *John 10. i. e.* to the Godhead of the Father dwelling in him. Thus *Christ and his Father are one*, John 10. 30. One Godhead belongs to both.

148 *Is there an intimate Union* Q. V.

From all this we may reasonably infer, that when the Names, Titles and Works of the True and Eternal God are *prophetically* attributed to *Jesus Christ* under the Old Testament, or *historically* in the New, 'tis not so much because his Human Soul is the Image, Representative or Deputy of the Father, as the *Arians* say; but because the very Godhead of the Father dwells personally in the Man *Jesus*: *the Fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily*, so as on some Occasions to give a sufficient Ground for the Representation of Christ as *God-Man*, or one complex Person including a Divine and Human Nature; tho' on other Occasions *Christ* is represented as a *Man*, and is called *the Man Christ Jesus the Mediator*, as in *1 Tim. 2. 5*.

And as we find Divine Names and Characters are given to *Christ* at, and after his Incarnation, because the *Fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in the Man Jesus*, and thereby he became *God manifest in the Flesh*; so before his Incarnation, when the *Angel of the Lord* who appeared to the Patriarchs, calls himself the *Lord, God, Jehovah, God Almighty*, and *the God of Abraham*, we very reasonably account for it in the same manner, (*viz.*) That the *Fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him* spiritually, *i. e.* that there was the Human Spirit of our blessed Saviour in his Pre-existent or Angelic State, inhabited by the Great and Almighty God, and composing as it were one complex

Q.V. between Jesus and his Father? 149

complex Person, one complex Intelligent Agent in those Appearances.

Object. But does not this represent *Christ*, as being the *Father*? Doth not this suppose *God the Father* to be incarnate, which is contrary to the common Expressions of Scripture and Sense of the Primitive Church?

Ans. 1. Almost all the Protestant Writers that have been counted most *Orthodox* for some hundreds of Years past, both in Foreign Countries and at Home, have universally supposed the very *same numerical Godhead of the Father* to be the *Godhead of the Son*: and that it is the same infinite Spirit, the same Understanding and the same Will, which exists in the Father with one relative Property, that is also incarnate in the Son with another relative Property: Only they suppose the superadded Idea or relative Property of *Fatherhood* is not incarnate, but the superadded relative Property of *Sonship*. Now I can't reasonably fear any just Censures from those who follow this Doctrine of all our *Reformed* Predecessors, because their Opinion comes so very near to, or, rather is the same with what I have asserted, tho' they add some human Phrases to it, of which I have not yet been able to attain any Ideas.

Ans. 2. Tho' the *same numerical Godhead* belong to the *Father* and to the *Son*, yet 'tis not proper to say, *the Father is incarnate*, because the Idea of *Fatherhood* super-

150 *Is there an intimate Union* Q. V

added to the Godhead, includes the Idea of the prime Agent, and supreme Ruler in the divine Oeconomy; whereas the Idea of *Incarnation* belongs properly to one that is sent in order to become a Mediator between God and Man, and this belongs properly to the *Son*; as I shall shew immediately.

Ans. 3. Tho' in general we may suppose the very Godhead of the Father to be united to the Man *Christ Jesus*, according to these Expressions in the 10th and 14th of *John*, and elsewhere, yet some have supposed there are other Scriptures which represent *Christ* in his Divine Nature, as the *Word* or *Wisdom* of the Father, as a peculiar essential Principle of Self-manifestation in the Divine Nature: and if Scripture does represent the *Great God* under the peculiar Idea or Character of his *Wisdom* or *Word*, as manifesting itself in Flesh, 'tis not so proper to say, *God the Father was incarnate*, but that the *Word* or *Wisdom* of *God* was made *Flesh*, tho' the Godhead of the *Word* is the same with that of the *Father*; for the *Wisdom* of *God* is *God*. But I insist not on this Answer, and therefore proceed.

Ans. 4. The pre-existent Soul of *Christ*, in whom the Divine Nature or Godhead always dwelt, is properly the *Son of God*, derived from the Father before all Worlds, as his *only begotten Son*, the *Brightness of the Father's Glory*; and the express Image of his Person.

Q.V. between Jesus and his Father? 151.

Person. And this glorious human Soul who lived many Ages in an angelic State; and was the *Angel of God's Presence*, does seem to be the more immediate Subject of Incarnation. This *Son of God* properly took Flesh upon him, and (shall I say) became as it were a *Medium*, in and by which the Divine Nature or Godhead was united to Flesh and Blood. Thus *Christ* is properly called *God manifest in the Flesh*, because true Godhead always dwelt in this human Soul, who is now incarnate: and he is properly called the *Son of God manifest in the Flesh*, or *Christ come in the Flesh*, because this human Soul, who was properly the *Son of God*, was more immediately the Subject of Union to Flesh and Blood. And thus the Expressions of St. *Paul* and St. *John* are reconciled, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16: *God was manifest in the Flesh*: and 1 *John* 3. 8. *The Son of God was manifested*; and 4. 2. *Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh*.

This sort of Exposition of these Texts where-
in *Jesus Christ* and God the *Father* are re-
presented as *one*, or as mutually *in-being* and
in-dwelling in each other, seems more exactly
agrecable to the whole Tenor of Scripture,
and best maintains the Unity of the Godhead,
which is the Foundation of all Religion both
natural and revealed; nor is it liable to those
Cavils, Objections and Inconveniencies with
which other Expositions are attended.

152 *Is there an intimate Union, &c.*

This Exposition is free from those Obscurities which attend the *mutual in-being and in-dwelling* of the Father and the Son considered purely in their Divine Natures, which the Learned have called *ἡμετεροχώρασις* and *Circum-incession*. We can hardly suppose our Saviour intended that Notion in *John* 14. 7, &c. because 'tis a Notion so mysterious and sublime beyond all the Ideas that *Philip* and *Thomas* could frame at that Season: And therefore we cannot imagine that *Christ* would go to amuse them with these Unsearchables, when they desired some Instruction from him in the Knowledge of God the Father.

This Account of things plainly, intelligibly, and effectually secures true, proper, and eternal Deity to God the Father, and to our blessed Saviour, and that in two distinct Persons, without introducing any other Godhead besides the Godhead of the Father. Thus God the *Father* is the *only true God* originally, and yet *Jesus* the *Son of God*, by Union to, and Communion in the Godhead of the Father, is also the *true God and the eternal Life*, *1 John* 5. 20. And *this is eternal Life to know the Father the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.* *John* 17. 3.

QUESTION



QUESTION VI.

Is Christ the express Image of God the Father in the Human Nature, or in the Divine?

ANSW. In the Human Nature.

IN several Places of Scripture our Saviour is represented as the *Image of God*: 2 Cor. 4. 4. *Christ, who is the Image of God.* Col. 1. 15. *The Image of the invisible God, the first-born of every Creature.* Heb. 1. 3. *The Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things.* Now 'tis an important Enquiry what is the Scripture Sense in which *Jesus Christ* is the *Image of God the Father*.

It has been the Custom of many theological Writers to suppose *Christ* in his pure *divine Nature* to be this Image of the Father to which the Scripture refers: but there are some Reasons which seem to oppose this Opinion, and incline me to withhold my Assent from it at present.

154 *Is Jesus the Image of the Qu. VI.*

1. That our Protestant Divines have almost universally supposed the Godhead or divine Nature of *Christ* to be the self-same, entire, numerical Godhead, Nature or Essence which the *Father* has, and differing only in his Personality or Manner of Subsistence, that is, *Filiation*; whereas the *Father's* Manner of Subsistence is *Paternity*. Now, according to this Doctrine, the divine Nature of *Christ* can neither be the Image of the *Father* in his *Essence*, nor in his *Personality* and Subsistence.

The divine Nature of *Christ* cannot be the Image of the *Father's Essence*, because it is numerically the very same Essence, and nothing is said to be the Image of itself.

Neither can the peculiar Subsistence or *Personality* of *Christ* as God, be the Image of the *Father's Personality* or Subsistence; for *Sonship* or *Filiation* is by no means an Image of *Paternity* or *Fatherhood*, but is rather the very reverse, or contrary to it. A *derived* Manner of Subsistence can never be the express Image of an *undervived* Manner of Subsistence.

If therefore the Person of *Christ* considered as God, be the same numerical Godhead with the *Father*, together with a distinct Personality, that is *Filiation*, and if he is neither the Image of the *Father's Godhead* nor his *Personality*; then *Christ*, considered merely in his divine Nature, cannot be the express Image of the *Father*.

Father in his Human Nature? 155

2. Another Reason why *Christ* as God, is not the Image of God the Father, is because he is called *the Image of the invisible God*. Now the Godhead of *Christ* is as much *invisible* as the Father's Godhead is; and therefore when he is called *the Image of the invisible God*, it must signify, he is that Image whereby God becomes visible, or is made known to Men; and for this Reason this Title of *Christ* must include such a Nature in *Christ* whereby the *invisible God* is made known to Mankind; that is, it must include something of his inferior or human Nature, and perhaps has a prime Reference thereto.

3. When *Christ* is called the *Image of God* in some Scriptures, it would naturally lead us to conceive him distinct from, and in some Sense inferior to that God whose Image he is; and therefore it doth as naturally lead one to conceive *Christ's* Godhead is not denoted in those Scriptures; for the Godhead of *Christ* and the *Father* is one, whereas the Image is something inferior to the Original.

Let it be noted also, that every Man is called *the Image of God*, 1 Cor. II. 7. And therefore this seems to be too low a Character of *Christ*, considered in his pure Godhead.

But there are three Senses in which *Christ* is the most noble *Image of God*.

1. This Title most admirably agrees to *Christ* considered as *Man*: His human Soul is the first, the greatest, the wisest, the holiest,
2 and

136. *Is Jesus the Image of the Qu.* VI.

and the best of all created Spirits: The Man *Jesus* is the wisest, holiest, and best of Men, formed after the Image of God in the greatest Perfections and probably his human Soul in his pre-existent State was *the first-born of every Creature, and the beginning on chief of the Creation of God*, and who hath more of Resemblance to God in all natural and in all moral Perfections than any Man ever had, or than the whole Creation besides.

2. And if it be further considered that this glorious Man *Jesus Christ* even in his pre-existent, as well as in his incarnate State, is intimately united to his divine Nature, *i. e.* to the same Godhead that belongs to the Father, or to the eternal *Word or Wisdom of God*; then the very Perfections of God himself shine through the *human Nature of Christ*, in a most resplendent Manner: *Christ as God-man* is indeed the *Brightness of his Father's Glory*, and the most *express Image of his Person*: and in this Sense it may be granted that *Christ* is such an Image of God as to be also God himself, *God manifest in the Flesh, God over all blessed for ever.*

Thus far we have seen in what Sense *Christ* may be called the *Image of God the Father*, in the very *Constitution of his Person*: Let us also now consider him,

3. In his *Character of Mediator*; and so he becomes the *Image of the invisible God* in yet a farther Sense. He is the Father's
Ambassador

Father in his Human Nature? 157

Ambassador to us, and in that Sense he is the Image of God, since he represents God among Men. He is also *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, vested with a sovereign Dominion over all things by the Appointment of the Father; and therefore he may be called the express Image of his Father's Person, as he is *appointed Heir and Lord of all things*: And as *Adam* was the Image of God, in his Dominion over Creatures in this World, so *Christ* is a much more glorious Image of God the Father in his Dominion over the upper and lower Worlds.

Thus, tho' our blessed Saviour considered in his pure Godhead or divine Nature cannot be so properly called the *Image of the invisible God*, or the *express Image of the Father*, yet considered (1) as *Man*, (2) as *God-Man*, or (3) as *Mediator*, those Ascriptions may very properly belong to him.

NOTE, In another Treatise which will be published in a few Months, concerning *the Glory of Christ as God-man*, and the Pre-existence of his human Soul, there will be an Abridgement of a larger Discourse of the Reverend Dr. *Goodwin's*, concerning the Glories and Royalties of *Jesus Christ* considered as *God-man*, and of his being the *express Image of the Father*.

QUESTION



QUESTION VII.

*Are the Worship of God and his Son
Jesus Christ consistent with one an-
other?*

1. **G**OD is a *Spirit*, i. e. a Being who has Understanding and Will; infinite in Knowledge, and in Power, and in every Perfection.

2. There is but one only living and true God; i. e. *one infinite Spirit*. And I express myself thus, lest if we suppose more infinite Spirits than one, we should give occasion to say, we believed more Gods than one. Three infinite Spirits seem to me to be three Gods.

3. This one true God is the only proper Object of divine or religious Worship. This Doctrine was asserted by *Moses*, supported by the Prophets, and confirmed by the Lord *Jesus Christ* himself.

4. In the Scripture *Christ* expressly calls God *the Father* the only true God, as distinct from himself; *John* 17. 3. And the Apostle *Paul* confirms it, *To us there is but one God,*
even

Q. VII. Father and Son consistent? 159

even the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things. 1 Cor. 8. 6.

5. *Jesus Christ*, who is the Son of God, is evidently represented in Scripture as another distinct Spirit different from God the Father, both before and after his Incarnation.

Before his Incarnation he had a distinct Consciousness or Understanding, whereby he knew and was conscious of his own Appointment to various Services and his own Mission by the Father; he knew all the Offices he himself was to sustain, the Flesh and Blood he was to take upon him, and the Work that he was sent to do by the Father's Appointment. These personal Consciousnesses of *Christ* are all different from the personal or individual Consciousnesses of God the Father. *Christ* had also a distinct Will, different from the Father, whereby he consented to what the Father's Will ordain'd concerning him, he accepted of the mediatorial Office at the Father's hand, and by his own Will submitted to that Incarnation which the Will of the Father appointed for him: All this before he was actually incarnate. *Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God; a Body hast thou prepared me. Psal. 40. Heb. 10.*

As for his Appearance after his Incarnation, 'tis sufficiently evident he is another distinct Spirit, different from the true and eternal God the Father; for he was conscious of his wearing

160 *Are the Worship of the Qu. VII.*

wearing Flesh and Blood, and of all the Sensations of Hunger, Thirst and Pain, which he derived thence : He was then compleat Man in Body and Soul, who knew and worshipped and obeyed his Father and his God. His own Words confirm this : *I came not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that sent me. Father, not my Will, but thine be done.*

6. Yet this Son of God often appears in Scripture as the Object of divine or religious Worship. 'Tis thus in some Places of the Old Testament, when he appeared as the *Angel of God's Presence* ; for *Abraham*, *Moses* and *Josbua* worshipped him as the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and as *Jehovah*, and as the Captain of the Host of the Lord : and in *Psal. 45. 11.* we are required to worship him ; *He is thy Lord, and worship thou him.*

And that we have several Examples of Worship paid to our Lord *Jesus Christ* in the New Testament, especially after his Resurrection and Ascension, is evident from the Writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles. *St. Stephen* worshipped him, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*, *Acts 7.* and *St. Paul*, *2 Cor. 12. For this I besought the Lord thrice.* And all the Saints and Angels in Heaven *do worship him*, *Rev. 5. 12, 13.*

7. Thence it must follow that *Jesus Christ* the Son of God, tho' he be a distinct Spirit,
yet

Qu.VII. *Father and Son consistent?* 161

yet he must be some way one with the true and eternal God, that he may be a proper Object of religious or divine Worship. Thus he expresses himself, *John* 10. 30. *I and my Father are one.* He must be some way the same God, or the same infinite Spirit with the Father, while he is also another distinct inferior Spirit, different from the Father.

8. Scripture does not teach us to conceive how this can be, but by so near an Union between this supreme or infinite Spirit and the inferior or finite Spirit, as may constitute one compounded Person, one complex Agent or Principle of Action, one complex Object of Honour, *i. e. God and Man.* And thus the Son of God seems to be represented often in Scripture as a complex Person, or as two distinct Spirits or Beings in a personal Union.

In the Old Testament he is the *Man* who conversed with *Abraham* and who wrestled with *Jacob*; he is the *Angel of the Covenant*, the *Angel in whom the Name of God is*, the *Angel of the Presence of God*, or a *Messenger sent from God*, and yet he is also the *Jehovah*, the *God of Abraham and Isaac*, the *I am that I am.* He is spoken of as the *Child-born*, the *Son given*; and yet the *mighty God*, and the *Holy One* whom the Angels adore.

He is represented also in the New Testament as the *Man* that died, rose, and ascended to Heaven; and also as the *Jehovah* or *God of Israel*, who is described in the 68th *Psal.*

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162 *Are the Worship of the Qu. VII.*

compared with *Ephes. 4.* as *ascending on high, leading Captivity captive, and receiving Gifts for Men.* He is God. *manifest in the Flesh, or a Man in whom dwells all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily.* He is the *Word who was with God, who was God, and who was made Flesh, and tabernacled among Men.* 2 *Col. 9.* *John 1. 1, 14.* and 1 *Tim. 3. 16.*

Now this near, intimate and unspeakable Union between the Man *Jesus* and one eternal *God* lays a sufficient Foundation for divine Names, Titles, Attributes, Worship and Honours to be ascribed to *Jesus Christ* the Son of God. *He and the Father are one, John 10. 30. i. e.* so united, that one Godhead is in both by this Union. *He is in the Father and the Father in him. 'Tis the Father in him that doth his wondrous Works.* *John 14. 10.* *He was in the beginning with the Father: The Word was with God, and the Word was God, John 1. 1.*

9. With regard to the *blessed Spirit of God*, tho' I think true Godhead is ascribed to him, and personal Actions are sometimes attributed to him in Scripture, yet as we are not expressly, plainly, and particularly inform'd, whether he be a really distinct Principle or Power in God, or has a proper distinct Personality of himself, so neither are we expressly required to worship him in any Text of the Bible that I can find. Nevertheless, as divine Attributes and Actions, and sometimes

Q. VII. *Father and Son consistent?* 163

times personal Characters are ascribed to the Spirit of God in the Language of Scripture, I think the Reason of things sufficiently authorizes and allows religious or divine Worship to be paid to him, tho' we may not precisely know the Manner how he is God, or how far he is a distinct Person.

10. What particular Distinctions may be in the Godhead or Divine Nature itself, and how great these Distinctions may be, Scripture does not so evidently assert, nor so clearly explain them to us. And in this place I would not on the one hand go beyond Scripture, nor on the other hand would I talk without Ideas. But so far as I have represented this Matter of Divine Worship, I think there are Ideas, and those borrow'd from Scripture too, which go along with my Words all the way; and I must acknowledge this is the clearest Conception I can arrive at in representing this Subject, after many Years Study of the Scripture and much Prayer for divine Instruction.

11. If we could once persuade ourselves to try to read every Scripture that relates to the Doctrine of the Trinity as placed in this Light, without any prejudicate Opinions derived from other human Schemes, I think that Doctrine would be found much more easy and intelligible than it is generally made; and the Worship of the *only true God* would stand ascertained and confirmed; and yet *Jesus Christ*
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164 *Are the Worship, &c. Qu. VII.*

the Son of God being one with the Father, or being God and Man in one complex Person, might become the Object of religious Worship, according to the Representations of Scripture, and without any Offence to human Reason.

12. If this be the true State of things, then the *one eternal God* abides still the only Object of Worship; whether he be considered as absolute in himself under the Character of the *Father of all*, or as united to the Man *Jesus Christ*, and dwelling in him by a personal Union. Thus the Father and the Son are both worshipped, but when the Son is worshipped, 'tis as *one with the Father*, and *to the Glory of the Father*, Phil. 2. 11.

And among other Reasons this is one, *why it has pleased the Father that all the Fullness of the Godhead should dwell in him bodily*, Col. 2. 9. that being so nearly united to God, or one with him, he might be a proper Object of Divine Worship together with the Father. Rev. 5. 14. *Blessing and Honour, Glory and Power be to him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever.*

QUESTION



QUESTION VIII.

What is the Worship paid to our Blessed Saviour, who is the Image of God?

Prop. I. **T**HERE is something in the Reason and Nature of Man that directs and inclines him to own and worship some God, or some superior Being, from whom himself and all his Enjoyments are derived, and on whom his Expectations depend.

Prop. II. Reason and Revelation conspire to teach us that there is but one true God.

Prop. III. This one true God has required expressly in his Word, that he alone should be the Object of our Worship or religious Homage: and 'tis several times repeated with much Solemnity in the Old Testament and in the New.

Prop. IV. There is something in the Nature of Man that inclines him to reverence and respect the Image of that Being which he worships: And the reason is evident; because the Image is supposed to be something more

166 *What is the Worship due* Q. VIII.

within the reach of his Senses, and therefore more suited to his Bodily Nature, than God who is the spiritual and unseen Object of his Worship: Or at least, because he can have the Image sensibly present with him when he has not the Original: and the Image being supposed to have the Likeness or Resemblance of the original Object of Worship, it refreshes the Memory and brings to mind the Excellencies of the Divine Original.

If we love or honour a Friend, a Father, or a King, we desire to have their Pictures or Images near us, we pay a sort of Esteem, Love and Veneration to those Pictures, upon the account of their Likeness to the original Persons: and we also pay our Esteem, Love and Veneration to the absent Original by the Means or Medium of these Pictures.

'Tis from this Principle that the *Heathens* in all Nations, who have worshipped the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, or their *Kings*, *Heroes* and *Ancestors*, have generally made Pictures and Images of them, and either revered and worshipped the Images or worshipped the Originals in and by those Images, or both. And for this Reason, in the corrupt *Antichristian* State, they did not only *worship the Beast with seven Heads and ten Horns*, but they *made an Image thereof and worshipped it*. Rev. 13.

Prop. V. God has expressly forbidden Men to make any Image of himself and worship it,

Q.VIII. to Jesus the Image of God? 167

it, or even to make it a *Medium* of paying their religious Homage and Worship to himself. The second Command is most express in this Matter; and this is in general esteemed by all Protestant Writers to be the plain Sense of that Commandment: And one chief reason of the Command is because Mankind is so prone by Nature to worship Images which they have made themselves.

Prop. VI. God himself has never shewn or given us any express Image of himself but one, and that is his own well-beloved Son *Jesus Christ*. Heb. 1. 2. *He is the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person.* He is *the Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. And in Col. 1. 15. *He is the Image of the invisible God.* Now this Expression seems to have a prime reference to his Human Nature; or (as the Learned and Pious Dr. *Goodwin* asserts and proves) it must at least include his human Nature in it, because every thing that relates directly to the Divine Nature of *Christ* is as *invisible* as God the *Father*, and therefore his Divine Nature considered alone would never have been so particularly described as the *Image of the Invisible God*.

Prop. VII. The great God himself has required us to make this his Image the *Medium* of our Worship paid to him. Eph. 2. 18. *By him we have access unto the Father.* Col. 3. 17. *Give thanks to God even the Father*

168 *What is the Worship due* Q. VIII.

by him. And he also requires Men and Angels to worship this his Image. John 5. 23. *That all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* Heb. 1. 6. *Let all the Angels of God worship him.* Thus far has the blessed God indulged or encouraged that natural Inclination in Man to reverence the Image of that divine Being which he worships.

Prop. VIII. To this End it has pleased the great God in a special manner to assume into the nearest Union with himself this his own Son, and thereby to render him a more compleat Image of himself: Thus the Son, who is *the express Image of the Father and the Brightness or Splendor of his Glory*, is also one with the Father, as *Christ* expresses it, John 14. 10. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father:* And the reason he gives is this, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* John 10. 30. *I and my Father are one*, i. e. by this Union, as 'tis explain'd *ψ. 38.* And this is done not only to render him capable of his glorious Offices, but of divine Honours too; that *Jesus Christ* might be worshipt, and yet that according to God's original Command, that which is not God might not be made the Object of our Worship.

Since there cannot be more Gods than one, and since proper Deity could not be communicated to the Man *Jesus*, who is the Image of the Invisible God, to render him a partaker of our Worship any other way, therefore
proper

Q. VIII. *to Jesus the Image of God?* 169

proper Deity is united to him, that he might be *one with God*. And thus as the *Word who was God was made Flesh*, John. 1. 1, 14. by his personal Union to Flesh, so the Man *Jesus* may be said to *become God* or to be God, by his personal Union to God.

Thus the human Nature of Christ being a Creature most like to God, and being inhabited also by Godhead, is the brightest Image of the invisible God, and is one with God himself, and that as our Divines express it by a *Personal Union*: And thus he is taken into as much Participation of that Worship which Men pay to God, as a Creature is capable of receiving, and as the original Law of *worshipping none but God* can admit. See Dissertation III. from pag. 92. to the end.

Prop. IX. When the ancient *Heathens* worshipped the Images of their Gods, the best way they could ever take to vindicate it was under this Notion, that they supposed their Gods to inhabit their own Images, and thus they worshipped the Image together with their God dwelling in the Image: But with far better Authority and with infinitely more Justice and Truth may Christians worship the Son of God who is the only appointed Image of the only true God, subsisting in a personal Union with the indwelling Godhead.

Prop. X. This may be illustrated by a very lively Similitude. A vast hollow Globe of Crystal, as large as the Sun, is in itself a fair
Image

170 *What is the Worship, &c.* Q. VIII.

Image or Resemblance of the Sun : But if we might suppose the Sun itself included in this Crystal Globe, it would thereby become a much brighter and nobler Image of the Sun, and it would be in a Sense *one with the Sun* itself, or *one complex Being*. And thus the same honourable Ascriptions which are given to the Sun because of his Light and Heat, might be given also to this Crystal Globe considered as inhabited by the Sun itself, which could not be done without this Inhabitation.

Then whatsoever Honours were paid to this Globe of Crystal would redound to the Honour of the Sun, even as the Divine Honour and Adoration paid to our Blessed Saviour arises from the personal Union of the human Nature with the divine, and finally redounds to the Glory of God. *Phil.* 2. 11.

Let it be observed here, that tho' I borrow an Emblem or a Resemblance of this Divine Doctrine from the World of *Nature* or from the *Heathen* Nations, yet the Doctrine itself is entirely derived from Scripture, and might easily be confirmed by many more Citations out of the Sacred Writers.

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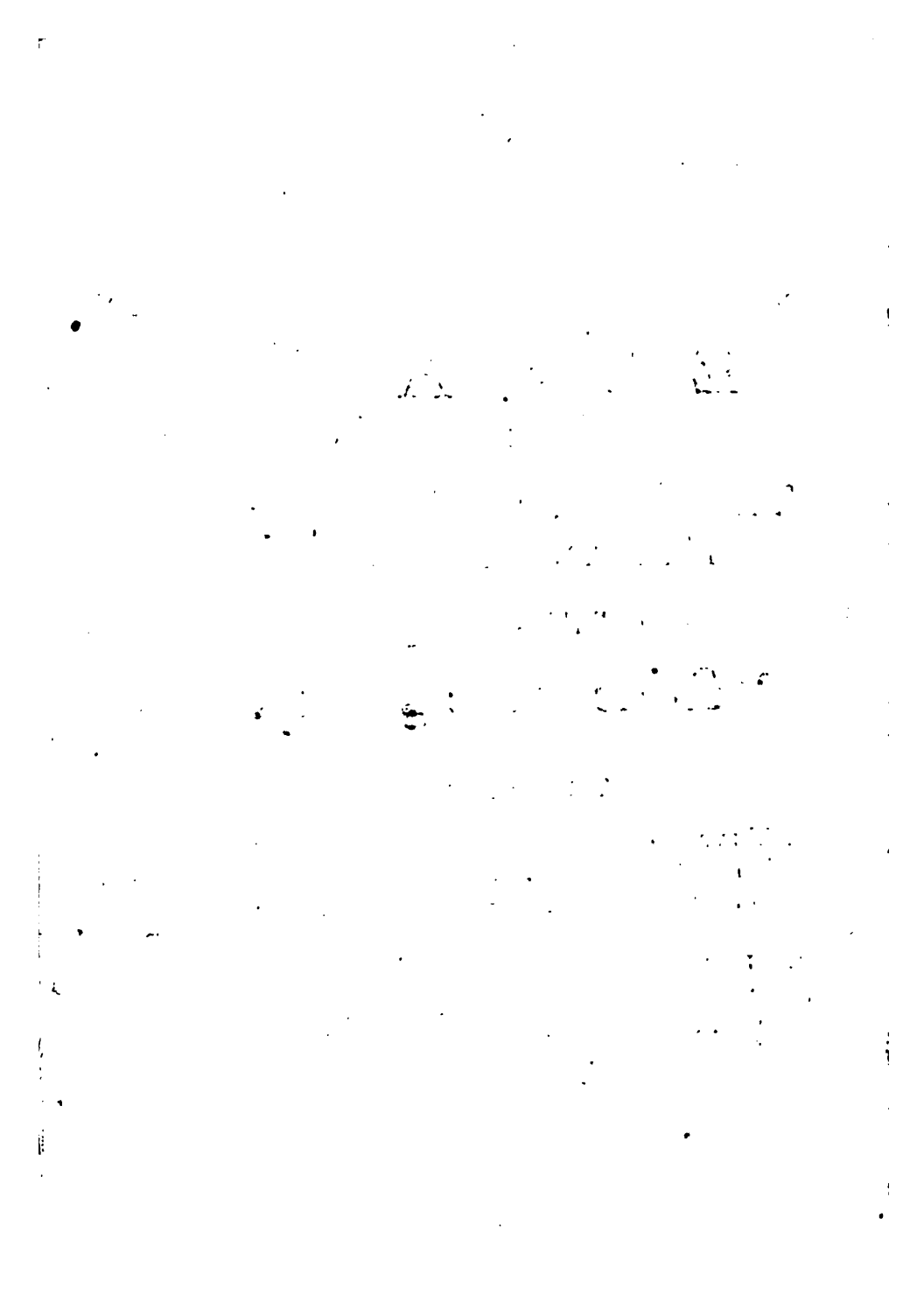
**True IMPORTANCE of any
HUMAN SCHEMES**

To Explain the Sacred

Doctrine of the Trinity.

S H E W I N G,

- I. THAT** no such Scheme of **EXPLICATION** is necessary to Salvation.
- II. THAT** it may yet be of great Use to the Christian Church.
- III. BUT** all such **EXPLICATIONS** ought to be proposed with Modesty to the World, and never imposed on the Conscience.





SECTION I.

THE first of these Points is already argued in a Discourse on the *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, Prop. XV. and we only take leave here to mention those Heads of Argument, and to enlarge a little on the same Subject.

1. *Any particular Explication of the scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity can never be necessary to Salvation*, because, tho' the Doctrine itself of three personal Characters which have Communion in one Godhead, be clearly revealed, yet the *Modus* how they are one, and how they are three, is not clearly and plainly revealed. And indeed if this *Modus* be revealed at all in Scripture, yet 'tis in so obscure a manner, that we can come at it only by laborious Reasonings and a train of difficult Consequences; whereas all necessary Articles are and must be clear and plain; and if they are not contain'd in express Words, yet they must lie open and obvious to a natural and easy Inference.

2. *Any particular Explication of this Mystery is not necessary to Salvation*, because *the most pious as well as the wisest and most learned*

174 *On the Importance of any Human learned Christians have had very different Sentiments on this Subject, and gone into different Schemes of Explication; and that in the several Ages of Christianity, as well as in our present Age. The very Mention of the venerable Names and Opinions of Dr. Cudworth, Bishop Bull, Bishop Stillingfleet, Bishop Fowler, Bishop Pearson, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Owen, and Mr. Howe, is sufficient to confirm this second Reason.*

3.. *We may pay all due Honours to the Sacred Three, which are required in Scripture, while we believe them to be represented as three personal Agents, and as one in Godhead, without any particular Explication how they are One, and how they are Three.*

Now 'tis evident that Scripture hath more directly and expressly laid our Salvation upon the special divine Characters or Offices which the Father, Son and Spirit sustain in the Bible, and upon the peculiar Blessings which we derive from them, and the peculiar Honours to be paid to them, rather than upon any nice Explication of their intimate Essence and Union, their Nature and Difference; and therefore such a nice Explication is not of necessity to Salvation.

It is evident to me, that divine and religious Ascriptions and Honours are paid to the *Father, Son and Holy Spirit* in Scripture, and I think they are due to them all. Now how these divine Honours can be paid by any who

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 175

who deny them to have some true and proper Communion in the Eternal Godhead, I can't well understand. But I can easily conceive that divine Honour may be given them without knowing exactly the precise Points and Boundaries of their Union and Distinction. See more in *Christian Doctrine of the Trinity*, Prop. XXI.

Do we not find it sufficient in all the common Affairs of Life, to manage a thousand Concerns wisely with regard to the human *Soul* and *Body*, and with regard to each particular Being of the *Animal*, the *Vegetable*, and the *Intellectual* World, if we do but just know whether it be an *Animal*, a *Vegetable*, or an *Intellectual* Being, without any determinate, philosophical Notions and Ideas of the Essences and specifick Differences of all, or any of these, and without determining how far they agree, and how far they differ? And why may it not be so in the Affairs of Religion? He may be a very *wise Man*, and dispose and direct his Affairs admirably well with regard to his *King*, his *Bishop*, his Father and his Friend, by that *common and general* Knowledge which he hath of their Capacities and Powers, their several Offices and the Relations they stand in *to him*, without any precise Acquaintance with their particular *natural Constitutions*, or the Relations they stand in *to one another*. He may be a most discreet Manager of his Affairs, and speak and do all Things

176 *On the Importance of any Human*

Things in *proper Time and Place*, without knowing philosophically what *Place* is, or what is *Time* : and he can be contented with this Ignorance, and be a *wise Man* still. And why may he not be a *Christian* with the same Degrees of Knowledge of the things of *Christianity*, i. e. without philosophical Science of the abstract Nature of God and Christ.

A poor Labourer or a Shepherd believes *Jesus Christ* to have the *proper divine Powers* of knowing, managing and governing all things ; therefore he prays to him, and trusts in him *as his Lord* and his God, without any Notion either of *Self-existence* and *Independency*, or without the least thought of *consubstantial Generation*, *eternal Sonship*, and *necessary Emanation from the Father* ; all which Ideas some Writers include in the Divine Nature of Christ, tho' perhaps without any sufficient Authority from Scripture. He believes him to be the true God, and *Son of God*, and the *appointed Mediator* to bring him to God ; therefore he honours and adores him, and depends on him under that Character, without any Notion whether his *Sonship* belong to his *Human* or *Divine Nature*. He believes him also to be the *Son of Man*, but perhaps he may not ever have heard whether he had an *earthly Father* or no, or that he was the *Son of a pure Virgin*. Now what is there in all this Ignorance that forbids him to be a *true Christian* and a *sound Believer*? But

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 177

But I would pursue this Argument a little, under some more parallel Instances.

The learned World well knows what corporeal Notions the famous ancient Father *Tertullian* had of the Soul of Man; what immaterial and refined Opinions *Des Cartes* and his Followers have entertained concerning the Presence or Place of Spirits; and what were the contrary Sentiments of Dr. *Henry More* and his Admirers.

Now may not a *Tertullianist* take proper care for the Salvation of his Soul, tho' he thinks the Nature of it be *Corporeal*? May not the Soul of a *Cartesian* find the right Way to Heaven, tho' he believes his Soul has no Relation to Place, and *exists no where*, or *in no certain Place*? May he not worship God with Acceptance in Spirit and in Truth, tho' he conceive God himself, as an infinitely wise and powerful Mind void of all Extension, and who hath *no relation to Place*? and tho' he suppose his *Omnipresence* to be nothing else but his *universal Knowledge and Power and Agency*, thro' all Times and Places? And may not a *Morist* with the same Acceptance worship the same God, tho' he believes him to be *infinitely extended* and penetrating all Bodies and all possible Spaces?

What is there in these philosophical Particularities, that forbids a Man to be truly pious, while he believes 'his Soul to have an

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178 *On the Importance of any Human*

immortal Being after this Life, and while he supposes God to have all the requisite Properties and Powers for a Creator and Governor, and Judge of the World?

You will say, some of these Persons hold gross Inconsistencies, and believe Impossibles, while they suppose a *corporeal Soul to be immortal*; or a *God infinitely extended thro' Length, Breadth and Depth, who is a pure Spirit*; and therefore such a Soul cannot be *immortal*, and such a God cannot *know*, or *govern* or *judge*.

I answer, It may possibly be so: These may be great Inconsistencies; and yet a Man may sincerely believe them both, who does not see the Inconsistency of them. And if we must be condemned to Hell for believing Inconsistencies, then We be to every Son and Daughter of *Adam*. What Man is there in the World free from all Error? And yet every Error which he holds, is perhaps inconsistent with some Truth which he believes: It's hard to write *Anathema* upon a Man's Forehead, because of some Inconsistence in his Opinions, while he believes all necessary Truths, and practises all the necessary Duties relating to God and Christ, and his own Soul.

You may perhaps *object* and say, That he that believes the Soul to be corporeal, by Consequence does not believe it to be immortal; or he that believes God to be infinitely extended in Length and Breadth, by Consequence
does

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 179

does not believe God to be a spiritual Being, who can know and judge human Affairs: and thus in the same manner by the Consequence of his own Suppositions, the Man that holds these Doctrines may perhaps be proved to be a *Brute* and an *Atheist*.

I reply, And must all the Consequences that can be drawn from the Mistakes of any Man be imputed to that Man as his own Opinions? This would make dreadful Work in the Christian Church. The *Arminian* would reduce the *Calvinist* into *Blasphemy* and *Atheism*; and likewise the *Calvinist* the *Arminian*. By this uncharitable Method each of them would be called *Atheists* and *Blasphemers*, and be utterly excluded from Christian Communion by such a perverse Practice as this.

I would add yet further, that by such uncharitable Constructions as these, The *Cartesian* Christian might say, I can't join in Worship with Dr. *More*, and his Followers, for we have not the *same Object of Worship*: I worship a God who is a pure Spirit, a pure thinking Being, without Extension or Dimension; but they worship a Being infinitely extended, *i. e.* infinitely long, broad and deep. The *Morist* might cry with the same Zeal, I cannot worship with a *Cartesian*, for we worship not the same Object: He adores a God that is properly in no Place; but I worship that God who penetrates all Things and Places, and is expanded thro' all.

180 *On the Importance of any Human*

Now if such Objections as these are indulged and supported, no two Persons could join together in any part of Divine Worship who had such different Ideas of the Divine Essence or Attributes, lest they should imagine they worship two distinct or different Deities. And if this were admitted, where could we find two Persons who had so exactly the same Ideas of God as to hold Communion in one Worship?

This wretched Practice of imputing all the distant Consequences of any Man's Opinions or Mistakes to him, is quite contrary to our Saviour's *general Rule*, Matt. 7. 12. *What you would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* Let these Objectors be pleased to consider that doubtless they themselves in some Parts of their Religion are guilty of some Errors or Mistakes in their Opinions; for no Man's Knowledge is perfect: and if those Errors should be pushed home to their utmost Consequences, perhaps they might terminate in *Blasphemy, Atheism, or mere Nonsense*: But no Man would be willing to be treated in this manner himself, (*viz.*) to have all the utmost Consequences of his mistaken Opinions be imputed to him, therefore he ought not to treat his Brothers so; according to that universal Rule, *What ye would that Men should do unto you, that do ye also to them.*

Now to apply these things to the present Case, Suppose,

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 181

Suppose, for Instance, *Timon* and *Pithus* both believe *Christ to be the true God*: but *Timon* supposes him not to be *Self-existent*; because he saith, he is a *Son*, derived from the Father by an *Eternal Generation*. On the other hand, *Pithus* believes him to be *Self-Existent*, because he is *God*. Now has *Pithus* Reason to say, that because *Timon* doth not believe the *Self-Existence* of *Christ*, therefore by Consequence he does not believe his Divinity? Or, should *Timon* be permitted to conclude, that because *Pithus* believes the *Self-Existence* of *Christ*, therefore by Consequence he does not believe his *Sonship*? Would it be agreeable either to the Reason of a Man, or to the Charity of a Christian, that these two Men should anathematize one another, or seclude each other from Christian Communion because of the Consequences of their Opinions, while they both profess to maintain that *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God, and has such Communion in and with the Eternal Godhead, as that both of them profess him to be *true God*, and both pay him Divine Worship.

Now what I would infer from hence is this, that since the different Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity may be so abused to give such Occasions for Contest, where Christians are not wise and charitable, I would rather exclude all the particular Modes of Explication from the *Terms of Christian*

182 *On the Importance of any Human*

Communion, than I would exclude one Christian from the *Church of Christ*. Where a Man professes that there is but one God, and yet that *Father, Son and Spirit*, have such a Distinction from each other, and such a Communion in and with this one Godhead as renders them all-sufficient for the Characters and Offices which they sustain in the Gospel, and pays proper Honours to them accordingly, I would never constrain him to determine any farther upon those difficult Points of the *Union and Distinction* of the Sacred Three; of the *Self-Existence*, the *Eternal Generation*, or *Eternal Procession* of the *Son and Holy Spirit*. Nor whether they are *three Natures* united in one Godhead, or whether *one individual Nature only*.

To sum up the whole, 'tis evident to me, that the Holy Scripture itself, as I have already proved elsewhere, lays the Stress of our Salvation upon a Belief that *Christ* is the *Messiah*, the appointed all-sufficient Saviour, a Trust in the proper Atonement or Sacrifice of *Christ* for the Forgiveness of Sins, a Dependence on his Grace and Spirit for Light and Holiness, and a Submission to his Government, much more than it does upon any precise and exact Notions or Hypotheses concerning his *Divine and his Human Nature*; even tho' the Union of the *Divine* and the *Human* Nature in him are in my Judgement necessary to render his Salvation complete.

Scripture

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 183

Scripture teaches us to concern ourselves about *Regeneration* and *Grace* to be received from the *Blessed Spirit*, more than about the *Nature* or *Essence of that Spirit* which regenerates us. It makes our eternal Interest depend upon the glorious Characters, Offices and Operations of the Three Persons of the *Blessed Trinity*, and our respective Honours paid to them, rather than upon our philosophical and exact Acquaintance with their inmost Essence or Essences, and their personal Distinctions. I must believe that the Great God will make merciful Allowances to sincere Souls for their different Sentiments, or for their Ignorance and Darkness in so sublime and mysterious an Article, which almost all Parties allow to contain some Unknowables and Unconceivables in it.

SECTION II.

YET where God is pleased to give greater Degrees of Light and Knowledge, if we can further explain these Mysteries of Christianity in clear Ideas and proper Language, it is a piece of excellent Service done to the Gospel of Christ.

A clear and happy Explication in what manner the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Spirit* are to be conceived as *three Personal Agents*, and as having Communion in *one Godhead*, would carry in it many desirable Advantages.

184 *On the Importance of any Human*

1. This would be like a Ray of sacred Light let into some of the most dark and difficult Passages of the Word of God. This would help us to unfold many Scriptures which at present lie sealed in Obscurity; or at least it would afford us the true Sense of several Texts which by reason of the various Expositions of them have hitherto given but an uncertain Sound and doubtful Notices of Divine Truth. It would clear up a large part of the Word of God to our Understandings, and teach us to read the sacred Transactions of the *Father*, *Son* and *Spirit* in the Bible with more abundant Edification.

2. This might teach us to perform our various Duties of Adoration, Faith, Love, and Obedience to the *sacred Three*, so far as *Scripture* requires it, in a more distinct and rational manner than we have hitherto done. The humble Christian would view and adore his heavenly *Father*, his *Saviour* and his *Sanctifier* with much more inward Pleasure, when he should be enabled to do it with much clearer and more explicit Ideas of their divine Unity and Distinction.

3. Such a happy Explication of the Mystery of the *Blessed Trinity* would vindicate this Doctrine against the Cavils of the Unbeliever as well as against the Scoffery and Insults of the prophane World. This would make it appear how the *Son* and the *Spirit* might be true God without injury to the Divine Honour of God the *Father*. There

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 185.

There have been some *Antitrinitarian* Writers who have deny'd the Possibility of the Godhead of the *Son* and *Spirit* in any *Sense* or *Modus* at all; and have pretended to prove that every Model and Manner of Explication of this Doctrine hath some Absurdity and Inconsistency belonging to it. Now it would be certainly of considerable Service to the Truth to exhibit some Scheme, some Manner of Explication to the World, wherein it is fairly consistent with the Reason of Things and the Language of Scripture, that the *Son* and *Spirit* may have communion in true Godhead as well as the *Father*: And that tho' there be but *one God*, yet the divine Names and Attributes may be ascribed to the *Sacred Three*, as having Communion in this one Godhead.

4. This would be a glorious means of vindicating the *Protestant* Religion against the Charges which are brought by the *Papists*, who tell us, that we refuse their Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* because it seems inconsistent to Sense and Reason, and yet we believe the Doctrine of the *Trinity* which is charged with the same Inconsistency. We often find fault with them for making the Words *Mystery* and *Supernatural* an *Asylum* and Refuge whereby to screen themselves from the Charge of a most absurd Opinion, that is, of *Bread becoming Flesh*, and yet retaining the *Properties of Bread at the same time*.
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186 *On the Importance of any Human*

They in the like manner find fault with us for making the same Words *Mystery* and *Supernatural* a Refuge for our selves while we profess *Three distinct Persons in one God*.

I confess there are many things to be said, and that with great Justice, to vindicate the Conduct of *Protestant* Writers in the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, which can never serve to defend the *Popish* Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*: for one is a Theme or Subject that concerns the deep things of the Divine Nature; the other relates but to Flesh and Bread, which are Objects that fall entirely within the Compass of our Senses and our reasoning Powers; and we can much better judge and determine *what is* and *what is not* a real Inconsistency in the one than in the other.

Yet after all it would be a vast Advantage in the Defence of our Religion against the Assaults of the *Papists*, and it would vindicate Christianity most gloriously in the Eyes of *Jews, Heathens* and all *Infidels*, if we could find some plain, easy, natural and obvious Account of this matter how the *Sacred Three* which are represented in Scripture under distinct Personal Characters have a communion in one Godhead.

5. I add farther, that if it were possible to exhibit a Scheme of Explication which should be so plain, so easy, so agreeable to the Light of Nature, and yet so happily correspondent with

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 187

with Scripture as to captivate the Assent of the Learned and Unlearned at the very Proposal of it, what a glorious advantage would the Church of *Christ* obtain by this means towards its Unity and Peace! What a Blessed End would be put to those shameful Quarrels and Contentions on this Subject, that have in every Age more or less divided the Christian World and laid it bleeding with many Wounds?

There are some difficult parts of our Holy Religion which have been so far explained by the united Labours and Prayers of pious and learned Men, that Controversies about them are well nigh ceased and the Disputes brought to an end. The humble Believer has been enlightened and taught to understand the Articles which he professes: The prophane Caviller and the subtil Critick have been baffled by the meer Force of Argument set in a clear and easy Light: and why may we not hope for the same Success in this sacred Article of the *Trinity*, by humble and laborious Enquiries into the Word of God, with a dependance on the Aids of the Divine Spirit, who is promised *to guide us into all Truth*?

It must be acknowledged indeed, there has no publick received Scheme been yet so successful to explain this Doctrine but what has several Difficulties attending it, and has left too much room for the Cavil of Unbelievers. Nor have any of these Schemes hitherto very much assisted the unlearned Christian in the Practice

188 *On the Importance of any Human*

Practice of his Devotions, or blest him with much clearer and juster Ideas of the matter than his own reading of the Bible had given him before.

And it must be confest also with Sorrow and Shame, that some Writers have invented or enlarged special Explications of the sacred Doctrine with too great a Neglect of Scripture in their Studies. They have affected to be wise in Words without Ideas. They have set forth their own Learned Explications of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, in sounding Scholastic Phrases and hard Words, with great assurance; and have helped Men to talk roundly on this sublime Subject with a great Exuberance and Fluency of such Language as has been established into Orthodoxy. This sacred Doctrine has been too often dressed up by Authors in abundance of *Metaphysical Phrases* borrowed from the *Popish Schools*, but without any clearer Conceptions of the Truth than their primitive Predecessors had attained, or than their meaner Brethren possess without that learned Language.

But tho' nothing has hitherto been done so effectually as one could wish, to remove all Difficulty and Confusion, yet he is a bold Man that will venture to lay an everlasting Bar upon our fervent Prayers and humble Study of the Scripture, and upon all the Labours and Hopes of the present and future Christian Ages, meerly because the Ages past have

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 189

have not been favoured with those happy Hints whereby to unfold these sacred Mysteries, and to reconcile the Difficulties that attend them.

SECTION III.

BUT after all, whatsoever Light or Knowledge we may suppose ourselves to have attained in the Explication of this sublime Doctrine, we ought not to be oversolicitous to proselyte other Christians to our particular Scheme; much less to impose it on the Consciences of others: We should ever take care lest by anxious Enquiries into things less necessary, we should unhappily divert ourselves or others from those Duties and practical Regards, which we all owe to the Father, Son and Spirit, and which all Parties agree to be necessary to Salvation.

It is an important Lesson both of natural and revealed Religion, that we should lay out our greatest Concern and Zeal on things of the greatest Consequence: and we have already proved, that it is of much higher Moment to wait for divine Benefits from the Sacred Three, and to pay our proper respective Honours to the *Sacred Three*, so far as Scripture requires it, than to know how far they are the same, and how far they are distinguished. Indeed when we have arrived at
any

190 *On the Importance of any Human*

any farther Light in some divine Doctrine, we ourselves may find greater Clearness of Thought, with more Ease, Satisfaction and Pleasure in the Practice of especial Duties ; yet the most enlightened Persons ought not to give unnecessary and unreasonable Disturbance to all those who practise the same Duties, tho' they do not attain so clear Ideas as God may have blest and favoured them with.

If we labour in our Zeal to proselyte the *Learned* to our Scheme, the most part of them are so deeply rooted in their old Opinions, so unmoveably established in their particular Forms, so self-satisfied in what they believe, so much prejudiced against any further Light, that we shall probably do nothing but awaken their learned Anger, to fix the Brand of *Heresy* upon us, and to overwhelm the Hints of any brighter Discovery with Clamours and hard Names, and drown them in Noise and Darkness.

If we are too solicitous to persuade the *unlearned Christian* to come into any better Explication of this Doctrine than he has learnt in his younger Years, we have the same huge Prejudices to encounter here as in the *learned World* ; nor can we hope for much better Success, if we attempt to change his ancient Opinion by a hasty and industrious Zeal. Hard Names and Reproaches are Weapons ever at hand, and common both to the Wise and the Unwise, the *Greek* and the *Barbarian*. The *vulgar Christian* is as expert at them as the *Scholar*.
Besides,

Scheme to explain the Trinity. 191

Besides, if he be a Person of weaker Understanding whom we address with our new Explication, and we set ourselves hard at work to shake his old Notions, but in the mere *Modus* of things, we may happen to unhinge him, as it were, and throw him off from his Center; we may imbarraß his Mind with inward Contests, which may be too hard for him; and we may tempt him to lay out too many of his Thoughts and Hours on some *particular Explications* of this Doctrine, on the *Substance* of which he had long before built his pious Practicés and Devotions, tho' mingled with some innocent Mistakes.

Yet these accidental Inconveniences are not a sufficient reason for our supine and perpetual Contentment with confused Sentiments and unintelligible Speeches about the *Modus* of sacred Truths, if clearer Ideas are any ways attainable. There are just and strong Motives that may excite us to search into the deep things of God, and to propose all our Improvements in Knowledge, to the World and the Church, tho' there are no Reasons or Motives sufficient to impel us to impose our improved Notions on others, or to raise Contentions and Quarrels on the account of them.

All our particular *Illustrations* therefore; or *clearer Conceptions* of this sublime Doctrine which God at any time may have favoured