

THE CHARACTER
OF
A SOUND, CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN;
AS ALSO
OF A WEAK CHRISTIAN,
AND
OF A SEEMING CHRISTIAN.

**WRITTEN TO IMPRINT UPON MEN'S MINDS THE TRUE IDEA OR
CONCEPTION OF GODLINESS AND CHRISTIANITY.**

THE

PREFACE ;

DIRECTED TO MY WORTHY FRIEND, HENRY ASHURST, ESQ.
CITIZEN OF LONDON.

DEAR AND FAITHFUL FRIEND,

WHEN this book was printed and passing into the world, without the ordinary ornament of a prefixed honoured name, my thoughts reduced me into the common way, though not upon the common reasons; assuring me that your name would be more than an accident or ceremony to such a discourse as this; even a part more substantial than a map is in a treatise of geography, or the well-cut figures in tractates of anatomy. Discourses of navigation, architecture, music, &c. may almost as hopefully instruct the learners, without any visible operations or effects, as the characters of well-tempered Christians can duly inform the minds of ignorant, ungodly men, of so divine a thing as Christianity and godliness, without acquaintance with some such persons, in whom these characters are manifestly exemplified. Wise and holy precepts, are to make wise and holy persons: it is such persons as well as such precepts which bear the image of God; which indeed is most perfect in exactness and integrity in the precepts; (for in them is no imperfection or error, as they are of God;) but it is of greater final excellency, in activity and usefulness as it is in men. And therefore as God delighteth in his servants, and is glorified in and by them in the world, so satan usually chooseth such persons, to reproach and make odious to the ignorant, rather than the holy precepts immediately, by which they are directed; both because their holiness is most

exasperating by activity; and also most liable to calumny and contempt, through imperfection, and mixture of that which indeed is worthy of dislike. Till godliness and Christianity be visible in full perfection, and elevated above the contradiction of folly, and the contempt of pride, the blind, distracted minds of hardened, forsaken sinners, will not acknowledge its divine, celestial nature and worth; but then it will be too late to become partakers of it: they must both know and possess it in its infancy and minority, who will ever enjoy it in its heavenly dignity and glory. If seasonable illumination and conversion confute not the deceits and slanders which pride and ignorance have entertained, the too late confutation of them by death and their following experience, will make them wish, that they had been wise at cheaper rates, when it will be in vain to cry, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are out;" Matt. xxv. 8.

But while I offer your name to the malicious world, as an instance of the temper which I here describe, I intend it not as a singular though an eminent instance: for through the great mercy of God, there are thousands of examples of confirmed Christians among us in this land, even before those eyes that will not see them. But it is not catalogues, but single names, which writers have used in this way. And why may I not take the advantage of custom, to leave to the world the testimony of my estimation and great respects, to so deserving a person of the primitive Christian, catholic temper: and to let them know, what sort of men were my most dear and faithful friends? And also thus to express my love, by telling you closely what you must be, as well as by telling the world for their example what you are? Upon these accounts, without your knowledge or consent, I presume thus to prefix your name to this treatise, written long ago, but now published by

Your faithful Friend,

RICHARD BAXTER.

From my Lodging in New Prison,
June 14, 1669.

TO THE READER.

READERS,

It is a matter of a greater moment than I can express, what idea or image of the nature of godliness and Christianity is imprinted upon men's minds : the description which is expressed in the sacred Scriptures, is true and full : the thing described is rational, pure, perfect, unblamable and amiable. That which is expressed in the lives of the most, is nothing so ; but is purblind, defiled, maimed, imperfect, culpable, and mixed with so much of the contrary quality, that to them that cannot distinguish the chaff from the wheat, the sickness from the life, it seemeth an unreasonable, fanciful, loathsome and vexatious thing, and so far from being worthy to be preferred before all the riches, honours and pleasures of the world, that it seemeth worthy to be kept under as a troubler of kingdoms, societies and souls. And doubtless this monstrous expression of it in men's lives, is because the perfect expression of it in God's word hath not made a true impression upon the mind, and consequently upon the heart. For as it is sound doctrine which must make sound Christians, so doctrine worketh on the will and affections, not as it is in itself, and as delivered, but as it is understood, believed, remembered, considered ; even as it is imprinted on the mind, and used by it. And as interposed matter, or defective application may cause the image on the wax to be imperfect, though made by the most perfect seal ; so is it in this case, when one man doth defectively understand the Scripture description of a godly man or Christian, and another by misunderstanding mixeth false conceptions of his own ; and another by a corrupt, depraved will doth hinder the understanding from believing, or remembering, or considering and using what it partly apprehendeth ; what

wonder if the godliness and Christianity in their hearts be unlike the godliness and Christianity in the Scriptures? When the law of God, in nature and Scripture is pure and uncorrupt, and the law of God written imperfectly on the heart, is there mixed with the carnal law in their members, no marvel if it be expressed accordingly in their lives.

I have therefore much endeavoured in all my writings, and especially in this, to draw out the full portraiture of a Christian or godly man indeed, and to describe God's image on the soul of man, in such a manner as tendeth to the just information of the reader's mind, and the filling up of the wants, and rectifying the errors which may be found in his former conceptions of it. And I do purposely inculcate the same things oft, in several writings (as when I preached I did in all my sermons) that the reader may find that I bring him not undigested, needless novelties, and that the frequent repetition of them may help to make the deeper and fuller impression: for my work is to subserve the Holy Ghost, in putting God's law into men's hearts, and writing it out truly, clearly, and fully upon their inward parts; that they may be made such themselves, by understanding thoroughly what they must be, and what a solid Christian is: and that thus they may be born again by the incorruptible, immortal seed, the word of God, which will live and abide for ever; and may purify their souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit; 1 Pet. i. 22, 23, 25. He is the best lawyer, physician, soldier, &c. who hath his doctrine in his brain, and not only in his books, and hath digested his reading into an intellectual system and habit of knowledge. If ministers had a hundred times over repeated the integral portraiture or character of a sound Christian, till it had been as familiar to the minds and memories of their hearers, as is the description of a magistrate, a physician, a schoolmaster, a husbandman, a shepherd, and such things as they are well acquainted with, it would have been a powerful means to make sound Christians. But when men's minds conceive of a Christian, as a man that differeth from heathens and infidels, in nothing but holding the Christian opinions, and using different words and ceremonies of worship, and such like, no wonder if such be but opinionative, lifeless Christians: and if their religion make them no better than a Seneca or Plutarch, I shall never believe that they are any surer to be saved than they. And

such a sort of men there are, that suppose Christianity to consist but of these three parts. 1. The Christian doctrine acknowledged (which they call faith). 2. The orders and ordinances of the Christian church and worship, submitted to, and decently used, (which they call godliness). And 3. The heart and life of a Cato, Cicero, or Socrates adjoined; but all that goeth beyond this, (which is the life of Christianity and godliness, a lively faith, and hope, and love; a heavenly and holy mind and life, from the renewing, indwelling Spirit of God, which is described in this treatise) they are strangers to it, and take it to be but fancy and hypocrisy. These no Christians do much to reduce the church to infidelity; that there may be indeed no Christians in the world. For my part I must confess, if there were no better Christians in the world than these, I think I should be no Christian myself: and if Christ made men no better than the religion of Socrates, Cato, or Seneca, and did no more to the reparation and perfecting of men's hearts and lives, I should think no better of the Christian religion than of theirs; for the means is to be estimated by the end and use: and that is the best physician that hath the remedies which are fittest to work the cure. If God had not acquainted me with a sort of men that have really more holiness, mortification, spirituality, love to God, and to one another, and even to enemies, and more heavenly desires, expectations and delights, than these men before described have, it would have been a very great hindrance to my faith.

The same may I say of those that place godliness and Christianity only in holding strict opinions, and in affected, needless singularities, and in the fluent oratory and length of prayer, and avoiding other men's forms and modes of worship, and in any thing short of a renewed, holy, heavenly heart and life.

And undoubtedly, if a true, full character of godliness had been imprinted in their minds, we should never have seen the professors of it so blotted with sensuality, selfishness, pride, ambition, worldliness, distrust of God, self-conceitedness, heresy, schism, rebellions, unquietness, impatience, unmercifulness, and cruelty to men's souls and bodies, as we have seen them in this age; and all this justified as consistent with religion.

And I fear, that because this treatise will speak to few

that are not some way guilty, every face which hath a spot or blemish will be offended with the glass ; and lest the faulty will say, that I particularly intended to disgrace them : but I must here tell the reader, to prevent his misunderstanding, that if he shall imagine that I have my eyes upon particular parties, and, as a discontented person, do intend to blame those that differ from myself, or to grieve inferiors, or dishonour and asperse superiors, they will mistake me, and wrong themselves, and me, who professedly intend but the true description of sound Christians, diseased Christians, and seeming Christians.

And for the manner of this writing, I am conscious it hath but little to commend it. The matter is that for which it is published. The Lord Verulam, in his essays, truly saith, that " much reading makes one full, much discourse doth make one ready, and much writing doth make a man exact." Though I have had my part of all these means, yet being parted five years from my books, and three years from my preaching, the effects may decay ; and you must expect neither quotations or oratory testimonies, or ornaments of style : but having not yet wholly ceased from writing, I may own so much of the exactness, as will allow me to entreat the reader, not to use me as many have done, who by overlooking some one word, have made the sense another thing, and have made it a crime to be exact in writing, because they cannot or will not be exact in reading, or charitable or humane in interpreting.

RICHARD BAXTER.

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PART II.
OF THE DIRECTIONS FOR WEAK CHRISTIANS.

IN the explication of the text, which I made the ground of the foregoing discourse, I have shewed you that there is a degree of grace to be expected and sought after by all true Christians, which putteth the soul into a sound, confirmed, radicated state, in comparison of that weak, diseased, tottering condition, which most Christians now continue in. And I have shewed you how desirable a state that is, and what calamities follow the languishing, unhealthful state, even of such as may be saved. And indeed did we but rightly understand how deeply the errors and sins of many well-meaning Christians have wounded the interest of religion in this age; and how heinously they have dishonoured God, and caused the enemies of holiness to blaspheme, and hardened thousands in popery and ungodliness, in probability to their perdition: had we well observed when God's judgments have begun, and understood what sins have caused our wars, and plagues, and flames, and worse than all these, our great heart-divisions, and church-distractions and convulsions; we should ere this have given over the flattering of ourselves and one another, in such a heaven-provoking state; and the ostentation of that little goodness, which

hath been eclipsed by such lamentable evils. And instead of these, we should have betaken ourselves to the exercise of such a serious, deep repentance as the quality of our sins, and the greatness of God's chastisements do require. It is a doleful case, to see how light many make of all the rest of their distempers, when once they think that they have so much grace and mortification, as is absolutely necessary to save their souls; and expect that preachers should say little to weak Christians, but words of comfort, setting forth their happiness. And yet if one of them, when he hath the gout, or stone, or cholic, or dropsy, doth send for a physician, he would think himself derided or abused, if his physician, instead of curing his disease, should only comfort him, by telling him, that he is not dead. What excellent disputations have Cicero and Seneca, the Platonists and Stoics, to prove that virtue is of itself sufficient to make man happy? And yet many Christians live as if holiness were but the way and means to their felicity, or at best but a small part of their felicity itself; or as if felicity itself grew burdensome, or were not desirable in this life; or a small degree of it were as good as a greater.

And too many mistake the will of God, and the nature of sanctification, and place their religion in the hot prosecution of those mistakes. They make a composition of error and passion, and an unyielding stiffness in them, and siding with the church or party which maintaineth them, and an uncharitable censuring those that are against them, and an unpeaceable contending for them; and this composition they mistake for godliness, especially if there be but a few drachms of godliness and truth in the composition, though corrupted and overpowered by the rest.

For these miscarriages of many well-meaning, zealous persons, the land mourneth, the churches groan; kingdoms are disturbed by them; families are disquieted by them; godliness is hindered, and much dishonoured by them; the wicked are hardened by them, and encouraged to hate, and blaspheme, and oppose religion; the glory of the Christian faith is obscured by them; and the infidel, Mahometan, and heathen world, are kept from faith in Jesus Christ, and many millions of souls destroyed by them. I mean by the miscarriages of the weaker sort of Christians, and by the wicked lives of those carnal hypocrites, who for custom or worldly

interest, do profess that Christianity which was never received by their hearts.

And all this is much promoted by their indiscretion, who are so intent upon the consolatory opening of the safety and happiness of believers, that they omit the due explication of their description, their dangers, and their duties.

One part of this too much neglected work I have endeavoured to perform in the foregoing treatise : another I shall attempt in this second part. There are five degrees or ranks of true Christians observable. 1. The weakest Christians, who have only the essentials of Christianity, or very little more : as infants that are alive, but of little strength or use to others. 2. Those that are lapsed into some wounding sin, though not into a state of damnation ; like men at age, who have lost the use of some one member for the present, though they are strong in other parts. 3. Those that have the integral parts of Christianity in a considerable measure, are in a sound and healthful state, though neither perfect, nor of the highest form or rank of Christians in this life, nor without such infirmities, as are the matter of their daily watchfulness and humiliation. 4. Those that are so strong as to attain extraordinary degrees of grace, who are therefore comparatively called perfect, as Matt. v. 45. 5. Those that have an absolute perfection without sin ; that is, the heavenly inhabitants.

Among all these, it is the third sort or degree which I have here characterised, and upon the bye, the first sort, and the hypocrite. I meddle not now with the lapsed Christian as such, nor with those giants in holiness of extraordinary strength ; nor with the perfect, blessed souls in heaven. But it is the Christian who hath attained that confirmation in grace, and composed, quiet, fruitful state, which we might ordinarily expect, if we were industrious, whose image and character I shall now present you with. I call him oftentimes a Christian indeed, in allusion to Christ's description of Nathaniel (John i. 47.), and as we commonly use that word, for one that answereth his own profession without any notable dishonour or defect ; as we say such a man is a scholar indeed ; and not as signifying his mere sincerity. I mean one whose heart and life are so conformed to the principles, the rule, and the hopes of Christianity, that to the honour of Christ, the true nature of our religion is discern-

ible in his conversation; Matt. v. 16. In whom an impartial infidel might perceive the true nature of the Christian faith and godliness. If the world were fuller of such living images of Christ, who, like true regenerate children, represent their heavenly Father, Christianity would not have met with so much prejudice, nor had so many enemies in the world, nor would so many millions have been kept in the darkness of heathenism and infidelity, by flying from Christians, as a sort of people that are common and unclean.

Among Christians, there are babes, that must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat, that are "unskilful in the word of righteousness;" (1 John ii. 2. 12—14. Heb. v. 12—14.) and novices, who are unsettled, and in danger of an overthrow; 1 Tim. iii. 6. John xv. 3. 5. &c. In these the nature and excellency of Christianity, is little more apparent than reason in a little child. And there are strong, confirmed Christians, who, by "reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," (Heb. v. 13, 14.) and who shew forth the glory of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light; of whom God himself may say to satan and their malicious enemies, as once of Job, "Hast thou not seen my servant Job," &c. This Christian indeed I shall now describe to you, both to confute the infidel's slanders of Christianity, and to unteach men those false descriptions which have caused the presumption of the profane, and the irregularities of erroneous sectaries; and to tell you what manner of persons they be, that God is honoured by; and what you must be, if you will understand your own religion. Be Christians indeed, and you will have the comforts indeed of Christianity; and will find that its fruits and joys are not dreams, and shadows, and imaginations, if you content not yourselves with an imagination, dream, and shadow of Christianity, or with some clouded spark, or buried seed.

The Characters.

1. A Christian indeed (by which I still mean, a sound, confirmed Christian), is one that contenteth not himself to have a seed, or habit of faith, but he liveth by faith, as the sensualist by sight or sense. Not putting out the eye of sense, nor living as if he had no body, or lived not in a world of

sensible objects ; but as he is a reasonable creature, which exalteth him above the sensitive nature, so faith is the true information of his reason, about those high and excellent things, which must take him up above things sensible. He hath so firm a belief of the life to come, as procured by Christ, and promised in the Gospel, as that it serveth him for the government of his soul, as his bodily sight doth for the conduct of his body. I say not, that he is assaulted with no temptations, nor that his faith is perfect in degree, nor that believing moveth him as passionately as sight or sense would do : but it doth effectually move him through the course and tenour of his life, to do those things for the life to come, which he would do if he saw the glory of heaven ; and to shun those things for the avoiding of damnation, which he would shun if he saw the flames of hell. Whether he do these things so fervently or not, his belief is powerful, effectual, and victorious. Let sight and sense invite him to their objects, and entice him to sin, and forsake his God, the objects of faith shall prevail against them, in the bent of an even, a constant, and resolved life. It is things unseen which he taketh for his treasure, and which have his heart and hope, and chiefest labours. All things else which he hath to do, are but subservient to his faith and heavenly interest, as his sensitive faculties are ruled by his reason. His faith is not only his opinion, which teacheth him to choose what church or party he will be of ; but it is his intellectual light, by which he liveth, and in the confidence and comfort of which he dieth. " For we walk by faith, not by sight. We groan to be clothed upon with our heavenly house. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him ;" 2 Cor. v. 7—9. " Now the just shall live by faith ;" Heb. x. 3. " Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ;" Heb. xi. 1. Most of the examples in Heb. xi. do shew you this truth, that true Christians live and govern their actions, by the firm belief of the promise of God, and of another life when this is ended. " By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith ;" ver. 7. " Abraham looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and ma-

ker is God ;” ver. 10. “ Moses feared not the wrath of the king ; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible ;” ver. 27. So the three witnesses (Dan. iii.), and Daniel himself, (chap. vi.) and all believers have lived this life, as Abraham the father of the faithful did ; who, as it is said of him, “ Staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ;” Rom. iv. 20. The faith of a Christian is truly divine ; and he knoweth that God’s truth is as certain as sight itself can be ; however sight be apter to move the passions. Therefore, if you can judge but what a rational man would be, if he saw heaven and hell, and all that God had appointed us to believe, then you may conjecture what a confirmed Christian is ; though sense do cause more sensible apprehensions.

2. The weak Christian also, hath a faith that is divine, as caused by God, and resting on his word and truth. And he so far liveth by this faith, as that it commandeth and guideth the scope and drift of his heart and life. But he believeth with a great deal of staggering and unbelief ; and therefore his hopes are interrupted by his troublesome doubts and fears ; and the dimness and languor of his faith is seen in the faintness of his desires, and the many blemishes of his heart and life. And sight and sensual objects are so much the more powerful with him, by how much the light and life of faith is dark and weak.

3. The hypocrite, or best of the unregenerate, believeth but either with a human faith, which resteth but on the word of man, or else with a dead, opinionative faith, which is overpowered by infidelity, or is like the dreaming thoughts of man asleep, which stir him not to action. He liveth by sight, and not by faith : for he hath not a faith that will overpower sense and sensual objects ; James ii. 14. Matt. xiii. 22.

II. 1. A Christian indeed not only knoweth why he is a Christian, but seeth those reasons for his religion, which disgrace all that the most cunning atheist or infidel can say against it ; and so far satisfy, confirm, and establish him, that emergent difficulties, temptations, and objections, do not at all stagger him, or raise any deliberate doubts in him of the truth of the word of God. He seeth first the natural evidence of those foundation-truths which nature itself maketh known ; as that there is a God of infinite being, power,

wisdom, and goodness, the Creator, the Owner, the Ruler, and the Father, felicity and end of man ; that we owe him all our love and service ; that none of our fidelity shall be in vain, or unrewarded, and none shall be finally a loser by his duty ; that man who is naturally governed by the hopes and fears of another life, is made and liveth for that other life, where his soul shall be sentenced by God his Judge, to happiness or misery, &c. And then he discerneth the attestation of God to those supernatural, superadded revelations of the Gospel, containing the doctrine of man's redemption. And he seeth how wonderfully these are built upon the former, and how excellently the Creator's and Redeemer's doctrine and laws agree ; and how much countenance supernatural truths receive from the presupposed naturals ; so that he doth not adhere to Christ and religion by the mere engagement of education, friends, or worldly advantages ; nor by a blind resolution, which wanteth nothing but a strong temptation (from a deceiver or a worldly interest) to shake or overthrow it. But he is built upon the rock, which will stand in the assault of satan's storms, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; Matt. xvi. 18. xiii. 23. vii. 25. John vi. 68, 69.

2. But a weak Christian hath but a dim and general kind of knowledge of the reasons of his religion ; or, at least, but a weak apprehension of them, though he have the best, and most unanswerable reasons. And either he is confident in the dark upon grounds which he cannot make good, and which want but a strong assault to shake them ; or else he is troubled and ready to stagger at every difficulty which occurreth. Every hard saying in the Scripture doth offend him ; and every seeming contradiction shaketh him. And the depth of mysteries, which pass his understanding, do make him say as Nicodemus of regeneration, " How can these things be ? " And if he meet with the objections of a cunning infidel, he is unable so to defend the truth, and clear his way through them, as to come off unwounded and unshaken, and to be the more confirmed in the truth of his belief, by discerning the vanity of all that is said against it ; Heb. v. 12, 13. Matt. xv. 16. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. John xii. 16.

3. The seeming Christian either hath no solid reasons at all for his religion, or else if he have the best, he hath no

sound apprehension of them ; but though he be never so learned and orthodox, and can preach and defend the faith, it is not so rooted in him as to endure the trial ; but if a strong temptation from subtlety or carnal interest assault him, you shall see that he was built upon the sand, and that there was in him a secret root of bitterness, and an evil heart of unbelief, which causeth him to depart from the living God ; Heb. iii. 12. Matt. xiii. 20—22. vii. 26, 27. Heb. xii. 15. John vi. 60. 64. 66. 1 Tim. vi. 10, 11.

III. 1. A Christian indeed, is not only confirmed in the essentials of Christianity, but he hath a clear, delightful sight of those useful truths, which are the integrals of Christianity, and are built upon the fundamentals, and are the branches of the master-points of faith. Though he see not all the lesser truths (which are branched out at last into innumerable particles), yet he seeth the main body of sacred verities, delivered by Christ for man's sanctification ; and seeth them methodically in their proper places ; and seeth how one supports another, and in how beautiful an order and contexture they are placed. And as he sticketh not in the bare principles, so he receiveth all these additions of knowledge, not notionally only, but practically, as the food on which his soul must live ; Heb. v. 13, 14. vi. 1, 2. &c. Matt. xiii. 11. Eph. i. 18. iii. 18, 19. John xiii. 17.

2. A weak Christian (in knowledge) besides the principles or essentials of religion, doth know but a few disordered, scattered truths ; which are also but half known, because while he hath some knowledge of those points, he is ignorant of many others, which are needful to the supporting, and clearing, and improving of them ; and because he knoweth them not in their places, and order, and relation, and aspect upon other truths. And, therefore, if temptations be strong, and come with advantage, the weak Christian, in such points, is easily drawn into many errors ; and thence into great confidence and conceitedness in those errors ; and thence into sinful, dangerous courses in the prosecution and practice of those errors. Such are like " children tossed up and down, and carried to and fro by every wind of doctrine, through the cunning sleight and subtlety of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ;" Eph. iv. 14. 2 Cor. xi. 3. Col. ii. 4. 2 Tim. iii. 7.

3. The seeming Christian having no saving, practical

knowledge of the essentials of Christianity themselves, doth therefore, either neglect to know the rest, or knoweth them but notionally, as common sciences, and subjecteth them all to his worldly interest. And, therefore, is still of that side or party in religion, which, upon the account of safety, honour, or preferment, his flesh commandeth him to follow. Either he is still on the greater, rising side, and of the rulers of religion, be it what it will; or if he dissent, it is in pursuit of another game, which pride or fleshly ends have started; 2 Pet. ii. 14. Gal. iii. 3. John ix. 22. xii. 42, 43. Matt. xiii. 21, 22.

IV. 1. The Christian indeed, hath not only reason for his religion, but also hath an inward, continual principle, even the Spirit of Christ, which is as a new nature, inclining and enlivening him to a holy life; whereby he mindeth and savoureth the things of the Spirit. Not that his nature doth work blindly, as nature doth in the irrational creatures; but at least it much imitateth nature as it is found in rational creatures, where the inclination is necessary, but the operations free, and subject to reason. It is a spiritual appetite in the rational appetite, even the will, and a spiritual, vivise disposition in the understanding. Not a faculty in a faculty; but the right disposition of the faculties to their highest objects, to which they are by corruption made unsuitable. So that it is neither a proper power in the natural sense, nor a mere act, but nearest to the nature of a seminal disposition or habit. It is the health and rectitude of the faculties of the soul. Even as nature hath made the understanding disposed to truth in general, and the will disposed or inclined to good in general, and to self-preservation and felicity in particular; so the Spirit of Christ doth dispose the understanding to spiritual truth, to know God and the matters of salvation, and doth incline the will to God and holiness, not blindly, as they are unknown, but to love and serve a known God. So that whether this be properly or only analogically called a nature, or rather should be called a habit, I determine not; but certainly it is a fixed disposition and inclination, which Scripture calleth the "Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4.), and "the seed of God abiding in us;" 1 John iii. 9. But most usually it is called the Spirit of God, or of Christ, in us. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his;" Rom. viii. 9. "By one

Spirit we are all baptized into one body;" 1 Cor. xii. 13. Therefore, we are said "to be in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit, and by the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body;" Rom. viii. 1. 9. 13. And it is called, "the Spirit of the Son, and the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" or are inclined to God, as children to their father; and the "Spirit of grace and supplication;" Rom. viii. 15. 23. 26. Gal. iv. 6. v. 17, 18. Eph. ii. 18. 22. iv. 3, 4. Phil. i. 27. ii. 1. Zech. xii. 10. From this Spirit, and the fruits of it, we are called new creatures; and quickened, and made alive to God; 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 15. Rom. vi. 11. 13. It is a great controversy, whether this holy disposition and inclination was natural to Adam or not, and consequently, whether it be a restored nature in us, or not. It was so natural to him as health is natural to the body, but not so natural as to be a necessitating principle, nor so as to be inseparable and unlosable.

2. This same Spirit and holy inclination is in the weakest Christian also, but in a small degree, and remissly operating, so as that the fleshly inclination oft seemeth to be the stronger, when he judgeth by its passionate strugglings within him. Though, indeed, the Spirit of life doth not only strive, but conquer in the main, even in the weakest Christians; Rom. viii. 9. Gal. v. 17—21.

3. The seeming Christian hath only the ineffectual motions of the Spirit to a holy life, and effectual motions and inward dispositions to some common duties of religion. And from these, with the natural principles of self-love and common honesty, with the outward persuasions of company and advantages, his religion is maintained, without the regeneration of the Spirit; John iii. 6.

V. From hence it followeth, 1. That a Christian indeed doth not serve God for fear only, but for love; even for love both of himself, and of his holy work and service. Yea, the strong Christian's love to God and holiness, is not only greater than his love to creatures, but greater than his fear of wrath and punishment. The love of God constraineth him to duty; 2 Cor. v. 14. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10.), therefore, the Gospel cannot be obeyed without it. He saith not, 'O that this were no duty, and O that this forbidden thing were lawful;' though his flesh say so, the Spirit, which is the predominant part, doth not:

But he saith, "O how I love thy law! O that my ways were so directed that I might keep thy statutes!" Psal. cxix. 5. For the Spirit is willing, even when the flesh is weak. He serveth not God against his will; but his will is to serve him more, and better than he doth. He longeth to be perfect, and perfectly to do the will of God, and taketh the remnant of his sinful infirmities to be a kind of bondage to him, which he groaneth to be delivered from. To will even perfection is present with him, though not perfectly; and though he do not all that he willeth. And this is the true meaning of Paul's complaints; Rom. vii. Because the flesh warreth against the Spirit, he cannot do the good that he would; that is, he cannot be perfect, for so he would be; Gal. v. 17. His love and will excel his practice.

2. The weak Christian also hath more love to God and holiness than to the world and fleshly pleasure. But yet his fear of punishment is greater than his love to God and holiness. To have no love to God, is inconsistent with a state of grace, and so it is to have less love to God than to the world, and less love to holiness than to sin. But to have more fear than love is consistent with sincerity of grace. Yea, the weak Christian's love to God and holiness is joined with so much backwardness and averseness, and interrupted with weariness, and with the carnal allurements and diversions of the creature, that he cannot certainly perceive whether his love and willingness be sincere or not. He goeth on in a course of duty, but so heavily, that he scarce knoweth whether his love or loathing of it be the greater. He goeth to it as a sick man to his meat, or labour. All that he doth is with so much pain or indisposedness, that to his feeling, his averseness seemeth greater than his willingness, were it not that necessity maketh him willing. For the habitual love and complacency which he hath towards God and duty, is so oppressed by fear, and by averseness, that it is not so much felt in act as they.

3. A seeming Christian hath no true love of God and holiness at all, but some ineffectual liking and wishes which are overborne by a greater backwardness, and by a greater love to earthly things; so that fear alone, without any true, effectual love, is the spring and principle of his religion and obedience. God hath not his heart, when he draweth near him with his lips; he doth more than he would do, if he

were not forced by necessity and fear ; and had rather be excused, and lead another kind of life ; Matt. xv. 8. Isa. xxix. 13. Though necessity and fear are very helpful to the most sincere, yet fear alone, without love or willingness is a graceless state.

VI. 1. A Christian indeed doth love God in these three gradations : he loveth him much for his mercy to himself, and for that goodness which consisteth in benignity to himself ; but he loveth him more for his mercy to the church, and for that goodness which consisteth in his benignity to the church. But he loveth him most of all for his infinite perfections and essential excellencies ; his infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, simply in himself considered. For he knoweth that love to himself obligeth him to returns of love ; especially differencing, saving grace : and he knoweth that the souls of millions are more worth incomparably than his own, and that God may be much more honoured by them, than by him alone ; and therefore he knoweth that the mercy to many is greater mercy, and a greater demonstration of the goodness of God, and therefore doth render him more amiable to man ; Rom. ix. 3. And yet he knoweth that essential perfection and goodness of God, as simply in himself and for himself, is much more amiable than his benignity to the creature ; and that he that is the first efficient, must needs be the ultimate, final cause of all things ; and that God is not finally for the creature, but the creature for God, (for all that he needeth it not) "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things ;" Rom. xi. 36. And as he is infinitely better than ourselves, so he is to be better loved than ourselves. As I love a wise and virtuous person, though he be one I never expect to receive any thing from, and therefore love him for his own sake, and not for his benignity or usefulness to me : so must I love God most for his essential perfections, though his benignity also doth represent him amiable. As he is blindly selfish that would not rather himself be annihilated or perish, than whole kingdoms should all perish, or the sun be taken out of the world ; (because that which is best must be loved as best, and therefore be best loved :) so is he more blind, who in his estimative, complacential love, preferreth not infinite, eternal goodness, before such an imperfect, silly creature as himself (or all the world). We are commanded to love our neigh-

hour as ourselves, when God is to be loved with all the heart, and soul, and might, which therefore signifieth more than to love him as ourselves; (or else he were to be loved no more than our neighbour). So that the strong Christian loveth God so much above himself, as that he accounteth himself and all his interests, as nothing in comparison of God, yea, and loveth himself more for God than for himself: though his own salvation be loved and desired by him, and God must be loved for his mercy and benignity; yet that salvation itself which he desireth, is nothing else but the love of God: wherein his love is the final, felicitating act, and God is the final, felicitating object, and the felicity of loving is not first desired; but the attractive object doth draw out our love, and thereby make us consequentially happy in the enjoying exercise thereof. Thus God is all and in all to the soul; Psal. lxxiii. 25. Rom. xi. 36. 1 Cor. x. 31. Deut. vi. 5. Matt. xxiii. 37. xix. 17.

2. A weak Christian also loveth God as one that is infinitely better than himself and all things; (or else he did not love him at all as God). But in the exercise he is so much in the minding of himself, and so seldom and weak in the contemplation of God's perfections, that he feeleth more of his love to himself, than unto God; and feeleth more of his love to God, as for the benefits which he receiveth in and by himself, than as for his own perfections; yea, and often feeleth the love of himself to work more strongly than his love to the church, and all else in the world. The care of his own salvation is the highest principle which he ordinarily perceiveth in any great strength in him; and he is very little and weakly carried out to the love of the whole church, and to the love of God above himself; Phil. ii. 20—22. 1 Cor. x. 24. Jer. xlv. 5.

3. A seeming Christian hath a common love of God as he is good, both in himself, and unto the world, and unto him. But this is not for his holiness; and it is but a general, ineffectual approbation and praise of God, which followeth a dead, ineffectual unbelief: but his chief, predominant love is always to his carnal self, and the love both of his soul, and of God, is subjected to his fleshly self-love. His chief love to God is for prospering him in the world, and such as is subservient to his sensuality, pride, covetous-

ness, presumption and false hopes; Luke xviii. 21, 22. 1 John ii. 15. 2 Tim. iii. 2. 4. John xii. 43. v. 42.

VII. 1. A Christian indeed doth practically take this love of God, and the holy expressions of it, to be the very life and top of his religion, and the very life, and beauty, and pleasure of his soul : he makes it his work in the world, and loveth himself (complacentially) but so far as he findeth in himself the love of God ; and so far as he findeth himself without it, he loatheth himself as an unlovely carcase : and so far as his prayers and obedience are without it, he looks on them but as unacceptable, loathsome things ; and therefore he is taken up in the study of redemption, because he can nowhere so clearly see the love and loveliness of God, as in the face of a Redeemer, even in the wonders of love revealed in Christ. And he studieth them, that love may kindle love ; and therefore he delighteth in the contemplating of God's attributes and infinite perfections ; and in the beholding of him in the frame of the creation, and reading his name in the book of his works, that his soul may by such steps, be raised in love and admiration of his Maker. And as it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun or light, so it is to the mind of the Christian indeed, to be frequently and seriously contemplating the nature and glory of God : and the exercise of love in such contemplations is most of his daily walk with God. And therefore it is also, that he is more taken up in the exercises of thanksgiving, and the praises of the Almighty, than in the lower parts of godliness ; so that though he neglect not confession of sin and humiliation, yet doth he use them but in subserviency to the love and praise of God : he doth but rid out the filth that is indecent in a heart that is to entertain its God. He placeth not the chief part of his religion in any outward duties, nor in any lower, preparatory acts ; nor doth he stop in any of these, however he neglect them not. But he useth them all to advance his soul in the love of God ; and useth them the more diligently, because the love of God, to which they conduce, as to their proper end, is so high and excellent a work. Therefore in David's psalms you find a heart delighting itself in the praises of God, and in love with his word and works, in order to his praises ; Psal. cxvi. I. &c. cvi. ciii. cxlv. cxlvi. &c. Rom. viii. 37.

2. The weak Christian is taken up but very little with the lively exercises of love and praise, nor with any studies higher than his own distempered heart : the care of his poor soul, and the complaining of his manifold infirmities and corruptions, is the most of his religion : and if he set himself to the praising of God, or to thanksgiving, he is as dull and short in it as if it were not his proper work ; Psal. lxxvii. Mark ix. 24. xvi. 14.

3. The seeming Christian liveth to the flesh ; and carnal self-love is the active principle of his life ; and he is neither exercised in humiliation or in praise sincerely, being unacquainted both with holy joy and sorrow : but knowing that he is in the hands of God, to prosper or destroy him, he will humble himself to him to escape his judgments, and praise him with some gladness for the sunshine of prosperity ; and he will seem to be piously thanking God, when he is but rejoicing in the accommodations of his flesh, or strengthening his presumption and false hopes of heaven ; Luke xviii. 11. xii. 19. Isa. lviii. 2.

VIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that is so apprehensive of his lost condition, unworthiness, and utter insufficiency for himself, and of the office, perfection, and sufficiency of Christ, that he hath absolutely put his soul, and all his hopes into the hands of Christ, and now liveth in him and upon him ; as having no life but what he hath from Christ, nor any other way of access to God, or acceptance of his person, or his service, but by him. In him he beholdeth and delightfully admireth the love and goodness of the Father ; in him he hath access with boldness unto God ; through him the most terrible, avenging judge is become a reconciled God, and he that we could not remember but with trembling, is become the most desirable object of our thoughts. He is delightfully employed in prying into the unsearchable mystery : and Christ doth even dwell in his heart by faith ; “ and being rooted and grounded in love, he apprehendeth with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and knoweth the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge ;” Ephes. iii. 17—19. He perceiveth that he is daily beholden to Christ that he is not in hell, that sin doth not make him like to devils, and that he is not utterly forsaken of God : he feeleth that he is beholden to Christ for every hour’s time, and every mercy to

his soul or body, and for all his hope of mercy in this life, or in the life to come. He perceiveth that he is dead in himself, and that his "life is hid with Christ in God." And therefore he is as "buried and risen again with Christ;" even "dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ;" Rom. vi. 3, 4. 11. Col. iv. 4. He saith with Paul, Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Thus doth he live as truly and constantly by the second Adam, who is a quickening spirit, as he doth by the first Adam, who was a living soul; 1 Cor. xv. 45. This is a confirmed Christian's life.

2. But the weak Christian, though he be also united unto Christ, and live by faith, yet how languid are the operations of that faith? How dark and dull are his thoughts of Christ? How little is his sense of the wonders of God's love revealed to the world, in the mystery of redemption? How little use doth he make of Christ? And how little life receives he from him? And how little comfort findeth he in believing, in comparison of that which the confirmed find? He is to Christ as a sick person to his food: he only picketh here and there a little of the crumbs of the bread of life, to keep him from dying; but is wofully unacquainted with the most powerful works of faith. He is such a believer as is next to an unbeliever; and such a member of Christ, as is next to a mere stranger.

3. And for the seeming Christian, he may understand the letter of the Gospel, and number himself with Christ's disciples, and be baptized with water, and have such a faith as is a dead opinion; but he hath not an effectual, living faith, nor is baptized with the Holy Ghost; nor is his soul engaged absolutely and entirely in the covenant of Christianity to his Redeemer: he may have a handsome, well-made image of Christianity, but it is the flesh and sense, and not Christ and faith, by which his life is actuated and ordered; John iii. 6. Rom. ii. 28.

IX. 1. A Christian indeed doth firmly believe that Christ is a "Teacher sent from God," (John iii. 2.) and that he came from heaven to reveal his Father's will, and to bring "life and immortality" more fully "to light by his Gospel;" and that if an angel had been sent to tell us of the life to

come, and the way thereto, he had not been so credible and venerable a messenger as the Son of God; and therefore he taketh him alone for his chief Teacher, and knoweth no master on earth but him, and such as he appointeth under him: his study in the world is to know a crucified and glorified Christ, and God by him, and he regardeth no other knowledge, nor useth any other studies but this, and such as are subservient to this. Even when he studieth the works of nature, it is as by the conduct of the Restorer of nature, and as one help appointed him by Christ, to lead him up to the knowledge of God. And therefore he perceiveth that Christ is made of God unto us, wisdom as well as righteousness: and that Christianity is the true philosophy; and that the wisdom of the world, which is only about worldly things, from worldly principles, to a worldly end, is foolishness with God: he taketh nothing for wisdom which tendeth not to acquaint him more with God, or lead him up to everlasting happiness. Christ is his Teacher (either by natural or supernatural revelation) and God is his ultimate end in all his studies, and all that he desireth to know in the world. He valueth knowledge according to its usefulness: and he knoweth that its chief use is to lead us to the love of God; Matt. xxiii. 8. 1 Cor. i. 30. ii. 2, &c. John. i. 18. Col. ii. 3. Ephes. iv. 13.

2. Though the weak Christian hath the same Master, yet alas, how little doth he learn! And how oft is he hearkening to the teaching of the flesh! And how carnal, and common is much of his knowledge! How little doth he depend on Christ, in his inquiries after the things of nature! And how apt is he to think almost as highly of the teaching of Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, or at least of some excellent preacher, as of Christ's! And to forget that these are but his messengers and instruments, to convey unto us several parcels of that truth, which is his, and not theirs, and which (naturally or supernaturally) they received from him; and all these candles were lighted by him, who is the sun! And how little doth this weak Christian refer his common knowledge to God; or use it for him; or to the furtherance of his own and others happiness! 1 Tim. ii. 4.

3. And the seeming Christian, though materially he may be eminent for knowledge, yet is so far from resigning himself to the teachings of Christ, that he maketh even his

knowledge of Christian verities to be to him but a common, carnal thing, while he knoweth it but in a common manner, and useth it to the service of the flesh, and never yet learned so much as to be a new creature, nor to love God as God above the world; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

X. 1. A Christian indeed is one whose repentance hath been deep, and serious, and universal, and unchangeable: it hath gone to the very roots of sin, and to the bottom of the sore, and hath not left behind it any reigning, unmortified sin, nor any prevalent love to fleshly pleasures. His repentance did not only disgrace his sin, and cast some reproachful words against it, and use confessions to excuse him from mortification, and to save its life, and hide it from the mortal blow; nor doth he only repent of his open sins, and those that are most censured by the beholders of his life; but he specially perceives the dangerous poison of pride, and unbelief, and worldliness, and the want of the love of God; and all his outward and smaller sins, do serve to shew him the greater malignity of these, and these are the matter of his greatest lamentations. He taketh not up a profession of religion with strong corruptions, secretly covered in his heart; but his religion consisteth in the death of his corruptions, and the purifying of his heart; he doth not secretly cherish any sin as too sweet or too profitable to be utterly forsaken, nor overlook it as a small, inconsiderable matter. But he feeleth sin to be his enemy and his disease, and as he desireth not one enemy, one sickness, one wound, one broken bone, one serpent in his bed, so he desireth not any one sin to be spared in his soul; but saith with David; "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me: and lead me in the way everlasting;" Psal. cxxxix. 23. He liveth in no gross and scandalous sin: and his infirmities are comparatively few and small; so that if he were not a sharper accuser of himself, than the most observant spectators are (that are just) there would little be known by him that is culpable and matter of reproof. He "walketh in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless;" (as to any notable miscarriage,) Luke i. 6. He is "blameless and harmless, as the son of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom he shineth as a light in the world;" Phil. ii. 15. The fear,

and love, and obedience of God, is the work and tenor of his life.

2. But the weak Christian, though he hath no sin but what he is a hater of, and fain would be delivered from, yet, alas! how imperfect is his deliverance! And how weak is the hatred of his sin, and mixed with so much proneness to it, that his life is much blemished with the spots of his offences. Though his unbelief, and pride, and worldliness are not predominant in him, yet are they (or some of them) still so strong, and fight so much against his faith, humility, and heavenliness, that he can scarcely tell which hath the upper hand; nor can others that see the failings of his life, discern whether the good or the evil be most prevalent: Though it be heaven which he most seeketh, yet earth is so much regarded by him, that his heavenly-mindedness is greatly damped and suppressed by it. And though it be the way of godliness and obedience which he walketh in, yet is it with so many stumblings and falls, if not deviations also, that maketh him oft a burden to himself, a shame to his profession, and a snare or trouble to those about him. His heart is like an ill-swept house, that hath many a slut-tish corner in it. And his life is like a motheaten garment, which hath many a hole, which you may see if you bring it into the light; 1 Cor. iii. 1—3. vi. 6—8. xi. 18. 21, 22, &c.

3. And for the seeming Christian, his repentance doth but crop the branches, it goeth not to the root and heart of his sin: it leaveth his fleshly mind and interest in the dominion: it polisheth his life, but maketh him not a new creature: it casteth away those sins which the flesh can spare, and which bring more shame, or loss, or trouble with them, than worldly honour, gain or pleasure; but still he is a very worldling at the heart; and the sins which his fleshly pleasures and felicity consist in, he will hide by confessions and seeming oppositions, but never mortify and forsake. As Judas, that while he followed Christ was yet a thief, and a covetous hypocrite; John xii. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 10.

XI. 1. Hence it followeth that a Christian indeed doth heartily love the searching light, that it may fully acquaint him with his sins: he is truly desirous to know the worst of himself; and therefore useth the word of God, as a candle; to shew him what is in his heart; and bringeth himself willingly into the light: he loveth the most searching books

and preachers; not only because they disclose the faults of other men, but his own: he is not one that so loveth his pleasant and profitable sins, as to fly the light, lest he should be forced to know them, and so to forsake them; but because he hateth them, and is resolved to forsake them, therefore he would know them; John iii. 19—21. Therefore he is not only patient under reproofs, but loveth them, and is thankful to a charitable reprove, and maketh a good use even of malicious and passionate reproofs; Psal. cxli. 5. 2 Sam. xvi. 11. He saith, as in Job xxxiv. 32. "That which I see not, teach thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." His hatred of the sin, and desire to be reformed, suffer not his heart by pride to rise up against the remedy, and reject reproof. Though he will not falsely confess his duty to be his sin, nor take the judgment of every selfish, passionate, or ignorant reprove to be infallible, nor to be his rule; yet if a judicious, impartial person do but suspect him of a fault, he is ready to suspect himself of it, unless he be certain that he is clear. He loveth him better that would save him from his sin, than him that would entice him to it; and taketh him for his best friend who dealth freely with him, and is the greatest enemy to his faults; and a flatterer he taketh but for the most dangerous, insinuating kind of foe.

2. But the weak Christian, though he hate his sin, and love reformation, and loveth the most searching books and preachers, and loveth a gentle kind of reproof, yet hath so much pride and selfishness remaining, that any reproof that seemeth disgraceful to him, goeth very hardly down with him; like a bitter medicine to a queasy stomach: if you reprove him before others, or if your reproof be not very carefully sugared and minced, so that it rather extenuate than aggravate his fault, he will be ready to cast it up into your face, and with retort to tell you of some faults of your own, or some way shew you how little he loveth it, and how little thanks he giveth you for it. If you will not let him alone with his infirmities, he will distaste you, if not fall out with you, and let you know, by his smart and impatience, that you have touched him in the sore and galled place. He must be a man of very great skill in managing a reproof, that shall not somewhat proveke him to distaste.

3. And for the seeming Christian, this is "his condemna-

tion, that light is come into the world, and he loveth darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil." He cometh not to the light, lest his deeds should be discovered and reprov'd; John iii. 19—21. He liketh a searching preacher for others, and loveth to hear their sins laid open, if it no way reflecteth upon himself. But for himself he liketh best a general or a smoothing preacher; and he flieth from a quick and searching ministry, lest he should be prov'd and convinc'd to be in a state of sin and misery. Guilt maketh him fear or hate a lively, searching preacher, even as the guilty prisoner hateth the judge. He loveth no company so well as that which thinketh highly of him, and applaudeth and commendeth him, and neither by their reproofs or stricter lives, will trouble his conscience with the remembrance of his sin, or the knowledge of his misery. He will take you for his enemy for telling him the truth, if you go about to convince him of his undone condition, and tell him of his beloved sin. Sin is taken to be as himself; it is he that doth evil, and not only sin that dwelleth in him; and therefore all that you say against his sin, he taketh as spoken against himself; and he will defend his sin as he would defend himself: he will hear you till you come to touch himself, as the Jews did by Stephen, Acts vii. 51, 54. when they heard him call them, stiff-necked resisters of God, and persecutors, then they were cut to the heart, and did grind their teeth at him. And as they did by Paul, Acts xxii. 22. "They gave audience to this word, and then lift up their voices and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live;" Gal. iv. 16. John ix. 40. Matt. xxi. 45. The priests and Pharisees would have laid hands on Christ, when they perceiv'd that he spake of them. And Ahab hated Micaiah, because he did not prophesy good of him, but evil; 1 Kings xxii. 8. Deservedly do they perish in their sin and misery, that hate him that would deliver them, and refuse the remedy. "Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge, but he that hateth reproof is brutish;" Prov. xii. 1. "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy;" Prov. xxix. 1.

XII. 1. A Christian indeed, is one that unfeignedly desireth to attain to the highest degree of holiness, and to be perfectly freed from every thing that is sin. He desireth

perfection, though not with a perfect desire. He sitteth not down contentedly in any low degree of grace. He looketh on the holiest (how poor soever) with much more reverence and esteem than on the most rich and honourable in the world; and he had far rather be one of the most holy, than one of the most prosperous and great; he had rather be a Paul or Timothy, than a Cæsar or an Alexander. He complaineth of nothing with so much sorrow, as that he can know and love his God no more! How happy an exchange would he count it, if he had more of the knowledge and love of God, though he lost all his wealth and honour in the world! His smallest sins are a greater burden to him, than his greatest corporal wants and sufferings: as Paul, who because he could not perfectly fulfil God's law, and be as good as he would, he crieth out as in bondage, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24.

2. And for the weak Christian, though he is habitually and resolutely of the same mind, yet, alas! his desires after perfection are much more languid in him; and he hath too much patience and reconciledness to some of his sins, and sometimes taketh them to be sweet; so that his enmity to his pride, or covetousness, or passion, is much abated, and suffereth his sin to waste his grace, and wound his conscience, and hinder much of his communion with God. He seeth not the odiousness of sin, nor the beauty of holiness, with so clear a sight as the confirmed Christian doth: he hateth sin more for the ill effects of it, than for its malignant, hateful nature: he seeth not clearly the intrinsic evil that is in sin, which maketh it deserve the pains of hell: nor doth he discern the difference between a holy and unholy soul, so clearly as the stronger Christian doth; 1 Cor. iii. 2, 3. Heb. xii. 1.

3. And as for the seeming Christian, though he may approve of perfect holiness in another, and may wish for it himself, when he thinketh of it but in the general, and not as it is exclusive and destructive of his beloved sin; yet when it cometh to particulars, he cannot away with it; he is so far from desiring it, that he will not endure it. The name of holiness he liketh; and that preservation from hell which is the consequent of it; but when he understandeth what it is, he hath no mind of it. That holiness which

should cure his ambition and pride, and make him contented with a low condition, he doth not like: he loveth not that holiness, which would deprive him of his covetousness, his intemperance in pleasant meats and drinks, his fleshly lusts, and inordinate pleasures. Nor doth he desire that holiness should employ his soul in the love of God, and in daily prayer, and meditating on his word, and raise him to a heavenly life on earth.

XIII, 1. A Christian indeed is one that maketh God and heaven the end, reward and motive of his life; and liveth not in the world for any thing in the world, but for that endless happiness which the next world only can afford. The reasons which actuate his thoughts, and choice, and all his life, are fetched from heaven. The interest of God and his soul as to eternity, is the ruling interest in him. As a traveller goeth all the way, and beareth all the difficulties of it, for the sake of the end or place that he is going to, (however he may talk of many other matters by the way;) so is it with a Christian; he knoweth nothing worthy of his life and labours, but that which he hopeth for hereafter. This world is too sinful, and too vile and short to be his felicity. His very trade and work in the world is to lay up a treasure in heaven, (Matt. vi. 20.) "and to lay up a good foundation against the time to come, and to lay hold on eternal life;" (1 Tim. vi. 19.) and therefore his very heart is there, (Matt. vi. 21.) and he is employed in seeking and setting his affections on the things above: (Col. iii. 1—3.) and his conversation and traffic are in heaven; (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) "he looketh not at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal:" (2 Cor. iv. 18.) he is a stranger upon earth, and heaven is to him as his home.

2. The weak Christian also hath the same end, and hope, and motive; and preferreth his hopes of the life to come, before all the wealth and pleasures of this life: but yet his thoughts of heaven are much more strange and dull; he hath so much doubting and fear yet mixed with his faith and hope, that he looketh before him to his everlasting state, with backwardness and trouble, and with small desire and delight. He hath so much hope of heaven, as to abate his fears of hell, and make him think of eternity with more

quietness than he could do, if he found himself unregenerate; but not so much as to make his thoughts of heaven so free, and sweet, and frequent, nor his desires after it so strong, as the confirmed Christian's are: and therefore his duties, and his speech of heaven, and his endeavours to obtain it, are all more languid and unconstant; and he is much more prone to fall in love with earth, and to entertain the motions of reconciliation to the world, and to have his heart too much set upon some place, or person, or thing below, and to be either delighted too much in the possession of it, or afflicted and troubled too much with the loss of it: earthly things are too much the motives of his life, and the reasons of his joys and griefs: though he hath the true belief of a life to come, and it prevaileth in the main against the world, yet it is but little that he useth to the commanding, and raising, and comforting his soul, in comparison of what a strong believer doth; Matt. xvi. 22, 23.

3. But the seeming Christian would serve God and man, and placeth his chief and most certain happiness practically on earth; though speculatively he know and say that heaven is better, yet doth he not practically judge it to be so to him; and therefore he loveth the world above it, and he doth most carefully lay up a treasure on earth; (Matt. vi. 19.) and is resolved first to seek and secure his portion here below; and yet he taketh heaven for a reserve, as knowing that the world will cast him off at last, and die he must, there is no remedy; and therefore he taketh heaven as next unto the best, as his second hope, as better than hell, and will go in religion as far as he can, without the loss of his prosperity here; so that earth and flesh do govern and command the design and tenor of his life; but heaven and his soul shall have all that they can spare; which may be enough to make him pass with men for one eminently religious; 1 John ii. 15. Matt. xiii. 22. Luke xviii. 22, 23. xiv. 24, 33. Psal. xvii. 14. Phil. iii. 18—20.

XIV. 1. A Christian indeed is one that having taken heaven for his felicity, doth account no labour or cost too great for the obtaining of it: he hath nothing so dear to him in this world, which he cannot spare and part with for God and the world to come: he doth not only notionally know that nothing should seem too dear or hard for the securing of our salvation; but he knoweth this practically, and is re-

solved accordingly. Though difficulties may hinder him in particular acts, and his executions come not up to the height of his desires (Rom. vii. 16, 17, &c.), yet he is resolved that he will never break on terms with Christ. There is no duty so hard which he is not willing and resolved to perform; and no sin so sweet or gainful which he is not willing to forsake: he knoweth how unprofitable a bargain he makes, who winneth the world, and loseth his own soul; and that no gain can ransom his soul, or recompense him for the loss of his salvation; Mark viii. 36. He knoweth that it is impossible to be a loser by God, or to purchase heaven at too dear a rate; he knoweth that whatsoever it cost him, heaven will fully pay for all; and that it is the worldling's labour, and not the saint's, that is repented of at last. He marvelleth more at distracted sinners, for making such a stir for wealth, and honours, and command, than they marvel at him for making so much ado for heaven. He knoweth that this world may be too dearly bought, but so cannot his salvation; yea, he knoweth that even our duty itself, is not our smallest privilege and mercy; and that the more we do for God, the more we receive, and the greater is our gain and honour; and that the sufferings of believers for righteousness sake, do not only prognosticate their joys in heaven, but occasion here the greatest joys that any short of heaven partake of; Matt. v. 11, 12. Rom. v. 1—3. &c. He is not one that desireth the end without the means, and would be saved, so it may be on cheap and easy terms; but he absolutely yieldeth to the terms of Christ, and saith with Austin, 'Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis;' 'Cause me to do what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt.' Though Pelagius contradicted the first sentence, and the flesh the second, yet Augustine owned both, and so doth every true believer: he greatly complaineth of his backwardness to obey, but never complaineth of the strictness of the command. He loveth the holiness, justness and goodness of the laws, when he bewaileth the unholiness and badness of his heart: he desireth not God to command him less, but desireth grace and ability to do more. He is so far from the mind of the ungodly world, who cry out against too much holiness, and making so much ado for heaven, that he desireth even to reach to the degree of angels, and would fain have "God's will to be done on earth, as it is done in heaven;" and there-

fore the more desireth to be in heaven, that he may do it better; Psal. cxix. 5. Rom. vii. 24.

2. The weak Christian hath the same estimation and resolution; but when it comes to practice, as his will is less confirmed, and more corrupted and divided, so little impediments and difficulties are great temptations to him, and stop him more in the way of his obedience. All his duty is much more tedious to him, and all his sufferings are much more burdensome to him, than to confirmed Christians; and therefore he is more easily tempted into omissions and impatience, and walketh not so evenly or comfortably with God. When the spirit is willing, it yieldeth oft to the weakness of the flesh, because it is willing in too remiss a degree; Matt. xxvi. 41. Gal. ii. 14.

3. But the seeming Christian (though notionally and generally he may approve of strictness) yet secretly at the heart hath always this reserve, that he will not serve God at too dear a rate. His worldly felicity he cannot part with, for all the hopes of the life to come; and yet he will not, he dare not renounce and give up those hopes; and therefore he maketh himself a religion of the easiest and cheapest parts of Christianity, (among which, sometimes, the strictest opinions may fall out to be one part, so be it they be separated from the strictest practice :) and this easy, cheap religion he will needs believe to be true Christianity and godliness, and so will hope to be saved upon these terms: and though he cannot but know that it is the certain character of a hypocrite, to have any thing nearer and dearer to his heart than God, yet he hopeth that it is not so with him, because his convinced judgment can say, that God is best, and the world is vanity, while yet his heart and affections so much contradict his opinion, as almost to say, "There is no God;" for his heart knoweth and loveth no God as God, that is, above his worldly happiness. He is resolved to do so much in religion as he findeth necessary to delude his conscience, and make himself believe that he is godly, and shall be saved; but when he cometh to forsake all, and take up the cross, and practise the costliest parts of duty, then you shall see that mammon was better loved than God, and he will go away sorrowful, and hope to be saved upon easier terms (Luke xviii. 23.), for he was never resigned absolutely to God.

XV. 1. A confirmed Christian is one that taketh self-denial for the one half of his religion; and therefore hath bestowed one half of his endeavours to attain and exercise it. He knoweth that the fall of man was a turning to himself from God; and that selfishness and want of love to God, are the sum of all corruption and ungodliness; and that the love of God and self-denial are the sum of all religion; and that conversion is nothing but the turning of the heart from carnal self to God by Christ: and therefore on this hath his care and labour been so successfully laid out, that he hath truly and practically found out something which is much better than himself, and to be loved and preferred before himself, and which is to be his chief and ultimate end. He maketh not a God of himself any more, but useth himself for God, to fulfil his will, as a creature of his own, that hath no other end and use: he no more preferreth himself above all the world, but esteemeth himself a poor and despicable part of the world, and more highly valueth the honour of God, and the welfare of the church, and the good of many, than any interest of his own. Though God in nature hath taught him to regard his own felicity and to love himself, and not to seek the glory of God, and the good of many souls in opposition to his own, yet he hath taught him to prefer them (though in conjunction) much before his own: for reason telleth him that man is nothing in comparison of God, and that we are made by him and for him, and that the welfare of the church or public societies, is better (in order to the highest ends) than the welfare of some one. Selfishness in the unregenerate, is like an inflammation or imposthume, which draweth the humours from other parts of the body to itself: the interest of God and man are all swallowed up in the regard that men have to self-interest: and the love of God and our neighbour is turned into self-love. But self is as annihilated in the confirmed Christian, so that it ruleth not his judgment, his affections, or his choice: and he that lived in and to himself, as if God and all the world were but for him, doth now live to God, as one that is good for nothing else, and findeth himself in seeking him that is infinitely above himself; Luke xiv. 31—33. Phil. ii. 4. 21.

2. And the weak Christian hath attained to so much self-denial, that self is not predominant in him against the

love of God and his neighbour; but yet above all other sins, too great a measure of selfishness still remaineth in him. These words 'own, and mine, and self,' are too significant with him; every thing of his own is regarded inordinately, with partiality, and too much selfishness. A word against himself, or an injury to himself, is more to him than worse against his brother: he is too little mindful of the glory of God, and of the public good, and the souls of others; and even when he is mindful of his own soul, he is too regardless of the souls of many, that by prayer, or exhortation, or other means, he ought to help: as a small candle lighteth but a little way, and a small fire heateth not far off, so is his love so much confined, that it reacheth not far from him: he valueth his friends too much upon their respect to please himself, and loveth men too much, as they are partial for him; and too little upon the pure account of grace, and their love to Christ and serviceableness to the church. He easily overvalueth his own abilities, and is too confident of his own understanding, and apt to have too high conceits of any opinions that are his own; he is too apt to be tempted unto uncharitableness against those that cross him in his interest or way. He is apt to be too negligent in the work of God, when any self-interest doth stand against it; and too much to seek himself, his own esteem, or his own commodity, when he should devote himself to the good of souls, and give up himself to the work of God: though he is not like the hypocrite, that preferreth himself before the will of God and the common good, yet selfishness greatly stoppeth, interrupteth, and hindereth him in God's work; and any great danger, or loss, or shame, or other concernment of his own, doth seem a greater matter to him, and oftener turn him out of the way, than it will with a confirmed Christian. They were not all hypocrites that Paul speaketh of in that sad complaint, "For I have no man like-minded (to Timothy) who will naturally care for your state; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's;" (Phil. ii. 20, 21.) that is, they too much seek their own, and not entirely enough the things that are Christ's; which Timothy did naturally, as if he had been born to it; and grace had made the love of Christ, and the souls of men, and the good of others, as natural to him, as the love of himself. Alas! how loudly do their own distempers, and soul-miscarriages, and the di-

visions and calamities of the church, proclaim, that the weaker sort of Christians have yet too much selfishness, and that self-denial is lamentably imperfect in them.

3. But in the seeming Christian, selfishness is still the predominant principle ; he loveth God but for himself ; and he never had any higher end than self : all his religion, his opinions, his practice is animated by self-love, and governed by it, even by the love of carnal self. Self-esteem, self-conceitedness, self-love, self-willedness, self-seeking and self-saving are the constitution of his heart and life. He will be of that opinion, and way and party in religion, which selfishness directeth him to choose. He will go no further in religion than self-interest and safety will allow him to go. He can change his friend, and turn his love into hatred, and his praises into reproach, whenever self-interest shall require it. He can make himself believe, and labour to make others believe, that the wisest and holiest servants of God are erroneous, humorous, hypocrites, and insufferable, if they do but stand cross to his opinions and interest : for he judgeth of them, and loveth or hateth them, principally as they conform to his will and interest, or as they are against it. As the godly measure all persons and things, by the will and interest of God, so do all ungodly men esteem them as they stand in reference to themselves. When their factious interest required it, the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, could make themselves and others believe, that the Son of God himself was a breaker of the law, and an enemy to Cæsar, and a blasphemer, and unworthy to live on the earth ; and that Paul was a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among the people, and a ringleader of a sect, and a profaner of the temple ; (Acts xxiv. 5, 6.) and which of the prophets and apostles did they not persecute ? Because Christ's doctrine doth cross the interest of selfish men, therefore the world doth so generally rise up against it with indignation, even as a country will rise against an invading enemy : for he cometh to take away that which is dearest to them ; as it is said of Luther, that he meddled with the pope's crown, and the friars' bellies ; and therefore no wonder if they swarmed all about his ears. Selfishness is so general and deeply rooted, that (except with a few self-denying saints) self-love and self-interest rule the world. And if you would know how to please a graceless man, serve but his

carnal interest, and you have done it: be of his opinion (or take on you to be so,) applaud him, admire him, flatter him, obey him, promote his preferment, honour and wealth, be against his enemies; in a word, make him your God, and sell your soul to gain his favour, and so it is possible you may gain it.

XVI. 1. A Christian indeed hath so far mortified the flesh, and brought all his senses and appetites into subjection to sanctified reason, as that there is no great rebellion or perturbation in his mind: but a little matter, a holy thought, or a word from God, doth presently rebuke and quiet his inordinate desires. The flesh is as a well-broken and well-ridden horse, that goeth on his journey obediently and quietly, and not with striving, and chaffing, and vexatious resisting: though still flesh will be flesh, and will be weak, and will fight against the Spirit, so that we cannot do all the good we would; (Isa. v. 17. Rom. vii. 16, 17, &c.) yet in the confirmed Christian, it is so far tamed and subdued, that its rebellion is much less, and its resistance weaker, and more easily overcome: it causeth not any notable unevenness in his obedience, nor blemishes in his life; it is no other than consisteth with a readiness to obey the will of God. Gal. v. 24, 25. 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof: they run not as uncertainly; they fight not as one that beateth the air; but they keep under their bodies, and bring them into subjection, lest by any means they should be castaways. They put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;" Rom. xiii. 13, 14. As we see to a temperate man, how sweet and easy temperance is, when to a glutton, or drunkard, or riotous liver it is exceeding hard; so it is in all other points with a confirmed Christian. He hath so far crucified the flesh, that it is as dead to its former lusts; and so far mastered it, that it doth easily and quickly yield. And this maketh the life of such a Christian, not only pure, but very easy to him, in comparison of other men's: nay, more than this, he can use his sense (as he can use the world, the objects of sense,) in subserviency to faith and his salvation. His eye doth but open a window to his mind, to hold and admire the Creator in his work. His taste of the sweetness of the creatures is but a means, by which the sweeter love

of God doth pass directly to his heart. His sense of pleasure is but the passage of spiritual, holy pleasure to his mind. His sense of bitterness and pain is but the messenger to tell his heart of the bitterness and vexatiousness of sin. As God in the creation of us, made our senses but as the inlet and passage for himself into our minds, (even as he made all the creatures to represent him to us by this passage;) so grace doth restore our very senses (with the creature) to this their holy, original use; that the goodness of God, through the goodness of the creature, may pass to our hearts, and be the effect and end of all.

2. But, for the weak Christian, though he have mortified the deeds of the body by the Spirit, and live not after the flesh, but be freed from its captivity or reign; (Gal. v. 24. Rom. viii. 1. 7—13.) yet hath he such remnants of concupiscence and sensuality, as make it a far harder matter to him to live in temperance, and deny his appetite, and govern his senses, and restrain them from rebellion and excess: he is like a weak man upon an ill-ridden, headstrong horse, who hath much ado to keep his saddle and keep his way. He is more strongly inclined to fleshly lusts, or excess in meat, or drink, or sleep, or sports, or some fleshly pleasure, than the mortified, temperate person is, and therefore is oftener guilty of some excess; so that his life is a very tiresome conflict, and very uneasy to himself, because the less the flesh is mortified, the more able it is to raise perturbations, and to put faith and reason to a continual flight. And most of the scandals and blemishes of his life arise from hence, even the successes of the flesh against the Spirit; so that (though he live not in any gross or wilful sins;) yet in lesser measures of excess he is too frequently overtaken: how few be there that in meat and sleep do not usually exceed their measure? And they are easily tempted to libertine opinions, which indulge the flesh, having a weaker preservative against them than stronger Christians have; Matt. xvi. 22, 23. Gal. v. 13. i. 16. ii. 12—14. Col. ii. 11.

3. But the seeming Christian is really carnal. The flesh is the predominant part with him; and the interest of the flesh is the ruling interest. He washeth away the outward filth, and in hope of sâlvation, will be as religious as the flesh will give him leave; and will deny it in some smaller matters, and will serve it in a religious way, and not in so

gross and impudent a manner as the atheists and openly profane. But for all that he never conquered the flesh indeed; but seeketh its prosperity more than the pleasing of God and his salvation: and among prayers, and sermons, and holy conference, and books, yea, and formal fastings too, he is serving the flesh with so much the more dangerous impenitency, by how much the more his cloak of formality hindereth him from the discerning of his sin; many an one that is of unblemished reputation in religion, doth constantly serve his appetite in meat and drink, (though without any notable excess) and his fleshly mind in the pleasure of his dwelling, wealth, and accommodations, as much as some profane ones do, if not much more. And whenever it cometh to a parting trial, they will shew that the flesh was the ruling part, and will venture their souls to secure its interest; Luke xviii. 23. xiv. 33. Rom. viii. 5—7. 9. 13. Matt. xiii. 21, 22. Jude 19.

XVII. 1. Hence it followeth that a Christian indeed preferreth the means of his spiritual benefit and salvation incomparably before all corporal commodities and pleasures. He had rather dwell under the teaching and guidance of an able, experienced pastor, though it be cross to his prosperity and worldly gain, than to live under an ignorant or dead-hearted preacher, when it furthereth his trading or more accommodateth his flesh: (though yet he must not remove when God layeth any restraint upon him, by his duty to his family, or others:) he had rather if he be a servant, dwell in a family where he may do or receive most spiritual good, than in a carnal family, where he may have more ease, and better fare, and greater wages. If he be to marry, he had rather have one that hath wisdom and piety without wealth, than one that hath riches without wisdom and piety. He is more glad of an opportunity (in public or private) for the profit of his soul, than of a feast, or a good bargain, or an opportunity for some gain in worldly things; Matt. vi. 20. 33.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same mind in the main. He valueth mercies and helps for his soul, above those for his body. But it is with less zeal, and more indifference; and, therefore, is more easily and often drawn to the omitting of spiritual duties, and neglect of spiritual helps and mercies; and goeth to them with more averseness, and as driven by necessity, and is much less sensible

of his loss, when he misseth of any such spiritual helps ; Luke x. 41, 42. Heb. x. 25. Acts ii. 42. iv. 32.

3. But the seeming Christian being a real worldling, doth serve God and mammon ; and mammon with the first and best. He had rather miss a sermon, than a good bargain or commodity ; he had rather dwell where he may thrive best, or have most ease and pleasure, than where he may find the greatest helps for heaven ; he will be religious, but it must be with an easy, and a pleasant, and a merry religion, which may not be too niggardly with his flesh, nor use it too strictly : unless when one day's austerity may procure him an indulgence for his liberty all the week following. He will make his bargain with Christ so, as to be sure that he may not lose by him ; and he will not believe that God is pleased with that which is much displeasing to his flesh ; Rom. viii. 5—8. 13. Matt. xiii. 21, 22.

XVIII. 1. The Christian indeed is one that is crucified to the world, and the world is as a crucified thing to him ; Gal. vi. 14. He hath overcome the world by faith, and followeth Christ in the pursuit of it, to a perfect conquest ; 1 John v. 4, 5. 2 John xvi. 33. He has seen through all its glossing vanity, and foreseen what it will prove at last. He hath found that it cannot quiet conscience, nor reconcile the guilty soul to God, nor save it from his consuming wrath ; nor serve instead of God or heaven, of Christ or grace ; but will cast off its servants in their last extremity, naked and desolate, into remediless despair. And, therefore, he is resolutely at a point with all things under the sun. Let them take the world for their portion and felicity that will ; for his part, he accounteth all things in it dung and dross, in comparison of Christ and things eternal ; Phil. iii. 7, 8. 19, 20. All the preferments, and honours, and command, and wealth, and greatness of the world, do not seem to him a bait considerable, to make a wise man once question whether he should persevere in faithfulness to God, or to tempt him to commit one wilful sin. He would not speak, or own a lie, or approve the sin of another, for all that worldlings enjoy in their greatest prosperity while they live. He accounteth his peace with God and conscience, and his communion with Christ in the greatest poverty, to be incomparably better than all the pleasures and commodities of sin ; yea, the very reproach of Christ is better to

him than all the treasures of court or country; Heb. xi. 25, 26. Grace hath mortified and annihilated the world to him. And that which is dead and nothing, can do nothing with him against God and his soul. He looketh on it as a carrion, which dogs may love and fight for, but is unfit to be the food of man. He is going to the land of promise, and therefore will not contend for an inheritance in this howling wilderness. Whether he be high or low, rich or poor, are so small a part of his concernments, that he is almost indifferent to them, farther than as the interest of God and souls may accidentally be concerned in them. The world set against God, and heaven, and holiness, doth weigh no more in his estimation, than a feather that is put in the balance against a mountain, or all the world. He feeleth no great force in such temptations, as would draw him to win the world, and lose his soul. His eye and heart are where his God and treasure are, above; and worldly wealth and greatness are below him, even under his feet. He thinketh not things temporal worth the looking at, in comparison of things eternal; 2 Cor. iv. 18. He thinketh that their money and riches do deservedly perish with them, who think all the money in the world to be a thing comparable with grace; Acts viii. 20.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same judgment and resolution in the main; but yet the world retaineth a greater interest in his heart; it grieveth him more to lose it; it is a stronger temptation to him. To deny all the preferments, and honours, and riches of it, seemeth a greater matter to him; and he doth it with more striving, and less ease; and sometimes the respect of worldly things prevaieth with him in lesser matters, to wound his conscience, and maketh work for repentance; and such are so entangled in worldly cares, and prosperity tasteth so sweet with them, that grace even languisheth and falleth into a consumption, and almost into a swoon. So much do some such let out their hearts to the world, which they renounced, and scrape for it with so much care and eagerness, and contend with others about their commodities and rights, that they seem to the standers by to be as worldly as worldlings themselves are; and become a shame to their profession, and make ungodly persons say, 'Your godly professors are as covetous as any:' 2 Tim. iv. 10.

3. But seeming Christians are the servants of the world; when they have learnt to speak most hardly of it, it hath their hearts. Heaven, as I said before, is valued but as a reserve, when they know they can keep the world no longer. They have more sweet and pleasing thoughts and speeches of the world, than they have of God and the world to come. It hath most of their hearts when God is most preferred by their tongues. There it is that they are daily laying up their treasure, and there they must leave it at the parting hour, when they go naked out as they came naked in. The love of deceitful riches choaketh the word of God, and it withereth in them, and becometh unfruitful; Matt. xiii. 22. They go away sorrowful because of their beloved riches, when they should part with all for the hopes of heaven (Luke xviii. 23.), yea, though they are beggars, that never have a day's prosperity in the world, for all that, they love it better than heaven, and desire that which they cannot get, because they have not an eye-of faith, to see that better world which they neglect, and therefore take it for an uncertain thing. Nor are their carnal natures suitable to it, and therefore they mind it not; Rom. viii. 7. When a hypocrite is at the best, he is but a religious worldling; the world is nearer to his heart than God is, but "pure religion keepeth a man unspotted of the world;" James i. 27.

XIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that still seeth the end in all that he doth, and that is before him in his way; and looketh not at things as at the present they seem or relish to the flesh, or to short-sighted men; but as they will appear and be judged of at last. The first letter maketh not the word, nor the first word the sentence, without the last. Present time is quickly past, and therefore he less regardeth what things seem at present, than what they will prove to all eternity. When temptations offer him a bait to sin, with the present profit, or pleasure, or honour, he seeth at once the final shame; he seeth all worldly things as they are seen by a dying man, and as after the general conflagration they will be. He seeth the godly man in his adversity and patience, as entering into his Master's joys; he seeth the derided, vilified saint, as ready to stand justified by Christ at his right hand; and the liars of the malicious world as ready to cover themselves with shame. He seeth the wicked in the height of their prosperity, as ready to be cut down and

withered, and their pampered flesh to turn to dirt; and their filthy and malicious souls to stand condemned by Christ at his left hand; and to hear, "Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" Matt. xxv. 1 Pet. i. 24. James i. 10, 11. Psal. lxxiii. xxxvii. Therefore it is that he valueth grace, because he knoweth what it will be; and therefore it is that he flieth from sin, because he "knoweth the terrors of the Lord," and what it will prove to the sinner in the end; and how sinners themselves will curse the day that ever they did commit it; and wish when it is too late, that they had chosen the holiness and patience of the saints. And therefore it is that he pitieth rather than envieth the prosperous enemies of the church, because he foreseeeth what the "end will be of them that obey not the Gospel of Christ. And if the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. 2 Thess. i. 8—10. If the wicked unbelievers saw but the ending of all things as he doth, they would be all then of his mind and way. This putteth so much life into his prayers, his obedience, and patience, because he seeth the end in all; Deut. xxxii. 29. Prov. xix. 20. Isa. xlvi. 7.

2. And the weakest Christian doth the same in the main, so far as to turn his heart from things temporal to things eternal; and to resolve him in his main choice, and to conduct the course of his life towards heaven. But yet in particular actions he is often stopped in present things, and forgetfully loseth the sight of the end, and so is deluded and enticed into sin, for want of seeing that which should have preserved him. He is like one that travelleth over hills and vallies, who when he is upon the hills doth see the place that he is going to; but when he cometh into the vallies it is out of his sight. Too oft doth the weak Christian think of things as they appear at the present, with little sense of the change that is near. When he seeth the baits of sin, whether riches, or beauty, or meat and drink, or any thing that is pleasing to the senses, the remembrance of the end doth not so quickly and powerfully work, to prevent his deceived imaginations as it ought. And when poverty, or shame, or sufferings, or sickness are presented to him, the foresight of the end is not so speedy and powerful in clearing his judgment, and settling his resolution, and preventing his misapprehension and troubles as it ought. And

hence comes his oft mistakes and falls ; and herein consisteth much of that foolishness, which he confesseth when repentance bringeth him to himself ; 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

3. But the seeming Christian hath so dim and doubtful a foresight of the end, and it is so frequently out of his mind, that things present do carry away his heart, and have the greatest power and interest with him ; and are most regarded and sought after in this life. For he is purblind, not seeing afar off, as it is said, 2 Pet. i. 9. He wanteth that faith which is the " substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things unseen ;" Heb. xi. 1. Things promised in another world seem to him too uncertain, or too far off to be preferred before all the happiness of this world ; he is resolved to make his best of that which he hath in hand, and to prefer possession before such hopes. Little doth his heart perceive what a change is near, and how the face of all things will be altered ! How sin will look, and how the minds of sinners will be changed, and what all the riches, and pleasures, and honours of the world will appear at the latter end ! He foreseeth not the day when the slothful, and the worldly, and the fleshly, and the proud, and the enemies of godliness, shall all wish in vain, ' O that we had laid up our treasure in heaven, and laboured for the food that perisheth not, and had set less by all the vanities of the world, and had imitated the holiest and most mortified believers !' Though the hypocrite can himself foretel all this, and talk of it to others, yet his belief of it is so dead, and his sensuality so strong, that he liveth by sense, and not by that belief : and present things are practically preferred by him, and bear the sway, so that he needeth those warnings of God as well as the profane, " O that they were wise, that they understood this, and that they would consider their latter end ;" Deut. xxxii. 29. And he is one of the foolish ones (Matt. xxv. 8. 11.), who are seeking oil for their lamps when it is too late, and are crying out, " Lord, Lord, open to us," when the door is shut ; and will not know the time of their visitation, nor know effectually in this their day, the things which belong to their everlasting peace.

XX. 1. The Christian indeed is one that liveth upon God alone ; his faith is divine ; his love, and obedience, and confidence are divine ; his chiefest converse is divine ; his

hopes and comforts are divine. As it is God that he dependeth on, and trusteth to, and studieth to please above all the world, so it is God's approbation that he taketh up with for his justification and reward. He took him for his absolute Governor and Judge, and full felicity, in the day when he took him for his God. He can live in peace without man's approbation. If men are never acquainted with his sincerity, or virtues, or good deeds, it doth not discourage him nor hinder him from his holy course; he is, therefore, the same in secret as in public, because no place is secret from God. If men turn his greatest virtues or duties to his reproach, and slander him, and make him odious to men, and represent him as they did Paul, a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, and the ringleader of a sect, and make him as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, this changeth him not, for it changeth not his felicity, nor doth he miss of his reward; 1 Cor. iv. 9—14. Read the words in the text. Though he hath so much suspicion of his own understanding, and reverence for wiser men's, that he will be glad to learn, and will hear reason from any one; yet praise and dispraise are matters of very small regard with him; and as to himself, he counteth it but a very small thing to be judged of men, whether they justify or condemn him; because they are fallible, and have not the power of determining any thing to his great commodity or detriment; nor is it their judgment to which he stands or falls; 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. He hath a more dreadful, or comfortable judgment to prepare for. Man is of small account with him in comparison of God; Rom. viii. 33—36.

2. And though with the weakest true Christian it is so also as to the predominancy of God's esteem and interest in him, yet is his weakness daily visible in the culpable effects. Though God have the chiefest place in his esteem, yet man hath much more than his due. The thoughts and words of men seem to such, of far greater importance than they should. Praise and dispraise, favours and injuries, are things which affect their hearts too much; they bear not the contempts and wrongs of men with so quiet and satisfied a mind, as beseemeth those that live upon God. They have so small an experience of the comforts of God in Christ, that they are tasting the deeper of other delights, and spare them not so easily as they ought to do. God, without

friends, or house, or land, or maintenance, or esteem in the world, doth not fully quiet them; but there is a deal of peevish impatience left in their minds, though it doth not drive them away from God.

3. But the seeming Christian can better take up with the world alone than with God alone; God is not so much missed by him as the world; he always breaks with Christ, when it cometh to forsaking all; he is godly notionally and professedly, and therefore may easily say that God is his portion, and enough for those that put their trust in him; but his heart never consented truly to reduce these words to practice. When it comes to the trial, the praise or dispraise of man, and the prosperity or matters of the world, do signify more with him than the favour or displeasure of God, and can do more with him. Christ, and riches, and esteem, he could be content with; but he cannot away with a naked Christ alone. Therefore he is indeed a practical atheist, even when he seemeth most religious: for if he had ever taken God for his God indeed, he had certainly taken him as his portion, felicity, and all; and therefore as enough for him without the creature; Luke xviii. 23.

XXI. 1. For all this it followeth, that a Christian indeed hath with himself devoted all that he hath to God, and so all that he hath is sanctified: he is only in doubt oftentimes in particular cases, what God would have him do with himself and his estate; but never in doubt whether they are to be wholly employed for God, in obedience to his will, as far as he can know it; and therefore doth estimate every creature and condition, purely as it relateth unto God and life eternal. "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" is written upon all that he hath and doth: he taketh it as sent from God, and useth it as his Master's goods and talents; not chiefly for himself, but for his Master's ends and will. God appeareth to him in the creature, and is the life, and sweetness, and glory of the creature to him. His first question in every business he undertaketh, or every place or condition that he chooseth is, how it conduceth to the pleasing of God, and to his spiritual ends; "whether he eateth or drinketh, or whatever he doth, he doth all to the glory of God; 1 Cor. x. 31. The posy engraven on his heart is the name of GOD, with "OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM

ARE ALL THINGS, TO HIM BE GLORY FOR EVER, AMEN;" Rom. xi. 36. He liveth as a steward that useth not his own, though yet he have a sufficient reward for his fidelity; and he keepeth accounts both of his receivings and layings out, and reckoneth all to be worse than lost, which he findeth not expended on his Lord's account. For himself he asketh not that which is sweetest to the flesh, but that which is fittest to his end and work; and therefore desireth not riches (for himself) but his daily bread, and food convenient for him; and having food and raiment is therewith content, having taken godliness for his gain. He asketh not for superfluity, nor for any thing to consume it on his lusts, nor to become provision for his flesh, to satisfy the wills thereof. But as a runner in his race desireth not any provisions which may hinder him; and therefore "forgetting the things which are behind (the world which he hath turned his back upon,) he reacheth forth to the things which are before, (the crown of glory,) and presseth toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" not turning an eye to any thing that would stop him in his course. Thus while he is employed about things below, his mind and conversation are heavenly and divine, while all things are estimated and used purely for God and heaven; Luke xvi. 1, 2. 1 Pet. iv. 10. Tit. i. 15. Prov. xxx. 8. 1 Tim. vi. 6. 8. James iv. 3. Rom. xiii. 14. Phil. iii. 13—15.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have all this in desire, and be thus affected and resolved in the main, and liveth to God in the scope and course of his life, yet is too often looking aside, and valuing the creature carnally for itself; and oftentimes useth it for the pleasing of the flesh, and almost like a common man; his house, and land, and friends, and pleasures, are relished too carnally, as his own accommodations; and though he walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, yet he hath too much of the fleshly taste, and is greatly out in his accounts with God; and turneth many a thing from his Master's use, to the service of the flesh; and though he be not as the slothful, wicked servant, yet is it but little improvement that he maketh of his talent; Matt. xxv. 17. 26—28.

3. But the seeming Christian being carnal and selfish, while his notions and professions are spiritual and Divine,

and his selfish and fleshly interest being predominant, it must needs follow that he estimateth all things principally as they respect his fleshly interest, and useth them principally for his carnal self, even when in the manner he seemeth to use them most religiously, (as I have said before;) and so to the defiled nothing is pure; Rom. viii. 5—8. 13. Tit. i. 15.

XXII. 1. A Christian indeed hath a promptitude to obey, and a ready compliance of his will to the will of God. He hath not any great averseness and withdrawing, and doth not the good which he doth with much backwardness and striving against it; but as in a well-ordered watch or clock, the spring or poise doth easily set all the wheels agoing, and the first wheel easily moveth the rest; so is the will of a confirmed Christian presently moved, as soon as he knoweth the will of God. He stayeth not for other moving reasons; God's will is his reason. This is the habit of subjection and obedience, which makes him say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and "Lord, what wouldst thou have me do?" And "Teach me to do thy will, O God;" Psal. cxliii. 10. 1 Sam. iii. 10. Acts ix. 6. "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea thy law is within my heart;" Psal. xl. 8. The "law written in our heart," is nothing else but the knowledge of God's laws, with this habit or promptitude to obey them; the special fruit of the Spirit of grace.

2. But a weak Christian, though he love God's will and way, and be sincerely obedient to him, yet in many particulars, where his corruption contradicteth, hath a great deal of backwardness and striving of the flesh against the Spirit; and there needs many words, and many considerations and vehement persuasions, yea, and sharp afflictions, sometimes, to bring him to obey. And he is fain to drive on his backward heart, and hath frequent use for the rod and spur, and therefore is more slow and uneven in his obedience; Gal. v. 17.

3. The seeming Christian is forward in those easy, cheaper parts of duty, which serve to delude his carnal heart, and quiet him in a worldly life; but he is so backward to thorough sincere obedience in the most flesh-displeasing parts of duty, that he is never brought to it at all; but either he will fit his opinions in religion to his will, and will not believe them to be duties, or else he will do something like them in a superficial, formal way; but the thing itself he

will not do. For he is more obedient to his carnal mind and lusts than he is to God; Rom. viii. 6, 7. and forwarder much to sacrifice than obedience; Eccles. v. 1.

XXIII. 1. A Christian indeed doth daily delight himself in God, and findeth more solid content and pleasure in his commands and promises, than in all this world; his duties are sweet to him, and his hopes are sweeter. Religion is not a tiresome task to him; the yoke of Christ is easy to him, and his burden light, and his commandments are not grievous; Psal. xxxvii. 4. i. 2. xl. 8. xciv. 19. cxix. 16. 35. 47. 70. Matt. xi. 28, 29. John v. 3. That which others take as physic, for mere necessity, against their wills, he goeth to as a feast, with appetite and delight; he prayeth because he loveth to pray; and he thinks and speaks of holy things, because he loveth to do it. And hence it is that he is so much in holy duty, and so unwearied, because he loveth it, and taketh pleasure in it. As voluptuous persons are oft and long at their sports, or merry company, because they love them, and take pleasure in them: so are such Christians oft and long in holy exercises, because their hearts are set upon them as their recreation, and the way and means of their felicity. If it be a delight to a studious man to read those books which most clearly open the abstrusest mysteries of the sciences, or to converse with the most wise and learned men; and if it be a delight to men to converse with their dearest friends, or to hear from them and read their letters; no marvel if it be a delight to a Christian indeed, to read the Gospel mysteries of love, and to find there the promises of everlasting happiness, and to see in the face of Jesus Christ the clearest image of the Eternal Deity, and foresee the joys which he shall have for ever. He sticketh not in superficial formality, but breaking the shell doth feed upon the kernel. It is not bare external duty which he is taken up with, nor any mere creature that is his content; but it is God in creatures and ordinances that he seeketh and liveth upon; and therefore it is that religion is so pleasant to him. He would not change his heavenly delights which he findeth in the exercise of faith, and hope, and love to God, for all the carnal pleasures of this world; he had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents or palaces of wickedness. A day in God's court is better to him than a thousand in the court of the greatest

prince on earth. He is not a stranger to "the joy in the Holy Ghost," in which the kingdom of God doth in part consist; Rom. xiv. 17. Psal. lxxxiv. 10. 2. lxxv. 4. "In the multitude of his thoughts within him, the comforts of God do delight his soul;" Psal. xciv. 19. "His meditation of God is sweet, and he is glad in the Lord;" Psal. civ. 34. The freest and sweetest of his thoughts and words run out upon God and the matters of salvation. The word of God is sweeter to him than honey, and better than thousands of gold and silver; Psal. xix. 10. cxix. 72. 103. Prov. xvi. 24. And because "his delight is in the law of the Lord, therefore doth he meditate in it day and night;" Psal. i. 2. He seeth great reason for all those commands, "Rejoice evermore;" (1 Thess. v. 16.) "Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice;" (Psal. lxxviii. 3, 4. lxxiv. 10. xxxi. 1. xxxii. 11.) "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy all that are upright in heart." He is sorry for the poor, unhappy world, that have no better things than meat, and drink, and clothes, and house, and land, and money, and lust, and play, and domineering over others, to rejoice in: and heartily he wisheth that they had but a taste of the saint's delights, that it might make them spit out their luscious, unclean, unwholesome pleasures. One look to Christ, one promise of the Gospel, one serious thought of the life which he must live with God for ever, doth afford his soul more solid comfort than all the kingdoms of the earth can afford. And though he live not continually in these high delights, yet peace with God, and peace of conscience, and some delight in God and godliness, is the ordinary temperature of his soul, and higher degrees are given him in season for his cordials and his feasts.

2. But the weak Christian hath little of these spiritual delights; his ordinary temper is to apprehend that God and his ways are indeed most delectable; his very heart acknowledgeth that they are worthiest and fittest to be the matter of his delights: and if he could attain assurance of his especial interest in the love of God, and his part in Christ and life eternal, he would then rejoice in them indeed, and would be more glad than if he were Lord of all the world; but in the meantime, either his fears and doubts are damping his delights; or else (which is much worse) his appetite is dull

and God and holiness relish not with him half so sweetly, as they do with the confirmed Christian ; and he is too busy in tasting of fleshly and forbidden pleasures, which yet more deprave his appetite, and dull his desires to the things of God ; so that though in his estimation, choice, resolution and endeavour, he much preferreth God before the world ; yet as to any delightful sweetness in him, it is but little that he tasteth. He loveth God with a desiring love, and with a seeking love, but with very little of a delighting love. The remnant of corrupt and alien affections do weaken his affections to the things above ; and his infant measure of spiritual life, conjunct with many troublesome diseases, allow him very little of the joy of the Holy Ghost. Nay, perhaps he hath more grief, and fear, and doubts, and trouble, and perplexity of mind, than ever he had before he turned unto God, and perhaps he hath yet less pleasure in God, than he had before in sin and sensuality : because he had his sin in a state of fruition, but he hath God only in a seeking, hoping state ; he hath the best of sin, and all that ever it will afford him ; but he hath yet none of the full felicity which he expecteth in God : the fruition of him is yet but in the prospect of hope. His sensual, sinful life was in its maturity, and the object present in its most alluring state ; but his spiritual life of faith and love, is but yet in its weak beginnings, and the object absent from our sight : he is so busy at first in blowing up his little spark, not knowing whether the fire will kindle or go out, that he hath little of the use or pleasure, either of its light or warmth. Infants come crying into the world, and afterwards oftener cry than laugh ; their senses and reason are not yet perfected, or exercised to partake of the pleasures of life : and when they do come to know what a laughter is, they will laugh and cry almost in a breath. And those weak Christians that do come to taste of joy and pleasure in their religious state, it is commonly but as a flash of lightning, which leaveth them as dark as they were before. Sometimes in the beginning, upon their first apprehensions of the love of God in Christ, and of the pardon of their sins, and the privileges of their new condition, and the hopes of everlasting joy, their hearts are transported with unspeakable delight ; which is partly from the newness of the thing, and partly because God will let them have some encouraging taste, to draw them further,

and to convince them of the difference between the pleasures of sin, and the comforts of believing ; but these first rejoicings soon abate, and turn into a life of doubts, and fears, and griefs, and care, till they are grown to greater understanding, experience, and settledness in the things of God ; the root must grow greater and deeper, before it will bear a greater top. Those Christians that in the weakness of grace have frequent joys, are usually persons whose weak and passionate nature doth occasion it : (some women especially) that have strong fancies and passions are always passionately affected with whatsoever they apprehend. And these are like a ship that is tossed in a tempest ; that is one while lifted up as to the clouds, and presently cast down as into an infernal gulf : there one day in great joy, and quickly after in as great perplexity and sorrow, because their comforts or sorrows do follow their present feeling, or mutable apprehensions. But when they come to be confirmed Christians, they will keep a more constant judgment of themselves, and their own condition, and constantly see their grounds of comfort ; and when they cannot raise their souls to any high and passionate joys, they yet walk in a settled peace of soul, and in such competent comforts, as make their lives to be easy and delightful ; being well pleased and contented with the happy condition that Christ hath brought them to, and thankful that he left them not in those foolish, vain, pernicious pleasures, which were the way to endless sorrows.

3. But the seeming Christian seeketh and taketh up his chief contentment in some carnal thing : if he be so poor and miserable as to have nothing in possession that can much delight him, he will hope for better days hereafter, and that hope shall be his chief delight ; or if he have no such hope he will be without delight, and shew his love to the world and flesh, by mourning for that which he cannot have, as others do in rejoicing in what they do possess ; and he will, in such a desperate case of misery, be such to the world as the weak Christian is to God, who hath a mourning and desiring love, when he cannot reach to an enjoying and delighting love. His carnal mind most savoureth the things of the flesh, and therefore in them he findeth or seeketh his delights. Though yet he may have also a delight in his superficial kind of religion, his hearing, and reading, and praying, and in his ill-grounded hopes of life eternal : but all this

is but subordinate to his chief, earthly pleasure; "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching unto God." Isa. lviii. 2. And yet all this was subjected to a covetous, oppressing mind. "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended;" Matt. xiii. 20. Whereby it appeareth that his love to the word, was subjected to his love to the world.

Object. 'But there are two sorts of people that seem to have no fleshly delights at all, and yet are not in the way to salvation, viz. the Quakers and Behmenists that live in great austerity, and some of the religious orders of the Papists, who afflict their flesh.'

Answ. Some of them undergo their fastings and penance for a day, that they may sin the more quietly all the week after; and some of them proudly comfort themselves with the fancies and conceit of being and appearing more excellent in austerity than others; and all these take up with a carnal sort of pleasure. As proud persons are pleased with their own, or other's conceits of their beauty, or wit, or worldly greatness; so prouder persons are pleased with their own and other's conceits of their holiness. And "verily they have their reward;" Matt. vi. 2. But those of them that place their chief happiness in the love of God, and the eternal fruition of him in heaven, and seek this sincerely according to their helps and power, though they are misled into some superstitious errors, I hope I may number with those that are sincere; for all their errors and the ill effects of them.

XXIV. 1. A confirmed Christian doth ordinarily discern the sincerity of his own heart, and consequently hath some well-grounded assurance of the pardon of his sins, and of the favour of God, and of his everlasting happiness; and therefore no wonder if he live a peaceable and joyful life. For his grace is not so small as to be undiscernible, nor is it as a sleepy, buried seed or principle; but it is almost of continual act; and they that have a great degree of grace,

also keep it in lively exercise, do seldom doubt of it. Besides that they blot not their evidence by so many infirmities and falls. They are more in the light, and have more acquaintance with themselves, and more sense of the abundant love of God, and of his exceeding mercies, than weak Christians have; and therefore must needs have more assurance. They have boldness of access to the throne of grace, without unreverent contempt; Ephes. iii. 12. ii. 18. They have more of the spirit of adoption, and therefore more child-like confidence in God, and can call him Father with greater freedom and comfort than any others can; Rom. viii. 15, 16. Gal. iv. 6. Ephes. i. 6. 1 John v. 19, 20. "And we know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness:" &c.

2. But the weak Christian hath so small a degree of grace, and so much corruption, and his grace is so little in act, and his sin so much, that he seldom if ever attaineth to any well-grounded assurance, till he attain to a greater measure of grace. He differeth so little from the seeming Christian, that neither himself nor others do certainly discern the difference. When he searcheth after the truth of his faith, and love, and heavenly-mindedness, he findeth so much unbelief and averseness from God, and earthly-mindedness, that he cannot be certain which of them is predominant; and whether the interest of this world or that to come, do bear the sway. So that he is often in perplexities and fears, and more often in a dull uncertainty. And if he seem at any time to have assurance, it is usually but an ill-grounded persuasion of the truth; though it be true which he apprehendeth, when he taketh himself to be the child of God, yet it is upon unsound reasons that he judgeth so, or else upon sound reasons weakly and uncertainly discerned; so that there is commonly much of security, presumption, fancy, or mistake, in his greatest comforts. He is not yet in a condition fit for full assurance, till his love and obedience be more full.

3. But the seeming Christian cannot possibly in that estate, have either certainty; or good probability that he is a child of God, because it is not true: his seeming certainty is merely self-deceit, and his greatest confidence is but presumption, because the spirit of Christ is not within him, and therefore he is certainly none of his; Rom. viii. 9.

XXV. 1. The assurance of a confirmed Christian doth

increase his alacrity and diligence in duty, and is always seen in his more obedient, holy, fruitful life. The sense of the love and mercy of God, is as the rain upon the tender grass : he is never so fruitful, so thankful, so heavenly, as when he hath the greatest certainty that he shall be saved. The love of God is then shed abroad upon his heart by the Holy Ghost, which maketh him abound in love to God ; Rom. v. 1—4. He is the more stedfast, immoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, when he is most certain that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord ; 1 Cor. xv. 58.

2. But the weak Christian is unfit yet to manage assurance well, and therefore it is that it is not given him ; graces must grow proportionably together. If he be but confidently persuaded that he is justified and shall be saved, he is very apt to gather some consequence from it, that tendeth to security and to the remitting of his watchfulness and care. He is ready to be the bolder with sin, and stretch his conscience, and omit some duties, and take more fleshly liberty and ease, and think, ‘ Now I am a child of God, I am out of danger, I am sure I cannot totally fall away.’ And though his judgment conclude not, ‘ therefore I may venture further upon worldly, fleshly pleasures, and need not be so strict and diligent as I was,’ yet his heart and practice thus conclude. And he is most obedient when he is most in fear of hell, and he is worst in his heart and life, when he is most confident that all his danger is past ; Heb. iv. 1, 2. iii. 14—16.

3. But the seeming Christian, though he have no assurance, is hardened in his carnal state by his presumption. Had he but assurance to be saved without a holy life, he would cast off that very image of godliness which he yet retaineth. The conceit of his own sincerity and salvation, is that which deludeth and undoeth him. What sin would not gain, or pleasure draw him to commit, if he were but sure to be forgiven ? It is fear of hell that causeth that seeming religion which he hath ; and therefore if that fear be gone all is gone ; and all his piety, and diligence, and righteousness, is come to nought ; Gal. vi. 3. John viii. 39. 42. 44.

XXVI. 1. For all his assurance, a confirmed Christian is so well acquainted with his manifold imperfections, and daily failings, and great unworthiness, that he is very low and

vile in his own eyes ; and, therefore, can easily endure to be low and vile in the eyes of others. He hath a constant sense of the burden of his remaining sin ; especially he doth even abhor himself, when he findeth the averseness of his own heart to God, and how little he knoweth of him, and how little he loveth him, in comparison of what he ought ; and how little of heaven is upon his heart, and how strange and backward his thoughts are to the life to come. These are as fetters upon his soul. He daily groaneth under them as a captive, that he should be yet so carnal, and unable to shake off the remnant of his infirmities, as if he were sold under sin ; that is, in bondage to it ; Rom. vii. 14. He hateth himself more for the imperfections of his love and obedience to God, than hypocrites do for their reigning sin. And O how he longeth for the day of his deliverance ; Rom. vii. 24. He thinketh it no great injury for another to judge of him as he judgeth of himself, even to be less than the least of all God's mercies. He is more troubled for being overpraised and overvalued, than for being dispraised and vilified ; as thinking those that praise him are more mistaken, and lay the more dangerous snare for his soul. For he hath a special antipathy to pride ; and wondereth that any rational man can be so blind as not to see enough to humble him. For his own part (in the midst of all God's graces) he seeth in himself so much darkness, imperfection, corruption, and want of further grace, that he is loathsome and burdensome continually to himself. If you see him sad, or troubled, and ask him the cause, it is ten to one but it is himself that he complaineth of. The frowardest wife, the most undutiful child, the most disobedient servant, the most injurious neighbour, the most malicious enemy, is not half so great a trouble to him as he is to himself. He prayeth abundantly more against his own corruption, than against any of these. O could he but know and love God more, and be more in heaven, and willing to die, and freer from his own distempers, how easily could he bear all crosses, or injuries from others. He came to Christ's school as a little child (Matt. xviii. 3.), and still he is little in his own esteem ; and, therefore, disesteem and contempt from others, is no great matter with him. He thinks it can be no great wrong that is done against so poor a worm, and so unworthy a sinner as himself, (except as God or the souls of men may

be interested in the cause). He heartily approveth of the justice of God, in abhorring the proud; and hath learned that, Rom. xii. 10., "in honour preferring one another," and Gal. v. 26. "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."

2. But the remnant of pride is usually the most notable sin of the weak Christian; though it reigneth not, it foully blemisheth him: he would fain be taken for somebody in the church; he is ready to step up into a higher room, and to think himself wiser and better than he is. If he can but speak confidently of the principles of religion, and some few controversies which he hath made himself sick with, he is ready to think himself fit to be a preacher. He looketh through a magnifying-glass upon all his own performances and gifts; he loveth to be valued and praised; he can hardly bear to be slighted and dispraised, but is ready to think hardly of those that do it, if not to hate them in some degree: he loveth not to be found fault with, though it be necessary to his amendment; and though all this vice of pride be not so predominant in him, as to conquer his humility, yet doth it much obscure and interrupt it. And though he hate this his pride, and strive against it, and lamenteth it before God, yet still it is the sorest ulcer in his soul. And should it prevail and overcome him, he would be abhorred of God, and it would be his ruin; 2 Chron. xvi. 10. 12. Luke xxii. 24—26.

3. But in the hypocrite pride is the reigning sin. The praise of men is the air which he liveth in. He was never well acquainted with himself; and never felt aright the burden of his sins and wants; and, therefore, cannot bear contempt from others. Indeed, if his corrupt disposition turn most to the way of covetousness, tyranny, or lust, he can the easier bear contempt from others, as long as he hath his will at home; and he can spare their love, if he can be but feared and domineer. But still his pride is predominant; and when it affecteth not much the reputation of goodness, it affecteth the name of being rich or great. Sin may make him sordid, but grace doth not make him humble. Pride is the vital spirit of the corrupted state of man.

XXVII. 1. A confirmed Christian is acquainted with the deceitfulness of man's heart, and the particular corrupt inclinations that are in it; and especially with his own; and

he is acquainted with the wiles and methods of the tempter, and what are the materials which he maketh his baits of, and what is the manner in which he spreadeth his nets. He seeth always some snares before him; and what company soever he is in, or what business soever he is about, he walketh as among snares, which are visible to his sight; and it is part of his business continually to avoid them. He liveth in a continual watch and warfare. He can resist much stronger and more subtle temptations than the weak can do. He is always armed, and knoweth what are the special remedies against each particular snare and sin; Eph. vi. 2 Cor. ii. 11. Prov. i. 17. And he carrieth always his antidotes about him, as one that liveth in an infectious world, and in the midst of a froward, and perverse generation, from which he is charged to save himself; Phil. ii. 15. Acts ii. 40.

2. And the weak Christian is a soldier in the army of Christ, and is engaged in striving against sin (Heb. xii. 4.); and really taketh the flesh and world, as well as the devil, to be his enemies, and doth not only strive, but conquer in the main; but yet, alas, how poorly is he armed: how unskilful doth he manage his Christian armour: how often is he foiled and wounded: how many a temptation is he much unacquainted with: and how many a snare doth lie before him which he never did observe. And oft he is overcome in particular temptations, when he never perceiveth it, but thinks that he hath conquered.

3. But the hypocrite is fast ensnared when he glorieth most of his integrity, and is deceived by his own heart, and thinketh he is something, when he is nothing; Gal. vi. 3. Luke xviii. 20—23. When he is thanking God that he is not as other men, he is rejoicing in his dreams, and sacrificing for the victory which he never obtained; ver. 11. He is led by satan captive at his will, when he is boasting of his uprightness, and hath a beam of covetousness, or pride, or cruelty in his own eye, while he is reviling, or censuring another for the mote of some difference about a ceremony, or tolerable opinion. And usually such grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; Matt. vii. 3—5. 2 Tim. iii. 13.

XXVIII. 1. A Christian indeed, is one that hath deliberately counted what it may cost him to follow Christ, and to save his soul; and knowing that suffering with Christ is

the way to our reigning with him, he hath fully consented to the terms of Christ. He hath read Luke xiv. 26, 27. 33. and findeth that bearing the cross and forsaking all, is necessary to those that will be Christ's disciples. And accordingly in resolution he hath forsaken all; and looketh not for a smooth and easy way to heaven. He considereth that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution," and that "through many tribulations we must enter into heaven." And, therefore, he taketh it not for a strange or unexpected thing, if the fiery trial come upon him. He doth not wonder at the unrighteousness of the world, as if he expected reason or honesty, justice or truth, or mercy in the enemies of Christ, and the instruments of satan: he will not bring his action against the devil, for unjustly afflicting him: he will rather turn the other cheek to him that smiteth him, than he will hinder the good of any soul by seeking right; much less will he exercise unjust revenge. Though where government is exercised for truth and righteousness, he will not refuse to make use of the justice of it to punish iniquity, and discourage evil doers, yet this is for God and the common good, and for the suppression of sin, much more than for himself. Suffering doth not surprise him as a thing unlooked for: he hath been long preparing for it, and it findeth him garrisoned in the love of Christ. Yea, though his flesh will be as the flesh of others, sensible of the smart, and his mind is not senseless of the sufferings of his body, yet it is some pleasure and satisfaction to his soul, to find himself in the common way to heaven, and to see the predictions of Christ fulfilled, and to feel himself so far conform to Jesus Christ his head, and to trace the footsteps of a humbled Redeemer in the way before him. As "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, so doth the Christian arm himself with the same mind;" 1 Pet. iv. 1. "He rejoiceth that he is made partaker of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, he may also be partaker of the exceeding joy;" ver. 12, 13. Yea, he taketh the reproach of Christ for a treasure, yea, a greater treasure than riches, or men's favours can afford; Heb. xi. 25, 26. For he knoweth if he be reproached for the name or sake of Christ he is happy. For thereby he glorifieth that God, whom the enemy doth blaspheme, and so the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on him; 1 Pet. iv. 14. He liveth and suffereth as one

that from his heart believeth, that "they are blessed that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for great is their reward in heaven. And they are blessed when men shall revile them and persecute them, and say all manner of evil against them falsely for Christ's sake." In this they "rejoice and are exceeding glad," as knowing that herein they are "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise;" Matt. v. 10—12. Heb. vi. 12. If he be "offered upon the sacrifice and service of the faith of God's elect, he can rejoice in it as having greater good than evil; Phil. ii. 17. He can suffer the loss of all things, and account them dung, that he may "win Christ, and be found in him, and know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death;" Phil. iii. 8—10. Not out of surliness and pride doth he rejoice in sufferings, as some do, that they may carry the reputation of holy and undaunted men; and seem to be far better, and more constant than others. When pride maketh men suffer, they are partly the devil's martyrs though the cause be never so good. Though it is much more ordinary for pride to make men suffer rejoicingly in an ill cause than in a good; the devil having more power on his own ground than on Christ's. But it is the love of Christ, and the belief of the reward, and the humble neglect of the mortified flesh, and the contempt of the conquered world, that maketh the Christian suffer with so much joy; for he seeth that the Judge is at the door, and what torments the wicked are preparing for themselves; and that as certainly as there is a God that governeth the world, and that in righteousness, so certainly are his eyes upon the righteous, and his face is set against them that do evil (1 Pet. iii. 12), and though "sinners do evil a hundred times," and escape unpunished till their days be prolonged, yet vengeance will overtake them in due time, and it shall be well with them that fear the Lord; and that he keepeth all the tears of his servants till the reckoning day. And if "judgment begin at the house of God, and the righteous be saved through so much suffering and labour, what then shall be their end, that obey not the Gospel? and where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. Eccles. viii. 12. Prov. xi. 31. xiii. 6. Psal. lvi. 8. Deut. xxxii. 35. James v. 9.

2. And the weak Christian is one that will forsake all for

the sake of Christ, and suffer with him that he may be glorified with him; and will take his treasure in heaven for all; Luke xiv. 26, 33. xviii. 22. But he doth it not with that easiness, and alacrity, and joy, as the confirmed Christian doth. He hearkens more to the flesh, which saith, 'favour thyself.' Suffering is much more grievous to him; and sometimes he is wavering before he can bring himself fully to resolve, and let go all; Matt. xvi. 22.

3. But the seeming Christian looketh not for much suffering: he reads of it in the Gospel, but he saw no probability of it, and never believed that he should be called to it in any notable degree: he thought it probable that he might well escape it, and therefore, though he agreed verbally to take Christ for better and worse, and to follow him through sufferings, he thought he would never put him to it. And indeed his heart is secretly resolved, that he will never be undone in the world for Christ. Some reparable loss he may undergo, but he will not let go life and all. He will still be religious and hope for heaven; but he will make himself believe (and others if he can) that the truth lieth on the safer side, and not on the suffering side; and that it is but for their own conceits, and scrupulosity, that other men suffer who go beyond him; and that many good men are of his opinion, and therefore he may be good also in the same opinion (though he would never have been of that opinion, if it had not been necessary to his escaping of sufferings) what flourish soever he maketh for a time, "when persecution ariseth he is offended and withereth;" Matt. xiii. 21. 26. Unless he be so deeply engaged among the suffering party, that he cannot come off without perpetual reproach; and then perhaps pride will make him suffer more than the belief of heaven, or the love of Christ could do. And all this is, because his very belief is unrooted, and unsound, and he hath secretly at the heart a fear, that if he should suffer death for Christ, he should be a loser by him, and he would not reward him according to his promise, with everlasting life; Heb. iii. 12.

XXIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that followeth not Christ for company, nor holdeth his belief in trust upon the credit of any in the world, and therefore he would stick to Christ, if all that he knoweth or converseth with should forsake him. If the rulers of the earth should change their

religion, and turn against Christ, he would not forsake him. If the multitude of the people turn against him; nay, if the professors of godliness should fall off, yet would he stand his ground and be still the same. If the most learned men, and the pastors of the church should turn from Christ, he would not forsake him. Yea, if his nearest relations and friends, or even that minister that was the means of his conversion, should change their minds, and forsake the truth, and turn from Christ, or a holy life, he would yet be constant, and be still the same. And what Peter resolved on, he would truly practise: "Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet would not I be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee;" Matt. xxvi. 33. 35. And if he thought himself, as Elias did, left alone, yet would he not bow the knee to Baal; Rom. xi. 3. If he hear that this eminent minister falleth off one day, and the other another day, till all be gone, yet still the foundation of God standeth sure; he falleth not because he is built upon the rock; Matt. vii. 22, 23. His heart saith, 'Alas, whither shall I go, if I go from Christ? Is there any other that hath the word and Spirit of eternal life? Can I be a gainer if I lose my soul?' John vi. 67, 68. Matt. xvi. 26. He useth his teachers to bring him that light and evidence of truth, which dwelleth in him when they are gone: and, therefore, though they fall away, he falleth not with them.

2. And the weakest Christian believeth with a divine faith of his own, and dependeth more on God than man: but yet if he should be put to so great a trial, as to see all the pastors and Christians that he knoweth, change their minds, I know not what he would do: for though God will uphold all his own, whom he will save, yet he doth it by means and outward helps, together with his internal grace; and keepeth them from temptations, when he will deliver them from the evil; and therefore it is a doubt, whether there be not degrees of grace so weak, as would fail, in case the strongest temptations were permitted to assault them. A strong man can stand and go of himself, but an infant must be carried; and the lame and sick must have others to support them. The weak Christian falleth, if his teacher or most esteemed company fall: if they run into an error, sect

or schism, he keeps them company. He groweth cold, if he have not warming company: he forgetteth himself, and letteth loose his sense and passion, if he have not some to watch over him and warn him. No man should refuse the help of others, that can have it; and the best have need of all God's means: but the weak Christian needeth them much more than the strong, and is much less able to stand without them; Luke xxii. 32. Gal. ii. 11—14.

3. But the seeming Christian is built upon the sand, and therefore cannot stand a storm; he is a Christian more for company, or the credit of man, or the interest that others have in him, or the encouragement of the times, than from a firm belief and love of Christ, and therefore falleth when his props are gone; Matt. vii. 24.

XXX. 1. A strong Christian can digest the hardest truths, and the hardest works of Providence: he seeth more of the reason and evidence of truths than others; and he hath usually a more comprehensive knowledge, and can reconcile those truths which short-sighted persons suspect to be inconsistent and contradictory, and when he cannot reconcile them, he knoweth they are reconcilable: for he hath laid his foundation well, and then he reduceth other truths to that, and buildeth them on it: and so he doth by the hardest providences: whoever is high or low, whoever prospereth or is afflicted, however human affairs are carried, and all things seem to go against the church and cause of Christ, he knoweth yet that God is good to Israel, (Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2.) and that he is the "righteous Judge of all the earth;" and that the "righteous shall have dominion in the morning," and "it shall go well with them that fear the Lord;" for he goeth into the sanctuary, and foreseeth the end; Eccles. viii. 11—13. Psal. lxxiii. 17. cxv. 11. 13. xxxi. 19.

2. But the weak Christian is very hard put to it, when he meeteth with difficult passages of Scripture, and when he seeth it "go with the righteous according to the work of the wicked, and with the wicked according to the work of the righteous;" Eccles. viii. 14. Though he is not overturned by such difficulties, yet his foot is ready to slip, and he digesteth them with much perplexity and trouble.

3. But the seeming, unsettled Christian is often overcome by them, and turneth away from Christ, and saith, 'These are hard sayings, or hard providences, who can bear

them ;' John vi. 60. 66. And thus unbelief thenoe gathereth matter for its increase.

XXXI. 1. A Christian indeed is one that can exercise all God's graces in conjunction, and in their proper places and proportion, without setting one against another, or neglecting one while he is exercising another. He can be humbled without hindering his thankfulness and joy ; and he can be thankful and joyful without hindering his due humility : his knowledge doth not destroy, but quicken his zeal : his wisdom hindereth not, but furthereth his innocency : his faith is a help to his repentance, and his repentance to his faith : his love to himself doth not hinder, but help his love to others ; and his love to God is the end of both. He can mourn for the sins of the times, and the calamities of the church, yea, for his own sins and imperfections, and yet rejoice for the mercies which he hath in possession or in hope. He findeth that piety and charity are necessarily conjunct ; and every grace and duty is a help to all the rest. Yea, he can exercise his graces methodically, which is the comeliness and beauty of his heart and life ; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 16—21. 1 Pet. ii. 17.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have every grace, and his obedience is universal, yet can he hardly set himself to any duty, but it hindereth him from some other duty, through the narrowness and weakness of his mind. When he is humbling himself in confession of sin, he can scarce be lively in thankfulness for mercy : when he rejoiceth, it hindereth his humiliation ; he can hardly do one duty without omitting or hindering another : he is either all for joy or all for sorrow ; all for love or all for fear ; and cannot well do many things at once, but is apt to separate the truths and duties which God hath inseparably conjoined.

3. And for the seeming Christian, he exerciseth no grace in sincerity, nor is he universal in his obedience to God ; though he may have the image of every grace and duty.

XXXII. 1. A Christian indeed is more in getting and using his graces, than in inquiring whether he have them : he is very desirous to be assured that he is sincere, but he is more desirous to be so : and he knoweth that even assurance is got more by the exercise and increase of grace, than by bare inquiry whether we have it already : not that he is a neglecter of self-examination, but he oftener asketh,

'What shall I do to be saved?' than, 'How shall I know that I shall be saved?'

2. But the weak Christian hath more of self, and less of God in his solicitude: and though he be willing to obey the whole law of Christ, yet he is much more solicitous to know that he is out of danger, and shall be saved, than to be fully pleasing unto God; and therefore proportionably, he is more in inquiring by what marks he may know that he shall be saved, than by what means he may attain more holiness, and what diligence is necessary to his salvation.

3. But the seeming Christian is most careful how to prosper in the world, or please his flesh: and next, how he may be sure to escape damnation when he hath done; and least of all, how he may conform to Christ in holiness.

XXXIII. 1. A Christian indeed doth study duty more than events; and is more careful what he shall be towards God, than what he shall have from God in this life. He looketh to his own part more than unto God's, as knowing that it is he that is like to fail; but God will never fail of his part: he is much more suspicious of himself than of God; and when any thing goeth amiss, he blameth himself, and not God's providence: he knoweth that the hairs of his head are numbered, and that his Father knoweth what he needeth; and that God is infinitely wiser, and fitter to dispose of him, than he is to choose for himself, and that God loveth him better than he can love himself; and therefore he thankfully accepteth that easy, indulgent command, "Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you. Take no thought what you shall eat or drink, or wherewith you shall be clothed;" Heb. xii. 15. xiii. v. Job i. 11, 22. Matt. x. 30. vi. 25. 31, 32. 1 Pet. v. 7.

2. But alas! how guilty is the weak Christian of meddling with God's part of the work! How sinfully careful what will become of him, and of his family, and affairs, and of the church, as if he were afraid lest God would prove forgetful, unfaithful, or insufficient for his work! So imperfect is his trust in God.

3. And the seeming Christian really trusteth him not at all, for any thing that he can trust himself or the creature for; he will have two strings to his bow if he can; but it is in man that he placeth his greatest trust for any thing that man can do. Indeed to save his soul he knoweth none but

God is to be trusted, and therefore his life is still preferred before his soul; and consequently man whom he trusteth most with his life and prosperity, is really trusted before God, however God may have the name; Jer. xvii. 5. 7. Psal. xxxiv. 8. xx. 7. xxxiv. 22. xxxvii. 3.

XXXIV. 1. A Christian indeed is much more studious of his own duty towards others, than of theirs to him; he is much more fearful of doing wrong, than of receiving wrong: he is more troubled if he say ill of others, than if others speak ill of him: he had far rather be slandered himself, than slander others; or be censured himself, than censure others; or be unjustly hurt himself, than unjustly hurt another; or to be put out of his own possessions or right, than to put another out of his; he is oftener and sharper in judging and reprovng himself than others; he falleth out with himself more frequently than with others; and is more troubled with himself than with all the world besides; he taketh himself for his greatest enemy, and knoweth that his danger is most at home; and that if he can escape but from himself, no one in earth or hell can undo him; he is more careful of his duty to his prince, his parents, his pastor, or his master, than of theirs to him; he is much more unwilling to be disobedient to them in any lawful thing, or to dishonour them, than to be oppressed, or unjustly afflicted, or abused by them. And all this is, because he knoweth that sin is worse than present suffering; and that he is not to answer for other men's sins, but for his own; nor shall he be condemned for the sins of any but himself; and that many millions are condemned for wronging others, but no one for being wronged by others; 1 Pet. iv. 12—16. Matt. v. 10—12. 1 Pet. ii. 13. 15—17.

2. And the weak Christian is of the same mind in the main; but with so much imperfection, that he is much more frequent in censuring others, and complaining of their wrongs, and finding fault with them, and aggravating all that is said or done against himself, when he is hardly made so sensible of as great miscarriages in himself, as having much more uncharitableness, partiality, and selfishness, than a confirmed Christian hath. There are few things which weakness of grace doth more ordinarily appear in, than this partiality and selfishness, in judging of the faults or duties of others, and of his own. How apt are (not only hypocrites,

but) weak Christians, to aggravate all that is done against them; and to extenuate or justify all that they do against another. O what a noise they make of it, if they think that any one hath wronged them, defamed them, disparaged them, or encroached on their right. If God himself be blasphemed or abused, they can more patiently bear it, and make not so great a matter of it. Who heareth of such angry complaints on God's behalf, as on men's own? Of such passionate invectives, such sharp prosecutions, against those that wrong both God and men's souls, as against those that wrong a selfish person. (And usually every man seemeth to wrong him, who keepeth from him any thing which he would have, or saith any thing of him which is displeasing to him.) Go to the assizes and courts of justice; look into the prisons, and inquire whether it be zeal for God, or for men's selves, which is the plaintiff and prosecutor? and whether it be for wronging God or them, that all the stir is made? Men are ready to say, God is sufficient to right himself. As if he were not the Original and the End of laws and government, and magistrates were not his officers, to promote obedience to him in the world.

At this time how universal is men's complaint against their governors! how common are the cries of the poor and sufferers, of the greatness of their burdens, miseries, and wants. But how few lament the sins against government, which this land hath been sadly guilty of! The pastors complain of the people's contempt: the people complain of the pastor's insufficiency and lives. The master complaineth how hard it is to get good servants, that will mind their business and profit as if it were their own: servants complaining of their masters for over labouring them or using them too hardly. Landlords say that their tenants cheat them: and tenants say that their landlords oppress and grind them. But if you were Christians indeed, the most common and sad complaints would be against yourselves. 'I am not so good a ruler, so peaceable a subject, so good a landlord, so good a tenant, so good a master, so good a servant, as I ought to be.' Your ruler's sin, your subject's sin, your landlord's sin, your tenant's sin, your master's sin, your servant's sin, shall not be charged upon you in judgment, nor condemn you, but your own sin. How much more, therefore, should you complain of your own, than of theirs?

3. As for the seeming Christian, I have told you already, that selfishness is his nature and predominant constitution; and according to self-interest, he judgeth of almost all things; of the faults and duties of others and himself. And therefore no man seemeth honest or innocent to him who displeaseth him, and is against his worldly interest. Cross him about mine and thine, and he will beknave the honestest man alive, and call his ancient friend his enemy. But of his dealings with them, he is not so scrupulous, nor so censorious of himself.

XXXV. 1. A Christian indeed is much taken up in the government of his thoughts, and hath them so much ordinarily in obedience, that God and his service, and the matters of his salvation have that precedency in them, and his eye is fixed on his end and duty; and his thoughts refuse not to serve him for any work of God to which he calleth them. He suffereth them not to be the inlets or agents for pride, or lust, or envy, or voluptuousness, or to contrive iniquity: but if any such sparks from hell are cast into his thoughts, he presently laboureth to extinguish them. If they intrude, he letteth them not lodge or dwell there. And though he cannot keep out all disorder or vanity, or inordinate delights, yet is it his endeavour, and he leaveth not his heart in any thing to itself.

2. The weak Christian also maketh conscience of his thoughts, and alloweth them not to be the inlets or servants of any reigning sin. But alas, how imperfectly doth he govern them! what a deal of vanity and confusion is in them! how carelessly doth he watch them! how remissly doth he rebuke them, excite them, and command them! how oft are they defiled with impurity and uncharitableness! and how little doth he repent of this, or endeavour to reform it! And little serviceable are his thoughts, to any high and heavenly work, in comparison of the confirmed Christian.

3. And the seeming Christian is very little employed about his thoughts, but leaveth them to be the servants of his pride, and worldliness, or sensuality, or some reigning sin; Psal. x. 4. Matt. xv. 19. 1 Cor. iii. 20. Isa. lv. 7. Jer. iv. 14. vi. 19.

XXXVI. 1. A Christian indeed is much employed in the government of his passions; and hath so far mastered them, as that they prevail not to prevent his judgment, nor to dis-

compose his heart so far as to interrupt much his communion with God, nor to ensnare his heart to any creature, nor to breed any fixed uncharitableness or malice in him, nor to cause his tongue to speak things injurious to God or man, to curse, or swear, or rail, or lie; nor yet to cause him to hurt and injure any in his heart. But when passion would be inordinate, either in delights or desires, or anger, or grief, or fear, or hope, he flieth to his helps to suppress and govern them. (Though fear is more out of man's power than the rest, and therefore ordinarily hath less of sin.) He knoweth that Christ hath blessed the meek (Matt. v. 5.), and bids us learn of "him to be meek and lowly; Matt. xi. 28, 29. And that a "meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price;" 1 Pet. iii. 4. It is, therefore, his care and course to give place to wrath when others are angry; Rom. xii. 18, 19. And "if it be possible, as much as in him lieth, to live peaceably with all men," (Heb. xii. 14.); yea, to follow peace when it flieth from him; and not, when he is reviled, to revile again, nor to threaten or revenge himself on them that injure him; 1 Pet. ii. 21—24. Reason and charity hold the reins, and passion is kept under; yea, it is used holily for God; Ephes. iv. 26. Slow to anger he is in his own cause, and watchful over his anger even in God's cause; Prov. xv. 8, xvi. 32 Ephes. iv. 31. Col. iii. 8.

2. But the weak Christian doth greatly shew his weakness in his unruly passions, (if he have a temper of body disposed to passion): they are oft rising, and not easily kept under; yea, and too often prevail for such unseemly words, as maketh him become a dishonour to his profession. Oft he resolveth, and promiseth, and prayeth for help, and yet the next provocation sheweth how little grace he hath to hold the reins. And his passionate desires, and delights, and love, and sorrows, are oft as unruly as his anger, to the further weakening of his soul. They are like ague fits, that leave the health impaired.

3. And the seeming Christian hath much less power over those passions, which must subserve his carnal mind. For anger it dependeth much upon the temperature of the body; and if that incline him not strongly to it, his credit, or common discretion may suppress it: unless you touch his chiefest carnal interest, and then he will not only be angry, but cruel, malicious, and revengeful. But his carnal

love, and desire, and delight, which are placed upon that pleasure, or profit, or honour, which is his idol, are indeed the reigning passions in him. And his grief, and fear, and anger, are but the servants unto these; Acts xxiv. 26, 27.

XXXVII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that keepeth a constant government of his tongue; he knoweth how much duty or sin it will be the instrument of. According to his ability and opportunity he useth it to the service and honour of his Creator. In speaking of his excellencies, his works, and word; inquiring after the knowledge of him and his will; instructing others, and pleading for the truth and ways of God, and rebuking the impiety and iniquities of the world, as his place and calling doth allow him. He bridleth his tongue from uttering vanity, filthiness, ribaldry, and foolish and uncomely talk and jests; from rash and irreverent talk of God, and taking of his name in vain; from the venting of undigested and uncertain doctrines which may prove erroneous and perilous to men's souls; from speaking imprudently, unhandsomely, or unseasonably about holy things, so as to expose them to contempt and scorn; from lying, censuring others without a warrantable ground and call; from backbiting, slandering, false-accusing, railing and reviling; malicious, envious, injurious speech, which tendeth to extinguish the love of the hearers to those he speaketh of; from proud and boasting speeches of himself, much more from swearing, cursing, and blasphemous speech, and opposition to the truths and holy ways of God, or opprobrious speeches, or derision of his servants. And in the government of his tongue, he always beginneth with his heart, that he may understand and love the good which he speaketh of, and may hate the evil which his tongue forbeareth; and not hypocritically to force his tongue against or without his heart. His tongue doth not run before his heart, but is ruled by it; Ephes. iv. 15. 29. 31. v. 3, 4, 6. Psal. xxxvii. 30. xv. 2, 3. Prov. xvi. 13. x. 20. xxi. 23. xviii. 21. xv. 2. 4. Psal. 34. 13. Prov. xxv. 15. 23. xxviii. 23. Matt. xii. 31, 32. 34.

2. But the weak Christian, though his tongue be sincerely subject to the laws of God, yet frequently miscarrieth and blemisheth his soul by the words of his lips, being much oftener than the confirmed Christian overtaken with words of vanity, meddling, folly, imprudence, uncharitableness, wrath,

boasting, venting uncertain or erroneous opinions, &c. so that the unruliness of his tongue is the trouble of his heart, if not also of the family, and all about him.

3. The seeming Christian useth his tongue in the service of his carnal ends, and therefore alloweth it so much unjustice, uncharitableness, falsehood, and other sins, as his carnal interest and designs require; but the rest perhaps he may suppress, especially if natural sobriety, good education and prudence do assist him; and his tongue is always better than his heart; Prov. x. 32. xix. 5. 9. Psal. l. 20. xii. 3. cxliv. 8. cxx. 2, 3. Prov. xxi. 6. 23.

XXXVIII. 1. The religious discourse of a confirmed Christian is most about the greatest and most necessary matters: heart-work and heaven-work are the usual employment of his tongue and thoughts; unprofitable controversies, and hurtful wranglings he abhorreth; and profitable controversies he manageth sparingly, seasonably, charitably, peaceably, and with caution and sobriety, as knowing that the servant of the Lord must not strive, and that strife of words perverteth the hearers, and hindereth edifying; 1 Tim. vi. 4—6. iv. 7, 8. 2 Tim. ii. 14—17. 24, 25. His ordinary discourse is about the glorious excellencies, attributes, relations, and works of God; and the mystery of redemption, the person, office, covenant, and grace of Christ; the renewing, illuminating, sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost; the mercies of this life, and that to come; the duty of man to God as his Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator; the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart; the methods of the tempter; the danger of particular temptations; and the means of our escape, and of our growth in grace; and how to be profitable to others, and especially to the church. And if he be called to open any truth which others understand not, he doth it not proudly, to set up himself, as master of a sect, or to draw disciples after him, nor make divisions about it in the church; but soberly, to the edification of the weak. And though he be ready to defend the truth against perverse gainsayers in due season, yet doth he not turn his ordinary edifying discourse into disputes, or talk of controversies; nor hath such a proud, pugnacious soul, as to assault every one that he thinks erroneous, as a man that taketh himself for the great champion of the truth.

2. But the weak Christian hath a more unfruitful, wandering tongue, and his religious discourse is most about his opinions or party, or some external thing; as which is the best preacher, or person, or book. Or if he talk of any text of Scripture, or doctrine of religion, it is much of the outside of it; and his discourse is less feeling, lively, and experimental. Yea, many a time he hindereth the more edifying, savoury discourse of others, by such religious discourse as is imprudent, impertinent, or turneth them away from the heart and life of the matter in hand. But especially his opinions, and distinct manner of worship, are the chief of his discourse.

3. And for the seeming Christian, though he can affectedly force his tongue to talk of any subject in religion, especially that which he thinks will most honour him in the esteem of the hearers; yet when he speaketh according to the inclination of his heart, his discourse is first about his fleshly interest and concerns, and next to that of the mere externals of religion, as controversies, parties, and the several modes of worship.

XXXIX. 1. A Christian indeed is one that so liveth upon the great substantial matters of religion, as yet not willingly to commit the smallest sin, nor to own the smallest falsehood, nor to renounce or betray the smallest holy truth or duty, for any price that man can offer him. The works of repentance, faith, and love, are his daily business, which take up his greatest care and diligence. Whatever opinions or controversies are afoot, his work is still the same; whatever changes come, his religion changeth not; he placeth not the kingdom of God in meats and drinks, and circumstances and ceremonies, either being for them or against them, but in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And he that in these things serveth Christ, as he is acceptable to God, so is he approved by such a Christian as this, however factious persons may revile him; Rom. xiv. 17, 18. 1—5. 10. The strong Christian can "bear the infirmities of the weak," and not take the course that most pleaseth himself, but that which "pleaseth his neighbour for his good to edification;" Rom. xv. 1—3. The essentials of religion, faith, and love, and obedience, are as bread and drink, the substance of his food. These he meditateth

on, and these he practiseth, and according to these he esteemeth of others.

But yet no price can seem sufficient to him, to buy his innocency; nor will he wilfully sin, and say, it is a little one, nor "do evil that good may come by it;" nor offer to God the sacrifice of disobedient fools, and then say, 'I knew not that I did evil;' for he knoweth that God will rather have obedience than sacrifice, and that "disobedience is as the sin of witchcraft;" and "he that breaketh one of the least commands, and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of God." And he that teacheth men to sin by the example of his own practice, can little expect to turn them from sin, by his better instructions and exhortations. He that will deliberately sin in a small matter, doth set but a small price on the favour of God and his salvation. Wilful disobedience is odious to God, how small soever the matter be about which it is committed. Who can expect that he should stick at any sin, when his temptation is great, who will considerably commit the least; especially if he will approve and justify it? Therefore the sound Christian will rather forsake his riches, his liberty, his reputation, his friends, and his country, than his conscience; and rather lay down liberty, and life itself, than choose to sin against his God, as knowing that never man gained by his sin; Rom. iii. 8. Eccles. v. 2. 1 Sam. xv. 15. 21—23. Matt. v. 19. The sin that Saul was rejected for seemed but a little thing; nor the sin that Uzzah was slain for; and the service of God, even his sacrifice and his ark, were the pretence for both. The sin of the Bethshemites, of Achan, of Gehazi, of Ananias and Sapphira, which had grievous punishments, would seem but little things to us. And it is a great aggravation of our sin to be chosen, deliberate, justified, and fathered upon God; and to pretend that we do it for his service, for the worshipping of him, or the doing good to others, as if God would own and bless sinful means, or needed a lie to his service or glory: when he hateth all the workers of iniquity (Psal. v. 5.), and requireth only the sacrifices of righteousness; Psal. iv. 5. He abhorreth sacrifice from polluted hands; they are to him as the offering a dog; and he will ask who hath required this at your hand. See Psal. l. 8—14. Isa. i. 9—12, &c. lviii. 1—4, &c. Jer. vi. 19, 20. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord;"

Prov. xv. 8. xxi. 27. It is not pleasing to him; "all that eat thereof shall be polluted;" Hosea ix. 4. See Isa lxi. 1—6. The preaching, the praying, the sacraments of wilful sinners, especially when they choose sin as necessary to his service, are a scorn and mockery put upon the most Holy One: as if your servant should set dung and carrion before you on your table for your food; such offer Christ vinegar and gall to drink.

2. In all this the weakest Christian that is sincere, is of the same mind, saving that in his ordinary course, he useth to place too much of his religion in controversies, and parties, and modes, and ceremonies, (whether being for them or against them,) and allow too great a proportion in his thoughts, and speech, and zeal, and practice; and hindereth the growth of his grace, by living upon less edifying things, and turning too much from the more substantial nutriment.

3. And the seeming Christians are here of different ways. One sort of them place almost all their religion in Pharisaical observation of little, external, ceremonial matters; as their washings, and fastings, and tithings, and formalities, and the tradition of the elders; or in their several opinions, and ways, and parties, which they call, 'being of the true church;' as if their sect were all the church. But living to God in faith and love, and in a heavenly conversation, and worshipping him in spirit and truth, they are utterly unacquainted with. The other sort are truly void of these essential parts of Christianity, in the life and power, as well as the former. But yet being secretly resolved to take up no more of Christianity than will consist with their worldly prosperity and ends, when any sin seemeth necessary to their preferment or safety in the world, their way is to pretend their high esteem of greater matters, for the swallowing of such a sin as an inconsiderable thing. And then they extol those larger souls that live not upon circumstantial, but upon the great and common truths and duties, and pity those men of narrow principles and spirits, who by unnecessary scrupulosity make sin of that which is no sin, and expose themselves to needless trouble. And they would make themselves and others believe that it is their excellency and wisdom, to be above such trifling scruples. And all is because they never took God and heaven for their all, and therefore are resolved never to lose all for the hopes of hea-

ven; and therefore to do that, whatever it be, which their worldly interest shall require, and not to be of any religion that will undo them.

And three great pretences are effectual means in this their deceit. One is, because indeed there are a sort of persons that tithe mint and cummin, while they pass by the greatest matters of the law, and that are causelessly scrupulous, and make that to be sin which indeed is no sin: and when such a scrupulous people are noted by their weakness, and under dishonour among wiser men, the hypocrite hath a very plausible pretence for his hypocrisy, in seeming only to avoid this ignorant scrupulosity, and taking all for such who judge not his sin to be a thing indifferent.

Another great shelter to the credit and conscience of this hypocrite, is the charity of the best, sincerest Christians, who always judge rigidly of themselves, and gently of others. They would rather die than wilfully choose to commit the smallest sin themselves; but if they see another commit it, they judge as favourably of it as the case will bear, and hope that he did it not knowingly or wilfully; for they are bound to hope the best till the worst be evident. This being the upright Christian's case, the hypocrite knoweth that he shall still have a place in the esteem and love of those charitable Christians; (whose integrity and moderation, maketh their judgments most valuable:) and then for the judgment of God, he will venture on it; and for the censures of weaker persons, who themselves are censured by the best for their censoriousness, he can easily bear them.

And another covert for the hypocrite in this case, is the different judgments of learned and religious men, who make a controversy of the matter. And what duty or sin is there that is not become a controversy? Yea, and among men otherwise well esteemed of, (except in the essentials of religion). And if once it be a controversy, whether it be a sin or not, the hypocrite can say, 'I am of the judgment of such and such good and learned men; they are very judicious, excellent persons; and we must not judge one another in controverted cases; though we differ in judgment, we must not differ in affection.' And thus because he hath a shelter for his reputation from the censures of men, by the countenance of such as accompany him in his sin, he is as quiet as if he were secured from the censures of the Almighty.

XL. 1. A Christian indeed is one that highly valueth time; he abhorreth idleness, and all diversions which would rob him of his time, and hinder him from his work. He knoweth how much work he hath to do, and of what unspeakable consequence to his soul, (if not also to others). He knoweth that he hath a soul to save or lose; a heaven to win; a hell to escape; a death and judgment to prepare for; many a sin to mortify, and many graces to get, and exercise, and increase; and many enemies and temptations to overcome; and that he shall never have more time of trial; but what is now undone, must be undone for ever. He knoweth how short, and hasty time is, and also how uncertain; and how short many hundred years is to prepare for an everlasting state, if all were spent in greatest diligence: and therefore he wondereth at those miserable souls, that have time to spare, and waste in those fooleries which they call pastimes, even in stage-plays, cards, and dice, and long and tedious feasting, delights, compliments, idleness, and overlong or needless visits or recreations. He marvelleth at the distraction or sottishness of those persons, that can play, and prate, and loiter, and feast away precious hours, as if their poor, unprepared souls had nothing to do, while they stand at the very brink of a dreadful eternity; and are so fearfully unready as they are. He taketh that person who would cheat him of his time, by any of these forenamed baits, to be worse to him than a thief that would take his purse from him by the highway. O precious time! how highly doth he value it, when he thinks of his everlasting state, and thinks what haste his death is making, and what reckoning he must make for every moment; what abundance of work hath he for every hour, which he is grieved that he cannot do! He hath a calling to follow, and he hath a heart to search, and watch, and study; and a God to seek and faithfully serve; and many to do good to; and abundance of particular duties to perform in order to every one of these. But, alas! time doth make such haste away, that many things are left undone, and he is afraid lest death will find him very much behindhand: and therefore he is up and doing, as one that hath use for every minute; and worketh while it is day, because he knoweth that the night is coming when none can work; John ix. 4. Redeeming time is much of his wisdom and his work; Eph. v. 16. Col. iv. 5.

He had rather labour in the house of correction, than live the swinish life of idle and voluptuous gentlemen, or beggars, that live to no higher end, than to live, or to please their flesh ; or to live as worldlings, that lose all their lives in the service of a perishing world. He knoweth how precious time will be ere long, in the eyes of those that now make light of it, and trifle it away as a contemned thing, as if they had too much.

2. The weak Christian is of the same mind in the main : But when it cometh to particular practice, he is like a weak or weary traveller, that goeth but slowly, and maketh many a stop. Though his face is still heavenwards, he goeth but a little way in a day : he is too easily tempted to idle, or talk, or feast, or play away an hour unlawfully, so it be not his ordinary course, and he do it but seldom. He taketh not the loss of an hour for so great a loss as the confirmed Christian doth : he could sooner be persuaded to live (though not an idle and unprofitable, yet) an easier, less profitable life. The world and the flesh have far more of his hours, than they ought to have ; though his weakness tell him that he hath most need of diligence.

3. But the time of a seeming Christian is most at the service of his fleshly interest ; and for that it is principally employed. And for that he can redeem it, and grudge if it be lost. But as he liveth not to God, so he cannot redeem his time for God. He loseth it even when he seemeth to employ it best ; when he is praying, or otherwise worshipping God, and doing that good which feedeth his false hopes, he is not redeeming his time in all this. While he is sleeping in security, and deluding his soul with a few formal words, and an image of religion, and his time passeth on, and he is hurried away to the dreadful day, and his damnation slumbereth not ; 2 Pet. ii. 3. Prov. xx. 4. Matt. xxv. 6—8.

XLI. 1. A Christian indeed is one whose very heart is set upon doing good : as one that is made to be profitable to others, according to his ability and place ; even as the sun is made to shine upon the world ; he could not be content to live idly, or to labour unprofitably, or to get never so much to himself, unless he some way contributed to the good of others. Not that he grudgeth at the smallness of his talents, and lowness or obscurity of his place, for he knoweth that God may dispose his creatures and talents as

he please ; and that where much is given, much is required : Matt. xxv. Luke xii. 48. xix. 23. But what his Lord hath trusted him with, he is loath to hide, and willing to improve to his Master's use. He is so far from thinking that God is beholden to him for his good works, that he taketh it for one of his greatest mercies in the world, that God will use him in doing any good ; and he would take it for a very great suffering to be deprived of such opportunities, or turned out of service, or called to less of that kind of duty. If he were a physician, and denied liberty to practise, or a minister, and denied liberty to preach, it would far more trouble him that he is hindered from doing good, than that he is deprived of any profits, or honours to himself. He doth not only comfort himself with foresight of the reward, but in the very doing of good he findeth so much pleasure, as maketh him think it the most delightful life in the world : and he looketh for most of his receivings from God, in a way of duty ; John v. 29. Gal. vi. 10. Heb. xiii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 11.

2. But the weak Christian, though he have the same disposition, is far less profitable to the world : he is more for himself, and less able to do good to others : he wanteth either parts, or prudence, or zeal, or strength. Yea, he is oft like the infants, and sick persons of a family, that are not helpful, but troublesome to the rest. They find work for the stronger Christians to bear their infirmities, and watch them, and support and help them : Indeed, as an infant is a comfort to the mother, through the power of her own love, even when she endureth the trouble of its crying and uncleanness ; so weak Christians are a comfort to charitable ministers and people ; we are glad that they are alive ; but sadded often by their distempers ; Rom. xiv. 1. xv. 12.

3. The seeming Christian liveth to himself, and all his good works are done but for himself, to keep up his credit, or quiet his guilty conscience, and deceive himself with the false hopes of a reward, for that which his falsehoodness maketh to be his sin. If he be a man of learning and good parts, he may be very serviceable to the church ; but the thanks of that is due to God, and little to him, who seeketh himself more than God, or the good of others, in all that he doth ; Matt. xxv. 24 - 26.

XLII. 1. A Christian indeed, doth truly love his neighbour as himself : he is not all for his own commodity : his

neighbour's profit or good name, is as his own: he feeleth himself hurt when his neighbour is hurt: and if his neighbour prosper, he rejoiceth as if he prospered himself. Though his neighbour be not united to him, in the nearest bonds of Christianity or piety, yet he is not disregardful of the common unity of humanity. Love is the very soul of life; Lev. xix. 18. Matt. xix. 19. xxii. 39. Rom. xiii. 9 Gal. v. 14. James ii. 8. Mark x. 21. 1 John iv. 10.

2. But the love that is in weaker Christians, though it be sincere, is weak as they are; and mixed with too much selfishness, and with too much sourness and wrath. Little matters cause differences and fallings out. When it cometh to MINE and THINE, and their neighbours cross their interest or commodity, or stand in their way when they are seeking any preferment or profit to themselves; you shall see too easily by their sourness and contention, how weak their love is; Matt. xxiv. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 10. Luke xxii. 24.

3. But in the seeming Christian, selfishness is so predominant, that he loveth none but for himself, with any considerable love. All his kindness is from self-love, because men love him, or highly value him, or praise him, or have done him some good turn, or may do him good hereafter, or the like. If he hath any love to any for his own worth, yet self-love can turn all that to hatred, if they seem against him, or cross him in his way: for no man that is a lover of the world and flesh, and carnal self, can ever be a true friend to any other. For he loveth them but for his own ends; and any cross interests will shew the falsehood of his love; 2 Tim. iii. 2—4. Matt. v. 46.

XLIII. 1. A Christian indeed hath a special love to all the godly; such as endeareth his heart unto them; and such as will enable him to visit them, and relieve them in their wants, to his own loss and hazard, according to his ability and opportunity. For the image of God is beautiful and honourable in his eyes: he loveth not them so much as God in them; Christ in them; the Holy Spirit in them. He foreseeth the day when he shall meet them in heaven, and there rejoice in God with them to eternity. He loveth their company and converse; and delighteth in their gracious words and lives. And the converse of ungodly and empty men is a weariness to him (unless in a way of duty, or when he can do them good). "In his eyes a vile person is con-

tened, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord;" Psal. xv. 4. Other men grieve his soul with their iniquities, while he is delighted with the appearances of God in his holy ones, even the excellent ones on earth; Psal. xvi. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Yea, the infirmities of believers destroy not his love; for he hath learned of God himself to difference between their abhorred frailties and their predominant grace; and to love the very infants in the family of Christ. Yea, though they wrong him, or quarrel with him, or censure him in their weakness, he can honour their sincerity, and love them still. And if some of them prove scandalous, and some seeming Christians fall away, or fall into the most odious crimes, he loveth religion nevertheless; but continueth as high an esteem of piety, and of all that are upright, as he had before; 1 John iv. 7, 8, 10. 2 John xiii. 34, 35. 1 Thess. iv. 9. 1 John iii. 11, 14, 23. Matt. xxv. 39, 40, &c.

2. The weak Christian sincerely loveth all that bear his father's image; but it is with a love so weak (even when it is most passionate) as will sooner be abated or interrupted by any tempting differences. He is usually quarrelsome and froward with his brethren, and apter to confine his love to those that are of his own opinion or party. And because God hath taught him to love all that are sincere, the devil tempteth him to censure them as not sincere, that so he may justify himself in the abatement of his love. And weak Christians are usually the most censorious, because they have the smallest degree of love, which covereth faults, and thinketh no evil, and is not suspicious, but ever apt to judge the best, till the worst be evident; 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. "It beareth all things, believeth all things (that are credible), hopeth all things, endureth all things;" ver. 7. But it is no wonder to see children fall out, even about their childish toys and trifles; and what the dissensions of the children of the church have done against themselves in these kingdoms, I need not, I delight not, to record. See 1 Cor. iii. 1—4. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able: for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you, envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?"

3. The seeming Christian may have some love to real

Christians, even for their goodness' sake ; but it is a love subservient to his carnal self-love ; and, therefore, it shall not cost him much. As he hath some love to Christ, so he may have some love to Christians ; but he hath more to the world and fleshly pleasures ; and, therefore, all his love to Christ or Christians, will not make him leave his worldly happiness for them. And, therefore, Christ, at the day of judgment, will not inquire after empty, barren love, but after that love which visited and relieved suffering saints. A hypocrite can allow both Christ and Christians such a cheap, superficial kind of love, as will cost him little. He will bid them lovingly, " Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled ;" James ii. 15—17. But still the world is most beloved.

XLIV. 1. A Christian indeed doth love his enemies, and forgive those that injure him, and this out of a thankful sense of that grace which forgave him a far greater debt. Not that he thinketh it unlawful to make use of the justice of the government which he is under, for his necessary protection, or for the restraint of men's abuse and violence. Nor is he bound to love the malice or injury, though he must love the man. Nor can he forgive a crime as it is against God or the common good, or against another, though he can forgive an injury or debt that is his own. Nor is he bound to forgive every debt, though he is bound so far to forgive every wrong as heartily to desire the good of him that did it. Even God's enemies he so far loveth, as to desire God to convert and pardon them, while he hateth their sin, and hateth them as God's enemies, and desireth their restraint ; Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22. ci. 3. cxix. 4. lxxviii. 1. xxi. 8. But those that hate, and curse, and persecute himself, he can unfeignedly love, and bless, and pray for ; Matt. v. 43—48. For he knoweth that else he cannot be a child of God ; ver. 45. And that to love those that love him is not much praiseworthy, being no more than heathens and wicked men can do ; ver. 46, 47. He is so deeply sensible of that wondrous love which so dearly redeemed him, and saved him from hell, and forgave him a thousandfold worse than the worst that ever was done against himself, that thankfulness and imitation, or conformity to Christ in his great compassions, do overcome his desires of revenge, and make him willing to do good to his most cruel enemies, and

pray for them as Christ and Stephen did at their deaths ; Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60. And he knoweth that he is so inconsiderable a worm, that a wrong done to him as such, is the less considerable ; and he knoweth that he daily wrongeth God, more than any man can wrong him, and that he can hope for pardon, but on condition that he himself forgive ; Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15. xviii. 34, 35. And that he is far more hurtful to himself, than any other can be to him.

2. And the weak Christian can truly love an enemy, and forgive a wrong ; but he doth it not so easily and so fully as the other. But it is with much striving, and some unwillingness and averseness ; and there remaineth some grudge or strangeness upon the mind. He doth not sufficiently forget the wrong which he doth forgive. Indeed, his forgiving is very imperfect, like himself (Matt. xviii. 21. Luke ix. 54, 55.), not with that freeness and readiness required. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love ;" Eph. iv. 2. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another ; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye ;" Col. iii. 13. 18. "Avenge not yourselves," &c. Rom. xii. 14. 18.

3. As for the seeming Christian, he can seem to forgive wrongs for the sake of Christ, but if he do it indeed it is for his own sake. As because it is for his honour, or because the person hath humbled himself to him, or his commodity requireth it, or he can make use of his love and service for his advantage, or some one hath interposed for reconciliation who must not be denied, or the like. But to love an enemy indeed, and to love that man (be he never so good) who standeth in the way of his preferment, honour or commodity in the world, he never doth it from his heart, whatever he may seem to do ; Matt. vi. 14, 15. xviii. 27. 30. 32. The love of Christ doth not constrain him.

XLV. 1. A Christian indeed is as precise in the justice of his dealings with men, as in acts of piety to God. For he knoweth that God requireth this as strictly at his hands. "That no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter ; for the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned and testified ;" 1 Thess. iv. 6. He is one that

“ walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. If he swear to his own hurt, he changeth not. He putteth not out his money to (unjust or unmerciful) usury; nor taketh reward against the innocent;” Psal. xv. He obeyeth that, Lev. xix. 13. “Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.” He can say as Samuel, “Whose ox or ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith, and I will restore it? And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken out of any man’s hand;” 1 Sam. xii. And if heretofore he was ever guilty of defrauding any he is willing to his power to make restitution; and saith as Zaccheus, “If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold;” Luke xix. 8. Though flesh and blood persuade him to the contrary, and though it leave him in want, he will pay his debts, and make restitution of that which is ill gotten, as being none of his own. He will not sell for as much as he can get, but for as much as it is truly worth: he will not take advantage of the weakness, or ignorance, or necessity of his neighbour: he knoweth that “a false balance is abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight;” Prov. xi. 1. He is afraid of believing ill reports, and rebuketh the backbiter; chap. xxv. 23. He is apt to take part with any man behind his back, who is not notoriously inexcusable; not to justify any evil, but to shew his charity, and his hatred of evil speaking, especially where it can do no good. He will not believe evil of another till the evidence do compel him to believe it. If he have wronged any by incautious words, he readily confesseth his fault to him, and asketh him forgiveness, and is ready to make any just satisfaction for any wrong that he hath done him. He borroweth not when he seeth not a great probability that he is likely to pay it. Nor will remain in debt by retaining that which is another man’s against his will, without an absolute necessity. “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another;” Rom. xiii. 8. For

to borrow when he cannot pay is but to steal. Begging is better than borrowing for such. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not;" Psal. xxxvii. 21.

2. And the weak Christian maketh conscience of justice as well as acts of piety, as knowing that God hath no need of our sacrifices, but loveth to see us do that which is good for human society, and which we have need of from each other. But yet he hath more selfishness and partiality than the confirmed Christian hath, and therefore is often overcome by temptations to unrighteous things. As to stretch his conscience for his commodity, in buying or selling, and concealing the faults of what he selleth, and sometimes overreaching others. Especially he is ordinarily too censorious of others, and apt to be credulous of evil reports, and to be over bold and forward of speaking ill of men behind their backs, and without a call; especially against persons that differ from him in matters of religion, where he is usually most unjust and apt to go beyond his bounds; James iii. 15, 16. Tit. iii. 2. Eph. iv. 31. 1 Pet. ii. 1.

3. The seeming Christian may have a seeming justice; but really he hath none but what must give place to his fleshly interest; and if his honour, and commodity and safety require it, he will not stick to be unjust. And that justice which wanteth but a strong temptation to overturn it, is almost as bad as none. If he will not seize on Naboth's vineyard, nor make himself odious by oppression or deceit, yet if he can raise or enrich himself by secret cozenage, and get so fair a pretence for his injustice, as shall cloak the matter from the sight of men, he seldom sticketh at it. It is an easy matter to make an Achan think that he doth no harm, or a Gehazi that he wrongeth no man, in taking that which was offered and due. Covetousness will not confess its name; but will find some reasonings to make good all the injustice which it doth; 1 Tim. vi. 5. 2 Kings v. 19, 20.

XLVI. 1. A Christian indeed is faithful and laborious in his particular calling, and that not out of a covetous mind; but in obedience to God, and that he may maintain his family, and be able to do good to others. For God hath said, "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread;" Gen. iii. 19. "And six days shalt thou labour;" Exod. xx. 10. And with quietness men must work, and eat their own bread;

and "if any will not work, neither should he eat;" 2 Thess. iii. 10—12. Abraham, and Noah, and Adam, laboured in a constant course of employment. He knoweth that a sanctified calling and labour is a help, and not a hindrance to devotion; and that the body must have work as well as the soul, and religion must not be pretended for slothful idleness, nor against obedience to our Master's will; Prov. xxxi.

2. The weak Christian is here more easily deceived, and made believe that religion will excuse a man from bodily labour; and under the colour of devotion to live idly. "They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not;" 2 Thess. iii. 8. 1 Tim. v. 13. Slothfulness is a sin much condemned in the Scriptures; Ezek. xvi. 49. Prov. xxiv. 30. xviii. 9. xxi. 25. Matt. xxv. 26. Rom. xii. 11.

3. The seeming Christian in his labour is ruled chiefly by his flesh. If he be rich, and it incline him most to sloth, he maketh small conscience of living in idleness, under the pretence of his gentility or wealth. But if the flesh incline him more to covetousness, he will be laborious enough: but it shall not be to please God by obedience, but to increase his estate, and enrich himself and his posterity, whatever better reason he pretend.

XLVII. 1. A Christian indeed is exactly conscionable in the duties of his relation to others in the family and place of his abode. If he be a husband, he is loving and patient, and faithful to his wife; if he be a father, he is careful of the holy education of his children; if he be a master, he is just and merciful to his servants, and careful for the saving of their souls; if he be a child or servant, he is obedient, trusty, diligent, and careful, as well behind his parent's or his master's back, as before his face. He dare not lie, nor steal, nor deceive, nor neglect his duty, nor speak dishonourably of his superiors, though he were sure he could conceal it all. For he knoweth that the fifth commandment is enforced with a special promise; Eph. vi. 2. 5. 9. And that a bad child, or a bad servant, a bad husband or wife, a bad parent or master, cannot be a good Christian; Col. iii. 18, 19, &c. iv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 18.

2. But weak Christians, though sincere, are ordinarily weak in this part of their duty; and apt to yield to tempta-

tions, and carry themselves proudly, stubbornly, idly, disobediently, as eye-servants that are good in sight; or to be unmerciful to inferiors, and neglecters of their souls. And to excuse all this from the faults of those that they have to do with, and lay all upon others; as if the fault of husband, wife, parent, master, or servant, would justify them in theirs; and passion and partiality would serve for innocency.

3. And the hypocrite ordinarily sheweth his hypocrisies by being false in his relations to man, while he pretendeth to be pious and obedient unto God. He is a bad master, and a bad servant, when his filthy interest requireth it, and yet thinketh himself a good Christian for all that. For all men being faulty, it is easy to find a pretence from all men that he doth abuse, to cover the injury of his abuse. Cain, Ham, Eli, Absalom, Judas, &c. are sad examples of this.

XLVIII. 1. A Christian indeed is the best subject, whether his prince be good or bad. Though by infidel and ungodly rulers he be oft mistaken for the worst. He obeyeth not his rulers only for his own ends, but in obedience to God; and not only for fear of punishment, but for conscience sake. He looketh on them in their relations as the officers of God, and armed with his authority, and therefore obeyeth God in them. He permitteth not dishonourable thoughts of them in his heart; much less dare he speak dishonourably of them; Exod. xii. Prov. xxiv. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17. Prov. viii. 15. Acts xxiii. 4, 5. Eccles. x. 4, 20. He knoweth that every soul must be subject to the higher powers, and not resist; and that there is no power but of God. "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and he that resisteth shall receive to himself damnation;" Rom. xiii. 1—6. Therefore in all things lawful he obeyeth them. And though he must not, nor will not obey them against God, yet will he suffer patiently when he is wronged by them; and not only forbear resistance by arms or violence, but also all reproachful words, as knowing that the righting of himself is not so necessary to the public order and good, as the honour of his rulers is. Usurpers may probably charge him to be a traitor, and seditious and rebellious, because he dare not approve of their usurpations; and when several are contending for the government, and in a litigious title the lawyers mislead him, when the controversy is only among them, and belongs to their profes-

sion, it is possible he may mistake as well as the lawyers, and take him to have the better title that hath the worse. But in divinity he knoweth there is no controversy whether every soul must be subject to the highest power, so far as he can know it. And that prayer and patience are the subject's arms; and religion is so far from being a warrant to resist, that it plainly forbiddeth disobedience and resistance; and none are more obliged to submission and quietness than Christians are. The spirit of Christianity is not of this world; their kingdom and their hopes are not of this world; and, therefore, they contend not for dignities and rule; much less by resisting or rebelling against their lawful governors. But they are resolved to obey God, and secure their everlasting portion, and bear all the injuries which they meet with in the way, especially from those whom God hath set over them. There is no doctrine that ever was received in the world, so far from befriending seditions and rebellion, as the doctrine of Christ; nor any people in the world so loyal as Christians, while Christianity retained its genuine simplicity; till proud, domineering, worldly men, for carnal ends, pretended themselves to be Christians, and perverted the doctrine of Christ, to make it warp to their ambitious ends. Suffering seemeth not so great a matter to a holy, mortified, heavenly mind, as to tempt him to hazard his salvation to resist it. No man is so likely to be true to kings, as he that believeth that his salvation lieth on it, by the ordinance of God; Rom. xiii. 3. And princes that are wise and just, do always discern that the best Christians are their best subjects; though those that are unbelieving and ungodly themselves, have ever hated them as the greatest troubles of the earth. And it hath ever been the practice of the enemies of Christ and godliness, to do all they can to engage the rulers of the earth against them; and to persuade them that the most godly Christians are persons of disloyal and unquiet minds; and by vexing and persecuting them, they do their worst to make them such as they falsely called them. Even Christ himself was crucified as an enemy to Cæsar, and Pilate driven to it by the noise of them that cried out, that if he let them go he was not Cæsar's friend; John xix. 12. They first tempted him with the question, "Whether it were lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar;" Matt. xxii. 17. Luke xx. 22. And

though they could this way take no hold of him, yet this was the first article of his accusation: "We have found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar;" Luke xxiii. 2. And how loyal would those rebellious Jews seem, when they thought it the only way to engage the Roman power against Christ? Then they cry out, "We have no king but Cæsar;" John xix. 15. And this was the common accusation against the Christians both by Jews and Gentiles. The language of the Jews you may hear from Tertullus: "We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes;" Acts xxiv. 5. And at Thessalonica, the charge against them was, that they "turned the world upside down, and did all contrary to the decrees of Cæsar;" chap. xvii. 6, 7. And thus the best Christians have by such been slandered from age to age; because the devil and his instruments know not how sufficiently to molest them, except they engage the rulers against them. But yet all this doth not conquer the patience and loyalty of confirmed Christians. They are wiser than that wise man that Solomon saith, "Oppression maketh mad;" Eccles. vii. 7. If usurpers or malicious liars shall a thousand times call them rebellious and seditious, it shall not drive them from their due subjection. They can patiently follow their Lord and the ancient Christians, in the enduring of such slanders, and suffering as enemies to Cæsar, so they do but escape the sin, and be not such as malice calleth them. They had rather die as reputed enemies to government, than to be such indeed. They prefer subjection before the reputation of it; for they look not for their reward from princes, but from God. If they can preserve their innocence, they can bear the defamation of their names, being satisfied in the hopes of the joyful day of the judgment of Christ, which will fully justify them and set all straight. Indeed they know that a state of subjection is easier and safer than places of command; and that it is easier to obey than govern. And so far are they from envying men's greatness, and from desiring dominions, that they pity the tempted, and dangerous, and troublesome state of those in power, and are thankful to God for their quieter and safer station. They heartily pray for kings and all that are in authority; not that by their favour they may rise to

places of wealth and honour, but "that under them they may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty;" 1 Tim. ii. 2. Yea, though infidel princes hate and persecute them, they continue to pray for them, and to honour their authority, and will not thereby be driven from their duty. If God cast their lot under infidel, ungodly, and malicious governors, they do not run to arms to save themselves, or save the Gospel; as if God had called them to reform the world, or keep it from the oppression of the higher powers. Nor do they think it a strange, intolerable matter for the best men to be lowest, and to be the suffering side, and so fall to fighting that Christ and the saints may have the rule. For they know that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, (John xviii. 36.); that is, not a visible monarchy, as his usurping vicar doth pretend; and that Christ doth most eminently rule unseen, and disposeth of all the kingdoms of the world, even where he is hated and resisted; and that the reign of saints is in their state of glory; and that all God's graces do fit them more for a suffering life, than for worldly power. Their humility, meekness, patience, self-denial, contempt of the world, and heavenly-mindedness, are better exercised and promoted in a suffering, than a prosperous, reigning state. When they think of the holy blood which hath been shed by heathen Rome, from Christ and Stephen, till the days of Constantine; and the far greater streams which have been shed by the bloody papal Rome; wherever they had power, in Piedmont, Germany, Poland, Hungary, in Belgia, England, and in other lands; the thirty or forty thousand murdered in a few days at the Bartholomew massacre in France; the two hundred thousand murdered in a few weeks in Ireland, they are not so unlike their suffering brethren, as to think that striving for honours and command, is their way to heaven. When Christ hath foretold them that self-denial under the cross, tribulation, and persecution, is the common way; Luke xiv. 26, 27. 29. 33. Acts xiv. 22. John xvi. 33. Rom. v. 3. viii. 35. 2 Tim. iii. 12. Matt. v. 10—12: 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7. 10. Mark x. 30. So far are they from fighting against the injuries and cruelties of their governors, that they account the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all their treasures, (Heb. xi. 15, 26.), and think they are blessed when they are persecuted (Matt. v. 10.), and say with Paul, "God for-

bid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world;" Gal. vi. 14. And 2 Cor. xii. 19. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong." "Nay, in all these things, when persecuted and killed all the day long, and counted as sheep to the slaughter, they are more than conquerors through Christ;" Rom. viii. 35—37. They obtain a nobler conquest than that which is obtained by the sword.

2. But the weak Christian having less patience, and more selfishness and passion, is more easily tempted to break his bounds, and with Peter run to his unauthorized sword, when he should submit to suffering; Matt. xxvi. 51, 52. And his interest and sufferings cause his passion to have too great a power on his judgment, so that he is more easily tempted to believe that to be lawful which he thinks to be necessary to his own preservation; and to think that the Gospel and the church are falling, when the power of men is turned against them; and therefore he must with Uzzah put forth his hand to save the ark of God from falling. He is more troubled at men's injustice and cruelty, and maketh a wonder of it, to find the enemies of Christ and godliness to be unreasonably impudent and bloody; as if he expected reason and righteousness in the malicious world. His sufferings fill him more with discontent, and desires of revenge from God; Luke ix. 54. and his prosperity too much lifts him up; 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. And in the litigious titles of pretenders to supremacy, he is oft too hasty to interest himself in their contentions, as if he understood not that whoever is the conqueror will count those rebels that were on the other side; and that the enemies of Christ will cast all the odium upon Christianity and piety, when the controversy is only among the statesmen and lawyers, and belongs not to religion at all.

3. The seeming Christian will seem to excel all others in loyalty and obedience, when it maketh for his carnal ends: he will flatter rulers for honours and preferment, and always be on the rising side, unless when his pride engageth him in murmurings and rebellions. He hath a great advantage above true Christians and honest men, to seem the most obedient subject; because he hath a stretching conscience, that

can do any thing for his safety or his worldly ends. If he be among Papists, he can be a Papist; if among Protestants, he is a Protestant; and if he were among Turks, it is likely he would rather turn a Mahometan than be undone. No prince or power can command him any thing which he cannot yield to, if his worldly interest require it. If there be a law for worshipping the golden image, it is the conscionable servants of God, and not the time-servers, that refuse to obey it; Dan. iii. If there be a law against praying, (Dan. vi.) it is Daniel, and not the ungodly multitude that disobey it. If there be a command against preaching, (Acts iv. 17, 18.) it is the holy apostles and best Christians that plead the command of God against it, and refuse obedience to it; (ver. 20, 29.) The self-seeking, temporizing hypocrite can do any thing; and yet he obeyeth not, while he seemeth to obey: for it is not for the authority of the commander that he doth it, but for his own ends. He never truly honoureth his superiors; for he doth not respect them as the officers of God, nor obey them for his sake with a conscionable obedience. He feareth the higher powers as bears or tigers, that are able to hurt him; or useth their favour as he useth his horse, to do him service. Were it not for himself, he would little regard them. The true Christian honoureth the basest creature more than the hypocrite and worldling honoureth his king: for he seeth God in all, and useth the smallest things unto his glory; whereas the worldling debaseth the highest, by the baseness of his esteem, and use, and end: for he knoweth not how to esteem or use the greatest prince, but for himself or for some worldly ends; 2 Tim. iii. 3, 4.

XLIX. 1. A Christian indeed is a man of courage and fortitude in every cause of God; for he trusteth God, and firmly believeth that he will bear him out. He knoweth his superiors, and hath a charitable respect to all men: but as for any selfish or timorous respect, he hath the least regard to man. For he knoweth that the greatest are but worms, whose breath is in their nostrils, that pass away as shadows, and return to dust; and that the most potent are impotent when they contend with God, and are unequal matches to strive against their Maker; and that it will prove hard for them to kick against the pricks; and that whoever seemeth now to have the day, it is God that will be conqueror at last.

Job xxv. 6. xvii. 14. xxiv. 20. Psal. lxxix. 31. ciii. 16. cxliv. 3—5. Acts ix. 4—6. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help; his breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God." "Woe to him that striveth with his Maker;" Isa. xlv. 9. He knoweth that it is more irrational to fear man against God, than to fear a flea or a fly against the greatest man. The infinite disproportion between the creature that is against him, and the Creator that is for him, doth resolve him to obey the command of Christ; "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him;" Luke xii. 4. "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: fear ye not the reproof of man, neither be afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation;" Isa. lvii. 7, 8. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint; and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together; who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me: who is he that shall condemn me? Lo! they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up;" Isa. l. 6—9. xxxv. 4. xli. 10, 13, 14. vii. 4. Jer. xlv. 27, 28. Matt. x. 26, 31. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of;" Isa. ii. 22. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, &c. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, &c." Jer. xvii. 5, 8, 9. Alas, how terrible is the wrath of God, in comparison of the wrath of man! And how easy an enemy is the cruellest afflicter, in comparison of a holy, sin-revenging God. Therefore the confirmed Christian saith as the three witnesses; Dan. iii. 16—18. "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter: the God whom we serve is able

to deliver us.—But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” When Daniel knew that the decree was past, he prayed openly in his house, as heretofore; Dan. vi. 10. Moses “feared not the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible;” Heb. xi. 27. “The righteous is bold as a lion;” Prov. xxviii. 1. “When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled;” Acts iv. 13. Paul’s bonds made others bold; 2 Cor. xi. 21. Ephes. vi. 19, 20. Acts iv. 29. 31. “Perfect love casteth out fear;” 1 John iv. 18. “If ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;” 1 Pet. iii. 14. “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me;” Heb. xiii. 6.

2. But the weak Christian, though he also trust in God, is much more fearful, and easily daunted and discouraged; and ready with Peter to be afraid, if he perceive himself in danger; Matt. xxvi. 69. He is not “valiant for the truth;” Jer. ix. 3. Though he can forsake all (even life itself) for Christ, (Luke xiv. 26. 33.) yet is it with a deal of fear and trouble. And man is a more significant thing to him than to the stronger Christian.

3. But the seeming Christian doth fear man more than God, and will venture upon the displeasure of God, to avoid the displeasure of men that can do him hurt; because he doth not soundly believe the threatenings of the word of God.

L. 1. A Christian indeed is made up of judgment and zeal conjunct. His judgment is not a patron of lukewarmness, nor his zeal an enemy to knowledge. His judgment doth not destroy, but increase his zeal; and his zeal is not blind nor self-conceited, nor doth run before, or without judgment. If he be of the most excellent sort of Christians, he hath so large a knowledge of the mysteries of godliness, that he seeth the body of sacred truth with its parts, and compages, or joints, as it were at once. It is all written deeply and methodically in his understanding; he hath by long use his senses exercised, to discern both good and evil; Heb. v. 14. He presently discerneth where mistaken men go out of the way, and lose the truth, by false suppositions, or by false definitions, or by confounding things that differ.

And therefore he pitieth the contentious sects and disputers, who raise a dust to blind themselves and others, and make a stir to the trouble of the church, about things which they never understood: and in the sight of that truth which others obscure and contradict, he enjoyeth much content or pleasure in his own mind, though incapable persons zealously reject it. Therefore he is steadfast, as knowing on what ground he setteth his foot. And though he be the greatest lover of truth, and would with greatest joy receive any addition to his knowledge, yet ordinarily by erroneous zealots he is censured as too stiff, and self-conceited, and tenacious of his own opinions, because he will not entertain their errors, and obey them in their self-conceitedness. For he that knoweth that it is truth which he holdeth, is neither able nor willing to hold the contrary, (unless he imprison the truth in unrighteousness). But if he be one that hath not attained to such a clear, comprehensive judgment, yet with that measure of judgment which he hath, he doth guide and regulate his zeal, and maketh it follow after, while understanding goeth before. He treadeth on sure ground, and knoweth it to be duty indeed which he is zealous for, and sin indeed which he is zealous against; and is not put to excuse all his favour and forwardness after, with a 'non putarem,' or, 'I had thought it had been otherwise;' 1 Cor. i. 5. 2 Cor. viii. 7. Col. iii. 16. iv. 12.

2. But the weak Christian either hearkeneth too much to carnal wisdom, which suppresseth his zeal, and maketh him too heavy, and dull, and indifferent in many of his duties, and the concernments of his soul, permitting the world to take up too much of the vigour of his spirit; or else he is confident in his mistakes, and verily thinks that he understandeth better than many wiser men, those things which he never understood at all. He chooseth his party by the zeal that he findeth in them, without any judicious trial of the truth of what they hold and teach. He is very earnest for many a supposed truth and duty, which proveth at last to be no truth or duty at all; and he censureth many a wiser Christian than himself, for many a supposed sin, which is no sin, but perhaps a duty. For he is always injudicious, and his heat is greater than his light, or else his light is too flashy without heat. Peremptorily he doth set down some

among the number of the most wise and excellent men, for keeping him company in his mistakes : and he boldly numbereth the best and wisest of his teachers with the transgressors, for being of a sounder understanding than himself, and doing those duties which he calleth sins. And hence it is that he is a person apt to be misled by appearances of zeal ; and the passions of his teachers prevail more with him than the evidence of truth. He that prayeth and preacheth most fervently is the man that carrieth him away, though none of his arguments should be truly cogent. If he hear any hard name against any opinion, or manner of worship, he receiveth that prejudice which turneth him more against it than reason could have done. So the bugbear names of Heresy, Lutheranism, and Calvinism, frighteneth many a well-meaning Papist both from the truth, and almost from his wits. And the names of Popery, Arminianism, Prelacy, Presbyterianism, Independency, &c. do turn away the hearts of many from things which they never tried or understood. If a zealous preacher do but call any opinion or practice antichristian or idolatrous, it is a more effectual terror than the clearest proof. Big and terrible words do move the passions, while the understanding is abused, or a stranger to the cause. And passion is much of their religion. And hence, alas ! is much of the calamity of the church ; Rom. xiv. 1—4, &c. 1 Cor. iii. 1—4. Acts xxi. 20. Gal. iv. 17, 18.

3. But the seeming Christian is only zealous finally for himself, or zealous about the smaller matters of religion, as the Pharisees were for their ceremonies and traditions, or for his own inventions, or some opinions or ways, in which his honour seemeth to be interested, and pride is the bellows of his zeal. But as for a holy zeal about the substance and practice of religion, and that for God as the final cause, he is a stranger to it. He may have a zeal of God, and of and for the law and worship of God as the material cause, but not a true zeal for God, as the chief final cause ; Rom. x. 2, 2 Sam. xxi. 2. 2 Kings x. 16. Acts xxii. 3.

LI. 1. A Christian indeed can bear the infirmities of the weak : though he love not their weakness, yet he pitieth it, because he truly loveth their persons. Christ hath taught him not to break the bruised reed, and to "gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young ;" Isa. xl. 11. xlii. 3. If they

have diseases and distempers, he seeketh in tenderness to cure them, and not in wrath to hurt or vex them. He turneth not the infants or sick persons from the family, because they cry, or are unquiet, unclean, infirm, and troublesome; but he exerciseth his love and pity upon their weaknesses. If they mistake their way, or are ignorant, and peevish, and froward in their mistakes, he seeketh not to undo them, but gently to reduce them. If they censure him, and call him erroneous, heretical, antichristian, idolatrous, because he concurrereth not with them in their mistakes, he beareth it with love and patience, as he would do the peevish chidings of a child, or the frowardness of the sick. He doth not lose his charity, and set his wit against a child, and aggravate the crimes, and being reviled revile again; and say, 'You are schismatics, hypocrites, obstinate, and fit to be severely dealt with.' But he overcometh them with love and patience, which is the conquest of a saint, and the happiest victory both for himself and them. It is a "small matter to him to be judged of man;" 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. He is more troubled for the weakness and disease of the censorious, than for his own being wronged by their censures; Phil. i. 16—18. Rom. xv. 1—3. xiv. 2, 3.

2. But the weak Christian is more ready to censure others, than patiently to bear a censure himself. Either he stormeth against the censurers, as if they did him some unsufferable wrong (through the over-great esteem of himself and his reputation), or else, to escape the fangs of censure, and keep up his repute with them, he complieth with the censorious, and overruns his judgment and conscience to be well-spoken of, and counted a sincere and steadfast man; Gal. ii. 12—14.

3. But the seeming Christian is so proud and selfish, and wanteth charity and tenderness to the weak, that he is impatient of their provocations; and would cure the diseases of the servants of Christ, by cutting their throats, or ridding the country of them. If a child do but wrangle with him, he crieth, 'Away with him, he is a troubler of the world.' He taketh more notice of one of their infirmities, than of all their graces; yea, he can see nothing but obstinacy and hypocrisy in them, if they do but cross him in his opinions, or reputation, or worldly ends. Selfishness can turn his hypocrisy into malignity and cruelty, if once he

take them to be against his interest. Indeed his interest can make him patient: he can bear with them that he looketh to gain by, but not with them that seem to be against him. The radical enmity against sincerity, that was not mortified, but covered in his heart, will easily be again uncovered; Mark vi. 18.20—22. Phil. i. 15, 16. 3 John 9.

LII. 1. A Christian indeed is a great esteemer of the unity of the church, and greatly averse to all divisions among believers. As there is in the natural body an abhorring of dismembering or separating any part from the whole; so there is in the mystical body of Christ. The members that have life, cannot but feel the smart of any distempering attempt; for abscission is destruction: the members die that are separated from the body. And if there be but any obstruction or hindrance of communion, they will be painful or unuseful. He feelth in himself the reason of all those strict commands, and earnest exhortations: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;" 1 Cor. i. 10. "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others;" Phil. ii. 1—4. "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ:" Ephes. iv. 2—7. Read also chap. iv. 12—16. 1 Cor. xii. throughout. He looketh at uncharitableness, and divisions, with more abhorrence than weak Christians do at drunkenness or whoredom, or such other heinous sin. He

feareth such dreadful warnings, as Acts xx. 29, 30. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own-selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And he cannot slight such a vehement exhortation, as Rom. xvi. 17, 18. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." Therefore he is so far from being a divider himself, that when he seeth any one making divisions among Christians, he looketh on him as one that is slashing and mangling the body of his dearest friend, or as one that is setting fire on his house, and therefore doth all that he can to quench it; as knowing the confusion and calamity to which it tendeth. He is of a Christian, and therefore of a truly catholic spirit; that is, he maketh not himself a member of a divided party, or a sect; he regardeth the interest and welfare of the body, the universal church, above the interest or prosperity of any party whatsoever; and he will do nothing for a party which is injurious to the whole, or to the Christian cause. The very names of sects and parties are displeasing to him; and he could wish that there were no name but that of Christians among us, save only the necessary names of the criminal, such as that of the Nicolaitans; Rev. ii. 6. 15. By which those that are to be avoided by Christians must be known. Christianity is confined to so narrow a compass in the world, that he is unwilling to contract it yet into a narrower. The greatest party of divided Christians, whether it be the Greeks or Papists, is too small a body for him to take for the catholic, or universal church. He admireth at the blindness and cruelty of faction, that can make men damn all the rest of the church for the interest of their proper sect; and take all those as no Christians that are better Christians than themselves. Especially the Papists, who unchurch all the church of Christ, except their sect, and make it as necessary to salvation to be a subject of the pope, as to be a Christian. And when, by their great corruption and abuses of Christianity, they have more need of charitable censures themselves than almost any sort of Christians, yet are they

the boldest condemners of all others. The confirmed Christian can difference between the strong and weak, the sound and unsound members of the church, without dismembering any, and without unwarrantable separations from any. He will worship God in the purest manner he can, and locally join with those assemblies, where, all things considered, he may most honour God, and receive most edification; and will not sin for communion with any. He will sufficiently difference between a holy, orderly assembly, and a corrupt, disordered one; and between an able, faithful pastor, and an ignorant or worldly hireling. And he desireth that the pastors of the church may make that due separation by the holy discipline of Christ, which may prevent the people's disorderly separation. But for all this, he will not deny his presence upon just occasion, to any Christian congregation that worshippeth God in truth, though with many modal imperfections, so be it, they impose no sin upon him as necessary to his communion with them. Nor will he deny the spiritual communion of faith and love to those that he holdeth not local communion with. He knows that all our worship of God is sinfully imperfect, and that it is a dividing principle to hold, that we may join with none that worship God in a faulty manner; for then we must join with none on earth. He knoweth that his presence in the worship of God, is no sign of his approbation of all the failings of pastors or people, in their personal or modal imperfections, as long as he joineth not in a worship so corrupt as to be itself unacceptable to God. While men who are all imperfect and corrupt, are the worshippers, the manner of their worship will be such as they, in some degree, imperfect and corrupt. The solid Christian hath his eye upon all the churches in the world, in the determining of such questions; he considereth what worship is offered to God in the churches of the several parties of Christians, the Greeks, Armenians, Abassines, Lutherans, &c. as well as what is done in the country where he liveth; and he considereth whether God disown and reject the worship of almost all the churches in the world, or not; for he dare no further reject them than God rejecteth them. Nor will he voluntarily separate from those assemblies where the presence of Christ, in his Spirit and acceptance, yet remaineth. And his fuller acquaintance with the gracious nature, office, and tenderness of

Christ, together with greater love to his brethren, doth cause him in this to judge more gently than young censorious Christians do. And his humble acquaintance with his own infirmities, maketh him the more compassionate to others. If he should think that God would reject all that order not, and word not their prayers aright, he would be afraid of being rejected himself, who is still conscious of greater faultiness in his own prayers, than a mere defect in words and order; even of a great defectiveness in that faith, and desire, and love, and zeal, and reverence which should be manifested in prayer. Though he be more apprehensive than others, of the excellency and necessity of the holiness and spirituality of the soul in worship; yet withal he is more judicious and charitable than the peevish and passionate infant Christians, who think that God doth judge as they do, and seeth no grace where they see none; and taketh all to be superstitious or fanatical, that differ from their opinions or manner of worship; or that he is as ready to call every error, in the method or the words of prayer, idolatry or will-worship, as those are that speak not what they know, but what they have heard some teachers whom they reverence, say before them. "He that dwelleth in love, doth dwell in God, and God in him." And he that dwelleth in God, is liker to be best acquainted with his mind, concerning his children and his worship, than he that dwelleth in wrath, and pride, and partiality.

2. But the weak Christian (though so far as he hath grace, he is of the same mind, and abhorreth discord and division among the flock of Christ, yet) being more dark, and selfish, and distempered, he is much more prone to unwarrantable separations and divisions than the stronger Christian is. He is narrower sighted, and looketh little further than his own acquaintance, and the country where he liveth; and mindeth not sufficiently the general state of the churches through the world, nor understandeth well the interest of Christ and Christianity in the earth. His knowledge and experience being small, his charity also is but small; and a little thing tempteth him to condemn another, and aggravate his faults, and think him unworthy of the communion of the saints. He is much more sensible of the judgment, and affections, and concernments of those few with whom he doth converse, and that are of his opinion,

than of the judgment, and practice, and concernments of the universal church. He knoweth not how to prefer the judgments and holiness of some that he thinketh more excellent than the rest, without much undervaluing and censuring of all others that are not of their opinion: he cannot choose the actual local communion of the best society, without some unjust contempt of others, or separation from them. He hath not so much knowledge as may sufficiently acquaint him with his ignorance; and therefore he is apt to be unreasonably confident of his present apprehensions, and to think verily that all his own conceptions are the certain truth; and to think them ignorant, or ungodly, or very weak at least, that differ from him. For he hath not thoroughly and impartially studied all that may be said on the other side. The authority of his chosen teacher and sect, is greater with him (if he fall into that way) than the authority of all the most wise and holy persons in the world besides. What the Scripture speaketh of the unbelieving world, he is apt to apply to all those of the church of Christ, that are not of his mind and party. And when Christ commandeth us to come out of the world, he is prone to understand it of coming out from the church into some stricter and narrower society; and is apt with the papists, to appropriate the name and privileges of the church, to his party alone, and to condemn all others. Especially if the church-governors be carnal and self-seeking, or otherwise very culpable; and if discipline be neglected, and if profaneness be not sufficiently discountenanced, and godliness promoted, he thinketh that such a church is no church, but a profane society. God hath taught him by repentance to see the mischief of ungodliness, but he yet wanteth that experience which is needful to make him know the mischief of church divisions. He had too much experience himself, of the evil of profaneness before his conversion; but he hath not tried the evil of schism; and without some sad experience of its fruits, in himself or others, he will hardly know it as it should be known: because it is the custom of some malignant enemies of godliness, to call the godly heretics, schismatics, factious sectaries, &c. therefore the very names do come into credit with him; and he thinks there are no such persons in the world, or that there is no danger of any such crimes, till he be taught by sad experience, that the professors of sincerity are in as much danger

on that side as on the other; and that the church, as well as Christ, doth suffer between two thieves, the profane and the dividers. Paul was unjustly called the ringleader of a sect, Acts xxiv. 5.), and Christianity called a heresy and a sect, every where spoken against; Acts xxviii. 22. xxiv. 14. But for all that, heresy is a fruit of the flesh, (Gal. v. 20.) and some of them called damnable; (2 Pet. ii. 1.) and they are the trial of the church, to difference the approved members from the chaff; 1 Cor. xi. 19. And an obstinate heretic is to be avoided by true believers; Titus iii. 10. And the Pharisees and Sadducees are well reputed to be several sects; Acts v. 17. xv. 5. xxvi. 5. And dividers and divisions are justly branded as aforesaid. There must be no schism in the body of Christ; 1 Cor. xii. 25. The following of selected teachers, in a way of division from the rest, or opposition to them, doth shew, that men are carnal in too great a measure, though it be not in predominancy, as in the profane. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal. For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" 2 Cor. iii. 1—3. How much more when he that is for Paul doth censure and rail at Cephas and Apollos? He that hath seen the course of men professing godliness in England in this age, may easily and sadly know how prone weak Christians are to unjust separations and divisions, and what are the effects. He that had heard many zealous in prayer, and other duties, and the next year see them turning Quakers, and railing in the open congregations at the most able, holy, self-denying ministers of Christ, and at their flocks, with a 'Come down thou deceiver, thou hireling, thou wolf, ye are all greedy dogs,' &c. and shall see how yet poor souls run into that reviling, and irrational sect (to say nothing of all other sects among us,) will no longer doubt whether the weak be inclined to schism, but will rather lament the dangerousness of their station; and know that all is not done when a sinner is converted from an ungodly state. Study the reason of those three texts; Ephes. iv. 13—16. "For the edifying the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of

the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; and the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, so that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love." Here you see the children are apt to be carried into dividing parties. And that they are more apt to be proud, and that way to miscarry, see 1 Tim. iii. 6. "Not a novice (or raw young Christian) lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil," and then followeth the effect, Acts xx. 30. "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." I would not have you groundlessly accuse any Christian with a charge of pride; but I must tell you that the childish pride of apparel is a petty business, in comparison of that pride which many in sordid attire have manifested, who in their ignorance do rage and foam out words of falsehood and reproach against Christ's ministers and servants, as if they were fools or impious in comparison of them, speaking evil of that which they never understood. The lifting up the heart above the people of the Lord, in the pride of supposed holiness, is incomparably worse than pride of learning, honour, greatness, wit, or wealth. Nay, it hath often been to me a matter of wonder to observe how little all those plain and urgent texts of Scripture, which cry down division, do work upon many of the younger Christians, who yet are as quickly touched as any, with a text that speaketh against profaneness and lukewarmness. In a word, they are often of the temper of James and John, when they would fain have had Christ revenged himself on his opposers by fire from heaven; "They know not what manner of spirit they are of;" Luke ix. 55. They think verily that it is a holy zeal for God, when it is the boiling of passion, pride, and selfishness. They feel not the sense of such words as Christ's, "I pray also for them who shall believe on me, through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in

me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me;" &c. John xvii. 20—24.

3. And as for the seeming Christian, in this they are of several sorts. When their carnal interest lieth in compliance with the major part and stronger side, then no men do more cry up unity and obedience. What a noise do many thousand Papist prelates, Jesuits, and friars make with these two words throughout the world. Unity and obedience (unto them upon their terms) do signify principally their worldly greatness, wealth, and power. But if the hypocrite be engaged in point of honour, or other carnal interest on the suffering side, or be out of hope of any advantage, in the common road, then no man is so much for separation and singularity as he. For he must needs be noted for somebody in the world, and this is the chief way that he findeth to accomplish it. And so being "lifted up with pride, he falleth into the condemnation of the devil," and becomes a fire-brand in the church.

LIII. 1. A Christian indeed, is not only zealous for the unity and concord of believers, but he seeketh it on the right terms, and in the way that is fittest to attain it. Unity, peace, and concord, are like piety and honesty, things so unquestionably good, that there are scarce any men of reason and common sobriety, that ever were heard to oppose them directly and for themselves: and therefore all that are enemies to them are yet pretenders to them; and oppose them. 1. In their causes only. 2. Or covertly, and under some other name. Every man would have unity, concord, and peace in his own way, and upon his own terms. But if the right terms had been understood and consented to as sufficient, the Christian world had not lain so many hundred years in the sin, and shame, and ruins as it hath done. And the cause of all is, that Christians indeed, that have clear, confirmed judgments, and strength of grace, are very few; and for number and strength, unable to persuade or overrule the weak, the passionate, and the false-hearted, worldly, hypocritical multitude; who bear down all the counsels and endeavours of the wise.

The judicious, faithful Christian knoweth, that there are three degrees or sorts of Christian communion, which have their several terms. 1. The universal church commu-

nion, which all Christians as such must hold among themselves. 2. Particular church communion, which those that are conjoined for personal communion in worship, do hold under the same pastors and among themselves. 3. The extraordinary intimate communion that some Christians hold together, who are bosom friends, or are especially able and fit to be helpful and comfortable to each other.

The last concerneth not our present business ; we must hold church communion with many that are unfit to be our bosom friends, and that have no eminency of parts or piety, or any strong persuading evidence of sincerity. But the terms of catholic communion he knoweth are such as these. 1. They must be such as were the terms of church communion in the days of the apostles. 2. They must be such as are plainly and certainly expressed in the holy Scriptures. 3. And such as the universal church hath in some ages since been actually agreed in. 4. And those points are most likely to be such, which all the differing parties of Christians are agreed in, as necessary to communion to this day, (so we call not those Christians that deny the essentials of Christianity): 5. Every man in the former ages of the church, was admitted to this catholic church communion, who in the baptismal vow or covenant, gave up himself to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier ; his Owner, Governor, and Father, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil. And more particularly, as man hath an understanding, a will, and an executive power, which must all be sanctified to God, so the creed was the particular rule for the 'credenda' or things to be believed, and the Lord's prayer for the 'petenda' or things to be willed, loved, and desired, and the ten commandments for the 'agenda,' or things to be done ; so that to consent to these rules particularly, and to all the holy Scriptures implicitly and generally, was the thing then required to catholic communion. The belief of the doctrine being necessary for the sanctifying of the heart and life, the belief of so much is of necessity, without which the heart cannot be sanctified, or devoted in covenant to God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator ; and without which we cannot love God (as reconciled to us in Christ) above all, and our neighbours as ourselves. So that, in a word, he that can tell what the baptismal vow or covenant is, can tell what is necessary

to that catholic church communion, which belongeth to Christians as Christians, at how great a distance soever they dwell from one another.

And then for particular church communion, which is local and personal, it is moreover necessary, 1. That each member acknowledge and submit to the same pastors. 2. That they be guided by them in the convenient circumstances and adjuncts of worship. For if some persons will not consent or submit to the same pastors that the body of the church consenteth and submitteth to, they cannot have communion particularly and locally with that church, nor are they members of it, no more than they can be members of the same kingdom that have not the same king. And there being no solemn worship performed but by the ministry of those pastors, they cannot join in the worship that join not with the minister. And if some members will not consent and submit to the necessary determination of the adjuncts or external modes of worship, they cannot join in local, particular church communion where that worship is performed. As if the pastor and the body of the church will meet in such a place, at such a day and hour, and some members will not meet with them at that place, and day, and hour, they cannot possibly then have their local, personal communion. Or if the pastor will use such a translation of the Scriptures, or such a version of the Psalms, or such a method in preaching and prayer, or such notes or books, and other like helps; if any members will not submit, nor hold communion with the rest, unless that translation, or version, or method of preaching or praying, or notes or books be laid aside, he cannot have communion while he refuseth it. If the pastor, and all the rest will not yield to him, he must join with some other church that he can agree with. And as long as the catholic church communion is maintained (which consisteth in unity, of the Christian covenant, or of Christianity, or of faith, love, and obedience), the difference of modes and circumstances between particular churches, must be allowed without any breach of charity, or without disowning one another. And he that cannot be a member of one particular church, may quietly join himself to another, without condemning that which he dissenteth from; so far as to hinder his catholic communion with it, (even as among the papists, men may

be of which order or of religious persons they best like, as long as they submit to their general government). And here the strong, judicious Christian for his part, will never be guilty of church divisions. For, 1. He will make nothing necessary to church communion, which any sober, pious, peaceable minds shall have any just reason to except against, or which may not well be manifested to be for the edification of the church. 2. And he will bear with the weak dissenters so far as will stand with the peace and welfare of the church. 3. And he will particularly give leave to such weak ones as cannot yet hold communion with him, being peaceable, and not promoting heresy, ungodliness, or sedition, to join to another church where they can hold communion with peace to their own consciences; as long as they continue their foresaid catholic communion. For the strong know that they must not only bear with, but bear the "infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves, but every one of them to please his neighbour for good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself." And so they will "receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God, not despising the weak, nor rejecting them that God receiveth;" Rom. xv. 1—3. 7. xiv. 1—4. 17, 18. And thus you may see how easy a matter it were to unite and reconcile all the Christian world, if the principles of the judicious, confirmed Christian might be received and prevail; and that it is not he that is the cause of the abundance of sin and calamity which divisions have caused, and continued in the church. But that which now seemeth an impossible thing, may quickly and easily be accomplished if all were such as he. And that the difficulty of reconciling and uniting Christians, lieth not first in finding out the terms, but in making men fit to receive and practise the terms from the beginning received by the churches. This is *Lirinensis's* 'Quod semper, ubique; et ab omnibus receptum est' supposing still that the magistrate be submitted to by every soul, even as he is the keeper of both tables; Rom. xiii. 1—3.

2. But the weak Christian is too easily tempted to be the divider of the church, by expecting that it be united upon his impossible or unrighteous terms. Sometimes he will be orthodox overmuch, or rather wise in his own conceit (Rom. xiii. 16.), and then none are judged fit for his com-

munion that be not of his opinion, in controverted doctrinals, (e. g. predestination, the manner of the work of grace, freewill, perseverance, and abundance such). Sometimes he will be righteous overmuch, or (to speak more properly) superstitious; and then none are fit for his communion that worship not God in that method and manner for circumstances, which he esteemed best. And his charity is so weak, that it freeth him not from thinking evil (1 Cor. xiii.), and so narrow, that it covereth not either many or great infirmities. The more need he hath of the forbearance and charity of others, the less can he bear or forbear others himself. The strong Christian must bear the infirmities of the weak; but the weak Christian can scarce bear with the weak or strong. Nay, he is oft too impatient with some of their virtues and duties, as well as with their infirmities. He is of too private a spirit, and too insensible of the public interest of the church of Christ. And therefore he must have all the world come over to him, and be conformed to his opinion and party, and unite upon his mistaken, narrow terms, if they will have communion with him. I mean, it is thus with him, when the temptation on that side prevaleth. And sometimes he is overcome with the temptation of domination, to make his judgment a rule to others; and then he quite overvalueth his own understanding, and will needs be judge of all the controversies in the church; and taketh it as unsufferable, if wiser and better men do not take him as infallible, and in every thing observe his will. And when his brethren give him the reason of their dissent, as his judgment is not clear enough to understand them, so his passion and partiality are too strong to suffer his judgment to do its part. And thus oftentimes he is a greater hindrance to the church's unity, than the enemies of the church themselves. For he hath not judgment enough to guide him the right way, and yet he hath so much zeal as will not suffer him to keep his errors to him.

3. And all these distempers that are but in a lower degree in the weak Christian, are predominant in the hypocrite. The church shall have no concord or peace if he can hinder it, but what is consistent with his carnal interest, his honour, or wealth, or dignity in the world. The pride and covetousness which rule himself, he would have to make the terms of concord, and to rule all others. It is hypocrites

in the church that are the greatest cause of discord and divisions, having selfish spirits, principles, and ends, and having always a work of their own to do, which suits not well with the work of Christ; and yet Christ's work must be subjected to it, and ordered, and overruled by it. And while they pretend to go to the Scriptures, or to councils or fathers for their reasons, indeed they go first for them to their worldly interest; and then would fain hire or press the Scripture, church, or fathers to serve their turn, and come in as witnesses on their side. And thus the church, as well as Christ, is betrayed by the covetous Judases of his own family. And the servants of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that take up the livery of Christ, and usurp the name and honour of Christian, do more effectually hinder the concord and prosperity of the church, than any open enemies do. And those that are indeed no Christians, do cause Christianity to be reproached; even as spies and traitors that are hired by the enemy to take up arms in the army which they fight against, that they may betray it by their fraud, and do more harm to it by raising mutinies, and by false conduct, than a multitude of professed enemies could have done. It is proud, and worldly, carnal hypocrites, that hinder most the concord of believers.

LIV. 1. A confirmed Christian is of a peaceable spirit. He is not masterly, domineering, turbulent, hurtful, cruel, seditious, factious, or contentious. He is like ripened fruits that are mellow and sweet, when the younger, greener fruits are sour and harsh. He is not wise in his own conceit, (Rom. xii. 16.), and therefore not over-urgent in obtruding his conceits on others, not quarrelsome with all that cannot entertain them, nor will he easily lay men's salvation or damnation, no, nor the church's peace upon them. He is "kindly affectioned to others with brotherly love, yea, loveth his neighbour as himself;" ver. 10. xiii. 9, 10. And therefore he doth to others as he would they should do to him; and uses them as he would be used by them. And then how far they are like to suffer by him, you may easily judge. For "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour;" ver. 10. He is above the portion of the worldling, and a contemner of that vanity which carnal men account their felicity; and therefore he preferreth love and quietness before it, and can lose his right when the interest of love and peace

requireth it. He is become as a little child in his conversion (Matt. xviii. 3.), and is low and little in his own eyes, and therefore contendeth not for superiority or preeminence, either in place or power, or reputation of his learning, wisdom, or piety; but "in honour preferreth others" before himself;" Rom. xii. 10. "He mindeth not high things, but condescendeth to men of low estate;" Rom. xii. 16. And therefore will not contend for estimation and precedency, nor scramble to be highest, though he rise by the ruins of men's bodies and souls. "If it be possible as much as lieth in him, he will live peaceably with all men;" ver. 18. For he is not one that by word or deed will avenge himself; but when the wrath of others is up like a blustering storm, he giveth place to it, he boweth before it, or goeth out of the way. "If his enemy hunger, he feedeth him; if he thirst, he giveth him drink;" ver. 19. when oppressors would deprive not only an enemy, but the righteous of their meat and drink: and thus he melteth his hardened enemies by heaping kindness upon them when they are wrathful, and proud, and contentious, and do him wrong, or use provoking words against him, he is not overcome of their evil to imitate them, but he overcometh their evil with his good; ver. 20, 21. If God hath given him more knowledge and abilities than others, he doth not presently set up himself to be admired for it, nor speak disdainfully or contemptuously of those that are not of his mind. But he sheweth the eminency of his wisdom, "with meekness by the works of a good conversation," and by doing better than the unwiser do; James iii. 1—13. He is endued with the "wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality" (or wavering in persecution, as Dr. Hammond renders it), and without hypocrisy. And thus the "fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace;" James iii. 17, 18. As he is "taught of God to love his brother;" 1 Thess. iv. 9. So that same teaching with experience of the effects assureth him, that they that pretend to be wiser and better than others, when "they have bitter, envious zeal and strife in their hearts, they vainly glory and lie against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish. For where envying and strife

is, there is confusion and every evil work ;” James iii. 14, 15, 16. (Read but the story of the Jewish zealots in Josephus, and the heretical zealots in all ages of the church, and you will perceive the truth of this.) When such quarrelsome spirits are filling the church with contentions, or vexations about their meats and drinks, and days, &c. the Christian indeed understandeth that ‘ the kingdom of God consisteth’ not of such things as these, ‘ but in right eousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ;’ and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approveth of (wise and sober) men. Therefore he followeth after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another: and will not for meats, &c. destroy the work of God ;” Rom. xiv. 17—20. He stayeth not till peace be offered him, or brought home to him, but ‘ he followeth peace with all men, as well as holiness ;” Heb. xii. 14. If it fly from him, he pursueth it ; if it be denied him he seeketh it, and will not refuse to stoop to the poorest for it, and to beg it of his inferiors, if it were upon his knees, rather than be denied it, and live an unpeaceable, disquiet life ; Psalm xxxiv. 14. For he believeth that “ blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God ;” Matt. v. 9.

2. And the weak Christian hath the same spirit, and therefore the love of peace is most predominant in him. But, alas, he is too easily tempted into religious passions, discontents, contentious disputations, quarrelsome and opprobrious words ; and his judgment lamentably darkened and perverted, whenever contentious zeal prevaileth, and passions do perturb the quiet and orderly operations of the soul. He wanteth both the knowledge and the experience, and the mellowness of spirit, which riper Christians have attained ; he hath a less degree of charity, and is less acquainted with the mischiefs of unpeaceableness ; and therefore it is the common course of young professors, to be easily tempted into unpeaceable ways ; and when they have long tried them (if they prove not hypocrites) to come off at last upon experience of the evils of them ; and so the young Christians, conjunct with some hypocrites, make up the rigorous, fierce, contentious and vexatious party ; and the aged, ripe Christians make up the holy, moderate, healing party, that groan and pray for the church’s peace, and

mourn in secret both for the ungodliness and violence which they cannot heal. Yea, the difference is much apparent, in the books and sermons which each of them is best pleased with. The ripe, experienced Christian loveth those sermons that kindle love, and tend to peace; and love such healing books as do narrow differences and tend to reconcile and heal; such as Bishop Hall's Peace-maker, and "Pax terris," and all his writings; and Bishop Davenant's, Bishop Morton's, and Bishop Hall's "Pacifactory Epistles to Duræus," and "Mr. Burroughs' Irenicon," Ludov. Crocius, Amyraldus, Junius, Paræus's and many other Irenicons written by foreign divines, to say nothing that are upon single controversies. But the younger, sour, uncharitable Christians are better pleased with such books and sermons, as call them aloud to be very zealous for this or that contested point of doctrine, or for or against some circumstance of worship or church discipline, or about some fashions, or customs, or indifferent things, as if the kingdom of God were in them: Rom. xiv. 1, 2. 15, 16.

3. But the seeming Christian, is either a mere temporizer, that will be of that religion, whatever it be, that is most in fashion, or which the higher powers are of, or which will cost him least: or else he will run into the other extreme, and lift up himself by affected singularities, and by making a bustle and stir in the world, about some small and controverted point: and careth not to sacrifice the peace and safety of the church, to the honour of his own opinions. And as small as the Christian church is, he must be of a smaller society than it, that he may be sure to be amongst the best; while indeed he hath no sincerity at all, but placeth his hopes in being of the right church, or party, or opinion: and for his party or church, he burneth with a feverish kind of zeal, and is ready to call for fire from heaven; and to deceive him, the devil sendeth him some from hell, to consume them that are not of his mind: yet doth he bring it as an angel of light, to defend the truth and church of Christ. And indeed, when the devil will be the defender of truth, or of the church, or of peace, or order, or piety, he doth it with the most burning zeal: you may know him by the means he useth. He defendeth the church, by forbidding the people to read the Scriptures in a known tongue, and by imprisoning and burning the soundest and holiest members of it, and

abusing the most learned faithful pastors; and defendeth the flock by casting out the shepherds, and such like means, as the murders of the Waldenses, and the massacres of France and Ireland, and the Spanish Inquisition, and queen Mary's bonfires, and the powder-plot; yea, and the Munster, and the English rage and phrenzies, may give you fuller notice of. He that hath no holiness, nor charity to be zealous for, will be zealous for his church, or sect, or customs, or opinions; and then this zeal must be the evidence of his piety. And so the inquisitors have thought they have religiously served God, by murdering his servants; and it is the badge of their honour to be the devil's hangmen, to execute his malice on the members of Christ; and all this is done in zeal for religion by irreligious hypocrites. There is no standing before the malicious zeal of a graceless Pharisee, when it riseth up for his carnal interest, or the honour, and traditions, and customs of his sect; (Luke vi. 7.) "And they were filled with madness, and communed with one another what they might do to Jesus;" Luke iv. 28. Acts v. 17. xiii. 45. John xvi. 2. Rom. x. 2. Phil. iii. 6. Acts xxvi. 10, 11. The zeal of a true Christian consumeth himself with grief to see the madness of the wicked; but the zeal of the hypocrite consumeth others, that by the light of the fire his religiousness may be seen. You may see the Christian's fervent love to God, by the fervent flames which he can suffer for his sake: and you may see the fervent love of the hypocrite, by the flames which he kindleth for others. By these he crieth with Jehu, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord;" 2 Kings x. 16. 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

LV. 1. A Christian indeed, is one that most highly esteemeth and regardeth the interest of God and men's salvation in the world, and taketh all things else to be inconsiderable in comparison of these. The interest of great men, and nobles, and commanders; yea, and his own in corporal respects, as riches, honour, health and life, he taketh to be things unworthy to be named, in competition with the interest of Christ and souls. The thing that his heart is most set upon in the world is, that God be glorified, and that the world acknowledge him their King, and that his laws be obeyed, and that darkness, infidelity and ungodliness may be cast out; and that pride and worldliness, and fleshly lusts, may not hurry the miserable world unto perdition. It

is one of the saddest and most amazing thoughts that ever entereth into his heart, to consider how much of the world is overwhelmed in ignorance and wickedness, and how great the kingdom of the devil is, in comparison with the kingdom of Christ; that God should forsake so much of his creation; that Christianity should not be owned in above the sixth part of the world; and popish pride and ignorance, with the corruptions of many other sects, and the worldly, carnal minds of hypocrites, should rob Christ of so much of this little part, and leave him so small a flock of holy ones, that must possess the kingdom. His soul consenteth to the method of the Lord's prayer, as prescribing us the order of our desires. And in his prayers he seeketh first, (in order of estimation and intention,) the hallowing of God's name, and the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven; before his daily bread, or the pardon of his sins, or the deliverance of his soul from temptations and the evil one. Mark him in his prayers, and you shall find that he is above other men, taken up in earnest petitions for the conversion of the heathen and infidel world, and the undeceiving of Mahometans, Jews, and heretics, and the clearing of the church from those papal tyrannies, and fopperies and corruptions, which make Christianity hateful or contemptible, in the eyes of the heathen and Mahometan world, and hinder their conversion. No man so much lamenteth the pride and covetousness, and laziness and unfaithfulness of the pastors of the church: because of the doleful consequents to the Gospel and the souls of men, and yet with all possible honour to the sacred office, which they thus profane. No man so heartily lamenteth the contentions and divisions among Christians, and the doleful destruction of charity thereby. It grieveth him to see how much selfishness, pride, and malice, prevail with them that should shine as lights in a benighted world, and how obstinate and incurable they seem to be, against the plainest means, and humblest motions, for the church's edification and peace; Psal. cxx. 6, 7. cxxii. 6. Phil. ii. 1—4. Psal. cxix. 136. Zeph. iii. 18. Ezek. ix. 4. Psal. lxxix. 9. John ii. 17. He envieth not kings and great men their dominions, wealth or pleasure; nor is he at all ambitious in their tremendous exaltation. But the thing that his heart is set upon is, "that the king-

doms of this world may all become the kingdoms of the Lord ; Rev. xi. 15 ; and that the Gospel may every where "have free course and be glorified," and the preachers of it be encouraged, or at least "be delivered from unreasonable, wicked men;" 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. Little careth he who is uppermost or conquereth in the world, or who goeth away with the preferments or riches of the earth (supposing that he fail not of his duty to his rulers) so that it may go well with the affairs of the Gospel, and souls be but helped in the way to heaven. Let God be honoured, and souls converted and edified, and he is satisfied. This is it that maketh the times good in his account ; he thinketh not as the proud and carnal church of Rome, that the times are best when the clergy are richest and greatest in the world, and overtop princes, and claim the secular power, and live in worldly pomp and pleasures ; but when holiness most aboundeth, and the members of Christ are likest to their head, and when multitudes of sincere believers are daily added to the church, and when the mercy and holiness of God shine forth in the numbers and purity of the saints. It is no riches or honour that can be heaped upon himself, or any others, that make the times seem good to him, if knowledge and godliness are discountenanced and hindered, and the way to heaven is made more difficult ; if atheism, infidelity, ungodliness, pride and malignity do prevail, and truth and sincerity are driven into the dark ; and when "he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." Psal. lix. 15. When "the godly man ceaseth and the faithful fail from among the children of men ; when every man speaketh vanity to his neighbour, and the poor are oppressed, and the needy sigh, and the wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted." Psal. xii. 1, 2. 5. 8. The times are good when the men are good ; and evil when the men are evil, be they never so great or prosperous. As Nehemiah, when he was cup-bearer to the king himself, yet wept and mourned for the desolations of Jerusalem ; Nehem. i. 3, 4. ii. 2, 3. Whoever prospereth, the times are ill when there is a "famine of the word of the Lord, and when the chief of the priests and people do transgress and mock God's messengers, and despise his word, and misuse his prophets ; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. 16. Amos viii. 11, 12. When the apostles are "charged to speak no more in the name of

Christ; Acts iv. 18, v. 40. It is a text enough to make one tremble, to think into what a desperate condition the Jews were carried by a partial, selfish zeal; "who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us, and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sin alway, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." 1 Thess. ii. 15. 16. When the interest of themselves and their own nation and priesthood, did so far blind and pervert them, that they durst persecute the preachers of the Gospel, and "forbid them to speak to the people that they may be saved;" it was a sign that "wrath was come upon them to the uttermost." A Christian indeed had rather be without Jeroboam's kingdom, than 'make Israel to sin,' and 'make the basest of the people priests,' and 'stretch out his hand against the prophet of the Lord:' 1 Kings, xii. 30, 31. xiii. 4. He had rather labour with his hands, as Paul, and live in poverty and rags, so that the Gospel may be powerfully and plentifully preached, and holiness abound, than to live in all the prosperity of the world, with the hindrance of men's salvation. He had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than be a lord in the kingdom of satan. He cannot rise by the ruins of the church, nor feed upon those morsels that are the price of the blood of souls.

2. And the weakest Christian is in all this of the same mind, saving that private and selfish interest is not so fully overcome, nor so easily and resolutely denied; Luke xiv. 26. 33.

3. But here the hypocrite sheweth the falseness of his heart. His own interest is it that chooseth his religion; and that he may not torment himself, by being wicked in the open light, he maketh himself believe, that whatsoever is most for his own interest, is most pleasing unto God, and most for the good of souls and the interest of the Gospel; so that the carnal Romish clergy can persuade their consciences, that all the darkness and superstitions of their kingdom, and all the opposition of the light of the Gospel of Christ, do make for the honour of God and the good of souls; because they uphold their tyranny, wealth, and pomp, and pleasure. Or if they cannot persuade their consciences to believe so gross a lie, let church and souls speed how

they will, they will favour nothing that favoureth not their interest and ends. And the interest of the flesh and Spirit, and of the world and Christ, are so repugnant, that commonly such worldlings take the serious practice of godliness for the most hateful thing, and the serious practisers of it for the most insufferable persons; Acts vii. 57. xxi. 36. xxii. 22. xxiv. 5, 6. John xix. 15. The enmity of interests, with the enmity of nature, between the woman's and the serpent's seed, will maintain that warfare to the end of the world; in which the prince of the powers of darkness shall seem to prevail (as he did against our crucified Lord): but he shall be overcome by his own successes, and the just shall conquer by patience, when they seem most conquered. The name, and form, and image of religion, the carnal hypocrite doth not only bear, but favour, and himself accept; but the life and serious practice he abhorreth, as inconsistent with his worldly interest and ends. For these he can find in his heart, with Ahab, to hate and imprison Micaiah, and prefer his four hundred flattering prophets; 1 Kings xxii. 6. 8. 24. 27. If Luther will touch the pope's crown and the friars' bellies, they will not scruple to oppose and ruin, both him and all such preachers in the world, if they were able: John xi. 48, 50. Acts v. 28.

LVI. 1. A Christian indeed, is one whose holiness usually maketh him an eyesore to the ungodly world; and his charity and peaceableness, and moderation, maketh him to be censured as not strict enough, by the superstitious and dividing sects of Christians. For seeing the church hath suffered between these two sorts of opposers, ever since the suffering of Christ himself; it cannot be but the solid Christian offend them both, because he hath that which both dislike. All the ungodly hate him for his holiness, which is cross to their interest and way; and all the dividers will censure him for that universal charity and moderation, which is against their factious and destroying zeal (described, James iii). Even Christ himself was not strict enough (in superstitious observances) for the ceremonious, zealous Pharisees. He transgressed, with his disciples, the tradition of the elders, in neglecting their observances, who transgressed the commandment of God by their tradition; Matt. xv. 2, 3. He was not strict enough in their uncharitable observation of the sabbath-day; Matt. xii. 2. John, who was eminent

for fasting, they said, had a devil. "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.' But wisdom is justified of her children;" Matt. xi. 18, 19 And the weak Christians; Rom. xiv. 1—3. did censure those that did eat those meats and do those things, which they conceived to be unlawful. They that err themselves, and make God a service which he never appointed, will censure all as lukewarm, or temporizers, or wide-conscienced men, that err not with them, and place not their religion in such superstitious observances, as "touch not, taste not, handle not," &c. Col. ii. 18. 21—23. And the raw, censorious Christians are offended with the charitable Christian, because he damneth not as many and as readily as they, and shutteth not enough out of the number of believers, and judgeth not rigorously enough of their ways. In a word, he is taken by one sort to be too strict, and by the other to be too compliant or indifferent in religion; because he placeth not the kingdom of God in meats and days, and such like circumstances, but in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" Rom. xiv. 15—17. And as Paul withstood Peter to the face, for drawing men to make scruple or conscience of things lawful; Gal. ii. 11—13; so is the sound Christian withstood by the superstitious, for not making scruple of lawful things.

2. And the weak Christian is in the same case, so long as he followeth prudent, pious, charitable guides. But if he be taken in the snares of superstition, he pleaseth the superstitious party, though he displease the world.

3. And whereas the solid Christian will not stir an inch from truth and duty, to escape either the hatred of the wicked, or the bitterest censures of the sectary, or the weak; the hypocrite must needs have one party on his side: for if both condemn him, and neither applaud him, he loseth his peculiar reward: Matt. vi. 2. 5. xxiii. 5—8.

LVII. 1. The confirmed Christian doth understand the necessity of a faithful ministry, for the safety of the weak, (as well as the conversion of the wicked) and for the preservation of the interest of religion upon earth! And therefore no personal unworthiness of ministers, nor any calumnies of enemies can make him think or speak dishonourably of that sacred office. But he reverenceth it as instituted

by Christ ; and though he loathe the sottishness and wickedness of those that run before they are sent, and are utterly insufficient or ungodly, and take it up for a living or trade only, as they would a common work ; and are “ sons of Belial, that know not the Lord, and cause the offering of the Lord to be abhorred ;” 1 Sam. ii. 2. 17. Yet no such temptation shall overthrow his reverence to the office, which is the ordinance of Christ ; much less will he be unthankful to those who are able and faithful in their office, and labour instantly for the good of souls, as willing to spend and be spent for their salvation. When the world abuseth and derideth, and injureth them, he is one that honoureth them both for their work and master’s sake, and the experience which he hath had of the blessing of God on their labours to himself. For he knoweth that the smiting of the shepherds, is but the devil’s ancient way for the scattering of the flock ; though he knoweth that “ if the salt hath lost its savour, it is good for nothing, neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill ; but men cast it out, and it is trodden under foot ; (he that hath ears to hear, let him hear) ;” Luke xiv. 34, 35. Matt. v. 13, 14. Yet he also knoweth, that he “ that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward ;” Matt. x. 41, 42. And that, “ he that receiveth them, receiveth Christ, and he that despiseth them (that are sent by him) despiseth him ;” Luke x. 16. He therefore readily obeyeth those commands, Heb. xiii. 17. “ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls as those that must give an account ; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. We beseech you brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works’ sake, and beat peace among yourselves ; 1 Tim. v. 17. Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour ; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”

2. But though the weak Christian be of the same mind so far as he is sanctified, yet is he much more easily tempted into a wrangling censoriousness against his teachers, though they be never so able and holy men ; and by seducers may be drawn to oppose them, or speak contemptuously of them, as the Galatians did of Paul, and some of the Corinthians ; accounting him as their enemy for telling them the truth

when lately they would have plucked out their eyes to do him good; Gal. iv. 15, 16.

3. But the hypocrite is most easily engaged against them, either when they grate upon the guilt of his former sin, or open his hypocrisy, or plainly cross him in his carnal interest, or else when his pride hath conquered his sobriety, and engaged him in some sect or erroneous way, which his teachers are against, and would reduce him from; John vi. 66. Mark v. 27. 2 Chron. xxv. 16.

LVIII. 1. A Christian indeed is one that hath stored up such manifold experience of the fulfilling of God's promises, and the hearing of prayers, and the goodness of his holy ways, as will greatly fortify him against all temptations to infidelity, apostasy, or distrust. No one hath stronger temptations usually than he, and no one is so well furnished with weapons to resist them. The arguments of most others are fetched out of their books only; but he hath moreover a life of experience to confirm his faith, and so hath the witness in himself. He hath tried and found that in God, in holiness, in faith, in prayer, which will never suffer him to forsake them. Yea, it is like that he hath upon record some such wonders in the answer of prayers, as might do much to silence an infidel himself. I am sure many Christians have had such strange appearances of the extraordinary hand of God, that hath done much to destroy the remnants of their own unbelief; Psal. lxxvi. 16.

2. But the experiences of the younger, weaker Christians are much shorter, and less serviceable to their faith; and they have not judgment enough to understand and make use of the dealings of God; but are ready to plead his providences unto evil ends and consequences, and to take their own passionate imaginations for the workings of the Spirit. It is ordinary with them to say, 'this or that was set upon my heart, or spoken to me,' as if it had been some divine inspiration, when it was nothing but the troubled workings of a weak distempered brain: and it is their own fancy and heart that saith that to them, which they think the Spirit of God within them said; Heb. v. 11—13. 2 Thess. ii. 21. John iv. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 1 Cor. xii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 28, 29, 32. xxix. 8.

3. And the hypocrite wanteth those establishing experiments of the power of the Gospel, and the hearing of pray-

ers, and fulfilling of promises, and communion with Christ in the Spirit; and therefore he is the more open to the power of temptations, and a subtle disputer will easily corrupt him and carry him away to flat apostasy; for he wanteth the root and witness in himself; Matt. xiii. 21, 22. 1 John v. 10. Heb. vi. 6, 7, 8. Luke viii. 13.

LIX. 1. A Christian indeed, is one that highly valueth sanctified affections and passions, that all he doth may be done as lively as possibly he can; and also holy abilities for expression. But he much more valueth, the three great essential, constant parts of the new creature within him; that is, 1. A high estimation of God, and Christ, and heaven and holiness in his understanding, above all that can be set in any competition. 2. A resolved choice and adhesion of the will, by which he preferreth God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, above all that can be set against them, and is fixedly resolved here to place his happiness and his hopes. 3. The main drift and endeavours of his life, in which he "seeketh first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; Matt. vi. 33. ix. 20, 21. In these three (his highest estimation, his resolved choice and complacencies, and his chief endeavours) he taketh his standing constant evidences of his sincerity to consist; and by these he trieth himself as to his state, and not by the passionate feelings or affections of his heart; nor by his memory, or gifts, or orderly thinking, or expression. And it is these rational operations of his soul, in which he knoweth that holiness doth principally consist; and therefore he most laboureth to be strong in these. 1. To ground his judgment well. 2. And to resolve and fix his will. 3. And to order his conversation aright; Psal. l. 23. Yet highly valuing sensible affections and gifts of utterance, but in subserviency to those which are the vital acts; 1 Cor. xiii. Rom. vii. 18, &c. vi. 16. 22. Rom. viii. 13. James ii. Col. i. 9. iii. 16.

2. But the weak Christian usually placeth most of his religion in the more affectionate and expressive part: he striveth more with his heart for passionate apprehensions, than for complacency and fixed resolution. He is often in doubt of his sincerity, when he wanteth the feeling affectionate workings which he desireth, &c. thinketh he hath no more grace than that he hath sensibility of expressive gifts; and so as he buildeth his comfort upon these inconstant

signs, his comforts are accordingly inconstant. Sometimes he thinketh he hath grace, when his body or other advantages do help the excitation of his lively affections : and when the dulness of his body, or other impediments hinder this, he questioneth his grace again, because he undersandeth not aright the nature and chiefest acts of grace.

3. The hypocrite hath neither the rational nor the passionate part in sincerity : but he may go much further in the latter than the former. A quick and passionate nature though unsanctified, may be brought to shed more tears, and express more fervour than many a holy person can : especially upon the excitation of some quickening sermons, or some sharp affliction, or great conviction, or at the approach of death. Few of the most holy persons can constantly retain so lively, fervent, passionate repentings, and desires and resolutions to amend, as some carnal persons have in sickness. The power of fear alone doth make them more earnest, than love maketh many a gracious soul ; but when the fear is over, they are the same again. How oft have I heard a sick man most vehemently profess his resolutions for a holy life, which all have come to nothing afterward ? How oft have I heard a common drunkard, with tears, cry out against himself for his sin, and yet go on in it ? And how many gracious persons have I known whose judgments and wills have been groundedly resolved for God and holiness, and their lives have been holy, fruitful, and obedient, who yet could not shed a tear for sin, nor feel any very great sorrows or joys ? If you judge of a man by his earnestness in some good moods, and not by the constant tenor of his life, you will think many a hypocrite to be better than most saints. Who would have thought, that had seen him only in that fit, but that Saul had been a penitent man, when he lift up his voice and wept, and said to David, "Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good ; whereas I have rewarded thee evil ; 1 Sam. xxiv. 16—21. A smaller matter will raise some sudden passions, than will renew the soul, and give the preeminence to God, and holiness and heaven, in the judgment, will and conversation ; Hosea vi. 4. xiii. 3. Isaiah lviii. 2. Matt. xiii. 20.

LX. A Christian indeed, confirmed in grace, is one that maketh it the business of his life to prepare for death ; and

delayeth not his serious thoughts of it, and preparations for it till it surprise him; and therefore when it cometh it findeth him prepared, and he gladly entertaineth it as the messenger of his father, to call him to his everlasting home. It is not a strange unexpected thing to him, to hear he must die; he died daily in his daily sufferings, and mortified contempt of worldly things, and in his daily expectation of his change. He wondereth to see men at a dying time, surprised with astonishment and terror, who jovially or carelessly neglected it before, as if they had never known till then that they must die. Or as if a few years time were reason enough for so great a difference. For that which he certainly knoweth will be, he looketh at as if it were even at hand; and his preparation for it is more serious in his health, than other men's is on their deathbed. He useth more carefully to bethink himself what graces he shall need at a dying time, and in what case he shall then wish his soul to be; and accordingly he laboureth in his provisions now, even as if it were to be to-morrow. He verily believeth that it is incomparably "better for him to be with Christ," than to abide on earth; and therefore, though death of itself be an enemy, and terrible to nature, yet being the only passage into happiness, he gladly entertaineth it. Though he have not himself any clear apprehensions, of the place and state of the happiness of departed souls, yet it quieteth him to know that they "shall be with Christ," and that Christ knoweth all, and prepareth and secureth for him that promised rest; John xii. 26. 2 Cor. v. 1. 7, 8. Phil. i. 21. 23. Luke xxiii. 43. Though he is not free from all the natural fears of death, yet his belief and hope of endless happiness doth abate those fears by the joyful expectation of the gain which followeth. See my book, called "The Last Enemy, and the Last Work of a Believer;" and that of "Self-denial," against the fears of death.

But especially he loveth and longeth for the coming of Christ to judgment, as knowing that the marriage-day of the Lamb is come, and then the desires and hopes of all believers shall be satisfied; "then shall the righteous shine as stars in the kingdom of their Father:" and the hand of violence shall not reach them. Every enemy then is overcome, and all the Redeemer's work is consummated, and the kingdom delivered up unto the Father. Then shall the ungodly

and the unmerciful be confounded, and the righteous filled with everlasting joy, when the Lord shall throughly plead their cause, and justify them against the accusations of sathan, and all the lies of his malicious instruments. O blessed, glorious, joyful day, when Christ shall come with thousands of his angels, "to execute vengeance on the ungodly world, and to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe;" 2 Thess. i. 8—10. When the patient followers of the Lamb shall behold him in glory, whom they have believed in, and shall see that they did not pray, or hope, or wait in vain! When Christ himself and his sacred truth, shall be justified and glorified in the presence of the world, and his enemies mouths for ever stopped. "When he shall convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him;" Jude 14, 15. Where then is the mouth that pleadeth the cause of infidelity and impiety? and reproached the serious holiness of believers? and made a jest of the judgments of the Lord? Then what terrors and confusion, and shame, what fruitless repentings will seize upon that man, that set himself against the holy ones of the Lord, and knew not the day of his visitation, and embraced the image and form of godliness, while he abhorred the power. The joys which will then possess the hearts of the justified, will be such as now no heart can comprehend. When love shall come to be glorified in the highest expression, to those that lately were so low; when all their doubts, and fears, and sorrows, shall be turned into full contenting sight, and all tears shall be wiped away, and all reproaches turned into glory, and every enemy overcome, and sin destroyed, and holiness effected, and our "vile bodies changed, and made like the glorious body of Christ; Phil. iii. 20, 21. Col. iii. 3, 4. Then will the love and work of our redemption be fully understood. And then a saint will be a saint indeed, when with Christ they shall "judge the angels and the world;" 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3: and shall hear from Christ, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" Matt. xxv. 34. "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord;" Matt. xxv. 21. Then "every knee shall bow to Christ, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" Phil. ii.

2. 10, 11. Then sin will fully appear in its malignity, and holiness in its lustre unto all. The proud will then be abased, and the mouths of all the wicked stopped; when they shall see, to their confusion, the glory of that Christ whom they despised, and of those holy ones whom they made their scorn. In vain will they then "knock when the door is shut, and cry, Lord, Lord, open unto us;" Matt. xxv. 10—12. And in vain will they then wish, 'O that we had known the day of our visitation, that we might have died the death of the righteous, and our latter end might have been as his;' Numb. xxii. 10. Rom. iii. 19. Job v. 16. Psal. cvii. 42. xxxi. 23. xiii. 6. 8.

The day of death is to true believers a day of happiness and joy; but it is much easier for them to think with joy on the coming of Christ, and the day of judgment, because it is a day of fuller joy, and soul and body shall be conjoined in the blessedness; and there is nothing in it to be so great a stop to our desires as death is, which naturally is an enemy. God hath put a love of life, and fear of death, into the nature of every sensible creature, as necessary for the preservation of themselves and others, and the orderly government of the world. But what is there in the blessed day of judgment, which a justified child of God should be averse to? O, if he were but sure that this would be the day, or week, or year of the coming of his Lord, how glad would the confirmed Christian be! And with what longings would he be looking up, to see that most desired sight.

2. And the weak Christian is so far of the same mind, that he had rather come to God by death and judgment, than not at all; (except when temptations make him fear that he shall be condemned.) He hath fixedly made choice of that felicity, which till then he cannot attain. He would not take all the pleasures of this world for his hopes of the happiness of that day: but yet he thinketh not of it with so strong a faith and great consolation, nor with such boldness and desire, as the confirmed Christian doth; but either with much more dull security, or more perplexity and fear. His thoughts of God and of the world to come, are much more dark and doubtful, and his fears of that day are usually so great, as to make his desires and joys scarcely felt: only he thinketh not of it with that contempt or stupidity as the

infidel or hardened sinner, nor with the terrors of those that have no God, no Christ, no hope; (except when temptation bringeth him near to the borders of despair.) His death indeed is unspeakably safer than the death of the ungodly, and the joys which he is entering into will quickly end the terror; but yet he hath no great comfort at the present, but only so much trust in Christ, as keepeth his heart from sinking into despair.

3. But to the hypocrite or seeming Christian, death and judgment are the most unwelcome days, and the thoughts of them are the most unwelcome thoughts. He would take any tolerable life on earth, at any time, for all his hopes of heaven; and that not only through the doubts of his own sincerity, (which may sometimes be the case of a tempted Christian,) but through the unsoundness of his belief of the life to come, or the utter unsuitableness of his soul to such a blessedness; which maketh him look at it as less desirable to him, than a life of fleshly pleasures here. All that he doth for heaven is upon mere necessity, because he knoweth that die he must, and he had rather be in heaven than in hell, though he had rather be in prosperity on earth than either. And as he taketh heaven but as a reserve or second good, so he seeketh it with reserves, and in the second place. And having no better preparations for death and judgment, no marvel if they be his greatest terror. He may possibly by his self-deceit have some abatement of his fears, and he may by pride and wit seem very valiant and comfortable at his death, to hide his fear and pusillanimity from the world. But the cure of all his misery is, that he sought not first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and laid not up a treasure upon heaven, but upon earth, and loved this world above God, and above the world to come; and so his heart is not set on heaven, nor his affections on things above; and therefore he hath not that love to God, to Christ, to saints, to perfect holiness, which should make that world most desirable in his eyes, and make him think unfeignedly that it is best for him to depart and live with Christ for ever. Having not the Divine nature, nor having lived the Divine life in walking with God, his complacency and desires are carnal, according to the nature which he hath. And this is the true cause, (and not only his doubts of his own sincerity,)

of his unwillingness to die, or to see the day of Christ's appearance; Matt. vi. 33. 19—21. 1 John ii. 15. Col. iii. 1—4. Rom. viii. 5—8. 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. 2 Pet. i. 4.

And thus I have shewed you from the word of God, and the nature of Christianity, the true characters of the Confirmed Christian, and of the Weak Christian, and of the Seeming Christian.

The Uses for which I have drawn up these characters, and which the reader is to make of them, are these:

1. Here the weak Christian and the hypocrite may see what manner of persons they ought to be. Not only how unsafe it is to remain in a state of hypocrisy, but also how uncomfortable, and unserviceable, and troublesome it is, to remain in a state of weakness and diseasedness; what a folly (and indeed a sign of hypocrisy) is it to think, 'If I had but grace enough to save me, I would desire no more, or I would be well content.' Are you content, if you have but life here, to difference you from the dead? If you were continually infants that must be fed, and carried, and made clean by others; or if you had a continual gout, or stone, or leprosy, and lived in continual want and misery, you would think that life alone is not enough; and that '*non vivere tantum sed valere vita est*;' that life is uncomfortable when we have nothing but life, and all the delights of life are gone. He that lieth in continual pain and want is weary of his life, if he cannot separate it from those calamities. He that knoweth how necessary strength is, as well as life, to do any considerable service for God, and how many pains attend the diseases and infirmities of the weak, and what great dishonour cometh to Christ and religion, by the faults and childishness of many that shall be pardoned and saved, would certainly bestir him with all possible care to get out of this sick or infant state.

2. By this you may see who are the strong Christians, and who are the weak. It is not always the man of learning and free expressions, that can speak longest and most wisely of holy things, that is the strong, confirmed Christian; but he that most excelleth in the love of God and man, and in a heavenly mind, and holy life. Nor is it he that is unlearned, or of a weak memory, or slow expression, that is the weakest Christian; but he that hath least love to God and

man, and the most love to his carnal self, and to the world, and the strongest corruptions, and the weakest grace. Many a poor day-labourer, or woman, that can scarce speak sense, is a stronger Christian (as being strong in faith, and love, and patience, and humility, and mortification, and self-denial) than many great preachers and doctors of the church.

3. You see here what kind of men they be that we call the godly; and what that godliness is which we plead for, against the malicious serpentine generation. The liars would make men believe that by godliness we mean a few affected strains, or hypocritical shews, or heartless lip-service, or singular opinions, in needless scrupulosity, or ignorant zeal; yea, a schism, or faction, or sedition, or rebellion, or what the devil please to say. If these sixty characters describe any such thing, then I will not deny, that in the way that such men call heresy, faction, schism, singularity, so worship we the God of our fathers. But if not, the Lord rebuke thee satan, and hasten the day when the "lying lips shall be put to silence;" Psal. cxxxi. 18. cxx. 2. cix. 2. Prov. xii. 19. 22. x. 18.

4. By this also you may see how inexcusable the enemies of Christianity and godliness are, and for what it is that they hate and injure it. Is there any thing in all this character of a Christian, that deserveth the suspicion or hatred of the world? What harm is there in it? Or what will it do against them? I may say to them of his servants as Christ did of himself: "Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?" John x. 32. Many heavenly graces are in the sanctified believer: for which of these do you hate and injure him? I know that goodness is so far in credit with human nature, that you will answer as the Jews did: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy;" ver. 33. We hate them not for godliness, but for hypocrisy and sin. But if it be so indeed, 1. Speak not against godliness itself, nor against the strictest performance of our duty. 2. Yea, plead for godliness, and countenance and promote it, while you speak against hypocrisy and sin. 3. And choose out the hypocrite whose character is here set before you; and let him be the object of your enmity and distaste. Let it fall on those that are worldlings and time-servers, and will

stretch their consciences to their carnal interest, and can do any thing to save their skin; and being false to Christ, can hardly be true to any of their superiors, but only in subordination to themselves. As it is said of Constantius, that he commanded that all his servants should be turned out of their places that would not renounce Christianity. And when he had thereby tried them, he turned out all the apostates, and kept in the sincere, and told them, they could not be true to him, that were not true to their God and Saviour.

4. And see that you be not hypocrites yourselves. You profess yourselves Christians; and what is it to be a Christian indeed, you may here perceive. If any that fall under the character of hypocrites, or worse, shall vilify or hate the sincere Christians as hypocrites, what a horrid aggravation of their hypocrisy will it be?

Indeed it is the best and strongest Christians that have most of the hatred both of the unbelieving and the hypocritical world. And for my own part I must confess, that the very observation of the universal implacable enmity, which is undeniably seen throughout the world, between the woman's and the serpent's seed (being such as is not found among any other sorts of men on other occasions), doth not a little confirm my belief of the holy Scriptures, and seemeth to be an argument not well to be answered by any enemy of the Christian cause. That it should begin between the two first brothers that ever were born in the world, and stop in nothing lower than shedding the righteous blood of Abel, for no other cause, but because the works of Cain were evil, and his brother's righteous; 1 John iii. 12, 13. And that it should go down to the prophets, and Christ, and the apostles, and primitive saints, and continue to this day throughout the earth; and that the profession of the same religion doth not alter it, but rather enrage the enmity of hypocrites against all that are serious and sincere in the religion which they themselves profess. These are things that no good account can be given of, save only from the predictions and verities of the word of God.

5. Also you may hence perceive how exceedingly injurious hypocrites and scandalous Christians, are to the name of Christ, and cause of Christianity and godliness in the world. The blind, malicious enemies of faith and godliness, instead of judging them by the sacred rule, do look only to

the professors, and think of religion as they think of them. If they see the professors of Christianity to be covetous, proud, usurpers, time-servers, self-exalters, cruel, schismatical, rebellious, they presently charge all this upon their religion; and godliness must bear the blame, when all comes but for want of godliness and religion. And all the world hath not done so much against these and all other sins, as Christ hath done. What if Christ's disciples strive who shall be the greatest, is it long of him who girdeth himself to wash and wipe their feet? and telleth them, that "except they be converted, and become as little children, they shall not enter into the kingdom of God?" Matt. xviii. 3. and telleth them, that though "the kings of the Gentiles do exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, yet ye shall not be so?" Luke xxii. 25, 26. Is it long of him that hath said to the elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock?" Who hath set the elders such a lesson as you find in Acts xx. 2 Tim. iv. 1—3. 1 Tim. v. 17. If any called Christians should be truly schismatical, factious, or turbulent, is it long of him that hath prayed the Father that they may all be one? John xvii. 21—23. and hath so vehemently entreated them "that they speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, and that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;" 1 Cor. vii. 10. and hath charged them to "mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and to avoid them?" Rom. xvi. 16, 17. If any called Christians shall be seditious, or rebellious, or as the Papists believe, that the clergy are from under the jurisdiction of kings, and that the pope hath power to excommunicate princes, and absolve their subjects from their allegiance, and give their dominions to others, as it is decreed in the general council at the Lateran under Innocent the Third, Can. 3. Is all this long of Christ, who hath paid tribute to Cæsar, and hath commanded that every soul be subject to the higher powers, and not resist, and this for conscience sake? Rom. xiii. 1—3. and hath bid his disciples rather to turn the other cheek, than to seek revenge? Luke vi. 29.

and hath told them that they that use the sword (of rebellion, or revenge, or cruelty) shall perish by the sword? John xviii. 11. If any Christians will, under pretence of religion, set up a cruel inquisition, or kill men to convert them, or become self-lovers, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false-accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, &c. Is this long of him that hath forbid all this? 2 Tim. iii. 2—5. If for their own domination, lust, or covetousness, men called Christians, will be worse than heathens and wolves to one another, is this long of him that hath made it his sheep-mark, by which we must be known to all men to be his disciples, that “we love one another?” John xiii. 35. and hath told them, that if they “bite and devour one another, they shall be devoured one of another?” (Gal. v. 15.) and hath blessed the merciful, as those that shall find mercy (Matt. v. 7.), and hath told men that what they do to his little ones, shall be taken as if it were done to himself (Matt. xxv.), and hath commanded the “strong to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves” (Rom. xv. 1—3.), and “to receive one another as Christ received us” (ver. 7.), and hath told those that offend but “one of his little ones,” that it “were good for that man that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. xviii. 6.), and hath told him that “smiteth his fellow servants, that his Lord will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and shall out him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;” chap. xxiv. 48—51. I wonder what men would have Christ do, to free himself and the Christian religion from the imputation of the sins of the hypocrites, and the weak distempered Christians. Would they have him yet make stricter laws (when they hate these for being so strict already), or would they have him condemn sinners to more grievous punishment, when they are already offended at the severity of his threatenings? O what an unrighteous generation are his enemies that blame the law, because men break it, and blame religion, because many are not religious enough. As if the sun must be hated, because that shadows and dungeons do want light; or life and health must be hated, because many are sick and pain-

ed by their diseases ! But Christ will shortly stop all the mouths of these unreasonable men ; and O how easily will he justify himself, his laws, and all his holy ways, when all iniquity shall be for ever silent. And though "it must needs be that offences come, yet woe to the world because of offences, and woe to the man by whom they come."

The wrong that Christ receiveth from hypocrites and scandalous Christians (of all ranks and places) is not to be estimated. These are the causes that Christianity and godliness are so contemptible in the eyes of the world ! that Jews, and heathens, and Mahometans, are still unconverted and deriders of the faith ; because they see such scandalous tyranny and worship among the Papists, and such scandalous lives among the greatest part of professed Christians in the world ; whereas, if the papal tyranny were turned into the Christian ministry (Luke xxii. 25—27. 1 Tim. v. 17.), and their irrational fopperies, and historical, hypocritical worship were changed into a reverent, rational, and spiritual worship ; and the cruel, carnal, worldly lives of men called Christians, were changed into self-denial, love, and holiness. In a word, if Christians were Christians indeed, and such as I have here described from their rule, what a powerful means would it be of the conversion of all the unbelieving world ? Christianity would then be in the eye of the world, as the sun in its brightness, and the glory of it would dazzle the eyes of the beholders, and draw in millions to inquire after Christ, who are now driven from him by the sins of hypocrites and scandalous believers.

And this doth not contradict what I said before of the enmity of the world to holiness, and that the best are most abused by the ungodly. For even this enmity must be rationally cured, as by the error of reason it is fed. God useth by the power of intellectual light, to bring all those out of darkness whom he saveth, and so bringeth them from the power of satan to himself ; Acts xxvi. 18. Men hate not holiness as good, but as misconceived to be evil. Evil, I say, to them, because it is opposite to their sensual pleasures, which they take to be their chiefest good. And the way of curing their enmity, is by shewing them their error ; and that is, by shewing them the excellency and necessity of that which they unreasonably distaste ; Acts xxvi. 9—11. 14. 19. Luke xv. 13—16, Acts ii. 36, 37.

6. Lastly, in these characters you have some help in the work of self-examination, for the trial both of the truth and strength of grace. I suppose it will be objected, that in ther treatises I have reduced all the infallible marks of grace to a smaller number. To which I answer, I still say, that the predominancy or prevalency of the interest of God as our God, and Christ as our Saviour, and the Spirit as our Sanctifier, in the estimation of the understanding, the resolved choice of the will, and the government of the life, against all the worldly interest of the flesh, is the only infallible sign of a justified, regenerate soul. But this whole hath many parts, and it is abundance of particulars materially in which this sincerity is to be found. Even all the sixty characters which I have here named, are animated by that one, and contained in it. And I think to the most the full description of a Christian in his essential and integral parts (yet shewing which are indeed essential) is the best way to acquaint them with the nature of Christianity, and to help them in the trial of themselves. And as it were an abuse of human nature, for a painter to draw the picture of a man without arms, or legs, or nose, or eyes, because he may be a man without them; so would it have been in me to draw only a maimed picture of a Christian, because a maimed Christian is a Christian. Yet, because there are so many maimed Christians in the world, I have also shewed you their lamentable defects: not in a manner which tendeth to encourage them in their sins and wants under pretence of comforting them, but in that manner which may best excite them to their duty, in order to their recovery, without destroying their necessary supporting comforts.

O happy church, and state, and family, which are composed of such confirmed Christians! where the predominant temperature is such as I have here described! Yea, happy is the place where magistrates and ministers are such; who are the vital parts of state and church, and the instruments appointed to communicate these perfections to the rest. But how much more happy is the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, where the perfected spirits of the just in perfect light, and life, and love, are perfectly beholding, and admiring, and praising, and pleasing the eternal God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier for ever! Where the least and meanest is greater and more perfect than the confirmed

Christian here described; and where hypocrisy is utterly excluded, and imperfection ceaseth, with scandal, censures; uncharitableness, division, and all its other sad effects; and where the souls that thirsted after righteousness shall be fully satisfied, and love God more than they can now desire; and never grieve themselves or others with their wants or weaknesses, or misdoings any more. And, O blessed day, when our blessed Head shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe; whose weakness here occasioned his dishonour, and their own contempt! When the seed of grace is grown up into glory, and all the world, whether they will or not, shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; between the clean and the unclean, and between him that sweareth, and him that feareth an oath. And though now "our life is hid with Christ in God," and it yet "appeareth not (to the sight of ourselves or others) what we shall be; yet then when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory;" Heb. xii. 22, 23. Rev. xxii. 3—5. 14, 15. xxi. 3; 4. 8. 2 Thess. i. 9, 10. Matt. v. 4. 6. Mal. iii. 18. Eccles. ix. 2. 1 John iii. 2, 3. Col. iii. 3, 4. Away then my soul from this dark, deceitful, and vexatious world! Love not thy diseases, thy fetters and calamities. Groan daily to thy Lord, and earnestly groan to be cloathed upon with thy house that is from heaven (2 Cor. v. 2. 4.), that mortality may be swallowed up of life! Join in the harmonious desires of the creatures, who groan to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; Rom. viii. 20—22. "Abide in him, and walk in righteousness, that when he shall appear, thou mayest have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming;" 1 John iii. 28, 29. Join not with the evil servants, who say in their hearts, "Our Lord delayeth his coming, and begin to smite their fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; whose Lord shall come in a day when they look not for him, and in an hour that they are not aware of, and shall cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" Matt. xxiv. 38—51. O watch and pray that thou enter not into temptation! and be patient, for the Judge is at the door! Lift up thy head

with earnest expectation, O my soul, for thy redemption draweth near! Rejoice in hope before thy Lord, for he cometh; he cometh to judge the world in righteousness and truth. Behold he cometh quickly, though faith be failing, and iniquity abound, and love waxeth cold, and scorners say, 'Where is the promise of his coming!' Make haste O thou whom my soul desireth, and come in glory as thou first camest in humility, and conform them to thyself in glory, whom thou madest conformable to thy sufferings and humility! Let the holy city New Jerusalem be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and let God's tabernacle be with men, that he may dwell with them and be their God, and wipe away their tears, and death, and sorrow, and crying; and pain may be no more, but former things may pass away! Keep up our faith, our hope, our love! and daily vouchsafe us some beams of thy directing, consolatory light in this our darkness! and be not as a stranger to thy scattered flock, in this desolate wilderness! But let them hear thy voice, and find thy presence, and have such conversation with thee in heaven, in the exercise of faith and hope, and love, which is agreeable to their low and distant state. Testify to their souls that thou art their Saviour and Head, and that they abide in thee by the Spirit which thou hast given them, abiding, and overcoming in them, and as thy agent preparing them for eternal life. O let not our darkness, nor any strangeness feed our odious unbelief! O shew thyself more clearly to thy redeemed ones! And come and dwell in our hearts by faith! And by holy love, let us dwell in God, and God in us, that we grope not after him, as those that worship an unknown God. O save us from temptation! And if the messenger of satan be sent to buffet us, let thy strength be manifest in our weakness, and thy grace appear sufficient for us. And give us the patience which thou tellest us we need, that having done thy will, we may inherit the promise. And bring us to the sight and fruition of our Creator, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

END OF THE CHARACTER OF A SOUND, CONFIRMED CHRISTIAN.