

# BALM FROM' GILEAD TO RECOVER CONSCIENCE.

IN A SERMON PREACHED AT PAUL'S CROSS, OCTOBER 20. 1616.

---

## TO THE READER.

VOUCHSAFE, good reader, in a word or two, to understand the occasion of bringing this Meditation to the press, that was purposed only for the pulpit: the rather for that it cometh not from the author's own hand, who would, no doubt, more exactly have polished it, could he have been persuaded to publish it himself; but he, out of his modesty, as he delivered it not like a scholar, his lesson learned without book, nor brought with him any intent to have it further made public, so could not be induced, though instantly laboured both by myself and many others desiring further fruit of so learned a labour, either to publish it himself, or to have any hand at all in the publishing of it.

Howbeit at length, upon extreme importunity (rather to prevent the wrong that, by imperfect copies printed, he might otherwise sustain, than to satisfy such as were earnest suitors to him for the same), he was with much ado drawn, before his departure from the city, to deliver his notes to a friend, with reference of the whole business to the judgment and discretion of others, to deal in, and dispose of, as they should deem fit; who being present at the speaking of it, with the author's notes, and his own helps, hath done his endeavour to pen it as near as he could to that which by the author himself was then delivered; which, though it be not altogether *verbatim* the same, yet it is hoped that there is not anything material wanting that the diligent hearer shall desire; besides, that he shall find some things over and above, that straits of time, and default of memory, were then a means to keep back.

If any ask, what needed such importunity in this business, there being already so many sermons abroad that even printers themselves complain that the press is oppressed with them? I answer: True it is that there are sermons indeed abroad, by some, more than enough, but yet not enough (I dare say it) such as this is, that deal so pithily, so effectually, in points of practice

so necessary, so ordinary, as this doth, wherein learning and piety, delightful manner of handling, together with profitable and useful matter, so concur, that if it please not any, they are those alone, whose profane palates can relish nothing that savoureth of grace, though never so delightful otherwise. If it profit not any, it is to be feared they are such whose corrupt consciences are grown well-near irrecoverable, if not wholly incurable.

But I am loath to be long where the work itself is not. This little be spoken rather in way of apology for myself and such others as urged the publishing of it, than in commendation of the work, which, in the very reading of it, to any judicious, ingenious, and religious, will sufficiently commend itself. For myself, considering the general approbation given it by all sorts that heard it, together with the earnest suits of many others so instantly desiring it upon their reports, and finding, upon view and survey, the thing itself fully to answer both the reports of the one and the desires of the other, I was right willing and ready (as he speaketh in Plato), though one barren hitherto in this kind myself, to perform some midwife-like office to another, for the further enlargement of so generally blessed and so deservedly desired a birth. Wherein, if thou shalt chance to find any defects, consider but (I pray thee) how hard a thing it is for another (though not unskilful) to perfect a work that some curious artist hath left unfinished.

And so, wishing only that it may, through God's gracious assistance, either work into or increase in thee a good conscience, and the comfort thereof, I leave the work to thy perusal, and it to his blessing whose gift a good conscience is, and with whom, beside the present comfort of it here, is a plentiful reward reserved for it elsewhere.

Thine in Christ,

THOMAS GATACRE.

## BALM FROM GILEAD TO RECOVER CONSCIENCE.

---

*For we are assured that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to walk honestly.*—HEB. XIII. 18.

I WILL use no other preface but the short one before my text, and that not as a preface, but in way of earnest suit, 'Pray for me.' For I desire this day, entreating of a good conscience, both so myself to keep and discharge one, and so to speak home to yours, that the dead consciences may hear the voice of God in my text, and be quickened, the secure ones awakened, the troubled ones comforted, the tender confirmed, the good bettered, and all receive some light and life, that we may all depart hence in the peace of a good conscience, 'assured (with our apostle) that we have a good one, desiring in all things to walk honestly.'

This work, God witnessing to my conscience, I much desire to do; and in so doing I know I desire a worthy work, a work so highly and peculiarly needful for these times, that a sharp seer of them was often heard to pray that God would stir up some to write and preach of this argument, and another to Augustine's wish, that he might hear Paul preach, addeth his own, that the text and theme might be conscience. They both saw it gasping, drawing on, and dying, and therefore desired that some life might be put into and kept in it, before it should be utterly overwhelmed in death and darkness.

The time, indeed, was in the beginning of time, when Adam by his first sin brought death upon his soul, and caused it to reign over all the powers of it, that this faculty had most life left in it, like Job's messengers, to tell news of the great loss. This little spark was left fresh, to shew what great light had been extinguished; \* but now this also, through affected blindness and wilful malice, is so smothered and suffocated, through a daily custom of sinning, the eyes of it so pecked out, the mouth so stopped, the very heart of it so wounded and quelled, that (as the world justly complains) it is dead long since, yea, long since buried in the grave of habitual sinning, with the stone of hardness rolled upon it, that, as Mary said of Lazarus, the very name of it is grown unsavoury, odious, and, I fear, ridiculous in the ears of many. Is it not, then, high time for the Lord to work? and for us to see it, by crying aloud (as Elias said of the dead idol) we may

\* *Scintilla reliqua rectæ rationis.*—Lipsa.

fetch life again into it, which is the very life of our spiritual life, and soul of our soul.

The time is now come upon us wherein man affect and desire good names, estates, wives, houses, good clothes, good everything, but content themselves with mean and vile consciences, which ought to be the chief and only good. Wherein men love to exercise and shew, in preaching, in hearing, in trading, and all manner of conversing, their memory, their skill and cunning, and all other their good parts, as they call them, neglecting this, which is the whole of a man, and despising Paul's exercise and Paul's policy, 'to have a good conscience before God and man,' Acts xxiv. 16, 88. Wherein men love preaching, indeed, and knowledge, but not wholesome doctrine, preaching to the conscience and knowledge of themselves, which makes this pulpit and churchyard full of polemical and school divinity, while the plain, practical, and ascetical part lieth untilld and unregarded, which maketh city and country full of craft and cunning, but void and destitute, not only of the power, but show, of conscience. All which maketh me to choose rather, with the apostle, to speak five words to the heart than ten thousand to the ear, 1 Cor. xiv., yea, one to shew you a good conscience, than ten thousand to shew all the science in the world. Sermon you hear upon sermon, till this manna comes out at your nostrils; but, as one said of laws, one is yet wanting for the practising of all the rest. Now conscience is the spring of practice, and the wheel that must set all the rest on going. Is it not high time to speak to conscience, that we be no longer hearers only, but doers also?

The time is now approaching, as we may easily discern, if we have not drunk or slept out our eyes, as in the times of Noah, in which Christ is pouring out his vials upon the earth; and, shortly, wherein the books shall be opened, these clasped and sealed books of our consciences, the contents whereof are now like letters written with the juice of oranges, that cannot be read till it come to that fire which shall make the secrets of all hearts legible; yea every the least fraction, even the least idle thought or speech; all which are faithfully registered in them. Is it not then high time to look into these books, to cast up these books, yea, to be well skilled and versed in them, for the sake and rectifying whereof all other good books are written, that we might be able to prove and examine ourselves, whether upon good ground we can say, with our apostle, 'We are assured we have a good conscience'? &c.

Which text, when I read and pronounce, which I do that you may well understand, methinks I hear Paul's voice, and discern his spirit, as the maid knew Peter's voice. I hear him use the like appeal in the very like case, when the Hebrews accused him, and Ananias had smitten him on the mouth: 'I have, in all good conscience, served God to this day.'

In the self-same case, when they hired Tertullus to paint him out with his rhetoric for a pestilent fellow, a troubler and commotioner of the whole world, he used the like provocation: 'I endeavour always to have a good conscience towards God and man.' The very like protestation against the surmises of the same Hebrews, Rom. ix. Yea, so often that, 2 Cor. i. 12, he calls this and claims it as his own glory: 'This is my boasting, a good conscience.' So that, as we discern ships by their flags, so may we Paul by this flag of comfort and defiance, which he hangs out almost in every epistle; and if we may guess at the whole cloth by the list, this epistle, as this triumph, is his. And worthily, indeed, becomes it this chosen vessel, to glory in this choice jewel, with which the whole world, compared and

weighed in the balance, will be found as light as dross and vanity; and, without this, loss, dung, and vexation of spirit. For mine own part, when I view this triumph, and the apostle so frequently and so confidently using it, I profess myself deeply affected therewithal. The world hath many stately sights, glorious objects, as, namely, strong towers, tall ships under sail, armies under banners, sumptuous buildings, pleasant orchards and groves; but when I represent to myself, when I seriously conceive and consider Paul, riding in this triumphant chariot, advanced above the reach of men's thoughts and tongues, yea, above all sublunary changes, all the fore-mentioned are in mine eyes but stately Babels, pompous fantasies, painted pageants. Did Paul, in the fruition of this, envy Agrippa's golden chain? No; it was but for manner's sake Paul excepted his chain.\* And he that hath this good, needs not envy, I say, not any greatness here present; no, not Nebuchadnezzar's stalking in his magnificent galleries, built for his honour, the great Turk guarded with his Janissaries, the triple-crowned man of pride riding upon men's shoulders, and treading upon emperors' necks; much less the rich fool in the gospel, with his goods increasing and barns enlarged, or the rich glutton, with his delicate fare and purple raiment, or any other glistening appearances of happiness which dazzle the eyes of the doting world. Let become of the rest what will, so that this be my lot and portion (which ever let be my wish above all wishes) that, through God's grace and Christ's blood, I may have a good conscience, and be assured that I have one, desiring, in all things, to walk honestly.

In which text or twofold of Scripture, which I may call Paul's triumph, I find these threads: 1. The excellent matter, a good conscience. 2. The glorious manner, a certain confidence.

The trophies are not mean and base, but the richest gift which Christ ascending on high left us to rejoice in, a good conscience.†

The boasting is not vain; it is no fantastical opinion, no fanatical revelation, but a true persuasion, 'we are assured.' It is no audacious presumption, but a grounded assertion, built upon these four pillars, as so many characters of a good conscience: (1.) Desiring; (2.) In all things; (3.) To walk or converse; (4.) Honestly.

Now, that we may more distinctly apprehend the contents of the text, and that which is best of all, attain the scope and subject matter thereof, which is the end of all, a good conscience (because many talk of conscience, few know it); I will first discover the nature of it, which hath been darkened by school definitions and rhetorical descriptions.

Secondly, because many slips and bad coins go for current and good ones (most brag of a good one, and fewest have it); I will shew you the goodness thereof, wherein it consists, how it is made good, and how it is distinguished from seeming good ones, and how by four infallible characters it is certainly approved and known to be good.

Because it is a dead commodity, a grape of Canaan, the sweetness whereof few have tasted, and they that have it cannot utter it; I will shadow out the excellency of it, as my poor skill and experience will allow me.

Lastly, when I have taught conscience to know itself and its own worth, I will set it a work to do its office in the application of the points of this and all other sermons.

Briefly collect and remark the heads.

\* That is, he wished Agrippa were altogether like himself; only 'for manner's sake,' he added, 'except these bonds.'—ED.

† Σῶμα καὶ ὄφους τῆς γράφης.

‡ Seges glorios.

. What conscience is.

. . What a good one is ; how it may be discerned from bad ones, and known to be good.

8. How good a thing it is. And

4. What is the use, office, and effect of a good one.

1. For the nature of it. Things that are nearest, and most nearly concern us, are commonly farthest off our knowledge and respect. As God, that is in us and near unto us, our own faces and visages, are hardliest known, hardliest remembered. Some fools doubt whether there be such a thing in them, yea or no. Origen thought it a spirit or *genius*, associated to our souls, to guide and tutor them : but this is like some of his other conceits. The carnal atheist thinks it a melancholy humour of the body, and so thinks all the checks thereof to be effects of humour. The schoolmen, somewhat acuter, thought it, some, an habit ; some, an act of the soul. The latter divines, a faculty of the intellectual part. But the truth is, it is no such inmate, no such guest of the soul, but an inbred faculty of it : ' a noble and divine power, planted of God in the soul, working upon itself by reflection : ' or thus, ' the soul of a man recoiling upon itself.\*

A faculty I call it, because it produceth acts, and is not got and lost as habits are, but is inseparable from the soul, immoveable from the subject, as neither acts nor habits are, which is Thomas's chief reason to prove conscience an act, *quia deponi potest* ; the clean contrary whereof is true, though indeed one might think some had laid aside and lost their conscience.

A noble faculty I call it, because so admirably strange in the reciprocal working of it. The eye of man sees not itself but by the help of a looking-glass ; neither hath any creature in this world this privilege and property, besides the soul of man. I give it room, and place it in the whole soul, and thrust it not, as some have done, like a spider, into some corner of it, as if it were a part of a part ; whereas the operation and power of it is circumscribed in no narrower bounds than the soul itself, and therefore the Hebrews more aptly call it *לב*, heart or soul, and the Grecians *καρδιά*. ' If our heart condemn us,' (1 John iii. 20).

It hath indeed the understanding for the throne and palace thereof, where it is chiefly resident, whereby it exerciseth the principal functions, from whence commonly it hath its name conscience, as the emperor of Russia from Moscow, his chief city ; and look how the soul itself is chiefly seated in the head, and there performeth the chief actions of reason, discourse, and sense, yet is in all and every part of the body, and in them performeth baser and meaner offices of nourishment and motion : right so the conscience keepeth a complete court in the whole soul, commonly called *forum conscientie*.

In the understanding part it is a judge, determining and prescribing, absolving and condemning *de jure*. In the memory it is a register, a recorder, and witness, testifying *de facto*. In the will and affections, a jailor and executioner, punishing and rewarding. Say we not in common use of speech, which is the emperor of words, My conscience tells me I did or did not such a thing, which is an action of the memory ? My conscience bids me do, or forbids me to do this or this, which is but an action of the will. It smites me, it checks me, it comforts or it torments me ; what are these but actions of the affections recoiling upon the soul ? But if any list to

\* Cum alia scit animus, Scientia dicitur, cum seipsum, Conscientia, &c.—Hugo et Bernardus.

content about these subtilties, conscience tells them it hath no such custom. Conscience, falsely so called, delighteth to languish about questions not tending to edification. Let us rather turn our eyes to behold and wonder at the divine royalties and endowments of it, it being in man the principal part of God's image, and that by which man resembleth most the autarchy and self-sufficiency of God, which I grant is proper to his infiniteness, to be content and complete within itself, but under him, and with his leave and love. This faculty makes him self-sufficient and independent of other creatures, like unto those self-moving engines which have their principle of motion within themselves. Thus Adam, when he was alone, was not yet alone and desolate, but might converse with this his conscience, as well as with a thousand companions and acquaintances.

Secondly, God hath given it more force and power to work upon men than all other agents whatsoever. It, being internal and domestical, hath the advantage of all foreign and outward. Man in this respect being like to the earth, immoveable of all the winds, though at once they should blow from all the points of the compass, yet easily shaken by a vapour from within; whence it is that the approofs and reproofs of it are so powerful and terrible, the one cheering more than any cordial, the other gnawing more than any chestworm, tormenting worse than hot pincers, boiling caldrons, racks, strappadoes, or what other the cruelty of tyrants hath invented. If one had angels daily ascending and descending, as Jacob had, to comfort him, it were not so comfortable; or if langold or coupled to devils, no more terrible.

Thirdly, It being individual\* and inseparable, there is no putting of it to flight or flying from it. *Nec fugere, nec fugare poteris.*† It was bred and born with us; it will live and die with us. Agues a man may shake off, tyrants and ill masters a man may fly from; but this saith (as Ruth to Naomi), 'I will go with thee whithersoever thou goest.' It hath more immediate deputation and authority from God (of whom all principalities and powers receive theirs) than angels, kings, magistrates, father, mother, or any other superior. It is only inferior to God. It is a certain middle thing between God and man, and hath the dignity of earls and nobles, that are *comites regum*. And so Paul is bold, Romans ix., to call his conscience a co-witness with God, whence it hath the name conscience, where being no other creature with whom it can bear witness, none knowing what is in man, save God, and the spirit, or conscience, which is man; which makes Paul join them in one appeal, Romans xi. It is his spy and intelligencer in our bosoms and bedchambers; a most exact notary of whatever we think or do. It is his lieutenant, and under him the principal commander, and chief controller of man's life; yea, every man's God, in that sense that Moses was Aaron's. It is the surest prognostication and pre-judgment of God's last judgment;‡ and best almanac within a man's own breast, foretelling him what will become of him at that day.

Wonderful is the greatness and sovereignty of it. O men therefore, and O consciences, know yourselves, and in this sense, love, respect, and reverence yourselves more than all other creatures, friends, and acquaintances. If they could speak, they would say to man's conscience, as the people to David, A thousand of us are not equal to thee in worth. It fares with conscience as with simple constables. Many an officer, if he knew his place, would stand more upon it, and take more upon him than he doth. The

\* That is, "indivisible."—Ed.

† Lypa. Pol.

‡ Prejudicium extremi judicii.—Tertul.

husbandman were happy, if he knew his happiness. The horse were strong, if he knew his strength. Conscience, if it knew its power and authority, would not suffer itself so to be silenced, abused, snibbed, and kept under, being under God, the lord-controller of the soul, and supervisor of our life.

2. Thus have we seen in part the greatness of conscience. Doth it not concern us now to see the goodness of it? The greatness of it maketh it, if good, nothing better; if bad, nothing worse; the surest friend and the severest foe. Whose heart burns not within him, to hear wherein that goodness consists, and how he may come by it?

The goodness of it is the peace of it; for stirring, accusing, and galling consciences are consequents of sin, and presuppose some evil.

They, secondly, prove good unto us only by accident, and God's goodness, which maketh them as afflictions, gather grapes of thorns; yea, all things work to the best of his beloved, as physicians do poisons in their confections.

And thirdly, they do not always produce this effect. Sometimes as sicknesses and purgations, they are in order to health, as in the Jews, Acts ii. Oftentimes as in Cain, Judas, Abithophel, they destroy their owners.

Good consciences, therefore, properly to speak, are only quiet ones, excusing and comforting; but here take heed the devil, the great impostor of our souls, put not upon our folly and simplicity, three sorts of quiet ones, as he doth to most: the blind, the secure, and the seared.

Blind and ignorant consciences speak peace, or hold their peace, because they have not skill enough to accuse and find fault; they swallow many a fly, and digest all well enough. While the scales were upon Paul's eyes, he was alive and quiet; he thought concupiscence, the sink and breeder of all sin, to be no sin. Such consciences discern sins as we do stars in a dark night; see only the great ones of the first magnitude, whereas a bright even discovers millions; or as we see a few motes in dark houses, which sunlight shews to be infinite. Such think good meaning will serve the turn, that all religions will save, or a 'Lord, have mercy on us,' at the last gasp; and that which is worst of all, they love to live under blind Sir Johns, seek dark corners, say they are not book-learned, nor indeed will suffer their consciences to prove good lawyers in God's book, lest they should prove common barrotters.\* The law which nature hath engraven they tread out with sins, as men do the engravings of tombs they walk on with foul shoes; they dare not look in the glass of God's law, which makes sin abound, lest the foulness of their souls should affright them. A number of such sottish souls there be, whose consciences, if God opens as he did the eyes of the prophet's servant, they shall see armies and legions of sins and devils in them.

In as pitiful a plight as this, are secure, sleepy, and drowsy consciences, who see, but will not see, with whom sin, Satan, and their conscience is not at peace, but at truce for a time. Safe they are not, only secure they be and careless. These sleep and delight in sleeping; and two ways especially the devil pipes and lulls them asleep: by mirth and by business. Ease and prosperity slay some fools; wealth and hearts-ease, like Delilah, rock them asleep on her lap; jesting and merry tales, eating and drinking, cast them into a spirit of slumber, and put their sin and judgment far away, and make them say they shall never be moved. While they prosper and flourish in the world, their consciences deal as creditors with their debtors; while they are in trading and doing, say nothing to them, but if once down the wind, in sickness, crosses, and poverty, then arrest upon arrest, action upon action, then come the fowls of the air and seize upon

\* That is, 'blackguards.'—Ed.



the sick soul, as the ravens upon sick sheep, write bitter things against them, and make them possess the sin of their youth. Mark this, you that dwell at ease, and swim in wealth in London. Your consciences that lie still like sleepy mastiffs, in plague times and sweating sicknesses, they fly in the throat; they flatter like parasites in prosperity, and like sycophants accuse in adversity. Business also and cares of this life choke the conscience, and the voice of manifold employments drown the voice of conscience, as the drums in the sacrifices to Moloch the cry of the infants. And such consciences are quiet, not because they are at peace, but because they are not at leisure. Mark then, you that have mills of business in your heads, whole *Westminster Halls, Bourses, Exchanges, and East Indies* (as I fear many of you have whilst I am speaking to your conscience), that making haste to be rich, overlay your brains with affairs, are so busy in your counting-house and books, and that upon this very day, that you never have once in a week, or year, an hour's space to confer with your poor consciences; yes, when did you? Let your consciences answer within you. No; but if at a sermon you appoint them a time, and say you will, you disappoint them and say, as Agrippa\* to Paul, 'We will hear thee another time;' and for the most part do as he did, that is, never hear them again.

All these sleepers have but a frenzy man's sleep. This tranquillity will be sure to end in a tempest.

Yet in a more horrible case, and step nearer hell, are such as sear their consciences with a hot iron, harden them of purpose, as men do steel, by quenching the motions of them; brand them with often sinning against their checking, fleshing tender novices with this counsel, when their consciences trouble them for anything, then to do it the rather, and so they shall hear no more of them. And so it proves, through God's just judgment giving them over to a reprobate sense, that their consciences serve them as Moses did Pharaoh, having received many repulses, and at last commanded to come no more in sight, forbore to lose any more breath unto him, but complained to God, who swept him and his host with a final destruction.

When tutors and pedagogues are weary with pupils, they give them over to their parents' fury. These are *αὐτοκράτορες*, and to these villains, there is no peace, saith my God, and my text. These men's consciences, if ever they awake (as seldom they do), they awake as Jonah, in fearful astonishment; and if they sleep out this life till their long sleep, yet their condemnation sleepeth not. Think of this, you monsters, scorners, and mock-gods, that forget your consciences, lest they awake and tear you in pieces. Be not, my brethren, deceived with any of these deceiving consciences, children of darkness. Though conscience be not usually mocked, yet many 'deceive their own heart,' James i. 26, for want of examination. Many say, and think in their consciences, that they have good consciences, when God saith, O that this people had such a conscience; and so Paul speaks in my text, as once to Agrippa, 'O that you were as I am,' 'assured that you have a good conscience, desiring,' &c.

What, then, is a good conscience? That which speaks peace with God's allowance, which is a messenger of good things between God and us, that upon good grounds is in good terms with God. It lies in the lawful peace of it, and not in integrity and freedom from sin. If my conscience accuse me not, yet am I not thereby justified; God is greater than my conscience. If any conscience say to any man, he hath no sin, it lies in the throat, and

\* Qu. 'Felix?'—Ed.

is a liar. Adam only had such a paradise, such a good conscience, walking with God, without sin, without fear, in the state of innocency. There is but one way now to come to it; our peace is now to be had by mediation and reconciliation; being justified by Christ's blood, we have this peace. Instead of many, mark one remarkable place of Scripture for this purpose. If you ask what makes a good conscience, there is but one thing in the world will make it: 'the blood of Christ, once offered by his eternal Spirit, without fault, purgeth our consciences from dead works,' Heb. ix. 14. Yea, so admirable is the force of this blood, that it leaves no more conscience of sin within it. This Lamb takes them away (Heb. x. 2), and carries them out of God's remembrance into the wilderness of oblivion. If any conscience rage as the sea, Christ cast into it, as Jonah, whists all the waves of it. If the law make it as Mount Sinai, covered with darkness, the gospel calms and lightens it presently. If tossed as the ship where the disciples sailed in the night, he rebukes the winds, and they are still; if the devils rend and rage in it, he casts them out presently.

The jailor came in trembling, ready to for-do himself; 'Believe on Christ,' sent him out leaping and rejoicing. It is strange how freely, effectually, and speedily he quiets all. O all ill consciences, hear and believe! this is the honour, royalty, and peculiar dignity of Christ's blood, to pacify and make good our consciences. I do not so much admire at all his miraculous healings of diseases, leprosies, blindness, and lameness, demoniacs of all sorts, as I do at his gracious and sudden quieting of the conscience of Mary Magdalene, of Zaccheus, of Paul; and so the like virtue this blood hath still, to-day and yesterday the same. Nothing else in the world hath this virtue save his blood: all other merriments have no more power to quiet conscience than holy-water and charms to conjure the devil.

I find in a French comedy one brought in as troubled in conscience for sin, and he runs up and down like a hart with an arrow in its side: for remedy he buys a pardon, runs to shrift, whips himself, goes on pilgrimages, and all this while, like an aguish man that drinks water, or leaps into a pool, his disease increaseth; then falls he to seek merry company, to see if he can play away his trouble; but, like Saul's ill spirit, it returns with greater violence, and brings seven worse with it to torment. In the end he finds Christ, or rather is found of Christ, and so finds peace. And this is the good conscience we speak of, to which being in Christ there is no condemnation, no accusation. Wouldst thou purchase a good conscience at an easier rate? wouldst thou have it for sleeping? When thou hast tried all conclusions, come hither and buy salve for thy conscience without money. When thou hast spent all thy time and money about what will not quiet thy mind, as alchemists smoke out all in seeking the philosopher's-stone, here is that which will do it: believe and prove, and thou and thy conscience shall be safe and quiet. This is approved, thus Paul got his. Yea, but is this all? Is it so cheap and easy a thing? May we now sing a *requiem* to our souls, lay the reins on our necks, cast care away, and do what we list? I fear not such an objection from a true believing conscience. They that prattle thus know not *ingenium fidei et bonæ conscientie*, the good nature of faith and a good conscience.

Let me not daub your consciences with untempered mortar. Faith, as it pacifieth, so it purifieth, conscience. Christ purgeth our consciences to serve the living God; and, after all his cures, bids the healed go away and walk after the Spirit, and sin no more. There are indeed a generation of libertines and hypocrites, that serve Christ as Louis the XI. is reported

to have served his leaden crucifix, which he used to wear in his hat; and when he had blasphemed or done any villany, he would pull it off and kiss it, and so sin over and over again: like our common swearers, that cry God mercy, and ask him leave to abuse his name again, and that wittingly and willingly.

These and such like let their consciences speak peace to them, as the friar in Stephan absolved a gentleman that would needs pay well, yet would not promise to amend his fault, instead of an absolution he pronounced a curse upon him in Latin, which he took for pay: 'Christ absolve thee, which I believe he will not; and bring thee to heaven, which is impossible.'

Many sentences hath the master of sentences\* borrowed from Ambrose against such consciences, which I omit to rehearse; lest, as Abner's body, they hinder the passing of the people by. A good conscience stands not with a purpose of sinning; no, not with an irresolution against sin. He is a fool and a vain mocker, no true penitent, that mourns for sin past, and yet means at the same time to sin for the time to come. With which sophism the most perish at this day, with this in their mouths: 'They believe on Christ, and have as good a conscience as the best,' and yet walk in sin. But O thou vain fellow, shew me Paul's good conscience by Paul's proof, by his 'desire in all things,' &c. Is Christ able to save thee, and is he not able to sanctify thee? Let me with Tertullian tell thee that, the promises standing true, thy faith is false; and, the gospel remaining safe, thou shalt perish.

Titus, a tradesman or lawyer here present, haply is desirous to have peace of conscience, is sorry for his oaths and fraudulent courses this week past, but knows he shall fall to the like the week coming, hates them not, and means not to strive against them, but to return to the mire; my text saith not to him, 'Go in peace,' to such loose and licentious consciences that make Christ a bawd of sinning, and faith a cloak of liberty. I have heard that the pope hath sold a pardon for a murder past, with a dispensation annexed for the next; but Christ, my Lord and Master (as bountiful and gracious as he is), grants no such. If he forgive that which is past, he gives at least so much grace, as to deny ungodliness for the time to come. To conclude this point. Thou desirest a good conscience, without intending or conditioning: I bid thee believe in Christ, and thou hast one; yet take this, not into the bargain, but as an after proviso. Art thou willing to have a good conscience? and to be assured thereof? here follow four infallible characters and marks of a good one, which I desire you to mark attentively, and by them to try your consciences thoroughly. Hitherto I have shewed how you may get one; now how you may prove one. Here are four elements or humours; which, well compounded and mixed, make up a perfect healthful conscience; if any one be wanting, or fail in a just measure or proportion, conscience is accordingly defective and sick.

The first is, that which must be the first in every good action, that is, the will—(θέλημα); that the bent and inclination of that be set right. I would the word had been plainly translated as it is in other places, *verbum*, 'willing.' It implies first, that he that hath a good conscience, doth not only do well, but wills to do well, doth it voluntarily, not forcedly, or out of external and sinister motions, but from an internal principle, a sanctified and rectified will, which God accepts for the deed, and above the deed. Secondly, that he doth not only wish and faintly desire, which translation

\* Lib. iv. Dist. 14.

may flatter an hypocrite—that hath some sluggish lusts, and some sudden good pangs and moods, and such as far the time little differ in sickness and starts from a regenerate will; but the word notes a strong and settled resolution, a constant purpose, and such as produceth endeavour. ‘He that *will* be rich, pierceth himself through with many sorrows;’ where the same word is used. I grant it is *carnificina*, a rack to a good conscience, to say, it must always do well; and contrarily, it is a true ground of comfort to say, that a will and purpose is sufficient testimony and approval of a good one; but then it must be meant, not every languishing and lazy flash of every wisher and woulder, but of a willer; and this word is equal with the other two, which are good synonyms and glosses upon this used by Paul, Acts xxiii. 24, ‘I labour,’ or ‘exercise myself,’ and *προσπορεύμαι*, ‘I lay my policy,’ or bend my wit and will to have a good conscience, and to serve God, &c.

It may be said of some, they would be good, but they have no will to it. There is none so prodigal or slothful but would be rich; yet we say not such will be rich, that is, set it down determining it *ultima voluntate*. There are none so wicked, but at some times would be good and leave sin; but these dispositions breed imperfect essays and proffers, ripen not, hold not, discern not the name of will. Corrupt flesh hath many such propensities and bubbles, and is very prodigal in momentary purposes and promises; but David saith he will keep God’s commandments, ‘I have vowed, sworn,’ &c.; when Michal mocked, ‘I will yet be more vile,’ as resolute swaggers, whose will is set and sold to sin. They sin and will sin, say preachers what they can. Ahab will go, cry Micaiah what he please; so Joshua will serve God, let others do what they will. Sanctified will may be crossed, and captivated, and hindered, but yet it holds its own bent, and overcomes the law of rebellion, is predominant, and can never be forced to sin, or to will to sin, without a curb in the mouth; the more stiff and steady this will is, the better symptom of a good conscience.

Secondly, this will must extend itself to all (*iv ὅτι*), though in many things our deeds fail: which extent let Paul expound with a distribution, towards God and man. In duties divine, human, of charity and piety, whatsoever is done for God’s sake and conscience sake, is done equally. No man makes a conscience of one, but he that doth of all; he that delights in the breach of one commandment, hates all the rest. The rich and precious box of a good conscience, is polluted and made impure, if but one dead fly be suffered, I say not, if one fly of infirmity light in it, against the will forementioned; but if with our will it lie, and die, and putrefy in it. When Christ purgeth Mary’s conscience, he casts out, not six, but seven devils, yea, he leaves not one of the legion remaining, not one spot of leprosy in any one member, but saith, ‘Faith hath made thee whole.’ Here I see many fall short, and I pity to see so many civil men and hypocrites to come so near the kingdom of heaven and a good conscience, and yet one thing is wanting. Foolish Herod, that deest many things and sticketh at one; foolish Ananias, that spillest and leavest all thy cost with a small reservation: foolish hypocrites, why takest thou pains to climb so high on the hill of piety, and yet for one step of injustice to thy neighbour, ascendst not into God’s mountain, though thou comest often into God’s tabernacle? Thou civil, honest man, why givest thou alms, livest fairly with men, and forgettest the main, art so far short of this ‘all things,’ that thou forgettest that which should be all in all, that is, piety to God? Universal and catholic obedience, is the best distinguishing touchstone of

truth and falsehood, of good and bad consciences. This universality must also extend to great and small duties. I say universality, not equality; a good conscience mainly desires to please God in the great commandments, as Christ calls them, and then in every complement, in every hoof and nail, so near as he can, yet observing a due proportion. It most of all strains at gross sins, yet swallows not gnats. It trembles at wounds and blood, fears faith and truth; it abhors adultery, hates dalliance; it pays tithe-sheaves carefully, it detains not tithe, mint, and aniseed; it says not, an inch breaks no square, and small faults must be winked at, and in this sense may well be said to be scrupulous, because it being tender feels scruples; only here I lay a caveat, that it be not erroneous, or ignorantly dubious and scrupulous, like the wall-eyed or bird-eyed horse, that starts upon every shadow without occasion or cause, makes conscience where God and his word makes none, makes many questions for conscience sake. Light and information is as good as tenderness, both together make an excellent conscience; and *obiter* for the sake of scrupulous consciences, that desire unfeignedly in all things to walk honestly, I give them these solemn charges:

*First*, That they study the peace of the church.

*Secondly*, That they study their liberties.

*Thirdly*, That they be humble towards God and their superiors, and willing to illuminate and regulate their consciences by the word, and be established in what they are to do, not admitting every fear of the contrary without ground, yet remembering Paul's rule, to follow the dictates of conscience, rather than of angel, potentate, or prelate, yea, of apostle. For, after the apostle had determined that, in the 14th to the Romans, he yet requires in the eater a plerophory, and blesseth him that doth it with consent of conscience, and makes all other sin a sin against conscience, being worse than a sin against man, yea, next to the sin against the Holy Ghost. An erroneous conscience holds the wolf by the ears, binds to the act, frees not from the fault. Oh! therefore labour to get a salve, and think not your own eyesight to be sharper than the eagles'. Endeavour to inform your consciences aright; and, having so done, be careful in all things to keep a good conscience, and that through the whole tenor and course of your lives, which is required in the next term of conversation.

A word that adds to the former, constancy and equality. There are in the life of man many turnings (*ἀναστροφάς*), references, and divers respects, in all these; at every turn to be the same man, requires the strength of a good conscience. To take a step or two well, a child or a drunkard may; but to walk evenly, and to turn hither and thither well, argues strength. A jade, or a broken-paced horse, may rack or strike a stroke or two right; but to maintain the thorough pace at every stop and turn, to be at the command of the rider, argues mettle and goodness. This term is expressed by Paul: 'I have always, or thoroughly, to this day' (*ἀρχῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης, δια παντός*), Acts xxiii. 1; and, xxiv. 16, *ἀρεσκον ἔχειν συνίστην*. That is, without tripping or stumbling, or without offence to other, &c. A weak conscience falls at every turn: godly in one company, profane in another; a good one, as a square cube, is the same which way soever you turn him. Turn him to God, to his neighbour, turn him to company, turn him alone, turn him loose to all occurrences, he holds his own, and walks honestly. For example, one day is the brief of a man's whole life, and is a little life, bounded with the night and the morning, as with birth and death: wherein a conscionable man first turns

to God in prayer alone, then with his family, then to his calling, then to his recreation, to society, eating and drinking, and at night returns to God and his rest; in all these walking godly, soberly, righteously, and is able to say trulier than the epicure at night, 'I have lived this day:' *βεβιώκα*, I have walked honestly. He is a good day's-man, or journeyman, or tasker, which is an excellent mystery of well living and redemption of time, a working up our salvation in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. He that lets slip one day's watch and work may sleep at night in a whole skin, but not in a sound conscience. Such crazy consciences have, as broken brains, their good and evil days, *turbida et lucida intervalla*. Conscience, as a vessel, may easily be kept pure and clean if rinsed every day; but if it go longer, it gathers soil, and asks harder scouring by more than ordinary repentance. Daily washing will keep it pure and fair, which is the last thing which is yet wanting to perfection, such perfection as is to be found in the way; and that being added, will set on the roof and pinnacle upon this building.

*Καλως*, *honestly*; I could wish the translators had used some other word, because this is so disgraceful and contemptible as the world goes, though the word in its due signification is honourable, *honesty* in truth (as ironically as the world useth it) being only truly honourable, forcing honour from the breasts of men, which is the seat of honour, which bravery doth but beg. The word is comprehensive, and compasseth in the fathom of it as much as any of all the other adverbs in Scripture: worthily, decently, accurately, circumspectly, gravely, after the best fashion or comely, praise-worthy, lively, famously (*ἀξίως, εὐπρεπῶς, ἀκριβῶς, σεμνῶς, εὐσχημονῶς*). It notes the lustre and grace of an action, which makes our conversation shine before men, and sets out God's glory. *Τὸ καλὸν*, a thing that citizen and courtier much stand upon in their actions; yea, all men now-a-days build, feast, wear apparel, not for bare necessity, but for their credit, so as they may get honesty by them. Unconscionable men slubber over their work, and think anything good enough for God, as in Malachi; and content themselves with reasonable service, for so they translate that, *λογικὴν λατρείαν*, Rom. xii. Whereas Paul often requires Christians should be excellent ringleaders in fair works (*καλῶν ἔργων προϊστάμενοι*), and provide honest or honourable things before men, and to possess their vessels, much more their consciences, in honour, that they may be fit temples for the Holy Ghost. As Theodoret most divinely upon Exodus, look how the temple was adorned with the finest gold, silver, silk, purple, scarlet, jewels, &c, so must thy conscience, of which temples this was but a type.

There is in every duty, besides the deed done, an honourable decorum annexed, as in hearing, to hear swiftly; in preaching, to labour and to be instant in season, &c.; in giving alms, to do it cheerfully; in trading, to be at a word; in payments and promises, to keep day and touch: and thus it becomes a Christian to exceed the pharisee and the civil man, or else it is not for his and his Master's honour.

David did excellently when he would not offer a sacrifice without cost; the woman that spent her costly spikenard on Christ, the smell whereof perfumed all the house, and holds the scent to this day; the widow that gave all her substance. Our honourable personages, how mean are they in allowances to ministers, in alms to the poor, or any expenses that respect God and their souls! A good conscience, for the sake of this honesty, avoids and flies, not only scandalous blemishes and stains, but all the least blushes and appearances of evil, all brackish-tasted things, his

stomach goes against them. If he knew never so well cards, dice, usury, non-residency, plurality to be never so lawful, yet because they stand not with this honour, he will none of them. He asks not what he may do with a safe conscience, but with an excellent one; not what is lawful and expedient, but honourable.

Thus have we seen the apostle riding in this triumphant chariot, drawn, as it were, with these four horses, the four evidences of conscience.

The first proves it good; the second, true; the third, strong; the fourth, excellent.

He that hath 'the will,' hath the seeds of religion, and is a Christian, and no atheist.

He that willeth 'in all things' is a sound Christian, and no hypocrite.

He that 'converseth or walketh,' is a grown Christian, no babe or weakling.

He that walks 'honourably,' is an excellent Christian, no ordinary one.

He that hath 'all these,' may well say and glory with the apostle's confidence, that he is assured.

He that hath them not, as most have them not, may well conclude, We are assured that our consciences are evil and impure, willing to sin, and walk after the flesh.

The word (*πιστιμα*)\* is Paul's word, and yet he speaks it in the plural number by way of syllepsis, changing the number, because he would have it the word of every Christian. *πιστιμα* is a word of as good certainty as *ἰδὲ*, it seconds and binds it as the better word, Rom. xiv., 'I know and am assured.' Of it, as of the root, springs *πιστε*, for all Bellarmine would elevate it. It implies a grounded persuasion, not from inspiration or revelation, but from arguments and experience. Faith is the subsistence and evidence (*ὑπόστασις, ἰσχυρος*); and the persuasion or assurance of a Christian is as firm as is any wordling's for his estate; yea, a thousand times surer. You rich men think yourselves sure of estates here upon earth, but we Christians know ourselves sure of heaven. Conscience knows itself, as well as science any principle, or sense any object. Without which certainty, Christians were, of all men, most miserable. Popery and nature, and the old leaven of Pelagius, newly worse soured by Arminius, never having had experience of this plerophory, serve Christians, when they boast of this their confidence, as Ananias did Paul, strike them on the face with the term of pride and presumption, yea, stick not to give them the lie; but such betray themselves with their own noise. I would ask them but Paul's question, 'Do not you know?' If they answer, as usually they do, No, nor they think any man living on earth, I would pray them to mark what follows: 'Except you be reprobate,' refuse, or *rejectionii*, as yet in the state of reprobation, for aught they know.

Indeed, it becomes the strumpet and adulteress to doubt of her husband, and not to call him *ishi*, Hosea ii.; but let him mark (saith Bernard) the spouse's language, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' See (saith he) what a good conscience dares do. *Habet ecclesia spirituales uxor, qui fiducialiter agunt cum Christo*: 'The church hath her spiritual ones that rely boldly on Christ,' or 'confidently;' the very term that Bellarmine excepts against. And, *id audet unus, quod audet universitas; ego pulvis et cinis, &c.* Yea, every particular person dares do as much as the Catholic Church; I that am dust and ashes, dare apply this to myself. And Thompson upon that text, 'These things (saith he) are not written, for I know not what

\* Qn. *πιστιμα*? *πιστιμα* is not Paul's word, neither is it plural.—En.

airy notions or ideas, but for me and thee.\* Without which, who would be a Christian? A man's conscience is deep and deceitful; but the spirit of man, especially helped by the Spirit of God, and upon examination and trial, may and doth know as well (saith Augustine), his charity wherewith he loves, as his brother whom he loves; and if his charity, then his faith.

Three *scios* I find in the end of John's epistle. The major, or proposition, is God's word, 'The believer is saved.' The minor is assumed by God's Spirit and the conscience, two sufficient witnesses, fortified and assisted by many premises, by the compass within, the landmarks without: faith, and the fruits of faith. 'Dost thou believe?' saith Christ; 'I believe,' saith the man. And this is the restipulation of a good conscience in baptism, and in every true believer. *Credis? Credo* was the ancient form, which answer all waverers must reverse and innovate. Latitudes of assurance I grant in babes and old men. David knew, when he came to Hebron, that God meant to establish the kingdom to him and his, which he knew before, but now with a confirmed knowledge. The balances of the scale shake and tremble at the first; after the weight is in a while, it settles and rests, and so our souls. And even this certainty is of the nature of all precious faith, though experienced faith increaseth it. It is this confidence that makes a good conscience; this valour makes the value of it invaluable and unutterable.

8. Look upon my text, and see how valiantly, by the right and interest of it, Paul first challengeth and commands prayers, even at the hands of the Jews. Who waters a dry stake with any heart? What comfort hath Peter to pray for Simon Magus in the gall of bitterness? But with what hope of audience might he pray for Cornelius, and such as he was? So John for Gains and the elect lady, walking in the truth; not so for Diotrophes. Secondly, see how he begs, not their good opinion and good words of him, though he knew they had strange surmises and suggestions of him from the false apostles, to be a very *Proteus* and *Polypus*, the grand cheater of the world; but instead of apologies and captation of good will, he relies to this fort, passeth not for man's day; he is happy enough without them; he carries his comforter in his bosom and breast, and hath a self-sufficiency. A dependent and beholden happiness is half a misery, like mills that cannot grind without wind or water. Saul cannot be merry without a fiddler; Ahab without Naboth's vineyard; Haman without Mordecai's courtesy. A good conscience without music, or money, or honour, is happy and merry alone, and is like the late engine of the perpetual motion.

As rich men stand upon terms, I can live by you and without you; so saith a good conscience to the world.

It lays claim not only to the prayers and communion of saints, but to the attendance of angels. As Luther is said to have said, they are cooks and butlers to this continual feast; they ascend and descend to them with messages from heaven. Christ, as Ahasuerus with Esther, delights to sup with such. The Holy Ghost takes up in them his abode and temple. See in the Canticles how Christ is enamoured with the beauty and familiarity of his spouse, and they often mutually invite one another to walks and feasts.

Thirdly, which is more, in the fall of all other comforts; yea, in despite of the greatest discomforts and disgraces that can be, in the greatest storms and stress, in the foulest weather, this ship reigns and rides at anchor, as

\* *Hæc non sunt scripta pro idæis necio quibus, sed pro me et te.*



in a harbour and lee, hangs out the flag of comfort and defiance. Let the Jews think and speak what they will, it stirs not Paul; he soars like an eagle, not respecting the chitting of sparrows; is above the scourges and razors of tongues.

I am much taken up with admiration, when I read Acts xxvii. How Paul in the angry Adriatical Sea, at midnight, when the tempestuous Euroclydon blew, after fourteen days' want of meat and light, when the mariners despaired, how courageous he was; but I wonder as much and more, to see his conscience pass with topsail and banners displayed, through the sea and waves of good report and bad report, to see him singing and praying at midnight in the dungeon, all manacled and fettered, in a wounded skin, but whole and merry conscience.

Censures and rumours the world is full of; who escapes? Not Paul himself; yet is above them, and gives a secret *item* to all such as censure him, that they wronged him in judging a good conscience. The fashion is, to judge and censure all courses we reach not, or favour not; and so we smite many a good conscience. In this respect what need have we all of good consciences, seeing tongues spare none!

There be three days especially, the day of sickness, of death, of judgment, in which comfort is worth a world, and then all worldly comforts and comforters, like runaway servants and drunken serving-men, are to seek when one hath most use and need of them, as Job complaineth of the brooks of Teman in the drought of summer; which makes the triumph of the wicked (Job xx.) momentary, and as a night vision, whenas the prophet said, 'One dreams of bread, and wakes hungry.' In these times you shall see the merry and jolly worldling hang the head like a bulrush, and the ruffian's brags lag like a starched ruff in a storm. How do such droop, even in old age, and say, The days are come, wherein there is no pleasure! The storm comes after the rain; that which is worst, an ill conscience, like a bloodhound, hunts dry-foot, and brings the scent of sins of his youth; whereas the conscience of a well-passed life is the staff of age, *pabulum senile*, better than all the sack and sugars, and such pitiful comforters. When the stomach fails, and the grinders wax few, and appetite ceaseth, this is a continual feast. In the decay of sleep this is a down pillow. In all our tribulation, this Simon helps us to bear our crosses. In all our evil days it is at hand. It sustains the infirmities of the body. When princes sat in council against David, this was his Jonathan to solace him. When the lion roars, the righteous is bold as the lion, and fears not what man can do unto him.

But if once death begin to look us in the face, how doth Nabal die like a stone! How do Ahithophel and Judas die the death of cowardly harts and hares, pursued with the full cry of their sins, that makes them dead in the nest before they die! Then a kingdom for a good conscience! Then send (as in the sweating sickness and the plague) for Mr Minister, but alas! he is come; he can but speak to the ear, and all in vain, unless God open the conscience to hear and be quiet, to hear and embrace comfort. But when speech fails, and all thy senses shut up their doors and windows, then who or what can avail but a good conscience? When thy wife and thy friends do augment thy grief with parting, and loath to depart, as Paul's friends broke his heart with weeping, then this only and alone dies, or rather lives with thee, and seeing land approaching, bids thee be of good comfort. More cheerfully have I seen it make some die than others wed.

All the martyrs, from Stephen the proto-martyr, down to the last that suffered, are clouds of witnesses; it hath enabled them to embrace their

stakes, clap their hands, leap, as Dr Taylor did, within two stiles of the stake, or (as he said) of his home and Father's house.

Lastly, at the last day, and after the last day, when all these shadows shall fly away, this substance shall abide. A good wife is a good thing, but Sarah must part with Abraham; and these relations shall cease in heaven; but a good conscience, attended with good works, shall follow, and the better it hath been here, the better in degree it shall be there, the wider entrance and entertainment it shall find there. When all books shall perish, and heaven melt like a parchment scroll, this book shall be of use; when all devils and damned shall tremble, and wish the hills to cover them, this shall lift up thy head, for thy redemption approacheth; when neither friends nor a full purse shall plead, nor the wicked stand upright in judgment, then, then, well-fare a good conscience; then shall conscience have its mouth opened, tongue untied, and God will bid it speak. Happy he then that hath an excusing one, miserable he that hath it an accusing adversary.

Yet still further: faith and hope are excellent things here in this valley; these shall cease, but conscience abides. A good one was a petty heaven upon earth, a Mount Tabor, a glimpse of glory here; a bad one was a hell, a purgatory, or a limbo at the least, tasting of the flashes and smoke of hell; but hereafter how intolerable shall be the horror of the one, and how inconceivable the joys of the other. Without this worm that dies not, hell should not be hell; without this continual feast, heaven should not be heaven. Next the happy vision of God shall be the company of a good conscience, and next to that the society of saints and angels.

4. But, O Lord, who believes our report, or to whom is the benefit and excellency of this creature of thine revealed? O Lord, to whom shall we speak and apply what hath been said? You, the sons of men, have lost your hearing; charm we never so wisely, thunder we never so earnestly, you despise us ministers. You think we come hither to play our prizes, to speak out of form and not of conscience, or to speak out of choler and passion.

Besides, if you would hear us, we are strangers to your secrets, to your hearts and ways. We are confined to our cells and studies, and are not acquainted with the tithe of the world's villanies; besides, when the hour-glass is out we can say no more to you, and perhaps shall never see you again. But your consciences know you, though happily you be strangers to them; they compass your paths, your lying down, and accustomed ways.

I will therefore turn my speech (as the prophet to the earth and heaven) to your consciences. Hearken, O consciences! hear the word of the Lord. I call you to record this day, that it is your office to preach over our sermons again, or else all our sermons and labours are lost. You are the ends of the soul, to chew over again. Against your reproofs, and against your secret and faithful admonitions, what exception can any take? Your balm is precious; your smittings break not the head, nor bring any disgrace. God hath given you a faculty to work wonders in private and solitude. Follow them home, therefore, cry aloud in their ears and bosoms, and apply what hath now and at other times been delivered.

Conscience, if the house and owner where thou dwellest be a son of peace, let thy peace and thy Master's peace abide and rest on him; that peace which the world never knows, nor can give, nor take away. Be thou propitious and benign, speak good things, cherish the least sparks and smoke of grace; if thou findest desire in truth, and in all things, bid them not fear and doubt of their election and calling. With those that desire to

walk honestly, walk thou comfortably. Handle the tender and fearful gently and sweetly; be not rough and rigorous to them. Bind up the broken-hearted. Say unto them, Why art thou so disquieted and sad? When thou seest them melancholy for losses and crosses, say unto them in cheer, as Elkanah to Hannah, 'What dost thou want? Am not I a thousand friends, wives, and children unto thee?'

Clap them on the back, hearten them in well-doing, spur them on to walk forward; yea, wind them up to the highest pitch of excellency, and then applaud them. Delight in the excellency of the earth.

Be a light to the blind and scrupulous.

Be a goad in the sides of the dull ones.

Be an alarm and trumpet of judgment to the sleepers and dreamers.

But as for the hypocrite, gall him and prick him at the heart. Let him well know that thou art God's spy in his bosom, a secret intelligencer, and wilt be faithful to God.

Bid the hypocrite walk 'in all things.'

Bid the civil add piety to charity.

Bid the wavering, inconstant, and licentious 'walk constantly.'

Bid the lukewarm and common Protestant for shame amend, be zealous, and 'walk honestly.'

But with the sons of Belial, the profane scorners, walk frowardly with them, haunt and molest them, give them no rest till they repent, be the gall of bitterness unto them. When they are swilling and drinking, serve them as Absalom's servants did Amnon, stab him at the heart. Yet remember, so long as there is any hope, that thine office is to be a pedagogue to Christ, to wound and kill, only to the end they may live in Christ, not so much to gaster and affright as to lead to him; and, to that purpose, to be instant in season and out of season, that they may believe and repent.

But if they refuse to hear, and sin against thee, and the Holy Ghost also, then shake off the dust of thy feet, and either fall to torment them before their time, and drive them to despair; or if thou give them ease here, tell them thou wilt fly in their throat at the day of hearing, when thou shalt and must speak, and they shall and must hear.

Conscience, thou hast commission to go into princes' chambers and council tables; be a faithful man of their counsel. Oh, that they would in all courts of Christendom set policy beneath thee, and make thee president of their councils, and hear thy voice, and not croaking Jesuits, sycophants, and liars. Thou mayest speak to them, subjects must pray for them, and be subject, for thy sake, to honour and obey them in the Lord.

Charge the courtiers not to trust in uncertain favours of princes, but to be trusty and faithful, as Nehemiah, Daniel, Joseph; whose histories pray them to read, imitate, and believe above Machiavelli's oracles.

Tell the foxes and politicians, that make the *main* the *by*, and the *by* the *main*, that an ill conscience hanged Abithophel, overthrew Haman, Shebna, &c. Tell them it is the best policy, and Solomon's, who knew the best, to get and keep thy favour; to exalt thee, and thou shalt exalt them, be a shield to them, and make them as bold as the lion in the day of trouble, not fearing the envy of all the beasts of the forest, no, nor the roaring of the lion, in righteous causes.

Conscience, thou art the judge of judges, and shalt one day judge them; in the meanwhile, if they fear neither God nor man, be as the importunate widow, and urge them to do justice. Oh! that thou sattest highest in all courts, especially in such courts as are of thy jurisdiction, and receive their

denomination from thee, suffer not thyself to be exiled, make Felix tremble, discourse of judgment to them.

To the just judges, bid them please God and thee, and fear no other fear; assure them, for whatever they do of partiality or popularity, thou wilt leave them in the lurch; but what upon thy suit and command, thou wilt bear them out in it, and be their exceeding great reward.

If thou meetest in those courts and findest any such pleaders as are of thine acquaintance and followers, be their foe and their promoter, tell them if they durst trust thee, and leave Sunday works, bimbng on both sides, selling of silence, pleading in ill causes, and making the law a nose of wax, if they durst plead all and only rightful causes, thou hast riches in one hand, and honour in the other, to bestow on them.

As for the tribe of Levi, there mayest thou be a little bolder, as being men of God, and men of conscience, by profession. Be earnest with them to add *con* to their *science*, as a number to cyphers, that will make it something worth. Desire them to preach, not for filthy lucre or vainglory, but for thy sake; wish them to keep thee pure, and in thee to keep the mystery of faith; assure them thou art the only ship and cabinet of orthodoxal faith, of which, if they make shipwreck by laziness and covetousness, they shall be given over to popery and Arminianism, and lose the faith, and then write books of the apostasy, and intercision of faith, and a good conscience, which they never were acquainted withal, nor some drunkards of them ever so much as seemed to have.

And whereas thou knowest that many of all sorts are discouraged with the taxation and slanders; some that confer, some that are fearful and doubtful, if they do it to the Lord and thee (as who knows but God?) bid the world as Paul doth here, turn censuring into praying; and, if they will not, let them, as they preach thee, so regard thee in all godly simplicity, *ἐν ἀνυπόκριτι καρτερῶντες τῷ Θεῷ*, and expect their reward at the hand of the great Shepherd.

For the city get thou into the high places, into the pulpits, into the entries and gates of the city; cry aloud and utter thy words in the streets. Oh! that thou wert free of it, and hadst freedom of speech and audience in all their courts and companies; and that, for thy sake, they would make and keep wholesome constitutions for the Sabbath, and orderly keeping of it, and see that well executed and observed, which is the nurse of all piety and conscience.

Charge them that are rich citizens, and in their thousands, that they lay no weak foundation, no three-halfpenny foundation, but be bountiful to pious uses, to the poor, and to the ministry of the city, that they take away the scandal of the times, and upbraiding of the Romish Peninnah against the Hannah of our times. Let the hospital, widows, and orphans, taste of their bounty; with such sacrifices (if they come from faith and a good conscience) God is pleased. Bid them not trust in the shadow of silver and gold, which will wither as Jonah's gourd, but in thy shelter. Go home with them this day, I invite thee to their table. If I had liberty (as they say it is a courtesy for the preacher to invite a guest), Conscience, thou shouldst be my guest. Defer not till to-morrow, lest business hinder thee. This day reckon and walk with them, and talk with them. Bid them lay aside all reckoning books and reckon with thee, and often reckoning will make you friends.

Be at their elbows when they use false weights and balances, and give them privy nips; let the mutual profit of buyer and seller be the rule of

buying and selling, and not the gain of the one of them alone. Assure them that are hoarders by fraud, that they hatch as the hen the partridge's egg, that hath wings and will fly away; and that they heap up wrath against the day of wrath, and are in the mean time self-condemned; whereas thou wouldst make them rich and add no sorrow, nor gravely grit in their mouth, but such gain as will stand with content and self-sufficiency.

If thou meetest with Simonaical patrons, tell them, they and their money shall perish, for selling thee and the souls of the people.

I have not, as Ezekiel, a map of the city, but thou knowest all the lurking dens, stews, and infinite books.\* I send thee to preach and cry unto them.

Roar and thunder in the ears of the roaring boys, of all the swaggering crew, and tell them they must for all these come to judgment.

To the fashion-mongers, both the statelier sort and the light-headed, yellow-banded fools: tell the one, that the richest lining and inside is a good conscience; and for the other, if thou wilt vouchsafe, tell them, that plain apparel and a good conscience will do them more honour than all these apes' toys.

As for the players, and jesters, and rhymers, and all that rabblement, tell them, thou wilt one day be in earnest with them, and though thou suffer them to personate thee upon their stages, and shew their wit, and break their jests on thee now, thou wilt owe it them, till they come upon the great stage, before God and all the world. Where my sides, memory, and knowledge fail, add, enlarge, and apply. Print it in the hearts of as many as thou canst, and the Lord grant thee grace and audience in their ears, that they may suffer the words of exhortation; and so I end with the prayer after my text, which is like a rich garment, that hath facing, guards, and selvage of its own. 'The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in all good works, to do his will,' &c.

Thou, O Lord, that hast wonderfully planted and formed our consciences within us; that only knowest and searchest our consciences; that hast thy chair in the heavens, and only art able to teach them and purify them; thou which woundedst and healedst three thousand at one sermon; whose hand is not shortened; stretch out thine arm, and do the like in these latter times.

Forgive the sins against thee and our consciences, and the frequent checks of it and thy Spirit.

Overthrow the man of sin, that tyrant and usurper of conscience.

Mollify and enlighten the obstinate consciences of the Jews, Turks, and pagans.

Illuminate and sanctify all Christian princes, especially our sovereign, and fill the royal treasure of his conscience full of excellent comfort; and that he may as much excel in conscience all other kings of the earth, as he doth in science, without all comparison.

Comfort the afflicted, direct the doubtful and scrupulous, and remove all snares and scandals of weak consciences, which thou hast not planted, and which thou knowest are not for the peace of thy Sion.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God our Father, and the comfortable fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and the peace of a good conscience, be with you all, now and ever! Amen.

Qu. 'Nooks?'—Ed.