

that you will come to Christ but upon trial, and that you will be religious as far as will stand with your prosperity and safety in the world, and so you may not be undone. If you except secretly either honour, estate, or life, which you resolve not to lay down if Christ require it, you then play the hypocrite and lose all.

4. You must consent to a present change, and at present thus wholly give up yourself to God, and not only that you will do it some time hereafter. As he that will not take up Christianity and a holy life till hereafter should not be baptised till hereafter, when he will do it; so, if you do but consent to repent and be converted till some time hence, this is at present no repentance, conversion, nor true covenanting with God. All this you must understand and do.

And now I will give you time to learn and resolve of all this that I have said to you. Read over and over the exposition of the covenant which I have written; and what you understand not, ask the meaning of it. And when you have done all, come to me, and tell me your resolution.

THE THIRD DAY'S CONFERENCE.

The Confutation of Ungodly Contradicters.

Speakers.—Paul, a Teacher; Saul, a Learner; Sir Elymas Dives, a malignant Contradictor.

PAUL. Welcome, neighbour. You are come sooner than I expected you. Are you well resolved of what we talked of?

SAUL. Since I saw you, I opened my case to my landlord, Sir Elymas Dives; and he is accounted a man of wit and learning; and he saith so much against all that you persuade me to, that I am perplexed between both, and know not what to say or do; but, at last, I got him to come to you, and say that to you which he said to me, that I may hear which seemeth in the right.

P. You did very wisely; and I have the more hope of your conversion and salvation, because you are diligent, and deal faithfully with yourself, and do not let deceivers carry you away

quietly, without hearing what can be said against them. Desire him to come in.

Sir Elymas Dives. Good-morrow, Mr. Paul. I perceive you have troubled the mind of my poor tenant, here ; so that he can scarce sleep. You, precise preachers, make such a stir with your religion in the world, that you will not let men live in quiet by you.

P. Sir, he that is called and consecrated to this office, to declare, from the word of God himself, things, ^s great, and necessary, and true, concerning the everlasting state of their souls, must needs call men to sober and serious thoughts. And if there be some trouble in these thoughts, to those that have foolishly neglected their own happiness, it is no wonder.

El. The man hath been all his time an honest, painful, labouring man. I never heard that he said, or did any man harm ; but hath followed his business, and gone to church, and received the sacrament, and lived in love and peace with his neighbour. I never saw him drunk, nor any harm by him ; and now you will make him doubt of his salvation.

P. Sir, I would have no man doubt of his salvation without cause ; nor no man presume of salvation without cause. The saving or losing of the soul, for ever, is a great business, and not to be cast upon presumptuous and blind hopes. I would but have him ^a make sure of heaven ; and can any man, think you, make too sure ? It is not you, nor I, that are the Judge of souls, but God ; and his laws are the rule of his judgment. His word tells us who it is that he will save. If I tell any man that Christ will not save him, to whom the Gospel promiseth salvation, condemn me, and spare not. But if you tell any man that God will save him, to whom God hath spoken no such thing, but the contrary, what wrong can be greater to God and him ? And as to his good life, which you talk of ; faith and repentance, and the love of God, and a holy life, are matters of another nature than all that you have said. Pardon me for telling you, that you speak out of your element, like an unlearned man about law, or physic, and not like one that had made divinity the study of his life, as we have done. I have but inquired of the man himself how the case standeth with his soul, and set the Word of God before him, and directed him how to judge himself. Ask him, whether he hath lived by faith, or sense ; after the Spirit, or after

^s Psalm iv. 5—7 ; li., and cxix. 59 ; Acts ii. 37.

^a 2 Cor. xiii. 5 ; 2 Pet. i. 10 ; Isa. iv. 5, 6.

the flesh; whether he hath ^b loved God or pleasure better; whether he hath sought heaven, or earthly prosperity, with the greater care and diligence. If he have, I will assure him that he is in a state of grace. It is he that must answer you.

El. Are you a preacher, and think that to frighten men, and cast them into terrors, is the way to mend them? It is believing well, and hoping well, that is the way to salvation.

P. Believing and hoping falsely, is not the believing and hoping well. He that knoweth not and feareth not a danger, will not sufficiently labour to escape it. Did you never read, that "The ^c fear of God is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do hereafter?" Doth not Christ say, "Fear him that is able to destroy both soul and body in hell?" Yea, I say unto you (whosoever saith the contrary), "Fear him!" (Matt. x. 28; and Luke xii. 5.) "Seeing we receive a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 28, 29.) "Having a promise left us of entering into his rest, let us fear, lest any of you come short of it." (Heb. iv. 1.) The Scripture is full of such like passages.

Suppose I am a physician, and have a medicine that infallibly cureth all dropsies and consumptions in time; and I see the signs of a dropsy or consumption on one of your servants, and I tell him my opinion of his case and danger, that he will die, unless he presently take this certain remedy; and you come, and chide me for frightening and discomfoting him; and tell him that there is no danger. Which of us is the most comfortable friend to the man? I assure him of recovery, if he will use the means: you flatter him with false hopes, to keep him from using them: and I am a physician, and you are none. Which of us may he wiselier believe?

El. When you should draw men to believe, you drive them to unbelief and doubting.

P. Faith is not merely to believe that we are already forgiven, and shall be saved. If it would prove a man good, to believe that he is good; or prove that a man shall be saved, to believe that he shall be saved; and that he hath true grace when he hath none; then all the heathens and wicked men in the world, may be saved, by believing it shall be so. Then let your tenant be-

^b 2 Tim. iii. 4; Matt. vi. 20, 21, 23.

^c Psalm cxi. 10; Prov. i. 10; xv. 33.

lieve that he hath money when he hath none ; and believe that he hath paid your rent when he hath not. Believing God, supposeth some word of his to be believed. And what word of his promiseth salvation to the ungodly ? We must believe the Gospel, that Christ pardoneth and saveth all that truly^d believe in him : that is, take him practically for their Teacher, their Saviour, and Lord ; to sanctify them by his Spirit, and mortify their worldly, fleshly lusts, and make them a holy and heavenly people. To take Christ for such a Physician and Saviour of your soul, is truly to believe ; and to doubt of the truth of his Word, is the doubting of unbelief : but so is not every doubting of our own sincerity. A drunkard may doubt he is not sober, and yet not thereby doubt of the Gospel of Christ.

El. If poor men have no more wit than to hearken to all that you would put into their heads, you will drive them all into despair at last.

P. We do but teach them how to prevent everlasting despair. There is no hope of being saved in despite of God, or against his will. And to cherish such^e hopes (of being saved without holiness) till time be past, is the way to hellish desperation. What, if the king tell his subjects, ‘ If you murder, there is no hope of your lives ; I will not pardon you.’ Will you say to them, ‘ Go on, and kill men ; do not despair ; the king doth ill to put you upon desperation ?’ What, if you had been with Paul in the shipwreck, when he said, “ There shall not a hair of your head perish ; but if these stay not in the ship, ye cannot be saved ;” would you have said, ‘ He preacheth despair ; go forth, and fear not ?’ What, if you had heard Christ himself say, “ Verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ;” (John iii. 3, 5 ;) and “ Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven ;” (Matt. xviii. 3 ;) or “ Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.” (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) Would you have said, ‘ Believe him not ; he preacheth desperation ?’ What, if you say to your servant, ‘ If thou do not work, thou shalt have no wages.’ Shall he say, ‘ I will not despair ; but I will hope well, though I work not ?’ What do you by this talk, but the same that the devil did to Eve ? God said, “ In the day that thou eatest, thou shalt die :” the devil

^d John i. 6—12, and iii. 16, 19 ; Luke xix. 27 ; Matt. vii. 21—23.

^e Isa. xlvi. 18, 22 ; lvii. 21, and lix. 8 ; Jer. iv. 10 ; vi. 14 ; viii. 11, and xxviii. 9 ; Ezek. xiii. 10, 16 ; 1 Thess. v. 3.

said, "Ye shall not surely die." Did God preach despair, and the devil preach better? Till men despair of being saved without holiness, they will never seek holiness, and so never be saved. I do despair that ever the devil should make good his word, and save any souls that God hath said shall not be saved.

El. Christ came to abolish the law, and set up the Gospel; and you preach nothing but the law, when mercy better becometh the mouth of a gospel-preacher.

P. Do I preach either the law of innocency, which giveth no pardon, or the Jewish law? It was these that Christ abolished, (in a sort,) and not his own law of grace. Doth not he preach mercy, who proclaimed pardon to all that will truly repent, and turn to God by faith in Christ? Repentance and conversion are gospel mercies. The law knoweth no place for repentance: but, sin and die, is all that it saith. Is it all our work, from year to year, to magnify the mercy of God in Christ, and to entreat men to accept of mercy, and not to refuse it, or abuse it? And yet must it be said, that we preach not mercy? I pray you, tell me, sir, what is the doctrine of mercy that you would preach, if you were in our stead?

El. I would tell them of the mercy of God, and that it is greater than our sins; and that Christ died for sinners; and that they that believe in him, and trust God, shall be saved.

P. What it is to believe in Christ, and trust God, I have opened to Saul already, and must not oft repeat the same things. We doubt not but God's mercy is greater than our sins; but no unholy soul shall be saved by it. For this merciful God hath said, that "without holiness none shall see God." (Heb. xii. 14.) The sun is brighter than our eyes, and yet the blind cannot see by it. We tell them of the exceeding mercy of God, and of the sufficiency of the sacrifice and merits of Christ; but we tell them withal, that the rejecting of this Christ and mercy will increase their misery, and be the food of the never-dying worm, the torment of their conscience to remember it for ever. Read Heb. iii., and vi., and x., and xii., and see whether we say true or not. Would you tell the people that all men shall be saved; or that any other faith and repentance would save them, than such as I described?

El. I would tell them that a quiet and sober religion will be accepted better than all the stir you make; and that all this ado, and noise about religion, to trouble men's minds, instead

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. v. 19.

of making them better, is but the work of a few hot-brained coxcombs, that can neither let themselves nor other men live quietly.

P. O, sir, that you had but tried what ^a quietness there is in the conscience of a renewed, justified person, in comparison of what is in the galled, ulcerous conscience of the ungodly. O! it is a proud, a worldly, a fleshly heart and life, which is the sting that will give the sinner no rest; and the defiled, guilty conscience which will never let the soul be quiet; which hath a life of unpardoned sin to look back upon; a life of sensuality and ungodliness, of pride, fulness, and idleness; abundance of oaths, curses, lies, contempt of God! These are they that will not let the world be quiet, nor suffer the consciences of the wicked long to give them any rest. Twice God protesteth by the prophet, "There is no peace to the wicked." (Isa. xlvi. 22, and lvii. 21.) "The way of peace they know not. There is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." (Isa. lix. 8.) "God hateth all the workers of iniquity." (Psalm lv.) And what peace is there, then, to such? "Because they have seduced my people; saying, Peace, and there was no peace: and one built up a wall, and others daubed it with untempered mortar: say unto them, that it shall fall. Lo! when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?" (Ezek. xiii. 11, 12.) "When they shall say, Peace and safety; sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail on a woman with child, and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 3.)

I pray you tell me truly, do you think that he that hath truly repented of his careless, ignorant, worldly, proud, fleshly life, and hath forsaken it; or he that hath yet all this sin unrepented of to answer for, is like to live the quieter life? If sin be the way of peace, how did it drown the world? How did it kill Christ? How doth it cause hell? Then you may say also, that poison and wounds, and breaking our bones, and sickness, are the way to the body's ease.

I pray you, sir, yet answer me these two questions. 1. Do you not believe, in your conscience, that a truly penitent, godly man, that hath spent his days chiefly in laying up a treasure in heaven, is liker to die in hope and peace than a careless, fleshly, worldly man? 2. And may not he live in the greatest peace,

^a Hab. iii. 18; Psalm iv. 7, 8; Rom. xiv. 17; Heb. x. 34.

who will die in the greatest peace? Is not that course the fittest to give us peace in health which is the fittest to give us peace in sickness?

And will you tell me what is the quiet and sober religion which you are for yourself?

El. It is to love God and my neighbour, and do as I would be done by, and go to church, and say my prayers, and, when I have sinned, repent, and cry God mercy, and trust in Christ, and so be quiet, and trouble myself no further.

P. You have said a great deal in a few words. But I hope you do not think that saying this will save them that do it not. Give me leave, then, to go over all particularly. 1. If you love God, you will love his ^h laws, and his government, and his service, and his servants, and you will love to please him, and you will long to be with him, and you will love him better than fleshly pleasure, or all this world. Will you think he loveth you, that loveth the dirt in the streets better than you? or that careth not how far he is from you, nor how little he hath to do with you? That loveth not much to hear, or think, or speak of you? If you love God, you will make him your delight, and not think his word and service the trouble of the world: and you will keep his commandments, and not think sin your greatest pleasure, and obedience to God your greatest pain.

2. And if you love your neighbour as yourself, you will not let Lazarus lie in hunger at your doors, nor your poor tenants and neighbours feel cold and want, while you are clothed in purple and silk, and fare sumptuously and deliciously every day. You will not lay out hundreds by the year, on hounds, and sports, and idle gentlemen servants, and on feasting and gallantry, and excess of bravery ¹ and furniture, while your poor tenants live in toil and misery. You will not rack your rents so as poor men, with all their care and labour, cannot live. You will not see your brother have need, and shut up the bowels of your compassion from him, and then say that you love God and your neighbour. You will not hate, and scorn, and persecute God's servants that are most careful to please him, and still say you love both God and them. You will not think that to love your riotous companions and playfellows, is to love your neighbour as yourself.

3. And for your repenting when you have sinned, and crying

^h John xiv. 15, 18; 1 John v. 3.

¹ 1 John iii. 16, 17; Jam. ii. 14-16, and *v.*, throughout.

God mercy, I hope you do not mean a mocking of God, with saying that you repent when you do not. I hope it is not only to be sorry and wish you had not sinned, when you have got all that sin can give you, and still to go on and do the same: to cry God mercy for a worldly, fleshly, voluptuous life of pride, fulness, and idleness, (the sins of Sodom, (Ezek. xvi. 49,) and of too many gentlemen,) and^k to continue it still, and hate those that are against it: nor to repent of oppressing the poor, and racking your tenants, and to do so still. Repentance is a true change of mind, will, and conversation: true repentance is all that I persuade this man to, when you say that I trouble him, and break his peace.

El. You are an arrogant, saucy fellow. What have you to do to meddle with my bravery, or sports, or tenants' rents? You think your priestly calling may warrant all your incivilities and insolence. Were it not for the reverence of your coat, I would kick you out of doors, or lay you by the heels. It was never a good world since such fellows as you were suffered to prate your pleasure against your betters, under pretence of reprovng sin.

P. I knew, sir, on what disadvantage I should discourse with such a one as you, but I do it for this poor man's sake, who desired it. If I were discoursing with you about common things, I would keep such a distance as should no way offend you. If any submissiveness would excuse me, I would not seem insolent or uncivil. I would not stand covered before you. I would not press into your presence, nor expect honour from you, but would be content to stand with your poorest servants. But when it is a business that God's truth and holiness, and men's salvation, and my ministerial fidelity, lieth on, it is cowardice and base treachery, and not civility, to desert the truth for want of^l plain dealing. I hope you know that not only the prophets and apostles, but Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and such others, have dealt much plainer with emperors than I have done with you: and Gildas spake homelier of the British princes and nobility. As long as you may use us at your pleasure, you may give us leave to speak according to our Master's pleasure. For we do not fear but at last he will bear us out.

El. It is the trick of you all to claw the vulgar by accusing the gentry and nobility of oppression, yea, and you would say as much by the king himself, if you durst.

^k 1 Cor. vi. 9, 11; Tit. iii. 3, 5; Acts xviii. 26.

^l Isa. lviii. 1; vii. 4, and li. 7, 8; Matt. xvi. 26, 28, 31; Heb. xiii. 6.

P. The worst I wish you, sir, is but that you would go now and then into the houses of the poor, and see how they live; and that you would read over Luke xii., and Luke xvi., and James iv. and v., and Matt. xxv., and try to write yourself a commentary on them. And that you would remember how you must leave this world, and what comes next.

El. It is such as you that set up levellers; you would have rich and poor live all alike, and we must fare and go no better than they, nor live at more ease.

P. No, Sir: but death will shortly play the leveller with you, and call away your soul, and turn your flesh to corruption and common earth: and then^m whose are those things that you possessed? I would have all honour done to magistrates, though I reverence not riches so much as I do magistracy. And I would not have you put yourself into any of the afflicting or hindering cases of the poor, in your food, raiment, or employment: but I must needs tell you, that in your place and way, you must labour as diligently, and live a mortified, self-denying life, as well as the poor. Andⁿ riches will excuse no man for idleness, or voluptuous living, nor allow you to waste one groat in vain.

El. The poor live in their way as well as we in ours: their diet and their labour is as suitable to them as our plenty and ease is to us.

P. It is but from use, then, for their flesh is of the same kind with yours: and if so, I hope if you be put to it, you can use yourself to live so too. And if so, methinks a due abatement of excesses and voluptuousness should be much more easy to you.

But, Sir, it is not the mere labour of the poor that I pity them for, nor the unpleasantness of their diet. I am persuaded the minds of many of them are quieter, and that their meat and sleep is sweeter than yours, but, pardon me for telling you that I am much among them, and I find, 1. That some of them drink nothing but water, or beer that is little better, and use a diet so unwholesome, that it breedeth dropsies, consumptions, and deadly sicknesses, having not fire and clothes to keep them warm. 2. That many are so full of cares how to pay their rents and debts, that they have no heart to think of the greater business of their souls; and many are so tired with their excessive labour, that when they should pray, or read a chapter, or instruct their families, either they have no time, or they are presently,

^m Luke xii. 18-21.

ⁿ Jam. v.

with weariness, asleep : yea, tired on the Lord's days with the week days' labour. 3. And worst of all, they cannot spare their children from work while they learn to read, though I offer them to pay the schoolmaster myself, much less have they time to catechise and teach them. So that poverty causeth a generation of barbarians in a christian, happy land. You would forgive my boldness, if you understood the sadness and sinfulness of all this, and that some rich men, that have caused such things as these, do now want themselves a drop of water to cool their tongues.

But all this is by a digression. I pray you tell me next what that is which you accuse me of as over-troublesome to my neighbour, or to the world, in my doctrine ?

El. I have told you : it is disquieting men's consciences.

P. But what is it that I say amiss to disquiet them ?

El. You would make them believe that God made us to damn us, and make his mercy as narrow as your conceits.

P. Do you not think that^o some shall be damned for their sins ; and that God best knoweth who ? and that he best knoweth how to use his own mercy ? and that we must believe his word ? If you think that all shall be saved, speak out, and let us hear your proof. If not, tell me to whom I deny salvation that God hath promised it to ?

El. You make strict laws and opinions of your own brains, and then damn all who do not keep them.

P. What be those laws and opinions of ours ?

El. What ! more than a good many. If a man go finer than yourselves ; if he be not of your fashion ; if a woman wear black spots, or go with bare breasts ; if we play at cards or dice, or go to a play-house ; if the people set up a may-pole, or dance on Sundays ; if one drink a cup, and be but merry ; O, these are profane people ; they are not precise enough to be saved.

P. There is nothing so small in which a true servant of God would not be obedient : and great sin is oft committed in^p small things. And their signification, and the omissions which they import, are oft sadder than the things themselves. If your harvest were out, or your house were on fire, and your servant should let all alone, and go to cards, or a play-house, the while, and say, ' How precise is my master to think that there is any harm in this, ' you know how to answer him. Truly, sir, our

^o 2 Thess. i. 7—10, and ii. 11, 12.

^p Heb. xii. 16 ; Matt. v. 19.

lives are short ; our souls are precious ; our work is great, and much undone ; time makes haste ; we have lost much already ; hell is terrible ; heaven is glorious ; God is just, and all that ever must be done for our souls must be now done. And in this case, he that hath time to cast away on stage plays, and cards, and idleness, let him do it ; for my part, I have not. As strict as you think me, God knoweth that my work is yet so much to do, that I have no time to spare for such things as these. He that liveth by faith, foreseeeth heaven open all the way, and such a sight doth cool my appetite to sports. Oh, precious time ! how fearful am I lest thou wilt be gone, before my faith be strengthened, my hope confirmed, my love to God increased, and my preparation made for death and judgment ! O what hearts are in those men that can see time passing, death coming, God present, judgment and eternity at hand, and yet sit needlessly at dice or cards, or idle recreations ! Have we no more to do with time ? I speak not against needful recreations, which fit us for an ordinary, laborious calling, as whetting doth the mower's scythe. But wo to them that cast away so short and precious time in fooleries and idleness, which is all that ever they shall have to prepare for their everlasting state.

And I must tell you too, sir, that I need not such pleasures : the word of God, and the foresight of eternal glory, afford me better ; so much better, that these stink in comparison of them.

But yet, sir, it is not my custom to talk first or much of such things as these. Here stands your tenant, ask him whether I once named any such matters to him ? I remember old Mr. Dod's saying to one that would have him preach against long hair, 'Win their hearts to Christ, and they will cut their hair themselves.' I remember a person of great estate yet living, that in youth was ignorant, vain, and gaudy, and being often persuaded to leave some gaudy fashions, long despised all that was said ; but at last, by a sermon, being convinced of greater matters, and humbled, and suddenly changed to a godly life, all the beloved vanities and fashions were in two days cast away, and never taken up again, without any talk about such things, to the marvel of spectators.

Oh, sir, could I but persuade you to that due sense of things eternal, as their truth and greatness do bespeak even of reason itself ; could I prevail with you to engage your heart and life to such care and ^a diligence for God and your salvation, and the

^a Johu vi. 27.

common good, as God will require of you, I would leave you to pass away as much time as this work can reasonably spare.^r One thing is necessary; do that, and then go to play.

El. But you are the most censorious generation of men in the world. You make a sect and party for religion, of precise and self-conceited people, and then none must be saved but your precise party; and how empty will heaven be, if none be there but puritans!

P. 1. I suppose you will grant, that if we should never so much flatter ungodly persons, with the hopes of salvation, their case might be the worse, but it could be never the better. God's will, or word, will not change with ours; he will never save an unholy soul. If all the prelates and preachers in the world should agree to tell them that they shall be saved, they would stand before God never the more justified for all this; it would but keep them from repentance, and consequently from being saved indeed. 2. And you cannot but know that all mankind is proner to security, presumption, self-flattery, and impenitence, than to overmuch fear, unless it be some persons that are melancholy. 3. And you cannot but know that false hopes are far more dangerous, though unjust fears be the more troublesome; for presumption keepeth them more from repentance. 4. And if I may judge of others by myself, we ministers are more prone to be too tender of troubling people, than too terrible; for naturally we all love our own ease and quiet, and the love of our neighbours;^s and we know that it is flattery that gets love, and plain dealing hatred; and we long not to be hated. And most ministers have need of their neighbour's bounty; and hatred is not the way to procure that, especially with the rich. Therefore you should rather charge us to deal plainly, and to take heed lest poverty, or cowardliness, or lukewarmness, tempts us to daubing flattery, or silence.

2. But, sir, what is the sect or party of puritans that you say we confine salvation to? I pray you let us not spend time in mere words! If you mean that we confine salvation to any that agree with us in by-matters, circumstances, doubtful opinions, or any thing not essential to Christianity and godliness, it is a sin which we detest. Prove it by me, if you can; ask Saul, whether I spake a word to him of any doubtful controversy in religion.

^r Luke x. 42.

^s 1 Kings xxii.; Amos. ii. 12; Mic. ii. 11; Job xxxii. 21, 22; 1 Thess. v.; Prov. xxviii. 23; xx. 19, 28, and xxvi. 28; Ezek. xii. 24.

But, if the party you talk of be that which Christ calleth believers, penitent, regenerate, sanctified, godly persons, do you not believe yourself that God in Scripture hath confined salvation to such only? All the world is of two parties: the seed of the woman and of the serpent; the godly and the ungodly. Do you believe Christ himself, or not? If you do, doth he not most expressly and vehemently confine salvation to them that are born again of the Spirit; (John iii. 3, 5;) to them that are converted; (Matt. xviii. 3;) to them that are new creatures; (2 Cor. v. 17;) to them that have the Spirit of Christ, and mind the things of the Spirit, and live after the Spirit, and mortify the lusts of the flesh; (Rom. i. 5—9, 13, 14;) to them that have a heart in heaven; (Matt. vi. 21;) and a heavenly conversation; (Phil. iii. 20, 21;) to them that seek first God's kingdom and righteousness. (Matt. vi. 33.) Are these the words of man, or of God? Are they ours, or Christ's? Are we censorious for believing our Saviour, and for preaching his word, and persuading others to believe it?

O, how much better were it for men to judge themselves by the word of God, and not by their self-flattering, fleshly mind, before God judge them; rather than to call God, or his holy word, or his ministers that speak it, censorious.

El. Do you allege God's word against his goodness, and merciful nature? It is contrary to God's goodness to save none but a few puritans and precisians, and to condemn all the rest of the world to hell. Would you have us to believe things utterly incredible, as well as undesirable?

P. Your scornful names of puritans and precisians are but words of your own, thrust in to vent your spleen, and to darken the question. If you mean any other than repenting, sanctified believers, it is nothing to our case, I talk for no other. But, sir, we will not be mocked out of our duty and salvation: heaven were little worth, if it were not worth the bearing of derision, from poor souls that are hastening themselves to hell. But to the matter.

1. As to the number of those that God will save, I never presumed to determine of it. I only tell you, that none are saved but those that are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ: remember, I pray you, that this is all that I say. How many are sanctified I know not, but I would advise you, instead of such inquiries, as you love yourself, to make sure that you are

¹ Gen. iii. 15; Mal. lii. 17, 18; Matt. xxv.; 2 Thess. i. 9, 10; John Hi. 8, 5.

one of them. But experience may help to make some conjectures: if all the world, or most of the world, be truly holy; that is, do love God and heaven better than fleshly pleasure and worldly prosperity, then all, or most of the world, shall be saved. But if there be few such, there are few that will be saved. This is the truth, if God's word be true; and instead of being offended at it, you had best to lay your hand upon your heart, and see whether or not it be so with you; for God will not save you for your riches, nor high looks, nor for contending against his word.

2. Do you think that God doth not know his own nature and goodness, and what is consistent with it better than you? Will you tell him, that he hath made a law, or given us a word, which is ^u contrary to his own nature and goodness? If you will teach God to know himself better, or to amend his Word, he will convince you, ere he hath done with you, that you should rather have known yourself and God better.

3. Is it contrary to the goodness of God to shut men out of heaven who will have none of it, or who hate it, or who prefer a swinish lust before it? Attend a little, sir, and I shall show you your unrighteous censure of God. If you can but forgive God for making you a man, you may perceive that it is you that damn yourself, and then quarrel with God for it. Is it not man himself that loveth the world and fleshly pleasure more than God; that committeth all the sin that is committed; that ^x turneth away his heart, his love, his delight, his thoughts from God, and from all that is heavenly and holy? Are not your lusts your own, and your passions your own? Is it not yourself that maketh yourself ungodly, and contrary to the holy nature of God and heaven? And yourself you resist and refuse the Spirit and grace of God? Do you know how much of hell is in sin itself, and of your own making, as well as of your own deserving? To be saved, is to know God and love him, and delightfully serve him: this in perfection is heaven. And doth God deny you this when you truly desire it; or do you not ^y deny it to yourself? Is it not you that delight not in God and his service; and that rather choose your fleshly pleasure? And is it not you, then, that put yourself out of heaven? Heaven is a state of perfect holiness; and you will not have holiness, and yet you say you would

^u Rom. iii. 3, 4, &c.

^x Job xxviii. 28; Prov. xiii. 14; xiv. 27. and xv. 24.

^y Job xxi. 14, and xxii. 17.

have heaven. God setteth before you a feast of holy joys; and your appetite is against it: you loathe it, you refuse it; no entreaty will persuade you to taste it; you deride it as preciseness; and when you have done, you blame God because you have it not. If you would have a Mahometan heaven of lechery, and wine, and sports; a heaven of cards, and dice, and plays, and jesting; a heaven of proud domination over your brethren, or of money, and great estates, and pomp, you are mistaken; there is none such in another world. All this heaven was ^a here on earth; and here you chose it; and here you had it. Hereafter there is no heaven but the sight and delightful love of God, and perfection of holiness. Would you have this, or would you not? If you will, then refuse it not, deride it not, neglect it not; presently begin, and spit out your filthy, fleshly pleasures, and ^a seek the Lord, and he will assist you and accept you; but if you will not, remember who put you out of heaven.

And when death hath opened your eyes, and showed you what it is that you refused, and have ^b lost, and what it was that you preferred before it, your own conscience will tear you with perpetual torments, to think what a glory you might have had and would not; what a God you departed from; and what all the fleshly pleasures were which you preferred; and what is now become of all. I tell you, if God should no further meddle with you, your ^c conscience in the remembrance of this would torment you.

You see, then, that besides what they deserve from the hand of divine justice, what it is that sinners execute upon themselves. You cannot both refuse heaven and make yourself incapable of it, and yet have it; and you cannot lose it, and not for ever feel the loss.

4. And is not God just? and injustice contrary to his nature? Is it contrary to the goodness of the king or judge to hang a thief or murderer? And what if they be many? Must they, therefore, be ^d unpunished? If many should beat you or abuse you, doth not that rather aggravate the wrong than extenuate it? You scruple not killing a nest of wasps or hornets, though they be many. Millions of men are not so much to God as a swarm of flies are unto man.

5. And I would know whether you think it contrary to God's

^a Luke xvi. 25.

^a John v. 40; Rev. xxii. 17; Jos. xxiv. 15.

^b Matt. xxv. 6-8.

^c Rom. xxi. 15.

^d Psalm i. 5, 6, and 1.; Matt. xxv.

goodness to condemn any at all, or not? If not, what numbers proportionably will you impose upon him to save? What if he saved a thousand or ten thousand for one that he condemneth; would that seem to you consistent with his goodness? And are you sure it is not so? We are sure that this earth is to the rest of the universe, but as one inch is to the whole earth; and how small a part is that! And you know not but * angels and pure inhabitants may possess all the rest, except what is allotted to the devils and the damned. And if so, if ten thousand to one in this wicked world (which is next to hell) were damned, it would not all be one to many millions of the pure and blessed ones in the rest of the creation. I only say that men that are ignorant of such matters, as we all are, are unfit to quarrel with God about them.

El. You have said much, I confess; but it is all no justification of your own arrogance, that lay claim to heaven before your neighbours. All we are profane and ungodly people; and you only are the holy brethren and the ' children of God. You say, 'Stand by, I am holier than thou?' and as the Pharisee, 'I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as other men, nor as this publican.'

P. 1. Who do you mean by 'us' and by 'you?' Speak plainly, that you may be understood. If any arrogate the name of holy or godly that is not so, he is an hypocrite. Do you hear me say that such shall be saved? And either you and the rest of our neighbours are really godly, sanctified persons, or you are not. If you are, we say you are the children of God, and the heirs of heaven as well as we or any others. Did you ever hear me say that any godly man is ungodly? or is not the child of God? Name the man that I have said so by. If your own conscience tell you that you love God better than the world, and † seek first his kingdom and righteousness, and if your conversation prove it, you have then the witness in yourself that you are sanctified, and need not care what others say of you; but if your conscience tell you that it is not so, but that you are a lover of the world and pleasure more than of God, silence not your conscience, and desire not that we should flatter you with lies, when your own conscience knoweth that the case is otherwise.

2. But, sir, do you think that there is no difference among

* Heb. xii. 22, 23; an innumerable company of angels, or myriads.

† 1 John v. 19, 20.

‡ Matt. vi. 33.

men? Are the good and bad, the godly and wicked, all alike? Then, indeed, there would be no difference hereafter. But if there be a difference, may it not be known? And must he that hath God's grace be unthankful, and falsely say that he hath none? Those are like the unhumbléd Pharisees, who thank God for that grace which they have not; and not they that humbly thank him for what they have. Would you have a temperate, chaste, and just person think himself to be a drunkard, a fornicator, a thief, when it is not so, and all for fear of being proud? Then why are you angry with those that count you ungodly, if humility bind all men to think themselves ungodly? God neither desireth that we should think with the Pharisee, that we are sanctified when we are not, nor that we deny the grace which we have. Unthankfulness for the greatest mercy is no virtue.

El. You are the true offspring of the pharisees; a pack of godly hypocrites; a generation that are pure in your own eyes, but are not cleansed from your filthiness. In secret you are as bad as any others.

P. Who do you mean, sir?

El. I mean all, or the most of you, that take on you to be so godly and religious above other men.

P. 1. Would you have men profess ungodliness? Would you have us be drunkards, swearers, fornicators, covetous, for fear of being hypocrites? or would you have us say that we are such when we are not? Is this your confession of Christ? Would you have no man profess himself a Christian or a servant of God? What, then, must we profess the service of the flesh and the devil?

2. Do not you take on you to be a Christian, and to be godly? Why else are you angry with them that count you ungodly? Else you are an infidel and an atheist. But if you profess Christianity and godliness yourself, are you therefore an hypocrite? If not, profession makes not others to be hypocrites. I pray you tell me, what do you profess less than I do? You profess Christianity and godliness, and I profess no more. But which of us is the hypocrite our consciences and lives must tell. I hope you will not renounce God and Christ, for fear of being an hypocrite.

3. But alas! sir, too many people fearing God are so far from being pure in their own eyes, that the greatness of their sins overwhelmeth them: and we can hardly keep them from con-

cluding that they have no grace at all, and are as ready to call themselves hypocrites in their fears, as you are in your spleen against them. And why do you at once accuse us for over-terrifying them, and driving them to despair, and yet of puffing them up with a conceit of godliness ?

4. But how is it that you come to know our hypocrisy, and what we are in secret ? If you know it, it is no secret : if it be a secret, you know it not. If our lives be vicious, prove it, and reprove us : if they be not, how know you that our hearts are so ? Is not God only the searcher of hearts ?

5. I am glad if, indeed, you hate hypocrisy. The hypocrite is he that professeth to be that which indeed he is not. You and I do both profess the same Christianity : now the question is, which of us is the hypocrite ? If one man live according to his profession, and be serious in his religion, and hate all known sin, great and small, and seek God diligently, and use all the means that God commandeth him ; and if another, making the same profession of Christianity, do live in open worldliness and sensuality, in gluttony, drunkenness, gaming, idleness, fornication, and deride holy living, and all that are serious in the religion which he himself professeth, and counteth the practice of Christ's own commands to be needless preciseness ; do I need to ask you, which of these is like to be the hypocrite ? I have admired to hear debauched persons call serious Christians hypocrites, when the want of seriousness in professed Christianity is the very nature of hypocrisy. Do not all these railers call themselves Christians ? Is not^h holiness essential to Christianity ? Is not a drunken Christian, a worldly Christian, a fornicating Christian, a sensual, voluptuous Christian, a very self-contradicting stigmatized hypocrite ? Every gross sin which such wilfully live in, is the brand of an hypocrite.

El. Are not all men sinners ? And he that saith he hath no sin, deceiveth himself. Why then make you such differences between yourselves and others ?

P. You may try whether by that trick you can deceive the king and the judges first : go to the bar and to the gallows, and say, ' Why should these poor men be hanged rather than all you ? Are not all sinners ? If one of your servants beat you, excuse him, because all are sinners.' But, sir, do you not know that there are^l sinners that shall be saved in heaven, and sinners

^h 2 Cor. v. 17 ; Rom. viii. 8, 9, 13, 30 ; Acts xxvi. 18 ; Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33.

^l 1 John i. 7, 8 ; iii. 8, 9, and v. 16, 17 ; John v. 14 ; 1 Cor. vi. 10, 11.

that shall go to hell; Sinners that are pardoned, and sinners that are not pardoned? And why so? But that there are sinners that are penitent, contrite, and truly converted, and sinners that are not so. There are ^k sinners that are ungodly, and sin wilfully, and love their sin: and there are sinners that are godly, and sin only of infirmity, and hate their sins, and make it the care of their lives to avoid them. Some make provision for the flesh to satisfy its desires or lusts: and some make it their work to mortify such lusts, and not to please them. If you will not difference between these two sorts of sinners, God will: and you shall shortly see it. They that stand on Christ's right hand and on his left in judgment, and hear, "Come ye blessed," and "go ye cursed," were all sinners: but read Matt. xxv. whether Christ maketh no difference?

El. The difference is, that you are the pharisees, and we are the publicans: you justify yourselves, and we smite on our breasts, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" And which of these was justified of God?

P. I pray you speak truly, sir; do you think that Christ meant a dissembling publican, that took on him to repent and did not? Doth God justify wicked hypocrites? Or was it not a truly penitent publican, that confessed his sins with true repentance, and went home with a changed mind and life? And is not this all that I persuade your tenant to? And are not these the persons that we say shall be saved? If you be this publican, go, and do likewise: repent, confess, and be converted to a holy life.

And I will make bold this once to paint out the pharisee to you in Christ's own words, and then you shall be judge yourself, who is the pharisee. The pharisees were a sect that set up the traditions of the elders against God's word. (Matt. xv. 3.) They were all for ceremony in religion, washing before meat, and washing cups, and formal, set fasting often. (Matt. ix. 14; Luke xi. 39.) They worshipped God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matt. xv. 9.) They drew near to God with their lips, saying over certain prayers, when their hearts were far from him. (Matt. xv. 8.) They were the rulers of the Jewish church. (Matt. xxiii. 2; John vii. 45, 47, 48.) They were called by high titles, and were set in the highest seats, and went in pomp and state, with the formalities of broad phylacteries, and such like. (Matt. xxiii. 5—7.) They were strict for tithing mint, annise, and cummin: they were tyrants and extortion-

^k Rom. vi. 16, and xiii. 13; Gen. xxxix. 9.

ers, and oppressors of the poor ; they strained at a gnat, and saw the mote in another's eye, condemning Christ and his apostles for not observing their ceremonies, while they saw not the beam of malignity and persecution in their own eye, but could swallow a camel, even these heinous sins : for their way was to honour the memorials of the martyrs, and to make more : to erect monuments for the dead saints whom their forefathers persecuted, and to go on to do the like by the living. (Matt. xxlii. 24. to the end.) They were the deadliest enemies of Christ, the silencers of his apostles, as far as they could, and the persecutors of Christians. And now I pray you tell me, who are the pharisees ?

El. But you leave out that which is against you : they devoured widows' houses, and, for a pretence, made long prayers ; and so do you.

P. I pray, Sir, tell me what widow's house I have devoured, and I promise you to restore it quickly. Do I oppress my tenants, as I before described to you ? Have I any house but a mean one that I dwell in ? Am I not fain to take up with the common jail, when your worship sends me thither for preaching ?

And as for long prayers I have two questions to put to you. 1. Was it the length of prayer, or the false pretence, which Christ reproved ? If the length, why did he continue all night in prayer himself who had less need than I ? (Luke vi. 12.) Why are we bid pray continually, and continue instant in prayer. (1 Thess. v. 17 ; Rom. xii. 12 ; Col. iv. 2.)

El. No : it was the false pretence that was blamed.

P. Was it not a proof that long prayer is a thing very good and laudable, when sincerely used ? Else it would not have made a cloak for sin ; for one evil is not a fit covering for another. My second question is, whether the pharisees' long prayers were free prayers, uttered from the habits of the mind, or forms of liturgy ?

El. I think they were such as your extemporate prayers.

P. Then you will wound the cause of liturgies, which I would not have you do ; for if the pharisees, that were so ceremonious, used none, it will scarce be probable that any were used in the Jewish church.

El. Well, then, suppose them to be set liturgies.

P. It is they, then, that are likest to the pharisees, who by long liturgies cloak their oppressions and covetousness.

El. You are noted to be as covetous a sort of people as any :

you will cheat a man in bargaining, and you will not swear; but you will lie like devils.

P. I assure you, sir, if we do so, it is contrary to our doctrine: for we profess that such persons are no children of God, nor can be saved in such a state. Therefore you must prove it against the particular persons whom you accuse. For if we know of such, we number them with wicked men, and bring them to repentance and restitution, or excommunicate them.

And for those ministers that are called puritans by you, whether they are in the right or wrong, I meddle not. But, 1. If they be so covetous, how come they these many years to live in pinching poverty, (except a few that have something of their own, or live in other men's houses,) and all to avoid that which they think is sin? 2. And if they are such liars, why do they not escape all their suffering? If they durst but once lie under their hands, and say that they assent and consent to what they do not, they might be as free as others.

El. There are as many villainies committed secretly among you as among others. Our faults are open, and known to all; but you are as bad in corners, as demurely as you carry it. Did you not hear lately of a great professor near you that was drunk, and another that got his servant-maid with child? This is your profession. If the truth might be known, on my conscience you are all alike.

P. Your¹ own tongue still confuteth you, and honoureth those whom you would fain reproach. If you sin openly, it seemeth you are not ashamed of it; you tell us that it is no wonder among you, as if it were your profession: if we sin secretly, how do you know it? Your naming one or two defamations, implieth that with such as you mean, it is a rarity and strange thing. And slanders are so common against such persons, that when it is examined, it is two to one but it proves false. But if it be true, either the acts you mention are marvels, committed by one of a hundred, once perhaps in all their lifetime since their change; or else they are such as you describe that live secretly in such sin. If it be the latter, they are hypocrites, and such as we call to repentance and conversion, as being in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; and all that I desire of you and your tenant here is, that you will not be such. If you like such, why do you blame them? If you dislike them, why will you be such yourselves? If you say that you make

¹ Isa. iii. 9. Jer. vi. 15, and viii. 12.

no profession of religion, I answer again ; unless you renounce Christ, you profess as much as the hypocrites named by you. for you profess Christianity, and they profess no more.

But if they were the falls of serious Christians, I ask you, which is the likelier sort of men to be true Christians, they that live impenitently and commonly in gross sin, and hate those that reprove them and live better ; or they that live blamelessly in the fear of God, save that^m one among many of them doth once in his life commit some heinous sin, which layeth him in such shame and brokenness of heart, that oftentimes such never well recover their comforts again while they live ? If Noah was once drunk in his life ; if there were one Ham in his family ; if Lot was twice tempted to drunkenness and incest ; if David once was guilty of odious sin ; if Peter once, or thrice at once, denied his Master ; if there were one Judas in the family of Christ himself ; will any but the malicious thence conclude that they are all alike, or that one sin repented of is as bad as a life of sin never truly repented of ?

And do you know what your slanderous inference doth import ? No less than that Christ is no Christ, and that all the world shall be damned ; for mark, I pray you, that we are certain that open unconverted sinnersⁿ are not saved from their sins by Christ ; and that so dying they are lost for ever. Now you come in and say that the rest that profess repentance and obedience are in secret, and at the heart, as bad as they. And if so, they are all certainly lost men, for without holiness none shall see God ; and the ungodly shall not stand in judgment ; (Heb. xii. 14 ; Psalm i. 6 ;) and God hateth all the workers of iniquity.^o Now, to say that all are such, either openly or secretly, is to say that either God is a liar, or that no one shall be saved ; and yet you are the man that cannot believe that many are damned : and if Christ sanctify and save none from their sins^p he is no Saviour, and so no Christ.

But, sir, if you will search after such scandals, and bring such sins to open shame and punishment wheresoever they be found and proved, you shall have all our help and thanks, and you shall not cry down hypocrisy and scandal more heartily than we will do.

El. Fain would you seem pure and perfect, without sin, as the old Catharists pretended themselves to be.

^m Psalm li.

^o Psalm v. 5.

ⁿ Luke xiii. 3, 5, and xv.

^p Matt. i. 21 ; Tit. ii. 14.

P. Did you never hear any of us pray? If you had, you would have heard that we are more large and earnest in confessing and lamenting our sins, even in public, before God and the congregation, than any others ordinarily are. In truth, every godly man is so humbled in the sense of his sins,¹ that he is a greater burden and trouble to himself than all the world is besides, and he loatheth himself for all his sins. We confess ourselves sinners, with daily grief and shame; and if, indeed, the Catharists did otherwise, they were no kin to us, nor any of our acquaintance. Why do we exhort others so much to contrition and repentance, if we are not for the same ourselves? Would not all men make others of their own mind?

El. Come, come, when you have prated never so long, you must confess that you are a pack of rebels, and seditious rogues, the firebrands of your country, that would destroy the king and all of us, if we were in your power. The world hath had experience enough of you. You have learned to cant and talk smoothly in your way, and have God, and Christ, and heaven, and Scripture in your mouths; but, on my conscience, the devil and treason is in your hearts.

P. Whom do you mean, sir?

El. I mean all of you that pretend so much to godliness and preciseness, and make such ado with Scripture and religion. You will not swear, nor drink, nor whore, nor go to a play, but ye are traitors all.

P. Doth not every man profess godliness, who professeth to be a Christian? Do not the king himself, and his council, and nobles, and judges, and all the magistrates of the land almost, and all the bishops and clergy, profess Christianity, and godliness, and to believe the Scripture, and to hope for heaven? Do not they all pray in the Common Prayer, 'that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, that at the last we may come to eternal joy;' and 'that we may live a godly, righteous, and sober life;' and 'that we may fall into no sin;' and that 'we may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives:' with many more such passages? Are you good friends to your king and country, that would make men believe that it is a sign of a bad subject to be religious, and that to "fear God and honour the king" may not stand together? What! will you charge the king and all his magistrates with treason? Are they all traitors who obey him and defend him?

¹ Rom. vii. 16, 17, 24; Psalm li.; Acts xxvi; Tit. iii. 2, 3.

El. You know who I mean well enough. I mean you puritans, all the pack of you.

P. A puritan is a word of so arbitrary interpretation, that sure it is too large to found a charge of treason upon. Mr. Robert Bolton, and Bishop Downame, and Bishop Robert Abbot, and many such, will tell you that it is commonly used in the mouths of the profane for any man that feareth God, and liveth holily, and avoideth wilful sin, and will not be debauched as sensualists are: and sometimes it is taken for one that is against the prelacy and ceremonies. In the first sense, as a puritan signifieth a serious Christian, and a godly man, dare you say that the king, nobles, judges, and bishops are not such? I am not acquainted with them: but our religion teacheth us to judge all men to be what they profess themselves to be, till the contrary be certain and notorious. Dare you say that all the magistrates, prelates, citizens, and subjects of the land are either ungodly men, or traitors? Sure this cannot be your meaning.

El. You are loath to know my meaning. I mean all the pack of the precisians that are for so much strictness, and preaching and praying, and talking of Scripture.

P. Dare you say that neither the king, nor his nobles, nor judges, nor bishops, nor clergy, are for Scripture, and for much preaching and praying, and for strict, precise obedience to God, and for strictness of justice, temperance, and sobriety? What, will you say that all are traitors to the king, that will not be rebels against God, and perfidious traitors against Christ and Christianity?

El. I mean your second sort of puritans, the non-conformists, if you are willing to understand.

P. Now, I understand you, sir, but it is but in part. But what is conformity or non-conformity to our case? What, if all non-conformists were as bad as you make them, will you, therefore, plead for non-conformity and rebellion against God? What an argument is this! Non-conformists are rebels. Therefore an ungodly man needeth no repentance and conversion, or we may be saved without a holy heart and life. Do you think this is wise reasoning? Do not conformists plead for holiness? Be you but a godly conformist, and I shall rejoice in your felicity. But, because I must love my neighbour as myself, I have three or four questions further to ask you. 1. Is it they that conform in nothing, or they that conform not in every thing? Such a one was Chillingworth; and I thought you had not taken the papists to be all traitors, who are non-conformists too.

2. Is it their doctrine that is traitorous? Or is it their hearts

and practice contrary to their doctrine? For the former, they defy their slanderers, and challenge them to cite one confession of any reformed church that hath in it any disloyal doctrine. Bishop Andrews, in *Tortura Torti*, will tell you that in this puritans are belied, and that they take the same oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and profess the same loyalty with others. But if it be their hearts and practices, as contrary to their own doctrine, are you not a slanderer if you charge such dissembling on any one that you cannot prove it by? Such charges must fall on particular persons, and be proved, and not on parties; for what shall notify any man's mind but his own profession, or his practice? When they readily swear allegiance and loyalty, are they not to be believed till some proof confute them? And if, in civil wars, you gentlemen, lawyers, and statesmen, say this is law, and that is law, and entangle poor men's consciences, will you afterwards conclude that no man's conscience will be true to his oath of allegiance, which scrupleth ecclesiastical oaths or subscriptions? Another man would think it a more probable arguing to say, 'He that scrupleth one oath or subscription is like to make conscience of another; for if he dare break an oath when he hath taken it, why should he not venture as far to take it?'

3. But, sir, all this is Satan's ordinary course, to endeavour to engage the interest of princes seemingly on his side, to make religion odious. Christ must be accused as forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar, and as an usurper of the kingdom. Pilate must condemn him, lest he seem not Cæsar's friend. Paul goes for a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the people, that taught things contrary to Cæsar and the law.

But, again, sir, what is all this to the case here that you come to treat about? Did I persuade your tenant to be a non-conformist? Did I speak one syllable to him of any such matter? Did I put any scruple into his mind against any orders of the church? Ask him whether I did? When I had nothing to say to him but to exhort him to repentance and the love of God, and a holy and heavenly life and conversation, and quickly to forsake his sins, how cometh non-conformity to have any thing to do here? What is that to the question in hand? Pray you, Saul, mark your landlord's argument; 'Non-conformists are all traitors and rebels,' if you will believe him: 'therefore, forsake not your sins, and turn not to God and a holy life by true repentance: or, other men are,' saith he, 'rebels against the king, therefore continue you a rebel against God.' Have not you natural logic enough to perceive the deceit of such an argument?

For my part, I here give you my plain profession, that all that fear God must honour the king, and not resist the higher powers, and that for conscience' sake, lest they receive damnation; and that rebellions and treasons against king or kingdom are the works of the devil and the flesh, which all true Christians must abhor.

El. However, you cannot deny but you are a pack of schismatics, that, for a ceremony, will tear the church, and set up conventicles of your own; and schism is kin to rebellion.

P. You shall not thus draw us away from the business in hand. I will not now dispute with you what schism is, who seem not to understand it, because it is impertinent, and tendeth but to divert us from our business. I ask you, 1. Do I persuade your tenant here to schism, or only to repentance and a holy life? 2. Are not conformists and non-conformists agreed in that? You know not what I am in those matters myself; but send for some able minister that is a conformist, and another that is a non-conformist, and try whether both agree not in the truth of all that I am persuading him to believe or practise.

El. The truth is, you are of so many sects and so many opinions, that he may sooner grow a Bedlam among you, than a good Christian. You are of as many minds as men. One tub-preacher saith, 'This is the word of God,' and another saith, 'That is the word of God;' scarce a whole house is of one religion; and if he must turn to any of you, how shall he know which party it must be? Must he be a presbyterian, or an independent, or a Brownist, or an anabaptist, or what? How shall he be sure which of all these is in the right, that he may rest?

P. Saul, you hear this terrible objection of your landlord. Will you but mark my answer in these three parts, and if it be not reason, spit in my face, and take your course.

1. Every different opinion^r is not a different religion. Our religion is but one thing, which is simple Christianity; and every by-opinion is not essential to Christianity. No two men in the world, I think, are, in every thing, of one opinion. He that will not take a journey which is for his estate or life, till all the clocks in London strike together, is as wise a man as he that will not turn from his sin to God till all Christians are of one opinion in all the difficult points of religion.

2. My earnest advice to you, Saul, is, that you become not a

^r Read Rom. xiv., and xv.

sectary* of any party whatsoever. Become a true Christian, and love the unity, peace, and concord of believers; and, for opinions, follow the right, as far as you can know it, but not to engage for doubtful things in any divisions, sects, or parties: but if men will needs quarrel, stand by, and pray for the church's peace.

3. Try whether Christians of all opinions do not agree in all that I exhort you to. If I have taught you, or persuaded you to, any one thing, but what the conformists and nonconformists, episcopal, presbyterian, independent, yea, and the papists are all of a mind in, and will all bear witness to, the certain truth, then let your conscience judge whether you be not a most inexcusable man, that will not be persuaded to that which even all differing Christians are agreed in; and whether this objection of sects and different religions condemn not you the more, that will not agree with them where they all agree? and I leave it also to Sir Elymas's conscience.

El. You would make me seem a fool, or an atheist; as if I persuaded him from religion. By — you are a set of the insolentest rogues in the world. I will stand talking with you no more. But for you, Saul, I tell you; if you hearken to such fellows, and turn a puritan, I will turn thee, and thy wife and children, out of doors the next week after it. And you, sir preacher, I will take another course with you, if you cease not thus to trouble my neighbours. I doubt not but I shall cause the bishop to trounce you; but if he do not, I will once more send you to the common jail, for all your sick night-cap, and there you shall lie among rogues like yourself.

P. I beseech you, let not loose your passion, sir: remember that you said you love your neighbour as yourself. Poverty, and a ' prison, are as near and sure a way to heaven as riches, and earthly prosperity, and pleasure. I must shortly die; and whether at home, or in a jail, or with Lazarus at your doors, among your dogs, it is not my interest or care: God is the Lord of your life and mine. Boast not of to-morrow; for who knoweth "what a day may bring forth?" (Prov. xxvii. 1.)

But, sir, seeing you are not against all religion, I beseech you, in the conclusion, yet, make us to understand what it is that you are against?

El. I am against being righteous overmuch; and making

* Rom. xvi. 17, 18; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Cor. i. 10, 11; ii., and iii.; Tit. iii. 10.

' Matt. v. 10—12.

men believe that they cannot be saved without being so holy and so strict ; and so frightening poor people out of their wits. A puritan is nothing but such a frightened protestant. Cannot you go to church, and sometimes say your prayers ; and so be quiet, and be moderate in your religion ? It is these bigots, and zealots, that trouble all the world ; and will neither let men live nor die in peace. Cannot you live as your neighbours do, and your forefathers have done ? What, are they all damned ; and will you be wiser than all the world ? Moderation is good in all things.

P. Your speech hath many parts which must be distinctly considered. I. To be righteous overmuch, in Solomon's sense, is to be stricter than God would have us ; by a preciseness, or a devised righteousness of our own ; where righteousness is not taken formally, but materially, for a rigid preciseness and pretended exactness, which is not commanded ; and, indeed, is no duty, but a great hinderance of duty, and that which I use to call over-doing. As some men will be so accurate in their expressions in preaching and praying ; as that over-curiousness in words destroyeth the life and use. And some will pretend that every thing must be done better, and mended still, till nothing be done, or all be marred. As in household affairs, over-curiousness about every little thing is accompanied with the neglect of greater things ; because we are not sufficient for all. So in religion, some, upon pretence of strictness, lay out so much of their zeal, and talk, and time, about many lesser or doubtful points of church order, discipline, and modes, and circumstances of worship, and about controverted opinions, that thereby they neglect the great substantials. This ^u tithing of mint, anise, and cummin, and omitting the weighty matters of the law, faith, judgment, and mercy, and preferring sacrifice before mercy, is at once to be unrighteous, and to be righteous overmuch, even with an unrighteous righteousness ; that is, a strictness of our own devising. Do I persuade any one to this ?

II. We would make men believe nothing but God's own word. If that word say not, that " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," (Rom. viii. 9,) let it not be believed. But if it do, what are we to preach for, but to persuade men to believe God's word, and obey it ? And will it save men's souls to be unbelievers ? Believing God is the way

^u Matt. xxiii, 23, and per totum ; ix. 13 ; xli. 7, and xvi. 3-6 ; Col. ii. 19, 20, &c.

which he hath appointed for salvation : and will you say, that not to believe him is the way ?

III. We would affright stupid sinners into their wits, and not out of them. When the prodigal came to himself, he returned to his Father. (Luke xv. 17.) We take that man to be much worse than mad, that will sell his soul for so base a price as a little worldly pelf, or fleshly pleasure ; and having but one short, uncertain life, in which he must win or lose salvation, will cast it away upon the fooleries of sin. And if you would have such a man to go quietly to hell for fear of being made mad, I wish that none may fall into the hands of such a physician for madmen. "Wisdom is justified of her children." (Matt. xi. 19.) He that sets less by heaven and his soul, than by lust and vanity, can scarce (in that) be madder than he is. And if that be your wit, we envy you not the honour of it. We are no friends to melancholy, because it is no friend to the holy, joyful life of a believer. We wish men so much ^x fear of God, and of sin, and hell, as is necessary to keep them out of these ; and we would encourage no more. The kingdom of God consisteth in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) We would have no tormenting fear, which is contrary to love, but only that which doth prepare for it, and promote it, or subserve it. To call men from a life of brutes, to seek and hope for a life with angels in heavenly glory, is not the way to frighten them out of their wits. The derisions of self-destroyers are easy trials to us, and cut not so deep as an offended God, or a guilty conscience.

IV. Moderation is a good effect of prudence ; and we are greatly against imprudence and irregular zeal. But because I perceive that this is the very point of all our difference, and that you think that a godly, righteous, and sober life is more ado than needs, and an excess in religion ; and would take us down to some dead formality, under pretence of being moderate ; I entreat your patient consideration of these questions following :

Quest. 1. Is it possible to ^y love God too much ; and is not love an active, operative principle ?

2. Is it possible to please God too well, and obey him too exactly ?

3. Is it not blasphemy against God to say so ? For God made all his laws : and he chargeth God's laws with folly and

^x Luke xii. 4, 5.

^y Matt. xxii. 37 ; 2 Tim. ii. 4 ; 1 Thess. iv. 1, and ii. 4 ; Col. i. 10.

iniquity, who saith that any of them are such as should not be obeyed.

4. Do you think that you can ^a give God more than his own, and more true service than he deserveth ?

5. Are you afraid of paying ^a too dear for heaven ? Do you think it is not worth more than it will cost the most serious, laborious believers ?

6. Are such men as you and I fit to be pulled back and dissuaded from loving and serving God too much ? Do you not say that we are all sinners ? And what is a sinner, but one that obeyeth not God enough ? And is sin a thing to be justified ? Are not we all such as we are sure shall do ^b too little, and come far short of our duty, when we have done our best ? Do you need to entreat lame men to run towards heaven too fast ? If the best are imperfect, and do too little, why will you persuade even an ignorant sinner to do less ? If you had servants that would do but a day's work in a week, or scholars that would learn but a lesson in a month, you would think that he abused you, that should exclaim against their working or learning too much.

7. Can that man be sincere, who desireth not to be perfect ? Doth he love holiness, that would not have more ?

8. Doth not all God's word call us up still to higher degrees of obedience, and to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ? (2 Cor. vii. 1.) And did not God know what he said ? Are you wiser than he ? And doth not the devil every where call men off from holiness, and make them believe that it is needless, or too troublesome ? And whose work is it, then, that you are doing ?

9. Doth too much holiness trouble any man when he is ^c dying, or too little, rather ? Had you rather yourself have too little, yea, none, or have much, when you come to die ?

10. Did you ever know any man so holy, and obedient, and good, that did not ^d earnestly desire to be better ? Nothing in the world doth half so much grieve the holiest persons that ever I knew, as that they can know, and love, and serve God no more. And if there were no excellency in it, or if they had enough already, why should they desire more ?

11. Is not sin the only plague of the world, the troubler of

^a 1 Cor. iv. 7.

^b Luke xvii. 10, 49.

^d Rom. vii. 24.

^a Luke xii. 32, 33 ; Matt. xvi. 26.

^c Num. xxiii. 10 ; Hos. v. 15.

souls, and churches, and kingdoms, that will not suffer the world to have peace? And were it not better if there were none? Would not the world be then like a heaven, a blessed place? And should men be then blamed for sinning too little? which is your sense who blame them for being religious too much.

12. What have you in this world to mind, which is worthier of your greatest care and labour than the pleasing of God and the saving of your soul? If doing nothing be the best condition, sleeping out your life is better than waking, and death is better than life. But if any thing at all should be minded and sought, should it not be that first and most which is most worth? And have you found out any thing that is more worthy of your love and labour than heaven, or the everlasting fruition of God in glory? I pray you, sir, what do you set your heart upon, yourself? What do you seek with your greatest diligence? Dare you say it is any thing better than God? If one come to you at death, will you say then that it is better? I beseech you think whether I may not much wiselier say to you, and to all that are of your minds, 'Why make you such a stir for nothing? Is a few nights' lodging in a wicked world, in the way to the grave, and hell, worth all this ado?' than you can say to others, 'What need all this ado for your salvation?' Do you know ever a one of us whom you account too religious, that in his love and service of God doth seem much to exceed the^s ungodly in their love and service of the flesh? How early rise your poor labouring tenants? How much toil and patience have your servants to please you? and the husbandman, for a poor living? and almost all men for provision for the body, till it be cast into a grave? Is not all this too much ado? And is our poor, dull labour too much for heaven? They think of the world as soon as they are awake. They speak of it the first words they say. They hold on thinking, and talking, and labouring, till they go to bed again. In company and alone, they forget it not: and thus they do from year to year. And yet men say, that this is good husbandry, and who blameth them for it, and asketh them whether their maintenance be worth all this ado? Yea, God saith, "Six days shalt thou labour." What if we should as early and late, as constantly and unweariably, in company, and alone, still think and talk of our God and Saviour, and labour as hard in all appointed means for

* Matt. vi. 19, 20.

† Isa. v. 11; Zech. iii. 7.

‡ Luke xvi. 8.

salvation? Had we not a thousand times greater motives for it? And yet who is it that doth so much? And are we puritans, and precisians, and such as trouble ourselves and others with doing too much, when we let every worldling overdo us? Yea, when a drunkard, or ambitious seeker of preferment, will run faster and more unweariedly towards hell, than most of us dullards do towards heaven. O Lord, pardon our slothfulness for doing so little! and we will bear these gentlemen's scorns and hatred for doing so much. O may we but escape thy deserved wrath for loving thee so little, and let us hear from persecutors what thy wisdom shall permit, for loving thee so much! My God, thou knowest, who knowest my heart, if thou wilt but make me believe more strongly, and hope for heaven more confidently and confirmedly, and love thee more fervently, and serve thee more faithfully, and successfully, and bear the cross more patiently, I ask for no other reward nor happiness in this world, for all that I shall do or suffer! I will not call thee too hard a Master; nor say that thy service is a toil; nor such a life a tedious trouble. O let me have this feast, these sweet delights, these restful labours, and let worldlings take their dirt and shadows, and Bedlams call me mad or foolish! Thou art my portion, my first and last, my trust and hope, my desire, my all! O do not forsake me, and leave me to a dead and unbelieving heart, to a cold, unholy, disaffected heart, to a fleshly, worldly, selfish mind, to live or die a stranger to my God, and the heavenly society, Christ, and his triumphant church, and then I will never join with the accusers of thy pleasant service, nor crave one taste of the beastly, deceitful pleasures of sin!

El. Oh, holy soul! No doubt you were in a rapture now! Were you not in the third heaven? Those tears were sanctified! Would not that holy water work miracles! Sure this was the breathing of the Spirit! Were you not fanatics, how could you think that God is pleased with your weeping and whining, and speaking through the nose, and cutting faces, and such like hypocritical shows?

P. Sir, I have no weapons to use but reason and God's word, and scorning is like sense and appetite, a thing that reason hath nothing to do with but rebuke, nor do I purpose to answer you in that dialect. I doubt you cannot undertake that you will not weep or whine on your death-bed: but if not, it may be worse.

El. Come, sir, when you have all done, who made the way

to heaven so long? Why lead you the people so far about? What need so many sermons, and so long prayers, as if God were moved or pleased with our talk? I can say all that is in your sermons and volumes in three words. All is but 'think well,' and 'say well,' and 'do well.'

P. That is quickly said, sir; but if I desire you to spend all or half your life in thinking well, and saying well, and doing well, will you not say that I am a puritan, and ask what need all this ado? Is it any thing else that I have persuaded your tenant to, and that you are opposing all this while? See still how unhappily you confute yourself. Let us but agree of this, that we must labour faithfully to think well, and say well, and do well, and repent unfeignedly that ever we did otherwise, and trust in Christ for pardon and for help, and we will so conclude, and differ no more.

But you must know that well and ill do differ. And what thoughts, words, and deeds are well indeed. And that is well which God commandeth, whether you like it or not.

But if you mean that our sermons need to be no^h longer, will you try first this art of short writing in a scrivener? Let him tell his boys, 'You have nothing to do but to make your letters well, and set them together well.' Let a schoolmaster say no more to his scholar but, 'You must know your letters and syllables, words and sentences, matter and method, and there needs no more.' Let a carpenter tell his apprentice, 'There is nothing to do but frame the house and rear it; and in rearing, nothing but lay the foundation and erect the superstructure, and cover, and ceil it.' Why do men set boys so many years to schools, and to apprenticeships, when two or three words may serve the turn?

But as for long prayers, sir, we know that God is not moved by words; but we are ourselves. And, 1. The exercise of holy desires exciteth them: as all habits are increased by act, and all acts further us by excitation of the faculties. And our fervent desires are our receptive disposition: and if you have any philosophy, you know that *recipitur ad modum recipientis*, and what a wonderful variegation of effects there is in the world, from the same beams or influxes of the sun, by the great variety of receptive dispositions. Two ways prayer maketh us receptive of the blessing: by physical disposition, (as appetite maketh our food sweet and effectual,) and by^l moral disposition, as we

^h Acts xx. 9-11, &c.

^l Luke xviii. 1-8.

are in the way where mercy cometh, and in the use of the means which God will bless. What if you offer your children money, or what else you see best, and bid them ask it first, and thank you after, and one of them doth so, and the other saith, 'My father is not so childish, mutable, or unloving, as to be moved with my asking or thanking.' What good doth this do to him? Will you not say, 'No; but it is good for you to do your duty, without which you are unworthy of my gift; and it is not wisdom in me to encourage your disobedience, nor to give you what you think not worth the asking.' We cannot have God's mercies against his will, and prayer is one of his conditions. And what can be more reasonable than ask and have? He that valueth not mercy, will neither relish it well, nor use it well.

There is a sweet and admirable co-operation between the bountiful communications of God, and the holy and constant desires of the soul. The heavenly influx cometh down on the soul and excite those desires; and desires arise, and by receptive disposition cause us more plenteously to receive that influx; even as the influx of the sun, and the fiery spirits in the eye, concur to our sight. We are receiving grace all the while we are desiring it. Therefore the constant excitation of holy desires, by fervent prayer, is the constant way of our reception and heavenly benediction.

2. And also it is part of the due^k homage that we owe to the great Benefactor of the world. The eyes of all things look up to him, and all things praise him in their kind; but man must do it as man, understandingly and freely. What else have we reason for, but to know the original and end of all the good that we receive? What have we tongues for, but to glorify our Creator and Redeemer, and to speak his praise? This is the use of our faculties; this is our duty, and our honour, and our joy. God made all his creatures for himself; even for the pleasure of his holy will; therefore he made our reason and tongues for himself. And can we have a nobler, sweeter theme for our thoughts, our affections, or our words? Oh! what is there in our blessed Saviour, our glorious God, and the heavenly joys, that we should ever be backward to think or speak of them; or ever count such work a toil; or ever be weary of it? Would you have us think that heaven is a place of weariness? Or have us afraid, lest it be a house of correction? As no papist can rationally ever be willing to die, who believeth he shall go to

^k Psalm lxxv.

the pains of purgatory, which is sharper, they say, than their sufferings here ; so you would have none at all willing to die, if you would make them believe that long praising God is a wearisome employment to a well-disposed soul. If you do not think that an hour is too long for dinner and supper at your plenteous tables ; if you can feast long, and talk long, and play long, and game long, and read romances, and see plays long, I pray you pardon us for praying long. And I would whisper this word to your conscience : ask Sir Elymas, on his death-bed, when time is¹ ending, whether he could then wish it had been spent in longer feasting, and dressing, and playing, or in longer praying ?

Sir, the most I wish you is, that you had felt but one hour what some of God's servants have felt in prayer, and in the joyful praise of their glorious Lord, and then our dispute about the troublesomeness of religion would be at an end ; as feasting would end the controversy, whether it would be a toil for a hungry man to eat ?

El. This hath ever been the custom of hypocrites, to place all their religion in words and strictness ; but where are your good works ? You will call good works a piece of popery ; you are as covetous and griping as any men in the world ; you will cut a man's throat for a groat, rather than give a poor man a groat. This is the precisian's holiness and religion.

P. You say as you are taught ; you are not their first accuser. But, sir, men's religion must be known by their doctrine and principles : if a Christian be an^m adulterer, or murderer, or malignant, will you say that the christian religion is for adultery, murder, or malignity. I will tell you our doctrine : it is, that we must love our neighbours as ourselves, and mustⁿ honour God with our substance, and with the first-fruits of our increase ; and that we must devote all that ever we have to God ; and that we are^o created in Christ Jesus to good works, and^p redeemed and purified, to be zealous of good works ; and that we must do^q good to all men, but especially to the household of faith ; and that what we^r do, or deny, to his members, is as done or denied to Christ himself ; and that^s to do good and communicate we must not forget, for with such sacrifice God is well pleased. In a word, that we must even pinch our own flesh, and^t labour hard, that we may have wherewith to

¹ Luke xvi. 26—27.

^o Eph. ii. 10.

^r Matt. xxv.

^m 1 Cor. 9, 10.

^p Tit. ii. 14.

^s Heb. xiii.

ⁿ Prov. iii. 9.

^q Gal. vi.

^t Eph. iv. 28.

relieve the needy; and that, as God's stewards, we must not waste one farthing in sensuality, or superfluous pomp, or pleasure, because, if we do, we rob the poor of it; and that we must give God an^u account of every farthing, whether we used it according to his will; and that we must lay out all, as we would hear of it at last; and that he that^x seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, the love of God dwelleth not in him; and that we must be judged according to our works; without which pretended faith is dead. Is this the doctrine which you or the papists do reproach?

El. These are good words, if your deeds were answerable.

P. 1. If men live not as they profess, blame not their profession, but their lives. 2. But then you, that are a justice, must be so just as to hear men speak for themselves, and condemn no man till it is proved by him: and condemn no more than it is proved by, and not precisians in the general. 3. He that liveth contrary to his profession doth, by his profession, but make a rack for his conscience, and a proclamation of his own shame to the world. If you like our doctrine, why do you blame us for persuading others to it? If you like it not, why do you blame us for not practising it?

But come, sir, you and I live near together; I pray you name me the men that are such covetous villains as you describe, and compare the rest of your neighbours with them.

El. You would put me upon odious work, I will not defile my mouth with naming any of you.

P. Am I one of them whom you mean?

El. I confess you have got you a good report, for a charitable man, but on my conscience it is but to be seen of men.

P. Nay, then, there is no ward against your calumnies. Before, you denied our good works; and now it is but our hearts and hypocrisy that you accuse, which God only knoweth. If you gave half your revenue to the poor, should I do well to think that you did it in hypocrisy?

But come, sir, I will do that for you which you avoid: you know in our country there are few gentlemen of estate called precisians, but Mr. T. F., and you know he hath built an hospital, and endowed it with many hundred pounds per annum.

You know Mr. N. N. in another county, who is called a precisian, and I have credibly heard, that he giveth five hundred

^u Matt. xxv.

^x 1 John iii. 17; Rom. xiv. 10; Jam. ii.

pounds a year to charitable uses these sixteen years at least; and both of them go plain, and forbear pomp and gallantry, that they may have to do it with.

I use to lodge but in two houses in London, and therefore am not acquainted with many men's secrets of this kind. One of them is a godly man of no great estate, and is readier to offer me money to any good use than I am (for shame) to receive it. The other is a tradesman also, not reputed now worth very many hundreds by the year; and he giveth in one county an hundred pounds a year to charitable uses; and I do not think that it is another hundred that excuseth him at home. I will offend them all by telling you this, because of the text, Matt. v. 16.

But why do I mention particulars: I here seriously profess to you and the world my ordinary experience, that if I have at any time a collection or contribution to motion for any poor widow, or orphans, or any real work of charity, those that you call precisians do usually give their 7 pounds more freely than most others give their crowns, and freelier give a crown, than most others a shilling, proportionable to their estates. Yea, they do now in London give many pounds, where men of far greater estates will give next nothing. Not but there are great men of great estates, that in gallantry, it is like, will sometimes be liberal. And I doubt not but there are some men that have liberal minds, who have little religion. But I tell you only my own experience. But still remember, that I speak not of men of any sect as such, but of such serious holy men as you call precisians, of what side soever.

And these things more I desire you to remember: 1. That you know not other men's estates, and therefore know not what they are able to give. 2. That such men as you and others will keep many of them poor enough whom you call precisians, that they shall have more cause to receive than to give. 3. That Christ hath² charged them to give their alms in secret, and not to let the right hand know what the left hand doth; and therefore you are no competent judge of their charity. 4. That the great covetousness of abundance that we have to do with maketh them think that they have never enough; and they accuse all of covetousness that satisfy not their covetous desires. 5. That no man hath enough to satisfy all men: and if we give to nine only, the tenth man that hath none will call

¹ Luke xix. 8; Acts iv.

² Matt. vi. 1-5.

us cruel, as if we had never given to any. 6. That the malignant enmity of the world to godliness doth dispose men to^a slander all godly persons, without proof or reason, and to carry on any lie which they hear from others. 7. That there are more and greater good works than giving alms. A poor minister, that saith with Peter and John,^b "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee," shall be accepted for what he^c would have given if he had had it. And if he^d convert souls, and turn many to righteousness, and help men to heaven, and all the year long doth waste himself in study and labour to do it, and liveth a poor despised life, and suffereth poverty, scorn, and wrath, from the ungodly, which, if he would change his calling, he might escape; doth not this man do more and greater good works, at a dearer rate than he that should glut his flesh, and gratify his pride, and lust, and ease, with a thousand or six hundred pounds a-year, and give as much more to charitable uses? Though I never knew such a one that did so.

And because you have said so much for good works, I take the boldness to entreat you to do more. We that are your neighbours see nothing that you do, but only give Lazarus a few scraps at your door; but we see that you are clothed in purple and silk, and that not only you, but your children and servants, fare sumptuously and deliciously every day. How much you spend in taverns, and pomp, and state, and feasting, and gaming, and visits, and on your pride and pleasure, the country talks of; but we hear little of any impropriations that you buy in for the church, or of any free-schools, or hospitals, that you settle, or of any poor children that you set to school, or apprenticeships, or the like. The sins of Sodom are your daily business; pride, fulness of bread, and idleness, and want of compassion to the poor, make them up. (Ezek. xvi. 49.) O what a dreadful account will you have, when all this comes to be reckoned for, as is foretold; (Matt. xxv. ;) when it is found, on your accounts, so many pounds on visits and needless entertainments, and pomp; so many on sports, and on superfluities of horses, dogs, and furniture; so many to tempt all in your house to gluttony, to say nothing of other wasteful lusts; and to pious and charitable uses, alas, how little! The Lord convert you, lest you hear, "Take the slothful and unprofitable

^a Matt. v. 10—12.

^c 2 Cor. viii. 12.

^b Acts iii. 6.

^d Jam. v. 20.

servant, and cast him into outer darkness ;” and lest you want a drop of water for your tongue. At least, O do less hurt, if you will do no good.

El. I will talk no longer with you, lest you think to make me tremble, with Felix, or to say, ‘Almost you persuade me to be a precisian,’ you put such a face of reason upon your religion.

P. Sir, I beseech you let me end all our controversy with one question more. You profess yourself a Christian. Had you denied the Scripture, or the life to come, or the immortality of the soul, I had proved them, and talked to you at another rate. I ask you, then, if Saul had never been baptised till now, would you advise him to be baptised or not ?

El. Yes ; do you think I would not have him a Christian ?

P. And would you have him do it understandingly ? or ignorantly to do he knoweth not what ?

El. Understandingly ; or else why is he a man ?

P. And would you have him do it seriously, or hypocritically ; dissemblingly, or in jest ?

El. Do you think I am for hypocrisy and jesting about our Christianity ?

P. I have done, sir. Saul, mark what your master saith. He would advise you to be baptised, if you had not been baptised before ; and, therefore, now to stand to your baptism (for I will never ask him whether he would have you renounce it as an apostate). He would have you do it understandingly and seriously : I desire no more of you. Remember that we are agreed of your duty. I call you to no other conversion nor holiness, than understandingly and seriously to renew your baptismal vow and covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Whatever you hear scorners talk of puritans and preciseness, and troublesome religion, and of our many sects and many religions, of conformity and nonconformity, of a hundred controversies, remember that the serious renewing and faithful keeping your baptismal covenant is all that I preach to you and persuade you to. I will therefore write you out this covenant, desiring you to take it home with the exposition of it which I gave you, and consider of it with your most serious thoughts ; and when you are resolved, come and tell me.

THE HOLY COVENANT.

I do believe in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy

* Matt. xxviii. 18—20 ; Mark xvi. 15, 16 ; Luke xiii. 3, 5, and xiv. 26, 33 ; Rom. viii. 8, 9, 17, 18.

Ghost, according to the particular articles of the christian faith ; and heartily repenting of my sinful life, I do personally, absolutely, and resolvedly give up myself to him, my Creator and reconciled God and Father in Christ, my Saviour and my Sanctifier ; renouncing the devil, the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh : that, taking up my cross, and denying myself, I may follow Christ, the Captain of my salvation, to the death, and live with him in endless glory.

Read but our church liturgy, yea the papists' liturgies, and you will see that here is not a word but what is in the sense of baptism, and what papists, and protestants, and all Christians, are agreed on.

I pray you, Sir Elymas, read it, and tell him here whether there be any word that you except against.

El. I cannot deny it without denying Christianity. God make us all better Christians ; for I perceive we are not what we promised to be. It was you that I talked against, I thought, all this while ; but I begin to perceive that it is Christianity itself (in the ' practice, though not in the name) which my heart is against. I cannot like this godliness, and self-denying, and mortification, and cross-bearing ; and yet I perceive that I vowed it, when I was baptised : and if I renounce it, I must renounce my Christianity itself. I would I had not talked with you, for you have disquieted my mind ; and I find that it is serious religion itself that is against my mind and course of life, and my mind against it, and that I must be either a saint or an atheist ; and which I shall prove I cannot tell. But if I must repent, there is no haste.

THE FOURTH DAY'S CONFERENCE.

The Resolving and Actual Conversion of a Sinner.

Speakers.—Paul, a Teacher ; and Saul, a Learner.

PAUL. Welcome, neighbour ; you have been longer away than I expected ; what was the matter with you ?

SAUL. O, sir, I have seen and felt the heavy hand of God since I saw you. We had a violent fever common among us, and my laudlord, Sir Elymas, is dead, and so is his servant that

¹ Prov. lii. 18, 19.