

AMENDMENT of LIFE:
THREE SERMONS,
UPON ACTS 2:37-38.
CONTAINING

The true effect of the Word of God, in the conversion of
the godly: and the manner how it changeth their hearts,
and reformeth their lives, which is the true work of
regeneration.

By JOHN UDALL,
Preacher of the word of God,
at Kingstone upon Thames.

JOHN. 3:3.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom
of God.

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TO The RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES, LORD HOWARD, BARON OF EFFINGAM, Lord Chamberlain of the Queen's Majesty's most honourable household, of the most noble Order of the Garter Knight, and one of her Majesty's most Honorable Privy counsel: JOHN UDALL wisheth continual increase in all virtue and godliness.

As there is no field, be it never so well-tilled, and be the seed never so good that is sown in the same, but weeds will of their own accord spring therein, and without the diligent care of the husband-man, choke the good seed, and deceive the owner of the expected fruit of his former labour: so there hath never since the world began (right honourable) been any church so pure without corruption, that hath not had many blemishes in the same: the which without the great mercy of God, and provident care of the governors thereof, both hath, and doeth, and to the end of the world will, so grow and increase, that they will never stay, until they have brought to pass the utter subversion and overthrow of religion there professed: for if we begin with the Church of the Jews, not only the first visible, and established church, but also the image and picture of the Church of God forever: and consider what corruptions have crept into the same, how they have increased from time to time, and often prevailed against the sincere worship of God, to the utter overthrow of true religion, and strengthening of idolatry: it is so manifest

in the books of Moses, Kings, and the Prophets, that either we must refer the consideration thereof, to those places, or else (which is needless) make a whole volume of the discourse of the same. We see the same practice in the Primitive Church, even in the time of the apostles, that both corruption of doctrine, and also looseness in conversation, did greatly infect that age. The which is evident in the times following, and even until this day: that the true doctrine of the Gospel hath been most blasphemously perverted, and godlessness in life so rooted into the heart of man, that the number of true Christians hath ever been a small, poor, and contemned flock. And in truth, we need go no further than to these present times, wherein we live: in which (because thorough the great mercy of our good and gracious God, the seeds of Popish tares can take no such root, as Satan wisheth) we may behold, and (to the great grief of Christian hearts) too plainly see, how greatly Atheism and ungodliness prevaieth, that it is a hard matter, even in this bright sunshine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to find many of them, that together with purity of religion, do study to keep a sincere and upright conscience, in their life. For religion (nowadays) is made a cloak, to hide sin: a mist, to blur the eyes of the world: a den, for transgressors: and a cage, for all unclean birds in the world. All which springeth hence, that Satan can persuade men, that if they profess themselves to be Gospellers, and make show of religion, it is not only

sufficient, (because no man shall be saved by his works) but also it shall bring them into more credit and estimation in the world, thereby to grow greater: which bringeth forth these three most pernicious and dangerous evils among men: first, that the Papists, (who measure all things by the outward show) are not only kept from listening to the truth, but also more hardened in their blind superstition. Secondly, that the glory of the high and mighty God, which should shine in our lives, by the Gospel, is trampled under feet. Lastly, that their own souls and bodies are in a most dangerous estate, (being driven by the provocation of the devil) headlong into the pit of condemnation, whereunto so many, as without repentance, run on to the end, must needs fall at length, feeling the torments increased unto them: that (for laying stumbling blocks in the way to overthrow others, and defacing the glory of the great God, and proceeding in satisfying their own appetite with sin) they have most justly deserved. The consideration of which mischief, moved certain godly, and well-disposed persons, (who were by the providence of God, here witnesses of a discourse, that it pleased the Lord to strengthen me, to utter in my ordinary course, upon the Acts of the apostles) earnestly to entreat me, that I would pen the same, for their further comfort: which good and godly motion of theirs, for that it proceeded (I doubt not) from an earnest desire in them, of spiritual edification, I condescended unto. And because it hath pleased God, to

make me, by special duty, bound unto your Honor: I therefore have made especial choice of the same: whereunto, these my simple and small labours might be dedicated, most humbly beseeching your honor, that, as it is the sum and substance of all the religion, taught, and professed in this poor Town of Kingston, so it would please your L. to accept thereof, not according to the quantity (that is but small) nor expecting the enticing words of man's wisdom, (which is most unfit for the Gospel of Christ) but according to the substance of the thing, and the mind of the poor labourer. So shall your Honor bind me, (which notwithstanding is my duty) with the rest of them, that fear God, among us, to pray continually unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for you: that it would please him, so to direct, guide, and bless all your enterprises, as may best tend to the glory of his most blessed name, the benefit of his Church, and this commonwealth, and the eternal and everlasting comfort of your own soul.

Your Honours most humble to command in the Lord
Jesus Christ,

JOHN UDALL.

Three sermons of the amendment of life.

Acts. 2:37-38.

Now, when they heard it, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the other apostles: men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them: Amend your lives.

When our Saviour Jesus Christ (according to his promise) had set down the Holy Ghost into the hearts of his disciples, which was so effectual in them, that they who were unlearned spake with diverse languages, the Jews and strangers of diverse countries gathered together to see that strange wonder, and some admired it as the wonderful work of God, others mocked them, affirming them to be drunk: whereupon Peter stood up making an Apology for himself and the rest: first delivering them from that lying slander of drunkenness, and then proved it to be the work of Jesus Christ, whom though they had crucified, yet God the father had raised, and had exalted him to be Lorde and King over all things both in heaven and earth. The which being proved unto them that: he was the very Messiah, whom they had so wickedly crucified, they perceived themselves to be in danger of the heavy vengeance of God for it, and their fear it wrong in them, as is set down in the former of these verses. In which (together with the latter) for our better

remembrance, we have to note these three things: First, the effect that Peters Sermon wrought in the hearts of these Jews: Secondly their care to be resolved what to do: and lastly? Peters counsel unto them.

When they heard it: that is, who he was whom they had so abused, and what danger they were in for it: it wounded them even at the very heart, and struck them in a marvelous fear of God's sudden vengeance to be poured down upon them for their so heinous a fact, and so horrible murder, as to kill the Lord of life, from whom all they that ever shall be saved, do receive their life and salvation. Which declareth unto us their wonderful blockishness, and palpable blindness, that they reading the prophetesies (concerning the Saviour to come) every Sabbath day and daily looking for him, yet when he cometh do thus behave themselves towards him. The cause whereof was for that they dreamed of a worldly King full of pomp and glory, and Christ being so base and poor, they were offended at him: much like the carnal Christians of our time, who are ashamed of the baseness of the gospel and simplicity of religion, and therefore think that it is too mean a thing for me? of great estate and honor: but we see the contrary in God's word: that there is no joy without Christ, but sorrow: no, honor, but ignominy: no blessedness, but cursedness, howsoever it seemeth otherwise to carnal people, that judge fleshly and according to natural reason: and

therefore we read that the greatest dishonour that ever came to the Kings of Judah and Jerusalem, was their negligence in religion, and their greatest praise is their care to establish it in sincerity: and therefore, how base, poor and contemptible so ever Christ seem to flesh and blood, there is no glory, riches, nor honor that profiteth, except it be governed by him, and directed to his glory. we learn further by these Jews, that there is no way in the world that can serve to convert man unto God, until the appointed time doo come: For they heard Christ often, and yet his word was to them as water poured upon a stone, until this hour wherein God had determined their conversion. Which doctrine ministreth a double use unto us: first to the magistrate that he compel all, (yea even the obstinate) to the outward exercises of religion: for by this means it may please God to work their conversion.

Secondly for every private person that is already called, (yea and the minister of the word especially to bear with patience the unregenerate, and not to determine or judge rashly of their reprobation: But still to hope for the time of their conversion. Moreover in that it is said here that they were pricked in their hearts when they heard it, we learn how needful it is for us to have the word of God continually sounding in our ears, whereby we may be roused out of the sleep of sin. For wee are naturally prone to evil, and slothful in the service of God's word, very dull to goodness, needing the goad of God's threatenings

to prick us in the sides, and to make us proceed in the fear of the Lorde: else we freeze in our sins, and if any good motions come in our minds now and then, they are choked: and so we wax worse and worse. The consideration hereof made David a King to meditate in the word of God day and night, and made it his counselor, a good example for all great estates to look unto and follow.

Pricked in their hearts. Howe cometh this to pass, that Peter speaking only to the outward ears, they are said to be pricked in their hearts, even by the wonderful power and Majesty that God hath printed in his word, that it should sound the bottomless depth of man's most secrete thoughts, and enter between the soul and the spirit. And this effect it hath in all, though it have a contrary fruit: for the wicked take occasion hereby, to be more severe against the Children of GOD. As we may see in Pharaoh, Achan, Jeroboam, and the Pharisees. But the children of God use means as soon as they be touched to amend their lives as did David, and Josiah, and these Jews? Whereby we may take good occasion to examine ourselves, whether wee be the Children of God or no: for if the contempt or neglect of amendment of our lives argueth (as yet) no grace to be in us, then the care to amend, and the endeavour thereunto indeed, is a special motion of the spirit, which we must be careful to cherish, least it be quenched, and so our estate wax miserable.

And said unto Peter. This is the second general parte containing their care to seek the right way, to be delivered from the gulf of perdition that hanged over their heads: which is a Note of a true Childe of God, for it is the nature of every man to say, when his sin is reproved, that the Preacher sayeth true, and that we should amend, but they never set one foot forward to put it in practise, only the Godly have that care, that when anything is found by the word of God to be amiss in them, they can never be at quiet until they find out means, whereby it may be redressed. Let us observe further in them a wonderful change: They had mocked Christ and his doctrine, and never were at rest, until they had killed him: they not long before this time did esteem the apostles no better then. Drunkards, and yet the Lorde in this short time so altereth their minds, that they come to them lovingly, terming them Men and Brethren: which will be so far from a wicked man untouched with God's spirit, that he will rather with Judas and Ahithophel hang himself, then seem (forsoothe) to be so much beholding to the godly, whom he taketh to be his enemies. But if once God's word take deep and sound root in any man, it will alter and change him quite from his former wicked mind: Whereof we have notable examples in the Scriptures: Saul went to Naboth, intending to persecute David, but God changed his mind, that he prophesied: Paul went toward Damascus with intent to make havoc of the Saints of God: But when he came there he

preached Christ unto them. The Soldiers went out from the Pharisees to take Christ, but the Majesty of his word struck them down to the ground, and made them return this answer: that they never heard man speak as he spake. They in this place came to mock, and you see how God turneth their mockings into earnest entreating the apostles to give them good counsel. Whereby we learn the truth of the saying of Solomon, that the hearts even of Kings are in the hands of the Lord, as a boat in the Rivers of water: and therefore it is not in man to direct his own ways: which teacheth us to pray unto the Lorde continually, that it would please his majesty so to govern us, as may best tend to his glory, and the comfort of our own souls. It teacheth us moreover, that seeing God turneth, at his pleasure, evil intents to good purposes, that we must wish, and desire, and daily exhort al men (of what mind soever they bee) that they have a care to hear God's word: for in that they come, though their intent be not to learn, but to carp and cavil, they bee welcome: God may caste the net of his mercy so far on them, that contrary to their purpose, they may be won into the sheepfold of Christ Jesus, to their endless comfort.

What shall we do? Being grieved with the sight of their sins, they seek what to do to be eased, showing unto us an example of the heart truly touched, to seek the way to amend, and not as is the manner of hypocritical repenters, to abide in the same sin, and continue without

amendment: for such (as yet) did never know what it is to be pricked in heart with the true sight of sin.

Then Peter said. The third general part of the text, which containeth the counsel that Peter gave unto them: the which (before we come to handle) we must observe two profitable lessons, for our comfort, and instruction.

The first is an experience of the truth of the promise of our Saviour Christ: for they that seek shall find, and to those that knock it shall be opened, and that God is near at hand to all them that call upon him faithfully: For our good and gracious God, being full of mercy and tender kindness, doeth open the treasures thereof unto his Children, when they seek it by repentance from the bottom of their hearts, and in the anguish of their souls acknowledge their woeful estate, and wretched condition if he should leave them to themselves. So he dealt with the Israelites in their plight before Pharaoh and his host. So with David being wounded with the sight of his own sins. So with Paul, being caste down and blinded in body, to teach him the blindness of his soul. And thus he dealeth with his dearest beloved Children: to wit giveth them a sight of their own sins, and his judgments deserved for the same: that they may learn to go out of themselves, where is nothing but confusion, and so to seek unto him with an unfeigned desire of comfort. The use of which Doctrine (being rightly applied) is most sweet and comfortable: For it is the lot of God's Children

to bee often grieved in their soul and afflicted in conscience, through the view of their own sins: whereby Satan would make them believe, it is for that God hath cast them of, and given them over into hardness of heart: thereby labouring to drive them to despair. But we must strive to be persuaded of the clean contrary: for to be given over of God, is to wallow in all sin without remorse, to heap transgression upon transgression, without sight of the danger thereof, and so to make a sport of iniquity: but to be grieved with sin, to feel the burden thereof with desire to be eased (though we feel no present comfort) is the undoubted work of the holy ghost, and shall (by God's grace) in time convenient (when he hath sufficiently humbled and tried us) bring forth the quiet fruit of righteousness unto all them that be thereby exercised. And therefore when the Lord layeth any trial upon us, that we seem to be ready to be swallowed up of many dangers that are imminent, though it be the property of flesh and blood to be grieved at it, yet we must strive to fly up farther, to wit, to learn this lesson, that if we be the children of God, when greatest dangers assail, we must assure ourselves that the Lord hath an especial work to bring to pass by us, whereby he will not only have his own glory to shine out more brightly, but also that we may perceive his love unto us more evidently. The second thing that we have to note, is Peters readiness to salve that sore that he had made, and to heal the wound that they were pained with

all: which sheweth in him two qualities, that be required to be in all the Ministers of God's words: to wit a ready and willing mind to help, and power to perform the same. The first we see was in him, and was the mark that he shot at, in reprovng them so sharply, even their conversion: which as it should be the care that all the Ministers of God's word should have, to do the work of the Lorde willingly, to seek souls unto Christ, and bring them out of darkness, into light: so it sheweth unto the people, that when the Minister reproveth sin sharply, and galleth them to the quick, he neither doth it of malice nor choler, neither yet of hatred, but of mere love unto them, to do them good, to bring them to see themselves, and so to seek to God. And therefore (howsoever flesh and blood judgeth otherwise) they are the greatest fools to man's soul that do tickle the ears with painted eloquence, studying rather for pleasing speeches, to delight the senses, then the power of the spirit to cast down man's pride, that he may be humbled to God: these be they whom the Prophet speaketh of, that sow Cushions under men's elbows, to lull them a sleep in their sins: these be fit preachers for such as cry out: preach to us pleasant things. But Saint Peter was not in the number of them, and yet did love this people most dearly. The second quality that we note in Peter is his ability, in that he was able presently to tell them what they should do: For if (when by the threatenings of God's judgments he had wounded them) he had not been able to help their bruised

hearts and comfort their sorrowing souls, he had been no better than a tormentor: But in that he was able, and ready to do both, his example commendeth unto us a pattern of a right Minister of the word, who must be able to bring out of his treasury both old and new: he must be able to teach, to resist the gainsayer, to instruct, to reprove, and comfort. But (alas) the world is come now to that pass, that if he can read (and that barely) that is laid before him, he is accounted and accepted for sufficient: and yet the Scripture calleth such idle shepherds, dumb dogs, that cannot bark. Salt without saltiness not good for the Dunghill, and yet this church of England (a grievous thing to be considered) is even pestered with such, and they swarm like Locusts let out of the lake. The Lord for his mercy sake either convert them to better uses, or in his good time send an east wind to blow them into the bottom of the sea, and place seeing watchmen, and painful labourers in his vineyard, that will dress it and not fast themselves therein.

Amend your lives. This is the counsel of Peters a sentence very short in words, but long in matter, containing the very substance of all religion, and the whole ??? of Christianity: the original word signifieth to recou with grief, it is commonly translated repent, and the mter called repentance, which is a turning of our lives unto God, proceeding from a true fear of his judgments for sin, embracing God his promises in Jesus Christ, and

reforming the life according to the prescript rule of God's word: the which (that we may the more orderly proceed) consisteth of these three principal parts 1. A sorrow for sin. 2 faith in Christ, and 3. Godliness of conversation: which last in truth is rather a fruit of faith, (as in a place convenient shall be proved) than any part of the whole: all which things in some measure more or less are to be found in all them that are God's children and have received any taste of his grace.

The first, Sorrow for sin may be thus defined: it is a grief of the soul for sin, wrought by the judgments of God, laid out in his word, whereby the party convicted is truly humbled. I call it a grief of the soul, because it bringeth man even into the gulf of condemnation, and setteth before his eyes the heavy wrath of God and hell torments, that his own conscience telleth him he hath justly deserved. This was wrought in David, when his own mouth condemned him to be the child of death. It was in Josias when his heart melted at the hearing of the Law expounded unto him. It was in Marie that washed our Saviour Christ Jesus his feet with her tears: it was in these that cried out in the anguish of their hearts: men and brethren what shall we do: it is in all them among us, that have any working of God's spirit in them, when they consider God to be a just God, a revenger of iniquity, and themselves to be most horrible and wretched sinners. Whereby we may take good occasion to examine

ourselves, whether we be of God or no: which we shall do thus: If I do not tremble at God's judgments: if my sins grieve me not, surely I am hardened: but if they make me sigh and groan unto the Lord under the weight thereof: if I loth them both in myself and others, then I have a mark of God's grace in me, that he worketh my salvation, and sealet it unto me. This sorrow may after a sort be in a man, and yet not the true sorrow: for many are grieved because they are not better: for that through their naughtiness, they forget preferment, or credit, that else they should have: and therefore it is said that this must be wrought by the judgments of God, laid out in his word: that is, when by God's Law I perceive the straight line that is enjoined to me, and the curse of God that hang over my head for my disobedience, that bringeth with it condemnation of body and soul: this is the thing wherefore I should be grieved. And if we see the matter well, it carrieth with it just cause of sorrow: for though I enjoy all the delights and pleasures that be in the world, I shall have them a very short time, and the reward of sin is eternal wo, without ease or intermission, which all men have justly deserved, and from which none shall be delivered, that is not brought to sorrow for sin and to seek to Jesus Christ, the life of them that rightly seek him. This (being the first step to God, and entrance into his favour) is mightily gainsaid by the subtle enemy Satan, that would have us make a sport of sin. Secondly by the world that blurreth our eyes with the poisoned baits of

vanities, and 3. by our own flesh, that lusteth after those things that bring perdition: and therefore the Lord (who hath a care that his chosen should not be deceived by all these or any of them) hath in his word set down many most strong reasons, and forcible persuasions, to induce us to this sorrow for sin, as first, his severe judgments executed upon others. Idolaters were given over into the hands of spoilers. Blasphemers consumed by the angel of God. Corrupters of God's sincere worship presently struck down dead. Disobedient rebels swallowed up quick into the earth, Murderers requited with murder. Generally, the whole world (except eight persons) drowned for sin. Sodom and Gomorrah burned with fire and brimstone from heaven, because of pride, riot, idleness, and contempt of the poor. Four sins, that now (I am persuaded) are as rife, as ever they were in those Cities: and all these, as they received sudden punishment in this world: so (to us) no other is known, but that eternal condemnation followed. Now how must these things bring us to sorrow for sins? Thus we have committed the same sins (in some pointe) that they did, and therefore being guilty of the same condemnation, there is no way for us to escape it, but to flee to the Lorde with penitent hearts, and sorrowing souls. Saint Paul teacheth us this doctrine, and the same use of it, saying: these are written as examples for us, that we sin not as they did, least we receive the same condemnation. Whereby we learn that the scriptures of God are not written to us as histories to

read and hear for pleasure, but for our learning and instruction, that we may learn by the example of the wicked there mentioned, to leave sin: and of the godly to be stirred up unto godliness. Again, when we consider how merciful God hath bene unto us: that whereas in his just judgment he might have not only cut us off, and cast us into eternal condemnation, when first we began to conceive any inclination unto sin: but even before we were born, have drowned us in original guilt, and never suffered us to come to any knowledge of good or evil, hath so long a time (we committing so many and infinite sins against his majesty) yet spared us, and not dealt rigorously with us: this should make us very sorry that we have so long provoked so merciful a God unto anger: which use S. Paul setteth down, saying that the mercy of God leadeth to repentance. But (alas) we take occasion to sin by the same, and so are careless to amend, ever having this in our mouths, God is merciful, and so we incur the danger of the severe denunciation following in the same place, where it said: that such heap up wrath against the day of wrath. For we must know that as God is merciful to all penitent sinners, so is he just to all careless and loose people that withhold the truth of God in unrighteousness: and therefore let us not be so abused by Satan, to think that God hath mercy in store for him that goeth on still in his wickedness. But let us try ourselves by the touch stone of God's word, how the consideration of God's great mercy worketh in us.

Besides this we see that when or wheresoever the word of God hath been preached it hath wrought either to their conversion and comfort, or hardening and condemnation: it was to Noah a safeguard, because he believed: to the world's overthrow, for this they harkened not: to the Israelites deliverance, to the Egyptians destruction: to the apostles salvation, to the Scribes and Pharisees' condemnation. The due consideration of this must bring us to sorrow for sin: for thus we must reason with ourselves we have the word preached, out of which the judgments of God are threatened to fall on the wicked: and contrariwise his promises to be performed to the godly: of which sort am I? if of the godly, then the word preached hath moved me to amendment, and continual grief of heart that I can amend no better: if I be not thus moved thereby, surely the? I am of the worst sort to whom the gospel is foolishness, and in whom it savoureth to death. The? I may not abide in sin thus, but by sorrow for the same, I must conceive a loathing of al iniquity. And to the end that this remorse may take deeper hold in me, I must enter into a view of my former conversation, and that by the candle of God's law, whereby I cannot choose but see the ugly deformities of mine own heart, the corrupt desires of my mind, the fruitless (if not blasphemous) speeches of my tongue, the god less actions of my conversation: all which heretofore, every one of us have taken pleasure in, and esteemed them as our great

felicity: and this being truly viewed, and withal the reward thereof in his own nature considered, must (if any spark of grace be in us) not only pinch us at the very heart, but also make us say with the apostle, that it is sufficient that we have spent the time past after the will of the flesh. And so much the rather, for that our time is very short, and a great part thereof already misspent, and therefore we may not differ any longer to begin the service of our God, in glorifying his holy name in these our mortal bodies. Neither may this be a remiss or slack sorrow which is ordinarily (almost) in all men: for if this would serve, then should all, or the greatest number be saved: and yet we see both by the course of God's word, and also evident sentences of the same, that the least number are accepted of God: for where eight were saved, thousands were drowned: Where Abraham and his family were, there was the Church: the Israelites were the peculiar people of God: a small handful in respect of the world: so it was in the time of Christ and his apostles, and yet even of them that were outwardly of the number many were hypocrites, and dissemblers. So true is that saying uttered by the mouth of Christ Jesus our Saviour. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. And wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many go that way. And therefore this same usual and ordinary saying. I am sorry, and it grieveth me, when yet they amend not, cannot be the sorrow to repentance,

which is not to be sorrowed for: seeing besides that the pangs of death shall try whether we have sorrowed unfeignedly or no. Jesus Christ, who seeth the darkest corner of our hearts shall be the Judge, and will give sentence of every one as they are, and not as they seem to the world to be. And lastly eternal torments are provided both for hypocrites, and hard hearted persons. Let us not deceive ourselves with an outward show of religion: let us not (like glowworms) make boast of that we are not. But all pleasures and vanities set a side, let us begin to rip up our own hearts, return to the Lord our God with earnest and hearty sorrow for our former transgressions with full purpose of taking a better course then yet we have done. I know that as this is the entrance unto God, and so the first slip that we give unto Satan, so he lacketh not his persuasions and glorious baits to trump in our way, whereby our eyes may be turned, and our hearts alienated from this course. For sayeth he: doest thou believe that there be so many torments provided for them, that take their pleasure in the things of this world? will God be so severe as so? will he mark so diligently what is done amiss. Is there such knowledge in the most highest? No no, it is but the choleric railing of these precise and wayward preachers, that love to be always chiding. God is merciful, he knoweth man cannot keep his Laws in all pointes, and therefore he will bear with him. Doest thou not see and behold great men, yea and learned men, they believe no such matter, and they be

wiser than thou art, being a simple man: for they take all the delight and pleasure that can be. Thou haste taken great delight in sin and wickedness thus long, and if thou shouldest do as they say, it were even to make a metamorphosis of thy self, and thou haddest better be out of the world, then to leave thy former companions, thy delectable pastimes and merriments. Thus oulde thou art: and thus many years thou hast lived at thy pleasure and what hath happened unto thee for it? if it were such a grievous thing in the sight of God, thou shouldest never have enjoyed it so long without punishment, for behold there be no men under the sun more void of calamities than they be that are not so precise, but follow their own desires. And though it did offend the Almighty (which is to be doubted) yet thou mayest return unto him many years hence? he will receive thee at any time, yea if thou do but cry, Lord have mercy upon me, when thou liest sick and seest no other way but death, it will serve. were it not great pity, that thou being a gallant, young, and comely person, shouldest be abandoned from the pleasures that thine estate both require? Yes doubtless. These with infinite such like motions doeth Satan put into the heads and hearts of natural men, which are so fit to their nature and so agreeable to their complexion, that they quickly assent and follow the steps prescribed by him. Where upon it cometh (as daily experience declareth too manifestly) that infinite numbers, yea almost the whole worlds, is drowned in sin and iniquity:

For either they be Papists, blind with superstition: or carnal gospellers, contented with bare profession, or Atheists addicted to no religion: thinking it the safest way to meddle no whit that way: and all these agree in one conclusion, to delight in sin and iniquity: so that, to find one that maketh a conscience of sin, that striveth for sincere reformation, and wrestleth against his own corruption, to please God, is very hard, even among a great number: and he whom God hath enlightened to take that course: What is he? a precision, a puritan, one that taketh himself to be without sin, a wayward body, and busy controller, a meddler, and what not? Which is the cause that sin everywhere so reigneth, and truth and godliness so generally decayeth, that (unless a general and speedy repentance prevent it) the wrath of God must needs fall upon this land, and utterly rote out this most devilish generation. Therefore let them that have any spark of God's grace, mourn, howl, and lament for the desolations of Jacob, and the transgressions of Israel, that at least they may escape the rod of God's visitation. Thus we see both the reasons that the holy Ghost useth to move us to sorrow for sin, and the temptations wherewithal Satan seeketh to keep us back, and stay us in the delight of the flesh, Let every one of us examine himself which prevaieth most with him. Whereby we may see ourselves in what state we stand, before the Lorde our God. The end of this sorrow for sin is, not to deserve thereby the favour of God, or that the force

thereof should merit justification: for the debtor that did fall down at his master's feet, deserved not thereby to have his debt forgiven him. And therefore the true end of this sorrow for sin is twofold. First, it is to show our humility to the Lord: for by nature we be proud and high minded, not bending one whit (notwithstanding our huge masse and heap of sin) but walk with stiff necks: and therefore it is needful that the Lord should lay open before our eyes the miserable estate and condition that we stand in: to the end that we seeing his majesty both great and terrible, and his justice being upon us, to pronounce our condemnation, may have our proud looks abated, our peacocks feathers pulled, and our haughty stomachs quailed, to behold God's wrathful countenance bent upon us: that we may be cast down before his throne, with unfeigned humility, abasing ourselves, whom we have well thought of, and ascribing all glory and power to him, whom we have little regarded. Secondly it is to make way for the grace of GOD to come near unto us, and his great mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour, to dwell in our hearts: for as it is impossible for fire and water to agree together, for Heaven and Earth to meet in their natural motions, for Light and Darkness to be matched as yokefellows: so impossible is it, to link the natural Man and Christ in one, or to find any abode for the spirit of God in the heart of that man or woman who hath not bene touched with the grief of conscience for his sins, nor the terrors of God's judgments for the

same: which to be true our Saviour himself hath affirmed, when he said that he came not to call the righteous (meaning such as deemed themselves righteous) but sinners to repentance: for sayeth he, the poor, that is, such as are naked in their own eyes, receive the glad tidings of the Gospel: and those shall be blessed that are poor in heart, which also is manifest by the Pharisee, who leaned upon his own works, and the Publican that fell down, and prostrated himself before the Lord, showing nothing to be in himself but sin, and therefore sued unto the Lord for his mercy and pardon. Therefore the doctrine of mercy in Christ Jesus appertaineth not to them that boast in their own strength, and are merit mongers, neither yet unto the stony and hard hearted, who have no touch of conscience, no sorrow for sin: but a continual delight and pleasure in the sweetness thereof, striving to fulfill the deeds of the flesh, and to offend, even with greediness. But unto the broken hearted, the wounded soul, the grieved hart, and sorrowing spirit, that feeleth itself (by desert) in the gulf of condemnation, that be cast down and truly humbled by the sight of his own offences: to such, when they ask, the Lorde giveth: when they seek, he is found: when they cry, he heareth: and when they moan their case, he (with his mercy) doth comfort them. Let then every one of us enter into consideration of his own estate, and try what effect the judgments of God for sin, worketh in him, assuring ourselves that unless it beat us down in

humility, we are no vessels for Christ to dwell in, neither doth the doctrine of faith (now following) in any respect appertain unto us.

Let us pray.

The Second Sermon of amendment of life.

The second branch of this amendment doth now follow: which is faith in Jesus Christ, whereby they in whom the former doctrine worketh terror for their sins, are erected and comforted: of the which, before I speak, it shall not be amiss to declare the divers uses of the word faith, in the scriptures, least we should take that for faith in Christ which is not: it is taken especially in three significations. First, it is used for believing the word of God to be true, called commonly, a historical faith, whereby man is persuaded that the things done and recorded in the scriptures are not feigned, going no further: this faith is most properly in devils, for they know and believe that all the things there spoken shall be performed, but because they have no comfort therein, they tremble at the consideration thereof. which thing we see also uttered by the devils through the mouth of the possessed, saying: art thou come to torment us before our time? whereby they acknowledge that they looked for torments, but they would have the time prolonged, so long as they could: this faith is hardly to be found in mankind, for Satan can teach them that be wicked a lesson that he could never learn himself, namely that the word of God is not true: that it is but a fable. And therefore you shall see, and hear them being reproved by the ministry of the word, either to be as blocks not moving a bit, or sung a sleep with the voice of the minister: or else openly blaspheme and

mock the word. These be notable scholars, that have learned more than their master the Devil. It must needs be therefore, that they be as near condemnation as he. Secondly, it is taken for the working of miracles, in which sense it is used where it is said: if ye had but faith as a grain of mustard seed, and should say unto this mulberry tree, pluck thy self up by the roots, and plant thy self in the sea, it should even obey you. This kind of faith was very rife in the primitive church, when the gospel was to be planted in the whole world: for God gave unto the apostles power to confirm their doctrine with signs and wonders. But afterward it ceased, only the ordinary confirmation by the preaching of the word remaineth now among us. This faith hath bene and may be in a man that is a reprobate and cast away: for some shall say in the latter day, Lord have not we cast out devils in thy name? to whom it shall be answered I know ye not, depart from me ye workers of iniquity. The strength of Antichrist was foreshowed to be with signs and great wonders. And it is also said by our Saviour himself, speaking of the last and dangerous times: that there shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, that shall show great signs and wonders, so y, if it were possible, they should deceive even the very elect: which we have seen and daily do see by experience, especially in the confirmation of Antichrist's kingdom. Thirdly, faith is taken in the scriptures, for that faith whereby we apprehend the mercy of God to salvation, commonly

called justifying faith, which so believeth the word of God to be true, that it applieth the whole, as profitable to himself, the threatenings to fear him from sin, and the promises of God in Jesus Christ, unto his own comfort and consolation: and then both to draw him on to godliness: in these three senses is faith most commonly used in the word of God. The last is that which appertaineth to our purpose, whereof we are to speak yet more at large. It may be thus designed. Faith is a certain knowledge, and sure persuasion of the free favour of God in Jesus Christ, grounded upon the promises of God in his holy word, and sealed in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. This definition, containing in it the whole substance and sum of our faith, is to be enlarged further, to the end that every part and parcel thereof may the more plainly be known.

Certain knowledge. This is the beginning and (as it were) the cause of faith: for (as the apostle sayeth) he that cometh to God, must believe that there is a God: so he that believeth, must first know what to believe, and learn the doctrine of salvation out of the word: and therefore our Saviour Christ in that heavenly prayer that he made a little before his passion hath these words. This is life eternal that they know thee to be the only very God, and whom thou hast sent Jesus Christ. The which place (though it contain in it faith also) yet it is forcible to prove, that knowledge must go before faith, for it is

the nature of faith to believe that it certainly knoweth: and therefore where there is no knowledge, there can be no faith. Then let all men judge what doctrine that was, which taught ignorance to be the mother of devotion: and forbid the people the knowledge of the word of God, it was even to blindfold our eyes that we might fall into the pit of perdition before we beware, it was to hide the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so that they neither entered themselves, neither suffered others to enter. But blessed be God, who of his great and infinite mercy, hath eased us of that burthen, and granted unto us his holy word. The which albeit many among us do little esteem, because their consciences are seared with a hot iron, that they cannot see the necessity of it. And therefore do loath the hearing of the same preached: yet we know that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. And albeit, it was to the Jews a stumbling block, and the Grecians foolishness: and is now to the superstitious Papist, heresy: and to the conceited wise man of the world needless, or too base for him to meddle withal: yet it then was, and now is, and ever shall be, to them that believe, the power of God to salvation, and that by preaching the which must make us (if we have any love to our own souls health or desire of faith) to meditate in the word of God day and night: and to love and like it above any profit or pleasure, this knowledge must be certain, for knowledge being the ground work of faith, if it be unstable, the building cannot stand sure: which

certainty standeth in these two pointes: first to be persuaded of the undoubted truth of God's word: and secondly of the absolute sufficiency thereof, not to need any traditions of men to make it perfect, for so much as it is every way perfect itself. These two things are duly to be considered, and so much the rather, for that Satan fighteth to shake them both, laying the truth of the word upon the approbation and allowance of men: and foisting dreams, and fancies of idle-brained persons into it, to consummate the perfection of the same.

Sure persuasion. This is the substance and nature of faith, which doeth arise (by the working of God's spirit with the word) out of the knowledge of the same: that hereby we are not only persuaded of the truth of his word, but also believe undoubtedly without wavering, to be partakers of the mercies of God in Jesus Christ. The names that the holy Ghost ascribeth unto this faith, in the doctrine of the apostles, be notable to prove the same not to be wavering, but sure and certain: it is called a ground or foundation: a steadfast faith: and assurance of faith without wavering: a full assurance: an anchor of our soul both sure and steadfast: which comparison is notable, for as the anchor, though the ship be tossed and moved with the waves and tempests, yet it is still safe and holdeth fast: even so faith, what troubles or trials so ever befall unto the godly in this world, doth never let go his hold that it hath in Jesus Christ but cleaveth unto him and

dependeth upon his mercy in all extremities, and so the Children of God feeling the comfort of God's grace, and having a sure hope of the performance of God's promises unto them are certain and sure to be saved. The which doctrine, Satan hath ever laboured, and doth greatly at this day labour to darken and extinguish: affirming it pride and presumption to dare be so bold, as to be assured of salvation. Which thing is true, if the certainty thereof stood any way in man himself, who is naturally filled with al sin and incredulity, but while they take their marks amiss, they greatly dishonour God. For mark this well: God promiseth in his word eternal life to all that believe: thou sayest thou believest, and I say so too: thou art not sure to be saved: and I say that I am. Which of us twain doth offend most? the cause why thou canst not be sure, is for that thou art sinful. And therefore God may cast thee off. Contrariwise the cause why I am sure is the truth and the power of God: his truth, because I do not doubt, but that he will be as good as his promise: his power, because all things are possible to him. This is the ground and foundation of the certainty of my hope, least I should mistrust God, or extenuate his power. For in this I look not upon mine own worthiness (for then must I needs doubt) but upon him that promised: and that I do well in so doing, I prove by the testimony of the scripture concerning Abraham, whose faith I am to follow: of whom it is said that he neither did consider his own body being now dead (which was almost a hundred years old)

neither the deadness of Sarah's womb: neither did he doubt of the promise of God through unbelief (mark, here doubting termed unbelief) but was strengthened in the faith, and gave glory to God (then wavering dishonoureth God) being fully assured that he which had promised, was also able to perform it. This being my warrant I am assured that whosoever doubt of their salvation, have no faith at all. The reasons that the adversaries of this doctrine do allege (because they seem to carry some colour of truth in them) are to be considered: first (say they) there is in all men naturally a fear: but where is fear, there is doubting, and therefore all men must needs doubt. Whereunto I answer confessing the whole, and yet it maketh nothing against me: for the fear that is in all men is natural, and is the work of the flesh, and (indeed) doth strive against faith, as the regenerate man doth against the unregenerate, or the outward man against the inward: but as the Children of God are through Jesus Christ more than conquerors through him that loveth them: so true faith overcometh, yea expelleth fear and maketh us to approach with confident boldness unto the throne of his grace. Further they object, that we are commanded, by Saint Paul to work our salvation with fear and trembling, the which we needed not to do, if we were sure to be saved. I answer that we must so, but we do not work faith in ourselves, and therefore the apostle speaketh there of the continual conversation of Christians, which in regard of the

majesty of God, always beholding them, and the quick eyes of the wicked narrowly espying into them, must be marvelous careful that they do not displease so great and good a God, and wary that they give the adversary no advantage. Whereby he may take occasion to dishonour God, and to speak ill of the Gospel. A meditation never to pass out of our minds: and yet maketh nothing against the assurance of our faith. They object yet further, and say, no man is sure that he shall stand: for David, Lot, and Peter, with many more that were godlier then we, have fallen. I answer, I am not sure to stand in sincerity of conversation: for it may please God to suffer me to fall into that sin, whereunto I am naturally prone, to the end to show me my own weakness, and his great mercy: but I am sure I shall never fall finally, because he that hath begun a good work in me will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: for whom God loveth he loveth unto the end. so that I or whosoever else doth feel himself comforted with an unfeigned persuasion of God's love, may thereby assure himself of God's favour forever. A notable example whereof we have in the servant of God David, who by the consideration of the help that he had against the Lion and the Bear, in the wilderness, is strengthened to go against Goliath, saying, that God that delivered me out of the hands of them, shall also save me from uncircumcised philistine: so that our assurance standeth in the mercy of god and not in our obedience, which staggereth daily. Lastly they say, certainty of

salvation standeth in God's eternal election, and who knoweth whether he is elected or no? answer, the foundation (indeed) standeth in election, and is the root of our assurance, but to say ye none knoweth whether he be elected or no, is to say that none be called: for he that is called is elected, because whom god electeth him he calleth: so that whosoever can prove to me by infallible marks out of the word, that he is called with the inward calling, to him I can prove his own particular election: and therefore when they say that none knoweth whether he be elected, they show plainly that themselves be not called, and then no marvel if they doubt of their salvation when they know not whether they be within the compass of God's grace in calling or no. Therefore let him (whosoever he be) whether Papist, Pelagian, libertine, familiar or atheist (for all these shake hands in this point) labour diligently by hearing and reading of the word, and prayer, to find out what the will of God is, and to try himself whether, it doth work in him or no: and not condemn the truth of God to be false, because his carnal wit cannot attain unto it: but let him rather condemn himself, because he findeth not in himself the marks that the word of God painteth them out with all, that are the children of God of the free favour of God. This is the thing which we must know, and whereof we must be undoubtedly persuaded: that is that God of his mere mercy in Jesus Christ hath vouchsafed to adopt us to be his children, not regarding anything in us that is ill to

hinder: nor any good to further the same. Which doctrine is in many places of scripture set down to us, as in that confession of Peter, our Saviour sayeth, flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee but my father which is in heaven. And in another place: No man cometh unto me, unless my father draweth him: without Christ we can do nothing for we are not able of ourselves to think a good thought, seeing that it is he that worketh in us both to will, and to perform. And yet notwithstanding all these express sentences of the holy scripture we see how man laboureth by main and might, to establish merit, and to maintain free will in man: to be good if he list. But we have learned out of God's word that all the imaginations of the heart of man are altogether evil, and that there is in ourselves no good thing: and therefore our faith leaneth upon the sole and only mercy of God for our salvation, and in regard of our own unworthiness doth in true humility cast down our minds to be ruled, and guided by his blessed word.

In Jesus Christ. Because we find in the word of God that God is just and that we be sinners, and therefore in his justice though he would he cannot pardon us: our faith findeth out a mean whereby the justice of God is satisfied to the full and also his mercy purchased for us, which is Jesus Christ both God and man? to overcome (as he is God) all the enemies of our salvation, Satan, sin, and death, and to suffer (as he is man) all the pains and

torments that we had deserved both in body and soul, and so presenteth us in his own righteousness and merits, blameless before the face of God, and maketh us heirs of his eternal glory. This being set down in few words, is the substance of the gospel: he telleth us by his own mouth that no man cometh to the father but by him and S. Paul sayeth that in him are all the promises of God, yea, and amen: because he is the way whereby al the mercies of God are conveyed unto us, the father being we pleased in him. The use of which doctrine (being rightly applied) is very comfortable: for first it bringeth unto us a comfort, that the severe wrath of God is appeased against us. Secondly it teacheth, that in all our needs and necessities, in all our prayers and thanksgiving and in the whole course of our conversation, we are to beg the Lord's assistance: in and through his son our Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom he is pleased, and without whose mediation, our prayers are abominable, our praises stink in the nostrils of the father, and we ourselves are the abject and refuse of the world.

Grounded upon the promises of God. and so forth. This is set down to show whereupon faith taketh hold, to wit the promises of God: for when we hear out of the word of God, what mercy God promiseth unto them that believe in him: it is the office of a true faith to apply the same particularly unto ourselves: whereby we see that same yet further verified that was spoken before, that

faith respecteth not ourselves, nor nothing that is in us, but the promises which God offereth unto us in his blessed word: and therefore our faith is not to respect the decrees of man, nor to lean upon anything, saving the word of God only, which is the thing whereby faith is wrought, strengthened and established in our hearts.

Sealed in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. The promises of God are general offered indifferently to all men both good and bad, without exception, in the ministry of the word, and yet effectual only to a few: and therefore here may arise a question, how I may assure mine own soul and conscience that they be particularly applied unto me. Which is answered thus by doctrine, though every man feeleth best by his own experience when the word is preached to many, we see that it is effectual only to few, because in the most it knocketh only in their outward ears, and moveth them nothing at all: but to those few unto whom it is effectual, God openeth their hearts that they attend unto the word: and as by the same he speaketh, through the ministry of man, unto the outward ears, so inwardly he preacheth unto the soul by his Holy Spirit, whereby those words are engrafted into their hearts, and they unfeignedly persuaded of them in their souls: which spirit doth keep continual residence in their hearts afterward, assuring them of his mercy. This S. Paul setteth down, saying we have not received the spirit of bondage to fear again, but the spirit of adoption,

whereby we cry Abba father: the same spirit witnesseth we ours, that we are the children of God: and in another place: it is God which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, who hath also sealed us, and hath given the earnest of his spirit into our hearts, hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit. This being evident by the word, that whomsoever God calleth he sealeth with his Holy Spirit, it resteth on every one of us examine himself how he feeleth himself affected in this point: whether we can feel this spirit comfort us at all times and seasons or no. The which trial that it may be the better, I will set down three effects of this spirit in them that have it, whereby thou mayest examine thy self. The first is this, whereas we by nature cannot away with, or care not for the word of God, because it is to our reason mere foolishness, the holy ghost worketh in us alone of the same, to take delight and comfort in hearing and reading of it and therefore they are said to be of God that hear his word. Which sentence Saint John applieth to the hearing of the ministers of God, preaching the same word. The second is the fruit that floweth out of this, which is comfort by the word, and increase of faith, with feeling of the working of the same in our hearts: for many hear the word, and that with some joy, who yet have little comfort by it, for that they cannot apply it to themselves for their particular use and profit. Therefore this is the effect of the holy ghost, to be unfeignedly persuaded, that all the

mercies of God in Jesus Christ promised in his word are as effectual to me, as if they were set down only to me by name. There is a loathing of sin, and a thirsting after godliness: whereby we endeavour to leave sin, and to live in all obedience of conversation. This Saint Paul setteth down in express words, saying, if any man have not the spirit of Christ the same is none of his: and if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin: but the spirit is life for righteousness sake: so then these three, love to the word, persuasion of God's mercies, and Reformation of life, are in all them that have the holy ghost. Thus we see briefly the particular pointes of faith set down out of the word of God.

Let us pray.

The third Sermon of amendment of Life.

Now remaineth to speak of the fruits and effects of the same faith, which are wrought by it in the hearts of all them that have it, which be of two sorts, inward in the soul, and outward in the conversation, inward be 1, Remission of sins. 2. The love of the Father. 3, Promise to be heard in our prayers, All which proceed one out of another: Outward is godliness in life and conversation. For the first which is remission of sins, to be the fruit of faith, is proved by many places of scripture: our Saviour Jesus Christ having a man sick of the palsy brought unto him, seeing their faith, said, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee. Where we have to consider, that not their faith, but his own, applied remission of sins unto him. S. Paul in a long discourse in that heavenly epistle written to the Romans, concludeth with these words: we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law. The prophet also sayeth? that a just man liveth by his faith. The reasons that the apostle useth to prove this are many: I will only set down three of them which are most apparent, and evident: The first is this: by the testimony of the old testament it is proved, that all men have erred and done amiss, there is none that doth good, no not one: so that all having sinned, and be that hath sinned in one is guilty in all: it must needs follow, that none can be saved by their works, and therefore, either by faith or not at all. The second is by the sentence

and promise of the Law. This do and thou shalt live: but cursed is he that abideth not in all these commandments to do them: but none is able to do so, for then Christ died in vain, and his death had been to no purpose: and therefore al men being, by nature, under the curse, and not able to redeem themselves: it followeth that he who was without sin (Jesus Christ) must be their redemption, and applied unto them by faith. Thirdly by the nature of the promise made to our father Abraham, thus: The same way that Abraham was justified and acquitted from sin, the same way are all his children justified: but he was justified by faith, for he believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and therefore must all the godly forever be justified by faith: so that this must stand for an undoubted truth, that he which seeketh any other way to have his sins put away (whether it be by pardons, merits, or any way else) then only by faith apprehending the merits of Christ, cannot be comforted in his soul by certain persuasion, but must needs stagger and waver continually.

The second inward fruit of faith is the love of God the father, which cometh unto us when our sins are forgiven: for as man is separated from God by reason of sin and iniquity, so the same being removed and taken away, God and Man are made one, and be reconciled together again, by which reconciliation the love of God is procured by the reconciler Jesus Christ, to have his full

course and passage unto man. The which our Saviour meant, when he said: the father loveth you, because ye have loved me and believed in me: which thing S. John also meant, when he said, that the effect of the Gospel is that we might have fellowship with the father and with his son Jesus Christ: of which thing whosoever is truly persuaded, he shall have in his soul and conscience an unspeakable comfort: for as there is nothing more grievous unto man (if he consider it well) then to have the heavy hand of God upon him, and his severe countenance against him, so nothing can be more sweet and comfortable, then to be persuaded of his favour, and fatherly love towards him. Out of which ariseth to the godly that peace of conscience, and joy in soul, that passeth all understanding: which thing our Saviour meant when he said to his disciples: peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world give, give I unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, nor fear: which also S. Paul meant when he said: being justified by faith we have peace toward God: and in another place, peace is reckoned up among the fruits of the spirit. Examples whereof we have in the scriptures: the Eunuch of Ethiopia, being instructed in the faith, and baptised by Phillip the Evangelist, it is said that he went on his way rejoicing. The same is reported of the Jailer that was converted by the preaching of Paul, that he rejoiced because that he with all his household believed in God: Mary likewise rejoiced (not so much in that she was the

mother of Christ) but in God her Saviour. So that this being by the word of God proved to be one of the fruits of a true faith, it resteth that every one of us do weigh ourselves, examining our hearts how great we find this joy in us, the which although (I doubt not) it is found in great measure in the hearts of some, yet I fear in the most it is very little or nothing at all. For if we may judge the tree by the fruits, some have so great pleasure and delight in scraping worldly pelf together: other in banqueting and drunkenness: and many in chambering and wantonness: it is hard to find that man or woman, that sheweth forth unto the world, the signs: of joy in the holy ghost which argueth us to be carnal and fleshly minded, not savouring of the spirit of God.

The third inward fruit is a promise that God hath made unto us, that he will hear our prayers, and grant our requests: which thing is promised by: the mouth of Christ Jesus unto all believers, saying, verily verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye ask the father in my name he will give it you, which thing we see verified unto the Centurion, to whom it was said: as thou haste believed so be it unto thee, and his servant was made hole the same hour. And likewise to the two blind men, who cried, son of David have mercy upon us: to whom he answered, according to your faith be it unto you. Which doctrine must needs be unto the faithful an exceeding comfort: for we see the manifold dangers whereunto we

be subject, the diverse temptations wherewithal Satan laboreth to overthrow our souls and the manifold tribulations that do daily befall to the body, as the slanders and injuries done unto us by the wicked, the sickness, poverty and need that lay hold upon us: against all which we have no shield nor defense, but only to fly unto the Lord by humble and hearty prayer. the which if he should not regard, our state were miserable and we of all other most wretched, if we should not be heard of him, for whose sake we hazard all our liberties in the world, and oppose ourselves against his foes: then could we look for nothing but utter confusion both of body and soul: but in that he hath promised, that if we call upon him in the day of our trouble he will hear and deliver us: we gather thereby an undoubted comfort against all afflictions, that either the Lord will remove them from us, or else grant us such strength and patience, that we shall not only sustain and bear them, but also triumph over them, to his great glory, and our own exceeding comfort. where upon we resting (as upon an anchor both sound and steadfast) do most willingly lay down our necks under the yoke of God's correction, being certainly persuaded, that all things shall fall out for the best unto us, if we do unfeignedly fear him. Yet this doctrine giveth no warrant to the carnal and fleshly prayers of natural men, who when they hear that God will grant whatsoever is asked in his sons name, do by and by ask riches, honor, promotions, and worldly dignities: but for

such wishes Saint James telleth us that we ask and receive not, because we ask amiss, that we might bestow it upon our own lusts. Therefore to ask in the name of Christ, is to ask according to his will, that is, to pray for the gifts of the spirit, for the strengthening of the soul absolutely, and for the things of this life, with condition, that is, if it be his will: and if we thus pray against any inward weakness, or outward extremity: and yet are not heard, we must think our prayers have not bene sufficiently faithful and fervent, or God seeth it better for us, to keep us under the rod, to school us: and having learned this lesson, we should have great comfort in our prayers, though they be not granted: and joy in the cross, even when it is most grievous, for when we are weakest in ourselves then be we strongest in the Lord. This fruit of faith bringeth forth many other, as first Hope, which is a looking for the performance of that which is promised, with a trust to obtain it. For when I see that God hath not only promised eternal life, but all things also necessary for this present life unto al them that with a hearty and true faith ask them at his hands, I believing the Lord that he will perform it, do daily expect and look for the performance thereof, and in the meanwhile do feed my desire with a continual expectation for the same to be revealed: waiting for the Lord's leisure, until it be his good pleasure to accomplish the same unto me And this is a notable virtue, being steadfast: for we see both by the Scriptures, and our own experience, how the Lord

promiseth, and then seemeth to withdraw his hand, he promised the land of Canaan to the Israelites, and yet kept them 400 years without it. he promised deliverance from Captivity, and yet kept them seventy years in it. he promised Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, the seed of the woman to bruise the head of the Serpent, almost four thousand years before he came in the flesh, and so he dealeth with us: which thing because it is not presently performed, the wicked distrust, and take their present pleasure of those things that bee here, following their great grandfather Esau. in selling the birthright of the kingdom of Heaven for a mess of pottage of pleasure, in this world choosing rather to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and so perish afterward eternally, then to suffer heaviness for a night, and want for a moment that they might enjoy the kingdom of heaven. But contrariwise, the godly believing God, and trusting to his promises, do with patience abide, with earnest prayer beg, and with hope look for the manifestation of all God's promises to their great and endless comfort: and of one of these sorts is every one of us: and therefore let us examine our own consciences. The second virtue is Patience the daughter of Hope: for as it is in things of this world, a man that hath bene long exercised in any labour, though it be at the first never so grievous unto him, because he seeth it cannot be avoided, he is contented to undergo the pain thereof, and with patience he proceedeth: even so it is in the looking for the

promises of God, the troubles that we endure here for Christ's sake, at the first they be very grievous, and the want of the accomplishment of them doth bring great lamentation and grief: but when we see that God hath ordained that it must be so, that his must be fed with hope, and tried with adversities: it maketh us (if we be God's children) as meek as lambs, and mild as Moses, and as patient (as we say) as Job. So that you see, how those things that be bitter to the flesh, turn to the great honor, and glory of God, and our own good: in that it increaseth virtue and godliness in us. The third and last virtue that this hope bringeth forth is contention: a singular and heavenly virtue, the rarest flower that the garden of man's soul bringeth forth: which is this, when I see by the eyes of faith, the narrow way that God hath appointed for his children, and that every extremity bringeth forth a happy success to them that fear God, therefore do hope that the Lorde being pleased with me in his son my Saviour Jesus Christ: it breedeth this in me and must do the same in all God's children, to be very willing, and contented with that cross which he hath lotted out unto me, and be so far from murmuring and grudging, that God hath left me under the cross: that I must greatly rejoyce therein. Which thing we do not only see practised by the holy apostles of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who did rejoyce that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name, but also prescribed unto all God's children, that because all that will live godly in Jesus

Christ must suffer persecution, and enter into the kingdom of God by many tribulations and afflictions: that therefore we must account it exceeding joy, when we fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of our faith bringeth forth patience, and patience, having her perfect work, bringeth forth perfection. The outward fruit of which contentment is also contentment with our estate and calling, wherein the Lord hath set us: that, so it be never so poor, base, contemptible, or laborious: seeing that God in who? we repose all confidence, of whose love we be persuaded, hath set us therein, we must think it the most convenient standing for us: and be well contented therewithal, labouring to do our duty therein, with all sincerity and care to deal justly and truly: which lesson (a pitiful thing to think) is scarce learned of any: for we see how the poor account rich in good estate: the rich deemeth the poor to live most at ease: subjects admire the happiness of princes: and princes wish to themselves the secure condition of their inferiors, Whereupon it cometh, that everyone (almost) setting his eyes upon the glory and outward show of another man, starteth aside from his standing and is careless in his calling: as magistrates become careless: mean men (looking aloft) wax covetous, seeking to grow great by extortion and usury: artificers to enrich themselves unlawfully, by facing and lying, swearing and forswearing: so that the head is sick and the whole heart heavy, from the top to the toe, there is nothing whole

therein, but wounds and swelling, and sores full of corruption, And in this general apostasy (I quake to think it) and my tongue faltereth in my mouth to speak it: they that should be lanterns of light to others, they from whose mouths should come the sweet word of eternal life, and in whose lives should shine the Image of Christ Jesus most clearly (alas) are so clogged and cloyed with promotions and dignities of this world, that they clean forget what calling they have, what charge is laid upon them, and what a heavy reckoning they have to make: in so much, that some falling from their first love, do now persecute that which heretofore they have preached: others, because they thirst after gains and vain glory, forsake Christ with Demas, and embrace this world, using all lawful and unlawful ways to win the wool, not regarding what become of those pilled sheep, the flock. Where from springeth a mystery more grievous then all these: that the people of God, for whom Christ Jesus did shed his most precious blood, are so hardened in atheism and godlessness: that a man bad as good speak to a stone, as to the most, concerning any matter of religion. And all these with infinite mo abominations spring hence, ye men are so careless to keep their standing: to be contented to abide the heat of the day, and discharge that duty with an upright conscience that God hath laid upon them I would to God that the due consideration of these enormities were settled in the heads and hearts, not only of every particular person, whose fault it is, but

especially into theirs, unto who? God hath enjoined to see these things redressed: that thereby we might be compelled not to trifle with God, and his service, as we do, and extoll a bare shadow so long, until the Lord remove from us the substance (which God forbid) but that we might all be compelled to labour in the vineyard of the Lord, for the instruction and comfort of his people, or else cast out as stones that make men stumble, and salt that being unsavoury is good for nothing. That every man (if of himself he will not) may be constrained to obey the Lord according to his word, and to serve him for the furtherance of his glory in a lawful and holy calling, warranted by the word of God: until which time it is impossible that the Gospel should flourish effectually in this land, because God will bless nothing but his own institution and ordinance: for the chaff and corn cannot agree together, neither is it lawful for the Gentiles to be suffered to join with the Jews in the building of the temple, though they seem never so glossingly to offer their helping hand thereunto. Least it should afterward be said that the Jews were not able to do it, without the help of their foes, and so it should be a dishonour to their God. The Lord give us eyes that we may see, and hearts that we may perceive what is his will, and how he will be served.

The outward fruit of faith is godliness of conversation, which in the beginning was made one branch of

amendment of life: and you see now how it proceedeth from faith and floweth out of it, as the fruit from the tree, and water out of the fountain. The which may be thus defined: it is an earnest, and careful endeavour to obey and fulfill the law of God, growing out of faith, and directed to those which God hath appointed: that is, to his glory, the comfort of our consciences, and the benefit of our brethren. In that it is said, that obedience is an earnest and careful endeavour: the meaning is, that we must not only think it our duty to serve God according to his will, and to obey his commandments (which all godless persons will confess) but also study and earnestly care to do the same in deed. For every one that sayeth Lord, Lord, shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: But he that doth the will of my heavenly father (sayeth Christ) which is in heaven: Not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified: for if any (sayeth St. James) hear the word and do it not, he is like unto a man that beholdeth his natural face in a glass, but when he hath considered himself, he goeth away, and forgets immediately what manner of one he was. But who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, shall be blessed in his deed. All which sentences are spoken by the holy Ghost to this end, that we should know, that it is needful for us (nay faith will bring it forth, if it be in us) to live in godliness to reform our affection inwardly,

and our conversation outwardly according to the prescript rule of God's word. Wherein how careless the world is, and how little reckoning is made hereof, all men that will try the truth by the touchstone of God's word shall easily see. For every man now a days, if he can put on the name of a protestant if he can make any show at all, by and by he taketh himself, and is also taken of others, to be of a true and sound religion: yea though his life and conversation do swear the contrary, being fraught with all sin and iniquity. These are they that turn the grace of God into wantonness: that sin because they are not under the law but under grace? that will make sin abound that grace may super abound, that will do evil, that good may come thereof: whose damnation is just. But we have not so learned Christ, and notwithstanding the worldlings be careless of godly conversation, yet we have unto us many reasons set down in the word of God to bring us thereunto: First the commandment of God in the Law reiterated by the mouth of our Saviour Jesus Christ: be ye perfect, even as your heavenly father is perfect: and S. Paul meaning to set down the same thing, sayeth this is the will of God, even your sanctification. Now it being the commandment, and will of God, who is the God of power, a revenger of sin, and punisher of iniquity, it should be even as a thousand whips to drive us, and ten thousand cart ropes to hale us unto the same: for he is not a God that loveth wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him: and we know that we shall al come

before his throne and seat of judgment, where he will give sentence without partiality, and judge all men, not according to their outward confession, but according to their deeds, where he will say: depart from me ye workers of iniquity: so that this should marvelously enawe us, to consider with ourselves, that if we carelessly go on, and heap sin upon sin, never a whit or little regarding whether we live godly or no, surely we can assure ourselves of no other sentence at the day of judgment, but go ye cursed. Secondly, the consideration of God's manifold blessings bestowed upon us in his son Jesus Christ should make us to live godly: The which was notably figured to us in the worldly blessings that God bestowed upon the Jews: unto whom the Lord (meaning to set before them as in a glass their estate by nature, and whereunto he had brought them) sayeth, thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. I found thee in the waste and roaring wilderness: and led thee about, and taught thee, and kept thee as the apple of mine eye, As the Eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her birds, stretcheth out her wings, taketh them and beareth them on her wings: so I alone led thee (sayeth the Lord) All which being set down in earthly terms unto them, as was his manner, for their instruction are more plainly exhibited unto us: which are in effect thus much. We are conceived and born in sin, by nature the children of wrath, the bondslaves of Satan, and heirs of Hell: which state of ours, the merciful father of heaven pitying, rather

then we should perish, hath sent his dear and only son Jesus to take on him our nature, to suffer the pain that we have deserved, and thereby not only hath freed us from condemnation, but purchased for us eternal salvation in the kingdom of heaven: whereby in the meanwhile, all that we do (which of itself is stinking in the nostrils of the Lord) is accepted, being in any measure good: and his creatures, which before were accursed, unto us and for us are blessed, sanctified to our comfort. The which (so oft as we consider it) must make us very careful to show ourselves thankful unto our good and merciful God: and carefully to glorify him with that obedience that he hath prescribed unto us in his holy and blessed word. Unto which the holy ghost doth often times take occasion to exhort us: I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that you give up your bodies a lively sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, and fashion not yourselves like unto this world, but be you changed in your shape, by the renewing of your minds. And in another place: I pray you that ye walk worthy of that vocation where unto ye are called, for ye were darkness but now ye are light in the Lord, walk as it becometh the children of light, being a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the virtue of him that hath called you, out of darkness, into his marvelous light: considering that for this end we are delivered from the hands of our enemies that we might serve him without fear, all the

days of our life, in holiness and righteousness before him: contrariwise if we have not this care, and do not thus endeavour to serve him, what do we? surely no better than did the Pharisees, that persecuted Christ, and Judas that betrayed him, and the soldiers that nailed him on the cross: for we crucify him again, and make a mock of him. The which thing I would to God that all they would consider that have no care, but how to excel in sin: no study, but how so defraud: no delight, but how to become the most singular and notorious sinners, as extortioners, usurers, ruffians, blasphemers, and such like: whose whole joy is in this, that their most mischievous practices may take place, for the satisfying of their own most devilish desires without either respect of God or the Devil: yea and all they likewise, that seem to be of a better stamp, serving the Lord with the fancies of their own brain: and carving out for him so much as they think good, without any regard or eye unto his will and commandment: whose gold will prove copper, and their silver will be tried to be dross, when they shall be refined in the furnace of God's judgments. Thirdly, the consideration of our calling is also in the word of God set down, as a reason to induce us to godliness. And what is it? Truly if we be of the number of God's children we are citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God: and we know that whosoever will not obey the will of a governor of a house in this world, he turneth him out at the doors, as an unfit person to abide in the society of

servants: and dare we profess to be the household servants of God, and disobey him? not scaring that he will cast us out of his family? we are not called to uncleanness, but to holiness so, if our life be impure we deny our calling: and shut ourselves from among God's children: we are said to be temples for God to dwell in, and will God dwell with sinfulness? can he abide to be in an unclean and unholy habitation? no God is light, and in him is no darkness: God is pure, and cannot match with the polluted heart. And therefore let us assure ourselves that without reformation of life; we have not the spirit of Christ. Whosoever hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his, but is a reprobate and cast away, ready to be thrown into the fire of condemnation. Fourthly, our baptism must move us to godliness, for by it we brag ourselves to be Christians: but all that are baptized with the outward baptism have not put on Christ, but they only that are baptized with him into his death: that as he died and rose again unto righteousness, so should we die unto sin, and rise again unto newness of life. For if we be grafted with him into the similitude of his death? even so shall we be to the similitude of his resurrection: knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that hence forth we should not serve sin. Read the whole sixte to the Romans, and consider of it: and if you find not the same work in you (at the least in some measure, that is there set down, assure yourselves, you have not yet

learned Christ aright, neither do express the fruit of your baptism in your conversation, but rather have gotten an outward show of godliness, and deny the power thereof, from which all true Christians are commanded to turn away. Lastly the Lord (who in justice might compel us, and give us nothing, hath set down unto them that live godly, a reward: that whatsoever we do in his name (that is in a true faith, with care to obey him, and set forth his praise) though it be worth nothing in itself to deserve anything, yet we shall have our reward: which is increase and augmentation of our joys in the kingdom of heaven: and therefore the Lord sayeth by the mouth of the Prophet, that they which be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, but they that turn many unto righteousness, shall shine as the stars. A doctrine very needful to be urged, because of the laziness of Christians in practise, of their profession. And as this is true in the godly, that the greater obedience they show, the greater shall be their glory. So on the other side in the wicked, the more heinous their sins be, the more intolerable shall their torments be, which is to be laid very often before their eyes: for it is the common speech of godless persons: if I be damned then what maketh it the matter what I do, I may give over myself to fulfill my lust in all pointes. But let them know this, that as it was said to the Pharisees that they should receive the greater damnation, so shall it be unto thee: thy offences shall be punished, according to the quantity thereof. And therefore though

thou art no otherwise persuaded but that thou shalt come into condemnation, yet fear to have it multiplied unto thee, for the least torment will be more than thou shalt be able to bear. Thus we see, that the holy ghost in the scripture exhorteth us (by weighing the commandment of God, by considering the manifold blessings of God offered to us in Christ, by the looking into the nature of our calling, by calling to mind the end of our baptism, and lastly by viewing the reward that God hath laid up to bestow upon them that serve him, to live godly in this present world: now let us lay them unto our own hearts and consciences, and see whether we have not just cause to bid battle to Satan, to strive against our own lusts, and corrupt affections: and let us be more careful the? heretofore we have been. Let us not delight in anything that may displease so loving and merciful a father. But let us make an end of our salvation, with fear and trembling. Thus much for the first part of the definition of Obedience (that it is an earnest endeavour to obey the Laws of God) this is the thing we must endeavour to do, which we are always to have an eye unto. These laws are set down briefly, in the first and second table. The sum whereof standeth in these two pointes, first that we seek to set forth the glory of God, according as he prescribeth in the first table: a thing commonly known to all men, but practised of very few: for we think, if we do anything that may seem to tend never so little towards God's glory that we have done a glorious work. But mark this well:

the Lord requireth not only of thee, to seek his glory in thy self by worshipping him in spirit and truth, by sanctifying his holy name, and thy self to the observation of his Sabbath, but also to thy power, to seek it (according to thy calling) in others. The magistrate to establish and defend true religion, and maintain it by holy discipline warranted by the word. The minister to teach, instruct, and exhort, the private man also in his calling, to use all lawful means for the advancement of the same. The second table containeth the outward godliness that we must show forth in the world for the benefit one of another. Which we see very little practised: for it is evident unto the sight of all men (to the great grief of them that fear God) how some be altogether set upon treacherous rebellion, and conspiracies: others on malicious murder, and envying hate: others on fornication, and uncleanness, with all allurements to the same: as pride, banqueting, surfeiting and drunkenness, with all lewd and unchaste gestures that can be: others, bent to extort, and wring out of men's hands their own proper possessions, and goods, by forging, by extremity of law, by deceiving, and by that foul canker usury, and what not? I cease to speak of the particular petty sins, wherewith men do so swarm, and so customarily live in, that they esteem them to be no sins, the least whereof deserveth eternal condemnation, both in body and soul: and yet all these be Christians, and say they have faith, but I say of them, and that by the

warrant of God's own word, that if they had the least spark of faith in the world, these things would be reformed: for it is impossible for a man to have faith, but therewithal is the spirit of God. But where the spirit is, there can be no delight in sin, no such carelessness to reformation, as appeareth: and therefore examine thy self and be not deceived, presume not of the mercy of God, and still abide in sin: for then be sure thou shalt find no place to repentance, though thou seek it with tears. Then seek the Lord while he may be found: put not of from day to day: for suddenly cometh the wrath of the Lord: and in his anger he will consume thee. Then let us without prolonging amend.

And fulfill. That is, a strife must be in us, against all lets that may hinder us to be in all pointes perfect: and that in such a perfection as by the word of God is not to be found fault withal: and though it be true that we cannot attain thereunto in this life, yet we must not faint, nor be weary: but go on still: forget that which is behind, and look at that which is before: never casting our eyes aside upon any bait of sin in this world: but ever go on in striving for this perfection, all the days of our life. In which course (least we should be discouraged) we are to know, that we are never able to attain to that perfection in this life, because of our wretched and sinful nature: because of the clogs of sin that do so hang on us, and the remnants of old Adam that stick so in the flesh, that it can never be

wholly clear thereof. The which we find to be in the apostle S. Paul, who had a law in his members, striving against the law of the spirit, leading him captive unto the law of sin. Whereby it cometh to pass, as our Saviour sayeth, that when we have done all that ever we can, we are unprofitable servants, and therefore we are taught to say daily: forgive us our sins: which doctrine sheweth forth divers most necessary uses: as first it sheweth the works of supererogation, imagined by the Papists, to be a mere doctrine of an idle brain: flat contrary to the truth of God, and blasphemous against Christ's passion. Secondly, displayeth the devilish error, of that pestiferous sect, the family of love, who hold, that a man may live without sin, and therefore accounteth it a note of imperfection to pray: so that none may be of the number of their illuminated Elders, until they be of that perfection: and yet we read that the apostles prayed not only when they were weaklings (as they fondly affirm) but after Christ's ascension, and the descending of the holy Ghost. And therefore (for the censuring of their heresy, and our own persuasion) let us say with S. John, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and there is no truth in us, for we make God a liar. But if we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Thirdly it is an exceeding comfort to the weak, that find themselves willing, and yet imperfect in the service of God: for God doth accept of us according to that we are,

and not according to that we are not. The least sparks of obedience (insomuch as they be his own work) are accepted in his sight, so that it be with earnest endeavour to increase: and therefore this giveth no liberty to licentious looseness, (which notwithstanding we see to presume hereupon: for, (say the atheists) who can keep God's commandments? is any man without sin? and so forth. Which indeed is true, but they, by occasion thereof, have no regard nor care of any reformation, but run on from sin to sin, and that with greediness. But let such know, that they cannot please the devil better with anything in the world, because hereby, they be as like him, as if they were spitted out of his mouth: for he knoweth that no man can absolutely obey God's laws: and therefore he prowleth to mock them in every point, to break them: and thou sayest thou canst not obey him perfectly, and therefore art careless to do any good at all. Wherein doest thou now differ from him? But let us have a care to win ground of our adversary, to obtain more and more strength against sin, and make it weaker in us every day than other, by continual meditation in the word of God, and prayer for his grace, to fructify therein, and then we shall show ourselves valiant soldiers, and not dastards in the quarrel of our Lorde and Captain Jesus Christ.

Now follow the end that we are to aim at, in this fight against ourselves: to live godly, which is duly to be

considered: for Satan hath gone thus far with a number, either to persuade them (without al doubting of the matter) that they shall merit heaven, and deserve to be God's children by their works, or else that they need to do none at all: and we see even the greatest number put the one of these in practise: for either they be obstinate and blind Papists, forgetting Christ Jesus, and hoping to come to heaven by their works: or else they be Atheists, affirming plainly, that if they deserve nothing for them, they will do no good works. From which fountain floweth this general security, where with all the world is so rocked on sleep, that every man seeketh for himself, never thinking that he is any way bound to benefit his poor and needy brother. Whereby (as in many other things) we may behold the usual practice of Satan, either to make us lie wallowing in all carelessness, or else to drive us too far into the contrary extremity. Which thing we are to have a great care of, even in everything that we do, that we may keep within the bounds of that mean prescribed by the Lord in his word, from which it is not lawful to decline, neither to the right hand, nor to the left, least Satan overtake us, and work our confusion.

The ends whereunto (by the word of God) we are to have regard, and respect, be in number three. First God's glory. 2. Our own comfort. 3. The good of our brethren among whom we live.

The glory of God, which is the first end, is to be sought in our good and godly conversation: for it is evident, that we are by nature unfit to do any good thing, but rather prone and bent to sin, but when it pleaseth God so to alter and reform our hearts, that the fruit thereof shineth in our conversation, this sheweth the great glory of God, in that he (of servants unto sin and uncleanness) maketh us to serve him in godliness. The which thing our Saviour Christ meant, when he said: let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works? and glorify your heavenly father, which is in heaven. Where unto also the apostle S. Peter had especial regard, when he said: Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which fight against the soul: and have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you, as evil doers, may by your good works which they shall see, glorify God in the day of visitation. Unto which end S. Paul had respect also: when he exhorting the Thessalonians to godliness, sayeth: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you. The which point is duly to be observed, for our instruction: because that now a days, all men will say they do love God, and honour him, but their bare words must not go for proof: for we see the holy ghost setteth down, that the glorifying of God by us, consisteth in godly conversation: for if thou sayest never so much, thou lovest God, and doest honour him, unless it shine in thy conversation, it is a lie in thee, and a thing

not to be believed of others. For our Saviour sayeth: If any love me, he will keep my sayings, so that the trial standeth in this: look how careful thou art to reform thy life, according to the word of God: and look how much thou hast subdued the heat of thine own affections: and so much thou doest glorify God, and no further. Nay if thou beest slack herein, and careless to do that in deed, whereof thou makest profession, thou doest, even as much as lieth in thee, dishonour God: and therefore sayeth S. Paul, thou that gloriest in the law, thorough breaking of the law, dishonorest God. I would to God that the carnal professors, and enemies to sincerity (of these our days) both in themselves, and others, could consider of this, with a single eye. For those that be enemies to reformation, be commonly loose in life, as we see in our own experience. If it were so, I doubt not, but their conversation would be found even of themselves, most vile, and filthy, not worthy once to be named among them that profess the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The second end, which we are to look unto, is, for the establishment and comfort of our own souls and consciences. For we see that all men are contented to make a show of religion, and to take upon them the profession of Christ, which cannot be sufficient: for then should all, or at least, the greatest number, be saved: and yet we know the words of our Saviour Christ: that narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few do walk therein.

Then what shall we do to examine ourselves unfeignedly, to see whether we are of the number of them, or no? S. Peter shall tell us most notably, what we must do. Flee (sayeth he) the corruption which is in the world through lust. Therefore give even all diligence thereunto: join moreover virtue with your faith, and with virtue, knowledge, and with knowledge, temperance, and with temperance, patience, and with patience, godliness, and with godliness, brotherly kindness, and with brotherly kindness, love: for if these things be among you, and do abound, they will make you that ye neither shall be idle, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that hath not these things, is blind, and cannot see a far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore Brethren, give rather diligence, to make your calling and election sure. By which words we see, that the fruit of the gospel, in holiness of life, doth make our calling and election sure, (not to God, for it was sure in him before the foundation of the world) but to ourselves, approving thereby unto our own souls and consciences, that we be the elect of God, because we feel the working of his grace in our hearts, and show forth the fruits thereof in our conversation.

The third end of our good works, hath relation unto our brethren, which is diverse ways. First thus: there be many that be weak in the faith, and newly converted unto

the Gospel: who have great need to be supported, and holden up: the which (as we may do many ways) so chiefly it is to be declared in our conversation: for when he beholdeth our godly and upright behavior, great occasion is offered unto him, not only to glorify God in us, but also to consider of his own imperfection and weakness, how far he is behind, and thereupon is moved to strive more strongly against his own infirmity, to grow stronger, and more established. Contrariwise, if he should behold us greater professors, or of longer continuance in the profession of the Gospel, than he, do those things that swerve foully from our show, we make it not only an offence, whereby his weak conscience is wounded, but (as much as in us lieth) a stumbling block for him to fall from his profession withal. A lesson of all men to be learned: for we see many, that in show, (and to their own thinking) be forward in religion, who, (when they be reprov'd, or by meekness exhorted) to leave some abuses, that they commit, because they agree not with their profession, and are offensive to the consciences of many weak ones. Tush (say they) if they be offended with these things, let them: what have they to do with me? they are not to meddle with my dealing, for I have not to do with them: and such like speeches. In the meanwhile, they have clean forgotten, not only the care that we ought to have one over another, but also the example of S. Paul, who would never eat flesh when he lived, rather then he would offend his brother: (which of

itself was a thing lawful, and to be received with thanks giving.) And therefore, we are not only to be careful, that we give none offence: (for woe be unto him, by whom offences do come,) but even to depart from those things that we may use, if they be any occasion of offence to the weak: for many things are lawful, that are not expedient. This end is yet further to be considered another way, and that is in respect of them that are without, who be so obstinate, that they will not only oppugn the profession of religion, but even refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely: not once frequenting the public meetings of Christians, with whom yet we have some dealings in the world. Whereby it may please God to bring them to some consideration of our profession, by our conversation. The which thing S. Peter setting down in one particular calling, is also to be applied as a general doctrine: the words are these: Let the wives be subject to their husbands, that even they that obey not the word, may be won without the word, while they behold your pure conversation, which is with fear: and surely, as the blameless conversation is very forcible to move the adversary, to consider of the profession itself: so we often see, both by example of the word of God, as in Moses, whom Pharaoh accounted godly, and himself wicked: and David, whom Saul accounted upright: and also by our own experience, that it cooleth the courage of the enemy, and stoppeth his mouth. And therefore it is our duty, (and I pray God we may rightly

consider of it) to be marvelous circumspect and careful, that we live so obedient to the decrees of our God, and be so careful to give none occasion to any, to see us faulty in our dealing: that thereby our good and gracious God may be glorified, our hearts and consciences comforted, and all men by us may either be encouraged unto godliness, or convicted in their own consciences of ungodliness. Which God for his mercies sake grant.

AMEN.