

THE
VAIN RELIGION
OF THE
FORMAL HYPOCRITE,
AND
THE MISCHIEF OF AN UNBRIDLED TONGUE,
AS AGAINST RELIGION, RULERS, OR DISSENTERS,
DESCRIBED IN
SEVERAL SERMONS
PREACHED AT THE ABBEY IN WESTMINSTER,
BEFORE
MANY MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
MDCLX.:
AND
THE FOOL'S PROSPERITY
THE OCCASION OF HIS DESTRUCTION
A SERMON
PREACHED AT COVENT GARDEN.
BOTH PUBLISHED TO HEAL THE EFFECTS OF SOME HEARERS'
MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND MISREPORTS.

TO THE READER.

THOUGH God be not the author of sin, he knows why he permitteth it in the world. He will be no loser, and Satan shall be no gainer by it in the end. The malice of the devil and wicked men is, ordinarily, the destruction of the cause which they most desire to promote; and an advantage by accident to the cause and persons which they would root out from the earth. Were there no more to prove this than the instances of Joseph's brethren, of Pharaoh, and the murderers of our Lord, it were enough. We usually lose more by the flatteries of Satan and the World, than by their violence. If these hasty, coarse, unpolished sermons, shall prove beneficial to the souls of any, this also may come in among the lower rank of instances. If the devil had let me alone, they might have been cast aside, and no further molested him or his kingdom, for aught I know, than they did upon the preaching of them. But seeing he will needs, by malicious misreports, and slanders, kindle suspicion, and raise offence, against them and the author, let him take what he gets by it. He hath never yet got much from me, by violence, or by his foul-mouthed slanderous instruments: no, not when the impudence or multitude of their slanders have forced me to be silent, lest I trouble the reader, or misspend my time.

The first of these discourses, being intended to undeceive the formal hypocrite, and to call men from a vain, to a saving, serious religion, and to acquaint them that cry out against hypocrisy, where the hypocrite is to be found, it seems, provoked the ignorant or the guilty; in so much that the cry went, that I preached down all forms of prayer, and all government and order in the church: when there is not a syllable that hath any such sense; but it seems what I spoke against the carcass, was interpreted to be spoken against the body of religion.

The words of Mr. Bolton, and other divines, which I have

cited against the reproachers of serious piety, are added since the preaching of the rest, as being more fit to be presented here to the eye, than in the pulpit to the ear.

The petulancy of men on both extremes constrained me to add, "The Bridle for their Tongues."

The second discourse, I understand, offended some few of the gallants, that thought they were too roughly handled; let them here peruse it, and better concoct it, if they please.

I only add this observation to the heirs of heaven, that are above this world, and live by faith.

Few rich men are truly religious; it is as hard for them to be saved, as for a camel to go through a needle's eye. Yet rich men will every where be the rulers of the world, and so (as to outward protection or opposition) the judges in matters of religion. Judge, therefore, whether dominion and earthly reign be the portion of the saints (as Jewishly some of late imagine); and what usage we must ordinarily expect on earth! and what condition the church of Christ is like to be in to the end. As his kingdom, so ours, is not of this world. A low, despised, suffering state, is it that believers must ordinarily expect, and prepare for, and study to be serviceable in. If better (may I call it better) come, take it as a feast, and grudge not when the table is withdrawn; and look not it should be our every day's fare. But yet, value the more highly those few of the rich, and great, and rulers, that are above this world, and devote their power and riches to the Lord, and are holy and heavenly in the midst of so great temptations and impediments.

The Lord teach us to use this transitory world as not overusing it, that we may never hear, "Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things. (Luke xvi. 25.) How shortly will they find themselves everlastingly undone, that made not sure of a more enduring portion! Reader, that thou mayest savingly remember these common but necessary, though much neglected, truths, is the end of these endeavours, and shall be the matter of my heart's desire and prayers, while the Lord continueth me

His servant for the promoting the increase
and edification of his church,

November 15, 1660.

R. BAXTER.

Postscript. Readers, meeting, in his consideration of the Liturgy, with these following words of the Rev. D. Gauden, "I

cannot but commend the candour, justice, and integrity of Mr. Baxter, who lately professed to me, that he saw nothing in the Liturgy, which might not well bear a good construction, if men looked upon it as became Christians, with eyes of charity," I was sensible of the great respects of this learned and Reverend man; but, lest you misunderstand both him and me, I think it best to tell you more fully what were my words. Speaking for reformation of the Common Prayer Book, and an addition of other forms in scripture phrase, with liberty of choice, &c. I said, "That for the doctrine of the Common Prayer Book, though I had read exceptions against divers passages, I remembered not anything that might not receive a good construction, if it were read with the same candour and allowance, as we read the writings of other men." So that it was only the truth of the doctrine that I spoke of; against which I hate to be peevishly quarrelsome, when God hath blest this church so wonderfully, with a moderate and cautelous, yet effectual, reformation in matter of doctrine: the more pity is it that the very modes of worship and discipline should be the matter of such sharp and uncharitable discords, which must one day prove the grief of those that are found to have been the causes of it, and of the sufferings of the church on that occasion.

THE VAIN RELIGION OF THE FORMAL HYPOCRITE, &c.

JAMES I. 26.

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

BELOVED hearers, I may suppose that we are all come hither to-day for the great end of our lives ; and to labour in that work for which we are created, preserved, instructed, and furnished with the helps and means of grace ; even to prepare for death that is coming to arrest us, and for the presence of our Judge, who stands at the door ; and to make our calling and election sure, that the glory of the saints may be our lot, when the world of the ungodly are cast into endless misery and despair. And I hope I may suppose that, in order to this end, you would gladly be acquainted with the causes of damnation, that you may avoid them ; with your greatest dangers, that you may escape them ; and with the hinderances of your salvation, that you may overcome them. When we read in the Gospel, that salvation is to be offered unto all, and no man is excepted or shut out, but such as shut out and except themselves ; and yet read that there are but few that find the "strait gate," and the "narrow way," and that the "flock is little" that shall have the "kingdom," and that "many shall seek to enter that shall not be able," (Matt. vii. 13, 14 ; Luke xii. 32, and xiii. 24.) we must needs conclude that some powerful enemy standeth in the way, that can cause the ruin of so many millions of souls ; but when we go further and find what rich preparations God hath made, and what means he hath used, and what abundant helps he offereth and affordeth to bring men to this blessed state of life, it forceth us to admire that any enemy can be so strong, as to frustrate so many, and such excellent means. But when we yet go further, and find that salvation is freely offered, and that the purchase is made by a Saviour to our hands, and

that hearty consent is the condition of our title, and nothing but our wilful refusal can undo us ; when we find that salvation is brought down to men's wills, and also what motives and convincing helps, and earnest persuasions, are appointed and used to make men willing ; we are then surprised with yet greater admiration, that any deceiver can be so subtle, or the heart of man can be so foolish, as to be drawn (in despite of all these means) to cast away the immortal crown that else no enemy could have taken from him. And now we discern the quality of our enemy, of our snares, of our danger, and of our duty ; it is not mere violence, but deceit, that can undo us ; not force, but fraud, that we have to resist. And were not the mind of a carnal man exceeding brutish, (while he seemeth wise for carnal things,) it were a thing incredible that so many men could, by all the subtlety of hell be drawn, in the day-light of the gospel, deliberately and obstinately to refuse their happiness, and to choose the open way of their damnation, and leave their friends lamenting their calamity, that might have mercy, and cannot be persuaded to consent.

That Satan is the great deceiver, and layeth the snare, and manageth the bait, we are all convinced ; that the world, and all our fleshly accommodations are the instrumental deceivers ; the snare, the bait which Satan useth, is also a thing that we all confess. But that beside the devil and the world, a reasonable creature should be his own deceiver, and that in a business of unspeakable, everlasting consequence ; and that religion itself, (a seeming religiousness that indeed is vain,) should be made by himself the means of his deceit, this is a mystery that is opened to you in my text, and requireth our most careful search and consideration.

When Satan and the World have wounded us by their deceits, religion is it that helpeth us to a cure. He that is deceived by pleasures and profits, and the vain glory of the world, must be undeceived and recovered by religion, or he must perish. But that religion itself should become his deceit, and the remedy prove his greatest misery, is the most stupendous effect of Satan's subtlety, and a sinner's fraudulency, and the saddest aggravation of his deplorable calamity. And yet, alas, this is so common a case, that where the gospel is preached, it seems to be Satan's principal game, and the highway to hell. There is no other name by which we can be saved, but by Jesus Christ, the only mediator between

sinful man and the offended Majesty; and yet, what is there in all the world that is more abused to the deceiving of men's souls, than the name and grace of Jesus Christ? Men that may be saved by an effectual faith, are cheated and destroyed by false faith and presumption. The merciful nature of God is the ground-work of all the comforts of the godly; and yet there is nothing that is more abused to the deceiving of men's souls; that will profess that they trust in the mercies of God, while they are labouring to be miserable by the refusing and resisting the mercy that would save them. The free promises of the gospel do support true believers, but are abused to the deceiving of the presumptuous world. And so the Apostle telleth us that many do by their religion; they will have a religion to deceive themselves, but not to save them.

It is the hypocrite that is the subject in my text, who is described by his double property. 1. That he seemeth to be religious. 2. That his obedience answereth not this seeming or profession; the instance is given in the bridling of his tongue, because that was the point that the Apostle had some special reason to insist on, with those to whom he immediately directed his epistle. Though it is plain, in verses 22, 23, &c., that it is the whole work of obedience that he implieth, where he instanceth in this particular. The sin of the tongue which he specially intendeth to reprove, was the bitter reproaching of their brethren, upon the account of their differences in matters of religion, and the vilifying of others, and uncharitable passionate contentings and censures, upon pretence of knowing more than others; as appeareth in the third chapter throughout.

The predicate is double; one by way of supposition, viz., that this hypocrite doth but deceive his own heart; the other by way of assertion, viz., that his religion is vain.

Whether *θηρηστικός* and *θηρησικία* be fetched as far as from Orpheus, the Thracian, as Erasmus and many others imagine, is of no great moment to our understanding of the text, it being evident that it is the worshipping of God that is here meant by religion; and it is men addicted to his worship that are called religious. The seeming, here spoken of, refers both to himself and others; he that seemeth to himself to be religious, or is judged so by other men. By bridling the tongue, is meant, restraining it from evil speech. By deceiving himself, is meant the mistake of his judgment concerning the sincerity and acceptableness

and reward of his religion, and the frustrating of his own expectations hereupon ; his religion is said to be in vain, in that it shall not attain the ends of an unfeigned, true, religion, of which more anon. The sense of the text, then, is contained in these two propositions :

1. There is a seeming religiousness which is but self-deceiving, and will prove in vain.

2. Where sincere obedience doth not accompany the profession of religion, and, in particular, when such men bridle not their tongues, their religion is but vain, and self-deceiving.

These two being contained in the text, the former comprised in the latter, I shall handle them together, and show you, I. What this seeming religion is, and how it differeth from true religion. II. Wherein this self-deceiving by a seeming religion doth consist. III. Whence it is that men are so prone to this self-deceit. IV. In what respects this religion is vain, and why. V. And then we shall consider how to improve these truths by a due application.

I. Concerning the first I must show you, 1. What this seeming religion is made up of. 2. And what it wants, which maketh it delusory and vain.

In general, this vain religion is made up sometimes of all that, 1. A laudable nature or temperature of body ; 2. And good education, and excellent means ; 3. Assisted by the common workings of the spirit, can produce.

More particularly, 1. A vain religiousness may have a great deal of superficial opinionative knowledge, and so may have the truest religion for its object : the true doctrines of faith may be believed by a faith that is not true ; the hypocrite, as to the materials of his creed, may be orthodox ; when ignorance aboundeth, he may be a knowing man, and pity the ignorance of others ; when errors abound, he may be of the right opinion in religion, and speak much against the errors of the times, as one that is wiser than the giddy, heretical, sort of people ; he may " know the will of God, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and be confident that he himself is a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hath the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. (Rom. ii. 18—20.) He may know as much materially as the upright may, and be able to convince gainsayers, and be a notable champion for the defending of the truth against the many adver-

saries that oppose it; and so may be eminently useful in his generation.

2. He that is but religious in vain, may be frequent in the worshipping of God; and may "seek him daily, and delight to know his ways, and to approach him, and ask of him the ordinances of 'justice,' as if he were one of the people that "did righteousness," and "forsook not the ordinances of their God." (Isaiah lviii. 1, 2.) He may be oft in fasting, and punctual in keeping holy days and ceremonies, (as verse 3, Isaiah i. 12—15; Luke xviii. 11—13.) and exercise much severity on himself, "after the commandments and doctrines of men, in things that have a show of wisdom, in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." (Col. ii. 20—22, 13.) Though he be slow-paced in the right way, he is swift in his mistaken paths. Though he liketh not preciseness, zeal, and forwardness, in the spiritual works that God prescribeth, yet, when it comes to his own, or other men's inventions, he will be religious and "righteous over-much," (Eccles. vii. 16.) and forward, to offer the sacrifice of a fool, that considereth not that he is but doing evil, while he thinks to please God with the sacrifice of his services, though he turn away his ear from an obedient hearing the word that should direct him. (Eccles. v. 1, 2; Prov. xxviii. 9.)

3. He that is but religious in vain, may see the evil of discord and divisions, and inveigh much against schismatics, and see the excellencies of unity and peace; and therefore may join himself with the visible catholic church, and with the christians and congregations that are most for unity. There have always been hypocrites in the most orderly peaceable societies of believers, and still will be.

4. The self-deceiving hypocrite is oft-times very sensible of the evil of vertiginous mutability in religion; and, therefore, he may be much resolved to continue what he is, and may cast many a jeer at the weather-cocks of the times, and the unconconstancy and levity of ignorant or temporising men; and may stand to his party and profession, against much opposition, as glorying in his constancy, and being ashamed to be thought a changeling, or such a turn-coat as others whom he merrily derideth.

5. An hypocrite that hath no other religion but delusory and vain, may observe the weaknesses of persons that are of lower education and parts, and may loath their indiscretion in

conference and behaviour, and their unhandsome expressions in prayer and other duties, and shake the head at them, as silly, contemptible, self-conceited fellows; and his heart may rise against their disorder, tautologies, and affectations: and it is like enough that hereupon he will jest at conceived prayer, or extemporate (as they call it), and bless himself as safe in his parrot-like devotions, because the same Spirit teacheth not fine words and rhetorical language to all that it teacheth to pray with unutterable sighs and groans, (Rom. viii. 26, 27;) though the Searcher of hearts (who is not delighted with compliments and set speeches) doth well understand the meaning of the Spirit.

5. The self-deceiving hypocrite doth frequently pretend to be a man of moderation in matters of religion, as distasting the hair-brained zealots, as he counteth them, that cannot be content to have their faith and religion to themselves before God, and to live and talk as others do, but must be singular, and make a stir with their religion, and turn the world upside down. The true zeal of the godly is usually distasteful to him, and the corrupt zeal of schismatical persons doth cause him to bless himself in his lukewarmness, and to take his most odious indifferency, and want of fervent love to God and his holy ways, to be his virtue.

6. This self-deceiving hypocrite doth frequently pretend to an exceeding great reverence in the managing of the outward part of worship; and to an extraordinary zeal about the circumstantial of religion. He accounts them all schismatical and profane that place not as much of their religion as he doth in gestures and forms and other accidents of worship, acquainting us that the pharisaical temper in religion is natural, and will continue in the world.

7. If the temptation of the hypocrite lie on the other side, he can withdraw himself into some small or separating society, and place his religion in the singularity of his opinions, or in the strictness of the way and party that he owneth, and in his conceited ability in his conceived or ready expressions in prayer; and can cry out as much upon the formalist, as the formal hypocrite upon him, and glory in his zeal, as the other in his moderation. It is in the heart that hypocrisy hath its throne, from whence it can command the outward acts into any shapes that are agreeable to its ends; and can use materials of divers natures, as the fuel and nutriment of its malignity. And whatever party such are

joined to, and whatever way they have been trained up to, whether formality, or schism, or more regular, sober, equal, ways; in all of them their religion is but vain, and they do but deceive themselves by all.

8. The religion that is but delusory and vain, may be accompanied with much alms, and works of seeming justice; and charity. (Matt. vi. 1, 2; Luke xviii. 11, 12.) He may have many virtues called moral; and be a man of much esteem with others, even with the best and wisest, for his seeming wisdom, and piety, and justice. He may be no extortioner, unjust, adulterer, but as to gross sins seem blameless, (Luke xviii. 11, 12; Phil. iii. 6,) and be much in reproaching the scandalous lives of others, and thank God that he is none such. (Luke xviii. 11.)

9. He that hath but a vain religion, may, in his judgment, approve of saving grace, and like the more zealous, upright; self-denying, heavenly lives of others; and wish that he might die their death, and wish himself as happy as they, so it might be had on his own terms; and he may have some counterfeit of every grace, and think that it is true. (Numb. xxiii. 10; Jam. ii. 14, &c; 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3; Mark v. 20.)

10. None will be more forward to call another hypocrite; than the hypocrite; nor to extol sincerity and uprightness of heart and life. And thus you see what this vain religion is made up with:

2. If you marvel what the hypocrite yet wants, that makes his religion delusory and vain, I shall now tell you, I hope, to your conviction and satisfaction.

1. For all his fore-mentioned religion, he wants the Spirit of Christ, to dwell as his sanctifier within him; and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) But because this is known by the effects, I add,

2. He wants that spiritual new birth, by which he should be made spiritual, as his first birth made him carnal. (John iii. 5, 6; Rom. viii. 6—8.) He is born of the will of the flesh, and of man, but not of God. (John i. 13.) From the first man Adam he is become a living soul, but by the second man Christ, the Lord from heaven, he is not yet quickened in the spirit. (1 Cor. xv. 45, 46.) He is not born again of the incorruptible seed, the word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Pet. i. 23.) He is not yet saved by the washing of regeneration (save only as to the outward baptism) and by renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed by Christ

on all his members, that, being justified by his grace, they should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Tit. iii. 5, 6.) They are not new creatures, old things being not past away, and all things with them become new: and therefore it is certain they are not in Christ. (2 Cor. v. 17.) They have not put off the old man with his deceitful lusts, and deeds, nor have they put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness. (Eph. iii. 22—24; Col. iii. 9, 10.) They have but patched up the old un sanctified hearts, and smoothed over their carnal conversations with civility and plausible deportment, and so much religion as may cheat themselves, as well as blind the eyes of others: but they are strangers to the life of God, (Eph. iv. 18,) and never were made partakers of the divine nature, which all the children of God partake of, (2 Pet. i. 4,) nor of that holiness, without which none shall see the Lord. (Heb. xii. 14.)

3. Though he make a slight and customary confession of his sins, unworthiness, and misery, yet he is not kindly humbled at the heart, nor made truly vile in his own eyes, nor contrite and broken-hearted, nor emptied of himself, as seeing himself undone by his own iniquities, crying out unclean, and loathing himself for all his abominations, weary of his sin, and heavy-laden, as all must be that are fit for Christ. Read Isa. lvii. 15, and lxvi. 2; Psalm li. 17, and xxxiv. 18; Lev. xiii. 44, 45; Ezek. xxxvi. 31, and xx. 43, and vi. 9; Matt. xi. 28; Rom. vii. 24.

4. This man's religion must needs be vain, for he wanteth the life of faith itself, and heartily believeth not in Christ. He hath but an opinion of the truth of Christianity, through the advantage of his education and company; and thereupon doth call him self a Christian, and heartlessly talk of the mystery of redemption as a common thing: but he doth not with a humble, broken heart, betake himself to Christ as his only refuge from the wrath of God, and everlasting misery, as he would lay hold on the hand of his friend, if he were drowning. The sense of the odiousness of sin, and of the damnation threatened by the righteous God, hath not yet taught him to value Christ, as he must be valued by such as will be saved by him. These hypocrites do but talk of Christ, and turn his name as they do their prayers, into the matter of a dry and customary form. They fly not to him as the only physician of their souls, in the feeling of their festering wounds: they cry

not to him as the disciples in the tempest, "Save, Master, we perish." They value him not practically, (though notionally they do,) as the pearl for which they must sell all. (Matt. xiii. 44—46.) Christ doth not dwell in his heart by faith, nor doth he long with all the saints to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. (Eph. iii. 17—19.) He counteth not all things loss for Christ, and the excellency of his knowledge; nor doth he count them as dung, that he may win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ; (Phil. iii. 8—10;) nor can he truly say, that he desireth to know nothing but a crucified Christ, (1 Cor. ii. 2,) and that "the life that he now liveth in the flesh, he liveth by the faith of the Son of God, that loved him, and gave himself for him." (Gal. ii. 20.) He is not taken up with that admiration of the love of God in Christ, as beseems a soul that is saved by him from the flames of hell, and that is reconciled to God, and made an heir of life everlasting. He hath not understandingly, deliberately, seriously, and unreservedly, given up himself and all that he hath to Christ; and thankfully accepted Christ and life, as given on the gospel terms to him. This living effectual faith is wanting to the hypocrite, whose religion is vain.

5. This vain religion doth never practically show the soul the amiableness and attractive goodness of God, so far as to win the heart to a practical observation of him, and adhering to him, above all; nor so far as to advance him, above all the creatures, in the practical judgment, will, and conversation; nor doth he cause the soul to take him for its portion, and prefer his favour before all the world, and devote itself and all unto his interest and will, and give him the superlative and sovereign honour, both in heart and life. (Psalm lxiii. 3, and xxx. 5, and iv. 6, 7, and xvi. 5, and xvii. 4; Matt. x. 37.)

6. This vain religion is always without that serious belief of the life to come, which causeth the soul to take it for its happiness and treasure, and there to set its desires and its hopes, and to make it his principal care and business to attain it, and to make all the pleasures and profits and honours of the world to stoop to it, as preferring it before them all. (Matt. vi. 20, 21, and ver. 33; Luke xviii. 22, 23, and xiv. 33; Col. iii. 1—5; Phil. iii. 18—20.) The hypocrite taketh heaven but for a reserve, and as a lesser evil than hell, and seeks it but in the

second place, while his fleshly pleasures and interest have the pre-eminence, and God hath no more but the leavings of the world; and he serveth him but with so much as his flesh can spare.

7. This vain religion consisteth principally in external observances. If he be a formalist that hath it, his religion lieth in his beads and prayer-books, in going so oft to church, and keeping holy days and fasting days, and saying over such and such words, and using such and such gestures and ceremonies, and submitting to church orders, and crying down sectaries and preciseness, and jeering at the simplicity of plain-hearted Christians that never learned the art of dissimulation. Their religion is but a pack of compliments, a flattering of God, as if they would mock him with cap and knee who will not be mocked; (Gal. vi. 7;) while they draw near to him with their lips, their hearts are far from him. (Matt. xv. 7—9.) They wash the outside, and pay tithe of all, and give some alms, and forbear disgraceful sins, which would make them be esteemed ungodly among men. (Matt. xv. 2, 3; Mark vii. 4, 8; Matt. xxiii. 25, 26, &c., vi. 1, 4, 6, &c.; Isa. i. 11—14, lviii. 1, 2.) But these self-deceivers are strangers to the inward spiritual work of holiness: their hearts are not busy in the worship of God, by fervent desire and exercise of other graces, while their tongues are put into an artificial pace, and they are acting the part of men that seem to be religious.

If they be cast into the sectarian mould, they place their religion in the strictness of their principles and parties, and in contending for them, and in their affected fervour, and ability to speak and pray extempore: but the humble, holy, inward workings of the soul toward God, and its breathings after him, and the watch that it sets over the heart, this hypocrite is much a stranger to.

If he be brought up among the orthodox in well-ordered churches, he placeth his religion in the holding of the truth, and taking the right side, and submitting to right order, and using God's ordinances: but the most of an upright man's employment is at home, within him; to order his soul, and exercise grace, and keep down sin, and keep out of the world, and keep under the flesh and carnal self, and do the inward part of duty; and he is as truly solicitous about this as about the outward works, and contenteth not himself to have said his prayers, unless, indeed, his heart have prayed; nor to have heard, unless

he have profited, or heard with obediential attention: and he makes conscience of secret duties, as well as of those that are done in the sight of men; but this the hypocrite comes not up to, to trade in the internal spiritual part.

8. The religion that is vain is without an universal hatred of known sin, and an actual conquering of it, so far as to live out of gross sin, which some call mortal, and to be weary of infirmities, and to be truly desirous to be rid of all; and to be willing to use God's means against it. Thus it is with the sincerely religious, but not with these hypocrites that deceive themselves. (John iii. 19, 20; Rom. vii. 24; Luke xiii. 3, 5; Rom. viii. 1—14; Gal. vi. 7, 8.) The hypocrite hath not only some particular sin, which all his religion makes him not willing to see to be a sin, or to forsake; but his very state is sinful in the main, by the predominancy of a selfish carnal interest and principle; and he is not willing of close plain dealing, much less of the diligent use of means himself to overcome that sin, because he loveth it.

9. This vain religion is not accompanied by an unfeigned love to a life of holiness, which every true believer hath; delighting to meditate in the law of God, with a practical intention to obey it, and delighting in the inward exercise of grace, and outward ordinances as advantages hereunto; desiring still more of the grace which he hath tasted, and grieving that he knoweth, and trusteth, and loveth, and feareth, and obeyeth God so little, and loving to reach higher, to know, and love, and fear him more. (Psalm i. 2, and cxix. 1—5, 9, 10, &c; Heb. xii. 14; 2 Peter iii. 11; Matt. vii. 13, 14.) But the self-deceiver either hath a secret dislike of this serious diligence for salvation, and loving God with all the soul and might, (because he is conscious that he reacheth it not himself,) or, at least, he will not be brought to entertain any more than will stand with his carnal ends.

10. A vain religion doth not so far reveal the excellency of Christ's image in his servants, as to cause an entire love to them as such; and to delight in them above the most splendid and accomplished persons that are strangers to the life of grace, and so far to love them as, when Christ requireth it, to part with our substance, and hazard ourselves for their relief. Thus do the truly religious. (Psalm xvi. 2. and xv. 4; 1 John iii. 14; Matt. x. 40; xi. 42; and xxv. 34, 35, 40, 42, 45, 46.) But the hypocrite either secretly hateth a heavenly, holy life, and, consequently the people that are such, (because they seem to con-

demn him by overgoing him, and differing from him; or, at least, he only superficially approveth of them, but will forsake both Christ and them in trial, rather than forsake his earthen god. I have now showed you what the self-deceiver wants, in which you may see sufficient reason why his religion is but vain.

II. We are next to show you how these hypocrites do deceive themselves, and wherein their self-deceit consisteth. It may seem strange that a man of reason should do such a thing as this, when we consider that truth is naturally the object of the understanding, and that all men necessarily love themselves, and therefore love what they know to be simply good for them. How then can any man that hath the use of reason be willing to be deceived, yea, and be his own deceiver, and that in matters of unspeakable consequence! But it is not as falsehood, nor as deceit, that they desire it, but as it appeareth necessary to the carnal ease and pleasure which they desire.

The way by which they deceive their own hearts consisteth in these following degrees:—

1. The hypocrite resisteth the spirit of grace, and rejecteth the mercies offered in the gospel; and so, by his refusal, is deprived of a part in Christ, and of the life of grace, and the hopes of glory which were tendered to him.

2. But withal, he is willing of so much of this mercy as consisteth with his sinful disposition and carnal interest: he is willing enough to be happy in general, and to be saved from hell-fire, and to be pardoned, and to have such a heaven as he hath framed a pleasing imagination of.

3. And therefore he maketh him up a religion of so much of Christianity as will stand with his pleasures, profits, and reputation in the world, that so he may not be left in despair of being saved, when he must leave the world that he most loved. The cheap and the easy parts of Christianity, and those that are most in credit in the world, and that flesh and blood have least against; these he will cull out from among the rest, and make him a religion of, passing by the dearer and more difficult and spiritual parts.

4. Having gone thus far, he persuadeth his own heart that this kind of religion which he hath patched up and framed to himself is the true religion, the faith, the hope, the charity, the repentance, the obedience, to which salvation is promised; and that he is a true Christian, notwithstanding his defects; and

that his spots are but such as are consistent with grace; and that his sins are but pardoned infirmities; and that he hath part in Christ, and the promises of life, and shall be saved, though he be not of the preciser strain. When he committeth any sin, he confidently imagineth that his confession and his wishing it were undone again, when he hath had all the pleasure that sin can give him, is true repentance; and that, as a penitent, he shall be forgiven: and thus, while he thinketh himself something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. (Gal. vi. 3.) He hath a counterfeit of every grace of God; a counterfeit faith, and hope, and love, and repentance, and zeal, and humility, and patience, and perseverance: and these he will needs take to be the very life and image of Christ, and the graces themselves that accompany salvation.

5. Having got this carcass of religion without the soul, he makes use of all those things to confirm him in his deceit, which are appointed to confirm true Christians in their faith and hope. When he reads or thinks of the infinite goodness, love, and mercy of God, he thinks God could not be so good and merciful, if he should refuse to save all such as he. When he readeth of the undertaking and sacrifice of Christ, and how he is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, he confidently, hence, concludeth that a Saviour so gracious, that hath done and suffered so much for sinners, cannot condemn all such as he. When he readeth of the extent and freeness of grace in the promises of the gospel, he concludeth that these promises belong to him, and that grace could not be so free and so extensive, if it did shut out all such as he. When he observeth the mercies of God upon his body, in his friends, and health, and credit and prosperity, he concludeth that surely God loveth him as a child, in that he dealeth so fatherly with him. If he suffer adversity, he thinks that it is fatherly chastisement of God, and therefore proveth him to be his son, and that he shall have his good things in the world to come, because he hath his evils here. If he suffer any thing for a good cause, or a cause that he taketh to be good, he taketh himself to be a confessor, and marked out for life eternal. If he give any considerable alms, he applieth all the promises to himself that are made to those that are truly charitable, though he giveth but the leavings of the flesh, and giveth but on common compassions, or for applause, or for some common end, and not as to Christ whom he honoureth in his members, as one that hath resigned all unto

him. If he pray, from the lips only, or only for pardon, and such other mercies as flesh itself would be glad to have, without the inexpressible groans of the spirit for spiritual mercies, (Rom. viii. 26,) he presently applieth all the promises to himself that are made to the upright that call upon God: and thus love, mercy, and Christ himself, are abused by him, to this damning work of self-deceit.

6. Moreover, he makes use of all the ordinances of God, to the deceiving of his own heart. The outward part of baptism persuades him that he is inwardly regenerate. He receiveth the Lord's supper that he may confirm his presumption, and increase his self-deceit, as the godly receive it to confirm and increase their saving faith. He joineth with the church in those prayers and praises that are fitted to the true believer's state that he may thence more confidently deceive his own heart, with the conceit that he is a true believer. And thus he turneth the bread of life, and all the helps and means of grace, to the strengthening of his sin, and the furthering of his perdition.

7. Moreover, this miserable self-deceiver does usually get into such company as may further his self-deceit, and maketh use of them to that end. If he get into any holy, well-ordered church of Christians, it is that, by his outward communion with the saints, he may seem to himself to have inward communion with them. If he get among able godly ministers, and other judicious Christians, and finds that he is well esteemed of by them, he is confirmed hereby in his presumption and self-deceit: when, alas! we must, in charity, judge of men as they profess and seem, and leave the infallible judgment of the heart to God. Usually, this self-deceiving hypocrite doth associate with some carnal or factious men, with whom he makes himself a party: and such will smooth him up, and make a saint of him, either because they are as bad themselves, and dare not condemn him, lest they condemn themselves, or because they are flatterers and daubers, or men that were never themselves acquainted with those saving operations of the spirit which he wants, or because they are partial to one of their own faction. And thus a formal hypocrite may be stroked by formalists, and a schismatical hypocrite may be soothed up by those of his own sect (as lamentable experience telleth us that such do) to the increase of their pernicious self-deceit.

Yet more than so; if these hypocrites fall in company with the notoriously profane, from them they will fetch some con-

firmation of their self-deceit : when they hear them swear and curse, and rant, and see them drunk, they secretly with the Pharisee rejoice and say, "I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as this publican." And this is one reason why such hypocrites are well content to have some servants in their families, or some neighbours or company about them that are notoriously profane, that their deluded consciences, considering that they are more civil and religious themselves, may hence gather comfort, that they are the servants of God, and in a state of grace.

Hence also it is, that those of them that go on the schismatical side, do purposely go into separated societies, that, by withdrawing from so many, and (as they speak) coming out from among them, they may seem to themselves to be fellow-citizens with the saints, and to be of the little flock that shall have the kingdom. This is the use that self-deceivers make of their companions.

8. Moreover, the hypocrite confirmeth his self-deceit, by observing the great numbers of ungodly persons, worse than he, that are in the world : this makes him think that God should be unmerciful, and heaven be empty, if all such as he should be shut out : the damnation of so many seemeth so incredible to him, that it much increaseth his confidence and self-deceit.

9. And he deceiveth himself also by a mis-observing and mis-applying the faults and infirmities of the servants of the Lord, and the scandalous lives of many hypocrites like himself. When he readeth of Noah's drunkenness and incest, and David's adultery and murder, and Peter's denial of his Master, with cursing and swearing, he considereth not how much these singular actions were contrary to the scope of their lives, nor by what serious repentance they did rise, and do so no more ; but he hence concludeth that sure he is in a state of grace, that hath no such heinous sins as these : though indeed he hath more heinous continually within him, (even a love of the world and pleasure above God, a secret root of unbelief, a servitude to the flesh, &c.) when he seeth any about him that profess the fear of God, prove hypocrites or apostates, or fall into any scandalous sin, he strengtheneth his presumption by it, and concludeth that this profession of greater holiness than he himself hath, is but hypocrisy ; and that he is as good as those that seem more devout, though he make not so much ado with his religion : or at least that he shall be saved, when those are so bad that are accounted better : if there be but a Ham in the

Ark and family of Noah, an Ishmael in Abraham's house, an Esau in Jacob's, an Absalom in David's, a Judas among the disciples of Christ, these self-deceivers will thence fetch matter for their own delusion and perdition, as if the rest were all as bad, or sanctification were not necessary to salvation.

10. The self-deceiver also is confirmed in his presumption, by taking to himself the comforts that ministers hold forth, for truly humbled, upright souls, that are apt to be too much disquieted and cast down. Our congregations are mixed of godly and ungodly, and broken-hearted and hard-hearted, dejected and self-confident sinners (besides all those that are well settled in their spiritual peace). And as we cannot tell how to tell the wicked of their misery, nor open the hypocrite's self-deceit, but the self-suspecting humbled soul, will mis-apply it to themselves, and be more dejected by it, and say, it is thus with me; so we cannot tell how to comfort the distressed, and clear up the evidences of a drooping soul, but the presumptuous hypocrite will lay hold upon it, and think that it belongs to him. Every comfortable book or scripture that he readeth, and every comfortable sermon or discourse which he heareth, is abused to increase his self-deceit.

11. It increaseth the hypocrite's self-deceit, when he findeth some partial reformation in himself, and that he hath mended many things that were amiss; this he takes for a true conversion, and thinks that the civilizing and smoothing of his life, the change of his opinion, and the taking up a form of godliness, are true sanctification; and that he is not the man that once he was, and therefore is in a safe condition. Though, alas! he hath never yet known by experience the new heart, the new ends, the new resolutions, affections, and conversation of a saint.

12. Lastly, he deceiveth himself by misunderstanding the nature of hypocrisy. Because he perceiveth not that he is a gross dissembler, but meaneth as he speaks, so far as he goes, therefore, he thinks that he is no hypocrite; whereas, besides the gross hypocrite that knoweth that he doth dissemble, and only deceiveth others, there are also close hypocrites, that know not they are hypocrites, but deceive themselves. And these are they that my text here speaks of, when it saith, "He deceiveth his own heart." It is hypocrisy (to seem better than one is, and to profess to be a sincere Christian when he is none,) though he confidently think that he is what he professeth himself to be.

III. But what is it that can move a reasonable creature to be wilfully guilty of such self-deceit in the day-light of the gospel, when he hath so much help to see his way?

Answer. 1. They are first deceived by the vanities of the world, and the pleasures of sin, before they deceive themselves by their religion. Their religious self-deceiving is but subservient to their fleshly servitude, and the world's deceit. They are carnal from the birth, (for that which is born of the flesh only, is but flesh, John iii. 6,) and custom in sinning fixeth and increaseth their sinful disposition. Their hearts are engaged to their worldly accommodations, and to their vain glory, and the things that please the flesh; they are willing slaves to their concupiscence. And therefore they cannot admit of that religion which would deprive them of that which they most dearly love. Christ speaks too late to them. They tell him they are promised already. Their affections are pre-engaged: sin hath taken up the chiefest rooms: and the heart that loveth sensuality and prosperity best, cannot love God best too: for it can have but one best. The nature of true sanctification is to take down the darling of a carnal heart, and to cross it in its dearest loves, and to lay that at our feet that before was our treasure, and to tame the body, and to bring it into subjection, which before was in the throne. The motions of such a change will not be acceptable, till they are made so effectual as to cause that change: the command will be unpleasant, till the heart be suited to the nature of the command. He that seeth what care and labour there is to gather a worldly treasure, and what a stir is made in the world about it, can never expect that all this should be vilified and despised at a word, and that any doctrine (how true and heavenly soever) can be welcome to these worldly men, that would debase their glory, and imbitter their delights, and make their idol seem but dung. The doctrine of Christ would take the old heart out of their bodies: and they will not easily leave their hearts. It doth not only command the drunkard to live soberly, and the glutton temperately, and the lascivious filthy sinner chastely, and the proud person humbly, and the covetous to live contentedly and liberally; but it commandeth the hearty forsaking of all for the sake of Christ, (Luke xiv. 33,) and the accounting them but as loss and dung that we may win him, (Phil. iii. 7—9.) and mortifying of that flesh which before we daily studied to please, (Col. iii. 4—5,) and the crucifying of its affections and lusts,

(Gal. v. 24,) and the denial even of ourselves. (Luke ix. 23, 24.) And for a carnal mind to love and yield to such commands, were no other than to cease to be a carnal mind. All this is largely expressed by the Apostle, (Rom. viii. 1, &c,) They that are in Christ Jesus, "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit—For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So they that are in the flesh cannot please God—For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye then through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

You see here why it is that the self-deceiver will not entertain the power of godliness, nor be religious seriously according to the true intent of the gospel, and the nature of Christianity, even because he is engaged to a contrary object, and hath another game in chase, which he will not leave, and which true religion requireth him to leave, and will not give him leave to follow. And therefore he parteth with the religion which would have parted him from that which he will not part with.

2. But withal, he is all this while under the threatenings of the law of God, and conscience is ready to bear witness against him; and betwixt law and conscience, the poor wretch is as the corn between two mill-stones; he would be ground to powder, and tortured with terrors before his time, if he had not some opiate, or intoxicating medicine, to ease him by deceiving him, and to abate his fears, and to quiet his conscience as long as a palliate cure will serve turn. So that here are two things for which the self-deceiving hypocrite is fain to fall into his vain religion: the one is, that it may be a cloak to the sin which he will needs keep: the other is, that it may save him from the terrors and disquietments that for this sin his conscience would else afflict him with. A belief that he may be saved, for all his sin, is the relief that he hath against the terrors of the law of God. He therefore chooseth out such parcels of religion as may serve him for this use, and yet will not separate him from the sin that he delighteth in. The power of godliness will not consist with his covetous, proud, or fleshly life; but the form and outside will. And therefore this

regeneration, and mortification, and self-denial, and subjection to the whole will of God, and this heavenly-mindedness and watching the heart, and walking with God, and living above the trifles of this world, and making it the chief business to prepare for another ; this kind of religion, which is religion indeed, he cannot (because he will not) entertain. This is the strait gate and narrow way, that few men find. Here he must be excused. God is no God for him upon these terms ; (and he can not and will not be his God upon any other terms;) Christ is no Christ for him unless he will excuse him from this trouble, and bear with him in his carnal course ; that is, unless he will be indeed no Christ to him. Heaven is no heaven for him, unless he may pass to it through prosperity and sin ; and unless he may have it without the trouble of a holy life ; that is, unless God will be unjust or false, and heaven cease to be heaven, and God cease to be God.

But yet these men are convinced that God is their rightful governor, and that, indeed, they should love him, and serve him with all their heart and might, and that without true religion and godliness there is no salvation. To be irreligious and profane, they know is a state that can afford no comfort, or shelter from the wrath of God ; and therefore some religion they must have : they are not able to endure the thoughts of lying under the curse of God. To conclude themselves to be utterly graceless, and the children of the devil, and in a state of condemnation, is so terrible, that they are not able to endure it : then every sermon they hear would torment them, and every chapter they read would torment them ; and their pleasures would all be embittered to them, and nothing that they enjoy in all the world would quiet and content them. (No, nor shall do long.) And therefore they must needs take up some religion, to quiet them for a little while, and to make them hope, that for all their sins, they are not so bad, nor in so dangerous a case as preachers tell them ; some religion they must needs have for fear of being damned : a sound and serious religion they will not have, because they love the world and sin, which it would deprive them of ; and therefore they patch up a vain religion, composed of so much truth and duty as will stand with their prosperity and pleasures : which will not save them, but sufficeth to deceive them.

Two parts make up this self-deceiving frame, as consistent with their sins : the one is the formal, outward, easy, cheap

part of duty to God and man in their practice ; leaving out the spiritual, inward, difficult, dear, self-denying part. The other is, the strictest parts of religion in bare opinion and notion, while they shut it out of their hearts and lives. For both these may stand with a sensual, worldly, selfish life. He may read or say his prayers, and be a worldling still : he may come to church, and, with the greatest ceremony and seeming reverence, receive the sacrament, and bow before the Lord his Maker, and yet be sensual or a worldling still. And he may be of the strictest party or opinion, and notionally condemn all sin, and justify the most holy life, and yet be sensual and worldly still. And therefore this much he may be persuaded to take up, to save himself from the lashes of his conscience. And so the use of the hypocrite's religion is to be a screen betwixt him and the flames of wrath, that would scorch him too soon, if he were of no religion : and to be to him as a tent or penthouse to keep off the storms that would fall upon him, while he is trading for the world, and working for the flesh. His religion is but the sheath of his guilty conscience, to keep it from wounding him, and cutting his fingers, while they are busy in the brutish service of his lusts. It is but a glove to save his skin, when he hath to do with the nettles and thorns of the threatenings of God, and the thoughts of vengeance, that else would rack his guilty soul. It is but as his upper garment, to save him from a storm, and then to be laid by as an unnecessary burden, when he is at home. The hypocrite's religion is but as his shoe : he can tread it in the dirt, so it will but save his foot from galling. As a man that hath an unquiet scolding wife, is fain to speak her fair by flatteries, lest he should have no rest at home ; or as a thief is fain to cast a crust to the dog that barketh at him, to stop his mouth ; so is an ungodly, sensual person fain to flatter his conscience with some kind of religiousness, and to stop his mouth with some kind of devotion and seeming righteousness, that may deceive him into a belief that he is a child of God. Religion is the sovereign in a gracious soul, and the master in an upright conscience, and ruleth above all worldly interests. But with the unregenerate, it is but an underling and servant, that must do no more than the flesh and the world will give consent to ; and is regarded no further than for mere necessity ; and when it hath done the work which the hypocrite appointed it, it is dismissed and turned out of doors. God is acknowledged and confessed by the hypo-

critic, but not as God. Christ is believed in and accepted, but not as Christ, but as an underling to the world, and a journeyman to do some job of work for a distressed, wrangling, conscience; or as an unwelcome physician to give them a vomit when they have taken some extraordinary surfeit of sensual delight. When they have fallen into great affliction, or into any foul, disgraceful sin, then, perhaps, they take up their prayer-books; or call upon Christ, and seem devout and very penitent. But their piety is blown over with the storm. The effect ceaseth with the cause. It was not the love of God, or of his holy ways and service, that set them upon their devotions, but some tempest of adversity, or shipwreck of their estates, or friends, or consciences; and when the winds are laid, and the waves are still, their devotion ceaseth with their danger.

3. Add hereunto (to show you the reason of the hypocrite's self-deceit) that he is one that never practically saw the amiableness of holiness in itself; and never had a heart that was touched with the love of it by the spirit of holiness; and therefore he taketh it but for mere necessity; and therefore he taketh up no more than he thinks is of necessity to save him from damnation, when he can live in the pleasures of the world no longer. God never had his heart. He had rather be about his sports or worldly business, if he durst, and thought he could be so excused. He loveth a pair (pack) of cards, or dice, or a harlot, or his ambitious designs and honours, better than he loveth the Holy Scriptures, and the heavenly discourse or contemplation of the life to come. And therefore he will have no more religion than needs he must, because he taketh it not for love, but need. The matters of the world and the flesh are his diet, and his extraordinary successes and prosperity are his feast; and therefore he will take as much of them as he can and dare: but religion is but his physic, and therefore he will take it as little and seldom as he dare. Had he but seen the face of God by faith, and had he but the heart of a true believer, that is suited by holiness to the holy works that God commandeth, as the heart of a true friend is suited to the will of him whom he loveth, he would then be no longer religious against his will, and consequently in vain; but he would think the most pure and heavenly mind, and life, and the highest degree of love and holiness, to be the best and most desirable state for his soul, as every true believer doth. Had this hypocrite any true love to God, as he deceitfully pretends to have, he would love

his image, and word, and ways; and then he would love best that kernel and marrow of religion, that life and soul of worship and obedience, which now he favoureth not, but shifteth off as a needless, or tedious, or unattainable thing.

The nature and use of these hypocrites' religion, is to save them from religion: they carry an empty gilded scabbard, accusing the sword of a dangerous keenness, as a thing more perilous than necessary to their use. When they seem most zealous, they are but serving God that they may be excused from serving him; and they worship him on purpose to shift off his worship. They offer him the lips, that the heart may be excused; and compliment him with cap and knee, that they may excuse themselves from real holiness: they offer him the empty purse for payment, and tender him a sacrifice of husks and shells, and lifeless carcases: they will abound in the shadow and ceremony, that they may be excused from the spiritual life and substance. Alas! that dead-hearted hypocrite that sits there, and heareth all this, is so great a stranger to the opening of the heart, and the deep entertainment of saving truth, and to the savoury relish of the searching, healing, quickening passages of holy doctrine, and to the thankful welcoming of an offered Christ, and to the lookings and longings of the soul after God, and to the serious desires, and hopes, and labours of a gracious soul for life eternal, that he is idle, asleep, and dead as to all this spiritual work, and if he had not some customary service to perform, and some ceremonies or external task to do, and some bodily worship to be employed in, he would find little or nothing to do in the assemblies, but might sit here as a brute, or as one of a strange language, that comes but to see and to be seen. And therefore if there be not somewhat more suitable to him than power and spirituality, it seemeth as no worship to the formal hypocrite. It is the pretty jingles and knacks of wit, and the merry jeers at the preciser sort, or some scraps of Greek and Latin authors, or shreds of fathers and philosophy, or at best an accurate, well-set speech, that makes the sermon acceptable to this hypocrite's ears. It is not spirit and life within him that brought him hither, nor is it spirit and life that he favoureth, and that he came for. And therefore it is that this sort of hypocrites are usually most impatient of a misplaced word, or of a worship performed in the primitive simplicity. If a man deliver the Lord's supper but as Christ did, and receive it but as the Apostles did, or serve God but

as the churches in their days, he will seem unreverent, and slovenly, and sordid to these self-deceiving formalists. They are set upon excess of ceremonies, because they are defective in the vital parts, and should have no religion if they had not this. All sober Christians are friends to outward decency and order ; but it is the empty self-deceiver that is most for the unwarrantable inventions of men, and sticketh in the bark of God's own ordinances, that taketh the garments for the man, and useth the worship of God, but as a masque or puppet-play, where there is great doings, with little life, and to little purpose. The chastest woman will wash her face ; but it is the harlot, or wanton, or deformed, that will paint it. The soberest and the comeliest will avoid a nasty or ridiculous habit, which may make them seem uncomely, where they are not ; but a curious dress, and excessive care, doth signify a crooked or deformed body, or a filthy skin, or, which is worst, an empty soul, that hath need of such a covering. Consciousness of such greater want, doth cause them to seek these poor supplies. The gaudiness of men's religion is not the best sign that it is sincere. Simplicity is the ordinary attendant of sincerity. It hath long been a proverb, " the more ceremony, the less substance ; and the more compliment, the more craft."

And yet if it were only for want of inward true religion that the hypocrite setteth up his shows, it were bad enough, but not so bad as with most of them, or all, it is. For it is an enmity to religion that accompanieth their religion. As in lapsed man, the body, that was before the soul's obedient attendant, is become its master, and the enemy of its perfection and felicity ; so, in the carnal religion of the hypocrite, the outside, which should be the ornament and attendant of the inward spiritual part, hath got the mastery, and is used in an enmity against the more noble part which it should serve ; and much more are his humane inventions and mixtures thus destructively employed. His bellows do but blow out the candle, under pretence of kindling the fire. He sets the body against the soul, and sometime the cloathing against both. He useth forms to the destruction of knowledge, and quenching of all seriousness and fervour of affection. By preaching, he destroyeth preaching, and prayeth till prayer is become no prayer, but the image or carcass of prayer at the best. And useth his words to the destruction of the due principle, sense, and ends. Having still his carnal self for his end, he preacheth, and

prayeth, and serveth God in a manner that seems most suitable to his end ; so that it is not God's means that he useth, when he useth them, but his own ; nor doth he indeed worship God, while he seems to worship ; nor is indeed religious, but seems religious. It is materially, perhaps, God's work that he doth, and his means he useth, but formally they are his own, and not God's at all ; when we meet with abundance of our people that are most nimble in their accustomed forms, that know not what religion or christianity is, nor who Christ is, nor almost any of the substance of the gospel, it assures us that it is easy to be infidels with christian expressions in their mouths, and that it is easier to teach a parrot to speak, than to be a man. As their bodies are but the prisons, or dungeons of their souls, so their formal words and ceremonies are used to be the prison and dungeon, or rather the grave, of true devotion. Their religion is excessively laced, but so scant of cloth, that it covereth not their nakedness, nor keeps them warm. It is always winter with the hypocrite in his formal lifeless services, and yet sometime his leaf doth never fall. He is like the box-tree that knows no fruit, and yet its leaves are always green. Wherever his heart is, the formalist's prayers are always ready, for his prayer-book or memory is still the same ; he can say them between sleeping and waking in his bed, and as he is dressing or washing him, and the interposition of a friend, or some intervenient word or business, is so small a rub, that it seldom puts him out of his way. Though he cannot make spiritual his common business, he can make his spiritual business common. Though he have not the art, the heart, to manage his trade or worldly business with a holy and heavenly mind, yet he can manage his holiest businesses with such a mind as he doth his trade. If you would know whether he be praying or playing, preaching or prating, serving God, or himself and the flesh, you must not search deep for an internal difference, but must discern it by the show and sound of words. He is not one of them that are above ordinances, as turning every day into a sabbath, and every thought into a prayer, and every morsel into a sacrament ; but he cannot turn every sabbath into a common day, and every prayer into common thoughts, and every sacrament into common food ; and therefore that which is holy to others, is to him unclean. Hypocrisy is a natural popery ; it filleth the places of worship with images. Instead of prayer, there is

the image of prayer; and instead of preaching, hearing, praising God, and other parts of worship, there is the image of worship; and instead of Christians, believers, saints, (and I was going to say, of men,) there are so many images of these. Church images are usually handsomely adorned, and placed in a posture of reverence and devotion, and so are they. But life they have none, but merely natural. They are seeing, hearing, speaking images, but images they are. They have eyes, but see not; ears, but hear not; hearts, but understand not.

And they are enemies to the life and power of religion, in others as well as in themselves. The publicans were not so bitter-persecutors of Christ, as the Scribes and Pharisees were. He can hate and reproach the faithful by the Spirit, though he cannot, or will not, pray by the Spirit; for he hath the spirit of malignity, though not the spirit of supplication. He can rail without book, though he cannot pray without book. Were it as natural and easy to be a saint, as to scorn a saint, and to worship God in spirit and in truth, as to hate such worship, the man might become a saint yet before he dies. But his vain religion changeth not his nature, and therefore destroyeth not his serpentine enmity against the holy nature and practice of believers, though perhaps the times may stop his hissing, or hinder him from putting forth his sting. These spiritual worshippers and heavenly, diligent sort of Christians, that make it the main business of their lives to honour God, and save their souls, are usually the greatest eyesore of the formalist. Many a disdainful thought he hath of them, and many a bitter gird he gives them: forgetting that their Redeemer heareth all, who is coming "with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude, 14, 15.) The humble, spiritual, heavenly believers, are they that condemn the hypocrite by their lives; were it not for them, he could easily believe that he is a saint himself, and should undoubtedly be saved. He looketh on the openly ungodly but as the beauty-spots of the assemblies that serve to set out the piety of such as he. If he saw no better than himself, he could easily take himself for one of the best. Every dotted post and glow-worm would be more resplendent and observable in the absence of all greater lights. They hate the sun for making

their candle to be but a scarce-discerned flame. The life of a holy, heavenly person doth as much gall the conscience of the hypocrite, and proclaim his misery, and bear a terrible witness against him, as a searching, powerful sermon doth. And therefore, as it is a vexation to him to live under such a searching minister as is always rubbing on the galled place, and causing conscience to torment him before his time; so is it a trouble to him to live among these heavenly believers, and to be daily condemned by their lives, and galled by their re-proving practices.

By this time you may see the reason and use of the hypocrite's religion; the self-denying part of religion he cannot abide; the life and power of it is above him, and seems against him; the fears of hell and gripes of conscience he cannot abide; some hopes of heaven he must have awhile to keep him from despair, and therefore he must have some religion to deceive his heart, and maintain his hopes. And therefore he fitteth his religion to these uses, and takes up with so much as will not much trouble him, or undo him in the world, or absolutely forbid his sinful pleasures. And though sometime he be afraid lest the power and life of godliness will prove necessary to his salvation, yet he revives his fainting hopes by running for comfort to his lifeless form. The rest he hath no mind to, and therefore will hope to be saved without it, till his deceit have brought him to the place of desperation, where is no hope. As a merchant in a storm is loth to cast his goods into the sea, and therefore hopes he may save himself and them, till he and they are drowned together; or as a patient that abhors his physic, or loves some forbidden thing too well, is hoping still that he may escape, though he use the thing he loves, and forbear the medicine which he loathes till he be past remedy, and he consents too late; so is it often with the self-deceiving hypocrite: he loves not this strict, and holy, and heavenly, and self-denying life, and therefore he will hope that God will save him without it, as long as he is religious in a way that he accounts more wise, and safe, and moderate, and comely, and suited to the nature and infirmity of man. These are his hopes, and to deceive his heart, by maintaining these, it is that he is religious, till either grace convert, or justice apprehend him, and his hopes and he are swallowed up by convincing flames and utter desperation.

IV. We are next to show you in what respect it is that this religion is called vain. And first, negatively, it is not vain to his own carnal ends, but to the true ends of religion.

1. He intendeth by it the quieting of his own accusing conscience, and the keeping up his hopes of salvation, and keeping off the terrors of the Lord, and so consequentially the deceiving of his own heart; and to these ends it is not in vain. Here he sitteth as quietly as if all were well between God and him, and heareth the threatenings as securely as if they concerned not him at all, and applieth the promises as boldly as if he were one of the heirs of promise; you would little think that this man must shortly be cast into utter darkness, from the presence of the Lord, and have "his portion with the hypocrites." (Matt. xxiv. 51.) His everlasting horrors appear not now to himself upon his heart, nor to others in his face; what sign can you see of the curse of the law, or the wrath of God in that man's countenance? what sign of his spiritual captivity and slavery, and of the load of sin that lieth upon his soul, unless it be that he feels it not? what sign of a man in so great danger of eternal torment, unless it be that he little feareth it? Doth he sit there like a man that is within a step of hell, and shall shortly be there with the devil and his angels as sure as he is here, unless he be saved by that grace and holiness which he now resists? No; he is as confident to be saved as the precisest of you all; he is as little troubled with the fears of hell or the wrath of God as those that are discharged from it by justification, and perhaps much less. For all this he is beholden to his vain religion, that in the point of self-deceiving is not vain. As solid evidences promote the comforts of true believers, so this superficial kind of religion promoteth the present peace of the presumptuous.

2. This religion is not vain as to the frustration of all the means of grace, and hindering the conversion and salvation of the hypocrite. This is his armour of defence against the sword of the Spirit, that would pierce his heart, and let out his close corruption, and separate him from his beloved sin. What tell you him of repentance and conversion? He thinks he needeth no conversion, or is converted long ago! What! is he not a Christian, a Protestant, a religious man? Tell swearers, and cursers, and drunkards, and extortioners, and cruel landlords, and fornicators, of conversion; tell these that they

are slaves of Satan, and under the wrath and curse of God, that are indeed so, past all controversy? but tell not him of it that makes no doubt but he is a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of heaven. He loveth to hear a minister rouse up the profane and grossly sensual offenders, and seems in pity to wish for their conversion, and perhaps will exhort them to turn and mend their lives himself. But he little thinks that he is faster in the prison of Satan than they, and that he is himself in the same condemnation.

Do you go about to tell him of the necessity of the fear of God, and of loving him above all, and of trusting him, and serving him as our only Lord? Why, all this he will confess, and perhaps is as forward to say as you, and verily thinks that he is one that doth it; you may as soon make him believe that he is not an Englishman, as that he is not a Christian, and that he loveth not himself, as that he loveth not God; even while he loveth not to think of him, to speak of him, to call upon him, to obey him; while he loveth not his word, his ways, or servants, or while he loveth the world and the pleasures of sin more heartily, and seeketh them more eagerly, and cleaveth to them more tenaciously, yet if you would persuade him that he hath not a heart as true to God as any of you all, you will lose your labour.

Do you tell him of hypocrisy? he will tell you that it is the thing he hateth: who speaks against it more than he? And because the world shall see he is no hypocrite, he will call them all hypocrites that are faithful to God and to their souls, and will not sit down in his truly hypocritical vain religion, but will be more holy and diligent than he. What can you say to such a man in order to his conversion, which his self-deceiving religion will not frustrate? Do you tell him of hell-fire, and of the wrath of God against the ungodly? All this he can hear as calmly as another man; for he thinks that he is none of the ungodly, he hath scaped the danger; let them be afraid of it whom it doth concern. If you tell him of his sins, he can tell you that all men are sinners; we are imperfect; and you shall never persuade him that his reigning, deadly sins are any other than such human frailties and infirmities as may stand with grace. Do you put him upon the inward practice of religion, and the fuller devoting of his soul to God, and the life of faith, and a heavenly mind? He will tell you, that in his measure, he doth all this already; though none of us are so good as we should be; and his heart being unseen to you, he thinks you must believe him. Do you

blame him for his slightness and formality in religion, and put him upon a more serious, diligent course, and to live as one that seeketh heaven with all his heart, and soul, and might? Why, he thinks you do but persuade him to some self-conceited over-zealous party, and draw him from his moderation to be righteous over much, and to make too much ado with his religion. Unless he be an hypocrite that falleth into the schismatical strain, and then he will make a greater bustle with his opinions and his outside services then you can desire. So that one with his mere book-prayers, forms, and ceremonies, and the other with his mere extemporate words, and affected outside seeming fervour, and both of them by a mere opinionative, lifeless, carnal kind of religion, subject to their fleshly ends and interests, do so effectually cheat their souls that they are armed against all that you can say or do, and you know not how to get within them, or fasten any saving truths upon their hearts.

3. This vain religion is not vain as to the preserving of his reputation in the world. It saveth him from being numbered with the filthy rabble, and from being pointed at as notoriously vicious, or branded with the disgraceful characters of the scandalous. Men say not of him, 'There goeth a drunkard, a swearer, a curser, a fornicator, or a profane ungodly wretch.' He may be esteemed civil, ingenuous, discreet, and perhaps religious, and be much honoured by wise, religious men; though most commonly his formal, or opinionative, heartless kind of religion is discerned or much suspected by experienced, judicious Christians, by his sapless, unexperienced, common and carnal kind of discourse and duty, sticking most in opinions, parties, or some outside things, and by his temporizing, and reserve, and uneven kind of conversation; yet it is not always so; but sometime he is as far unsuspected as the best; perhaps he may be esteemed a reverend preacher, or a discreet, religious, well-accomplished gentleman, and may be set in the head of church or commonwealth, as a leader of the saints on earth, that shall be thrust into the place of hypocrites, and not come near the meanest of the saints in heaven.

4. Lastly, (but better than all this,) his religion is not vain as to the good of others. He may, by the perfume and odour of his gifts, be kept from stinking to the annoyance of others, while he is dead in sin. He may be very serviceable in the church of God; a judicious, earnest expounder of the Scripture, and preacher and defender of the truth; in his place as a magistrate, or master of a family, he may be a severe corrector

of profaneness, and promoter of godliness ; it being much easier to drive others from their sin, than to forsake their own, and to drive on others to a godly life, than to practise it themselves : and by their owning godliness, and disowning sin, they persuade themselves the more effectually that they are truly godly. The Church cannot well spare the gifts and services of hypocrites, and many ungodly men. As bad or sick physicians may be God's instruments to cure our bodies, and a wicked carpenter may make a good house ; so a wicked minister may well expound and apply the Scriptures ; and he that refuseth the grace of Christ, may prevail with others to accept it ; the sign-post that stands out of door itself, may invite others into the house ; and the hand upon a post that goes not one step of the way, may point it out to others. There is more self-denial required to the forsaking of their own sins, than to persuade others to forsake theirs ; a covetous man cares not how liberal others be ; nor a glutton, drunkard, or fornicator, how temperate and chaste his neighbours be. And hence it is that many of these that refuse a holy life themselves, are willing their children or servants should embrace it. The end of the balance that goeth down itself, doth cause the other to go up. Other men's souls are more beholden to hypocrites than their own. They are like the common mariners, that enrich the merchant by fetching home his treasure, when they have nothing but a poor maintenance themselves ; or like tailors, who make ornaments for others, which they never wear themselves ; or like carpenters, that build fair houses which they never dwell in ; or like the cook, that dresseth meat which he eateth not. God giveth hypocrites their usual gifts, for the service of the Church more than for themselves. He sometimes maketh those to be nursing fathers to his Church that are butchers of their own souls, and makes those his instruments to undeceive others, that deceive themselves. And thus far their religion is not vain.

But 1. It is vain as to God's special acceptation. True religion pleaseth God ; but the self-deceiver's opinion he abhorreth. He hath no pleasure in fools. (Eccl. v. 4.) He asketh such, To what purpose is the multitude of their sacrifices ? (Isaiah i. 11,) and saith, he is full of their burnt offerings, and delights not in them. When they come to appear before him he asketh them, Who required this at their hands, to tread in his courts ? and bids them, bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination to him ; the calling of their assemblies he cannot away with, and their solemn meetings are iniquity ; (ver. 12, 13 ;) their

prove you the heirs of heaven. You may be snatched out of the purest Church on earth, and from the purest ordinances, and out of the arms of the most upright Christians, and cast into hell, if you have no better evidences than such, to show for your salvation. If ever you be saved, it must not be because you are Papists, or Protestants, Lutherans, or Calvinists, Arminians, Autinomians, Anabaptists, Independents, Presbyterian, or Prelatical; formally and merely as such; but because you are true Christians, that have the Spirit of Christ, (Rom. viii. 9,) and are conformed to him, in his sufferings, death, and resurrection, and live in sincere obedience to his will. But hypocrites that want the inward life and power of religion, and are conscious of their wilful sins, would fain borrow something from the parties which they join with, or the opinions which they take up, or the formal outward worship which they perform, or the alms which they give, to make up the want, and cheat their souls with a self-created confidence, that they shall be saved.

But more specially you may hence observe the reason that popery hath so many followers, and that it is so easy a thing to make an infidel, whoremonger, or drunkard, to turn a papist, when yet it is not easy to bring them to faith, and chastity, and temperance, much less to the unfeigned love of God, and to a holy, heavenly life. Though I doubt not but there are many sincere-hearted Christians among the papists, yet popery itself is of an hypocritical strain, and is notably suited to the hypocrite's disposition. It is revived Pharisaism: I marvel that they tremble not when they read themselves so lively characterized by Christ, with the addition of so many terrible woes, as in Matt. xxiii., and other places, frequently they are: "Woe to the scribes, pharisees, hypocrites." They bind heavy burdens of external observances, to lay upon the consciences of their proselytes: they make broad their phylacteries; and in variety of holy vestures, they make ostentation of such a religion, as a peacock may have when he spreads his tail. They contend for superiority and titles to be called rabbi, pope, cardinal, patriarch, primate, metropolitan, archbishop, diocesan, abbot, prior, father, &c., to the great disturbance of all the nations of the christian world. They must needs be the fathers and masters of our faith: they shut the kingdom of heaven against the people, forbidding all to read the scriptures in their vulgar tongue, without a special license from their ordinary: and commanding them to worship God in a

strange tongue which they do not understand : by the numbers of their masses and prayers for the dead, they delude the souls, and devour the patrimony of the living. In temples, and altars, and images, and ornaments consisteth no small part of their religion : they make more of tithing mint, anise and cummin, than of judgment, mercy, and faith, the weightier matters of the law. The outside they make clean, and appear as beautiful to men, as ceremonies and outward pomp can make them. They make it a part of their religion to murder the living saints, and keep holy days for the dead : they build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Thus, Matt. xxiii., is their description. They have their touch not, taste not, handle not, after the commandments and doctrines of men, their voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, and other rudiments of the world, and things that have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. (Col. ii. 19—23.) How easy a thing is it to bring an ungodly man to be of a religion that consisteth in such things as these ! in eating fish on certain days instead of flesh ; and saying over so many Pater Nosters, and Ave Marias, and naming so oft the name of Jesus ; in worshipping a piece of consecrated bread with divine worship ; in bowing and praying before an image ; in praying to the souls of such as the pope tells them are saints in heaven ; in crossing themselves, and being sprinkled with holy water, and using Agnus Deis, and consecrated grains and annulets ; in dropping of beads ; in saying such words as a prayer at such a canonical hour, and such words the next canonical hour ; in hearing a mass in Latin, and saying a Latin prayer ; in being anointed, with hallowed oil, and burning hallowed candles on the altars by day-light ; in going so many miles to the chapel of a saint in pilgrimage ; in carrying about them a bone, or some other supposed relic of a supposed saint ; in confessing their sins so often to a priest, and doing penance, if he impose it on them. And so while they live in whoredom, or drunkenness, or swearing, or lying, or all these, and many other such, it is but confessing and doing penance, and to it again ; on which account (whatever some of them say for the necessity of contrition) it is usual with them, to venture upon the sins of whoredom, drunkenness, and the rest,

5. Thy religion employeth thee about thy heart, as much as about the outside and appearing part; it is heart sins that thou observest and lamentest, and a better heart that thou daily longest, and prayest, and labourest for.

6. Thou livest not in any gross and deadly sin; and thou hast no infirmity but what thou longest and labourest to be rid of; and goest on in the-use of Christ's holy means and remedies for a cure.

7. Thou dislikest not the highest degree of holiness, but lovest it and longest after it, and hadst rather be more holy than be more honourable or more rich.

8. Thou unfeignedly lovest the image of Christ on the souls of all his servants where thou canst discern it; and seest a special excellency in a poor, humble, heavenly Christian, though never so low or despicable in the world, above all the pomp and splendour of the earth; and thou lovest them with a special love; and the holier they are, the better dost thou love them.

9. Thou lovest the most convincing, searching sermons, and wouldest fain have help to know the worst that is in thy heart; and comest unto the light that thy heart and deeds may be made manifest.

10. All this is the bent and bias of thy soul; thy habituated, ordinary case: though there be not alway the same opportunity for the acts, nor the same degree of life in acting. It is not only a good mood that thou art frightened into by some affliction, and then returnest to thy carnal course of life again; but thou heartily continuest thy consent to the covenant which thou hast made with Christ, and wouldest not turn back to a worldly, carnal, or formal life, nor change thy Master, nor forsake the holy course which thou art engaged in for all the world.

This is the truth of thy case, poor, doubting, troubled Christian! thou canst not deny it without much injury to thyself and God. And therefore be not now troubled at that which I shall say to the self-deceivers.

And now I am to speak to the self-deceiver, I perceive my task to be exceeding difficult: to get within him that is so guarded; and to pierce his heart that is so armed; and to open his eyes that is willing to be blind; and to undeceive him that hath so long deceived, and that studieth to deceive himself, and is engaged in that unhappy work, by such subtle enemies that further his deceit, and by so many allurements, and

such strong corruptions, and by a seeming necessity for the quieting of his conscience ; all this is not an easy work. But we must attempt it, and leave the success to grace. And, first, let me solemnly profess before you all, (for the removing of your prejudice, and the calming of your resisting hearts,) that it is none of my desire, by the discovery of your hypocrisy, to shame you before others, or to make you seem more miserable than you are, or to disturb and grieve you any more than is necessary to the escaping of your exceeding danger, and than your own salvation and comforts do require. But when we know that religion is your business in the world ; and that an endless world shall presently receive you ; and that Christ is coming ; and your souls are ready to quit their residence, and take their leave of your flesh till the resurrection ; and when we know that hypocrisy and self-deceit is the thing that you are most in danger of, and that you must be saved from it, or be in hell for ever ; and that the enemies of your souls will do all they can to keep their possession in peace, and to continue your deceit till you are past remedy ; what would you have us do in such a case ? would you wish us to be silent, and betray your souls, and damn our own for fear of disquieting and displeasing you ? How hard are your hearts, if you would wish us to do thus !

Be awakened, therefore, O all ye self-deceivers ! and know that hypocrisy, as the harlot's paint, is but a base and borrowed beauty ; that will vanish away when you draw near the fire ; and that self-deceit will quiet you so short a time, that it is as good let go your delusory peace, and comfortable dream to day as to-morrow ; and it is better now to begin and examine yourselves, than stay till the dreadful judge examine you, who is even at the door ! The discovery of your case is the one half of your cure : and as you have been your own deceivers, let us in justice find you so equitable to yourselves, as to be willing of the light that must undeceive you ; and to go along with us into your consciences, and help us in the search, and impartially pass a preventing judgment, that Christ may not pass a condemning judgment.

And in order to your conviction and recovery, I shall first acquaint you with your misery, that so it may awaken you to look about you, while there is time and hope. If it were God's way to work by ocular demonstrations, and the christian life were a life of sense, and you had heaven and hell this hour open to your sight, how little need should I have to plead

this cause with you any further? you would then see and hear that vengeance that would awake you; and make you presently fly into your hearts, and charge conscience to deal impartially with you, lest self-deceit should bring you to those flames. But it is a life of faith that we are to call you to, and a word of faith that we have to preach; but of things that are as sure as if you saw them.

And 1. If thy religion be vain, thy hopes and comforts, that are built upon it, are all but vain. How vain is that hope that will vanish when the enjoyment is expected, and will end in endless desperation! What though thou sit here with so great hopes and confidence of salvation as maketh thee even scorn the man that questions it, art thou ever the better when death awakeneth thee, and thy confident dream is at an end? When thou art dying wilt thou hope? Perhaps thou mayest: but when thou art burning wilt thou hope? When thou art tormented wilt thou hope? Desperation will then be essential to thy misery. The devils that now feed thy hope by their deceits, will then as readily keep awake thy conscience, and exasperate thy despairing soul. If now thou wilt hope under the threatenings of God (that thou mayest be saved in thy present state) wilt thou then hope under his execution? Thy flatterers and prosperity may cherish thy deceitful hopes for a time, but who will maintain them, when God commandeth desperation to torment thee? (Job xxvii. 8, 9.) "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?" As Sands turneth it:—

What hope hath the prevailing hypocrite,
When God shall chase his soul to endless night?
Will God relieve him in his agonies?
Or from the depth of sorrows hear his cries?

His worldly glory will then desert him, and leave him to the fruit of his deserts: his fruition will perish with his hopes. (Job xxvii. 22, 23.) "For God shall cast upon him and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place." Or as Sands turneth it:

God shall transfix him with his winged dart;
Though he avoid him like a flying hart.
Men shall pursue with merited disgrace;
Hiss, clap their hands, and from his country chase.

Hopes that are built by self-deceit have no foundation but sand and water, and in trial they will fall, and their fall will be

great and terrible. (Matt. vii. 23, 24; Job viii. 11—15.) “Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb: so are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.” Or—

Can bull-rushes but by the rivers grow?
 Can flags there flourish where no waters flow?
 Yet they, when green, when yet untouch’d of all
 That clothe the spring, first hang their heads, and fall.
 So double-hearted hypocrites; so they
 Who God forget, shall in their prime decay.
 Their airy hopes, as brittle as the thin
 And subtle webs which toiling spiders spin:
 Their houses full of wealth and riot, shall
 Deceive their trust, and crush them in their fall, &c.

Job. xxxvi. 13. “The hypocrites in their heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.” Or as the paraphrase:—

For the deluder hastens his own fall,
 Nor will in trouble on th’ Almighty call.
 Who on the beds of sin supinely lie,
 They in the summer of their age shall die.

And what we say of the hypocrite’s hope, we may say also of all his pleasures and delights. He may now be as merry as the most righteous of his neighbours, and seem the most happy, because the most jocund; and abound with medicines against melancholy, and all wise and sober consideration: even his business, his cups, his wantonness and uncleanness, or, at least, his less disgraceful pleasures and recreations, which fortify his mind against the fears of death and judgment, and all the threatenings of God—

As sleepy opium fortifies the brain,
 Against the sense of sicknesses and pain.

And if this mirth could always last, how happy a man were the self-deceiver! But, saith Solomon, (Eccles. vii. 6.) “As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.”

As thorns beneath a cauldron catch the fire,
 Blaze with a noise, and suddenly expire;
 Such is the causeless laughter of vain fools;
 This vanity in their distemper rules.

And as Job xx. 4—9. “Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reacheth

to the clouds; yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung; they which have seen him shall say, Where is he? He shall flee away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him." Or, as the aforesaid Paraphrase—

This is a truth with which the world began,
 Since earth was first inhabited by man;
 Sin's triumph in swift misery concludes,
 And flattering joy the hypocrite deludes.
 Although his excellence to heaven aspire;
 Though radiant beams his shining brows attire;
 He as his dung shall perish on the ground;
 Nor shall th' impression of his steps be found;
 But like a troubled dream shall take his flight;
 And vanish as a vision of the night;
 No mortal eye shall see his face again,
 Nor sumptuous roofs their builder entertain.

Thus as the hypocrite's religion is vain, so all his hopes and joys will be vain, and will deceive him, as he deceived himself. As Zophar concludeth of him: (Job xi. 20:) "But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost." Poor soul! thy religion also is so vain, that it giveth thee no solid satisfaction or delight: thou art fain to go to thy lands, or friends, or pleasures, or carnal accommodations for delight: thy religion, which should let thee into heaven, and there refresh thee with the foretastes of everlasting pleasures, and should daily fetch thee fresh delights from the face of God, alas! is an impotent lifeless thing; acquainted with shadows, but strange to the invisible substance; acquainted with formal shows and ceremonies, but unacquainted with God; acquainted with the letter, but not with the spirit; familiar with the orders of the church, but strange to the foretastes of heaven. If thou hadst no other comfort but what thy dead religion brings thee from the face of God, thy pensive heart would be better disposed to consideration and recovery than it is. If thou hadst a faith that brought thee in any solid, stablishing content, what needest thou be hunting abroad the world among thy crowd of vanities and deceits, to beg or borrow some short delight, which thou must return with griping usury? and what needest thou so many pitiful shifts to muzzle thy conscience, and to keep that peace a little longer, which will end in sorrow, and will part with thee as the devil went out of the possessed person (Mark ix. 26) that rent him, and left him as a dead

man? That religion is certainly vain, that is not sufficient to acquaint the soul with matter of solid comfort and content, but leaves that felicitating work to worldly transitory things, while itself is used only as a screen, to keep hell-fire from scorching the conscience, or as children's rackets, to quiet them when they are apt to cry.

2. But the vanity of a superficial religion will most appear in the hour of extremity; when their help, as well as their hope and comfort, will to them prove vain. Prosperity will not always last: as sure as winter followeth summer, and as the darksome night succeeds the day, so sure will adversity take its turn: sickness will follow the longest health, and death succeed the longest life; and your house of darkness in the dust will hold you longer than your present habitations. And when thou seest all things fail, O what wouldest thou give for a hope and help that will not fail, that thou mightest be received into the everlasting habitations! The conscience that is now asleep, will be shortly awakened in such a manner, that it will be utterly past the skill and power of thyself, and all the friends thou hast, to cast it asleep, or quiet it again. And then, what wouldest thou not give for a lenitive to pacify it! no wonder if thou sit here as senseless as if no harm were near thee: it is now in thy power not to believe that there is a hell for hypocrites, or that it is thy own inheritance: but the day is near, (if a supernatural change prevent it not,) when it shall no more be in thy power, but sight and feeling shall convince thee whether thou wilt or no. Now we must entreat thy own consideration, and solicit thee for thy own consent, to know thy grievous sin and misery, and yet leave thee unconvinced, because thou art unwilling to know the truth, and because we cannot show thee heaven and hell while we are speaking of them: but then God will not crave, but force thy consideration: nor will he ask thy consent to feel thy misery: but the less thou art willing, the more thou hast to feel. And which way then wilt thou look for help? which way ever it be, it will be all in vain, because thy religion was but vain; wilt thou look to thy duties and supposed honesty, whose sincerity now thou art so confident of? alas, this is the vain religion that could deceive thee, but cannot save thee. Thou art like a man in a falling house, that hath nothing to lay hold on, but that which is falling, and it is that will break him unto death. Or like a drowning man that hath nothing but a handful of water to lay hold upon; which is it that will

choke him, but is vain to save him. It is thy superficial, hypocritical, complimentary services that will fall with thee, and fall upon thee, that will thus both deceive thee, and choke thee in the time of thy distress. To be told now that thy religion is vain, is a thing that thy dead, unbelieving heart can too easily bear; but to find then, when thou lookest for the benefit of it, that it is vain, is that which is not borne so easily, but will overturn the stoutest heart with terrors. If thou wert a man of no religion, and so hadst none to deceive and quiet thee, thou couldst scarcely keep off thy terrors now: if thou hadst not thy hollow-hearted prayers, thy affected zeal, or forms, and shows, and tasks of duty, thy profession, with its secret exceptions and reserves, thy smoothed outside, with the good conceit thou hast of thyself, and the good esteem that other men have of thee; if thou hadst not these to flatter thy conscience, and cloak thee from the storms of threatened wrath, thou wouldest perhaps walk about like another Cain, and be afraid of every man thou seest, and tremble at the shaking of a leaf, and still look behind thee as afraid of a pursuit. But, alas! it will be ten thousand times more terrible to find thy confidence prove deceit; and thy religion vain, when God is judging thee, when hell is before thee, and thou art come to the last of thine expectations! Nay, then to find not only that thy superficial religion was vanity, and lighter than vanity, nothing, and less than nothing; but that it was thy sin, and that which will now torment thee, and the remembrance of it be to thee as the remembrance of drunkenness to the drunkard, and of fornication to the unclean, and of covetousness to the worldling, the rust of whose money will eat his flesh, and burn like fire. O what a doleful plight is this! when the sentence is ready to pass upon thee, and hell is gaping to devour thee, and thou lookest for help to thy vain religion, and criest out, 'O now, or never help! help me, or I am a firebrand of unquenchable wrath: help me, or I must be tormented in those flames: help me now, or it will be too late, and I shall never, never more have help!' Then to have thy self-deceit discovered, and thy seeming religion condemn thee, and torment thee, instead of helping thee, what anguish and confusion will this cast thy hopeless soul into, such as no heart can here conceive! Thy guilty soul will be like a hare among a company of dogs: whichsoever of thy duties thou fliest for help to, that will make first to tear thee, and devour thee.

Like a naked man in the midst of an army of his deadly enemies : whichsoever he flieth to for pity and relief, is like to be one of the first to wound him. Poor self-deceiver ! what wilt thou then do, or whither wilt thou betake thy soul for help ? The reason why thou canst now make shift with a lifeless shadow of religion, is, because thou hast thy sports or pleasures, thy friends and flatterers, thy worldly business to divert thy thoughts, and take thee up, and rock the cradle of thy security ; and thy piety is not yet brought unto the fire, nor thy heart and duties searched by the all-discovering light : but when the light comes in, and when all thy fleshly contents are gone, and when thou comest to have use for thy religion, and seest that, if it prove unsound, thou art lost for ever, O then it is not shadows, and shows, and compliments, that will quiet thee. That will not serve turn then, that serves turn now. Thou wilt find then that it was easier deceiving thyself than God. (Gal. vi. 3—5, 7.) “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work : For every man shall bear his own burden. Be not deceived ; God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

But perhaps thou wilt say, it is not any duties, but Christ that I must trust to : he will be my help, and he is sufficient, and will not deceive the soul that trusteth in him.

Answer. Undoubtedly he is sufficient, and will not deceive thee. But doth he deceive thee, if he give thee not the salvation which he never promised thee ? he never promised salvation to an hypocrite (without conversion). It is the upright soul devoted to him, that takes him for the absolute master of his life, and for his only portion and felicity, to whom Christ hath promised salvation : and his promise shall be made good, and the sincere shall find that Christ deceives them not. But where did he ever promise salvation to a superficial pharisee ? to such a seeming Christian as thou ? show such a promise from him if thou canst ; and then trust it and spare not. But thou dost not trust him, but thy own deceit, if he have given thee no such promise to trust on. Nay, rather, should he not deceive all the world, if he should save such superficial hypocrites, when he hath professed in his word that he will not save them ? and if he should not condemn such heartless formalists, when he hath so often

told us that he will condemn them? surely he that breaks his word is liker to be a deceiver, than he that keepeth it. Be it known to thee therefore (and O that thou wouldest know it while there is a remedy at hand) that if thou trust that Christ should save an unsanctified false-hearted person, whose soul was never renewed and revived by the Holy Ghost, and absolutely given up to God, and that setteth not up God and his service above all the interest of the flesh, and the commodities and contentments of the world, thou dost not then trust Christ, but thy own deceits and lies; and it is not Christ that is the deceiver, but thou art a deceiver of thyself, that makest thyself a false promise, and trustest to it; and when thou hast done, sayest, thou wilt trust to Christ: yea, trustest thyself against Christ, and trustest that he will break his word, and not that he will make it good. See whether he resolve not to condemn all such. Matt. x. 37, 38; Luke xiv. 27, 33; Matt. vii. 26, 27; James ii. 14; Heb. xii. 14; Rom. viii. 9. with the texts before cited, and abundance such. Christ will be a Saviour; but he is the Saviour of the body, and not of the affixed hypocrites. (Eph. v. 23.) And his body is the church which is subject to him. (Verse 24.) "He will save to the utmost:" but whom? "even all that come to God by him," (Heb. vii. 2, 5,) but not those that make the world their God, and would put God off with a few running heartless words and duties. It is the living fruitful branches that he will save: but the withered branches he casteth forth, to be burned in the fire. (John xv. 2—7.) "No man can serve God and Mammon:" nor live both to the Spirit and the flesh: he that hath two hearts, hath none that is acceptable unto God: he that hath two faces (a face of devotion in his formal customary services, and a face that smiles on the world and fleshly pleasures when he hath done) hath none that God will ever smile upon. The leaves of the barren fig-tree saved it not from the curse of Christ. (Matt. xxi. 18, 19.) "Hew it down and cast it into the fire," shall be the sentence of the most flourishing tree that is fruitless. (Luke xiii. 7.) "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." (Heb. vi. 7, 8.) So that if thy religion be vain, the blood of Christ, and all the treasures of his grace will be vain to thee, that are saving unto others. An infidel may then as

well expect to be saved by the Christ whom he rejected, as thou. Nay it is Christ himself that will condemn thee : it is his own mouth that will say to such as thee, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." And though thou couldest say, "Lord, Lord, I have prophesied, or cast out devils, or done many wonderful works in thy name," he "will profess to thee that he never knew thee," or owned thee. (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) If crying would then serve, I know thou wouldest not spare thy cries. But he must so pray as to be accepted and heard on earth, that looks to be accepted and regarded then ; when the miserable soul, with endless horrors in its eye, is looking round about for help, and findeth none ; when all the creatures say, we cannot, and he that can shall say, I will not ; who can apprehend the calamity of such a soul ? what soul so sleepy and regardless now, that will not then cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," when the door is shut, and it is too late ? (Matt. xxv. 10—12.) Then if thou roar in the anguish of thy soul, and cry out to him that saveth others 'Condemn me not, O Lord, but save me also ! now Lord have mercy on a miserable sinner ! save me, or I am lost for ever : save me, or I must burn in yonder flame : turn not thy heart against an undone perishing soul ; if thou cast me off, I have no hope !' a thousand such cries would be in vain, because thou hadst but a vain religion. (Prov. i. 24, &c.) "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you ; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me :—Therefore they shall eat of their own way, and be filled with their own devices," saith the Lord.

And when hell hath once taken thee into its possession, if thou cry and roar there ten thousand millions of ages it will be all in vain. Thy strongest and thy longest cries cannot procure thee a drop of water to cool thy tongue, tormented in those flames. (Luke xvi. 24—26.)

In a word, if thy religion be vain, all is vain to thee ; thy life itself is vain. (Eccles. vi. 12.) Thou walkest in a vain show. (Psalm xxxix. 6.) Thou disquietest thyself in vain, in all thy labours ; (Psalm xxxix. 6, and cxxvii. 1, 2 ;) and vanity and vexation is all that thou shalt possess. (Eccles. i. 2, 14 ; Prov.

xxii. 8.) And if conscience, when thy day of grace is past, shall force thee upon the review to say, 'My piety was but seeming and self-deceit, and all my religion was vain;' it will be the voice of utter desperation, and will stab the heart of all thy hopes. This, and no better, being the self-deceiver's case, is not conscience now at work within you, and asking, as each of the disciples did, (Matt. xxvi. 24, 25,) "Is it I?" If thou have a heart within thee, beseeching a reasonable creature, by this time thou art afraid of self-deceit, and willing to be searched, and to know thy hypocrisy while it may be cured. For my part, I shall pronounce no one of you personally to be an hypocrite, as knowing that hypocrisy is a sin of the heart, which, in itself, is seen by none but God and him that hath it. But my business is only to help such to know and judge themselves. Could I name the man to you in the congregation that had none but a seeming, vain religion, I am persuaded you would all look upon him as a most unhappy, deplorable wretch. Alas! sirs, hypocrites are not so rare among us, as some imagine. There are few, or none, but saints and hypocrites in this assembly, or in most of the assemblies in the land. I think here are none that make not a profession of the christian faith, and of love to God. All, therefore, that have not this faith and love, must needs be hypocrites, as professing to be what they are not. In your baptism you engaged and professed yourselves the disciples of Christ, and gave up yourselves in solemn covenant to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This covenant, you will say, you stand to yet; and none of you will be known to have renounced your Christianity. As Christians, you use to come to these assemblies, and here to attend God in the use of his ordinances, and some of you to renew your covenant with him in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. I meet with none that will say, 'I am no Christian, nor a servant of the God of heaven; I am an infidel, and rebel against the Lord.' I think there is none of you but would take it ill if I should call you such, or should deny you to be Christians and men fearing God. If, therefore, you are not such, indeed, you must needs be hypocrites. What say you? Is there any of you that profess yourselves to be ungodly, unbelievers, and servants of the devil; and will take this as your current title, disclaiming the love and service of the Lord? I think you will not. If you are such as you profess, you are all saints, and shall be saved. If any of you be not such, they can be nothing else but hypocrites.

Seeing, therefore, that you are all either saints or hypocrites, come now to the bar, and refuse not a trial that may prevent the terrors of another kind of trial that you cannot refuse.

And here let me set before you your profession, and then try yourselves whether you are such as you profess yourselves to be or not. And I think I may take it for granted that the Articles of the Creed and the Baptismal Covenant is the least that every one of you do profess; and that the desires, implied in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, you all profess to be your own desires, and that you take the Ten Commandments for part of the rule of your obedience. Let us peruse them briefly in the several parts.

1. Do you not all say that you "believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," and that you will "have no other Gods but him?" and are you not accordingly engaged in covenant with him? You will not deny it. And what is the meaning of this much of your profession? It is no less than to take God for the only infinite good, to be loved with the chiefest love, and to take him for your absolute Lord and Governor, the owner of you and all you have, to whom you owe universal, absolute obedience; and that you are truly willing to love him above all, and fear him, and trust him, and obey him accordingly, though your flesh and all the world should be against it. He that meaneth not all this, doth dissemble or lie, when he saith he taketh God to be his God: for to be God, is to be this much to us.

And really is it thus with you as you profess? Speak but as men that dare not lie before the Lord that knows your hearts. Do you indeed love God as God, with your superlative love? Are your hearts set upon him? Do you make it your principal care to please him? Is it your delight to do his will? Is it sweeter to you to think and speak of him than of the world? Doth it grieve you most to offend him? In a word, you are not such strangers to nature but you know what love is: and you are not such strangers to your own hearts, but you know what it is to love your pleasure, your profit, your honour, and your friend. Can conscience say before the Lord that you love him better than all these? If not more passionately, yet more deeply, effectually, and resolutely—with a love that will cause you to deny and part with all for him. If you thus truly love him as God, and above all, how comes it to pass that you seek the world more carefully and eagerly than him; and that you

are more pleased with worldly thoughts, and speeches, and employments, than with divine? Were not the hypocrite justly blinded, and a wilful stranger to himself, he could not but know that he loveth not God as God, and above all. And to love him, in subordination to your flesh and its contents, is not at all to love him as God; as it is no degree of conjugal love to love a wife but as a servant, nor no degree of the love due to your sovereign to love him as an equal or as a slave.

And if really you take God for your absolute Lord and Governor, why is it then that you take no pleasure in his laws, but count them too strict, and had rather be at your own dispose? Why is it that you obey your fleshly desires, before and against the God whom you acknowledge? Why will you not be persuaded to that holiness, justice, and charity, which you know his law commandeth you? Why do you wilfully continue in those sins which conscience tells you God forbids? Will you live in wilful disobedience, and love your sins, and loath your duty, and obstinately continue thus, and yet profess that you take God for your God, and, consequently, for your Lord and Governor? and yet will you not confess that you are dissembling hypocrites?

2. Do you not all profess that you "believe in Jesus Christ;" and have you not, in covenant, taken him for your Saviour and Lord? and do you so, indeed, or do you not, play the hypocrites? If you believe in Christ, and take him for your Saviour, you then take your sins for the disease and misery of your souls, and you are so grieved for them, and weary of them, and humbled in the apprehension of your lost estate, that you fly to Christ as your only refuge from the wrath and curse of the offended Majesty, and value his justifying and healing grace before all the riches of the world; and you are willing to take his bitterest medicines, and use the means appointed by him for the destruction of your sin and the perfecting of his graces. And is it thus with you that have unhumiliated hearts, that never felt the need of Christ, as condemned miserable men must do; and that love the sin that he would cure, and are unwilling to be mortified and sanctified by his grace? Unless a carcass be a man, such hypocrites as these are no true Christians, and have but a seeming, self-deceiving faith.

3. Do you not all profess "to believe in the Holy Ghost;" and are you not engaged to him in covenant as your Sanctifier; and do you not grossly play the hypocrites here? If not, he

comes it to pass that you stick in your natural state, as if you had no need of sanctification; and live as quietly without any acquaintance with true regeneration, and the Spirit to dwell and rule within you, as if you needed no such change? Or else, that you take up with a formal, an affected, or a forced kind of religion, instead of sanctification and spiritual devotion? And how comes it to pass that you distaste the highest degrees of holiness; and that you will not be brought to the mortification, self-denial, and unreserved obedience, which are the essence of sanctification? As for the more debauched, profane sort of hypocrites that can make a common mock of godliness, and scorn at the very name of holiness and sanctification, and deride at all that pretend to have the Spirit, I had rather tremble at the thought of their misery than now stand to reprove that notorious hypocrisy, which professeth to believe in the Holy Spirit which they deride, and covenanteth with the Sanctifier, while they hate and mock, or, at least, do obstinately refuse, sanctification, When God himself tells us, (Rom. viii. 9,) "That if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his:" and therefore to deride a man for professing that he hath the Spirit, is to deride him for professing to be a Christian.

4. Do you not all profess to "believe the holy Catholic Church;" that is, that Christ hath a people dispersed through the world, that are sanctified by his Spirit, and made a holy peculiar people, whom he loveth as his spouse and as his own body, of which number you must be if you will be saved? And yet, at the same time, the members of this church you condemn, the holiness of it you secretly hate, and the faithful pastors in it you despise and disobey. Is not this hypocrisy?

5. You all profess to "believe the communion of saints;" that is, that the true members of the Catholic Church are all saints, that have one and the same Spirit, and walk by the same holy law or rule, and in holiness must converse together, and join together for the public worshipping of God, according to his own institution; and must purely and fervently love each other with such a charity as shall make one as ready to relieve another, when God calls for it, as if our riches did belong, in common, to the saints. This is the meaning of this article of your creed. And do I then need to ask you whether those that profess this are hypocrites, if they hate the saints and their inward spiritual communion; and if they love them but with that lifeless charity that James describeth? (James ii. 14, 15, &c.) or

if they despise or hate the discipline, ordinances, and holy communion of the church; and if they live in communion with drunkards, with harlots, with worldlings, or sensual, vain, or ambitious men, and fly from the "communion of saints?" What dost thou when thou sayest, "I believe the communion of saints," but say, 'I am a dissembling hypocrite,' if it be thus with thee?

6. You all profess to "believe the forgiveness of sins;" that is, that through the blood of Christ all true repenting and believing sinners shall be forgiven, and are not shut up under remediless despair; and also I think you all profess that you do repent yourselves, that forgiveness may be yours; and yet you love your sin; you love not to be told of it; you will not believe it to be sin, as long as you can strive against conviction; and when you must needs confess it, you will not forsake it; but while you seem to reform by parting with so much as you can spare, your dearer sins, which pleasure and honour and profit are much engaged in, you will not forsake; though repentance do consist in turning from sin to God, and Christ hath assured you that "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) Is not this, therefore, palpable hypocrisy, to profess repentance for remission of sin, and still keep the sin which you say you repent of, as if you thought to mock God with names and shows?

7. You all profess to "believe the resurrection of the body, and that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead;" but do you live as men that believe it indeed, that they are passing unto such a judgment? If you seriously expected to be judged for your lives, for the words you speak, the deeds you do, the time you spend, the means of grace which you neglect or use, and for all that you receive and do, is it possible you could so waste your time, and neglect the means of your salvation, and sin so boldly and obstinately as you do?

8. You all profess that you "believe the life everlasting," that the righteous shall go into their Master's joy, and the rest into everlasting punishment in hell. (Matt. xxv. 13.) But do you not play the hypocrites? Can you heartily believe that you stand so near to heaven or hell, to everlasting joy or torments, and make no greater a matter of it, nor make no better preparation for it, nor bestir yourselves no more in a case of such unspeakable weight? If you believe sincerely the glory of Heaven, you set your hearts on it more than upon Earth,

and take it for your portion, and most desirable felicity. But do I need to tell the worldly, fleshly hypocrite how far he is from this.

9. You profess, as the sum of the ten commandments, that you love God above all, and your neighbours as yourselves. But doth not your selfishness, and quarrelling with your neighbours, when they do but stand in the way of your honour or commodity, convince you of hypocrisy in this profession?

10. In the use of the Lord's Prayer, what word do you speak that is not in hypocrisy? Do you first and principally desire the hallowing of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will? when you are far more tender of your own names than of God's, and more regardful of your own honour? And when you care more for your own prosperity than for the prosperity of the church and gospel, and do yourselves become the hinderers of his kingdom and government in the church and in the souls of men? And when you cannot abide to do his will, when it crosseth the interest of your flesh, but dislike it as too strict, and had rather the word and will of God were agreeable to yours, than you will conform your own to his?

Do you only desire your daily bread, and that in subordination to the honour, and kingdom, and will of God. Or rather do you not play the hypocrites in saying so, when it is not daily bread that will content you; but plenty and prosperity is sweeter to you than holiness?

When you pray for "the forgiveness of your sins, as you forgive others," you intimate that you are weary of your sins, and hate them, and would forsake them; and that you forgive all that have wronged you, out of the sense of your own transgressions, and of the love of Christ. But is all this so, or is it mere dissembling, when you forsake not your sin, nor are willing to forsake it, and when your consciences know that there be some that you forgive not?

You pray against "being led into temptation," and yet you love it, and cast yourselves into it. Into tempting company, and tempting talk, and tempting employments. And for recreation, meat, drink, apparel, houses, attendants, estate, reputation, and almost all things else, you love and choose that which is most tempting.

You pray to be "delivered from evil," when the evil of your pride, flesh-pleasing, and worldliness, you so love, that indeed

you would not be delivered from them. What can you say to excuse all this from palpable hypocrisy.

To conclude, you pretend to all that is necessary to salvation, but have you that in reality which you pretend to ?

1. You think yourselves wise enough to be saved. But is it not folly that goes under the name of wisdom ? When you should be converted, and lead a holy life, you are wise enough to give reasons for the contrary, and wise enough to confute the preacher, and prove him a fool, instead of obeying the call of God. You are wise enough to prove the physician to be ignorant, and to cast away the medicine that should heal you. And what if nobody could deal with you in subtlety of argument, but you could say that against the necessary means of your own salvation, that none can answer ? When you die by your wisdom, and have disputed yourselves out of the reach of mercy, will you not bewail it then as folly ? Is he wiser, that, being hungry, eats his meat, or he that gives such reasons for his refusing it, and pleadeth so learnedly against eating and drinking, that none can answer him ? Is the condemned man wiser that makes friends for a pardon, or he that with unanswerable subtlety reasoneth against it, till the ladder be turned ? Such is your vain and seeming wisdom. You are not wise enough to be cured, but to give reasons why you should continue sick. In the issue, it will prove that you were not wise enough to be saved, but notably wise to resist salvation, and plead yourselves into hell.

2. You pretend that you have a saving faith, when your hearts refuse that salvation from sin, and that rule of Christ which is the object of faith, and when you will not believe the doctrines, precepts, or threatenings that cross your own conceits ; and when your belief of heaven will not carry your hearts from earth, nor work you to a holy, heavenly life.

3. You pretend to repentance, as I said before, while you hold fast the sin, and give not up yourselves to God ; when as if your neighbour, or master, or husband, should but beat one of you, and tell you when he hath done that he repenteth, and do this as often as you commit your wilful sins, and say you repent, I am confident you would not take it for true repentance. You repent, but will not confess when it is to your disgrace, as long as you can hide your sin. You repent, but will not make restitution or reparation of injuries to your power. You repent, but your heart riseth against him that

reproveth you. You repent, but you had rather keep your sins than leave them. What is this but to deceive your own hearts, and to mock yourselves with a seeming, vain, and mock repentance?

4. You pretend to love God above all, (as was before said,) when you love not his image, ways, or communion, but love that which he hateth, and still prefer the world before him.

5. You pretend that you have true desires to be godly, and what God would have you be; but they are such desires as the sluggard hath to rise, and as the slothful hath to work: that is, if it could be done with ease, and without labour; you lie still, and use not the means with diligence for all your desires. When you can sit and have your work done with wishes, and your families maintained, and your necessities all supplied with wishes, you may think to come to heaven with wishes. The good desires that the poor may be warmed, and clothed, that James speaks of, (Jam. ii. 15,) did neither relieve the poor, nor save the wisher. "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour." (Prov. xxi. 25.) Up and be doing according to thy desires, or else confess that thy wishes are hypocritical, and that thou deceivest thy own heart by vain desires.

6. You also pretend to be sincere worshippers of God. You pray, and you read the Scripture, and good books, and you hear the word, and receive the Lord's supper. But I have before shown you your hypocrisy in these; you pray against the sin that you love and would not leave; you pray for holiness, when you hate it, or desire it not in any degree to cross your flesh; you serve God, with mere words (whether of your own conceiving or of others' prescribing) with some forced acknowledgment of that God that hath not your hearts or lives. Let Christ pass the sentence on you, and not me: (Matt. xv. 7—9.) "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'" You like that teaching that sooths you in your own opinions, and galleth not your consciences in the guilty place. A minister you would have, that should stand like an adorned idol that hurts nobody, and toucheth not your sores; or that is but like a pair of organs, or a tinkling cymbal, to tickle your fancy, and make church worship to be as a kind of religious stage-

play to you. But a true minister of Christ, to open to you the doctrine of the kingdom, and roundly to awaken you from security in sin, and to call you up to the most serious, holy, heavenly life, and follow you, and let you take no rest, till you yield and practise it; and to call you to open confession of your open scandalous sins, that you may make such reparation to the wronged honour of God and souls of men, as you are capable of; and accordingly to absolve you, or to bind you over to answer it at the bar of God, and charge the Church to avoid communion with you, if you are impenitent and incorrigible; such a minister as this (which is the minister of Christ's appointment) you abhor; at least, when he comes to touch your sores. Then you are too proud to be taught and ruled by such as these, though you hypocritically profess to be ruled by Christ, who ruleth his Church by his Spirit, word, and ministers, conjunct. Then you say, 'Who gave you authority to do thus and thus by me?' As if you knew not that Christ in Scripture hath described, confirmed, and limited the ministerial office. Like condemned traitors, that should say to him that bringeth them a pardon, 'Who gave you authority to make so bold with me?' or like a man that hath the plague or leprosy, that asketh the physician, 'Who gave you authority to tell me that I am sick, and put me to such medicines as these?' or as the Israelite to Moses, (Exod. ii. 14,) "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" "not understanding that God by his hand would deliver them," saith Stephen; (Act. vii. 25;) or as the Jews to Christ, when he was teaching men the way to heaven, (Matt. xxi. 23,) "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" So because you hate the way of your recovery, you will not be saved without authority, nor be satisfied of their authority that would save you, but are like a beggar that should proudly refuse a piece of gold, and ask, 'By what authority do you give it me?' A minister that agreeth with God's description you cannot abide. (Acts xx. 18—36; Heb. xxiii. 7, 17; 1 Cor. iv. 1; 1 Thes. v. 12, 13; 1 Tim. v. 17, 20, and 2 Tim. iv. 1.) So that, indeed, it is but a mock-minister, a mock-sacrament, a mock-prayer, and so a seeming, vain religion which you desire.

7. Lastly, you pretend also to sincere obedience. If we ask you, whether you are willing to obey God? you will say, God forbid that any should deny it. But when it comes to the particulars, and you find that he commandeth you that which flesh and blood is against, and would cost you the loss of worldly

prosperity, then you will be excused ; and yet, that you may cheat your souls, you will not professedly disobey ; but you will persuade yourselves that it is no duty, and that God would not have you do that which you will not do. Like a countryman's servant, that promiseth to do all his master bids him ; but when he cometh to particulars, thrashing is too hard work, and mowing and reaping are beyond his strength, and ploughing is too toilsome ; and in conclusion, it is only an idle life with some easy charrs, that he will be brought to. This is the hypocrite's obedience. He will obey God in all things, as far as he is able, in the general : but when it comes to particulars, to deny himself, and forsake his worldly prosperity for Christ, and to contemn the world, and live by faith, and converse in heaven, and walk with God, and worship him in spirit and truth, to love an enemy, to forgive all wrongs, to humble himself to the meanest persons, and to the lowest works ; to confess his faults with shame and sorrow, and ask forgiveness of those he has injured ; these and other such works as these he will not believe to be parts of obedience, or at least, will not be brought to do them.

Poor souls, I have stood here a great while to hold you the glass, in which, if you were willing, you might see yourselves. But if you will yet wink, and hate the light, and perish in your self-deceiving, who can help it ?

Briefly and plainly, be it known to thee again, whoever thou art that hearest this, that if thou have not these five characters following, thy religion is all but vain and self-deceiving.

1. If God's authority, as he speaketh by his Spirit, word, and ministers, be not highest with thy soul, and cannot do more with thee than Kings and Parliaments and than the world and flesh. (Matt. xxiii. 8—10.)

2. If the unseen everlasting glory be not practically more esteemed by thee, and chosen, and sought, than any thing, or all things in the world. (Matt. vi. 21 ; Col. iii. 2 ; John vi. 27 ; 2 Tim. iv. 8, 9 ; Matt. xxii. 5 ; Luke xviii. 22, 23 ; Phil. iii. 20.)

3. If thou see not such a loveliness in holiness, as being the image of God, as that thou unfeignedly desirest the highest degree of it. (Matt. v, 20 ; Psalm cxix. 1—3, &c. ; Phil. iii. 12—14.)

4. If any sin be so sweet and dear to you, or seem so necessary, that you consent not and desire not to let it go. (Matt. xix. 22 ; Phil. iii. 8 ; Psalm lxvi. 18.)

5. If any known duty seem so costly, dangerous, troublesome, and unpleasant, that ordinarily you will not do it. (Matt. xvi. 24—26; Psalm cxix. 6.)

In a word, God must be loved and obeyed as God; Christ must be entertained as Christ; Heaven must be valued and sought as Heaven; and holiness loved and practised as holiness; though not to the height of their proper worth (which none on earth is able to reach,) yet so, as that nothing be preferred before them.

But yet there is one more discovery, which, if I pass by, you will think I baulk a chief part of my text.

An unbridled tongue in a professor of religion is enough to prove his religion vain.

By an unbridled tongue is not meant all the sins of our speech. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. For in many things we offend all." (Jam. iii. 2.) Every unwarrantable jest, or angry word, or hasty, rash expression, is not enough to prove a man's religion to be in vain. Though Christ says that we shall "answer for every idle word," he doth not say, "we shall be condemned for every idle word." But when the tongue is unbridled, and is not kept under a holy law, but suffered to be the ordinary instrument of wilful known sin, or of gross sin, which men might know and will not; this proves the person void of holiness, and, consequently, his religion vain.

It is true, every hypocrite hath not an unbridled tongue: some of them have the bridle of moral precepts, and some of religious education, and some of the presence and awe of persons whom they esteem; common knowledge, with natural mansuetude and moderation doth bridle the tongues of many an hypocrite; but as every wicked man is not a drunkard, or fornicator, and yet every drunkard or fornicator (that liveth in it) is a wicked man; so every hypocrite hath not an unbridled tongue, (his vice may be some other way;) but every man that hath an unbridled tongue is an hypocrite, if withal he profess himself a Christian.

The sins of the tongue are of three sorts. 1. Such as are against piety. 2. Such as are against justice. 3. Such as are against charity.

1. Against piety, that is, directly against God, are blasphemy, perjury, rash swearing, swearing by creatures, light and unreverent using of God's name and attributes, and words and works;

pleading for false doctrine, or false worship, disputing against truth and duty; scorning at godliness, or reasoning against it. These and such impieties of the tongue, are the evidences of profaneness in the speaker's heart; though some of them much more than others; and if the tongue is not here bridled, all is in vain.

2. Sinful speeches against justice and charity are these:—reproaching parents, or governors, or neighbours; railing and reviling, cursing, provoking others to do mischief, or commit any sin, disputing against and dissuading men from truth and duty; and hindering them by your speeches from a holy life, and the means of their salvation; calling good, evil, and evil, good; lying, slandering, false-witness bearing, backbiting; extenuating men's virtues, and aggravating their faults beyond the certain apparent truth; receiving, and reciting, and carrying on evil reports, which you know not to be true; endeavouring to cool men's love to others, by making them seem bad, when we cannot prove it, mentioning men's faults and failings without a call and just occasion; unchaste, immodest, ribald speeches; cheating and deceitful words to wrong others in their estates; with other such like.

But undoubtedly that sin of the tongue which the Apostle here had particular respect to, was the reproaching of fellow-Christians, especially upon the occasion of some differences of judgment and practice in the smaller matters of religion; the Judaizing Christians gave liberty to their tongues to reproach those that refused the use of those ceremonies which they used themselves, and placed much of their religion in; the quarrel was the same that was decided by the Apostles, Acts xv., and by Paul, Romans xiv. and xv., and throughout the Epistle to the Galatians. And this is the religion that James calls vain here, which was much placed in ceremonies, with a pretence of highest knowledge, and a censorious vilifying of all that would not do as they.

There are especially three sorts that use to reproach each other about the matters of religion.

1. Those that are hardened to that height of impiety, as to make a mock at seriousness and diligence in the practice of Christianity itself, hating and reproaching them that dare not sell their souls at as base a price as they.

2. Those that have so far extinguished charity by faction and self-conceit, as to confine their love and honour to their party, and to speak evil of those that are not of their own opinions.

3. Those that give liberty to their tongues unseasonably, unmeasurably, or unwarrantably to speak hardly of those that they suffer by upon religious accounts; though, perhaps, they are their superiors whom they are bound to honour.

1. The first sort are arrived at such a measure of maliciousness and misery, that they are as mad men, the objects of compassion to all men save themselves. Their sin and misery is so notorious, that I need not say anything to discover it to others that have anything of reason and true religion; and for themselves, being so far forsaken of God, as to hate and reproach the means of their salvation, no wonder if withal they are given over to that blindness as not to understand the words that should convince them, and neither to see their shame, nor the light that would discover it; and to such impenitency, as not to feel or fear the wrath and threatenings of the Almighty; but boldly to rage on, till hell hath brought them to their wits. (Prov. xiv. 16.) "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil, but the fool rageth, and is confident." Yet this much, briefly, I shall say to these, if any of them be this day my auditors, that I may not leave them as utterly past hope.

1. Thou art one of the most self-condemned, stigmatized, slaves of Satan, in the world. Thou bearest openly so undoubted a brand of wickedness, that there is no room for any rational hope in thy self, or any of thy friends, that ever thou shouldest be saved, if thou die in such a state; some hope is left that yet thou mayest be converted, but none that thou shouldest be saved without conversion. It is possible with God that can do all things, that yet thy wilful blindness may be cured, and thy tongue may unsay all that thou hast said; and thou mayest cry out of thy folly, and cry shame against thyself, for that which now thou gloriest in. It is possible for God of such a stone to make a child of Abraham! and to melt that hardened heart of thine, and lay it bleeding at the feet of Christ, and to make thee wish with tears or groans, that such thoughts had never entered into thy heart, nor such words of malice proceeded from thy mouth. And happy art thou, if God will have so much mercy on thee, that hast derided mercy, as to vouchsafe thee such a change. And pray for it, and pray hard, and pray again, if thou love thy soul; for this is thy hope, and thou hast no other. For that ever such a wretch as thou shouldest be saved, in the state that now thou art in, is as impossible as for God to lie, and as impossible as for the devils to be saved. I

wonder (but that such a forsaken soul is a senseless block, and as a lifeless carcass,) that thou dost not quake with the fears of hell, which way ever thou goest ; and that thou art not still thinking whither thou art going, and how the devils are ready to take thy soul as soon as death hath opened the door and let it out into Eternity ? As carelessly or scornfully as thou sittest here, I wonder that thou dost not tremble to consider, where it is that thou must shortly be, and where thou must abide for ever. It is one of the most notable discoveries of the powerful craft of Satan, that he is able to keep such a garrison as thy heart in so much peace, and to quiet a poor wretch that is uncertain to be one hour out of hell ! that thy sleep is not broken with terrible dreams, and that thou dost not eat thy meat in terrors, and that ever a smile should be seen in thy face ! that thy business, or company, or sports, or pleasures, should once put out of thy mind thy endless misery. While I am speaking, and thou art hearing, hell-fire is burning, and the devils are waiting, and, thy blinded soul is posting on, and, for aught thou knowest, may be there this night. Poor sinner ! for my part, I know thee not ! and, therefore, cannot justly be suspected to bear thee any ill will, or to speak these words with a desire of thy hurt. I know this is language that the guilty do not love to hear. But I must tell thee, who reproachest and deridest a serious, holy life, that, except the blasphemers of the Holy Ghost, there are few in the world in more certain misery than thou. Other sinners, though miserable, may have some cloak to hide their misery. Though the drunkard shall not enter into heaven, he may flatter himself with the remembrance that Noah was once overtaken with that sin. Though the fornicator or adulterer shall not enter into the kingdom of God, (Eph. v. 5,) he may cheat himself awhile with the remembrance of David's guilt. Though the false-hearted, temporizing, self-saving hypocrite shall not be saved, he may deceive himself, by the instance of Peter's denying his master, and his dissimulation, (Gal. ii.,) but what cloak hast thou to hide thy misery ? Did ever any true disciple of Christ either hate or reproach his servants and his ways ? What godly man hath made a mock at godliness (unless it were when he was ungodly ?) If any should think that an act of drunkenness or fornication might consist with grace, no man that understands himself can think that a scorner at an holy life, hath himself the holiness which he scorneth ! I would not for a world be in the case of that wretch, that speaks well of

holiness in others, while he lives in fornication, luxury, or worldliness himself, though he think that he cuts scores by daily crying to God for mercy. But I would much less for a thousand worlds be in the case of him that neither is godly, nor can speak well of it; that is not only void of the Spirit of Christ, but speaks against it; that is not only void of the holy image of God, but hateth it, and reproacheth it in others. O rather let me have no tongue to speak, no soul to think, than ever I should speak or think thus maliciously of the image, and ways, and servants of the Lord! I had rather be a dog, or a toad, than one of those men that use to mock at serious, diligent serving of the Lord, or that maliciously reproach his servants, and bend their wits and tongues against them; so legibly is the mark of the devil upon them, that I must needs tell you that are true believers, you are much to be blamed that you look not on them with more compassion, and weep not for them, as for men that are within a step of hell, when you hear them rail at the laws or servants of the Lord. I mean those of whom the Apostle saith, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, (that is, to the self-denying mortified state of Christians, and following him even through sufferings,) whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 18, 19.) "That not only do wickedly, but teach men so to do;" (Matt. v. 19.) "and have pleasure in them that do it;" (Rom. i. 32;) "and think it strange that we run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of us, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." (1 Pet. iv. 4, 5.)

2. Thou bearest most eminently the image of the devil, and most expressly speakest his mind, and art most openly employed in his works. What is the devil but an apostate spirit, filled with enmity against God and his servants, and hating holiness; the malicious accuser of the brethren, slandering and reproaching them, and seeking their destruction! And shall a malicious, lying sinner live, that imitateth Satan in his enmity to God? O that thou knewest whom thou servest! And that thou knewest whom thou speakest against! Woe be to him that striveth with his Maker. (Isa. xlv. 2.) It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. (Acts ix. 5.) Whoever hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? (Job ix. 4.) If Satan were to speak with open face, what would he say, but as the tongues of the malici-

ous enemies of holiness; even to speak evil of the ways and servants of the Lord? Might he appear and speak himself in the assemblies and councils of the great ones of the earth, he would speak against the same men, and to the same purpose, as those that I have described. Your tongues are his instruments. You speak what he secretly suggesteth, as verily as if he had written you your instructions, and you had read it in his words: he hateth holiness, and, therefore, he tempteth you to hate it. He would bring it into hatred in the world, and, therefore, he speaks disgracefully of it by your tongues. His will is your will; and your words are his words; and the pleasantest music that you could make him. O how it pleaseth him to make a reasonable creature reproach the word and ways of the Creator! How eager was he to have got Job to have spoken evil of God!

3. Be it known to thee, thou reviler, that if ever thou be saved thyself, it must be in that way that thou revilest. Thy hope lieth in it. As sure as thou livest, there is no other way to life eternal. Without holiness none shall see God. (Heb. xii. 14.) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Matt. v. 8.) When thou hast done all, thou must come back, and go that way thyself, or burn for ever. Either thou must be such as those that thou dost speak against, or thou art everlastingly undone. And if thou think to be such a one thyself, and to come to heaven by the very way that now thou dost revile, canst thou yet revile it? And if thou perish in hell for want of holiness, thou shalt then have enough of thy rebellion. Then thou shalt cry out against thy own malicious reproaches a thousand times more than ever thou didst against the servants of the Lord. Though the very distinction between the godly and ungodly be now thy scorn, yet I shall be bold to tell thee, in the words of Enoch, yea of God, (Jud. xiv. 16,) "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Now you have your day, and judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God! And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.) "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the

seat of the scornful ! But his delight is in the law of the Lord ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." "The ungodly are not so : but like the chaff which the wind driveth away : therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous : for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (Psal. i.) This is scripture distinction, which God will make good.

I make no question, but the worst of you will put by all this in your self-deceit, and say, it is not holiness that we speak against, but it is hypocrisy, or schism, or some such accusation that malice shall suggest, will be your mask. But will you answer me these few questions.

Quest. 1. Why then do you not imitate them so far as they do well ? Why are you not as much in works of holiness as they ? In reading, and meditating on the word of God, in holy conference, and secret prayer, and instructing your families, &c. And then leave them, and spare not where they do amiss.

Quest. 2. Why do you not hate the sins of the notoriously ungodly, who show them without shame ? Nay, why do you make such men your companions ?

Quest. 3. Why go you to the heart, that is unseen, and arrogate the prerogative of God, to censure men of hypocrisy, and such secret sins that are out of your discerning ? If you know your heart by outward actions, insist upon your proofs.

Quest. 4. Why speak you not of their good as well as of the supposed evil ? Why are you not more in speaking well of what is well, than in speaking ill of what is ill ?

Quest. 5. Why is it that you speak of men that you know not ? And of others that are innocent, for the sake of those you imagine to be guilty ? And why do you so greedily snatch at any matter of reproach, and take it by hearsay from the most ignorant, rash, or malicious mouths.

Quest. 6. If it be hypocrisy, or other vice, that you so hate, why do you not hate them in yourselves ? Why live you so viciously while you profess obedience to the Lord ? And why do you take on you to believe a heaven and hell hereafter, and to give up yourselves in covenant to God, and live so contrary to that professed belief and covenant ?

Quest. 7. Do you not feel that it is partly malice, and partly the recrimination of a guilty galled conscience, that fain would steal a little peace by thinking others to be as bad as you ?

I shall dismiss this unhappy sort of men with these two requests : 1. You are the men that of all others have the most notable advantage from your conviction, of the misery of your present state : and therefore, I beseech you, take that advantage. One would think it should be the easiest matter in the world, for such as you to know that you are ungodly, that hate godliness and oppose it. You have no plausible pretence for self-flattery or self-deceit. And therefore confess your misery, and look out to Christ, for help and pardon, while there is hope and time.

2. For the time to come, will you but try a serious, holy life before you speak against it any more ? For shame, speak not evil of the things you know not, as those brutes described, Jud. x. And holiness was never well known but by experience. O that you would be entreated but to yield to this most equal motion ! Away with your worldly, fleshly lives ; and live in faith and holiness, a just, a spiritual, and a heavenly life, but one year, or one quarter, or one month, and then if, by experience, you find just cause for it, reproach a holy life, and spare not.

II. To the second sort, (that speak evil of men upon differences of opinion, especially while they profess the same religion, in all the essential, necessary parts,) I shall propose these aggravations of their sin, for their humiliation.

1. Consider, can you think it agreeable to the law of Christ, to reproach men behind their backs, and unheard, for that which you never soberly and christianly told them to their faces ? Did you lovingly first admonish them, and impartially hear what they can say for themselves ? What is your end in speaking against your brother ? Is it to do him hurt, or good ? If hurt, be sure you do him justice ; and backbiting is not the way of justice. If good, you cross your own intention. For what good can it do him, that another hears him evil spoken of ?

2. If you are Christ's disciples, it must be known to all men by your special love to one another. (John xiii. 25.) And is reproach and evil speaking the fruit or evidence of such love ? Can you talk so of the friends that are most dear to you, or that you love indeed ? How do our hearts rise against that man, that speaks reproachfully of our dearest friends ! Love would scarce suffer you to endure such abuse of Christians in another, without a serious reprehension : much less to be the abuser of them yourselves.

3. Your evil speaking of your brethren destroyeth love in others, as it proves the want of it in yourselves. And to destroy their love is to destroy their souls. You do your worst to quench the love, both of him that you speak evil of, and of them to whom you speak it. Good is the object of love; and therefore to speak [well] of men, and manifest them to be lovely, is the only way to make them loved. Evil is the object of hatred: and therefore to speak evil of them, is to make them seem hateful, and draw men to the guilt of hating them. To praise a man will do more to make him loved, than if you only entreat another to love him; and to dispraise a man will do more to make him hated, than if you directly persuade another to hate him. And what service you do the devil, and what disservice unto Christ, by destroying love, and sowing hatred among his servants, were you impartial you might easily discern.

4. Is it not shame and pity, that the followers of Christ should imitate the devil, and ungodly men, as by detraction and reviling words they do? You aggravate your brethren's faults; and find faults where there are none; and so do Satan and ungodly men. You have a secret desire to make them seem contemptible and vile; and so have Satan and ungodly men. And hereby you seem to justify the wicked, and encourage them in their reproaching. They think they may boldly speak such a language of you all, as they hear you speak of one another. O what pity is it to hear the professed children of the Lord, to use the hell-bred language of his enemies, as if they had gone to school to Satan!

4. Are there not tongues enough sharpened against us in the world, but we must wound each other with our own? Is it not enough, if we are the seed of Christ, that every where the serpent's seed do hate us; and that all manner of evil is falsely spoken of us, and that we are not made as the scorn and the offspring of all things, but we must also hate and reproach each other? Have you not load enough from the world? Have you not enemies enough to do the work of enemies, but friends must do it? And hath not Satan instruments and tongues enough of his own, but we must use those that are Christ's against himself?

6. If thou hate thy brother, yet sure thou dost not hate thyself. Why then dost thou hurt and shame thyself? His hurt is but to be defamed, which is little, if any thing at all (for it is much in himself whether it shall hurt him.) But thy hurt

that doeth it, is to provoke God against thee, and incur his wrath, and wound thy soul by the guilt of sin. And if another hurt thee in the heel, wilt thou therefore stab thyself to the heart? If another be bad, wilt thou become so by unjust defaming him? And how dost thou cross thine own intentions? The stone that thou castest at him, flies back in thy face. Thou proclaimest thy own transgression and shame, when thou art uncharitably proclaiming his. Is not a backbiter, a reviler, is not a malicious calumniator, a worse name (which thou takest to thyself) than that which thou canst fasten on him whom thou dost reproach?

7. Thy uncharitable speeches are a dangerous sign of an unhumbed and unpardoned soul. If thou canst not forgive, thou art not forgiven. Did you know yourselves, it would teach you to deal more compassionately with others. You would have the act of oblivion as extensive as you could, if you knew what danger you are in yourselves. Do you not know as much by yourselves as you have to reproach your brother with? Do you not then invite both God and man to take you at the worst, and use you as you use your brother? Methinks you should rather be desirous of a more tender and indulgent way, as knowing what need yourselves have of it.

If you say, O but he hath done thus and thus against me. Let conscience say what you have done yourselves against God and others. If you say, he is a schismatic, an hypocrite, or this or that; remember that malice is blind, and never wants matter of accusation or reproach, and innocency is no defence against it: else Christ and his prophets and apostles had been better used by the world. And ask conscience whether more than you can truly say of him, may not be said against yourselves. If all such must be defamed, how infamous will you be?

8. If you will speak ill, you must hear ill. You teach men how to use you. "Si mihi pergit quæ vult dicere, quæ non vult audiet."

"Benedictis si certasset, audisset bene," saith the comedian. And God usually in justice suffereth it to be. And as those that by violence trample down others, when they feel themselves; on the higher ground, do oft live to be trampled on themselves; so those that take their advantages to insult and defame others, do usually live to be defamed. "For with what

measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. Judge not therefore, that ye be not judged." (Matt. vii. 1, 2.)

To which of these two former ranks you should refer the common names of scorn that religious persons have been most loaded with among us, you must judge by the particular occasion and person. It is not my intention or desire to plead for any faction, disobedience, irregularity, or hypocrisy; much less to palliate heresies or odious crimes that are cloaked with the name or profession of religion. It is the hypocrite that I am all this while detecting. But I must say that it hath been the highest brand or character of hypocrisy and impudent profaneness conjunct; and one of the most crying transgressions of this land, that men, baptized into the name of Christ, have made a scorn at the diligent serving of him, and lived in the hatred of that religion in the life and practice, which themselves profess. And that if upon some small circumstantial differences, any of their superiors have encouraged them to use any nickname of reproach against their most conscientious brethren, they have been glad of the occasion, and used those reproaches against the serious practice of religion, which others pretend to use only against men's different opinions, which they account their exorbitancies or mistakes. How the names of zealots, precisians, puritans, and such like, have been used in this land; and what sort of people have been made thereby (and by the discountenance of those that should have cherished a diligent, holy life) to be the common scorn; and how great a hinderance this hath proved to the salvation of many thousand souls, is a thing that is much more sad to mention, than difficult to prove. And when one nickname is grown out of use, the serpentine enmity watcheth for the opportunity that is afforded by differences and discountenance of the times, to take up another that may have a sharper sting. The dead form of religion, and as much as you will of words and shows, they can reverence or endure: but life, and seriousness, and practice, is the thing they hate. Just like a bear, or other ravenous creature, that will let their prey alone while it seem dead and stirs not; but if it stir, they leap upon it, and tear it into pieces. And therefore it is that the diligent zealous exercise of religion among the Papists, by images, and tautologies, and lifeless ceremonies and forms, is not half so much hated or reproached by the vulgar, as the serious exercise of unquestionable duties, that all are

in words agreed in, is here with us. To pray in our families ; to instruct our children or servants in the necessary points of faith and duty ; to exhort a drunkard, a swearer, a covetous person, or other ungodly ones to repent, and to give up themselves to a holy life ; to take up any serious speech of death and judgment, and the life to come, and the necessary preparations thereto ; these and such like are the odious marks of a zealot, a precisian, or puritan, with the ungodly rabble : so that serving the great and glorious God is with them become a matter of scorn ; while serving the devil is taken for their glory, if they can but do it in the plausible less, disgraceful mode.

But because some of the chief accusers of the brethren would needs persuade men, that the ordinary usage of the forementioned nicknames hath been less impious and more justifiable, against a sort of people only whom they feign to be unfit for human society, I shall only appeal now to the godly bishops, and conformable ministers, that mention it.

Bishop G. Downname (who, though he had written so much for bishops, hath written as much to prove the Pope to be the Antichrist) in his sermon called Abraham's Trial, p. 72, saith : " And even in these times, the godly live among such a generation of men, as that if a man do but labour to keep a good conscience in any measure, though he meddle not with matters of state, or discipline, or ceremonies ; (as for example, if a minister diligently preach, or in his preaching seek to profit, rather than to please, &c.—Or if a private Christian makes conscience of swearing, sanctifying the sabbath, frequenting sermons, or abstaining from the common corruptions of the time) he shall straightway be condemned for a puritan, and consequently be less favoured, than either a carnal gospeller, or a close papist." &c. Such were the times then.

Dr. Robert Abbot, public professor of divinity in Oxford, and after bishop of Salisbury, in a sermon on Easter-day, 1615, saith : " That men, under pretence of truth, and preaching against the puritans, strike at the heart and root of faith and religion, now established among us : that this preaching against the puritans was but the practice of Parson's and Campian's counsel, when they came into England to seduce young students ; and when many of them were afraid to lose their places if they should professedly be thus, the counsel they then gave them was, that they should speak freely against the puritans, and that should suffice," &c. So he.

Of Archbishop Laud's tract of Doctrinal Puritanism, drawn up for, and presented to, the Duke of Buckingham, see Pryne, in his Tryal, p. 156. Divers bishops have affirmed the Jesuits were the masters of this nickname here in England, and the promoters of it.

But of the common sense of this word, and the use of it, I shall now call in no more witnesses but Mr. Robert Bolton, a man that frequently published his judgment for conformity to prelacy and ceremonies; in his Discourse of Happiness, p. 163, he thus speaketh :

“ I am persuaded there was never poor persecuted word, since malice against God first seized on the damned angels, and the graces of heaven dwelt in the heart of man, that passed the mouths of all sorts of unregenerate men, with more distastefulness and gnashing of teeth than the name of puritan doth at this day ; which notwithstanding as it is now commonly meant (N. B.) and ordinarily proceeds from the spleen and spirit of profaneness, and good fellowship, as an honourable nickname, that I may so speak, of Christianity and grace. And yet for all this I dare say, that there is none of them all, but when they shall come unto their beds of death, and are to grapple immediately with the painful terrors of the king of fears, and to stand or fall to the dreadful tribunal of the living God,— then (except the Lord suffer them to fall into the fiery lake with senseless hearts and seared consciences) would give ten thousand worlds, were they all turned into gold, pleasures, and imperial crowns, to change their former courses of vanity, &c., into a life of holy preciseness, strictness, sincerity, and salvation. Oh ! when the heavens shall shrivel together like a scroll, and the whole frame of nature flame about their ears ; when the great and mighty hills shall start out of their places like frightened men ; and the fearful reprobate cry and call upon this mountain, and that rock, to fall upon him ; when as no dromedary of Egypt, nor wings of the morning, shall be able to carry them out of the reach of thy revenging hand ; no top of Carmel, no depth of sea, or bottom of hell, to hide them from the presence of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; no rock, nor mountain, nor the great body of the whole earth, to cover them from the irresistible power that laid the foundations of them ; no arm of flesh, or armies of angels, to protect them from those infinite rivers of brimstone which shall be kept in everlasting flames by the anger

of God, when their poor and woful souls shall infinitely desire, rather to return into the loathed darkness of not being, and to be hid for ever in the most abhorred state of annihilation, than now to become the everlasting objects of that unquenchable wrath, which they shall never be able to avoid or to abide, and to be chained up by the Omnipotent hand of God among the damned spirits, in a place of flames and perpetual darkness, where is torment without end, and past imagination: I say, at that dreadful day (and that day will come) what do you think would they give for part in that purity which now they persecute? and for the comforts of true-hearted holiness that now they hate? and yet without which (as it will clearly appear, when matters are brought before that high and everlasting Judge) none shall ever see the Lord, or dwell in the joys of eternity. Nay, I verily think there are no desperate despisers of godliness, or formal opposites to grace, which do now hold holiness to be hypocrisy, sanctification singularity, practice of sincerity too much preciseness,—but when the pit of destruction hath once shut its mouth upon them, and they are sunk irrecoverably into that dungeon of fire, would be content, with all their hearts, to live a million of years as precisely as ever saint did upon earth—to redeem but one moment of that torment.” So p. 159. “The common conceit of these men is, that civil, honest men are in the state of grace, and that formal professors are very forward, and without exception, but true Christians indeed, are puritans, irregularists, exorbitants, transcendants to that ordinary pitch of formal piety, which in their carnal comprehensions they hold high enough for heaven: they either conceit them to be hypocrites, and so the only objects for the exercise of their ministerial severity, and the terrors of God; or else, though the Lord may at last pardon perhaps their singularities and excesses of zeal, yet, in the mean time, they dissweeten and vex the comforts and glory of this life, with much unnecessary strictness and abridgment.

“Now, of all others, such prophets as these are the only men with the formal hypocrite; exactly fitted and suitable to his humour; for however they may sometimes declaim boisterously (N. B.) against gross and visible abominations, (and that is well) yet they are no searchers into, nor censurers of, the state of formality; and therefore do rather secretly encourage him to sit faster upon that sandy foundation, than help to draw him forward to more forwardness,” &c.

See also his Description of a puritan, p. 132.

So, in his Direction for Walking with God, p. 172,

“Good fellow-meetings and ale-house revellings, are the drunkard’s delight : but all the while he sits at it, he is perhaps in a bodily fear of the puritan constable.”

Many such passages tell you how the word puritan was commonly interpreted in Oxford, Northamptonshire, and wherever learned and holy Mr. Bolton was acquainted.

And having mentioned his testimony of the use of the word, I shall add somewhat of his discovery of this spirit of malignity and detraction that worketh in the anti-puritans. In his Discourse of Happiness, p. 190, he saith:—

“The reverence and respectful carriage to godly ministers, which may sometimes be found in the formal hypocrite, doth grow towards distaste and disaffection, when they press them by the powerful sense, and piercing application of some quickening scriptures, to a fervency in spirit, purity of heart, preciseness in their walking, supernatural singularity above ordinary and moral perfections, excellency of zeal, and a sacred violence in pursuit of the crown of life : to an holy strictness, extraordinary striving to enter in at the strait gate, and transcendent eminency over the formal righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, to a nearer familiarity with God by prayer, daily examination of conscience, private humiliations, meditation upon the endless duration in a second life ; to a narrow watch over the stirrings and imaginations of the heart, and expression of holiness in all the passages of both their callings, &c.—Points and ponderations of which nature are ordinarily to him as so many secret seeds of indignation, and many times breed in his formal heart, cold affections, exasperation, and estrangement, if not meditation of persecution and revenge. Sanctification, preciseness, purity, holiness, zeal, strictness, power of godliness, spiritual men, holy brethren, saints in Christ, communion of Christians, godly conferences, conceived prayers, sanctifying the sabbath, family exercises, exercise of fasting, and mortifying humiliations, and such like ; are commonly to men of this temporising temper, and luke-warm constitution, terms of secret terror, and open taunting.—And sometimes they villanously sport themselves with them, and make them the matter of their hateful and accursed jests, that so they may keep under as much as they can, in disestimation and contempt, the faithful professors and practisers thereof, whom

naturally they heartily hate, and also seem thereby to bear out the heartless flourishes of their own formality with greater bravery. Hereupon it is, that if they take a child of God but tripping in the least infirmity, (against which too, perhaps, he strives and prays with many tears, &c.) slipping only in some unadvised precipitant passage of his negotiations, &c.,—O then they take on unmeasurably! they cry out, these are your men of the Spirit; these are the holy brethren; these are your precise fellows; these are they which make such show of purity and forwardness! you see now what they are, when matters come out, and their dealings are discovered, when it comes to the trial indeed, or to a matter of commodity, &c. Are they not proud? are they not malicious? are they not hard-hearted and covetous as well as others, &c. When by the mercies of God (in their sense) they are neither so nor so; but such censures as these are very often the mere evaporations of pure malice, and the bitter ebullitions and overflowings of their gall," &c.

And p. 164. "The ordinary conceit which unregenerate men entertain of these (experimental ministers) is—that they are troublers of Israel, preachers of terror, transgressors of policy, unfit to prophesy at Court, or in the King's Chapel, pestilent fellows, seditious, factionists, born only to disquiet the world, and vex men's consciences.—In these days of ours especially, which are strangely profane, and desperately nought, in what man soever the power of grace, undaunted zeal, resolute sincerity, are more working, eminent, and remarkable, ordinarily the more and more implacable, outrageous, and inflamed opposites shall that man find, wheresoever he lives."

And p. 10. "The formal hypocrite is moved to think his state good, and the way of his life to be right, from a prejudice which he conceives from the imputations which the world layeth upon the children of God; such as are pride, hypocrisy, singularity, melancholy, simplicity," &c.

Page 38. "His form of godliness in his conceit is the only true state of salvation: whatsoever is short of him is profaneness; whatsoever is above him is preciseness. But, when upon his death-bed, he awaketh."

And Direct. for Walk. p. 131. "The more forward he is in the narrow way, the more furiously is he persecuted by the spite of tongues: the most resolute for God's glory, and in good causes, is ordinarily railed against, and reviled. The foul spirit

of good fellowship, as they call it, is still foaming out against God's chiefest favourites the foulest censures: that they are hypocrites, humorists, factionists, traitors, pestilent fellows, and all that is nought.—There is no creature that ever God made, not Satan himself excepted, which is more maliciously set against and censured than good men. Neither should any have so bad a name as they, could the hellish mists of virulent tongues obscure and stain the glory of their reputation."

And p. 43. "At this day, professors of the gracious way be in greatest disgrace with the most; and a drunkard, and swaggering good fellow, an usurer, a son or daughter of Belial, shall find more favour, applause, and approbation with the world, than a man which makes conscience of his ways, &c."

Page 350. "They cry, these forward professors will all turn fantastical, familists, anabaptists, arians, any thing; which cry awakes the eye of state jealousy, and so, by an unworthy consequent, draws upon those who are true of heart, even God's best servants, and the king's best subjects, discountenance, suspicions, if not molestations, unnecessarily, causelessly."

And p. 351, 352, out of Austin's Epistles, p. 137, he shows, that it was so in his time. "They every way, and infinitely labour, that when some professors of holiness have foully fallen indeed, or be only so slandered, the world would believe that they are all such; do you not think in his time the world did thus exult and exclaim, or in the like manner, upon Lot's fall? 'Here now you see puritan Lot, who could not endure the good fellowship of the Sodomites, he is now himself seized on by incest: they are all such, I warrant you:'" citing Du Barta's translation by Silvester, p. 412.

Base, busy stranger! com'st thou hither thus
Controller-like, to prate and preach to us?
No puritan, thou shalt not here do so, &c.

Thus you hear, from a conformable divine, how men calling themselves Christians, and being (some of them) formally religious, do prove themselves self-deceiving hypocrites, by their unbridled tongues, in reviling at those as Puritans, and too precise, that will not be self-deceiving formalists as well as they. I shall only add some of Bishop Hall's characters of an hypocrite, that you may see what formality is in the judgment of knowing men.

Page 169. "Walking early up into the city, he turns into

the great church, and salutes one of the pillars on one knee; worshipping that God which at home he cares not for, while his eye is fixed on some window, or some passenger, and his heart knows not whither his lips go. He rises, and looking about with admiration, complains on our frozen charity, commends the ancient—with the superfluity of his usury, he builds an hospital, and harbours them whom his extortion hath spoiled: so while he makes many beggars, he keeps some. He turneth all gnats into camels, and cares not to undo the world for a circumstance. Flesh on a Friday is more abomination to him than his neighbour's bed. He abhors more not to uncover at the name of Jesus, than to swear by the name of God," &c. So Bishop Hall.

But perhaps you will say, these persons whom you describe, that will make a mock of godliness itself, are not to be numbered with hypocrites, but with the openly profane.

To which I answer, 1. Even these profess themselves to be Christians, and therefore are hypocrites when they are not what they do profess. 2. They persuade themselves that they are as truly godly as those that they reproach, and do not think that it is godliness, indeed, for which they do reproach them, but for engrossing the name or reputation of godliness to themselves, and for some differing manner or way of worship. For this is one of the most notable cheats by which the devil undoes the empty, formal hypocrite; finding that this man doth own Christianity in his opinion, but is void of the true spirit, and power, and life of Christian religion; he raiseth some controversies between the serious Christian and the hypocrite, about some controvertible points of doctrine, or about some modes or circumstances of discipline and external worship, and when they fall into two sides, the hypocrite thinks that it is but in these controversies that the difference lies. The question, thinks he, is not whether men should be regenerate, godly, and religious, but whether my way of religion or the puritan's and precisian's be better! And presently he hence concludes, that indeed it is he that is the more truly religious. For, saith he, my judgment is sound, and the Puritan's is erroneous; I am of the judgment of the church, which he is against; the reverend prelates or doctors are more of my side than on his; I am for order, and he is for confusion and irreverence, and followeth the humours and fancies of his own brain. And thus the devil turneth his eye from the

main difference, and makes him believe that it is these controversies that are all that sets them at a distance. But alas! man, thou overlookest the point that thy life and soul lieth on. Agree first in the serious hearty entertainment and practice of the substance of that holy truth which you are both in point of opinion agreed in, and do not condemn thyself in the things which thou allowest; contradict not thy creed and profession by thy fleshly, worldly, negligent, careless, and ungodly life, but love God with all thy heart and might, and first seek his kingdom and his righteousness, which thou confessest thou shouldest do, and then the principal difference is healed, and thou hast escaped the principal danger of thy soul, and then it is not a few circumstantial differences that will divide your hearts, or divide you from each other in the life to come. Men that differ about bishops, and ceremonies, and forms of prayer, may be all true Christians, and dear to one another, and to Christ, if they be practically agreed in the life of godliness, and join in a holy, heavenly conversation. But if you agree in all your opinions and formalities, and yet were never sanctified by the truth, you do but agree to delude your souls, and neither of you will be saved for all your agreement.

III. The third sort to be spoken to, is those that let out their passion in hard speeches against superiors or others, that they think do wrong or persecute them on a religious account. At this time I will suppose the injury be real, and the complaint be just, it yet beseems not Christians to revile.

1. Consider how contrary this is to the example of our Lord; and that he left us his example in this particular, with a special recommendation for our imitation. When he was falsely accused, and the High Priest urged him to answer for himself, (Matt. xxvi. 62, 63,) he was silent, to show that he could bear a false accusation, without so much as vindicating his innocency by a just defence. O learn both the lesson and motives recommended to you, 1 Pet. ii. 18, to the end. "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because

Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Here is the description of your duty, and your example. Are you used worse than Christ was used? (Isa. liii. 7, 8.) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. And if you will come to him, and be his disciples, you must learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart, that you may find rest unto your souls. (Matt. xi. 28, 19.)

2. Consider, as our kingdom is not of this world, so we are not to strive for worldly pre-eminence, nor with carnal weapons, but must know that our greatness here is in being the least, and our dignity in being the servants of all; and our gain is by our loss, and our honour by evil reports, and by disgrace, and our advancement by our debasement, and our preferment by being kept from worldly honour, and our joy by sorrow, and our exaltation by humiliation. And therefore it is contrary to our state of faith to murmur at them that deprive us of the pleasures of sense, or the ease and privileges of the flesh. Mark the description of Christianity in the gospel, and see how much of it consisteth in contempt of the esteem and honours of the world, and of all the accommodations and pleasures of the flesh, because of the expectation of the unseen eternal pleasures; and in the forsaking all, and taking up our cross, and following a crucified Christ; and in patience, and meekness, and forbearing and forgiving; and rather than seek either verbal or actual revenge, to give the cloak also to him that takes away our coat, and turn the other cheek to him that smiteth us. Unmortified passion, and untamed nature, will not give some men leave to understand these passages of Christ, but they search for some such figure so to expound them by as shall annihilate the plain and proper sense. Self-love so blindeth men, that when they read these gospel precepts, they feel not their consciences touched and bound by them, but they read them as if they read them not, and retain no more than if it were nonsense which they read. Had the commands aforesaid (of patience, forbearing, and forgiving,) but as much force and efficacy upon the souls of most professors as the com-

mandments have that are against swearing, and cursing, and drunkenness, and fornication; we should have much better maintained our innocency and our peace, and have more honoured our profession by showing the world Christianity exemplified in its proper, genuine nature and effects.

3. Consider, it is not oppression, persecution, or hard usage that will exempt us from the obligation of the fifth commandment, which requireth us to honour our superiors, our natural, and civil, and ecclesiastical fathers. It is the evil and froward, and not only the good and the gentle, that we must honour and obey. And the reason is plain from their original end. It is not as our trustees, or agents, or friends only, that our rulers must be honoured, but as the officers of the God of heaven; nor is it only as they do good to us, but as they preserve order and justice in the world, and are the pillars of the Commonwealth. If magistrates should deal ever so hardly with you and me, yet still their office is of necessity to the common good. And if their office be necessary, their honour is necessary, for when they are dishonoured and despised, they are disabled. And therefore, for the common good, we must be careful to keep up the honour of our governors, even when we suffer by them ourselves. Princes were none of the best when the apostles commanded the churches to honour them, and obey them, and this not only for fear of their penalties, but for conscience' sake. (Rom. xiii. 5.) Of old it was they that walked after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, that were presumptuous and self-willed, and despised government, and were not afraid to speak evil of dignities; whereas the angels that are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusations against them before the Lord. (2 Pet. ii. 10, 11; Jude 8, 9.)

4. Consider, that reviling is a tongue-revenge, and revenge is God's, and he is engaged to repay, and hath commanded us not to avenge ourselves. As we must not step into the judge's tribunal whenever we think he is negligent in his administrations, so much less must we accuse God of negligence or injustice, by stepping into his throne. And though the railers of these times excuse their sin with the name of justice, they must show their commissions for the executing of that justice, before it will pass in heaven for an excuse. Is not God severe enough? will not his judgment be terrible enough? would you wish men to suffer more than he will inflict on the impenitent? what! more than hell? and will it not be soon enough? are

you so hasty for so dreadful a revenge? can you not stay when the Judge is at the door? Mark both the usage and remedy of believers, in James v. 5—8. To the rich and great ones of the world he saith, "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter! Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." There is your usage. "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." There is the remedy. But must we stay so long? He thus repeateth his advice: "Be ye also patient: stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Let your moderation be known to all men; the Lord is at hand." (Phil. iv. 5.) "Shall not God avenge his own elect, that cry night and day unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." (Luke xviii. 7, 8.) There is no contradiction between crying long and avenging speedily.

5. Consider what compassion, rather than reproach, you owe to those by whom you suffer. They do themselves much more hurt than they do you. Are they great? They have the more to answer for, and their fall will be the greater. (James v. 1—3.) If you are yourselves believers, go into the sanctuary, and ask the Scriptures what will be their end; and then deny them compassion if you can. Alas! consider they are, at the worst, but such as you were formerly yourselves as to the main. Paul makes a sad confession of his own persecution of the church, when he was before Agrippa, and doth not complain that he was himself so hardly used. "I verily thought," saith he, "with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. Many of the saints I shut up in prison (little thinking that they were saints); I gave my voice against them, I punished them oft in every synagogue; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them." (Acts xxvi. 9—12.) He would not tell Agrippa that he was mad, but he might speak more freely of himself. Oh! Sirs, pity poor men who have the temptations of worldly greatness and prosperity, and must go through a camel's eye if they will come to heaven; who stand so high that sun and wind have the greatest force upon them; who see so much vanity, and little serious exemplary piety; who hear so much flattery and falsehood, and so little necessary truth, saith Seneca, "*Divites cum omnia habeant, unum illis deest; scilicet, qui verum dicat: si enim in cliente-*

lam felicitis hominis potentumque perveneris, aut veritas, aut amicitia perdenda est." If you were in their places, you know not how far you might be prevailed upon against yourselves. If little temptations can make you miscarry in your places so oft and foully as you do, what would you do if you had the strongest baits of the world, and allurements of the flesh, and the most dangerous temptations that Satan could assault you with? Have you not seen of late before your eyes, how low some have fallen from high professions, and how shamefully the most promising persons have miscarried, that were lifted up and put to the trial of such temptations of prosperity as they had never been used to before? Oh! pity those that have such dangerous trials to pass through, and be thankful that you stand on safer ground; and do not cruelly envy them their perils, nor reproach them for their falls, but pray, and daily pray, for their recovery.

6. Consider this speaking evil of those by whom you suffer, hath too much of selfishness and corrupted nature in it to be good. If another suffered as you do, and you were advanced as another is, would not you speak more mildly then? Or, if not so, yet the proneness of nature to break out into reviling words, though it were for religion and for God, doth intimate to you that it hath a suspicious root. Do you find it as easy to be meek and patient, and forgive a wrong, and love an enemy? Take heed lest you serve Satan in vindicating the cause of God. It is an unfit way of serving God, to do it by breaking his commands. Read seriously the description of a contentious, hurtful, foul-tongued zeal, in James iii., and then tell me what thanks Christ will give you for it. The two great disciples, James and John, thought it would have notably honoured Christ, and curbed the raging spirit of the ungodly, if he would have let them call for fire from heaven, to consume a town that refused to receive him. But doth Christ encourage their destroying zeal? No; but he tells them, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." They little knew how unlike to the tender, merciful, healing spirit of Christ that fiery hurting spirit was, that provoked them to that desire, nor how displeasing their temper was to Christ. This is the very case of many thousand Christians that are yet young, and green, and harsh, and have not attained to that mellowness, and sweetness, and measure of charity, that is in grown, experienced Christians. They think their passions and desires of some plagues on the

contemners of the gospel, are acceptable to God, and blame the charitable as too cold, when they little know what spirit it is that raiseth that storm in them, and how unlike, and unacceptable it is to Christ. Were you as zealous to serve all others in love, and to stoop to their feet for their salvation, and to become all things lawful to all men, that you may win some, this saving zeal would be pleasing to your Lord, who comes to do the work of a physician, and not of the soldier, to save, and not to destroy, and therefore most approves of those that serve him most diligently in his saving work.

7. Lastly, consider, your passions and evil speakings will but increase your suffering, and make it seem just, if otherwise it were unjust. If you are not meek, you have not the promise of inheriting the earth. (Matt. v. 5.) If you honour not your parents or superiors, you have not the promise that your "days shall be long in the land." And your evil speaking will make men conclude that you would do evil if you could and durst; as it is said to be Zoilus's answer, when he was asked why he spoke evil of Plato, and such worthy men, "Quoniam malum facere cum velim non possum—Because I would do them hurt and cannot." Give not occasion for such a charge.

Finally, "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another: love as brethren: be pitiful: be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but, contrariwise, blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing; for he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil." (1 Peter iii. 8—11.) "But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, nor be troubled." (ver. 14.)

But I suppose you will here say, 'Is it not lawful to call a spade a spade? Is not a wo against them that call evil good? May not a man speak of the hurtful crimes of others?' I answer, first, Yes, when, as a magistrate, a minister, or a brother, you have just cause to tell them of it lovingly, though plainly, to their faces, in order to their recovery: secondly, and when you have a just call to speak of it to others, either in seeking justice, or in charity and mercy, for the preservation of those that else will be more hurt by the silencing of men's faults, than you do hurt by mentioning them.

But, 1. You may not slander men as guilty of what indeed they are not.

2. You may not make men's faults seem worse than they are.

3. You must endeavour the good of the person as much as you can, while you blame the sin.

4. You must not mention men's faults without a call ; unless the good of himself or others do require it.

5. You must not do it with a revengeful mind, for personal injuries.

6. You must manifest love and compassion in all.

7. You must difference between reigning sins, and human frailties ; and between a course of sin and an unusual fall ; and between a sin repented of, and not repented of ; and must censure but as you find God censure in his word.

8. You must be more ready to speak of the good that is in the same men as you have a call, than of the evil ; and not maliciously stick only in the galled place.

9. Let it be as far as may be to his face.

10. Let it be according to the common rule of equity. Do as you would be done by. Not measuring your duty to others, by a corrupt impatience of bearing such yourselves ; but speaking nothing for matter or manner to another, which you would think unmeet to be spoken to you, if you were in his case.

11. And especially be tender of the honour of superiors, yea, though they were evil, and do you wrong.

12. And foresee the consequence, whether your words are not like to do more hurt than good.

And if still you think that sufferings will justify reviling, contumelious complaints, consider these two causes of your mistake.

1. You make a great matter of a little one. As there is not so great good in the prosperity of the flesh, as worldlings think ; so neither is there so great evil in the loss of it ; what great harm is poverty, imprisonment, reproach, or death ? Nay, you have a promise that all shall work together for your good. (Rom. viii. 28.)

2. You make a strange matter of that which is the ordinary condition of believers, to be hated of all men ; to have all manner of evil spoken falsely of you ; to be persecuted from one city to another ; to be killed all the day long, and counted as sheep to the slaughter. Do these seem strange matters to you ? Did you never read or hear the Gospel ? nor know the terms of Christ till now ? Did you never read of forsaking all for Christ, if indeed you would be his disciples ? Did you never

count what it must cost you to be saved? Did you not renounce the world and the flesh in your baptismal, oft-renewed covenant, (1 Peter iv. 12, 13.) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, as if some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." And will you think so strange of smaller matters, as to think they excuse your impatience, and evil speeches?

By this time you may see, if you are willing to see, that all among us that are not real saints, are hypocrites, if they profess themselves Christians and the servants of God; and that miserable, ungodly souls, that call such hypocrites, as are more diligent than themselves for their salvation, do but discover their ignorance and malignity, and condemn themselves in betraying their hypocrisy, while they reproach the practice of the same christian religion which themselves profess; and the obedience to that Scripture which they confess, themselves, to be the word of God. All the profane, and unsanctified among us, that call themselves Christians, are certainly hypocrites. And for the godly it is the very same religion, that is professed by them and you; it is the same engagement and vow that you all made to God in baptism; and suffer but reason impartially to tell you, when two men have entered the same covenant, and one never mindeth it so as to keep it; and the other makes it his chiefest care; which of these is like to be the dissembler in his covenant? When two men profess themselves the servants of God, and as such place their hopes in heaven, and one of them makes a jest of sin, and serveth the flesh and world which he hath renounced, and hates those that diligently serve the Lord; and the other maketh it the principal care and business of his life to serve and please him, insomuch as he is reproached for it, as making more ado about it than he needs; which of these are hypocrites, and which are serious, in the performing of their covenants, and living according to their profession? If two men that promise to do your work, and one labour as hard as he can, and the other sit down and deride him for making so much ado, which was it that played the hypocrite in his promise? If diligence in God's service be a sign of hypocrisy, then promise-keeping is hypocrisy, and promise-breaking is sincerity; and then you may transfer the case to God, who will be the rewarder of them only that diligently seek him. (Heb. xi. 6.) And say that it is his faithfulness to break his promises, and his unfaithfulness to keep them. But who will spend words on such impious

absurdities? so gross, that the devil would {have showed himself a fool to vent them, if he had not made his followers such fools as to believe them. But for the faithful servants of the Lord, let them know, that they must serve him on such terms; they must live above the judgment and reputation of this world; and be content that God, the searcher of hearts, shall be their judge, who knoweth both sincerity and hypocrisy; and will bring forth their righteousness as the light. Christians, you must not only be sincere, but also patiently expect to be accounted hypocrites, and pointed at as the only dissemblers of the world; you must not only be honest, but patiently expect to be accounted dishonest. You must not only be wise and sober, but patiently expect to be accounted fools and madmen. You must not be liberal, charitable, and contemners of the world, but patiently expect to be called covetous, even though you give away all that you have. You must not only be chaste and temperate; but also patiently expect to be defamed as incontinent and licentious, and as Christ was called, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. A minister must not only lay out himself wholly for the saving of men's souls, and spend himself and all that he hath on his Master's work; but also patiently expect to be accounted unfaithful, covetous, and negligent, and murmured at by almost all whose unreasonable desires he doth not answer, and be censured by almost all whose wills and humours he doth not fulfil; and that is, most, that have a self that ruleth at home, and, therefore, they think should be the idol of others, as it is their own; and that are but unacquainted with the reasons of those things that do displease them. It is little comfort to us to do good, if we cannot bear the estimation of doing evil, and cannot lose all the observation, acknowledgment and applause of man, as if we had never done ~~what~~ good at all. It is far from christian perfection to be honest, and godly and sincere, if we must needs be accounted to be as we ~~are~~ good, and cannot patiently be esteemed dishonest, ungodly, and hypocritical; and be judged worst when we are best; what have the servants of Christ lost their lives for in flames, and by other sorts of torments, but for the best of their service, and greatest of their piety and fidelity? When dogs bark at passengers, commonly it signifieth but two things, namely, that they are persons they know not, or that they hate; but it is no sign that the persons are bad, or poor, or sick; for be they never so bad and miserable, if they know them, and love them, the dogs

will not bark at them. See that thou be not an hypocrite, and then it must be accounted a small matter by thee, to be called an hypocrite ; yea, if persons that fear God themselves shall so esteem thee, it is no other affliction but what thou must be armed for, and patiently undergo. Even from the godly, through mistake, we often suffer most for our greatest duties, and are censured most for that which God and conscience most approve us for ; and lose our reputations for that which God would be greatly offended with us if we did otherwise. As ever then you would not prove yourselves hypocrites, see that you look not for the hypocrite's reward, as Christ calls it, Matt. vi. 2, which is, to be approved of men ; be they good or bad men, their overvalued applause may be but the hypocrite's reward. To be content and patient in doing well, and being judged to do ill, and being good, and being judged to be bad, is the property of him that is sincere indeed ; therefore, to be unthankfully requited and reviled, and spit upon, and buffeted, and shamefully used and put to death, even by those whose lives and souls he had, with greatest care and condescension, pitied, this was the pattern of love and self-denial that was set us by our Lord. And though we cannot reach his measure, and distempered Christians find much struggling before they can bring themselves to patience, under such ingratitude and unworthy usage from the world, especially from their mistaken froward brethren, yet, in some prevailing measure, it must be done. For he that cannot serve God without the hypocrite's reward, is but an hypocrite. If he will not be a Christian, obedient, charitable, diligent, faithful, for heaven and the pleasing of God alone, he is not a Christian indeed. And, alas, what a pitiful reward is it, to be thought well of, and applauded by the tongues of mortal men ! How few were ever the more holy by applause ! But thousands have been hurt, if not undone, by it. Thou givest all thou hast to the poor : thou spendest thyself wholly, and all that thou hast, for the service of God, and the good of others ; it is well ; it must be so. But, after all, thou art censured, slandered, vilified, and unthankfully and unmannerly used. And what of that ? what harm dost thou fear by it ? What advantage thy pride and selfishness might have taken, even by due applause and thankfulness, it is easy to perceive. But now the temptation is taken out of thy way ; thou art secluded from all creature-comforts ; and so art directed, and almost forced, to look up to the love of God alone ; now thou hast no other reward before thee, it

is easier to look singly on the saints' reward. When God hath no competitor, to whom else canst thou turn thy thoughts? when all others abuse thee, it is easier to have recourse to him. When earth will scarce afford thee any quiet habitation, thou wilt surely look to heaven for rest.

Thus much I thought meet to interpose here for the confirmation of the sincere, on occasion of the world's unjust accusations; and so to persuade them to be satisfied in the portion of the sincere. I now return again to the self-deceiver.

And here I shall conclude all with these two requests to you, which, as one that foreseeth the approaching misery of self-deceivers, I earnestly entreat you, for the sake of your immortal souls, that you will not deny me. The first is, that you will be now but as willing to try yourselves, as I have been to help you; and as diligent and faithful when you are alone, in calling your own hearts to a close examination, as I have been to hold the light here to you. O refuse not, delay not, to withdraw yourselves sometimes from the world, and set yourselves as before the eye of God, and there bethink yourselves whether you have been what you have vowed and professed to be! And whether that God hath been dearest to your hearts, and obeyed in your lives, and desired as your happiness, who hath been confessed and honoured with your lips? Consider therefore, that God judgeth not as man; nor will he think ever the better of you, for thinking well of yourselves. And that there must go more to prove your approbation with God, than commonly goes to keep up your reputation in the world. The religion that serveth to honour you before men, and to deceive yourselves, will never serve to please the Lord and save your souls. And the day is at hand when nothing but God can give you comfort, and when self-deceivers will become, everlastingly, self-tormentors. O therefore go willingly and presently to the word, to your lives, and hearts, and consciences, and try yourselves, and try again, and that with moderate suspicion, that in so great a business you may not be deceived, and be self-deceivers.

2. My second request is, that if you do discover, or but justly suspect yourselves of hypocrisy and self-deceit, you would stick there no longer, but presently change your vain religion, your seemings and formalities, for the power of godliness and sincerity of heart.

But I suppose that some of you will say, there lies the difficulty. O that we could do it! But how should it be done?

I answer : if thou really be willing to be above hypocrisy, and a vain religion, the cure is half wrought, at least ; and I will not tire thee now with many, but help and try thee by these few, directions.

In general, be what thou hast promised and vowed to be, in thy baptism, and what thou still dost profess to be, a Christian, and it will serve thy turn : what that is, I have told you before.

More particularly. Direct. 1. Deliberately renew thy covenant with God : and with a grieved heart, bewailing that thou hast been a covenant-breaker, give up thyself presently to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; as thy Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, thy Owner, thy Ruler, and thy Father.

2. Renounce sincerely the devil, the world, and the flesh, and be at a point with all below ; and quit all conceits and hopes of felicity, or rest, on earth : and absolutely devote and resign thyself, and all thou hast, to the will and service of thy Lord, without any secret exceptions or reserves. This is the property and plague of hypocrites, that secretly they have exceptions and reserves in giving up themselves to God. They will follow him, except it would disgrace them, or undo them, in the world ; he shall have all, provided the flesh may not be too much pinched. That is, in plain English, they take him not for God, but for a second to themselves and the world, and will give him but what the flesh can spare.

3. Fix the eye of lively faith of God upon the everlasting joys, and there take up thy whole reward, and look for no other. Quit all expectations of a reward from men. Let it seem a small thing to thee, what any mortal man shall think or speak of thee ; unless as God's honour or interest is concerned in thine. I have told you before, he is an hypocrite that will not be godly without the hypocrite's reward ; and that can sail no further than he is moved by the wind of man's applause, or some other worldly end.

4. Stick not in any externals of religion, nor in notions and barren, ineffectual opinions. So far art thou religious, as thy soul is engaged unto God, and thy life employed for him ; and so far thou dost truly worship him as thy heart is drawn up to him in love, and as thou dost fear him, admire him, trust him, and take thy pleasure in him. Think not, that it is a saving religiousness, to be of such or such an opinion, or such a party, or such a church, or to say over so many words or prayers, or

to keep a task of outward duties, or to be of a ready, voluble tongue, in preaching, prayer, or discourse, religion lieth in the heart and life.

5. Indulge not thyself in one known sin. Retain no gross or wilful sin. Plead for no infirmity, but make it the business of thy life to extirpate the relics of the body of death. Be willing of the most searching word, and of the plainest reproof, and of the help thou canst get against so dangerous an enemy.

6. Stint not thyself in any low degree of holiness ; but love, and long, and strive, after the highest. If thou bear a secret core of distaste against those that outgo thee, it is a mortal sign. Thou must be perfect in desire, or thou art not sincere.

7. Walk always as in the presence of the holy, dreadful, heart-searching God : remember that he seeth thy ends, thine affections, and all thy thoughts. Be the same, therefore, in secret as thou art in public ; sincerely search the word of God, and know what it is that he would have, and that resolve on, if all the world should be against it. Unresolvedness is hypocrisy ; and temporizing, or following the greater side, for the security of the flesh, is no better. Never think that thou canst be too holy or too obedient. But make it thy study to do God all the service that thou canst, whatever suffering or cost it put thee to. Be not ashamed openly to own the cause of Christ. In the presence of the greatest, remember that thy Master is so much the greater, that they are worms and vanity to him. Take heed of culling out the easy and cheap part of religion, and laying by the difficult and dear. Thy religion must be as the heart in thy breast, which is always working, and by which thou livest ; which cannot stop long, but thou wilt die. But the hypocrite's religion is like the hat upon his head, for ornament and shelter from the weather, and not for life : in the night when none seeth him he can lie without it ; and in the day he can put it off for the sake of a friend, and perhaps stand bare in the presence of a greater person that expecteth it. So can the hypocrite too often dispense with his religion.

8. Be hearty and serious in all thou doest. Hear, and read, and pray, as for thy life. Sincerity consisteth much in seriousness. Remember that thou art almost at another world ! While I am speaking, and thou art hearing, we are both hastening to our endless state. O how should men live on earth, that must live here for so short a time, and must live for ever in heaven or hell ! these things are true, and past all question : and there-

fore, for your souls' sake, lose not heaven by trifling. Pray not in jest, and resist not sin in jest, lest you be damned in good sadness. When you are at work for eternity, it is time to do it with all your might. O what inconceivable mercies are now offered to you! O what an excellent price is in your hands! And nothing is so likely to deprive you of the benefit, as dreaming and dallying, when you should be up and doing; as if this were not your business, but your play; and salvation and damnation were matters of sport! O do but set yourselves to the pleasing of God, and the saving of your souls with all your might, and ply it with diligence as your chiefest work, and then you are out of the danger of the hypocrite! But if still you will give the world the pre-eminence, and your flesh must be pleased, and your prosperity secured, and God must have but compliments, or the leavings, your misery is at hand, and vengeance shall undeceive those hearts that would not be undeceived by the word. And you shall remember, to the increase of your anguish, that you were told this day, that your seeming, trifling religion would prove vain. But I beseech you, as you are men, as you love your souls, dismiss us with some better hopes; and now resolve to be downright Christians. Which, as I have begged of you, I shall now beg of God.