

# The Anatomy of Secret Sins

PRESUMPTUOUS SINS, SINS IN DOMINION, AND UPRIGHTNESS

OBADIAH SEDGWICK



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Presumptuous Sins, Sins in Dominion, & Uprightness.

Wherein Divers weighty Cases are resolved in Relation to all those Particulars: Delivered in divers Sermons preached at Mildreds in Bread-street London, on Psalm 19.12, 13.

Together With the Remissibleness of All Sin, and the Irremissibleness of the sin against the Holy Ghost Preached before an Honorable Auditory.

By that Reverend and Faithful Minister of the Gospel, Mr. Obadiah Sedgwick, B. D.

Perfected by Himself, and published by those whom he entrusted with his notes.

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## **TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.**

The Name of the Reverend Author of this Work, will commend it to the Acceptance of them all, who were either acquainted with his Ministry, or have attentively perused his Treatises formerly published. He was a Workman who needed not to be ashamed: As the matter of his Discourses was solid and profitable, so his language was pregnant and delightful, both which took much upon his

gracious and ingenuous Auditors. This is to be acknowledged a great abatement of the Churches loss by his death, that though he be dead, he yet speaketh from the Press by the useful Treatises left written by his own hand, which through God's Mercy, may prove rich blessings unto posterity, by edifying Christians in Grace and Comfort. As the reasonable immortal soul is the more noble part of man, so supernatural Grace doth truly ennoble it by introducing the likeness and life of God. This Grace which is The good work, The good and perfect gift of God may be promoted both in its habit and exercise, by such helps as this, which Divine Providence putteth into thy hand. And therefore since sanctifying Grace (which is the strength, beauty, riches of the soul, and the best thing on this side Christ himself, From whose fullness we all do receive Grace for Grace) is wrought, preserved, enlarged, and quickened by these means, they should be gladly welcomed, and diligently improved by all serious sincere Christians. And whereas Humility and Sincerity are Graces eminently excellent, and useful throughout the whole course of Christianity rendering every other grace, and every duty the more lovely and acceptable. Helps in both these thou mayest expect from this ensuing Treatise. The Text here handled doth hold forth at the first view, both Sinfulness and Uprightness of God's servants: Their sinfulness bitterly bewailed, and their uprightness seriously designed; whence we have The Anatomy of secret sins, Presumptuous sins, Sins in Dominion, and of Uprightness.

Every self-considering Christian doth see so much sin in his heart and life, that he is abased under the Burden of it; how heavy then is this thought upon his heart, that there are many thousands of secret unseen Errors chargeable upon him by the All-knowing heart-searching God. And yet this adds further load unto the burdened Spirit, that besides his former guiltiness of, and inclination to presumptuous sins, (things heinous and horrid) the seeds also of that

unpardonable sin (the thoughts whereof are amazing and dreadful to every Gracious heart) do lie and live in his depraved nature. These particulars are here largely and convincingly discoursed of, by means whereof the secure sinner may be well awakened, and the proud heart deeply humbled. What examples of Bitter Mourning, self-loathing, and lamentable outcries, upon this account are recorded in the holy Scriptures. How needful and seasonable this too much neglected Endeavor would be in these loose luke-warm times, might easily be manifested. The manifold precious Benefits of this practice may persuade it; Besides, Divine Acceptance and familiar Communion, together with many rich Promises hereby possessed. By means hereof the soul will patiently submit to God's Afflicting hand , and seriously set upon real Reformation: Thus Christ will become much more precious and sweet unto the soul ; And as we shall be made more Meek in our deportment towards all, so more peculiarly compassionate towards Bleeding, Repenting sinners , viewing the number and heinousness of our own Irregularities, considering how much we ourselves do still lie under Sins Dominion, with the guilt of some presumptuous Iniquities.

Good Reader, thou shalt not only be thus edified in Humility (his Product of sins discovery) but in Sincerity also by that which followeth in the Anatomy of Uprightness. Inexpressible are the Comforts which come into the soul by clearing up its Sincerity from Scripture evidence. If there be a Messenger an Interpreter, one of a thousand to show unto man his Uprightness, then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a Ransom, his flesh shall be fresher than a Child; And for the Enjoyment of satisfaction out of God's All-sufficiency is assured in the Covenant of Grace unto upright walking with his Majesty. Herein consists God's image in man which is his fairest beauty, and his greatest Glory. The imperfect performances of the Sincere, do not

only find Acceptance, but Delight in the Lord; unto them he will not deny either Grace or Glory, or anything may be truly Good; and notwithstanding the saddest dispensations imaginable, God will be constantly and superlatively good unto them: How bad soever they be in their own eyes, yet they are perfect in God's Account; and they may always rejoice with Thanksgiving before the Lord, and with gladsome Boldness: look Pale death itself in the face when it doth approach. But we will not enlarge ourselves in these matters, contenting ourselves with these short hints suggested to give thee a taste of that sweet fruit which thou mayest expect to reap by the careful perusal of this very savory useful Book, which we commend to thy Improvement, and thyself therein to the Blessing of the Almighty, through Jesus Christ, in whom, and for whom, we are

September. 1. 1659.

Thy faithful friends and servants,

Humphrey Chambers,

Edmund Calamy,

Simeon Ash,

Adoniram Byfield.

## **THE ANATOMY OF SECRET SINS:**

Who can understand his Errors? Cleanse thou me from secrets:  
or from secret sins, or faults. - PSALM 19.12.

Saint Chrysostom conjectures that the main intention of the greatest part of this Psalm consists in the discovery of divine providence, which manifests itself in the motions and courses of the heavenly bodies, concerning which the Psalmist speaketh much, from v. 1. to the 7. Saint Augustine (upon the place) is of a quite different opinion, who conjectures that Christ is the whole subject of this Psalm: whose person is compared to the Sun for excellency and beauty, and the course of whose doctrine was dispersed round about the world by his Apostles, to which Saint Paul alludes, (Rom. 10. 18. Have they not heard, yes, verily their sound went into all the earth, &c.) and the efficacy of whose Gospel is like the heat of the Sun, which pierceth into the very heart of the earth, so that into the secrets of the soul.

I confess this allegorical exposition, is not altogether impertinent, neither is that literal Exposition of Saint Chrysostom to be blamed, for it hath its weight.

But to omit all variety of conjectures, this Psalm contains in it.

A double kind of the knowledge of God, of which one is by the book of the Creature; and this Divines call a natural knowledge: there is not any one creature, but it is a leaf written all over with the description of God, his Eternal power and God-head may be understood by the things that are seen, saith the Apostle, Rom. 1. 20. And as every creature, so especially the Heavens do lead us to the knowledge of a God: so v. 1. of this Psalm: The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work: they are the Theatres as it were, of his wisdom, and power, and glory.



Another is by the book of Scripture: And this knowledge is far more distinct and explicit: with the other, even the Heathens do grope after a Deity, but with this, Christians do behold God as it were with open face: The Characters here are now fresh, spiritual, complete, and lively: The Word of God is the singular means to know God aright: Look as the light which comes from the Sun, so that Word of God, which is light, is the clearest way to know God who is light itself. Hence it is that the Psalmist stands much upon this, from v. 7. to v. 12. where he sets open the words in its several encomiums and operations, viz. in its perfection, its certainties, and firmness; its righteousness, and purity, and truth, and then in its efficacy: That it is a converting word, an enlightening word, an instructing word, a rejoicing word, a desirable word, a warning word, and a rewarding word.

2. A singular and experimental knowledge of himself, so it seemeth that that word, which David did so much commend, he did commend it from an experimental efficacy; he had found it to be a righteous, and holy, and pure, and discovering word, laying open, not only visible and gross transgressions, but also like the light of the Sun; Those otherwise unobserved and secret atoms of senses flying within the house, I mean in the secret Chambers of the soul.

Now in this there are two things which the Psalmist sets down.

1. A sad complaint of his ignorance, [who can understand his errors?] As Paul in his case spake, the Law is holy, and just, and good, and spiritual, but I am sold under sin, Rom. 7. 12, 14. so David here, the Law of the Lord is pure, and righteous, and perfect, but I am very sinful; many sins I see in myself, and more there are which I cannot espy, I cannot find them out, nay, I think saith he, every man's sins

do arise beyond his accounts, he cannot give a full and entire list of them, who can understand his errors.

## 2. An earnest request, and that for three things.

One is to be cleansed from secret sins, which words some expound that he desires to be pardoned, not only his known, but also his unknown sin; Yet others conjecture that his desire reacheth to sanctification, which might prevail not only against open, but the private and closer methods of sinning.

2. Another is to be kept from presumptuous sins, v. 13. Saint Austin and others read it, a superbiis contine servum tuum, keep back thy servant from prides. I think their reason is because, 1. Pride is a bold and presuming sin. 2. And it is that which is the main ingredient of a presumptuous kind of sinning: even good men have the root of high transgressions within them, into which they may fall, If corruption might have its swinge; and if they do not fall into them, it is not because they are able alone to keep themselves, but because God doth by his spirit of grace keep them back.

3. A third is, the ordering of his words and thoughts, which he desires might be so composed, that they might be always acceptable in the sight of God, v. 14. as if he had said, O Lord, I do not only desire to be kept from the viler ways of sin, but from all whatsoever, I would not only not be wicked, but I pray thee that I may be good: As I would not do evil, so I would not speak evil, nay as I would not speak, so I would not think evil, I desire to be so, as that I may be acceptable before thee; I desire to do, as that I may be acceptable with thee; I desire to speak so, as that I may be accepted: yea and I desire to think so, that I may be acceptable in thy sight.

In my poor Conjecture you have in David here a lively copy of an upright heart, which is truly plain all over, and pitcheth upon this, that it may be acceptable with God, and that it may be so, it would be rinsed of all sins, not only notorious and visible, but invisible and secret, and it would have not only an outward decency of religion in pious actions, but also an inward conformity even of the very thoughts and Meditations of the heart.

I shall not speak of David's complaint, v. 13. who can understand his errors? only a word and a way.

By errors, he means his unwitting, and inconsiderate mistakes: There are sins, some which are committed when the Sun shines (i.) with light and knowledge, and then as it is with colors when the Sun shines, you may see them, so these a man can see and know, and confess them particularly to be transgressions: there are other sins, which are committed either in the times of ignorance, or else (if there be knowledge) yet with inobservance: either of these may be so heaped up in the particular number of them, that as a man did (when he did Commit them) take no notice of them, so now after the commission, if he should take the brightest candle to search all the records of his soul, yet many of them would escape his notice. And indeed this is a great part of our misery that we cannot understand all our debts: we can easily see too many, yet many more lie as it were dead, and out of sight; To sin is one great misery, and then to forget our sins is a misery too: If in repentance we could set the battle in array, point to every individual sin, in the true and particular times of acting and re-acting, O how would our hearts be more broken with shame and sorrow, and how would we adore the richness of the treasure of mercy which must have a multitude in it, to pardon the multitude of our infinite errors and sins.

But this is the comfort, though we cannot understand every particular sin, or time of sinning, yet if we be not idle to search and cast over the books; and if we be heartily grieved for those sins which we have found out, and can by true repentance, turn from them unto God, and by faith, unto the blood of Jesus Christ, I say, that God, who knows our sins better then we know them; and who understands the true intentions and dispositions of the heart, that if it did see the unknown sins, it would be answerably carried against them; He will for his own mercy sake forgive them; and he too will not remember them. Nevertheless, though David saith, who can understand his errors? as the Prophet Jeremiah spake also, The heart of man is desperately wicked, who can know it? yet must we bestir ourselves at heaven to get more and more heavenly light to find out more and more of our sinning's: So the Lord can search the heart: And though we shall never be able to find out all our sins which we have committed, yet it is possible, and beneficial for us to find out yet more sins then yet we do know: And you shall find these in your own experience, that as soon as ever grace entered your hearts, you saw sin in another way then ever you saw it before, yea, and the more grace hath traversed and increased in the soul, the more full discoveries hath it made of sins: It hath shewn new sins as it were, new sins, not for their being, not as if they were not in the heart and life before, but for their evidence, and our apprehension and feeling: we do now see such wages, and such inclinations to be sinful which we did not think to be so before: As physic brings those humors which had their residence before, now more to the sense of the Patient: or as the Sun makes open the motes of dust which were in the room before, so doth the light of the word discover more corruption.

But I pass by that point of the impossibility of a full apprehension of all sins committed ignorantly, and inconsiderately.

I now proceed from David's complaint to David's request, and here I shall speak of his first Request, viz. Cleanse thou me from secrets, or secret sins. Saint Austin upon the words, Ab occultis meis munda me domine, expreseth it thus, A cupiditatibus in me latentibus munda no: (i.) from those concupiscences which lie so hid, and so close, and so private within me: O Lord cleanse thou me, And in his second exposition of this Psalm (for he expounded the Psalm twice) Tolle-ex cord maelam cogitationem, (i.) O Lord take out of my very heart even the sinful thoughts.

I will name the Proposition, and then we may perhaps open things more fully.

## **CHAPTER I.**

It is the desire of a holy person to be cleansed, not only from public, but also from private and secret sins, Rom. 7. 24. O wretched man (saith Paul) who shall deliver me? Why, O blessed Apostle! what is it that holds thee? what is it that molests thee? thy life, thou sayest, was unblameable before thy conversion, and since thy conversion, Phil 3. Thou hast exercised thyself to have a conscience void of offense, toward God and toward men, Acts 24. 16. And yet thou criest out, O wretched man, and yet thou complainest, who shall deliver me? Verily brethren, it was not sin abroad, but at home, it was not sin without, but (at this time) sin within, it was not Paul's sinning with man, but Paul's sinning within Paul, O that Law of his members, warring (secretly within him) against the Law of his mind, This, this made that holy man so to cry out, so to complain: As Rebekah was weary of her life, not as we read for any foreign disquietments, but because of domestic troubles, the daughters of Heth within the

house, made her weary of her life: so the private and secret birth of corruption within Paul, the workings of that, that was the cause of his trouble, that was the ground of his exclamation and desires, who shall deliver me? I remember that the same Paul adviseth the Ephesians as to put of the former Conversation, so to put on the renewed spirit of the mind, Ephes. 4. 22, 23. intimating that there are sins which are lurking within, as well as sins walking without; and that true Christians must not only sweep the door, but wash the Chamber, my meaning is not only come off from sins which lie open in the Conversation, but also labor to be cleansed from sins and sinning, which remain secret, and hidden in the Spirit and inward disposition.

Now for the beneficial discovery of this assertion, let us inquire four things.

1. In what respects sins are called secret?
2. What it is to be cleansed?
3. Why we are to desire a cleansing from them?
4. What of all this to us?

#### SECT. I.

1. In what respect sins are called secret? for the resolution of this know, that sin hath a double reference.

Either to God, and so really no sin, nor manner of sinning is secret, Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord, do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord, Jer. 23. 24. it

is true, that wicked men with an Atheistical folly imagine to hide themselves, and their sinful ways from God, they seek deep to hide their Council from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, who seeth us, and who knoweth us, Isa. 29. 15. But really it is not so, though the cloud may somewhat eclipse the light of the Sun, and though the dark night may shut it forth altogether, yet there stands no cloud, nor curtain, nor moment of darkness or secrecy 'twixt the eyes of God and the ways of man: The ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings, Prov. 5. 21. He speaks principally there of the ways of the adulterer which usually are plotted with the most cunning secrecy, yet God seeth all those ways, so Heb. 4. 13. There is not any Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked, and opened (Anatomized) even to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Not a creature, not a thing, not anything of any creature, but it is naked, it is without all fig leaves, it is uncased of his colors and pretenses, ye it is opened as it were unbowelled, cut into distinct pieces, the very inside of it turned out to the eyes of God.

Onto man, and thus indeed comes in the division of sin into, 1. open: and 2. secret: Now in this respect sin may be Termed secret diversly.

1. In respect of the person sinning: when his very sinning is (formally considered) hidden from himself (i.) he doth a thing which is really sinful, but to him it is not Apprehensively so what outrages did Paul breath out against the Church in times of his Ignorance which he did not know to be acts of sin, but thought to be motions of a warrantable zeal; In this sense all the obliquities which may be fastened, at least, upon Invincible Ignorance, may be stiled secret sinners.

2. In respect of the manner of sinning, and thus sins may be Termed secret.

Either, 1. When they are colored and disguised, though they do fly abroad, get not under that name, but appareled with some semblances of virtues: Cyprian complains of such tricks in his second Epistle which is to Donatus.

2. When they are kept off from the stage of the world, they are like fire in the Chimney, though you do not see it, yet it burns: so many a person, like those in Ezekiel, Commit abominations in secret: (i) so as the Public eye is not upon them: He is sinful, and acts it with the greatest vileness, All the difference twixt another sinner and him, is this; that he is, and the other saith, he is a sinner; just as twixt a book shut, and a book opened; that which is shut, hath the same lines and words, but the other being opened, every man may see and read them.

3. When they are kept, not only from a public Eye, But from any mortal Eye: (i.) The carnal Eye of him who Commits the sins sees them not, He doth indeed see them with the eye of Conscience but not with an eye of natural sense: even those persons with whom he doth converse, and who highly commend the frame of his ways, cannot yet see the secret discoursing's and acting's of sin in his mind and heart: for Brethren, all the acting's of sin are not without, they are not visible, but there are some, yea the most dangerous acting's within the soul: where corruption lies as a fountain and root. The Heart of man is A scheme of wickedness, nay, a man saith that in his heart, which he dares not speak with his tongue, and his thought will do that which his hands dare not to execute, well then sin may be called secret, when it is sin, and acted as sin, even there, where none but God and Conscience can see; me thinks sin is like a Candle in a



Lantern where the shining is first within, and then bursting out at the windows: or like Boils and ulcerous Humors which are scabs and scurvy stuff, first within the skin, and afterwards they break out to the view on the outside, so it is with sin, it is a malignant Humor, and a fretting leprosy, diffusing it self into several secret acts and workings within the mind, and then it breaks abroad and dares adventure the practice of it self to the eye of the world, and be it, that it may never see the light, that it may be like a Child born and buried in the womb, yet as that Child is a man, a true man there clossetted in that hidden frame of nature, so sin is truly sin; though it never it gets out beyond the womb which did conceive and enliven it.

Now whether David doth speak of secret sins in opposition to the eyes of men, or to his own sensible eye, (i.) such as currupt Nature did commit within his own heart; or whether he intends it of both? it may be much disputed: for my part I conjecture that it may be understood both of such which he might commit in private, & so the words respect the acting's of sin in secret, & also which his own heart & thoughts might commit within themselves, and so the words respect the secret acting's of sin, though Principally they may be most fitly Expounded in this latter sense.

But what were those secret sins from which David desired to be cleansed.

Nay that is a secret; he doth not Instance in any one because his desire is to be freed from Everyone: he speaks Indefinitely, He found many secret inclinations (without all doubt in several kinds of sin, now in one, now in another, from all of which (not some only) he desires to be Cleansed.

## SECT. II.

### 2. But what is that to be Cleansed.

There be two Expositions of it.

1. One is that he desires to be justified, to be pardoned those sins and so the Hebrew word  $\eta\kappa\beta$  doth import in the second conjugation, *immunem aliquem facere a Culpa vel a poena*.

And indeed the blood of Christ which justifies is a Cleansing thing, it wipes off the guilt.

Now if this be it, Then thus much is evident, that secret thoughts and inclinations may be sinful and are damnable, or else they were not pardonable.

2. Another is that he desires more to be sanctified, and that his Nature might be more changed, not only that outward sinning's might be abandoned, but even inward acting's or motions might be subdued.

And observe, he doth desire to be Cleansed, he doth not desire to be dipped only into the water, or sprinkled, he doth not desire only to be a little rinsed, but he desires to be washed so long until he be cleansed, until his soul be made clean and pure, and free from those secret sinfulness's.

Where observe by the way three things.

First, he who hath received True Grace needs more grace: our lives need to be still reformed, and our hearts still to be cleansed, the soul is such a vessel as continually is gathering in and sending out what is

corrupt and evil. It is like a fountain which you need still be laving of it out.

2. Again the progress and perfection of cleansing the soul appertains to God as well as the beginning, The physician must go through with his cure, or else the patient will relapse, the disease will prevail, no not the created Grace in the soul is hard enough to keep down sin, much less to put it out, unless a divine & new assistance comes to the soul, Therefore David, though a Holy man, prays to God to cleanse him.

3. Lastly, persons Truly Holy, and sensible desire yet further measures, of Holiness: David was cleansed before, and yet he desires to be cleansed: why, because though he had a radical purity, yet he had not the gradual purity, The whole man was cleansed, but it was not cleansed wholly: some grace he had, but more he did want, some sins he was pretty well rid of, but others he felt yet stirring and working: Though no man saw them, yet he felt them: Noah combat, serves the Christian but that which Looks to victory, and he thinks the day is not yet won, if he hath not yet the conquest of every sin, as well as any one.

### SECT. III.

3. But why should we desire to be cleansed from secret sins: Either from secret acting or secret motions.

I will give you diverse reasons of it.

1. Because secret sins will become public sins, if they be not cleansed. It is with the soul, as it is with the body wherein diseases are first

bred, and then manifested; and if you suppress them not in their root, you shall shortly see them to break out in the fruit: or as it is with fire catching the inside of the house first, and there if you do not surprise it, it will make way for its self to get to the outside. Lust when it hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, Jam. 1. 15. Beloved, remember this, that though the first ground of sin be within the heart, yet the propension of sin is to come forth into public: the Child in the womb hath not stronger throws to get out of its private lodging, then sin secretly wrought to fly into open and manifest action: Ammon is sick with the sinful Conceptions of incestuous lust, and what ado was there till he had committed that villainy: let a man set up any sin in delightful Contemplation and meditations that same inward acting of his sin, Either doth actually Cast him upon the outward adventures, or invites them. This is the least that it doth, it doth strangely ripen his natural inclination; and besides that it doth prepare him for a temptation that suits that way: Satan shall not need to tempt him much, who hath already tempted himself: and he who will work sin in his heart, a weak occasion will draw it out into his life, thirty pieces of silver will prevail with a covetous Judas, who had already sold his Master in his heart.

Object. But what of that, will you say, suppose that secret sins uncleansed do become public.

I say therefore, should we the rather labor to cleanse them: for as much as the more public sin becomes, the worse it is you know, that if the word or letter of the mind be written in paper, now it becomes a copy for others to write after, whilst secret sins are confined the house (i.) to the soul only, and break not out into visible act, though they be very damnable, yet they are but of personal and proper danger, they endanger him only who maintains them, as poison doth him who takes the poison; But when they come to public and visible

acting's, then they are a copy, they are exemplary sins, & like the Plague infecting other persons, others are capable to imitate them, and so more souls are tainted, and God now receives a common dishonor.

2. Secret sins are apt to deceive us most, & therefore cleanse there; there is a deceitfulness in all sinning's whatsoever, the soul is cozened by sin whensoever it doth sin; but now secret sins deceive us most, they are most apt to prevail with us: partly,

1. Because we have not that strict and spiritual judgment of the inwards of sin, as of the outwards: many times we conceive of them as no sins at all, or else as slight and venial, to draw a sword, and run a man thorough the heart; O this is a fearful murder, to draw a false word, and slanderously to pierce thorough his good name, we likewise imagine that this may be bad, but to kill a man with malicious thoughts, with revengeful plots and desires, nay, this is scarce thought as a matter culpable, or at least very excusable. Beloved, it is the ingenium of sin to come off easily in the soul without stir and debate, and no sins come off so easily, as those with we scarce imagine to be sins. Now we are apt to think that secret sins are scarce sins.

2. And because Most men decline sin upon outward respects, which do not reach the acting's of secret sins, shame and fear, and observance are great, and the only restraints to many. They do not live in, and visibly commit such sins, because they like not shame, and are afraid of punishment, but what are those to secret sinning's, where no Law of man can reach, and no eye of man can search. It is true, that God hath set someone or other to watch the sinner all over, as his law for inward, & outward acting's; his conscience principally for the inward, and the eyes and mouths, and hands of men for the

outward: but now for secret sinning, it being invisible, it doth therefore escape all the outward restraints by the seeing, and speaking, and judging of men; and it hath mainly to attend what conscience will say, which perhaps is ignorant or drowsy, & if it doth speak yet it is not regarded: Now mark of all sins eye them most, which do most easily deceive you, these a man commits most, affects most, and continues in longest, since therefore secret sins come under that form, is it not necessary to labor to be cleansed from them.

3. The strength of sin is inward, therefore labor to be cleansed from secret sins; if a man hath a fever, so that his tongue doth even fry in his mouth, and his flesh is even roasted with burning heat, yet the strength of that fever is in his spirits and inward parts, which are set on fire by some humorous distemper; so is it with sin though the outward acting's be bad enough, yet the strong holds are within the soul: The strength of a sin,

1. Lies in its nearness to the fountain, from whence it can take a quick, immediate, and continual supply, and so do our secret sins, they are as near to Original sin, as the first droppings are to the springe head: they are indeed Original sin immediately acting itself, which sin is a full sin, a feeding sin, a sinning sin, and never weary.

2. It Lies in the acceptance of the affections: love and liking set sin upon its throne: They are the Arms royal of a sin; now of the two, men are more apt to like and love secret then open sinning's.

3. It lies in the confidence of Commission: Now a man doth take more heart and boldness and courage to commit secret sins then open.

4. It lies in the iteration and frequency of acting, for sin often repeated & acted, is like a cable doubled in strength by the manifold twisting's, but secret sins are more frequently iterated; an unclean heart can keep a whore in his thoughts every day and moment, who perhaps is afraid to be seen at the door of her house once a year: a proud person can disdain another in his heart all the week, who yet will not show it once a month, so for the malicious, &c.

4. The principle object of God's eye, is the inward and secret frame of the soul, therefore labor to be cleansed from secret sins, Psa. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me, Psa. 51. 6. Behold, thou desirest Truth in the inward parts: Therefore is he often said in scripture to search the heart & the reins, which intimates this special observation of the secret frame: it is true, that God doth give in charge against open sins, why, because he would not have any to be profane; and so he doth give singular charge against secret sins, why? because he cannot endure any to be hypocritical: the man is most, in all to God what his inside is: if ye work wickedness in your heart, God will destroy you, plaster your visible part with all sorts of pious expressions, if yet you can set up a form of sinning within, you are notable Hypocrites? the Lord seeth you to be false, and rotten, and he will discharge himself of you: Treason is as bad as Rebellion, Rebellion is but open Treason, and Treason is but secret Rebellion; the King will exact life justly for either; so will God for the secret sinning's, as well as for the open.

The spirit of God is grieved by secret sins, as well as dishonored by open sinning's.

SECT. IIII.

Now I come to the Applications of this point, Is it the desire of an holy heart to be cleansed? not only from public, but also from private sins, not only from gross and visible, but also from secret and invisible sins: then these things will follow from hence, as information's.

1. That true holiness hath a repugnancy and contrariety to all sins: It is not contrary to sin, because it is open and manifest; nor to sin, because it is private and secret, but to sin as sin, whether public or whether private, because both the one, & the other is contrary to God's will & glory, as it is with true light, though it be but a beam, yet it is universally opposite to all darkness: or as it is with heat, though there be but one degree of it, yet it is opposite to all cold; so if the holiness be true and real, it cannot comply with any known sin: you can never reconcile them in the affection: they may have an unwilling consistence in the person, but you can never make them to agree in the affection.

Beloved, there is a marvelous difference twixt things which are at difference by a respective and accidental repugnancy, and by a natural and pure contrariety, in the former there may be an accord, but in the latter none: an Hypocritical heart may fall out with its sin for the consequence of it, for the shame it brings, for the stinging guilt which it causeth in the conscience, yet his heart hath (in absolute terms) an inward Cohesion and league with that sin: but now true holiness & sin are opposite with a natural contrariety, therefore you can never reconcile them in the heart: but the opposition is inward as well as outward, to sin wheresoever it is.

2. That sanctification is not perfect in this life, he who hath most grace, hath yet some sin: Else why doth David (a holy person) desire



to be cleansed, he who needs to pray, that he may be cleansed, cannot yet totally say, my heart is Clean.

There is a perfection of Integrity which an holy heart hath standing in opposition to Hypocrisy and essential defectiveness, but there is not a Perfection of eminency which consists in an opposition to all want: Grace whiles in your hearts living on the earth, is as health rising in a sick body, or like heat getting into the water, or like light spreading itself more and more to chase away darkness, there is yet more of sin to be conquered, and we have less grace then we should have, and where any part or degree of sin is yet as an enemy, being and rising, there grace though it may be sound and saving, yet is it not absolute and perfect.

3. Here you may understand the grounds and reasons of the many troubles and heavy complaints of Christians: It is true, that they may fail many times in their words and speeches (and he is a very perfect man who doth not trespass therein) and they may be overtaken with explicit sinning's, no holy person will profess himself to be an Angel, but he hath many outward sins to bewail, as he hath many inward graces to bless God for; yet the load of his soul is within his soul; commissions do justly humble him; but the secret inclinations of sin they do even burst his heart asunder.

Why look ye so sad, say we oftentimes to good people, and why are yea so cast down? what is it which troubles you? you have a good God, and a good Christ, and a good Gospel, yea, I have, but withal, I have yet a bad heart in despite of all my conflicting's, and strivings, and praying's; I am yet so molested with sinful imaginations, with sinful inclinations: If I do, not perform duty with any life, I am troubled for my dullness: if I do it with any life, I am troubled with pride: If I do not pray, I cannot bear the guilt of a willing omission; if

I do pray, I am even torn from myself; and the crowd of other thoughts do justle out the apprehension and affection of my praying. Another Christian he complains bitterly of secret blasphemies; Atheistical risings, Another with private murmurings, discontents, unbelieving's; though you hear no such words, and see no such carriages; O wretched man that I am, said Paul: and verily so great are the Insolences of secret corruptions, that the Christian is oftentimes weary of his life. Beloved the main battle of a Christian is not in the open field, his quarrels are most within, and his enemies are in his own breast, when he hath reformed an ill life, yet it shall cost him infinitely much more to reform an ill heart; he may receive so much power from grace at the beginning, as in a short time, to draw off from most of the former gross acts of sinning's, but it will be a work of all his days to get a through conquest of secret Corruptions.

4. Then all the works of a Christian is not abroad, if there be secret sins to be cleansed.

There are two sorts of duties,

Some are direct, which are working duties, they are the colors of grace in the countenance and view of the Conversation, setting it forth with all holy evenness, and fruitfulness, and unblamableness.

Some are reflexive, which are searching duties, they appertain to the inward rooms, to the beautifying of them, and reforming of them; for not only the life, but the heart also is the subject of our care and study: I am not only to labor that I do no evil, but a so that I be not evil, not only that sin do not distain my paths, but also that it doth not defile my intentions: not only that my clothes be handsome, but also that my skin be white (i.) my inward parts be as acceptable to God, as my outward frame is plausible with man; yea, let me tell you one thing, that he is an hypocrite, who takes care to wash the outside

only, forasmuch as the greatest solicitude for the life, may be without any reformation of the heart; not that the life must not be squared, but if that be varnished, and the heart neglected, the person hath not only the same natural and lively frame of sinfulness, but he deceives himself, or at least another with a mere pretense and shadow, therefore brethren let us have eyes to look inward, as well as outward, God hath given us a reflexive faculty; and besides that, know

1. That Prima pars, the first part of our work is to set upon the inward part; how vain is it to wash the brackish streams which are yet fed by a sour fountain: and verily the conversation will be ever and anon unequal and unlike itself; if the heart remains unpurged and unchanged, corruption which hath often entertained your secret thoughts, will at length present these births to your very eye.

2. That Maxima pars, the greater part of your work is within: It is true, an ill tongue, a lustful eye, a stealing hand, they may challenge much prayer, care and observance, watchfulness to reform them, but a beam of light is small to the vast body of light in the Sun, and the dribbling rivers are with more ease, turned and dried up, then the deep ocean, sin within, is sin in the fountain, and sin in the visible parts, is sin in the streams, yea, and as everything is strongest in its cause (and therefore sin is highest in the heart) for the strength and vigor of temptations is at the inward part of man: Satan doth not stir a naked eye, but a filthy heart to look through that sinful window, he doth not come to the hand, and say steal, but first to the heart, which will quickly command the hand: he doth not say immediately to the tongue, swear and blaspheme, but the heart, which can easily command that Hellish language into the tongue. If thou shouldest pluck out thine eyes, and never see any object to excite thy unclean heart, yet mayest thou be as filthy a person, thine own corrupt heart,

and Satan would alone incline thee; and though thou haddest never a foot to go, nor hand to stir, yet mightest thou be as very a thief as Judas: thy heart might rob every passenger, and steal from every house thou comest in: objects are but accidental things to man, they have no necessary impressive influences; they do but deliver themselves in that nature wherewith God hath clothed them: but that which envenoms them, and makes them to work so wickedly, is man's wicked heart; you have many persons who complain much against objects, O they can see none, or deal with none, but wickedness is stirring. Why, beloved, the objects are innocent, but our hearts are unclean and sinful: if thou couldest get another heart, thou wouldest look with another eye: the only way to make temptations lose their force, is to decline occasions, and to cleanse the inward parts.

#### SECT. V.

Another Use which I would make of this is, to try ourselves, what care we have of secret sins: I will give unto you some Reasons why I would have you to try yourselves in this,

1. Because there be many persons, who wallow in secret sins. The Apostle complained of such in his time, Ephes. 5. 12. It is a shame to speak of those things which are done to them in secret, he speaks of such as lived in secret fornications and uncleanness; Brethren, how many are there, who do apparel themselves even with a form of godliness, who yet not only allow themselves in the secret thoughts of abhorred wickedness's, but even in the secret acting's of the same, as if there were no God to look on them, nor conscience to espy them, nor judgment day to arraign them: O how infinitely odious must thou be in the eyes of that holy God, who dares to Court him in the

public, and yet dares to provoke him to his face thus in private; like a whorish strumpet, who dissembles marvelous affections to her husband abroad, and yet at home she will violate the Covenant of her God, before her husband's eyes; So thou to pretend so much for God before company, and yet in private thou wilt presume to sin before his face: for he seeth thee, and that thy conscience knows right well.

There be at the least three horrible sins which now thou doest commit at once.

First, that very sin which thou wouldest so conceal: And perhaps it may be a sin of the deepest die. Yea, mark this, that usually the most damnable sins are such which are committed in secret, as Sodom's adulteries, and such fearful kinds of pollutions, and murders, and treasons, &c.

Secondly, Hypocrisy, which is a screen to thy sin, a holy cover for an unholy heart and practice, which makes the sinner by how much the more vile in God's eyes, by how much the more that he doth not only sin against God, but wrests (as it were) something from God to cover and palliate his rebellion against him.

A third is Atheism: if there be not formal Atheism, yet there is a virtual Atheism, as if God were no God in secret, but only in public, that he could see in the light and not in the darkness; that his eye is as the eye of a man only: whereas he is a universal eye, and is a light without all darkness.

2. The principle of sinning is secret and common to every man.

The motions of sinning are not like the motions of a bowl which runs only by the virtue of an imprinted strength, they are not violent motions whose cause is only extrinsical, but they are natural

motions, whose principle is within the subject: out of the heart (saith Christ) proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, malice, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, all these evil things come from within and defile the man, Mark 7. 21, 22, 23. the nature which tempts thee, that nature is in thee, it is the womb of many and infinite sinful corruptions, and imaginations: it casts out wickedness as the fountain casts forth water; so the Prophet, Jer. 5. 7. it is very true, that outward occasions, and Satan by his suggestions may assist and quicken original corruption, as the bellows may enflame the fire, yet the fire hath heat, and an aptness naturally to burn. So original corruption, though it may grow monstrously active by temptations from abroad, yet it can and doth incline us, and can beget private acting's of horrible sins, from its own native strength, it can send out several forms of sinning, and incline us to contemplate upon them, yea to contrive the singular methods of transgression, yea, it can feed the soul with wonderful delights in them, so that in the eye of God, the sinning's are formed, and fashioned, and ripened with most of odious perfections.

There is a high depth of hypocrisy in the souls of men, whose proper work is to have a secret way contrary to an open profession; as a player who takes on him to act the part of a King, yet in his private and absolute way, he may be a person of most ignoble birth, and unworthy qualities: so it is with the hypocrite.

1. One is natural and hath footing in every man: even the most upright heart hath in it some hypocrisy, and he doth sometimes seem to be that, which he is not: he may be sometimes more full in his profession, then he is indeed in his actions.

2. Another is foul and gross, which is when a man's heart, is not at all what it seems to be unto the world. Christ compares persons guilty of it to whited Sepulchers, which within are full of dead and rotten bones, as when a man shall profess he loves God, and Christ, and his ways, and yet secretly contemns and hates holiness, and resists the motions of God's spirit: and is at defiance with all the heavenly rules of life and powerful obedience.

3. A third is formal, when a man not only deceives others with a show of what is not in him, but also cozens and cheats his own heart with a false persuasion of his own happiness, partly from some special, which he finds in himself above others, and partly from the pride of his own spirit, joined with an affectation of happiness; yet all this while, his heart keeps an haunt of some private lust and ungodliness, there is some sweet morsel under his tongue from which he will not part.

4. Outward occasions can incline to secret sinning's: Beloved (there lies a snare almost against us) in all society: we have such vile natures, that as a spark of fire will easily kindle a box of tinder, so but a word spoken doth many times kindle a world of passion, of malice, of revenge within us: yea, the misplacing of a look begets in us secret disdain and discontent, yea, the casting of an eye may inflame the heart with excess of lust: need we not then (putting all these things together) to search our inward frame, to see what care we have about and against secret sinning's: but you will say, how may a man know whether he doth, or no, desire truly to be cleansed from secret sins.

I will give unto you some observations for this, 1. Negatively, then 2. Positively.

1. The Negative discoveries (i.) those by which a man may know that he doth not desire to be cleansed from secret sins are these.

1. When the principal restraint of his sinning's is terminated only in man. Beloved, really our conversing is either with God, or with ourselves, or with men; and answerable to these, there are three several reasons of forbearing sin; either because of God, whose will and holiness is injured; or else because of our conscience, because our secret, quiet, and ease shall be interrupted, or else because if we should adventure to sin, we should hazard our estimations and estates, and safeties, and incur ignominy, blame, shame, punishment, and loss with men.

Now mark it: when respect to man is the only reason, why I forbear sin, I am all this while loose and unconscionable in the inward frame, all my care is taken up about those actions and carriages which fall under the eye and judgment of man; and none but the visible and open acting's of sin break out that way: If I forbear sin for man's sake, that men may esteem well of me, and not censure or punish me, I therefore so far restrain sin as it may not be visible, but I do not strive against it, because it is sinful; I say, not because the thing is sinful before God, but only because it is culpable before man: now try yourselves in this: what is the restraint of your sinning: suppose all men in the world were in a dead sleep, suppose that no eye did see thee, suppose that no tongue of human justice would call thee to account: would not thy heart then with full sail spread out itself: wouldst thou not now, like the lions in the night, wander about for thy preys; would not thy heart turn out itself, let go itself, drive out its secret inclinations: wouldst thou not do that in any place which now thou committest in secret corners.

2. When the hindrances of secret sinning's are a burden, they are crosses. A man doth not desire to go out of the way of his delight: he is not weary of his affection, for delight is endless, and unsatisfied: though the body may be wearied, yet the affection of delight is never



wearied: now brethren, a man may know his delights by his crosses, if I attain not that which I respect not, I am not moved, but if my spirit rise, and swell, and rage, or if I grieve, and complain, and am sad, because of an impediment of something which hath clapt in itself 'twixt me and my desires, this shows that I had a delight in it, that I would fain have had it. Now let me apply this to our business in hand, God doth many times hinder the sinner, he doth step in by his providence, and prevents him from increasing his guilt: he puts forth some accident, some impediment or other which stands twixt the intention of sin, and the execution of it: the sinner hath contrived and plotted the time, and place, and the manner of the sinning, but God (who over-rules all) hath disappointed him, by the unexpectedness of other company, or some other occurrence of sudden sickness, or misadventure, if now the heart do grow into Ahab's turbulent fits, it is a sign it would have had Naboth's vineyard; if the hindrance of the sinful fact, whether (open or secret) be a grief to thee, this shows the bent of thy heart to the sin, but I pass on.

3. When the nature of sin is no burden, but some particular acting's are. As Joab said to David, when he observed his sorrow for Absalom, I perceive (said he, 2 Sam. 19. 6.) that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well: So here, when the main trouble is for some actions irregularly starring out to the world, and not for the nature, which is a cause of that and all other sinful acting's, this shows that our eye is outward and not inward.

Brethren, mistake me not, I do not mean that sinful actions should escape our tears, nay verily all our sinful births and broods naturally, calls for sorrow and humbling's, and the more sinful any explicit act is, the more dishonor God hath by it, the more scandal religion suffers for it; therefore, I say, the more sorrows and tears should we

cast after it; but then know, that according to the guilty quality, according to the proportion of it, should be the answerableness of our grief and perplexity: am I grieved for a rash and hasty word, and not for a passionate and violent nature; am I troubled for an unclean gesture or act, and not for an unclean heart; am I perplexed for a lie by my tongue, and not for an evil and false heart: verily then my eye is not on God, but man, it is not upon secret sins, but only upon open and manifest sins.

4. When we cannot abide the spiritual efficacy and inward searching of the word: Beloved, the Word of God is quick and powerful, a two-edged sword, it divides between the joints and the marrow, it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, Heb. 4. 12. you find it to be so, that it comes into your closet, it finds you out in your most secret ways of sinning, it follows you into the most dark corners, it pierceth into the imaginations and plots which you never yet brought out to the Sun, it tells you of your very desires and affections, what you like most, crave most, do most. Now what do your hearts say, how do they bestir themselves, when they find the word to haunt and pursue them, when they observe the word to come and close with the secret windings and turnings: do you not strive to keep out the light? do you not hold it off, as they do the enemy in a siege in the out-works, that he might not break into the heart of the City, would you not be spared, unsearched: nay, you cannot endure the word which comes to your private sinful gains; and to your private sinful pleasures, you will not endure to be ordered how to think, and how to desire: if it be so, where is then in you the property of an holy David, who doth not desire to guard and defend, but to be cleansed from secret sins.

Positive Trials.

The Positive observations by which you may know that you desire in truth to be cleansed from secret sins, may be these.

1. Consider of what acceptance are secret temptations; there are open and broad temptations which carry some express prejudice unto our names, and there are implicit, and close temptations, which carry a real prejudice to God's glory, of this latter sort, there are again two kinds: some temptations there are which the ingenuity of a refined nature may perhaps start at as too infinitely gross, to yield unto them; as some kinds of blasphemy, and mocking's, and reviling's of God, or Christ, or the Gospel, and those hideous excitations to self-murder, or any unnatural villainy: other temptations there are which may find a principle within the soul more intimate and apt to take and receive the impressions, if not opposed by the advertency and purity of a spiritual heart: now assuredly the heart doth desire to be cleansed from secret sins which stirs up itself with all its might against those secret temptations, which deal for sin within the soul, which lighten and quicken natural corruption by representation, or by excitation, or by both: O it is the heavy day of the soul, when it is so inwardly assaulted and buffeted: the heart is so far from yielding, that it is resisting with tears, with prayers; yea, and observe one thing which is this, that the temptation to the sinning is not only resisted, but it is made an occasion to the holy soul, the more to labor against the corruption, unto which the temptation would secretly incline: as if Satan should tempt to secret pride; not only not to admit the temptation, but now to go to God and pray more earnestly against a proud imagination, and a proud spirit, yea, to be vehement for an heart more lowly and humble; or if Satan doth tempt to contemplative uncleanness, or secret acting's, not only to resist and abhor them, but to pray more earnestly for a Chaste and pure heart, and for chaste and spiritual imaginations and thoughts.

2. Consider how far forth thou desirest to approve thyself to God. God is the God of our spirits as well as of our bodies, and he doth not only ponder our paths, but doth also search our hearts: That thou sendest forth some words in prayer, O this satisfies not because of so many distractions in the mind, and of so many deadness's in the affection: that man cannot accuse thee for any habitual unevenness, this is not enough, if God cannot approve of thee for a person after his own heart: if thy heart were such as God would like regard, approve, accept, then thou wouldest be better satisfied.

There is a twofold approving of ourselves, one in the conscionable exactness of duty appertaining to our callings; hence the Apostle, 2 Cor. 6. 3. giving no offense in anything that the Ministry be not blamed: verse. 4. But in all things approving ourselves as the Ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.

Another in the internal disposition of the soul; which is when the private frame of the spirit is so endeavored to be rectified, squared, beautified, and ordered, that the great and holy God may take delight, and proclaim his gracious testimony of the same: hear that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 10. 18. Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth; in the former respect is that phrase of Paul, Rom. 16. 18. approved of men, in the latter respect is that phrase of Paul, Rom. 16. 10. approved in Christ; and of Peter, Acts 2. 22. A man approved of God. Now verily, no man can sincerely desire to approve himself unto God (i.) to put himself over unto God's sentence of trial and decision so, that he might find an acceptance from his eyes, but he doth indeed desire to be cleansed from secret sins; why? because God's sentence is righteous and according to truth, he doth not weigh so much, the actions as the spirits of men, not so much the outward expressions as the inward

dispositions; not so much what they do, as what they would do; not so much that they do not, as this that they would do no iniquity I remember that David is upon this very strain, in Psal. 139. 23. Search me O Lord, and know my heart, and know my thoughts, v. 24. And so if there be any wicked way in me: Here he puts himself entirely upon God, to try him, to search him, to see whether his heart be such as he should like and approve. Paul is in the same strain, 1 Cor. 4. 3. with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you; (i.) whether you approve of me or not accept of me, or condemn me, I tell you, this is not the main thing that I look on, v. 4. But he that judgeth me is the Lord, (i.) there is another Judge, a greater Judge, a better Judge, one who can canvas the secret and inward parts, as well, as eye the mere visible acts and motions, to him do I look, to him do I desire to approve myself.

3. Observe, where doest thou lay the sharpest edge of the axe: the axe, said Matthew in another case, is now laid to the root of the tree: sin is like a tree, it hath root and branches, that which we see of the tree, is the bulk and branches, that which is the life of the tree we see not, it is the root which is moored in the bowels of the earth. Now as a man may deal with a tree, so he may deal with his sins; the axe may be employed only to lop off the branches, which yet all live in the root, and he may apply his axe to the very root, to the cutting of it up, and so he brings an universal death to the tree: So it is possible for a man to bestow all his pains to lop off sin only in the visible branches in the outward limbs of it, and it is also possible for a man to be crucifying the secret lust, the very corrupt nature and root of sinfulness. Now this I say, he who bestows his study, his prayers, his tears, his cares, his watching's, his strength to mortify corruption in the root, in the nature, in the cause, how unquestionable is it that he doth desire to be cleansed from secret sins. Suppose a man hath an ulcerous part (undiscovered) in his breast: if he applieth such physic

which will carry away the spring of that ulcer, it is a palpable sign he doth desire to be cleared from the secret ulcer itself: so it is in this case.

Beloved, we distinguish 'twixt these two things, viz.

1. The restraining of sin.

2. The weakening of sin.

A man whose sins may crawl in him, like the worms in a dead body, which may feed upon his most exquisite contemplations, and dearest affections, with fullest and sweetest contentment, may yet curb and restrain the habits, or sinful propensions from breaking out into act; The vigor of a natural and enlightened conscience, and the ingenuity of a more nobly bred disposition; and the force of particular aims and ends, may be able to rein up and bridle in thee. Actus imperatos (as the School-men speak) the notable or visible deliveries or acting's of sin; But that which weakens sin is grace; that which purgeth out the sin is always contrary to it.

Again, we observe a difference 'twixt these two, viz. to have sin and the heart asunder: and to have sin and the shame or the bitterness asunder: this latter a Pharaoh, an Ahab may desire; but the former, only that man who is truly holy, and would be cleansed from secret sins.

4. And this now leads me to a fourth discovery of a person who desires to be cleansed from secret sins, viz. he who strongly desires to have another nature, another heart. Another nature or heart is a heart replenished with most holy qualities, which stand in a present opposition to that of sin, and which in time will get the victory over it: Suppose a man be apt to much unbelief, secret mistrusts and

distrusts, how know I that he would be cleansed from them? not only by this that he complains, but also that he is day and night with God for the grace of faith, and the strength of his Spirit to believe: And indeed it is the contrary grace which doth cleanse from sin; secret grace which cleanseth from secret sins: forasmuch as the inward cleansing, is not by outward medicines, but by a completed principle, both in nature and operation, striving against the nature and operations of sin, as the Apostle elegantly shadows it, in Gal. 5. Psal. 51. Create in me a new heart, said David; the new heart is a new frame and temper to fil the soul with other inclinations and thoughts, and the life with other ways and actions.

#### SECT. VI.

I Now proceed to a third Use which shall be for Comfort to such persons whose desires are really carried to be cleansed from secret sins, as well as public and visible, they may comfort themselves in many things. For,

1. That their praise is of God, and he doth commend them, see the Apostle, Rom. 2. 28. He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, verse 29. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God: Now what a comfort is this that thou art a person whom the Lord will take notice of, yea, whom the Lord himself will praise and commend: to say of thee as of David. I have found a man after mine own heart; and that thy heart is perfect with the Lord.

2. That conscience in a day of distress will acquit and clear them. Beloved, there are two sorts of people.

Some daubing, and dissembling, and shuffling, whose care it is not, not to sin, but to be cunning in sin; these shall find that in the day of their distress, conscience shall rip up before their eyes their most private vileness's, and that God will set their secret sins before the light of his countenance; yea, and the more industrious and witty that they have been that way, the more shall conscience aggravate the hypocrisy of their souls.

Others conflicting and agonizing with secret motions, outward occasions, strong temptations: these persons in a day of distress shall find singular testimony from conscience; for though now, whiles their judgment is oppressed with variety of arguments, and the mind is overladen with the heap of temptations, they are not able clearly to judge and decide their condition, yet when conscience (which is the great umpire in man) shall arise to examine fore-past actions and endeavors, it will there give sentence for thee, excusing thee, approving thee, That in all simplicity, and sincerity thou hadst thy conversation, both towards man and towards God, and that it was the desire of thy soul, to fear the Lord, to do no iniquity, but to walk before him in all well-pleasing: conscience doth clear, as the word clears, and whom the word doth clear.

3. They may with confidence make their prayers to God, and shall be heard. The hypocrite hath Moab's curse, that he shall pray but not prevail, Isaiah 16. 12. for saith David, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer, Psalm 66. 18. But saith Eliphaz, Job 22. 23. If thou return to the Almighty, &c. and shalt put away iniquity from thy Tabernacles, ver. 27. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee: O how acceptable unto God are the sacrifices of a spirit truly and uprightly tempered.



4. The Lord will more and more cleanse them: he will by degrees put more beautiful ornaments, on the inward man, and change their burdens; if Paul be troubled with himself, Christ will deliver him from himself; he hath this comfort, that for the present God observes his inward conflicts, and accepts his secret uprightness, and for the future, that he shall have the victory over his rebellions by Jesus Christ. There be two things, of which the soul, which deals with inward convictions (out of a pure respect) may be confident, viz. One is grace to combat, Another is strength to overcome.

Ob. 1. O but can a man be truly holy who hath such vile inclinations, abhorred thoughts and motions, such wonderful eruptions of sinful abominations working yet within him.

Sol. 1. A word for this; you must know this that a holy man is a man, and a man; he is compounded of a nature, and a nature; flesh and spirit, grace and sin.

Secondly, you must distinguish 'twixt the secret motions of sin, and the secret approbations thereof; as grace doth not utterly root out all the existence of natural corruption, so neither is it able absolutely to suppress (though to hinder) the operations or workings of sinful corruption.

Thirdly, we distinguish of secret workings of sin, there is a double secrecy.

1. One is natural, and it befalls any man: for sin naturally carries shame with it, and therefore hath a desire of secrecy.

2. Another is artificial, which is a cunning devising of sin: this kind of secrecy is not so incident to holy persons: they do not frame methods

of transgressing, no ways of dishonoring God, yet I will put forth a distinction, I think it good, there is a twofold artificial secrecy,

1. One antecedent and delightful, contrived on purpose to enlarge the way of the vile heart out of a deep love of the sin, and to compass the continual fruition thereof.

Another is a consequent and troublesome, and a kind of enforced artificialness, as was that of David, which did arise from a sin secretly committed by him, in the hast of a temptation; Now I think that even an holy soul may possibly touch upon an artificial secrecy, by consequence having been violently and preposterously carried unto some precedent sin, which that it may be hid from the eye of man, it doth therefore spin out some other methods of sinning: however this is a very fearful course, there is no comfort at all in it, but a deeper aggravation of the former sinning, for as much as adding sin to sin is no remedy, but to repent of former sinning's is the only and best way of help.

## SECT. VII.

A Fourth Use of this assertion, shall be for Exhortation to take heed of, and labor against secret sins: it's true, that all sin is to be declined: But I therefore stir you up to beware of secret sins, because we are more apt to those then to the open; we sink ourselves sooner with these then with any other sinning's.

There are three things which I will handle here, and so conclude this point, viz.

1. Motives to enforce our care.

2. Aggravations of secret sins.

3. Means which may present help against secret sin.

1. The Motives.

There be many arguments which may justly stir us up to take heed of, and to cleanse from secret sins.

1. The Lord knoweth our secret sinning's as exactly as our visible sinning's, Psal. 44. 21. He knoweth the secrets of our hearts, Psal. 139. 2. He knoweth our down sitting and our uprising, and understands our thoughts afar off, ver. 11. If I say surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me, verse. 12. yea the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike unto thee, Ezek. 8. 6. Son of man, seest thou what they do; even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here. Like one on an high mountain pointing at the thief robbing a man in a thicket, see you yonder thief plucking of him down, &c. so here the great and lofty God, whose seat is on high, beholds all the ways and motions of the children of men, even thorough the thickest clouds, and nothing can bar out his observance, whose eye fills heaven and earth: what is the curtain to him, or the night, or the lock, or the chamber; or the whispering, or the thinking, or the imagination of that thinking: he needs not to have his understanding to be informed by the sensibleness of speech, or the visibleness of acting, who made the frame of spirit, and searcheth into the depths of the soul, and clearly observes all things in a perfect nakedness.

2. The Lord will make manifest every secret thing, Mark 4. 22. There is nothing hid which shall not be manifested: Neither is anything kept secret but that it should come abroad.

There is a twofold breaking out of a secret sin or manifestation of it.

One is natural: look as the child formed in the womb naturally desires liberty to come forth, and as the fire within, to fly out and abroad, so the inward conceptions of sin, naturally propend and strive to thrust out themselves into visible acting and view: the soul cannot long be in secret acting's, but someone part of the body or other will be a messenger thereof.

Another is judicial; as when the Judge arraigns, and tries, and screws out the close murder, and the dark thefts: so God will bring to light the most hidden works of darkness; for though the acting's of sin be in the darkness, yet the judging's of sin shall be in the light: though they be secret, yet these are open: as though the times of theft be private, yet the places of Judicature are open, Eccles. 12. 14. God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil: he doth not say, some work, but every work, and not only works, but secrets, and not only secrets, but every secret; and not only secret good things, but evil too, whether good works or ill works, whether secret or open, all must be brought to judgment, 1 Cor. 4. 5. Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: Though thou mayest now cover thy sinfulness with much hypocrisy, yet then all vizards shall be pulled off, thou shalt be stripped of all counterfeit shapes, as thou art, and as thou hast done, so shalt thou be made known to men and Angels, and to all the world: thy whole heart, and thy whole course of life shall be pulled a pieces before thee.

3. Thy secrets shall not only be manifested, but shall also be Judged by God, Rom. 2. 16. In the day when God shall Judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ: we read sometimes that God will Judge our

words, and God will Judge our works, and here that God will Judge our secrets, he will judge words and works as sins ripened to expressions; he will judge secrets, as sins ripening and breeding, Job 31. 26. If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, 27. And my heart hath been secretly enticed, 28. This also were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge, Job 13. 10. he will surely reprove you if you do secretly accept persons, Deut. 27. 15. Cursed be the man that maketh any Graven Image, an abomination to the Lord, &c. And putteth it in a secret place.

There is a twofold judging, to which secret acting's of sin are obnoxious.

One is Temporal, and in this life; see this in David, 2 Sam. 12. 9. wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight, thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword (this was done in a secret letter) and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and v. 10. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast, &c. v. 11. Thus saith the Lord, behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thy eyes, and give them to thy neighbors, v. 12. Thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the Sun, Eph. 5. 6. Because of these things cometh the wrath of God, upon the Children of disobedience.

Another is eternal: that the Lord will Judge them with eternal wrath, for that is the portion of hypocrisy: though thou mayest escape the judgment of man, yet thou shalt not escape the judgment of God, Heb. 13. 4. whoremongers and adulterers God will judge, he will sentence them himself for their secret abominations.

4. Secret sins are more dangerous to the person in some respects than open sins. For,

1. A man doth by his art of sinning deprive himself of the help of his sinfulness: like him who will carry his wound covered, or who bleeds inwardly; help comes not in because the danger is not descried nor known, if a man's sin breaks out, there is a Minister at hand, a friend near, and others to reprove, to warn, to direct: But when he is the artificer of his lusts, he bars himself of all public remedy: and takes great order and care to damn his soul, by covering his secret sins with some plausible varnish, which may beget a good opinion in others of his ways.

A man doth by his secrecy give the reins unto corruption; the mind is fed all the day long, either with sinful contemplations or projecting's, so that the very strength of the soul is wasted and corrupted.

2. Nay, secret acting's do but heat and inflame natural corruption, as in shouldering in a crowd, when one hath got out of the door two or three are ready to fall out after: so when a man hath given his heart leave to act a secret sin, this begets a present, and quick, and strong flame in corruption to repeat and multiply, and throng out the acts: sinful acts are not only fruits of sin, but helps and strengths; all sinning being more sinful by more sinning: not only in the effects but in the cause: the spring, and cause of sin will grow mad and insolent hereby: & more corrupt, this being a truth, that if the heart gives way for one sin it will be ready for the next; if it will yield to bring forth once at the devils pleasure, it will bring it forth twice by its one motion.

3. A man by secret sins, doth but polish and square the hypocrisy of his heart, he doth strive to be an exact Hypocrite, and the more cunning he is in the palliating of his sinning's, the more perfect he is in his hypocrisy.

2. The aggravations, will you give me your leave to make a short digression, touching the degrees of aggravation of secret sinning's, verily, perhaps they may sink deep and quicken us to repentance and caution.

1. The more foul the sin naturally is, the worse is the secret acting of it: you know that some sins have a fouler dye in them then others, all are not a like, but some are more intrinsically vile: A blasphemous thought, is worse than an Idle thought, and the secret stealing of a shilling though it be a sin, yet not so great as the secret killing of a man.

2. The more relations are broken by secret sinning the worse they are, and more to be feared, for all relations are bonds, and cords, they are a file of reasons, why we should not sin; for a single person to commit folly, its a damnable sin, but for one to break the covenant of her youth and God, for a person who is married, this very relation trebles the guilt: for anyone to murder is a sin of death, but for the Child to murder the parent secretly, this very relation increases the guilt.

3. The more profession a man makes the worse are his secret sinning's; forasmuch as he carrieth not only a badge, but also a judge on his shoulders, he not only wears a profession which is contrary to his practice, but which shall condemn and judge him; that he is not what he would seem to be, yea, his contrary practice, doth ground and occasion the great reproaches and blemishes like dirt, to be cast upon the face of Religion: and woe to him by whom offenses come.

4. The more light a man hath meeting him in the dark, and secret acting's of sin, the more abominable is the sin; when not only a discovering light, but a checking light, not only a checking but a threatening, not only a threatening but also a troubling light,

opposeth, and chargeth from the conscience against the sinning, this makes it the more out of measure sinful.

5. The more repugnant secret sins are to the light of nature, the worse are they in their acting's. A sin is very broad when the light of nature without any aid of knowledge from the scripture shall make the heart to tremble at the commission and to be terribly amazed, the Apostle toucheth at these kinds of secret sinning's, Rom. 1. unnatural lusting's and burnings.

6. The more art a man doth use to effect his secret sinning's the worse they are: forasmuch (as a about the same sin,) it is ever worse when it is breathed out by deliberation, then when it is forced out by a mere temptation: and sin is not to be reputed an infirmity, or weakness, when art or cunning is the cause of it, for as much as art is sober and takes time to contrive, and reason to place and displace; to help and forward its acts or intentions all which are contrary to surprises and infirmities.

7. The more frequent a man is in secret sinning's the deeper is his guilt? when he can drive a trade of sin within doors: when it is not a slip, but a course; and he hath hardly scraped out the bitterness of the former, but he is exercising the sin new and afresh again.

8. The more gripes of conscience and resolutions a man hath felt and taken against secret sinning's, and yet wallows in them, the more stain and guilt lies upon his soul. A wound to a sick man is worse than to an healthy man, forasmuch as the spirits are already wounded by sickness: no sinning's wound deeper then such as follow the woundings of conscience; a sinner doth thrust the sword in again to the same hurt.

Thirdly, the means.



But you will say, this is fearful to sin thus, what Means may be used to get off, and to keep off the soul from secret sins?

The rules of direction (which as so many means) I would commend unto you are these.

1. If thou hast been guilty of secret sins, be humbled and repent: A man shall hardly stave off a new sin, who hath not been humbled for an old sin of the same kind: for as much as future care seldom manifests itself without former sorrow: hast thou been a secret Adulterer, fornicator, thief, backbiter, oppressor, liar, drunkard, &c.

O hasten, hasten in by speedy sorrow, by speedy repentance: bewail (if it be possible) with tears of blood thy secret wickedness: if thou doest not judge thyself, God will surely judge thee, and think not that because thy sinning's were secret, therefore thy compunctions must be small, nay, thou oughtest to abound the rather, and the more in floods of tears, and of bitter contrition, who didest dare to provoke God so, &c.

2. Take heed of secret occasions and provocations: why is it that thou sayest, O this nature, O this heart, O that Satan. Thou hast, I confess, shed many tears; thou hast felt many sorrows and troubles, thou hast made many vows and resolutions; thou hast put up many prayers and petitions, and yet thou art in thy secret sinning's, why, what should be the reason, do prayers do nothing against sin? yea, do tears nothing? do troubles nothing? do vows nothing? yes, all of those may do something, if something else be added, if the leak be stopped, if the windows be shut, if the doors be locked, I mean, If occasions and provocations be conscionably and carefully avoided: otherwise they are nothing: if thou prayest and then adventures thy strength upon the occasion of thy secret sinning, what dost thou but seek God first, and next rise up and tempt him. Keep close to heaven,

and keep off from the occasions, and then tell me whether God will not keep thee from thy sinning's.

3. Crush the temptations which come from the roots, Though thou doest decline occasions, yet thou canst not decline thy self: And there is that in a man's self, which can fetch in the occasion by representation, by inclination, by contemplation: sometimes another provokes thee to sin, and this is in society; sometimes thine own heart provokes thee to sin, and this is when thou art solitary. Now the thoughts steal out, now imaginations present and confer with the mind, with the will, with affections: wouldst thou now free thyself from secret acting's, then free thyself from secret thinking's.

The picture in the glass may inflame as much as that in the natural face: so sin in the representation of the mind may fire our corrupt hearts, as well as the enticing's of it by conversing occasions, Psalm 19. 14. Let the Meditations of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my Redeemer.

There are two things which will never fail you in your surprisal of secret sinning's, viz.

1. One is to be digging up the intimate root of all sinning's.

2. Another is to stifle the first conception of sins, to make sin an abortive in the womb, that it shall never stretch out itself to actions. Beloved, to tie Samson's arms, it was a vain thing, his strength lay not there; but if the hair of his head be cut off, then his strength is gone, and he shall become weak. To tamper (only) with the acts of sin is not the way to be rid of sinful acts. But the singular way to be rid of bad acts, is to be rid of a bad nature: the virtue of the effect always lurks in the cause, and therefore it is the cause which gives life and death to it. If thou couldest once get a holy nature, which

might be at defiance with sin in its throne; know this, that a new nature and daily combat would much help against secret sinning's. That sin is least of all acted with life, which is most of all combated within the heart: for sin hath least practice where it hath most opposition: And of all oppositions those that are inward are most weakening of sin.

4. Get a hatred of sin, which will oppose sin in all kinds, and all times, and in all places.

5. Get the fear of God planted in thy heart. There are three sorts of sins which this fear will preserve a man against.

First, Pleasant sins, which take the sense with delight.

Secondly, Profitable sins, which take the heart with gain, but what shall it profit me to win the whole world, and to lose my soul.

Thirdly, secret sins of either sort. Joseph did not dare to sin that great sin of uncleanness; though the acting of it might have been secret, and though perhaps the consequence of it might have been his preferment; why, the fear of God kept him off, he had an awful regard to God, he knew the greatness of his holiness, of his power, How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Gen. 39. 9. Why (brethren) if we fear the Lord, it is not the night which the thief doth take, nor the twilight which the adulterer doth take, nor the seasons of secrecy or places of obscurity that will prevail with us, &c. Yea, but God sees me, the great judge of heaven and earth, the holy one, the God who hates all sin, whose eyes are brighter than the Sun, and purer then to behold sin: and who is mighty in power, and just in his threatening's, he sees and beholds, therefore I dare not.

6. Believe God's omniscience, and omnipresence; that the Lord is everywhere, and all things are naked and open to his eye with whom thou hast to deal: thou canst not intend to think, thou canst not whisper out thy thoughts, thou canst not finger the closest bribes, thou canst not incline thyself to the most abstracted kind of secrecy in the world; but God sees thee clearly, perfectly; now if a man could believe that God is still with us, and there are two which evermore go with us, the Judge and the Register, God and conscience, that he is acquainted with all his thoughts, paths, ways, this would put an awe upon him: would the wife be so impudent to commit folly and prostitute her whorish body in the sight and presence of her husband; would the servant be filching out of the box; if he saw his Masters eye upon his hand.

7. Get thy heart to be upright, uprightness is an inward temper: and hypocrisy is an outward complexion, Psalm 119. 3. They do no iniquity, &c. The inward man is the business of sincerity, to the forming and fashioning of that, doth it improve and employ itself? it knows that God delights in truth, and this too in the inward parts: It endeavors to please God in all things, and there to be most to God, where man can be least in observation, and that is in the secret and hidden frame.

## CHAPTER II.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and shall be innocent from that great transgression. - PSAL. 19.13.

These words contain in them David's second Petition and request: sins do not only differ in respect of openness and secretness, but also in respect of the degree of heinousness and greatness: now because secret sins sticks closest, and are of a more easy and adventurous commission, therefore David prays much against them, Lord, cleanse thou me from secret sins: And because presumptuous sins are of a more fearful efficacy, and consequently (they being usually the braving's of God even to his face) therefore David prays as vehemently against them in this verse.

This verse may be considered two ways.

1. Respectively, as in connection with the former by that word (also) keep back thy servant also, as if David had said, O Lord I have prayed unto thee to be cleansed from secret sins, and I beseech thee let me be answered, but yet this is not all that I have to request, I have yet another request besides that, keep me also from presumptuous sins.

2. Absolutely, in regard of their proper matter, so they comprehend.

1. The Petitioner [thy servant.]

2. The Petition, which respects sins.

1. Presumption [from presumptuous sins.]

2. Dominion [let them not have Dominion over me.
3. The Petitioner who is implied, and that is God, yet expressed by what he should do [keep back, &c.]
4. The Conclusion or inference which he makes from the grant of all this, which is his uprightness and innocence, innocence, not absolute, but limited, innocent from that great transgression. There is more matter in these words then you yet well conceive of, I will touch some Propositions, which might challenge a further prosecution, and then I will set down at large upon the main intentions and conclusions from the words considered as a connection of a new request with the former request, these things might be observable, viz.

## SECT. I.

First, There may and should be a conjunction, even of great Petitions and requests (at once) unto God: As they say of graces and duties, that they are connected (and like so many pearls upon one and the same string) for we may say of requests to God, though they be many for kinds, and number, and matter, yet they may be put up in the same prayer to God. David ends not at that request (keep me from secret sins) but goes on also, O Lord, keep me from presumptuous sins, he multiplies his suits according to the multiplicity of his necessity and exigence.

There be divers qualities about our prayers, viz.

1. One is an urgent fervency; when the soul doth not nakedly commence the suit, propound it to God, and say, Lord hear me, but it

doth enforce (as it were an audience and acceptance, it doth strive with God and wrestle with him, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me, Gen. 32. 26. as Jacob, And, O Lord hear, O Lord hearken and consider; do and defer not for thy name sake, as Dan. 9. this is a following of the suit with God, as the woman did Christ.

2. Importunity: when a person renews the same suit, comes often to the door of grace and knocks.

3. Patient perseverance: I will hearken, saith David, Ps. 85. I will wait, saith the Church, Mica. 7.

4. A variety or multiplicity of matter, like as a patient who comes to the Physician; Sir, saith he, such an ach in my head, and such crudity in my stomach, and such a stitch in my side: so when we come to the Lord in prayer, we may and should open not only one want, but all our wants; and crave help not in one thing, but in everything: we should multiply requests, O Lord, saith David, in Psal. 51. I was conceived in sin, but do thou cleanse that; and I shed the blood of Uriah, do thou pardon that; and I defiled his wife, do thou wash that; and I lost thy spirit for these, but do thou restore that; and I weakened and wounded my graces, but do thou renew them: As Paul spake, Phil. 4. 6. In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God: so I say, for everything let your manifold requests go up to God by prayer: And I think that phrase (in Eph. 6. 18. Praying with all prayer) will reach the point in hand: All prayer extending itself not only to all the kinds and forms of praying, but also to all the matters or things for which we do pray.

Reasons hereof are these.

1. God can hear every request as well as any one. A multiplied request as well as a single request: for he takes not, nor observes things by discourse, where one notion may be an impediment to the apprehension of another, but all things (by reason of his omniscience) are equally at once present unto him.

2. Nay, he can grant many and great requests, as easily as the single and smallest Petition. The greatest gift comes as freely and readily out of his hand, as the most common mercy, even Jesus Christ, and pardon of many sins, are of the same price with our daily bread. Though the former gifts be (in comparison with the other) of a much more elevated nature and dignity, yet in respect of the fountain of them, all of them come from the freeness of his goodness and love.

3. Christ (by whom we are to put up all our requests (for he is our advocate and intercessor) is as ready and able to implead many and great requests, as well as some and inferior: As he is our mighty Redeemer, so he is our mighty Intercessor. And his blood is as efficacious and meritorious for many sins as for some.

4. God hath for this end made manifold promises; therefore we may put up many and great requests at once; the promises are called the wells of salvation, and the breasts of consolation. Now the living wells will afford a plenty, as well as a scanting measure of water: the child may move from breast to breast, and draw enough of either, if one alone will not serve: If one promise comprehends not all thy wants, yet all of them do; And as God graciously comprehends all our supplies in all of his promises, so he hath propounded them all unto us, that we might then there urge him for the supply of all our necessities.

5. Lastly, God is rich in mercy, and plenteous in compassion; his mercies are often styled manifold mercies, and his goodness is called



an abundant goodness, and his redemption a plenteous redemption, and his kindness a great kindness. Now mercy is a ready inclination to pity and help, and multitudes of mercies are as a compounded, and doubled, and redoubled opening (as it were) of God's tenderness to do a sinner good.

Uses of this might be many, I will briefly touch a few.

Then conceal no one of thy distresses from God: the heart and life of man are full of sin, and as full of want; there is not any branch of the soul, nor limb of the body, nor turning of the life, but is replenished with some necessity or other. Thou hast a mind which yet needs to be enlightened, a judgment which yet needs to be captivated, an heart which yet needs to be converted, and humbled; how many sinful commissions are there which need to be bewailed; how many particular and vile inclinations which need yet to be subdued: besides all this every grace which thou hast (and there are manifold graces in an holy soul) every one of them is in exigence, and needs a more spiritual filling▪ both for the habit, and acts, and degrees: Yea, and all our duties are but lame handed motions, which needs more strengthening, or as mixed rivers which should run more clearly.

In this case what should we do? to whom should we go? should we divide the principles of our helps, and go for some to God, and for the most to the creatures: O in no wise, for all our help is only in him, who alone can help all, or should we branch out our helps, and present them as a beggar doth his supplies, one day open one want, and some distance of time hereafter, open another; O no, come with all, and with all at once, to God, who is as able, and as willing for many sinners, as well as for one sinner; and for many sins in one man, as well as for one in any. As they did with the impotent and sick man, they brought all of him (bed and all) and laid him before Christ,

so should we bring body and soul, and every distress of either, and present the whole bulk, root and branches all before the Lord at once, for a manifold supply; we should press upon him for manifold mercies, for abundant strength: for God is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we are able to ask or think, Eph. 3.

Beloved, as a man's own unworthiness should not prejudice him from being a Petitioner to the Throne of grace, so the variety of a man's necessities should not discourage him to commence his suits at the Throne of rich mercies: forasmuch as there is reason in God which will dis-hearten us, and there is reason in ourselves to crave as earnestly, and as simultaneously for all our helps, as for some: thou doest equally need the pardon of this sin, as that, and Mercy is as ready, and able for both, as for either. And if that corruption were more subdued, and yet this remained altogether untouched, thou wouldst have as many, and more forcible suspicions of the truth of thy estate from this division, and inequality of thy victory. Wherefore as Abraham in his suit for those of Sodom and Gomorrah, took up request upon request, descending from high to low, from many to few; so should we in our requests, ascend from one sin to more, from more to many, from many to all; you know that confession of sins, should not be particular only, but universal; and our sorrow for sin should respect the kinds as well as the particular acts: all which import an Amplitude of grants; so much Mercy and supply answerable to the required latitude of confessions and sorrow.

Object. 'It is true, someone sin may (upon special reason, either of some guilt, or present insolency) be more insisted on then another, (as one clause in the plea, may be more urged than any other) yet not with the exception of the rest. O that sin, Lord, by which I have dishonored thee so much, and yet which rageth so much, pardon it,

subdue it, out with it; and not that only, but such sins, and not them only, but all my sins, blot them out, cleanse me from them.

Another Proposition, which I will briefly touch on, shall be this, viz.

## SECT. II.

That even a good Christian should have a fear of great sins as well as a care of secret sins: Keep me also from presumptuous sins.

Reasons whereof may be these.

The latitude of original sin, which as it is yet remaining in the best, so it is in them an universal fountain naturally apt to any vile inclination: though actual sins may be divided in the life, yet they are all united in their spring, (i) they are all of them virtually as so many potential effects involved and lurking in original sin, as their cause, which how far it may work, both from its own strength, and the assistance of temptations and occasions, if God doth not actually prevent and interpose, if we put not forth our fear, and watch, we may with miserable experience both, know and bewail.

2. The instances of great transgressions: even those Saints, who have been as the highest stars, have left behind them their twinkling's, and sad Eclipses. Noah, his actual distempers by wine: Lot his unnatural defilements by incest; David his wounds and bleeding by whoredom and blood; Peter his unkind and troubled denial of Christ against his knowledge.

Now when Cedars fall, should not the tender plants tremble? if the sins of others be not our fear, they may be our practice; what the best have done, the weakest may imitate, if they do not hear and fear:

there being scarce any notorious sin into which self-confidence will not plunge us; and from which an holy and watchful fear may not happily preserve us.

An Instruction from this, and so on: Blessed is the man that feareth always, Prov. 28. 14. When we read of great sinners in the Scripture, and see great falls, and sins in others, as we should thereupon seek to recover them who are thus fallen by our Counsel and prayers: so we that stand, should take heed lest we also fall, 1 Cor. 10. 12. If that Satan, who would deal with us, could be procured to shape out only mean and vulgar assaults and suggestions, to common and unavoidable infirmities and sinning's, this might somewhat abate the vigor and intension of our holy fear and circumspection? yet not altogether, forasmuch, as he being a subtle enemy, trains and facilitates the heart by the frequency of small commissions, at length to the boldness of great Impieties; or if Satan's suggestions were artificially and extremely laid, and pressing to great sins as well as small, yet if we had natures no way capable to receive the greatest impressions of sin, but were naturally averse, and stiffly indisposed to such temptations, then our careful fear were not so requisite: But we are not shot-proof: Temptations (even to the greatest sins) have within our breast some principles which would presently shake hands with them: The actual light and acting grace do sometimes happily turn them aside from closing, though they keep them at the door, as the Prophet caused the Messengers who came from the King to take away his life; Yet there is another Principle of corruption which would let them in, and which would co-operate with those temptations, even to Contemplation and inclination, and acting both inward and outward: nay, this corrupt nature of ours alone, (though it doth learn somewhat by temptations and occasions) yet it alone from itself can cast forth most sore temptations to most abhorred sinning's.

Therefore this we must do, fore-past sins must be eyed with grief, present inclinations with combat, and future with fear: we must not in our War imitate the Syrians, who were to fight neither with small nor great, but with the King of Israel: No, but we must oppose all sins, small sins as well as great, and great as well as small: those sins which do encounter us, we should force some out, and keep the rest off. He is a wise and sincere Christian who resists the smallest, and fears the greatest sins: Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

### SECT. III.

Another Proposition which I might observe from the words, absolutely considered, is this, That a good man is God's servant, [Thy servant from, &c.] We read of divers servants in the Scriptures; some are the servants of men, who apply all their gifts and parts, and sacrifice the whole method of their beings and expressing's, to claw and humor the itch and pleasure of others: All flatterers are such, who are a people of slavish-bondage, having sold themselves from themselves to some persons. Some are the servants of the world, whose hearts and labors are bestowed upon earthly things; and they make even those noble souls of theirs to weary themselves for very vanity; and to increase only in that with the least toe, is too excellent to tread upon. Some are the Servants of Satan, mentioned in an instrumental Activity and readiness to entertain and execute his base and hellish inspirations and motions. Some are the servants of sin, who (quales & quanti) all that they are, and can do, is to fulfill the lusts of their flesh: there is no servant so obedientially attending the Command of his Lord, as they to receive, and act the pleasure of their sinful hearts. Some are servants to themselves, who, as if they were

born, neither for God, nor man, apply all their will, and strength, and abilities, only to their own ends without any real effectual consideration to public good of Church or Country. And some are servants to God; Moses was so, Simeon was so: Moses my servant is dead, said God: Now letest thou thy servant depart in peace, said Simeon: and David here, (Keep back thy servant.) God's servants differ from all servants in the world: every other servant loseth himself by service; he is not sui juris,— in the Law: but the only way to find a man's self, is to be God's servant. Every other servant loseth his liberty by his service; but liberty is then got, when we become servants to God: As soon as we enter the service, we obtain our freedom: Every other servant in strictness of Rule, is below a son, a child; but every servant of God is a son of God, and shall have not gifts as a mere servant may have, but the inheritance which the son who serveth his Father shall have.

There are two sorts of servants under God.

1. Some stubborn, who are *Servi victi*; (as St. Aust in speaks) The Law of Creation is upon them, and so will they, nill they, they are in some obediencial and serviceable Relation.

2. Others are servants, not of force, but of affection, not of compulsion, but of election they have chosen God to be their Lord, and have willingly resigned up themselves (in the purpose of their hearts) to an universal observance, and love of him, and obedience unto him, impartially, and constantly to do his work. Such a servant to God was David: but this observation is very general, therefore I pass unto another, viz.

SECT. IV.

Even this. That we are God's servants, should be used to move the Lord to help us against sins; you know that in all relations there are mutual bonds and duties: the wife owes much of subjection to the husband, and the husband owes also much of love, respect and care to the wife: The Child owes much attendance, reverence, and affectionate duty to the Parents, and the Parents owe much of instruction, reproof, correction, nurture, provision of Estate for the child again: so is it betwixt the Lord and his servant, though to a mere slave, there be no mutual obligation, or else it is in that which is weak; yet to a servant, who stands in that relation, which they call Ingenuous; as much is due from him to his Lord, so, something his Lord ought to do for him, to feed him, to cloth him, to house and lodge him, to defend him against wrong and injuries.

This is it in the case of David, Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; as if he had said, O God, thou art my Lord, I have chosen thee, to whom I will give obedience, thou art he whom I will follow, I bestow all that I am on thee. Now a Lord will help his servant: his servant against an enemy, against an enemy who for the Lord's service is the servant's enemy. O, my Lord, help me. I am not able by my own strength to uphold myself, but thou art All-sufficiency. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

I observe in Scripture many singular Methods to prevail in request upon God; sometimes he hath been urged from something in himself to do things for his Mercies sake, and for his truth sake, and for his goodness sake, and for his holiness sake: sometimes he hath been urged from something which he was very tender of, and at which he aims in all his dealings, viz. for his own glory, and for his names sake: sometimes he hath been urged, from some word or other which he hath let fall, at which the believing soul doth catch, (as did Benhadab servants from Ahab; thy brother Benhadab) Remember

thy word (saith David) upon which thou hast caused me to hope, Psalm 119. Thou saidst thou wouldst do me good, said Jacob, Gen. 32. Sometimes he hath been urged from the special relations twixt him and his people; as from that of a Father: Isa. 64. 8. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: and this of a Lord. Isa. 63. 18. The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while, verse 19. We are thine; and in many other places, Remember thy servant, and remember thy servants.

Beloved, It is a great thing to stand in near relations to God: and then it is a good thing to plead by them with God: forasmuch as nearer relations have strongest force with all, the servant can do more then a stranger, and the Child then a servant, and the wife then a Child: but though this urging of God by virtue of our relation be an excellent point, yet because it is not the main intention of the place, I likewise pass it over.

Another observable Proposition may be this.

#### SECT. V.

That our special Relations to God should be special Reasons to work a care not to sin against God. [Keep thy servant from, &c.] Thy servant: there be many reasons against sinning: the very nature of sin carries along with it a condemnation of sinning, because sin formerly is a transgression, an Anomy, and a Rebellion, which alone is an inglorious thing: Again, The Laws and threatening's of God should be as forcible cords to draw off the heart from sin: And again, All the Mercies and goodness of God should exasperate the heart against sin. Again, All the Attributes of God might hold us: Now with these this also may come in, viz. The specialty of our Relation to God,



that we are his Children, and he is our Father, we are his servants, and he is our Lord: though the common obligations are many, and sufficient, yet the special Relations are also a further tie: the more near a person comes to God, the more careful he should be not to sin against God.

Let us who are of the day be sober, let us not sleep as do others. 1 Thes. 5. 6, 8. God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness, 2 Thes. 3. 7. If you call him father, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, 1 Pet. 1. 17. If I then be a father, where is my honor? If I be a Master, where is my fear? Mal. 1. 6. I will be sanctified, (saith God) of all them that draw near unto me.

There is a double drawing near unto God.

1. One in respect of Office, as the Priests of whom he there spake, who because their Calling and Office is more high and heavenly, they therefore should be more religious and holy.
2. Another in respect of Nature and change by virtue, of which our Relation comes closer to God, even this nearness should occasion more care against sinfulness.

Reasons whereof are these.

First, Admissions of sinning's here do diffuse a greater ingloriousness to God: sin is most darkening in a white cloud, then in a black, as a spot is more eminently disgraceful in a fair than in a foul cloth. Though the sins of evil men do prejudice God's Glory, yet the great sinning's of good men do occasion much more: for not only the particular sinning's send up a cloud, but other men by reason of them, form out of them a smoke of blaspheming and reproaching of the ways of God, and the profession of Grace.

Secondly, Their great sinning's do make them the sorer wounds and work: no sinning wounds so deep as such, which have more Mercy and goodness to control them; and these only good persons do most taste of: much grace received, and much kindness conferred, will in case of great transgressions, make the conscience eagerly to arise, and sting the Offender.

What should this teach us, who profess more Interest in God, more Title to Christ, more purity of Religion than others? Why? if we be light, then to walk as Children of the light: if we do profess the Gospel, then to walk as becomes the Gospel: if we be the Children of God, then to walk as dear Children, cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. None needs to be more circumspect, then he who is called to holiness: his very relation is of a tender (though high) nature, he cannot sin but he grieves a father; yet this is as true, that none of our relations exempt us from temptations and assaults, which call upon us to be watchful and prayerful: If temptations drive thee not to thy knees, they will drive thee easily to the ground: no more but this; no man should sin, and no man should be more careful, then he who is most good; for if he offends, then God suffers, Christ suffers, the Gospel suffers, Religion, Profession, Christians, and all.

O then let us improve our interest in our God: Should such a man as I flee, said Nehemiah; so then, should such a man as I sin thus, walk thus, live, do thus? Why? God is my God, he is my Father, I am his child, his servant. If I should sin, sin would not only be my own wound, but his dishonor: I may not so abuse his love, his mercies, his Calling, his honoring of me. Others look on me, but I must look on my God, and on his honor.

Thus have you the general observations of the Text, now I come to a more punctual and intimate view of them both in the petition, and in the conclusion of them, consider the words as a Petition, they yield unto us two main considerations.

1. One of sin in presumption, [Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

2. Another of sin in Dominion, [Let them not have dominion over me.]

First, For presumptuous sins; there are divers expositions of these words.

1. Keep me Ab alienis, scilicet peccatis, from those sins which by the suggestion or temptation of others I am enticed to; or as others, Ab alienis, (i) falsis diis, from another, or false gods that I do not serve them, and be not captivated by them; these think the Word to be Zurim from Zur, which signifies Alienari.

2. Keep me a superbiis (Mizedim a verbo zud) which signifies superbire, aut superbie & temere agere; the word in Hiphel signifies to do a thing, de industria & per presumptionem. Before David prays to be kept from sins of ignorance, and here from prides; from such sins as are done insolently and knowingly; Some translate it, keep me from proud sins, others from insolent sins, by which are meant manifest sins, open transgressions, committed with contumacy, and with a high hand; but to hold to the expression in the Text, Presumptuous sins. And the Observation is this.

## **CHAPTER III.**

Even the servants of God should pray to be kept from presumptuous sins.

Touching this I shall inquire into these particulars.

1. What presumptuous sins are.
2. Of that strength which keeps regenerate persons from presumptuous sinning's, and what difference 'twixt the withholdings and restraining's of evil men, and this keeping back of good men.
3. What reasons or causes of this desire to be kept back from presumptuous sins.
4. Then some useful applications of all this to ourselves.

#### SECT. I.

Quest. 1. What presumptuous sins are; Sol. Sin (in the general) is any transgression of the Law: the Law of God is his revealed will, for doing, or forbearing, and it is the rule of nature, and actions; whatsoever things stands in conformity to its good, and whatsoever varies or swerves from it, that same is sin.

Now sins are diversely distinguished, for all sins are not equal either for matter or manner: For matter some sins of themselves are more deep transgressions then others, as some diseases (in their own nature,) are worse than other some; to blaspheme and curse God is a sin naturally more vile then an idle thought, or an empty word: and to commit Idolatry, is naturally more vile then to steal a Shilling: to shed innocent blood is worse than to steal.

Again, sins may be distinguished in respect of the manner of committing, and thus it may fall out, that even a sin in its own nature less than another, may yet for the manner of commission be more heinous: and a sin in its own nature greater than another, may yet for the manner of commission, be less guiltful than a lesser sin which is more intensively raised by circumstances; as to gather a few sticks on the Sabbath, was in itself not so great a sin, as deflowering of a virgin, yet because the person did commit the sin with a contempt of God's express prohibition, it became more heinous and guilty.

Now here falls in that distinction of sin into sins of infirmity, and into sins of presumption: which distinction is made, not from the different qualities of sin, but from the divers qualification of sinning; the same sin may be committed through presumption, which is committed through Infirmity, yet the committing of it through infirmity, is still much less and extenuating, than the committing of it through presumption: for as much as all passive failings, (which arise from unevenness of strength) are not so high as the active trespassing's, which arise more from the ready contributions, and concurrent assistances and furtherance's of our own hearts: now to the thing in particular.

Presumptuous sins are the bold daring's, and proud adventuring's of the heart upon things or ways known to be unlawful against express threatening's, either upon a false confidence, or upon contemptuous slighting, or desperate willfulness: I have in this description not only expressed the nature of presumptuous sinning's, but also concluded in it the several degrees and risings thereof: all which, give me now liberty to open and explain: consider therefore.

1. That presumptuous sinning's are proud adventuring's of the heart upon sin; there is a large difference 'twixt foiling's by temptation, and

adventuring's by presumption: Temptation beats down that actual strength of grace resisting: but presumption tramples down the light of the word opposing: therefore presumptuous sinners are said to sin with an exalted, or high hand; the sinner doth put aside God's will, and prefers his own: Our tongues are our own, said they, who is Lord over us? Psal. 12. yea, they are said to set their mouths against heaven, q. d. what tell you us of the Lord; of his displeasure or pleasure: As for the word which thou hast spoken in the name of the Lord we will not do it, said they in Jeremiah 44. A man doth even try it out with God, and provokes him to his face: and maintains the devises of his heart against the purity and equity of God's will.

2. In presumptuous sinning's a man knows the thing and way to be unlawful: and therefore the presumptuous sinner is opposed to the ignorant sinner, Numb. 15. not that every sinning against knowledge (absolutely whatsoever, is a presumptuous sinning, is against knowledge, and without gross ignorance; the presumptuous sinner holds a candle in one hand, and draws out the sword with the other; my meaning is this, that he breaks through the light of knowledge, discerning the way to be sinful: yea, and flaming upon his breast, working in and checking his conscience, notwithstanding all which, yet he will presume to offend and proceed in transgressing's; 'It is true, even a good man in many particulars may and doth sin, not only against habitual, but against actual knowledge, but this is through infirmity, not through contumacy: he approves that light against the sin, and doth not maintain the sin against his light, yea, he yields not only by approbation of judgment, but also by resolution and desire of will to imitate the light, yet through the weakness of his power, and from the force of an hasty temptation, he may fall down even at noon-day; but the presumptuous sinner sees light as an enemy, and therefore willingly breaks through it to the way of his sin: yea, he makes his heart to uphold the sin against the force of his

knowledge, and drives back the arguments with a resolution, that however he will have his sin.

3. The presumptuous sinner (in that kind of sinning) adventures against express threatening's: thus it stands with a man, his heart and Satan incline and egg him to sin, but God and Conscience stand in the way against him; as he said of the sword to Joab, Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the end, so God saith to him, thou shalt not have peace in this way, it is the thing which I hate and abhor, and I have revealed wrath from heaven against it: but in presumption the sinning soul steps over the threatening to the committing of the sin: that sword of God which may keep back another man, yet though God sets the point of it to the breast of a presumptuous sinner, it will not stave him off from adventuring: therefore the presumptuous sinner is said to bless himself in his heart, though God threatens a curse, Deut. 29. this is a truth that a presumptuous sinner is not changed by mercies, nor affrighted by threats, but as the Leviathan in Job, laughs at the shaking of the spear; so the heart of a presumptuous sinners puffs at all divine warnings and menaces: come, said they, let it come that we may see him: As there is not a love to the goodness of God; so there is not a fear of the greatness of God in presumption.

4. Presumptuous sins do arise from a false confidence; there are two things upon which the presuming sinner doth embolden himself.

1. One is the facility of mercy: when a man sets mercy against sin, he doth well, (because God's mercies should draw our hearts off from sin) but when a man sets mercy against Justice, now he offends; yet thus doth the presumptuous sinner, perhaps there is not in every presumptuous sinner such a spirit of Atheistical madness; that he is absolutely careless of all that God threatens, nor is he so miserably

prodigal of his soul, that he rejoiceth to have it damned, no, he may and sometimes doth apprehend threatening's, yea, so that his heart is caused to demure, it may be a stopping apprehension (i.) such as may make him study how to pursue his sin, and yet to wave and decline the edge of the sharp threatening, and this he doth by opposing mercy to justice; 'tis true, this is a sin, and divine justice will not take it well, but I will adventure on it, hoping that divine mercy will pacify the rigor of the threatening, I will sin and offend Justice, but then I will decline that Court, by flying to the Mercy-seat: God is of a gentle heart, easy to be entreated, and will be presently satisfied and appeased: Just like a man who will break his bones, because he trusts to have them quickly set by a skillful Surgeon, or like a lewd child, who adventures to outrages, upon the scope and allowance of his fathers good nature: This ground of presumption God fully intimates in Deut. 29. 19. when he heareth the words of the curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, &c.

Beloved, this is certain that presumption disposeth of mercy beyond all allowance, and writes a pardon which God will never allow nor seal: it will dare to run in debt upon a conceit of a discharge, and clearing however: as if Divine mercy were nothing else but a present untwining of all the knots which we make, and a crossing of debts as soon as entered, and served for no other end, but that men should be bold to sin, and cheerful after the commission of it; But verily mercy is more precious then so.

2. Another is the self-possibility and strength of future repentance: he is one of the worst patients in a way of sinning, who is confident that he can be his own Physician: no soul wounds itself more than that which vainly thinks that it can presently cure them;



presumption is not always carried upon an absolute hope of mercy, but the sinner being more piercingly understanding knows that mercy is a special Charter, and such a balm as is spread only upon a returning and humbling soul; here it is that this presumptuous person will adventure to sin upon a confidence that he will (notwithstanding all this) fashion and polish his soul to a meet capacity of mercy, by hereafter repenting's and humbling's: he doth foolishly delude his soul with a fancy of such things which exceed his power. There are two things which the sinner cannot assure himself of.

One is the lengthening of his life: for this candle is lighted and put out, not according to our desires, but according to divine pleasure: all life hath its limits from the Lord of life and death: he who sins today, cannot be assured that he shall live till tomorrow. Now repentance is a work of this life: death binds us over to sentence, and then 'tis too late to return: And therefore every presumptuous sinner adventures boldly upon that which cannot be his, beyond the time present.

Another is the returning of the heart from sin, though our natural principles can give the wound, yet they must be supernatural principles, which give the cure: our own hearts can cause us to fall, but God's grace only is that which raiseth us; Now God's grace is God's gift, and not man's stock: though we alone can fall off from God by sin, yet none but God can bring us back from sin by true repentance unto himself: yet presumption makes the heart bold, not only with time (which is in God's hand) but also with grace, which is only in God's gift: Though I sin, yet I will hereafter repent, thus the presumptuous soul, whose life may be instantly cut off, and to whom God may therefore deny his grace to repent, because it did beforehand presume to sin.

5. In many presumptuous sinning's there is a slighting contempt: therefore, Numb. 15. 30, 31. presumptuous sinning is called a despising of the Word of the Lord: the soul that doth ought presumptuously, &c. shall be cut off, because he hath despised the Word of the Lord, &c. to despise the Word of the Lord, is to esteem of it as a vain thing, to disregard it in his authority and Majesty over our consciences, and hearts, and ways: As if a soul should say, what care I though God doth speak thus and thus; I will not be curbed, and limited, nor restrained: this is to contemn God: And it is called a rebelling against him, Deut. 1. 24. I spake unto you, and you would not hear, but rebelled against the Commandment of the Lord, and went up presumptuously to the hill.) It is called a casting of God's Law behind our back; God hath hemmed and circumscribed the soul with precepts, within which if a man walks, he hath God to be his security, but in presumptuous sinning's a man will exceed his limits, and yet believe a safety: this very thing is expressed in Deut. 17. 11. According to the sentence of the Law, which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do, thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee, to the right hand or to the left, ver. 12. And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken to the Priest, &c. even that man shall die, ver. 13. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously; There you see that presumptuous sinning consisted in the slighting of the sentence of the Law by the Priest: the Priest said, this is it which God would have you do: This is it which he would not have done. Now the person who sinned presumptuously, would not stand to this, but would break over this sentence, and would go in his own way, he disregarded what God spake, that should not be his rule, no not his.

6. Lastly, presumptuous sinning's may rise higher then all this, as when a man sins not only knowingly and willfully, but most

maliciously, and despitefully against God and Christ; the Apostle speaks of such presumptuous sinners, who tread underfoot the Son of God, and do despite unto the Spirit of Grace, Heb. 10. 29. And who crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, Heb. 6. 6.

This kind of presumptuous sinning, is not only to sin, though a man knows it, nor only to sin, because a man will sin, but it is also to sin on purpose to dishonor God, and to vex his holy spirit; the soul is grown unto that abominable insolency, that a man even plots deliberately how to cross God, and will therefore apply himself to such words and acts, because he knows they will displease God; this is the very top and height of presumptuous sinning: when a man in a sober and calm spirit exempted from violent diseases and strong passions, and insolently turbulent temptations, shall in sober circumstances, desperately, and of malicious and set purpose encounter God, adventure iniquity, to provoke God: he knows that the worst which shall befall him is damnation, but he cares not for that, he will however have his pleasure in sin, and will strive to despite that God, who stands in a just enmity to his soul and sins.

## SECT. II.

Quest. 2. What that strength is which keeps back regenerate persons from presumptuous sins; and what difference 'twixt the restraining's of evil men, and this keeping back of good David.

Sol. For a more distinct knowledge of this point, observe a few particulars.

1. Restraint is any kind of stop 'twixt the inclination and the object: when the nature is inclined to such or such a thing, and a bar falls in, to keep them asunder, this is restraint. As when God bridled up the fire from burning the three children; and the Lion, from devouring Daniel; and Abimelech from touching Sarah; and Laban from hurting Jacob, The natural inclinations of the former, and the morally evil dispositions of the latter, were chained in, they were stopped, they were hindered in respect of their acting's and exercise. All creatures are capable of restraint, because under a Supreme power; only God cannot be restrained: but for all creatures, their natures, and inclinations, and operations, are under his command by the Law of Creation.

2. Restraint of any Agent, ariseth from a greater strength of a Superior Agent: whatsoever keeps a man back from a sinful acting, it is (at that time) whiles a restraint of more actually strong force, then the present inclination is; as in the stopping of a stone or water, that which is unequal in strength, a lesser force is not able to keep in the stronger: the cords wherewith Sampson was bound, were no restraints to his motion and escape, for his strength exceeded them, and he easily brake them asunder: But God's decree and providence is a restraint to the raging sea: and his power is a restraint to gird in the malice and rage of man, because, though sinful inclinations be strong, yet God can over-rule, and bound, and bind it in.

3. All Restraints presupposeth an aptness, a disposition ready to run, and get out. The Child whose desire is to lie in the Cradle, is not there said to be restrained: and the Trades-man, whose shop is his paradise, is not therefore restrained from going abroad; but when a servant would be gadding, and yet is kept in, this is Restraint. In every man there is too much sin; Corruption is in us all, and it is with it, as with a Child in the womb which would be breaking out into the

world; or as with fire kindled within, which would be flaming abroad; such an aptness is there in our sinful inclinations to secret, and then to open acting's. Now the Cohibition, the inclosing, the locking of them in, is properly Restraint.

4. All Restraint of sin is from God. That God whom David here desires to hold, or keep him back, did also with-hold Abimelech, keep in Laban, keep up Esau, keep off Saul; and it is granted that there are several means and ways of restraint, natural, moral, spiritual, (as you shall hear anon) but it is God in them which causeth restraint; he imprints such a vigor into those Arguments, into those Apprehensions, that they shall bind, and chain, and hold in the nature, which else would not judge so seriously, nor submit so easily to impedition or hindrance: as the horse rusheth into the battle, if left to his own swing and violence; so the heart of man, if left to itself, it would put no periods to wickedness, but would grow from evil to worse, and fill up all the measures of iniquity. There should not be one righteous Abel, but every Cain would kill him; not a Jacob, but Esau would pursue him; not a David, but Saul would hunt him; not an Apostle, but Herod would be-head him: All Christian Religion would lie in blood, yea, and the very order of nature would sink into confusion by the efficacy of that sinful corruption which is equally divided amongst all, if God did not look down from heaven, and restrain the rage of sin in all.

5. All evil men are not equally restrained by God; which appears both in the matter, and in the measures of sinning: some evil men do not break out into all horrible kinds of sin: some, though they be at the same school of particular sinning, are not yet in the same form, and height, or degree of sin, though they be at the same trade; yet their skill and thriving in the same sin is different: Every Drunkard is not the mighty man to drink, and every swearer lets not his tongue loose

to the highest blast of Blasphemy. There is no man so high in sin, but if God should cease to restrain him, he would yet plunge himself into a deeper guilt.

6. The restraining of any sinner is an Act of a merciful Providence unto him. God's Justice begins already to smoke against a man, when he totally leaves the reins unto him, when he gives him up to himself to his own vile affections, reprobate mind, to his own Counsels and ways, and will no more strive with him, but cast him off to himself. But it is a great Mercy when he restrains: though renewing grace be the saving Mercy, yet restraining grace is a great Mercy, when God will not let a man's sinful corruption take its full walk: for restraint diminisheth guilt, whereas, if this bridle were off, a man would increase his sinful accounts by infinite iterations and multiplications of sinning. Now he is kept from enlarging his debts, yea, and it diminisheth sin; whereas a man let loose, would diffuse sin, cast his fire-brands about, draw others to a consociation of evil, and so set up the trade: now by restraint, sinning is more contracted and narrowed: yea, and it diminisheth wrath and judgment: for according to the number and measures of sinning, there shall be an equal proportion of vengeance and punishment, the greater sinner shall have and feel the sharper flames of hell: but now restraint keeps in the sin and at least makes it less sinful, (for as sin sticking in the inclination is not so deep as that which flies out of that into acting's and consummations) and so consequently is a means to lessen the heat of future torment.

7. God doth restrain the good and the bad from sin. The evil man is so wholly carried by a sinful nature, that if God did not keep him back; he would bring all to confusion. The good man is so weakly good, that if God did not prevent, and interpose, and with-hold, he could not with-stand so much evil as now he doth.

How great a Mercy did David acknowledge a Restraint from sin to be, you may see in his own words; 1 Sam. 25. 32. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel which hath sent thee this day to meet me. Verse 33. And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from shedding innocent blood.

The Father hath two Children, one young, and the other old: if he doth not keep in the elder, he will be like the Prodigal, sell all, and be riotous: if he doth not hold in the other, he will fall, and be like Mephibosheth, lame on both feet.

Evil men have strong corruptions, which God is pleased many times, many ways to keep within door, he will not suffer all their intentions, desires, projects to see the light.

Good men have weak graces, their own legs are not able to bear them up, and strong temptations and occasions may soon lay flat a weak defendant, and therefore God is pleased yet to bridle in that remaining corruption, to keep off the soul, or something off from the soul, lest it should sin: we see it in experience, that grace alone is not able to keep off sin: Grace can keep us, whiles God keeps the grace: but if God leaves us to the assays of our own best strength, we are unequal Combatants in the field.

8. God doth diversely keep back or restrain men from particular sins and sinning's: sometimes,

1. By enlivening the conscience, which being strictly awakened, riseth to such an height of impatience, and choler, and rage, that the sinner is willing to let go the sinning, rather than to answer the scourging indictments and threats of conscience for it. As the luxurious patient, though he likes the sparkling wine, yet he dares not drink it, lest his spirit should be thereby inflamed, and burn him up; even an evil

man, though he be not afraid of sin, yet he may be afraid of conscience, and may therefore be kept back from his sinning, as the Collier from handling his coals, not because they are coals, but because they are burning hot.

2. By self-reflecting apprehensions: the love that a man hath to himself, may be a means to keep him off from some sinful acting's: for some sinning have such infamy, and charge, and envy, and loss, and danger indorsed on them, that the very present arrears of sin do prevail, and keep off the man from adventuring; he will not strike the bargain for payment so sharp, and sure, and present.

3. By legal imprinting's: God is pleased many times to set up the flaming sword, and the shadows of hell before the eyes of a daring sinner: tells him plainly that he will call him to an account, and wrath shall be his portion, if he will not forbear thus to provoke him: whereupon he forbears.

4. By denying and crossing opportunities: when a man hath prepared himself for a sin, then God doth so secretly direct the ways, and the eyes, and the presence of other creatures, that the sinner must keep in the cup which he hath tempered, and dares not draw the sword with which he is girded, nor act the evil which he did before earnestly intend to prosecute and finish. The sinner doth not always sin, not that he wants an heart, but because he hath not a conveniency; as the ship ridged may be wind-bound: though the greediness of sin thrusts on the sinner, yet the wisdom of the flesh will keep it in, till the season of sinning may suitably match with the former contrivances of sin. Esau deferred to slay, his brother Jacob till Isaac died.

5. By denying, or with-holding of temptations. Beloved, Though evil men are under the power of the Prince of the Air, yet I conjecture, not in this sense, that they may tempt them when, and how he



pleaseth; or that they must necessarily act every sin to which he tempts them. But as God is pleased, when Satan doth many times tempt them, yet sometimes to restrain them; so he is pleased, when Satan would tempt them, many times to restrain them, well knowing that his temptations would easily draw out matter already prepared: An heart which hath won itself to a sin, may without any more ado, by the very presence of a temptation and occasion be instantly wrought unto it.

6. By causing Diversions, which may call aside the employment of the sinner another way: As when Saul in malice raised a persecution against David, and had hemmed him in; God yet restrained Saul, by letting in the Philistines upon his County, with-drew back the execution of his rageful intention against David at that time.

7. Lastly, By beginning, and supporting, and enlarging the principle of sanctification, which is the sweetest restraint of the heart from sin, drawing it off, enabling it against inclinations and temptations: and such a kind of holding back doth David pray for in this place, viz. a sanctifying restraint, a renewing restraint, a subduing Restraint.

9. The restraining of good men are exceeding different from those of evil men: though the sins from which either are restrained may be common, yet the keeping back of one by renewing Grace, and of the other by mere restraining grace, are very different. v. g.

1. They differ in the fountain for keeping off by mere restraining's, proceed from the care of universal providence, but keeping back by renewing's, comes from a special affection of God in Christ: God hath an eye over all his works, and a mercy over them too, he doth not totally leave, no not the sinful Creature, but expresseth a Providence in permissions of some things, contradiction of many things, restriction of many things, and ordination of all things: though men

be desperately evil, and as it were the lords of sin, yet God will be known forever to be the Lord of nature by circumscribing, and abridging, and commanding it in its propensions: But the keeping back by renewing grace, this doth arise from a tender love, a most gracious affection which God bears to his servants, like the Father with-holding of his dear Child from a sword which might hurt him, or meat which might make him sick.

The restraining's of evil men are from the Wisdom of divine power, and the cohibitions of good men are from the goodness of special favor. They differ again in the form of Impression: for restraint of evil men arise only from argument, but those of good men, depend upon nature as well as argument. In the former, it is argument alone which makes the stop. In the latter it is argument and nature both, as Abner said to Asahel; 2 Sam. 2. 22. If I should smite thee, how should I look thy brother Joab in the face? there was naked argument. How can I do this great evil, and sin against God? as Joseph said to his Mistress, Genesis 39. 9. there was a divine Argument, and a holy nature; bid a man to grasp a toad, his very nature shrinks back from this; bid him climb by a little rope to the top of a high mast in the midst of the sea, and here Argument or reason may withhold him: it is one thing for a new Argument to keep off an old heart; it is another thing for a new nature to keep back from an opposite corruption.

3. They differ in their entrance and seizure; The Restraining's of evil men are but as locks upon the out-door: and the keeping back of good men is as the lock upon the Closet; one is an impedit to the actions, the other is an impedit to the inclinations; one is a bridle upon the lips and hands, the other is a bond upon the heart and disposition; the one may seal up the lips that a man doth not swear: the other tempers the heart that a man fears an oath.

4. They differ in their Efficacy: Restraining's of evil men do not impair the state of sin, no more than chains and prisons do the nature of the thief or Lions: Look as it was with the fire, into which the three Children was cast, the restraining of its burning Act did no way prejudice, either the nature of the fire, or the faculty of it to burn, only it did suspend the act: so it is with mere Restraints about moral things, though it doth give a Supersedeas to the evil act, (for the present) yet it grants not a Capias corpus, the body of sin is all one, as before. But in the keeping back of a good man, there is not only an inter-let of the Act, but some measure of diminution to the sinful inclination.

5. They differ in the fairness of equality: Meer Restraints do not deal justly with sins, they make a stop in one, and leave open a gap for other sins: like a vessel of many holes, though the water break not out in one place, because it is stopped, yet it freely flies out in the rest: so where a man is restrained only, though that sin cannot find a way in that vein, yet it will find a course (like the water which is hindered underground) another way: But the holdings back by renewing grace do indispose generally and evenly.

6. They differ in the fullness of duration: for mere Restraints hold in the nature, no longer then the things remain, by virtue of which the mind was restrained. Let the fear of death expire, put aside the edge of the Law, be sure that shame shall not follow, and the only restrained sinner breaks open school, so that he goes to the sin: But holdings back by renewed grace are cohibitions of the heart upon permanent grounds, viz. the perpetual contrariety twixt God and sin, twixt sin and his Will, and Holiness, and Goodness, and Honor.

7. They differ in this, That the heart of a man only restrained, doth, being at liberty, (like waters held up) pour forth itself more violently

and greedily, as if it would pay use for forbearance; it abounds in the sin, and makes a more fully wicked recompense for the former restrictions. But where the soul is kept back by renewing grace, it doth not multiply sin, because of less practice now, but is laboring a fuller diminution of sin, because of too much practice heretofore.

8. They differ thus: An evil man is kept back as a prisoner by force against his Will; But a good man is kept back as a Petitioner, it is his hearts desire, O that my ways were so directed that I might keep thy statutes: order my steps in thy Word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me: Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

It is an evils man cross to be restrained, and a good man's joy to be kept back from sin: when sin puts forth itself, the evil man is putting forth his hand to the sin; but when sin puts forth itself, the good man is putting forth his hand to heaven; if he finds his heart yielding, out he cries, O keep back thy servant: An evil man is kept back from sin, as a friend from a friend, as a lover from his lover, with knit affections, and projects of meeting: but a good man is kept back from sin, as a man from his deadly enemy, whose presence he hates, and with desires of his ruin and destruction: It is the good man's misery, that he hath yet an heart to be more tamed and mastered: It is an evil man's vexation and discontent, that still, or at any time he is held in by cord or bridle.

And thus you see what David aims at, in desiring to be kept back from presumptuous sins, viz. not a mere suspension, but a mortification, not a not-acting only, but a subduing of the inclination, not for a time, but forever. Nevertheless, methinks, there may be something more added for the opening of this point, Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

Take what I conceive, briefly thus, God keeps back his servants from sin.

1. By preventing Grace, which is by infusing such a nature, which is like a Bias into the Bowl, drawing it aside another way: so that holy nature which God confers on his servants, doth secretly draw off the soul from the consent, appetite and practice of sin propounded to the soul.

2. By assisting Grace, which is a further strength superadded to that first implanted nature of holiness, like an hand upon a Child holding him in. This Divines call, a Co-operating Grace, which is an excess of divine strength, to that strength which God hath formerly imprinted in preventing grace: which whether it be an enlargement of habitual grace in the natural measure of it, (as when health is made to rise to a greater degree of strength) or whether it be an efficacious motion of God's Spirit, powerfully strengthening the inherent Grace to the acts of aversation and resistance of sin and temptation; It is, I confess, an acute and disputable inquiry, yet whether the one, or whether the other, the soul is by either more confirmed, and established, and upheld, and kept from sin?

3. By quickening Grace, which is, when God doth enliven our graces to manifest themselves in actual oppositions, so that the soul shall not yield, but keep off from entertaining the sin: As when in the motions of sin, he inflames the heart with an apprehension of his own love in Christ, and then excites our love exceedingly unto himself again, whereby the heart is made marvelously averse, and to detest any closure with this sin, by which so ample and gracious a love should be wronged and abused; or as when in the temptations to sin, he excites that affection of holy fear, which works that filial and awful regard to a great God and a good Father, that the soul is

brought into Josephs temper, how can I do this great evil and sin against God.

4. By directing grace, which is when God confers that effectual wisdom to the mind, tenderness to the conscience, watchfulness to the heart, that his servants become greatly solicitous of his honor, scrupulously jealous of their own strength, and justly regardful of the honor of their holy profession. And therefore they decline all occasions of the sin which may over-lay their own strength, and dailies not with the temptations, or with the first motions: But as they are in fear of themselves, so they are in defiance, not only with apparent sins, but also with the appearances of them: and shun not only the sins, but the inlets and preparations to the sins: and verily he shall be much kept from the secrecy of sin, as a King who is wise to keep off Parle with the Ambassadors of sin, I mean occasions, which do negotiate with the soul, and prepare it to lose its own strength.

5. By doing grace, which is, when God effectually inclines the heart of his servants to the places and ways of their refuge, safeties and preservations from sin: By enlarging the spirit of supplication which carries the soul to its strength; prayer engageth God, and this we find, that the praying Christian is more kept from sin, then the disputing Christian: for though sin be stronger then reason; yet God is stronger than sin: by framing the heart to the reverent and affectionate use of his Ordinances: A man many times comes to the word a combatant, but is sent away a Conqueror, comes hither as a pursued man, by sin and Satan, but here God gives him a safeguard, a protection; and sends him away armed with more holy resolutions, courage and defiance, by strengthening his graces, by assuring his love and strength, by making the sin more vile and odious.

### SECT. III.

Quest. 3. Now I proceed to the third question, What causes or reasons there should be which might move David to put up this prayer, Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

Sol. Reasons thereof are many, I will touch them, though under a few heads, viz.

1. In respect of himself.
2. In respect of the sins themselves.
3. In respect of others.
4. In respect of God.

1. In respect of himself.

1. If he considered himself, there were sufficient grounds for such a petition, because

1. His aptness by virtue of original corruptions, even to presumptuous. sins. Beloved, I dare not traverse the extent and compass of sin (in respect of aptitude and possibility) even for a good man: of this I am sure, the least sin is farther then he should go, and the higher he mounts in sin, the deeper are his own wounds; no man can be safely bad, or comfortably sinful: Nevertheless, this may be said, that though there be some top-sins, which perhaps, a good man doth not commit, yet there is scarce any sin for kind or degree, which might not lay him flat, if God did not hold him up, and keep him back.

The reason whereof is this, because original sin, which (cleaves to the best) is not only a corrupt, but also an universal corrupt inclination; what the Philosophers conceit of the capacity and disposition in their first matter, that it is illimited, unbounded, infinite, not restrained to this or that form only, but in a general way lies open to all impressions: That is most true of original corruption, even in all that it is (for its part) a capacity, an aptness to any actual villainy and wickedness, a womb of all uncleanness, a seed of all iniquity, not distinguishing 'twixt the vilest and the fairest transgressions; Paul complained in Rom. 7. 18. I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; the flesh (i.) the corruption of sinful nature is an utter vacancy of any good, that is the privative nature of it, and then the flesh, i.e. sinful corruption, is a diseased inclination, a filthy fountain, a lewd womb, a sinning sin, impelling, enticing, egging on the soul to consents and acts unlawful, and that upon all occasions without any distinctions of great or little, and that is the positive nature of it: Though inherent grace doth much abate and keep under that sinful nature (as a naughty servant may be held down by a good and stronger Master) yet it is of a false, deceitful, and capable nature for the vilest impressions of actual sins.

2. His impotency and self-inability to keep off himself from such sins: Beloved, it is true, that grace is a sweet and enabling quality; he who receives grace, doth with it receive a measure of strength proportioned to the degree of grace received, and no man is so vain to conceive that a person receiving grace, can do no more against sin, then he who was never armed with such heavenly power: But then Divines have well distinguished, that as there must be a first grace (which they call *gratia operans*) to change the nature within, so there must be a second grace which they call *gratia co-operans*, to assist the soul and the first grace, against the insolency of corruption, and of actual temptations; grace can do much, but (of itself) not always



enough to keep off a sin: it is true that the distance of the soul and sin depends on grace, but that the soul keeps a distance from such a sin, (i.) that such a sin doth not engage and lay flat the soul, this doth not owe itself to the mere and natural strength of the first created grace, but to that grace, as assisted and supported by an higher hand from heaven: so far as I yet conjecture that principally effectual strength of created grace is more in its dependence, then in its self. As an arm is strong, and able to do much service, and to put off several assaults, but principally by reason of its communion with the head, from which if it were separated, it can do nothing but fall down: or as the beam of light from the Sun, moves, irradiates, pierceth, and perhaps heats and melts, none of which could it do, if there were an eclipse, an intercision, a cutting of it off from its dependence on the Sun; so grace doth most and more, as it is most and more assisted from above, from its head which is Christ, and from God who is the father of lights. Suppose grace left entirely and solely to itself, a person would be exposed to many and foul miscarriages: though the water be well heated, yet remove the fire, and the natural cold will return and prevail over that accidental heat: The natural habits of sin would easily have the better of the extrinsical habits of grace, were not these held up, and backed by an higher arm, then that of itself, or then that in corruption working against it; you know that all Adams strength was not Canon proof against Satan's temptations; he assaulted and entered his Castle, and laid him flat and all the world with him. Peter, though a very good man, and a very forward Disciple (one qualified with much grace, and high affections) yet was beaten down in plain field, he could not preserve and keep back himself, though armed beforehand with a warning from his Master, but denied him thrice, and that with some high qualifications too: Nay, the great falls of the best men we ever heard of in Scripture, show thus much, that it was not their sword, and their own spear, that it was not their own strength which could

keep them entirely back, and point unto us, not only the impotency of our own guard, but also the name by which we stand, and therefore is it, that David prays, Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

## 2. In respect of the sins themselves.

The mere consideration of sins (as) presumptions, afford strong causes why David should pray to be kept back from them: for though every sin contains a natural reason of dislike and forsakement (every sin carrying a foul quality in it, and a condemning inconformity) yet some sins are of a deeper die, and of a more crying guilt, and of a darker blackness, and of a more wounding sharpness, and of a louder vileness then other some are.

Amongst which higher ranks of iniquity are presumptuous sins and sinning's; which may appear thus.

1. The more shining light of grace is trampled over for to act the sin, the viler is the sinning; for if naked light makes the spot the broader (the sinner ever sins the more, by how much the more clearly he sees his way to sin) then shining light makes it much more heinous, (i.) when knowledge doth as it were wrestle in the conscience, when it doth contend strongly with the soul by force of evidence and plain reasoning's, to stay it: But now presumptuous sins and sinning's, they are the laying flat (as it were) of shining light: the soul doth (as it were) shut its eyes, and stop its ears, it doth break away to the sin, against all the discoveries and clear impleading's of knowledge, gainsaying and withstanding it, the presumptuous person goes not to sin ignorantly, but he doth it by imprinted light, so the sin as God's enemy which yet he will embrace as his friend: yea the more Inexcusable that a sin is, the worse it is; when little or nothing can be

said in behalf of the sinner: thus is it in presumptuous sinning's, the man cannot say I did not know it, I was not warned.

2. The more pride of heart accompanies any kind of sinning, this makes it the more vile: for pride lifts up the point of the sword, it shakes the spear against God: when the will of God, and the will of a sinner come into a competition about sinning, then pride grows high; Who is the Lord saith Pharaoh that I should let Israel go, Exod. 3. Who is Lord over us, said they in Psalm 12. when the heart goes proudly to sin, it will acknowledge no Lord, but its own pleasure, and no rule, but its own resolution, it can slight a precept, and scorn a threatening. Now presumptuous sinning's are filled with pride; I think St. Augustine had an aim at this, in his exposition of this v. when he rendered the reading of it thus; contine servum tuum a superbiis, keep back thy servant from prides: as if pride were knotted, and folded, & doubled in presumptuous sinning's, there was pride and pride again in that heart which durst thus to sin: and verily so there is in presumptuous sinning's a manifold pride: a pride of judgment to approve that which God hath branded and condemned; a pride of will to rise up to that which God would have the sinner forbear. A pride of security to make a Sanctuary for the soul, when God hath threatened wrath, &c.

3. The more impudency and boldness attends a sinning the worse it is. There is a double impudency about sinning.

One of defense, when the sin hath been committed, of which I am not now to speak, which is no more but to paint a whore, or to cover a plain sore, to make that seem good which really is stark naught.

Another of entrance, when the sinful soul lays aside all shame, and fear, and modesty, and restraints, and arguments, said he, whatsoever may be said come of it, whatsoever may come, yet I will

on; let God take it well, or take it ill, let him beseech by mercy, or warn by threatening's, nothing moves, neither my peace nor comfort, nor soul prevail, nor my shame, nor trouble, nor misery keep back. But thus it is in presumptuous sinning's, the heart is bold and impudent, which can look so much mercy in the face, and yet will dare to sin, which can look so many threatening's in the face, & yet will dare to sin, which can look its own great misery (in respect of the issue and end of the sinning) in the face, and yet will dare to sin, nay, which can (perhaps) look many former experiences of bitterness and anguish for the same sinful adventuring's, in the face, and yet will dare to sin: putting the hand into the fire again, which hath burned it, and venturing to swim in those waters, where (had not God's mercy stepped in) the soul had long since been drowned.

4. The more abuse of mercy concurs to the sinning, the more heinous it raiseth the sin: for mercy is the sweetest stop of a sinner; and the kindness of it should smooth off the soul from offending: what is mercy but that unspeakable readiness in God to forgive a sinner; a gracious willingness to sit down with wrong offered, if yet the sinner will come in, and the abusing's of it, are affronts to the highest love. But now in presumptuous sinning's mercy is extremely abused.

First, in that it hath not its direct end: the direct end of mercy is to awe, and to keep off the heart from sin; There is mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be fear!: Psal. 130. But the presumptuous sinner is less fearful, because God is so merciful, and the mercies of God should lead to repentance, Rom. 2. But the presumptuous sinner yet dares to hold on the sinful trade.

Secondly, when it is made to serve and to encourage sin; O this is the imbasing of that high and tender attribute of God, when we draw out from his goodness to embolden the heart to wickedness; as if that

God whose soul abhors sin, would let fall any expression to hearten a sinner, yet thus it is with the presuming sinner, the very mercy of God makes him bold to sin against God; the confidence of that easiness in God to forgive, occasions him therefore to adventure and multiply transgressions.

### 3. In respect of others.

David had good reasons to pray to be kept from presumptuous sins in respect of others; as well as in respect of himself: whither you consider his general calling (a man of goodness, or his particular calling, a man of dignity and place) but I will fold them both together: thus then,

1. Such sins would be exemplary and noted: There are three things which set a man upon the stage, which lift up his actions on high to the eye of the world.

One is his powerful and active sanctity; a very holy man is a kind of a wondrous sight, after which many eyes are gazing: Godliness is a very rare thing, and therefore men look much upon him who professeth it.

Another is his singular dignity: lift a man out of the crowd, advance him to a place and seat of honor above others, how busy is the multitude to eye, and judge, and imitate him. The ways and actions of great persons (are usually) the present copies of the most.

A third is his notorious miscarriages, which are like the tail of a blazing comet; the great sinning of good or great men, fall instantly into common discourse and (perhaps) also easily into common practice. Therefore great cause had David to pray against presumptuous sins, which by his practice might prove a common

snare, for who will not confidently write after that sinful copy, which both goodness and greatness have begun: that which the great man doth, the inferior person will do; and that which the good man doth, that the evil man thinks he may now lawfully do: if knowledge will venture, ignorance supposeth that it may safely follow, and if holiness will adventure, why should profaneness be so nice as to stop: The way or fact is credited, either as not bad, or else not so dangerous, where either authority or profession are leaders.

Now this might be some cause to move good David to pray to be kept back from presumptuous sins, knowing how his actions were capital copies, wrote in Text Letters: And that the sinning's of great men are like the fallings of Cedars, which bring down with them to the ground many lower shrubs: And that the sinning's of good men are easily snares, whereby other men would encourage and deceive themselves.

2. Such sinning's from him would be trophies to evil men: There are three things which flash evil hearts.

One is the accomplishing of their own projects and lusts.

Another is the distresses of the Church; Aha, so would we have it.

A third is the great falls of good men, now like the dog they will bark and insult over the wounded Lion: A good man's sins, which are his wound, and God's dishonor, is their day of mirth and sport.

I observe that there are three mouths which the higher sinning's of good men do open.

The mouth of God, O how his word thunders his displeasure against the soul of such a one who is come so near unto him, and yet hath adventured thus to sin against him, doest thou thus requite the Lord.

The mouth of conscience, if we do well and keep uprightly with God, then the mouth of conscience yields words of oil and peace (it exceedingly excuseth, comforteth, acquitteth, upholdeth, &c.) but if we wickedly transgress and exceed infirmities, O then the mouth of conscience proves like the mouth of the sword, it speaks with sharpness, and woundings, and terrible amazement, &c. breaks the bones of David, Psal. 51. makes him roar, Psal. 32.

The mouth of evil men; Now their voice is set on high, the trumpet is set to their mouth; O what Raging's, Railing's, Girding's, Scoffing's, Obloquies, and Blasphemies are instantly heaped upon Religion and Profession, yea, these are they, this is their holiness, this their profession, this their niceness, this the hypocrisy of them all. Now (perhaps) this also might move David to pray to be kept back from presumptuous sins, though not the immediate, yet the colateral reason, viz. because he might not give occasion to the Adversary, that God might not suffer by him, nor Religion by him, that he might not sad the hearts of the righteous, nor weaken the Glory of holiness, nor stretch the mouths of them who can bless themselves in a course of vileness, and yet curse and accuse the godly for particular facts only.

#### 4. In respect of God.

Here also might David frame strong and singular reasons to be kept back from presumptuous sins. I know there is nothing in God which a good heart might not urge as a sufficient argument against any sin; but I will contract my thoughts and matter.

1. What God had been to him, might cause him to pray against presumptuous sins.

For his temporal kindness, that was exceeding great, he raised him from the crook to the Scepter, from the Shepherds tent to the Kings

Throne, and now after all this, to answer so great goodness with great sinfulness, this would be a high degree of odious unthankfulness.

His spiritual kindness, that was more than the former, he did set his love upon him, and made him a person after his own heart, gave unto him his good Spirit of grace and joy, comforted his soul in many adversities, compassed him about with favor, as with a shield, heard his prayers, granted him the desires of his soul; O then, how should David do such great wickedness, and sin against his God! God forbid that David should put forth a hand to such an high kind of sinning, who had received from the hand of his God such high kinds of mercy and goodness; Mercy should make the greatest distance twixt us and sin, and cause the purer walking twixt us and God.

2. What he was to God, Why? David was his servant (see the Text) and presumptuous sinning's are high oppositions to our service of God: David was his child, his son; and presumptuous sinning's are great, at least incongruities to the way of filial obedience. Should such a man as I flee? said Nehemiah: so here, should such a man as David, one to whom God was so near, one who was so near to God, should he break out into the ways of Rebellions, into the acts of an enemy, into the paths of hostility? not only sin, (which may befall the best) but sin presumptuously, which befalls the worst, nor only to be surprised by temptation, but also to dare one in a sin by a proud presumption: What for a child to take arms against his Father, for a holy David to sin with so high a hand against so good a God, and so professed a Father? no marvel that he fears, and prays, and that earnestly, Lord, Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.

No other might be expected from men professing themselves haters of God, and Lover of sin: but for a friend, for a servant, for a child,



how can my God take such vile dishonors from me? and who will honor him, if his own should adventure, and presume thus to dis-glory his name, and wrong his, and their relation?

#### SECT. IV.

Now I shall descend to the useful Applications of this point unto ourselves: there are four general uses which may flow from this prayer of David. 1. Of Instruction. 2. Of Examination. 3. Of Exhortation. 4. Direction.

##### 1. For Instruction.

It may instruct and inform us in divers particulars, viz.

1. To see our own danger: as the prayers of holy men for good things, should learn us faith and hope: so their prayers against great sins should teach us fear and watchfulness. There is a story of an heathen man, who prayed to Jupiter to be saved from his enemies, one who heard him so petitioning, willed him to mend his suit, and to desire Jupiter to save him from his friend, for he trusted them more, and therefore they might do him most hurt. I would add one thing more to have mended that petition also: He should have prayed to have been saved from himself; for there is more danger in ourselves, than in all enemies or friends.

O Brethren, we carry about with us vile natures, and treacherous hearts: Even those abominations which sometimes we could have trembled at, unto them will our wicked selves deliver ourselves, if God keep us not back. Natural corruptions will bid fair for the foulest commissions; and that the match is not finished and acted, it is not

because we want hearts, but because God restrains and hinders. My soul is even among Lions, said David: In another case, assuredly our soul dwells with such a nature, as will not distinguish twixt small and great, but is then most like itself, when it is boiling in the vilest degrees of sinning.

The temptations cannot be so black and foul, but our corrupt hearts would easily kindle by them, and we should embrace them, unless there were a God to stay and stop us: you know that Hazael, when the Prophet wept, and told him of that Savage and barbarous Cruelty which should break from him in ripping up the woman, and butchering of the Children: Is thy servant a dog? said he, q. d. I abhor the thoughts of such unnatural villainy; and yet being left to himself, he soon acted that which now he seemed to abominate: even those sins which made a cry to heaven, as Cain's murder, and Sodom's uncleanness: and the mighty sins which the Prophet touched at, yea, and the highest and stoutest rebellions, they have all of them in all men a natural foundation, and seed and principle.

Secondly, Not to boast ourselves of our standing. Learn Paul's counsel thoroughly, Let him that stands take heed lest he fall, 1 Cor. 10. 12. Even thou which hast heretofore bitterly judged another for his sinning's, art now in the same transgression, and thy conscience is all over running with blood; either thus thou art, or thus thou mayst be

There be four things which the great falls of others should work in us, viz.

1. Great compassion: It is an ill heart which can rejoice at other men sins, and it is never right with us until we can hate our own sins, and shed tears for others.

2. Humbling fear, Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted, Gal. 6. 1. Thy Glass is made of the same brittle metal, and that it falls not, and breaks, it is because of the hand yet holds it, not because it keeps itself. If God should permit Satan to winnow thee, thou wouldst (perhaps) more readily deny Christ, and his truths, then ever Peter did: many a man hath sound limbs, because he was never in the field at battle.

3. Earnest prayer for continued assistance: forasmuch as though our Combats and dangers are here below, yet our guards and safe-comes are there above, and only there.

4. Tender jealousy. When others fall into sin, it is good for us to fall upon our knees, and watch, since our forbearance depends not on the betterness of our nature, or greatness of our strength, but on the efficacy of God's preventing and assisting grace.

Thirdly, You may here learn, what weakness there is in the strongest Christian: all his own strength is not sufficient for him against temptation or sin: if anything could keep off sin, it is grace, but grace needs help, as well as sin needs a bridle: Hold thou me up, said David, so shall I be safe, psalm 119. Look as it must be a divine Power which implants Grace, so it must be an Almighty hand which must maintain it: we can neither form our own hearts, nor conquer our own lusts: What would become of the Child, if the Nurse did not hold him? And whether would the ship be driven by a Tempest, had it not a Pilot to steer and order it? None can say what shipwrecks would befall even a good soul, were it not continually preserved and looked unto by a good God. Our strength and safety is more in the name of God and Christ, then in our own defense: hence it is that our Savior commended that petition, even to the best, (Lead us not into temptation) not that God tempts any man to evil, but that Satan

would easily lead us into sin: Did not God lead us out? his suggestions are crafty, his temptations strong, our hearts deceitful, our graces weak, our hands feeble, our resolutions insufficient, so that we may all cry out in this case, as Peter in another, Help Master, or else we perish.

'It is true, we must resist, and we must handle all our weapons, and we must seek, and we must resolve, and we must study, and we must hear, and we must read, and we must decline, but in all these, yea, with all these, yea, above all these, we must take in the Lord, and depend upon his help, Lord, Keep back thy servant, or else none of these (without him) will keep off the sin. That soul is most kept from sin which keeps most to God: None can keep up a soul, keep off a sin, keep back a temptation, so as God can do.

## SECT. V.

### 2. Of Examination.

Now let us come yet more close to our own hearts, David's care is here against presumptuous sins; But how stands it with our souls? Are we in the shallows only, or have we adventured into the deeps? it is true, that there are some presumptuous sinning's which are past all shore, they are out of the reach of all recovery, therefore I meddle not with them; but then there are other Degrees which are, though very fearful, yet recoverable. Consider,

1. Presumptuous sinning's arise more from the manner than the matter, it is not always so much what is done, as how the soul behaves itself in the sinning, which make it presumptuous: A little sin committed with an high spirit may therefore prove an high sin.

2. Again, In times of much light either there is much formal and explicit presumption, or else virtual and interpretative presumption: for where so much is afforded to lighten and keep back, it must be reputed as presumptuous, yet to adventure on.

3. There is Habitual presumption, when a man will hold on in a course and way of sinning: and there is particular presumption in respect of this or that fact: now one of these most men do touch upon.

I know you like not to be handled roughly in this thing: such is our hearts, we had rather have our sins concealed than uncased, and still conceive that we are not so bad as the worst, therefore let me propound things unto you more generally.

1. What call you that kind of sinning, When we ourselves will venture upon the same sins which we condemn in others? Rom. 2. 1. Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest dost the same things.

2. What kind of sinning call you that, When the heart will maintain its way against the Revelations of wrath, (i) though God proclaims vengeance and death against such a sinning way; yet the man will adventure on in the commission: I say, will adventure: for through weakness a man may be trodden down; but it is a stoutness when he will break through the Army: when a person will through the pikes, he will not give up his worldly and fleshly lusts, though the heavens be darkened round about his soul with threatening's; is not this presumptuous sinning?

3. What kind of sinning call you that, When the soul suppresseth truth, and holds back the light for unrighteousness sake? when it

knows the fact or way to be sinful, and yet will not be held back.

4. What is it for a person to bless himself in his way, and to protect himself when God hath cursed his facts; to say, none of this evil shall befall me, but tomorrow shall be as today: The Prophet is a fool, and the spiritual man is mad: God will not do as he reports, therefore soul take thine ease, thy course, let us eat and drink, and to our sins still.

5. What is that, When men will not repent till they be old, or ready to die, and till then will continue upon that score of sinning, upon a presumption that sin will be easily discharged, and Mercy presently had?

6. What is that Returning of the soul to a fact or way which it hath found to be bitter already? and though it hath found Hell in the conscience for the same sinning, yet it will break out again upon a hope of great mercy.

Object. Yea, But alas! The best have their infirmities and escapes: we think no hurt, and God knows our hearts, sin we do, and who doth not? but it is not through presumption, but through infirmity. The spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak; we still carry flesh and blood about us, it is our weakness, and God we trust is merciful.

Sol. It is most true, that the best are sick, and the strongest are weak, but then it is as true that the heart is deceitful, and sin is subtle, and men are apt to raise themselves in a false opinion of their safeties, and to extenuate the height and parts of their sinning.

But to the objection, I will briefly discover unto you, whether your sinning's fall from Infirmity, or else proceed from Presumption.

This must be granted in the general.

1. There are sins of Infirmity as well as of Presumption.

2. Infirmities are of two sorts.

1. Meer Infirmities, sins arising from mere weakness without any deliberation of the mind or choice of the Will, as sudden evil thoughts, words, deeds, dullness's, defects, shortness in good, &c.

2. Mixt, which have a tinge of presumption, but not enough to make the sin to be presumptuous; A knowledge, but not a practical Judgment, pro hic & nunc: some apprehension, but not a perfect deliberation: sudden passions perplexing the Judgment, and dazzling of it; Inadvertencies, Inconsideration's. But more particularly,

1. Acts owning themselves to infirmity, depend most upon outward strength: they have not such an entire causality from the subject, but are produced from unequal power; It is granted, that even a good heart may yet be found in the dirt, it may be overtaken with some particular facts which are stark naught; but this irregular action ariseth principally from a strength of temptation, which exceeds the actual strength of the renewed heart: like a man in a crowd, though he strives another way, yet is over-born, he is over-set, he is carried down, for all his strength cannot shoulder off the crowd, he is too weak: So when a man sins through infirmity, there is a nature which resists, as Paul had a Law in his mind, warring against the Law of his members, Rom. 7. yet the strength of that sinful Law did over-bear the resisting strength of his renewed mind, in respect of particular facts, & therefore the acts were acts of infirmity. But what is this to him whose heart is set on wickedness, who imagineth sinful devices, who shapes and contrives his way of sinning, who tempts even sin

itself to sin, whose sinning's arise from affection, not from temptation, who provokes his corruption to get out, who is a devil to his own heart, inclining and stirring it to sinful commissions, were our sinning's springing from a full principle, from a nature giving out itself: and that alone, I cannot judge them to be infirmities.

2. Acts of infirmity, are not habitual, but particular; they are rather transient then permanent acts: they are acts, but not continued acts, like a land-flood, not like a river; and the reasons of it are these.

1. Partly because they spring from Temptation, which though it may now and then over-reach the soul, yet the renewed heart observing the slight of Satan, and the imbecility of itself, provides therefore for stronger defense and strength to resist. And,

2. Partly because They flow from passion and sudden distemper, which is not a constant inclination, but only a fit, a present violence.

David in a sudden Passion, will kill Nabal, and every mothers child, but when Abigail met, and asswaged him, and made him understand reason, he was quit from his projects: But now where things fall into a habit, into a course, into a common practice, when a man is every day at his sin, when it proves an haunt, this cannot be called a business of infirmity: when our actions run, and fall into a kind of naturalness and custom, that a man is always tippling, and always swearing, and always filching, and always lying, when the way of his sin is a Trade, why this is no more to be reputed an infirmity, then for a Mariner to be in his ship, or a Trades-man to be in his shop.

Thirdly, acts of infirmity are involuntary acts: the man doth them, but the will is against them: the evil which I would not do, that do I, said Paul, in Rom. 7. As the fact opposeth the Law, so that will opposeth the fact, it is that which a man's judgment disapproves, and



which his will is averse from. The traveler, his will is to go the right way, and in that to stand, yet he may stumble and fall down, and this may be called an infirmity: But if he be himself, and should put off his clothes, and lay himself down in the dirt, this were an act of a voluntary madness; so when a man sets himself to sin, when he will go and wallow in the mire; when with Ahab, he sells himself to work wickedness, that he doth bargain away his soul for a sin; when he gives up himself to uncleanness with greediness, this is no infirmity, it is a height of proud presumption; But through infirmity of prevalent resistance, a good man may be sold under sin, as Paul, he may be led captive, being over-surprised, he may be led with Peter, that way, or to that fact, which yet he would not willingly do.

Fourthly, acts of infirmity is not a state of quietness, or consistence, (i.) if a man sins from a weakness of withstanding grace; Though the temptation hath been his conquest, yet his sinning shall be his trouble: weak strength in grace, though it be not always actually sufficient to prevent sin; yet it will be able to melt the soul for it; if temptation hath surprised the soul to sin, grace will then surprise the soul to mourn; neither will it lie with sin upon it: Even a weak child thrown down will be scrambling up or crying for some to raise it; But if the places of our fall be the places of our peace and of our rest, it is a bad sign that our sinning's exceed infirmities: when the sinning is to us, as the sea to the fish, or as the center to the stone, or as the bed to the laboring man; this is no infirmity.

Fifthly, in sinful acts of infirmities, the heart as it intends not sin, it condemns sin; the heart is more sensible, watchful, prayerful against it, and exceedingly strives to mortify it, and subdue it.

SECT. VI.

### 3. Of Exhortation.

A Third Use shall be to exhort us to imitate holy David in a care against presumptuous sins, and to be kept back from them.

Consider seriously a few things.

1. It is a great judgment to be left to ourselves: to be given up to a man's own heart, to be given up to Satan, to be given up to vile affections, to a reprobate sense, to our own councils and ways. As if God should say to a person, I have dealt with thee by my mercies, but thou wilt be unrighteous still, I have dealt with thee by my judgements, but thou wilt hold fast thy wickedness still; I have dealt with thee by my word and counsels, but thou wilt proceed on in thy sinning still; I have dealt with thee by my spirit in many convictions and motions, but thou wilt sin still; I have dealt with thee by reproofs, and checks, and troubles of conscience, but thy heart is set in thee to sin still: Since thou wilt be unrighteous, thou shalt be unrighteous still, since thou wilt be filthy, thou shalt be so still; I will leave thee unto the hands of Satan who works mightily in the children of disobedience, and he shall take thee captive at his pleasure; I will leave thee to the vileness of thy own sinful nature, that since thou wilt not hearken unto me, thou shalt (as thou desirest) with all greediness fulfil the lust thereof, but I will withdraw from thee in my mercy, and in my loving care: go on, and fill up the measure of thy iniquity and of wrath: why brethren, this is a sad and forlorn condition; what is the estate of the patient, when the Physician gives him off, and relinquisheth him to his own sick palate, and his own vain appetite and diet, why saith he, physic will do him no good, it is in vain to prescribe him rules, let him do on, take what he will, I see well he is a dead man; thus it is with him whom God leaves unto himself.

Surely there is not a more direful judgment then for God to give over his keeping of us: whither will not our wicked hearts carry us? what will not sin (left to itself) dare to do? how outrageously will it swell? how irrecoverably will it sink the soul? all helps are little enough to bound and keep in sin, but if it be left to its own force and violence, then like the sea without a shore, what a deluge it makes.

2. To sin upon presumptuous grounds, upon a presumption of mercy, is the next way to cut us off from mercy: Knowest thou not O man that the kindness, and longsuffering, and mercy of God should lead thee to repentance; but thou through thy hardness and impenitency of thy heart, treasurest unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. 2. 4, 5. God will not be merciful to the wicked transgressor, but he will wound the hairy scalp of such a one who goes on still in his sins: Mercy is a sweet City of refuge to the penitent sinner, but justice will tear off the presumptuous sinner, even from the horns of the Altar: God never yet said that he would forgive him, who will not leave his sins; do not flatter thyself, thou doest forsake thy mercies; unless thou wilt forsake thy sins, God will not spare thee, nor pity thee.

3. Presumptuous sinning makes high work for the soul; The pricks of a pin, the cut of a knife may do much hurt, but the gash of a sharp sword, forcibly followed, this will open death in thy sides. Every sin fetcheth blood in the soul, but presumptuous sinning's do even cleave the conscience asunder, be thou good or bad, who mounts up in an high kind of sinning, good Lord, how it will, (in a day of judicial sense) make the very sinews to crack, and thy joints to tremble.

Of all sensible wracking's in the soul, there is not any one comparable to that of despair: O! despair, it is the death pang of the conscience, it is the soul in the Extremity of amazing throws, it sees

no heaven, and no shore, but lays the soul either in hell, or ready to be cast quick into it; now presumptuous sinning's prepare the way for despair: when the soul would have its sinful course, it would not be beaten off by any method and warning of heaven, but went on in a secure confidence of the easiness and largeness of mercy: when God will not take these proud braveries any longer, but arrest the stout transgressor, and set his sins in order, both for the greatness of fact, and height of pride and daring's, and that against all light and goodness, and warning and threatening, and the sinner sees himself fallen into the hands of a terrible and glorious God, from whose fierce displeasure it cannot now rid itself. O cries out the miserable man, what shall I do? woe to me that ever I was borne, I have shut up heaven against myself, I am rejected forever; as I have dealt with God, so now he deals with me, I would not hearken to him, and now he will not hearken to me, O I shall never have mercy, I have adventured on so presumptuously, that I have distinguished myself from any hope and possibility of recovery: I was entreated, but still I would sin, I was warned, but still I would sin, I saw it to be sinful but I would do it; I felt some trouble for it, but, &c. I despised counsel, and scorned reproof, I slighted mercy, I quenched motions, and these so often, O Lord, now thou hast met with me, now shall I never rise anymore, I would have my sins, and I have them still, and I shall have thy just wrath and hell with them too. Thus the presumptuous sinner makes way to the despairing sinner: for what is it which causeth despair? when the soul sees justice to be exceeding great, and a cloud over the mercy-seat, now it sinks a pace, and what darkens the mercy-seat more than the greatness of sinning; and why doth divine justice seem so terrible, but because the person hath been so audaciously sinful: Now, he saith with Cain, my iniquity is greater than can be forgiven, Gen. 4. No, no, there is not balm for such wounds, there is not mercy for such great transgressions as I stand guilty of.

## SECT. VII.

### 4. Of Direction.

The last Use of the point shall be for direction, guiding us to the observation of some particular Rules, that so we may be kept from presumptuous sinning's.

1. Beware of a course of little sins: The stirrup, though it be low and small, yet it doth serve a man to mount; the great flames of fire took their beginning from a coal or a spark: And men, usually, have been first wading in lesser sins, who are now swimming in great transgressions: sinning's (supposed as little or inconsiderable) have not only this happiness, that they are not so much regarded, but this unhappiness that they are more often committed: And then this is certain: That the frequent commission of small sins is great in itself, and doth also dispose and prepare to greater commissions; many drops make a currant: he who makes no conscience of acting many little sins, will shortly take the boldness to assay and act some great sin.

For, 1. The more any sin is committed, the more is the judgment blinded and corrupted. 2. The more are the affections inclined and seduced. 3. The more is conscience benumbed and seared. 4. The lesser force have divine arguments with the soul, being surfeited with the pleasures of former sins, and then it must well follow, that the heart being thus qualified, may easily be wrought upon to a foul commission: this I find, that the way to be kept from a high sin, is to fear the least sin.

For little sinning's are not like a little inch of candle which goes off in an absolute period, but they are like a train of powder, which takes fire from corn to corn, till at length the barrel is burst asunder, or like a little sickness which is a humor disposing to a stronger distemper: or like a little circle in a pond, which begets greater and greater.

I observe three things.

1. That Satan hath a strange hand over that soul which can bear with any sin: he may by lesser things maintain his command: as it was said that the little child did command the land, for the child prevailed with the Queen, and the Queen with the King, and he over the land: Satan can prevail for a little sin, and a little sin can prevail with the heart, and the heart with the whole man.

2. That little sins are breeding sins: Now sin will keep its bounds, but naturally would greaten itself; though it seem modest at first, yet will it by degrees become familiar and impudent.

3. They are enticing sins, they are the advocates in the bosom for greater, they do not only labor for their own lodging, but will deal strongly with the heart to embrace greater, as occasion and temptations present themselves.

Therefore this do give the water leave, no not a little: little streams makes way to the ocean. And thou studiest the present way, to become a great transgressor, to rise to presumptuous sinning's, who wilt allow thyself to be an habitually immoderate sinner.

Secondly, take heed of the iterations of any sin, (viz.) do not go a sin over and over: of all transgressions, which dispose the soul towards

presumption, the repeated have a special influence, and I will give you a reason for it,

Because presumptuous sinning's depend much upon the boldness of the heart: when the heart becomes bold and fearless, it will then venture thorough thick and thin, it will presume far, they were men who sinned with both hands, and as high as Sodom, who came to this pass, that they knew no shame.

Now sins of iteration, or repeated sins, they frame a boldness in the heart (as repeated blows do the anvil) and the more hardened the heart is, the more bold it grows; partly because they delude the heart, they work false principles in the mind; forasmuch as we have gone on in these courses again, and again, and no evil befalls us, therefore tomorrow shall be as today, let us eat, and drink, and sin.

It was a sweet advise that of Elihu, Job 34. 32. That which I see not, teach thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do no more: for all sin grows strong by practice, and the often going over it is like the motion of the feet from one round of the ladder to the other, still rising, or like the manifold turnings of the wheel, which mounts the weight still to an higher pitch; what Job therefore spake in another case, Once have I spoken, but I will not answer, yea, twice, but I will proceed no further, Job 40. 5. that I say unto thee, once thou hast sinned, thus, and thus, yea, twice, and yet conscience is tender, there is yet fear and sorrow, but proceed no further, least that become mighty to sin. This is certain, that the stronger sin grows, the more easily will a sinner presume. Now repeated sinning's do wedge in the sin with strength, as the more often the Scholar writes after the copy, the fairer he writes, and the more he is enabled to write: so often sinning's makes the soul more strong in that kind, and then more fit for a worsen.

Thirdly, do not stifle or reject the frequent checks of conscience: God hath appointed several things to give the sinner a touch, like cords to twine him in, to keep him from sinning's, viz. the voice of the word, and the voice of judgment, and the voice of men, and the voice of his own conscience.

Now mark it, there are two of these voices (more especially) which if a man will neglect and slight, a thousand to one, but he will fall to be a presumptuous sinner, viz.

1. The voice of the Word, Prov. 29. 1. He that being often reprov'd, hardened his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

2. The voice of conscience: when the conscience shall concur with the word, in its informing acts, and in its directing acts, and in its warning acts, and in its restrictive acts, and in its corrective and judicial acts, (i.) it shall point the way, or fact, in the evil, and unlawful quality of it, and strive, and reason, and fret, and reprove, and threaten, yea, and speak bitterly, yet a man will go on, I say, this man hastens to some great sin, to presumptuous sinning's.

I will give you a reason for it, because the Lord will forsake this man, he will leave him to himself, he will give him up to his own heart: since he will not hearken to the counsel of the word, nor to the advises of his conscience, God will strive with him no more, but he shall be left to himself, this is the usual course of God's righteous and judicial proceeding. Now what can the heart do, being left to itself, as it hath no strength against a great temptation, so it hath sufficient strength and desire to; for the greatest methods of transgressing's; if restriction be a merciful bond to corruption, then wrathful desertion, a desertion of the creature, (i.) a denial of preventing assistance against temptation or inclination, or acting, why it is as the



unmuzzling of the Mastiff, or untying of the Lion, Not that God sets on the heart to sin, but that the heart will in a moment be mighty in sinning, which is judicially deserted, or left by God for former sinning's.

Therefore, I beseech you take heed of scorning divine admonitions and reproofs: Consider that place well in Psal. 81. 11. But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me, ver. 12. so I gave them up to their own hearts lust, and they walked in their own counsels: if thy heart can rise above the word, it will rise above thy conscience, and if thy heart rise above thy conscience, thy next sinning's will rise above thy former: he will not be modest to sin, who grows impudent against the word, and violent against his conscience.

Fourthly, secure not the heart because of God's present silence.

Beloved, I observe that God is silent (ofttimes) when men are in either way, in the good and in the bad: a man may repeat his seeking's of God, and yet God may be silent, O my God, saith David, Psal. 22. 2. I cry in the day time, but thou heardest not, and in the night season, and a man may repeat his sinning's against God, and yet God may be silent, Psal. 50. 21. These things hast thou done and I kept silence: But then this silence is not an infallible testimony either way; though he be silent to the many prayers of his servants, yet the vision will speak at length, for as thou hast a time to seek, so God will find a time to answer. And though he be silent many times at the sinning's of men, yet this is but forbearance, it is not an acquittance, if thou takes the times to sin, God will take his turn to punish, Psal, 50. 21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

Obj. But you will say, what is this to the preventing of presumptuous sinning's.

Sol. Very much; for presumptuous sinning's depend much upon security: a man secures his facts and ways from this, that God is silent and does not presently draw the sword; send for the arrest: and therefore presumes to a second or greater sinning, from God connivence and patience toward former. Solomon insinuates it clearly, Eccles. 8. 11. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil, q. d. There is now no ho, they make no bones of it, they will venture yet again: But brethren: take heed; if you sin, and yet you prosper in the world; if you sin, and yet conscience be quiet; if you sin, and yet God presents not a present testimony of his displeasure; yet do not presume: for if you do evil, sin lies at the door: first or last, when you open it, your sins shall fly in your face: though the punishment of the sinner be not present, yet it is certain: it shall not be well with the wicked, though he prolong his days, Eccless. 8. 13. yea, the sinner of a hundred years old shall be accursed: And this is observable, that God's silence towards a forward transgressor, is made up at length, not only with certainty, but with number and measure: perhaps he will take such a time to account with thee, for thy sinning's, that he will break thee suddenly all to pieces; he will break thy estate, and thy conscience, and thy body, and thy soul, and all, and all irrecoverably forever.

When a man emboldens his heart to sin because of divine patience, God doth usually do two things, viz.

1. He riseth suddenly to the vengeance.
2. He curseth the sinner without all remedy, and so fully vindicates his silence, and glorifies his Justice.

Fifthly, If you would be kept from presumptuous sinning's, then both study and improve mercy aright: Mercy it is the sweet savor of a sinful soul: that gentle voice which speaks hope to a trembling spirit, that tender hand which supports and relieves a fainting soul. And yet even from this sweet flower doth presumption suck the vilest poison: corrupting and inflaming the heart to the greater boldness of sinful adventures, from the greater goodness of exceeding Mercifulness in God. But then mark it, that upright apprehension of divine Mercy would serve to keep off the soul from presumptuous sinning's. If a man did consider two things.

1. That Mercy, the very intent of it, the pulse of it, it is to draw a man off from sin: it is true, Mercy is a harbor, but not for the Traitor to thrust in his ship, it is a City of refuge, but not for the audacious man-slayer: O! No, Mercy it is the tenderest goodness, but withal it is a special goodness, and is set up not as a light by the sea, that a man may know thereby how to sail more freely, that a man should therefore sin more violently, but as a proclamation from a Prince, to draw in the rebel to sheath his sword, and to fall down on his knees. There is Mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared, said David; And knowest thou not, O man, saith the Apostle, that the goodness of God should lead thee to Repentance; Rom. 2. 4. Hath God mercy to pardon me? with what heart can I then presume to provoke him; Hath he Mercy to pardon me? How canst thou then, O my soul, hold on thy sins, & not return when Mercy sends a Message after thee, it is the last, and most prevailing motive for a sinner to repent, even this that God will be merciful to him.

2. Mercy mis-proved to the sin, is both justly denied to the sinner, and also intends his sin: The only way to forsake our Mercies, is that we will not forsake our sins: God will never show thee Mercy, if thou

wilt not return from sinning against him: if we will not return, iniquity shall be our ruin.

Object. O! but God is merciful, though we be sinful.

Sol. Yea, But he is merciful only to the penitent, and if thou wilt be impenitent, thou forsakest thy mercies, and treasurest wrath unto thyself against the day of wrath, Rom. 2. 4, 5. Nay, more, Mercy doth so infinitely upbraid thee that the very Devils will hiss at thee: in the day of Judgment they may cry out against thee, for the abominablest wretch living, yea, in this respect worse than they: Lord, may they say, we have sinned exceedingly against thee, why, what should we do? we had never any hope or proposition of mercy, it was never offered to us, nor assured us; but here's a wretch, that though he were a sinner, yet thou didst beseech him by thy mercies to leave his sins, thou assuredst him of free pardon, if he would return, and he not only refused the pardon, but because of thy goodness in it, therefore grew more proudly bold, and presuming to sin against thee.

6. Sixthly, Consider this, That it is a difficult thing to repent, and that the more a man doth sin, the more hard it is to repent of his sins.

Object. Why will you say? what of this, to the prevention of presumptuous sinning's.

Sol. I answer, this conduceth much, because the presuming sinner leads on his soul to sin upon this ground and confidence, that if the worst come to the worst, he will yet at last put off his sins, and repent; whereupon his heart adventures far.

Now if a man were thoroughly convinced of two things, this ground would sink, and perhaps his heart might be taken off from

presuming.

1. One is, That it is a difficult thing to repent; Why? Repentance is the new setting of the heart and life: it is the very contradiction of a man's former love and practice, it is the undoing of all his doings, it is the shifting (as it were) of his nature, and the transplanting of himself, the divorcing of the affections, the new bent and edge of the soul for all holy and pious obedience: and is this an easy thing? Is it easy for a man to become an enemy to himself, to lay down his sweet delight, his precious profits, his closer nature, to judge and condemn his heart and ways, forever to forsake his own counsels, his own inclinations, his own courses: Know you not, that to sneath up but an idle word and form of language, is not so facile an act? how much more then to put off root and branch? Do we not stick in the same sins after many threatening's of wrath, after many executions of Judgment, after many invitations by mercies, after daily counsels and directions by thy Word, after instances and examples of punishment; nay, after particular and personal experiences of the deceitfulness and bitterness of our sinning's: Doth not this show that it is a difficult thing to repent?

Nay, Take an Assay of thy heart, begin the study of thyself, remember thy doings which have not been good, thy ways that have been evil, summon up all the matter of Repentance, (for if Repentance be true, it must be an universal turning) and then set upon the work of Repentance, and tell me whether former sins cannot plead hard for future and constant possession, whether they cannot work mightily and deceitfully? tell me how willing and ready thou shalt find thy heart which comes to this duty as a Thief to the Executioner? Tell me whether Satan will easily give up his Title and interest, and will give Christ possession quietly without many fervent suits to heaven, yea, without bitter and strong conflicts, yea, unless the Almighty God

himself come in, and turn him out of thy heart, and turn thy heart to him.

2. Another thing is this, That the more a man doth sin, the more he disables himself to repent, Tell me, seriously, Doth not the Debt weaken his ability of payment by greater engagements? Doth not the disease consume the powers of nature by its increase? Why? what is that which spoils us, and disarms us of strength, is it not sin? then the more sinning, still the less strength to return from sin. Nay, sin doth not only corrupt our strength, by multiplied sinning's, but withal increaseth its own strength: the more a man doth sin, the weaker and weaker he becomes, and sin thereby becomes stronger and stronger: Now tell me, if it be hard for thee in strength to turn from sin, will it not be harder for thee in weakness to conquer strength? if thou canst not step over the brook, why, dost imagine it easy to stride over the Ocean? If thou canst nor stand before the child, thinks thou in a moment to cast down the strong man? surely by thy continued and multiplied course of sinning, thy mind is more blinded, and thy Judgment is more corrupted, and thy love is more inflamed, and thy heart is more hardened; and art not thou then more disabled?

Once again; by thy more sinning's, the Counsels of God are more despised by thee: and the Spirit of God is more grieved and resisted by thee, and the Mercies of God are more abused by thee, and the patience of God is more profaned and injured by thee, so that God in Justice may forsake thee, and deny his hand forever unto thee, and then, thou, what wilt thou do? what canst thou do?

I beseech you lay these things to heart; they may check, and hold off your hearts from presuming: why thinks the soul, here is a temptation to sin, yea, but I must repent, and it is not so easy, that to

do, if it be, let me try about my former sins, without a new addition now: and then this I am sure of, that the more sinning's will make the work of Repentance more hard, forasmuch as they wedge in the sin more into the affections, and provoke God more, &c. therefore it shall suffice me to have sinned already: I will adventure no more, nor no further.

Seventhly, Consider, That thy life is short, and thy account is sure.

Thou sinnest this moment, and art not sure to live till the next day, and hast not assurance of life till tomorrow: for what is our life, but a lease of time, which God lets to man, the date of which is only known to God, and commanded by him. Saint James would not have us talk of tomorrow, and Christ would not have us think of anymore then for two days: and Paul saith, That the present time is the acceptable time, and the day of salvation. Thou fool, said Christ, this night shall they take away thy soul, death attends thee every moment, it is even laying hands on thee in the womb; and thou art never going to sin, but death saith, Lord shall I now strike him, arrest him in his very rebellion; Now if a man were effectually persuaded of this, perhaps he would not presume to sin; for presumption is usually confident of longer life, and therefore emboldens itself to stronger sins: a foolish error, and vain, for were it true, that in a natural probability, thou mightest yet live long, yet in a judicial course this is most true, that great sinning's shorten the life; the thief goes to the Gallows in his youth, because of his theft; and the sinner is suddenly laid in his grave by reason of his sinning's: And then, woe unto thee, better that thou hadst never been born, if thou lives and dies in thy sins; to the Judgment-seat of God must thou be brought with sin in thy bones, and presumptuous iniquity in thy heart: thou who now darest to out-face the Ministers of God, shall not then dare to look the holy, and just, and terrible God in the face, but he will fill thy breast with

confusion, and all the veins of thy soul with flames of hottest vengeance and indignation.

Eighthly, Get knowledge sanctified. Knowledge is like a sword, it may defend a man, and it may hurt a man, it may both arm him and kill him; or like the light of a Candle which may both direct, and also burn: and so accidentally, even knowledge itself may prove a great addition to our sinning's. That which serves to give us light against them, may yet improve the guilt of them upon us.

There is a twofold knowledge.

1. One naked, which shows the evil.

2. Another sanctified, which keeps from evil: the former is good at the Object, but the latter is good with the subject; that looks upon what is to be done, or not to be done; this looks down to the heart, and inclines it strongly to embrace the good, and to resist and abhor the evil. This is certain that not all the spirits of speculation are a sufficient rescue of thy soul from presumptuous sinning's.

Object. Why? saith a man, I will not sin so, I know better then so.

Sol. Alas! The bullet strikes down the soldier for all his head-piece; naked knowledge is at best but a head-piece, (and that not of proof neither) but sanctified knowledge is a breast-plate, and that keeps off the dart.

Lastly, Renounce thine own strength of nature, of parts, of gifts, yea, of graces, yea, of services: he shall be brought far in sin, who goes far upon his own strength; thy own strength will deceive thee: it is not enough to keep thee good, nor preserve thee from being bad: if thou



couldest get a trembling heart, and a bended knee, and a believing eye, and an humble spirit, then thy Castle were impregnable, &c.

## CHAPTER IV.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. PSAL. 19.13.

Having handled David's prayer against sin, as lying in presumption, now I shall touch on it, as it doth respect sin in Dominion, [Let them not have dominion over me:]

There may be divers conjectures about the connection and depending sense of these words.

First, As if they were a distant petition, q. d. Lord, I pray unto thee against high kinds of sinning, and perhaps I may sometimes be laid flat by them, but then I desire of thee that though they strike me down, yet they may not rule over me: though I stoop, yet I may not serve; though I fall, yet I may not lie, and rest; though they may be sometimes so strong as to over-come, yet never so full as to reign, let them not have Dominion over me.

Secondly, As if they are but the same petitions greatly enforced, q. d. O Lord, I beseech thee to keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins: all sins are bad, and inglorious, and foul, but none so as they, they are high transgressions, therefore I beseech thee, let them not have Dominion, (i.) never suffer them to prevail over me, never let them enter into my soul, or life, let them never over-come me, let them not over-take me, let me never commit them. Now which way

of these you conjecture the sense of the words may be aimed at; it requires accurateness to determine, and cut the thread; For my part, I think that both may be commodious, and are pious, though the latter to me doth seem more genuine; yet in this I easily submit to better Judgments.

For the words themselves, this is evident, that they express the spirit of holy David, as vehemently carried against presumptuous sins in Dominion; for the better discussing of them, I shall inquire these particulars.

1. What Dominion of sin here may import, wherein it consists.
2. Whether sins in Dominion may befall a David?
3. Why David prays so against it?
4. Then some useful applications.

#### SECT. I.

Quest. 1. FOR the first of these, What Dominion of sin doth import?

Sol. Dominion is given sometimes to God, sometimes to Christ as Mediator, sometimes to man over man, sometimes to Satan over man, sometimes to death which is said to rule, and sometimes to sin, when it is betwixt sin and the sinner, as betwixt a King and his Subjects. As a reigning King hath dominion, so sin, it acts in all things like a King. 1. It hath possession, original sin of our hearts; actual sin of our lives. 2. Hath a title, our forsaking of God, and voluntary election and compact. 3. Hath a throne, our souls. 4. Hath servants, our Members. 5. Hath a council, our carnal wisdom and

corrupt reasonings. 6. Hath power to give Laws, and see them executed. Paul speaks of the Law in his members, and the Law of sin, Rom. 7. 21, 22.

But more distinctly for the better understanding this, observe these particulars.

1. That Dominion (properly) is the Right and Power of a Lord over a servant; it is a word implying Superiority and Subjection, one who hath Authority to command, and another whose condition is obediencial, and to serve; so that in the dominion there is one who doth rule, and another who is ruled; one who doth command, and another who yields at least virtute juris (he is to yield and obey) and ration facti, where dominion is exercised, there is actual command, and actual obedience; as the Centurion who had authority and dominion over his servants, he said to one go, and he did go, to one come, and he did come, to another, do this, and he did it.

Secondly, observe that Dominion is twofold, it is either,

1. Original and absolute, and this is when the Lord hath a natural, and prime, and irrespective title, it belongs to him as so, to command, and impose obedience, merely from his absolute right, and according to his own pleasure: such a dominion belongs only to God, who made all the world, and is Lord of all: All the creatures are his servants, and are set by the Law of their Creation, to the obedience of his will; he doth rule the Nations, and hath power to order, limit, appoint, to require, to bind both bodies, and souls, natures, consciences and acts.

2. Derivative and depending, and limited: such is the Dominion which God hath given man over the creatures: the great Lord hath made man a Lord over the works of his hands, a pro-rex, a deputy as

it were: yea, and he hath derived dominion to man over man, to one man over another, to the King over his Subjects, to the Parent over the Children, to Masters over Servants. I say, he hath derived dominion unto them (i.) a power to command, and order, yet this is a restrictive dominion, and not absolute: it must not be against God, but for God and according unto God.

Thirdly, observe that there is a twofold dominion.

One is lawful (i.) such a dominion and subjection which the word and will of God doth or will warrant, as that of persons over persons, or of God and Christ over all persons and creatures: God may command us, for he made us; and Christ may command us, for he redeemed us, both our persons and our services fall unto him, we are not our own, for we are bought with a price, therefore serve or glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's, 1 Corinth. 6. 19, 20.

Another is unlawful, and as it were usurped, which is when command is exercised, and obedience given, without any just title or right; and this Dominion is either assumed by Satan, who is called the Prince of the air, and the Prince of darkness, and a Ruler, and one who works mightily in the children of disobedience: or else it is exercised by sin, sin is said to have a Dominion, a Law, a rule over a sinner, and the sinner is said to obey the sin, to serve it, to fulfil the lusts of it, &c.

Fourthly, consider, that the dominion of sin doth imply two things.

One is singular power and strength joined with authority. The authority of it consists in this, that it doth command the man (as a King doth his Subjects) and the strength of it consists in this, that it is able to make its commands to be obeyed and followed.

Another is quiet, willing and total yielding of subjection to that authority, law and command of sin: when a man is as cheerfully and readily prepared to obey his lusts, as any Subject is to embrace the commands of his Prince, or any servant is to follow the will and pleasure of his Lord and Master.

The former of these is styled, in Scripture, sometimes the powers of darkness, Col. 1. 13. Sometimes the strong man, Luk. 11. 21. Sometimes the Law of sin, Rom. 7. 23. Sometimes the power of Satan, Act. 26. 18. Sometimes the efficacy of the Prince of the air, Ephes. 2. 2. by all which phrases, this is implied, viz. that where sin doth reign or hath dominion, there it is of singular power, not only to stir and assault, not only to tempt and provoke, but also to command and incline, to rule and dispose of the heart and ways, that the will of a man is but as it were the will of his lusts; and the desires of the man are but as it were the desires of his lusts: he is taken captive at the pleasure of Satan: and sin needs not use any violent compulsion, or strength of argument to draw on the sinner, only if sin speaks the word, it is enough, that's Law enough.

The latter of these is expressed; sometimes by fulfilling the desires of the flesh; and by having the conversation in the lusts of the flesh, Eph. 2. 3. and by being servant to unrighteousness, Rom. 6. and by taking pleasure in sin, and by sinning with greediness, and by selling of a man's self to work wickedness, and by giving up ourselves, or ourselves over to uncleanness; when a man doth as it were by a proper and voluntary act surrender up his soul to the obedience of iniquity, as the servant passeth away himself, when he takes such an one to be his Lord, that all his faculties, and strength, and designs, and main intentions shall submit themselves to the service of his lusts and sins.

So that dominion of sin on sins part, comprehends strong and complete power, a commanding and disposing power, and on the sinner's part, it comprehends resignation, and complete subjection: A molesting power doth not constitute its dominion, (for sin may molest as an enemy, where it doth not rule as a King) nor doth attempting and suggesting power (nakedly considered) constitute its dominion (for sin may be a tempter where yet it is not a ruler.) But where the dominion of sin is erected, there it doth sit in the heart as a King in the Throne, and gives forth its Laws and commands to the soul and body, as to its proper servants and instruments: the which commands are as cheerfully entertained, as they are unjustly prescribed.

But a little more to wade into this point, sin may be said to have Dominion, or to reign in a threefold respect.

1. In respect of assent: when the understanding subjects itself to its motions: I say subjects itself, for there are two acts of the mind about the motions and commands of sin; one is apprehension, another is subjection: a man may apprehend sin as working, and yet he may not embrace, but resist that working of sin: And then it is not sin in dominion: If I see an enemy approaching, and rise up to oppose that enemy, he is now an enemy encountering, but he is not a King ruling: so that it is not mere apprehension, but subjection which puts up sin into the Throne, into a dominion: (i.) when sin gives the command, and the sinner yields thereto, Renders up himself to the obedience, freely gives way unto, and entertains the motions of sin.

And hereto we must again distinguish of that subjection of assent which denominates Dominion, that it is not a mere passive subjection (as when a man is taken prisoner) but an active subjection, a subjection of approbation, as when a servant hears the

will of his Master, and he likes it so where sin hath dominion, the sinner doth not give a naked assent, but an approving assent, he allows his sin and approves of his sinful course.

Neither is this all, for every active assent is not sufficient to denominate dominion; a man may be on a sudden circumvented, he may be under the quickness and strength of a temptation, he may be so over-born by sudden passion, that possibly he may assent, and approve a sin in respect of the fact, in this or that particular, for this and that time, as a true subject (suppose one of David's) not understanding all things aright, not pausing, was drawn to the conspiracy on Absalom's side, so a Christian, in whom sin hath not a proper dominion, he may on a sudden be so ensnared by sin and temptation, that he gives way unto it, yet afterwards he returns to himself, and condemns his own act by sound repentance.

Therefore know, that the assent which sets up sin in dominion it is double.

One is Antecedent: and this assent is such a work of the mind, wherein sin is not only not rejected and condemned, but yielded unto and approved: what Abraham answered in another case to Isaac, calling out, my father, he presently answered, here am I my son; so when sinful corruption thrusts out the sinful inclination or motion, the sinner presently answers, here am I, I am ready to do thy will, I like it, I allow it.

The other is Consequent: this is an assent not only when a sin is to be committed, but after it is committed, and that too, not whiles the heat of sinful deceit or temptation remains, and lies upon the soul, but when that is gone off; when matters grow quiet, and sober and calm; then a man he likes his fact, he likes his course, he doth not only antecedently devise mischief on his bed, and abhors not evil:

and sets himself in a way that is not good, (as David speaks, Psal. 36. 4.) But he rejoiceth when he hath done evil, and delights in the frowardness of the wicked (as Solomon speaks, Prov. 2. 14.)

Even a godly man by temptation, and by infirmity may yield an antecedent assent, but then as soon as he comes to himself again, as soon as he recovers his judgment to be clear, and his affections to be calm, he will then set upon himself and reverse his own acts; he will judge and condemn both his deed and his assent (such a fool was I, said David) and he will hate himself and his sinful yielding's (such a beast was I, said David again) and he will not rest in such an estate; Peter goes out and weeps bitterly, so that even his underhanding will condemn his understanding, his understanding by a subsequent act of judiciary sentence will condemn and dis-allow, yea, and dis-avow the antecedent act of the understanding in assenting and yielding: the serious judgment will condemn the rash judgment; As a man who hath foolishly yielded to the bond, if he can get it into his hands he will now blot out his name, and tear off his seal, so it will be in this case.

But where sin is in dominion, there is not only antecedently *permissio* (i.) a free and favorable leave given to the committing of sin, but consequently there is *adhesio* and *defensio*: the man approves and upholds that which was committed; there is not a revocation of the fact, a man doth not put in, and sue out a Writ of Error against himself (i.) that he was circumvented by deceit and mistake, nor doth he make protestation against his sinful commissions, but still owns them as being ready to proceed and advance on forward: he gave his band before that sin should be done, and now the sin being drawn out, as it were, into a deed of his own approbation he further confirms the same, by adding thereto his



Seal, he approves it still, and saith, Tomorrow shall be as today, and much more abundant.

Secondly, In respect of the consent of the will, when the will declares itself expressly as a party for sin. Beloved! the disposition of the will is the fairest throne of sins dominion, and as we judge of the dominion of grace far better by the will and affections, then by the workings and reaches of the understanding; so on the contrary we may more safely judge and determine of the dominion of sin by the frame and bent of the will, then by any other faculty: whatsoever may be discoursed about natural actions, for their prime and principal causation, whether by the will or by the understanding, yet this is most true in morals, that the greatest denomination is from the will, either for good or evil: and this holds in the case of sins dominion; the will hath (in a sort) the casting voice, it is one of the chief, of the Royal Arms and supporters of the sinful Throne: sin is strong indeed, when it hath taken seizure and possession of the will, the more corrupt a man's will is, the more strong is corruption in the man; sin is high, when the sinner will sin, and will go on.

The School-men observe three things which do appertain to the will, and they do all of them demonstrate sins dominion.

1. Consensus: you know that the consent of the will is that which makes the match 'twixt person and person (in Law, the Canon Law, consensus, non concubitus facit matrimonium) so here the consenting of the will, it is the espousing and contracting of the soul and sin together: I will be a Lord to thee, saith sin, and I will be a servant to thee, saith the sinner: I will give thee pleasure and profit, saith sin, and I will give thee my heart and obedience, saith the sinner.

2. Electio: this is such an act or work of the will in which a man prefers one thing before another, or one way before another: And where sin is in dominion, the sinner would rather be sinful than godly, he would rather go on in his sins than forsake them; They love darkness rather than light, Joh. 3. 19. Thou lovest evil more than good, and lying rather than to speak righteousness, Psal. 52. 3. as it was with the Hebrew servant, when the year of Jubilee was come, liberty was propounded unto him, he might go free if he would, it did depend upon his own choice, but the servant (sometimes) he loved his Master, he would not go free: So when the Lord comes to a man in whom sin doth exercise dominion, and propounds unto him several things, and several ways, here is Heaven, and here is Hell; here is Life, and here is Death; here is Holiness, and here is Sin; here is the way of Duty, and here is the way of Disobedience; why as Esau made choice of the poor mess of pottage, or as the Jews of Barabbas; so the sinner, he makes choice of his sins and sinful ways, I had rather keep my drunkenness still, my uncleanness still, my covetousness still, &c.

3. Imperium or propositum: the will is the chief wheel of the soul; it is that which in a sort commands all the faculties, and all their acts: now where the will is chief in sin, if sinning be the fruits of its lustful commands: a man hath set up his resolution, it is the purpose of his heart, to be as he hath been, and to do as he hath done, he will not learn to do good, he will hold fast his wickedness, here sin is in dominion. Nevertheless for the clear discovery of this part of sins dominion in respect of the will, be pleased to observe several things.

1. That there is a twofold will.

1. One is altogether single in its workings, it doth not partly incline to good, and partly to evil, but either only to good, or only to evil, v. g.

where the created nature (which is reasonable) was never morally deformed, or where the rational nature is gloriously reformed, there the will inclines only to good, (as in the Angels and blessed souls) so again, where the nature is totally deformed, (I mean in respect of spirituals) where it is entirely corrupted, there the Bias of the will draws the soul only to evil, the whole pond, weight, and strength of the will is for sin: and the sinner (without any intrinsical opposition of another nature in the will) will yield and surrender up himself unto sin. Now such a will as this plainly argues dominion of sin: where the will, what it is and can do, that it is and will do for sin; when we may say of the will as Saint John of the world; the whole world lies in wickedness, 1 Joh. 5. 19. so the whole will (the whole frame and bent of it) is universally obediential, or serviceable, where the whole nature of the will vents itself into an habitual and plenary consent; This is of itself manifest, that sin hath dominion.

Another is mixed and compounded: when the will is divided within itself, and consequently its consents and dissents (embracing's and refusing) are likewise opposed one to another, and opposing each the other in the same man: you must know that original sin (which yet in part remains) is diffused through the whole man, and into every faculty; and so renewing grace (which is opposite thereto) is an universal temper, dispersed into every faculty too: Neither is it able utterly to dis-lodge sin in respect of being on some acting's: So that a regenerate man (as Saint Austin spake) hath in him an old man and a new man: his flesh is like a dead man, and his spirit like a living man; the living man moves up, the dead man hangs down; the living man's breath is sweet, the dead man's savor is loathsome; so far forth as the will is renewed by grace, so far doth it reject and deny sins consent, but so far as it is affected and disturbed by remaining and working corruption, so far forth it is willing and ready enough to consent to sinful acting's.

Now when we say that the dominion of sin depends upon the will, this is not to be understood of the compounded will, or of the assent and actions which do arise from a nature, and will imperfectly renewed and cleansed in respect of degrees: But of the single and corrupt, and so complete will wherein the consent is total and plenary. Now the plenary consent of the will consists properly in the full and natural, and longing inclination of the will after sin; when the will embraceth an evil, sets the heart upon it, bends after it, and that without any resistance or striving: so that it is the embracing of sin, with an unstriving consent of the will, which sets up the dominion.

Quest. 1. Here now falls in a subtle and deep enquiry whether all resistance impairs dominion, and no resistance doth always infallibly argue it.

Sol. I answer briefly to the first.

1. That all resistance doth not prejudice dominion: A man may hold a firm league with sin in his heart, he may be a servant to it, though sometimes in some particulars he may skirmish and quarrel.

There is therefore a double resistance, or denying, or disputing with sin.

One is Collateral and accidental; which doth not arise from an immediate contrariety of nature, but from a contrariety of effects: As now a man in whom sin hath dominion, his sinning's may be sent back with such bitter Writs of attachment, that he may stand at defiance, and be at some forbearance (a while) from sin: or he may have such affected apprehensions of death and hell, and shame and terror: whereupon he may resist sin as penal and painful: as a thing so bitterly vexing, and galling, and this grieves him too.

Another is natural and immediate: which depends on a holy nature implanted in the soul, which opposeth sin as a thing formally evil and displeasing to God: This resistance doth (I confess) prejudice sin in its dominion, but the former doth not.

Secondly, No restraint doth imply the consent to be plenary, and therefore sin to be in dominion: when the estate of the soul is such, that no contrary quality stands twixt the command of sin and the obedience of a sinner, it is easy to point who is Lord of the House: and indeed what doth more palpably demonstrate dominion, then a quiet subjection.

It is not all the commanding's of sin (alone) which argue dominion infallibly (an enemy may command much, and highly, as Sennacherib, and yet not be obeyed) but it is consent, and the more full and quiet kind of consent, which is that where no resistance is made) this shows that the strong man possesseth the house.

Quest. 2. But yet another question is raised, and to be removed, whether a good man, in whom sin hath not dominion, may not yield a plenary consent of will: which if, then plenary consent argues not dominion.

I will tell you what I conjecture about it, in a few propositions.

1. It is possible that he may sin willingly: two Intensive aggravations of sin (in respect of particulars) may befall a good man, viz. he may sin knowingly, and he may sin willingly: the cause whereof is this, because his will is but in part renewed, and therefore may be a willing principle; neither doth this set up sin in dominion, though it greatens sin in the commission; for as much as not every particular willingness, but an habitual & a complete willingness assures sin of its dominion.

Secondly, observe, that there is a double concurrence of the wills consent to sin.

One is real, when in truth the whole composition, and all the inclination of the will is for sin, the bent of it, and Bias, all runs that way: and where it is thus, there sin is in dominion.

Another is sensible; which is an observed acting of the will as embracing, and leaguering it with sin: when all (which may for the present be observed) is a corrupt inclination and consent: Now here I conjecture, that possibly sin may not always have dominion, where yet, for the present, and for a particular, the whole sensible part of the will seems only for sin.

My reason is this, q. the resistances of grace are secret and more hidden; and again, when the soul is hurried to a sin in the heat of temptations and passions, it is not easily able to observe every secret and transient regretting and opposition.

Thirdly, you must distinguish 'twixt dominion of sin, and 'twixt a strong inclination to sin: dominion of sin is a thing more natural, but the strong inclination may be preternatural: as a stone by strength may be vehemently carried upward, or an arrow out of a bow, and yet the propensions of their nature are quite contrary and downward.

A man in a violent temptation, and under the strength of a seduced judgment, like a captive, he may be exceedingly hailed, he may put on eagerly for a sin, yet with some little reluctancy, with some strivings on the other side, with some dissenting's, though faint, though feeble, though not able to put by the actually greater strength of the temptation: so that the will may be strongly inclined, when yet it is not totally inclined; the violent flying out of the soul, may be but the hurrying strength of an enemy, which marcheth in haste: against

which the Regenerate part of the will may put in its exceptions, and though unable to stay the soul, yet it may be able to appeal to heaven against this rash and strong working, &c.

4. Lastly, you must distinguish 'twixt facts, and 'twixt courses; and 'twixt particular, and 'twixt general intentions: and 'twixt too much yielding, and a plenary yielding and resignation.

The will may come on to sin (where it hath not dominion) in respect of facts; and by a particular intention, and by a partial yielding: but where the will comes on as to a course, and with a general intention, and with a plenary yielding, there is dominion: Thus of the dominion of sin in respect of the will.

Thirdly, the dominion of sin may be considered in respect of the work or service; the working of sin, and obedient acting of it, doth also include and express its dominion; Hence they, in whom sin hath dominion, are said to serve sin, and they are said to obey sin, (his servants ye are to whom ye obey) and they are said to commit sin, ἁμαρτίαν ποιῆν (to do it as a man would follow his trade) and they are said to do the work of the devil, Joh. 8. 44. as if the sinner had nothing else to do, but to follow and serve his sins: which we may evidently see in persons under the dominion of any lust, their whole and main designs are to fulfil it: the drunkard, it is his work and life to sit and drink; the covetous person, it is his work and course of life to be scraping, and getting; As where grace is in dominion; why? the main work is to serve and please God, to learn his will and obey it; so is it on the contrary where sin hath Dominion; the service of the sinner is given up to sin, so that, obedience to sin (which is the doing of the work of sin) doth evidently demonstrate the dominion thereof.

Nevertheless, you must wisely understand this as you have the other parts respecting sins Dominion; therefore Consider,

First, that there is a twofold obedience unto sin.

One is Material: when that thing is done or acted which is sinful: the work is repugnant to the will of God, yet this absolutely doth not constitute dominion; for as much as it may be with the soul, as with a Captive, who may do the same work which the subject doth, yet not with the same mind, and not in the same form of service.

Another is formal: when the work of sin is not only done, but it is done after the manner of sinning, as when a servant or subject do express service and obedience, they do it with the hearts of servants and subjects, and as to a Master, and King: so where a man obeyeth his lusts, where he doth the work, as Covenant-work, as the work of a servant, as a proper work, and as a ready work, as an hearty work, indeed this argues Dominion.

Again, we must distinguish of obedience to the commands of sin.

One is simple and absolute: which is when to sin, though it be not every particular thing which a man doth, yet it is a principal thing unto which he applies himself: as that is a man's trade, not presently which he looks upon or deals in, but wherein he doth principally, and chiefly deal in, unto which he applies the current and strength of his stock: so it is here, sin is a man's absolute work, when it is his main work, and he is besides his calling (as it were) when he is besides his sin: such an obedience is a respect unto sin in Dominion.

Another is cursory or transient: as a Be may light upon a thistle, but her work is to be gathering at flowers, or a sheep may be in the dirt, but its work is to be grassing on the mountains, or in the meadows: or an honest traveler may be besides the way in a wood, or in a house, but his work is to go on in the Kings Rode. So is it possible for a man, in whom sin hath not dominion to touch upon sinful facts;



But his main way, his principal work to which he doth apply the intentions and strength of his heart and spirit, it is the obedience unto God, and his holy and righteous will.

3. Therefore in the third place observe another distinction: which though it doth hold some correspondency with the former: yet it saith a little more, and gives yet a further light.

There is an obedience.

1. Of course: which is a continued applying of ourselves to the work of sin▪ it is our trade which we do drive, the mire in which we wallow, the mill which we help going on.

2. Of Fact, which may be but some particular and intervenient acts: not a thread spun out and drawn, but a sword drawn, and sheathed again, and laid down. There is something which steps in, interrupts the progress, and takes off the soul from service, and then it is not sin in Dominion.

Quest. 1. I know that that is a notable case, whether all interruptions of sinful facts, impeach sins Dominion.

Sol. For my part I think, that all absolutely do not, there are two kinds of abruptions, or interruptions, (i.) working causes, which do, if not untwine the thread, yet respite and hinder the finishing of it.

Some are Political: when the interruptions depend upon politick and private respects: as upon the wisdom of the flesh, the stinging's of conscience, the defect of occasions, the safety of our names and credit, &c.

Others are Natural, which depend upon a contrary nature, touching the heart for its particular trespassing, humbling it, recovering it

again out of the snare of the devil, and this interruption, is not only a mere limit, or politique halt for a while where the sinner takes breath, and makes a pause before he will go on, but it is an undoing of a particular ill doing; by a holy nature now recovering the soul.

Once again observe, that the work or obedience to sin is twofold.

1. Either by surprisal, and compulsory, and this work owes itself not to the intention of the heart, nor to the approbation of the judgment, but to the deceitfulness of sin, and to the strength of temptation.

2. Another is cheerful, and as it were of nature, now remember that acts of surprisal, do not testify sin in dominion: indeed this they may testify that sin in its inclination, or Satan in his temptation, is (at that time very strong: but yet, not that they rule; for dominion in this case is not when a man is vanquished and captived, but when he yields out himself, and willingly follows.

Though sin be acted, yet it is not therefore sin in dominion, unless it be a willing doing of the work of sin: though force and compulsion, may be sufficient to testify, that there is a tyrant, yet ready obedience is that which testifies homage to a King.

Thus have you heard a little in the general about the nature of Dominion, and about the nature and manner of sins dominions.

5. I conjecture: that it is fit to add one thing more in the general about the dominion of sin, as respecting its powerful commands that it is either,

1. Habitual, where sin in the course behaves itself as a King, it rules, and commands, and disposeth of the person to its base services and lusts.

2. Actual: and this is not properly its dominion, though it be miscalled so, yet to give a little scope to freeness of language, I will call it an actual dominion, which is rather a particular prevalency of acts, then a Sovereignty or dominion in the nature, when though the heart and nature have surrendered themselves to Christ as the only Lord, and to his will as the only Law, yet in many particulars, sin gets the better over grace, though it cannot be said to rule, yet it may be said to conquer: it makes the man to fall down; it is too strong and prevalent for all the actual improvements, and particular resistances of grace and prayer at that time, and for that fact. Against which, if I mistake not, David doth here principally bend himself, when he prays [Let not them have dominion over me] that is, not only, let them not rule, but which is beyond that, let them not so much as prevail over me: Though I may meet with temptations to presumptuous and high sinning's, though I may find a false nature ready enough to break forth upon a vain confidence, yet Lord do thou then so effectually aide and assist me, that I may not only resist, but repel them; though they may attempt, yet let not them once conquer nor overcome me; let me never yield to them, nor act them: yet if any think that he aims at the habitual dominion of those sins; I will not enter into the lists, let him enjoy his opinion, but I think this of actual dominion is more punctual to the place.

## SECT. II.

Quest. Whither sin in dominion may befall a David, or regenerate person?

For the resolution of this question remember these particulars.

1. That there is a difference twixt peccatum vincens, and peccatum regnans, 'twixt a conquest by sin and the dominion of sin: A Conquest is when sin prevails: Dominion is when sin Rules: The Conquest respects power, Dominion respects the will; In Conquest the person resists, but his strength is too weak: In dominion the person yields up himself to the Will, and Law, and Power of another. Sin may overcome a Regenerate person, but it hath not dominion in him.

2. There is *Dominium Tyranni*, and *Dominium Domini*; A tyrannical Dominion is by force and constraint, a Regal dominion is by consent and choice; the former is incident to the Regenerate: Paul complains that he is sold under sin, Rom. 7. But Ahab sold himself to work wickedness. Paul is brought into captivity to the Law of sin, but Judas willingly offers himself to betray Christ: In tyrannical dominion there is unwillingness, hatred, dislike, conflict, weariness, trouble, and desire to be freed: In Regal Dominion there is chief Contentment, Delight, and Rest, &c.

3. The Dominion of sin may be taken either,

1. Strictly and Properly: where sin is absolute, and full, and uncontrolled, and the sinner freely and totally Resigns up himself to the lusts, and will, and commands of sin.

2. Largely, and in some respect, when as to some particular act of sin, there is not (for a time) any actual or prevalent present resistance: even the will itself is surprised by carnal affections, but yet in the event, and at length, it is revived, and grace doth resume its imperium, and recovers the person again: In this sense sin may be said to reign, or to have dominion in a Regenerate person; But it is as a Thief or Robber reigning and ruling in a royal Castle, which (shortly) he is forced to quit and leave.

But for a complete, uncontrolled, habitual, final dominion of sin, this cannot befall the regenerate.

1. The Dominion of grace and Christ is eternal: True grace is an immortal seed, it cannot be totally quenched: a well of water springing to everlasting life.
2. The union with Christ is inseparable, and insuperable, which could not be, if a regenerate person might fall under such a dominion of sin.
3. The promise of grace must not fail, sin shall not have dominion over us, Rom. 6. 14. I will subdue their iniquities, Micah 7. 19.
4. The Covenant of God is, I will put my fear into their hearts that they shall not depart from me, Jer. 32. 40.
5. Jesus Christ hath conquered, as well as other enemies, so our sins.

Quest. If sin in dominion cannot happen to the Regenerate, why doth David pray, &c.

Sol. Three things may be said of this,

1. If David or any regenerate person should be left unto himself, sin would have dominion over him: therefore he prays, acknowledging that it must be a strength greater than his own, &c.
2. Prayers are a means to fetch us out of the Dominion of sin, and keep off sin from having dominion over us: upon Paul's prayer, the answer was, my grace is sufficient for thee.
3. Although habitual, and universal, and final dominion of sin be incompatible or inconsistent with the state of grace, yet actual and

particular dominion is possible, and there are great reasons for a regenerate person to pray, if it were no more than against particular, and temporary dominion of sin; but of this more distinctly in the next Section.

### SECT. III.

Quest. 3. Why David prays against sin in dominion? Sol. Remember that precedent distinction of actual dominion, which comprehended a particular prevalency over the soul for particular acts of sinning: and of habitual dominion which intimated the full resignation of the heart to the commands of corruption.

In both respects there may be great reasons, why any man should pray against the dominion of sin.

#### 1. Against actual dominion.

1. Because though actual dominion doth not infallibly testify the person to be bad: yet it is ever a breaking forth of what is very bad: for as much as the action in this case is but sin acted.

Now consider,

1. That every sin (as acted) is therefore the worse: you know that sin, though it be a vile thing, yet it tends towards a perfection (in its kind) lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, &c. Jam. 1. 15. He alludes to a child in the womb, which in the conception is not so perfect and complete, as in the birth and life: sin is naturally bad, if it be at all, it is evil, if in inclination it is evil, if in thought evil, if in acting, then much worse; when it is brought forth, then it is more ripened, and therefore the more sinful; now

where sin hath but actual dominion, there it prevails, though not always to a full consent, yet to a sinful service or act: the person doth the thing which is evil.

2. That the acting of the greater sin is always a greater kind of sinning: I mean, *caeteris paribus*, if things be equally set together.

A high sin, a presumptuous sin in temptation is not so guilty, as the same presumptuous sin in dominion; for all sin in service is ever worse than any sin in conflict: though sin may trouble a man more when it inclines and tempts, yet it wounds a man more, when it prevails and overcomes.

Secondly, actual dominion though it doth not always conclude the absence of grace, yet it always impairs and weakens the strength of grace.

There are two things which sin prevailing to act, doth not necessarily infer.

One is Privation of grace: for even a good man may stoop and fall, a good man may yet do that evil which he would not: an honest traveler may be struck down, and a faithful soldier may be taken captive, though to sin be the evil man's work, yet it may possible be the good man's action.

2. Another is Annihilation of grace: There is a great difference twixt sickness and death: sickness though it removes health, yet it doth not remove life, it is death which doth that; particular dominion, or prevalence, it may lay flat, wound deeply, leave a man in a swoon (as ye shall hear presently) yet it is the habitual dominion which denies life.

Nevertheless, particular dominion doth even weaken grace (i.) any sin (much more a presumptuous sin at which David seems here to touch) prevails and wins ground on the soul to yield to act, there the Corrupt nature improves itself, it hath the better: And this is certain that sin is never improved but grace is weakened: weakened much in its measure, and in its strength; as all health by the prevalency of sickness, and all heat by the victoriousness of cold, sinful acting's do abate the vitality of grace, the edge and the spirit of it, and lay it in a swoon, so that a man may now have little heart to pray, Infinite distrust toward God, and which is as bad as the rest, if he takes not heed, actual prevalencies (at the least) incline and tempt him shrewdly to habitual acting's, so a man shall hardly do sin any one service, but sin to recompense him, will impose thereupon many Commands for more.

3. Because actual dominion, though it doth not always cut off the union, yet it may and doth disperse and check the comforts. It is an eclipse though it be not a night, He who made the Leprosy, though he lost not right to his tent or house, yet he was interdicted the use and benefit of either. A Child who offends his father, though he doth not therefore presently cease to be a child, yet his offense doth turn and change the countenance of his father. Though it doth not break off the relation, yet it doth the respect; he shall not easily be admitted into his fathers presence, and then, he shall see bended brows instead of smiles, and sharp rebukes, and upbraiding's instead of kind and wonted well-comes: so shall even David himself find, if that great sins get dominion over him, if they do prevail, if he doth act them, though God doth not cast off his person, yet he will draw off his Countenance: why hidest thou thy face? He shall quickly find the difference twixt the service of God, and the service of sin: when he goes to pray, his sin shall meet him, and when he goes to hear, the Ordinances shall cast his sin into his face: As Sampson, when he lost



his hair, he could not do as formerly, as at other times, so even actual dominion of sin, though it doth not nullify. the relations, yet it wonderfully varies the condition: The Sun seems to be darkened at noon-day, the Air is filled with tempest, and thunders, which lately was overspread with beautiful light; God looks in terror and displeasure, and the conscience wounds with closest bitterness: all former comforts seem to take leave of us; sometimes we are so distressed that we fear we are lost forever: one such sinning may cost us many years of cruel vexation, and of this we may be sure, that till we are soundly humbled and renew our repentance, we shall never see a smile in God's countenance, nor hear a good word from conscience: Now this is a doleful case that a man shall hear the same promises from which he sucked much comfort, and yet he may not taste (now he cannot rejoice) and that God whose communion was so sweet, now through his sinning, becomes so bitter and heavy, &c.

4. Because actual dominion, (especially of great sins, and over a David) is accompanied with great prejudice to Divine glory: As they say of Fevers, that they are usually worst in the strongest constitutions; and of spots, that they are usually the greatest blemishes in the fairest garments: that we may say of sinning's: the better the man is, the more dishonorably foul his offending's are: God loseth more honor in the eyes of the world, by the slips of the good, then by the wallowing's of the bad: evil men are hardened, good men derided, Satan and sin advanced, and by all these God is infinitely dishonored: Therefore good reason hath David to pray, Let them not have dominion over me.

Secondly, Habitual Dominion.

But then in the Second place, if we interpret the dominion here of a Habitual dominion of sin, the reasons of prayer against sin, as in

such a dominion, are very strong and urgent.

1. Habitual dominion decides the estate: the question of a man's soul is, whose servant he is, whether he belong to God and Christ, or to sin and Satan.

Now particular failings do not determine this, but the dominion of sin doth, his servants we are whom we obey: you know what the Apostle hath said, Rom: 6. 16. know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or if obedience unto righteousness: if sin doth rule, and the sinner yields up his heart to the love and obedience of it: he professeth thus much, that Christ is not his Lord, and the Law of Christ is not the law which he will obey, as these Rebels spake of David, what portion have we in the son of Jesse? so here the sinner, I do not belong to Christ, sin is my Lord, The servant of sin am I, that is the thing which I have Chosen, and that is it which I will serve; So that one may without any scruple conclude, that if sin hath dominion, the man hath yet no interest in Christ, no one degree of true grace, he is a most wretched sinner: sin is his Lord, God is his enemy, Hell is his portion, unless he get from under this Dominion.

Secondly, there is no Dominion in all the world so vile: whither you consider it, First, In the commands of sin, or Secondly, In the service of the sinner.

First, The Commands.

The commands of sin are the vilest commands. For,

1. They are Illegal, any command which finds ground and title may be defended, but sin hath no reason to command: A condemned man loseth all command; sin is the only thing which God's law hath

condemned: And again, it hath no title to the soul, the soul owes not itself to it, either by a natural, or by a purchased subjection: we owe a natural subjection to God, because he made us; A purchased subjection to Christ, because he redeemed and bought us; but sins commands are merely usurped, and Insolent.

2. They are purely sinful: all its edicts and desires are but Rebellions: that a man should transgress a righteous, and supreme, and good, and holy law: there is not any one thing which sin at any time commands, but it is that which God forbids, and which God will Judge the sinner for.

3. They are extremely unreasonable; a command may be esteemed unreasonable, either when one service runs contradictory against another, as to command a man to run and yet to stand; so is it with sin, it commands a man to such a service as is opposite in particulars, for as all sin is opposite to grace, so some sins are opposite to others; though not in the fountain, yet in the acting's; or a command may be esteemed unreasonable when any service tends to the ruin of the obedient; it were an unreasonable thing, and unjust, to command a man to run into the fire and burn himself, but the commands of sin tend directly, and intentionally to the destruction of the sinner, sin enjoins a man much service and pains, and all this is, to dishonor God, and to damn his own soul.

Secondly, the service.

The service of sin: it is the most disloyal service in respect of God renouncing him, denying him his due, and conferring it on his only enemy.

2. It is the most injurious service to our souls.

3. It is the basest service: if a man did serve a dog or a toad, this were a vile abasing of himself, but it is far baser to serve sin, for those creatures have some goodness in them, but sin is naturally bad: Nay, though we do cry out at the devil, as vile and base, yet the Devil himself is better then sin, for it is his sin only which makes him so base, and he hath an absolute being, which he owes to God; but sin hath no relation to God, and it is that which imbaseth all beings.

4. It is the drudgingest service: A man who is a servant to sin, he is at the command of every lust, and is taken captive at its pleasure, and there is no hoe, nor measure, nor end: all the day will not serve, nor will the night satisfy: an age of years is spent, and when a man's strength doth fail him, yet sin sets him to work still. The cruelest Tyrant, wearies himself sometimes by his unwearied commands, but sin never relents nor spares: Nay that which shows the extremity of this vassalage, the sinner continues service there, and then, where he sees and knows his misery; he hath felt the fruits, the bitter fruits of sinning, yet sin still commands and easily puts him upon the same service afresh: so that he often tyers his thoughts, and spends his estate, and consumes his strength, and breaks his sleep, and loseth his friends, his God, his soul, his all, to drudge at the Commands of his own base lusts.

5. It is a most unprofitable service: Though in some service there may be but an uncertain gain, yet in the service of sin, there is a most certain and great loss, what profit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed Rom. 6. 21. therefore sins are said to sow the wind, and to reap the whirl-wind, they deal in vanities which shall not profit, and every sin is a lie, let it pretend much, yet it advantageth nothing. Suppose a man had an estate worth 10000 li. and he should receive a baby for it, tell me what he got? O that precious soul of man which is more worth than a world, is utterly lost by sin, what then,

doth the service of it profit him? for what is a man profited (saith our Savior) though he gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul; thou Gets a little credit by thy sinning, yea but with whom? And what is that whiles the great God doth disgrace thee: and thine own conscience doth often shame thee? Thou gets a little wealth by thy sinning, yea, but what is that Treasure of wickedness, but a Treasury of wrath against the day of wrath? Thou gets a little pleasure by thy sinning; yea, but what are these short minutes of joy to those eternal nights of darkness, in which they must end and be swallowed up? one fall breaks all the glass to pieces, and one anguish of conscience, or peal of death, blasts and sinks all the vain triumphing's of a sinful heart: sin may pretend fair, and promise much, but the wages thereof (i.) that which thou must expect for thy service, is death: yea, that death which is opposed to eternal life, Rom. 6. vlt.

6. It is a most uncomfortable service: How oft is the servant of sin in the depths of fear, and in the heights of trouble, his very sinning's are more his torments then his joys: he is many times vexed with thoughts how to sin, and afterwards he is hewed in his conscience for his sinning; though he hath not grace to make him grieve, yet he hath a conscience which can make him tremble: the very surfeits of his sins do distaste his soul, and make him of times weary of his very life; he is ashamed of Company, and dares not yet to be solitary: The night is many times a terror unto him, and the day renews his anguish: though the servant of sin (in the transient flash of his spirit) out-braves all counsel, yet he doth ordinarily feel infinite gripes within, either he is utterly unsensible of his misery, (which is one of the greatest judgments,) or he his sensible, and then he feels a Hell of horror for his lewd obedience: Nay, so exceedingly high do the distresses sometimes prevail, that he is forced to despair of all mercy, and thinking to ease himself of some flames, greedily throws away himself into the very gulf of Hell-fire: what shall I say more, where

sin hath the dominion over a person, a man is a slave to the Devil, and a servant to that which will vex him and wound him, and damn him; he never enjoys himself, nor shall he ever enjoy God, unless that yoke of service be broken: and therefore good reason hath any man to pray against the habitual dominion of sin.

#### SECT. IV.

Thus for the explication, now something for the Application thereof unto ourselves: where first let me begin with inquiry? what think we of the dominion of sin within our souls.

You will say, we trust there is no such thing. I Remember the Jews said as much to Christ, in a case not much unlike, we are Abraham's seed, said they, we were never in Bondage, Joh. 8. 33. But Christ replied, verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin, v. 34.

I will premise a few things at this time.

1. No man living but he is borne a servant to sin: sin is his Lord before he can tell who is his Master, sin requires not age to set on the crown, but even in the very womb, doth it begin its reign, and poisons, and impaireth our whole nature, therefore the Apostle saith, that by nature we are the children of disobedience and wrath as well as others, Ephesians 2. 2. it is the disposition, and sway, and bent of us to sin, and to walk on in sin.

2. It is a hard thing to get off the dominion of sin. Sin is a strong man, It hath possession, and goes not out by entreaty or bribe, but it must be by force, by one that his stronger: I assure you, that the

almighty God must reveal his own arm, and he must cast down strong holds, he must work a kind of a miracle, or else sin will still be a Lord, and the sinner will be a servant to his lusts: A man may change any Master soever, and with more ease then sin?

Thirdly, it is very manifest, that sin hath the dominion in many persons; I will present unto you such instances which you shall confess do evince so much.

1. What think you, hath not sin the dominion, where no kind of arguments and dealings are able to disengage the heart and to turn it? when no kinds of merciful Arguments, and no kinds of just threatening's, and no sense of bitterness, can yet discovenant and disservice the soul: but still it holds the league, keeps the agreement with sin, now then how often hath God come to many persons, and offered unto them his pardoning mercies, & the blood of Christ, and eternal life, if they would leave such a sin of drunkenness, such a sin of filthiness, such a sin of worldliness, but unrighteous they were, and unrighteous still they are and will be: How often hath God set the point of the sword upon the breast of a sinner, revealing his wrath, threatening death and Hell if he will not leave the service of his sin; nay, scourged his estate for his sinning, nay, scourged his body, nay, his soul & conscience, and all this to renounce his sinful Lord, yet men hold fast their wickedness, they yet give over themselves to sin with greediness, they study how to fulfill their lusts, and rejoice when they have done evil: doth not this show, that the heart is indeed endeared, and totally emancipated by a strong and elective subjection unto sin.

What think you of such whose hearts cannot endure the Dominion of Jesus Christ, and the service of righteousness; it is even a tormenting slavery unto them, even the imaginations thereof are so. The Soul of

a man cannot serve two Masters, and there are but two of them upon which our service can be bestowed, either sin, or Christ: the Apostle intimated as much, Rom. 6. 16. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey his, servants ye are to whom you obey, whither of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness; so that these divide the soul, if a man doth yield obedience unto righteousness, he is then no servant of sin; if he yields obedience unto sin, he is then no servant of righteousness; if he be an enemy to sin, he is then a servant to righteousness, If he be an enemy to righteousness, he is then a servant of sin. Yet many persons are enemies to righteousness, we will not have this man to reign over us, said they in the Gospel, they cannot endure the dominion of Christ, either in his word, or in his spirit: The rules and precepts of the word are the cords which they will break asunder, Psal. 2. 3. They cast the laws of Christ behind their backs, and hate to be reformed, Psal. 50. 17. There is nothing more unacceptable to them then to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in holiness of heart, and newness of spirit, and righteousness of obedience.

3. What think you of those who are still overcome of their lusts, and are willingly entangled; The Apostle Peter Conjectures, that sin hath dominion in such, while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of Corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage, 2. Peter. 2. 19.

There is a twofold overcoming of a person, one is only in respect of the action: Another is also in respect of the affection.

It cannot be denied, but that even an holy man (who is heartily the servant of Jesus Christ) may be overcome in respect of particular action; relapses are not impossible to him who is truly good, and they may consist with (though they do weaken and disconsolate) the



service of grace, there is the same natural principle of sin in the best after repentance as before: there is the same Satan to suggest and incline, there may be the same occasions and provocations: But then there is an overcoming in respect of assertion, and this shows the dominion of sin: Now this overcoming is, either when a man through policy forbears, or else in passion seems to bid defiance to his sin, being either in sickness and apprehension of death, or in pangs and distress of conscience (to which the Apostle seems to allude, 2 Pet. 2. 22. the dog is turned to his vomit again;) Now he cries out against sin, and thinks he doth detest it heartily, and will not for a world act the sin now, yet when this tempest is off, when the water grows cool, when circumstances are free, when the bitterness either of death, or cross, or conscience is over, and sin tempts and woos him again, he yields up himself, he gives over his heart and affections, he loves the sin and wallows in it as much as ever: he turns from the holy Commandment (as the Apostle speaks, ver. 21.) all his good moods of holy profession, and purpose are gone off, and he is more entangled, and renews his bondage with ardent and excessive delight, even with greediness, as the Apostle Paul speaks, Eph. 4.

Now if this be an argument of sins dominion, viz. the willing and affectionate re-entering of our hearts to the service of sin, then certainly many of us have just cause to fear and to suspect ourselves, who return with the dog to the vomit, and with the sow to the wallowing in the mire; who not only are surprised in action, but in affection; nay, and our affections are more eagerly carried to the sinning now then heretofore; our minds are more on them, and our desires, yea, and the measures of sinning in the same kind rise in an higher strength: we are more mighty to drink, more inglorious in swearing, more insatiable in earthliness, more vain in conversation more obstinate in our sinful courses against the reproofs of the

Word, the checks of our conscience, the shame of men, the fear of Hell, and the hope of Heaven, we grow worse and worse, &c.

Fourthly, what think you of such who make choice of sin to be the Lord whom they will serve.

There are but two sorts of people in the world, viz. good and bad, and both of them do choose their Lord's.

The good they choose the Lord to be their God, Josh. 24. And they choose the things which please him, Isaiah 56. 4. And choose the way of truth, Psal. 119. 3. and choose the good part, Luke 10. 42.

The bad, they also are said to choose their own ways, Isa. 66. 3. and evil, Isa. 65. 12. That in which God delights not: yea, and they are said, not to choose the fear of the Lord: when several things are propounded, & a man prefers this before that, this is called an election or choice: There is Christ and his way laid before the sinner, and sin and its lusts laid before him; now when he prefers the latter before the former, he is said to make a choice: which many do, they do prefer their sinful lusts before the commands of Christ, as appears in all the times of competition, and in the courses of action, yea, and when they may go free, yet with that Hebrew servant they will not, for they love their Master.

Lastly, what think you of many who love their sins; love is that which bestows the soul and the service thereof; the whole strength of a man goes that way which his love goes, for it is of a constraining and most serviceable nature. Now there are many who do love sin, there is, as it were, a conjugal match and union 'twixt their hearts and their sins, and be sure of this, that sin hath the whole man, if it hath won the love of the heart.

4. A person may possibly delude his own heart, and deceive himself about the dominion of sin, and therefore it is convenient to try ourselves whether sin hath not Dominion indeed.

There are many erroneous deceits,

1. One is the unsensibleness of its power: when a man feels no violence of sinful inclination, no stirrings, no opposition, no commands, but there is a calm and quietness in his spirit, and in his way, which could not be as he thinks if sin had dominion and rule in him.

Now this is a deceit; For,

1. It is most probable that sin hath the strongest dominion, where the heart is most unsensible of the Law and commands of sin; when the strong man keeps the house, all is quiet, said our Savior, where subjection is peaceable; there dominion is (in all likelihood) most absolute and complete.

Nay, this is certain, that where Christ sets up his Scepter (which cast down the dominion of sin) there is the greatest stir, the Law of the mind will war against the Law of the members, Rom. 7. 23. And the spirit will lust against the flesh, Gal. 5. 17.

2. This unsensibleness and quietness may arise, partly from the oneliness of sin, and partly from the ignorance of a sinful condition, and partly from the habitual custom of sin: Whether the Sun doth shine or not, there are as many atoms and motes flying in the room, there they are really, though not sensibly till the light comes in to manifest them. When a man is in a deadly disease, he may be void of all sense of it, his life may be even dropping out, and his disease may rule in his body, though he feels not any aches, or pain; for this

unsensibleness depends upon the strength of his disease, which hath not only pierced his natural temper, but his senses also: so may a person be utterly unsensible of sin for want of all saving light, and holy experience which ariseth from a new nature, &c.

Nay, and as we see men in bondage, and slavery, when they are long in the same, grow unsensible, and the hand which is used to iron, and nettles, is not sensible of them; so the frequent acting's of sin may suppress the inward sense of sinning, this being an easy observation, and most true, that much sinning adds to the strength of sin, and disables the sense of a sinner, sears his conscience, and makes his mind reprobate, and as it were without sense.

2. Another deceit may be a freedom from many courses of sinful acting's: when a man is not like every whore, that prostitutes her body to every lover, so he doth not rage and live in all sorts of wickedness, nay, his ways seem to keep clear of divers iniquities: to this I answer.

Sol. Though a man doth not all evil, and his ways or courses is not universally spreading in all the kinds of sinning, yet sin may rule in that man, it may have dominion; forasmuch, as

1. Particular subjection is sufficient to set up dominion: Though a servant hath but one Master, and doth not serve every man in the Parish, yet he is a true servant in respect of that one Master: and though a subject doth not obey every Prince in the world, yet if he obeys any one, it is enough to prove that he is a subject: so though the sinner is not at the command of every lust, yet if he be the servant of any one lust, sin hath the dominion over him; for it is not the multitude of sins which doth absolutely and necessarily concur to dominion, but a subjection to the power of any one.

2. A man may do all that service to one sin, which others do to many sins; he may devise, and study to fulfil it, he may cheerfully and greedily receive its commands; he may heartily love it, and go on in it, and for its sake oppose the Scepter and Dominion of Christ, he may consecrate all his strength to the obedience of it; Now as they observe in the Politicks that there are several forms of government or dominion; as Democracy, and Aristocracy, and Monarchy, sometimes the dominion is exercised by many, sometimes by one alone, yet the subjection to any of them, is true subjection, and sets up dominion.

So though in some men many sins do rule, and in others someone only, if the heart obeys many or few, or one, it is enough to declare dominion: subjection to no sin, that indeed denies dominion, but if the dispute be of many or few sins, then this know, that subjection to any argues dominion.

3. Yet again, another deceit may be, not only declination of some sins, but also opposition; which a man thinks cannot possibly consist with dominion; for a Kingdom is not, or should not be divided against itself.

Sol. To this I answer, that there may be notable deceit in this also; for as much as to that of exemption from great and gross sins: it is not the greatness, but the power of sin which makes it reigning; the Princes in Germany have dominion; though the dominion of the Emperor be more large. The least sin acknowledged, loved, served, sufficeth to dominion: the dominion of sin is most within the heart.

2. As to that of opposition.

1. There is a double opposition of sin: one depending upon office, another depending upon nature: a person advanced to some office in

the Common-wealth, may oppose a sin with respect to his office, which yet perhaps he doth favor and dearly love in respect of his private nature and practice. A justice of peace may oppose many sins upon the bench, which yet he lies in, at home in his own house and dealings.

2. Again, there is a twofold opposition of sin; one, because it is sin; another, because it is shame, and this latter may befall him, who is under the dominion of sin.

3. Once more, there is an opposition of a sin, either because of the opposition which the sin hath to God's will, or because of the opposition which the sin hath to another sinful way and inclination: for though it be true that all sin hath a contrariety to the rule, yet it is as true, that some sins have a contrariety among themselves, as prodigality to covetousness, &c. And a man may oppose the one, not from a respect had to its natural vileness, but from a respect had to his private and personal inclination; this other being such a way of sinning, as likes not but it would overthrow that other sin which he hath set up, and which he loves, and in which he is resolved to walk.

4. In a word, it is not particular, but universal opposition of all known sin, which denies Dominion: A man may oppose many sins, for our sin's sake, as well as act any sin for its sake, and both show sin to be in Dominion.

4. A fourth deceit may depend upon the troubles which a man may feel after some sinful acting's; his soul may be grievously heavy and perplexed, and hereupon a person may conclude, that sin hath not dominion, because he conceives dominion of sin to exclude all trouble for sin.

Sol. Nevertheless there may be error in this, for though hardness of heart after sin be as ill a symptom of wickedness as impudency before sin, yet all trouble for sin committed, is not an infallible argument of in-dominion, which I clear.

1. By instance: if the worst of men may have after-troubles for former sinning's, then it is not an infallible argument, &c. (because, if sin hath dominion in any, then surely in the worst of men) but even they may have after-troubles.

As it is with the most honest wife, and with the most dishonest strumpet, both of them, after their child-birth may have their after-throws, so the most ingenious Christian, and the most lewd sinner may (after their sinning's) partake of great anguishes and troubles of conscience: I refer you to Ahab and to Judas, and to those of whom he speaks in Job, that the terrors of God did drive them to their feet.

2. By Argument: for trouble for sin in respect of the conscience only, it is but a judicial act, it is but a part of the wages of sin. Indeed trouble in the affections (which Divines call godly sorrow) that is an act or effect of grace, but mere trouble in the conscience, which consists in sense and accusation, that God brings upon the sinner, for his transgressions; he awakens the conscience after sin to accuse for sinning, whose directions and checks could not avail to keep off from sinning: so that a person whose heart is in no measure changed by grace, (and therefore of necessity is under sins dominion) he may be filled with extreme wrath, and bitterness; yea, the very terrors of Hell may shake and amaze, and confound his soul: why? the reason is, because, though grace be required to raise godly sorrow; yet conscience only awakened and actuated by light, and divine command is abundantly sufficient to accuse, condemn, vex and trouble the sinner.

5. A fifth deceit may be in the vacancies, or spaces, or interims of sinning; because a man doth not every moment, or every day lie at his sin, but there are oftentimes some pauses and distances of time 'twixt sinning and sinning; he therefore conjectures that sin hath not dominion over him: why? because where sin hath dominion, there a man sells himself to sin, and wallows himself in sinning, and makes it his trade, at which he spends his life and strength.

To this I also answer, that yet sin may have dominion, though there be some respites and breathings 'twixt sinning and sinning. For,

1. Some respites do not arise from a nature which will not subject itself to sin, but only from the defect of occasions, and opportunities of sinning: A thief doth not always steal because he may be sometimes sick, and there is not always an open conveniency for his hand; the like may be said of any sins which are capable of visible and corporeal acting's.

2. Again, the dominion of sin doth not absolutely consist in an uninterrupted propagation or service of sinful acts, (i.) that a man doth not other particular acts, but sin, sin; the drunkard is under the power of drunkenness, though he be diverse times sober; and the filthy person is under the power of uncleanness, though he doth not every day see and embrace his harlot: But the dominion of sin is to be judged by the disposition of the heart, and the main part of the course; if sin be the main thing which a man intends, and the singular things to which he resigns and yields up his heart, whether he be always, or sometimes in the acting's, this is not material.

3. Nay, for a man to give no respite to sinful acting's, this were against that wisdom of the flesh, which concurs to make up the dominion of sin; though the propension to sin may be and is constant, though the love of the sin may be, and is great, yet the



acting's of sin may often vary, and be suspended, upon private reasons and respects, either of safety, or quiet, or profit, or pleasure, &c.

6. A sixth deceit may be from the practice of some actions which are contrary to all outward sinning's, at least in respect of exercise: because a man is perhaps a constant Church-man, and hath a course of duties (such as they are) in his family, and he is much in vowing's, and can condemn sin to purpose: now surely sin hath lost its dominion.

I answer, that notwithstanding all this, yet sin may be in dominion: For,

1. The dominion of sin is within.

2. It may consist with many visible acts of piety: I will clear this unto you by propounding one case, what think you of a hypocrite, hath no sin dominion in him? you will confess it hath, and verily it hath; but now even a hypocrite may step forth into all outward conformities, I know no visible act of impiety, which an hypocrite either doth not, or may not perform.

Secondly, though those material good acts be formally opposite to sinful acts as acts, yet as the denomination of a Christian, so that of a sinner is more from the affections then from the actions, and indeed this defines and decides the dominion, or indominion of sin immediately, viz. the disposition of the heart, which may be really rotten and false, and the true harbor of a sin, though the person doth get out to the acting of some visible duties of piety. There must be more then externals, in duty to evince, that sin hath not Dominion.

Having delivered unto (in the useful application of the point already) the natural community of sins dominion, and the difficulty of release from it, and the probability of its rule in many men's hearts, and the erroneous grounds by which men cozen and flatter themselves as free and exempted persons.

I now proceed to set down some instances by which it may appear, that a man is not under the dominion of sin, or that sin hath not dominion over him.

1. If Christ be his Lord: the Apostle hath a sweet passage in Rom. 6. 17. But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, ver. 18. Being then made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness, (i.) you chose Christ to be your Lord, and resigned up yourselves to his service. This is a most undoubted truth, if Christ be my Lord, I am not then a servant to sin, sin is not my Master. Christ's Dominion is destructive to, and inconsistent with sins dominion. It ever stands alone.

Obj. But you will say, how may a man know that Christ is his Lord.

Sol. This is a great point, and much depends on it, I will touch it a little.

You know that one may be a Lord in a double respect, one in respect of title and right, another in respect of authority and acknowledgement; it is certain that Christ is the Lord of all the world, all the Nations of the earth are given unto him, and are in respect of his title and right, to stoop and bow down themselves, but he is not acknowledged as a Lord, he is not embraced (as so) by his enemies, yet some there are in whose heart Christ sets up his authority and rule, and who do acknowledge him, who do make

choice of him to be the Lord of their hearts and lives; (i.) they prefer the government of Christ, they do consent unto him, that he only shall rule them, and they do resign up themselves to his will, they do bestow their hearts and service on him.

Beloved! when a person makes choice of Christ to be his Lord, he doth consider the several kinds of dominion (of sin, of the World, of the Devil, of Christ) he considers them seriously, and compares them, and then he finds that no dominion for a man's soul, is like Christ's; none so righteous and just, none so holy and heavenly, none so sweet and profitable: Christ hath the only right to the soul, and his government is infinitely best.

Now the person (hereupon) makes choice of Christ, and comes unto him with humble tears, and beseecheth him to reign over him: O blessed Jesus! (saith the soul) thou art the only Lord, and there is none like thee, or besides thee; I have been a rebel, an enemy unto thee, I have been disobedient, and have served divers lusts and pleasures; I have served the world, and the Prince of darkness, but now I renounce their service, and condemn my slavery, and come unto thee to be my Lord. Thy title is just and proper to my soul; it is thy purchase, and therefore the service of it belongs to thee. Thy precepts and commands are righteous and holy, therefore doth thy servant make choice of thee, and love them: thou wouldst have my heart, my will, my affections, my life, and who should have them but thyself, upon thee do I bestow myself, and most gladly do I consent to thy holy will, and resign up all the strength, and powers of all that I am, or have, or can do, to the service and honor of thee; though sin rage, yet I will serve thee; though the world frown or fawn, yet I will serve thee, though Satan tempt, yet I will serve thee.

My heart I bestow on thee as well as my safeties, my service I bestow on thee, as well as my hopes; thy honor I desire sincerely to intend, my love I set on thee, my fear is of thee, my greatest care shall be to obey thy will, and my only joy to bring thee glory; such a choice of Christ to be our Lord, infallibly argues that sin hath not dominion, forasmuch as this cannot be without the change of the heart and whole man, which change cannot consist with sins dominion.

2. If sin and we be enemies, then sin is not our Lord. Sin is an enemy two ways. Either,

Really: thus it is an enemy to him, who yet dearly loves, and faithfully serves it; though it gives unto a man the wages of unrighteousness (many sinful pleasures, and many sinful profits) yet in all these, sin is an enemy to the person; it works his soul off from God and happiness, and holiness, and exposeth it to death and hell.

Practically: thus sin is an enemy, when a man looks upon it, and deals with it as with an enemy, he judgeth of it as of a vile thing, and hates it, and abhors it as the only evil thing, and enemy to his soul. Beloved, when sin hath dominion, there is then a confederacy 'twixt it and the soul, the Prophet calls it a Covenant, and the Apostle calls it a contract, or espousal or marriage, (i.) such an agreement and conjunction where the soul bestows its choicest love on sin. But when the dominion of sin goes off, then the Covenant is broken, the knot is dissolved, the affection of love is displaced. As it was in another case, Amnon's love turned to the cruelest hatred; so here, though a man did love his sins, yet now his love is changed into hatred, and this hatred infallibly argues the indominion of sin; for

1. Hatred includes separation: It is such a quality as draws off the sou; love is that which draws on the soul towards its object, and hatred is that which draws it off; Get thee hence, said they, in Isaiah

30. 22. and what have I to do anymore with idol, said Ephraim, Hos. 14. 8.

Now sins dominion consists in the cleaving and united subjection of the affections, the soul makes sin its center unto which it wholly inclines, it and the soul are one, when sin reigns, and therefore the separation of the affections (which is done by hatred) argues that the yoke is broken asunder.

2. Again, hatred includes perfect opposition, the greatest defiance, and contradictions and warring's arise from hatred: we oppose and cross most, where we hate most: And this cannot be where sin hath dominion, for there our weapons are edged, for our lusts we love them much, and defend them most, and are careful to preserve and keep them.

Thirdly, hatred inclines to destruction: Ruin is the scope of hatred: we seek the death of him whom we hate, and all the evil which befalls a person hated, is the joy of him that hates. So is it where sin is hated, a man seeks the death of sin, and therefore such persons as hate sin, are said in Scripture to mortify the flesh, and to crucify their lusts (i.) the killing, and subduing, and rooting out of sin is that which they desire and endeavor. Now this cannot stand with sin in dominion, where a man is so far from offering any deadly violence to his reigning sins, that he reposes him as the greatest enemy, who draws forth any crucifying weapons, and applies them to the casting down of his strong holds.

3. If holiness or grace hath our love, then sin hath not dominion over us.

Beloved it is granted, that

1. The Dominion of sin may consist with the naked profession of holiness: A hypocrite (whose heart is in the deepest and most affectionate, and elaborate service of someone particular lust) he may yet wear the livery, and garb, and profession of greatest sanctity: Nay, he doth therefore seem good that he may (the more inobservably and fully) follow his sin.

2. The Dominion of sin may consist with the knowledge of holiness; great parts and intellectual speculations of holiness, as they may depend upon foreign causes without grace (viz. upon mere study and frequent hearings, and a natural desire of knowing, and looking into all intelligible objects, and also on an humor of pride, that a man will be accounted able to say something in everything; I say as those intellectual parts may depend upon weak and vain causes) so they may consist with an ardent love of reigning corruptions; for learning alters not the nature, nor doth more knowledge overthrow sin: a man may be a learned sinner, and by his knowledge grow more accurately and inexcusably sinful.

3. The Dominion of sin may consist with some visible acting's of holiness; as a man may be a Traitor, when he yet doth seem to do something of the service to a Prince: So sin may be a man's Lord, though he doth do many things which seem good: Herod loved Herodias, though he heard John the Baptist, and did many things gladly: there is scarce any man (where Christ is professed) that is so universally bad, but he may (now and then) do something which may be particularly good, at least materially considered.

4. But yet fourthly, the Dominion of sin cannot consist with the love of holiness; for where sin is in dominion, there sin hath the love of the soul; Now it is impossible for a man to love sin, and to love holiness. I grant it, that many things may be the object of love,

though there be a numerical variety of them, yet there may be an objective unity, they may all meet in one common reason, and natural course of love, and therefore may be loved. But then opposite and contradictory things cannot be both loved at once, the reason is, because you cannot reconcile them into an objective unity: that which is a reason of the love in one, is a reason of hatred in the other. Now sin and holiness are opposite, they are at the greatest distance in spiritual contradictions, their natures, and courses, and effects, all are opposite, so that a man cannot (at once) possibly love them both: And therefore if holiness and grace hath thy love, verily sin hath not dominion.

I must not insist at large on this: only observe whether thou lovest holiness precisely and purely for itself; what is it which thou esteemest most, which thou desirest most; is the want of it thy greatest grief? is the prosperity of it either in thyself or others, a true and singular joy unto thee? at what pains art thou to purchase and increase it? what are thy thoughts of them who are holy? and of those Ministries which edge and work on thy heart most unto holiness, these and such like things will show whither thou lovest holiness, which if thou doest, thy sin is not thy Lord.

4. Whose Laws doest thou approve and delight in; according as a man's Lord is, so are his Laws, and according as the man is, so is his mind and affections towards those Laws of that Lord; you shall find that when sin hath dominion, there sin hath several Laws, several commands, the obedience of which is delightful to the sinner: And therefore such a one is said to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and to commit sin with greediness, Ephes. 4. 19. and to yield himself over unto sin.

Thus it is on the contrary, where sin is broken off from its dominion, and Christ doth rule the heart, his Laws have a marvelous suitableness with the spirit of that man: his Law is written in the heart, (i.) there is a powerful and answerable inclination stamped in the heart, which gives way to the command: In the volume of thy book it is written of me, that I should do thy will, lo, I come, Psalm 40. 7. I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy Law is in my heart, v. 8. Thou saidest, seek ye my face, my heart said unto me, Thy face Lord will I seek, Psal. 27. 8. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do, Act. 9. 6.

Obj. It is true, that sinful corruption (yet abiding in the best) will make head against the holy commands of Christ, it will be backward enough, cross enough, unwilling enough, resisting and striving.

Sol. But yet three things will more habitually appear in a person, whose soul is governed by Christ and not by sin.

1. One is Approbation (i.) this judgment doth highly esteem of the commands of Christ; Paul counted the commandment holy, and righteous, and good, and tending to life, Rom. 7. 12.

2. Another is consent (i.) his will yields unto it, as to a rule most fit to be obeyed, I consent unto the Law that it is good, Rom. 7. 16. and therefore would obey it.

3. A third is inward delight, Rom. 7. 22. I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: The Apostle from this (though he found a contrary Law in his members warring against the Law of his mind; and much evil present when he would do any good) yet concludes against sins dominion, Rom. 7. 25. so then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the Law of sin.



Why brethren? this is a great matter, and a great discovery of our hearts, to observe, what Law that is with which we take part: which we set up as our rule, whose authority we do justify: sin will command in him which hates it, (i.) it will be prescribing to our affection, and our actions, but then if Christ doth rule us, we war against those commands, we resist them, we defy them, we pray against them, we take not part with them. We acquit that Law of Christ which we would follow, but sometimes cannot (so fully as we should) we justify it as a most righteous command, and strive to conform our hearts to that, and to order our lives by that.

5. A fifth trial may be this, what is the disposition and course of our hearts, under the passive captivities of our souls by particular sinning's.

There is a twofold captivity of the soul to sin

One is active, wherein a man doth (as Ahab) sell himself to wickedness, or as Judas, offer himself to betray Christ (he went to the high-Priest, what will you give me, and I will betray him, &c.)

Another is passive, wherein (as Paul complained) he is sold under sin, like a soldier over-powered, and by strength taken captive, and led away prisoner. I confess, that this is most true, a good man may sin, nay he doth sin, sin may have many particular victories, where yet it hath not a Kingdom or Dominion: As there may be antecedent differences before sin is committed, and as there may be concomitant differences, when sin is committing (which may be as so many lively testimonies against dominion) so there are consequent differences: there are some things afterward which show that yet sin hath not dominion though it did prevail and overcome.

Three things.

1. One is hearty grief: though a good man hath not always sufficient strength to conquer a temptation, yet he hath sufficient grace to bewail his sinning's: though he cannot always rejoice that he stands, yet he can heartily grieve that he falls, either sin is his conquest, or else it is his sorrow. Though you see not David cast down by his pleasures, yet you shortly see him cast down himself by his mourning's. Though you see Peter untrusty to his master, yet you shall presently find himself bitterly weeping for his miscarriage: Whereas the servants of sin do the work and take the wages, they sin and rejoice when they have done evil, yet the servants of righteousness actively afflict their hearts, for that which hath deceived them, and prevailed upon them.

Obj. It is granted that terror may gripe an evil heart for evil doing: but there is a great difference betwixt a sword which wounds, and a fountain that runs.

Sol. Conscience may be wounded in the good and in the bad: but besides this, that acted sins are a good man's wound, they are also his great grief of soul.

2. Another is earnest desire of recovery: It is a singular and observable matter, this when a man hath sinned; to whom he holds out his hand upon it: The servant of sin doth work sin, and his hand stretcheth out itself as a servant still, as ready to advance and finish the service: sin is his work and delight, it is the Lord and captain, after which he would yet march: But an holy man (not under dominion, but surprisal; not under service but captivity) he is not himself till he hath recovered his liberty and strength: There is such an high displeasure with himself, and with his facts, that he will go free, he will not have his ear bored to serve such a Master as sin.

Good Lord how his heart trembles, how his heart meditates, cast about, works, strives, sometimes he cries out: ah wicked, a deceitful heart; sometimes he condemns himself, what a beast was I thus to sin? sometimes he looks up toward heaven, and sighs bitterly; Ah! what a God have I provoked; what mercies have I wronged? sometimes he looks in, and weeps, and saith, ah! what motions did I withstand? what a spirit have I grieved? how unlike myself is myself? sometimes he is down in prayer, O Lord forgive, blot out, heal, help, recover my heart again unto thee: One way or other is his soul working like a fountain in which dirt is cast, till it hath purged out the filth: he is not at rest till sin be more subdued, his heart more changed, his affections more humbled, his judgment more cleared, his conscience more preserved, his peace more confirmed, his soul not only recovered, but also bettered; yea, thus it will be with such an heart (which clears it that sin hath not dominion) that though sin prevail to action, yet it shall not to affection; though I did the evil, yet I hate it; though it did prevail, yet I will not serve it; though it hath beat me down as a tyrant, yet I will not follow it as my Lord; nay, I am not at quiet till I can recover the sight of my Lord Christ again, and have made my peace, and strengthened my heart for more loyal service unto him.

The third is strong hatred and conflict: the War is more increased; by victory, revenge is more raised, 2 Cor. 7.

#### SECT. V.

A Second Use from David's prayer against the dominion of sin, shall be for thankfulness, to such in whom this dominion is broken off.

Though there be so much of sin remaining, as may keep thee humble, and watchful, yet if dominion be gone, there is so much done as may challenge from thee to be heartily thankful: give me leave to put on this a little. Six motives.

1. Deliverance from the greatest evil is reason enough of great thanks: It is more than if God delivered thee from hell, if he hath delivered thee from the dominion of sin: No hell is like sin reigning, for as much as torment in strength, is nothing to sin in strength: that is indeed a very miserable thing; but this a very evil thing: sin is worse than all punishment, and reigning sin is the worst of all sin.

2. None but God could deliver thee, and therefore if he hath done it, bless him. A man may deliver his friend out of prison by paying his debt; A father may deliver his child out of captivity by sending his ransom; A Country may be delivered from the oppression of an invading tyrant by great strength of its own: But there are two hands out of which none but God can deliver, one is Satan's, another is our own. As David spake in another case; thou hast loosed the bands of my distress, and it is the Lord who subdueth the people under me; and it is not my bow nor my sword, &c. that I say here, it is not your own arm which hath gotten you the victory; no hand but God's high hand; which hath delivered you from the powers of darkness, which hath kept sin from dominion, which hath cast out the strong man, which hath cast down the strongholds; thou wast not so much as sensible of thine own vassalage, or of sins dominion, thou hadst not power to feel, much less to conquer and deliver: And when thou wert sensible of sin, thy heart did not behave itself as an enemy, but as a friend most willingly bowing under the yoke, and readily embracing the lusts and motions of the law of sin: when thou hast been called upon to put off the yoke, and to come out of the house of bondage; the Hebrew servant (who loved his Master) was never more

unwilling to part from his house, then thy heart was to come off from thy love and service of thy sins. And yet the almighty God (in compassion to thy soul) hath delivered thee: he hath dethroned sin, he hath drawn off thy heart to a better Lord, and would not suffer sin to rule thee: but by the mighty power of his grace, hath made thee free from the house of most heavy bondage.

Therefore not to thy good nature, nor to thy free-will, nor to thy abilities, nor to thy wit, or parts, or reason; but to the Lord be all the glory: the victory is his, therefore let the praise be his.

3. It is special grace and mercy: Paul stiles its rich mercy, and great love, and riches of grace Eph. 2. It is mercy to be rid of a disease; more of a sin; to resist a temptation, much more to take off dominion, the spirit of Christ only doth it; the more singular a mercy is, the more thankful should we be, Titus 3. 3. We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures &c. v. 4. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared: v. 5. According to his mercy he saved us: thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, said Hezekiah, Esa. 38. 17. O then what a mercy is it to be delivered from the power of sinful dominion? If thou were rid of a hard Master that would seem a mercy, if of a cruel Tyrant, that would seem a mercy, if of a desperate enemy, if of bonds, if of a sickness, what then is it to be rid of the rule of sin? which is infinitely worse than all these.

Fourthly, no Lord so bad, and no command so vile, as those of sin in dominion, Therefore bless God for your deliverance you whose souls are (through the mighty graciousness of a good God) rescued from the powers of darkness, Tell me, what are your thoughts, what your judgments, what your troubles, for the workings of your vanquished

enemy? if the weakened corruptions appear, yet so vile, what were your reigning corruptions: If sin be so monstrous unto you now only in temptation; what was it heretofore in dominion? if the finger be so heavy, what were the loins? if a particular action doth (as you imagine) expose you so dangerously, what did the service of sin do? under what displeasures of wrath lay your souls, when sin had fullest affection and complete to obedience.

Rebekah seemed weary of her life, because of the presence of the Daughters of Heth: If the presence created such an affliction, what might the conjunction and union have done? verily if sin be (as it is) bad and troublesome in combat, O it is infinitely worse in the throne, and absolute Empire over the soul, wherein every faculty serves it with all its strength, and madly strives how to dishonor God, breaks his law, resists his spirit, to fulfill lusts, and please the devil, and to damn the soul.

O bless the Lord for his goodness to thee, that yet the dominion of sin is off: It is true, corruption yet remains, but yet it remains not as a Lord, but as a Tyrant; not as a king, but as an enemy; time was that sin had thy love, but now thou hatest it; time was that sin had thy mind to devise for it, but now those imaginations are cast down: time was that thy will was espoused to sin, but now a divorce is sued out; time was that thy members were ready enough to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but now they are made servants of righteousness; time was that thou didest sell thyself to wickedness, and was never so joyful, as when thou wast sinful, but now it is not so, thou art a drudge, a slave, a vassal no longer, thy former ways amaze thee, and the present Commands of sin are an affliction to thee, O bless the Lord, &c.

5. Again, if the dominion of sin be off, then assuredly the scepter of Christ is set up in thy soul. Beloved! the soul stands not, abides not

in a middle estate: it must have someone Lord or other, it is necessarily under someone dominion (either of sin or of Christ) and this know, that the dominion of sin cannot be taken off in the soul but by a contrary, by a better, by a stronger dominion, by that of Christ who dispossesseth the strong man, It is he who hath changed thy heart, who hath made thy heart to change its Master, who hath drawn off thy love, thy service, &c.

Now, no dominion in the world like that of Christ.

1. None so holy, he is holy, love holiness, and all his commands are righteous.
2. None so Gracious, he doth not exact beyond what he gives, and will yet mercifully pardon our true endeavors of service wherein they fall short:
3. None so peaceable: his very service is a kind of wages to the obedient: a vassal to sin is like a man laboring all day about thorns, and nettles: (the more abundance of them grasped by him, galls him with the more wounds and pains) no man can be long cheerfully sinful, either Terror or fear accompanies most sinning's, but the service of Christ hath warrant from the word, and peace from conscience.
4. None so afflicted: his commands are accompanied with strength and spirit: he bids us to do the work, and gives us his own hand thereto, imposeth duty, and Imprinteth ability, writes the law to the ear, and writes it also in the heart.
5. None so rewarded, no man serves Christ too much or for naught: Though all our work be but duty, yet he pays us rich wages, we owe unto Christ all our strength and the use of all our graces, neither do

we bring in so much of these in full service as we should, yet our good Lord and Master will give us (if we be faithful servants) at night our penny, and at the last our crown.

6. Lastly be thankful, for if dominion be off, then damnation is off: There is no condemnation (saith Paul) to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit, Rom: 8. 1. A man is not damned (merely) because he hath sin (for then no man could be saved, for who is the man that sinneth not) but because sin is his Lord, and he is the servant of sin; Not so much because he is bad, but because he will be bad, not only for the act, but for the love; It is confessed, that guilt is as natural to sin, as the shadow is to the body, no man can sin at any time, in anything, and yet be Innocent; But meritorious guilt, is one thing, and redounding guilt is another thing: If the dominion of sin be broken off (that a man loves not sin, but hates it, yields not up himself unto it, but resists it, is not in league, but in conflict with it) then the estate of guilt is taken off, so that it shall not effectually redound to the condemnation of the person, where God doth powerfully subdue the sinful nature, there he will mercifully pardon and discharge the unwillingly sinning and offending person: if sin be not thy Lord, then Hell shall not be thy portion: He who is become an enemy to his sins; grace rules in his heart now, and glory shall crown his soul hereafter.

Obj. But will some troubled (and therefore unably discerning soul reply) we doubt it not, But that it is a most singular mercy. A rich grace, worthy of greatest acceptance and heartiest thanks, where the dominion of sin is broken off; but alas, we fear it is not so with us, heavy cause have we to suspect that we are captives yet under sins dominion, so that though others who can happily observe the yoke broken off, and therefore can be cheerfully thankful, we find it yet



strong, O very strong, and therefore more reason have we of grief and sorrow.

Beloved, it is granted, that if a man finds himself indeed under the dominion of any sin, assuredly he hath peculiar cause of great humbling's, speediest reforming's, vehement beggings at the throne of grace for mercy and for the mighty power of Jesus Christ to release and deliver his soul: But then let us carefully observe, whither this of which a man complains, be sin in dominion or not, perhaps it may be something else, and then the soul must be advised and directed in a more especial way.

Why I find such strong and manifold inclinations of sin within me: daring forth into so many vile imaginations, and working down to draw my affections, woe's me? what is the dominion of sin but this? and who but a slave of sin is hurried with such motions of sin? it cannot be, that my heart should be good whilst inclinations are so manifoldly bad.

To this, let me shape a few answers.

1. First I demand how the heart stands affected toward these manifold inclinations! doest thou approve them or dis-allow them: doest thou love them, or doest thou hate them: verily (saith the soul) I dislike them, and hate them, they are the burden of my soul: And why so, why? because God is dishonored by them, and they are contrary to his holy will, and they are evil and filthy; O I had rather be in any miserable estate, then in this sinful and vile estate.

Now then observe: sin hath not dominion in thee, for where sin hath dominion, sin is not formally and purely hated.

The dominion of sin doth not consist in the multiplicity of motions; a man may have many enemies to assault him, and yet love and serve none: so a man may have many sins inclining and tempting, and yet be a servant to none of them: for it is not the temptation of sin which infallibly argues dominion, but the willing resignation of the heart, the subjection of the heart to those motions and temptations of sin, this necessarily is required to make dominion: but now thy heart doth not so, it doth not resign up itself, it yields not subjection, for as much as it doth hate, and resist, and bewail sin even in temptation?

Of all the signs of a good heart (of a heart that is delivered from sins dominion) this is one of the best and surest. viz. That it hates, and resists and bewails sin when it is only in temptation: when a man hath committed a sin, then the conscience (being made guilty) may alone break and afflict, and this may befall even a wicked man, there is now some other thing besides sin in the filthiness of it to work trouble and grief, viz. The guilt and accusation of it, but when sin is resisted and bewailed in the temptation before it hath got out into actual commission, now the peculiar reason of trouble is the formal vileness of sin because it is so base, and so opposite to God.

Secondly, I demand, what doest thou against these sinful inclinations: every man hath some weapons or other, and in case of anguish he is apt to draw them, what weapons hast thou in thy hand; and to what end doest thou manage them: Do not many and strong temptations of sin, occasion many and strong supplications, the more that sin inclines, the more doth thy heart incline to God by prayer, for more grace to resist, for more strength to subdue: doest thou not by reading, and hearing, and inquiry, labor to find out the manifold helps and victories of a tempted and an assaulted soul? doest thou not keep the precepts of God in thy heart, and the threatening's of God in thy heart, that thou mayest fear to offend

him; and the promises of God, which yet hearten thee to withstand? What doth all this demonstrate, but that sin is not in dominion, it is, I confess; thy troublesome enemy, but it is not thy ruling Lord: it is that which doth molest thee, it is not that which doth reign in thee; it is that which would have dominion, but it is not that which hath dominion: it is that which doth assault thy affection, but is not that which hath got thine heart; thou art but in a greater war: Nevertheless thou art not so much as in captivity, though in a strong conflict.

Yea, but yet I feel one thing perhaps worse than all this, sin works (in me) after a more peculiar manner, there is a particular sinful inclination in me, and so hath it been all my days: if I were to give you the sum of my life, I could lay out that particular inclination above all the rest; like a thread which goes through the whole piece, such a sin, which I have seen long since & felt it, and (I thought) bewailed it, and resisted it a long time, and yet here it lives still, works still; can it be that sin should not have dominion, where someone special corruption yet lives?

I must be warily tender to Resolve this scruple, for as much as,

1. Particular subjection is enough to set up dominion.
2. Hypocrites are under the reign of special lust and particular sins, both which I touched heretofore: But to the scruple take me thus.

4. Things.

1. That when God doth convert the soul, no one sinful inclination is totally removed, though everyone be in some measure changed: The corrupt nature, doth yet remain, and all its principles, or particular inclinations to particular sins; for grace doth not change us by a

present Annihilation of sin, but by a powerful alienation of our hearts from it.

Secondly, note, that sin may work (even in a man rescued out of its dominion (is a more singular or particular way; my meaning is this, that there may be in him yet a more particular twang, and more apt inclination, and propension to someone sin rather than to another: Sin (yet abiding) may take the advantage of the same complexion still remaining, and of the same condition and calling yet continuing, and without all doubt, most men living, whether good, or whether bad, do find more to do with someone sinful inclination, then with another.

Thirdly, consider: usually, that particular inclination, which was in dominion before conversion, is most frequent in inclination after our calling.

And I will give you some probable Reasons thereof.

One, because that was the spring of the sin of our custom: which sent out and fed the issue, by which the soul was so beaten in the path and way of sinning, so that the old and accustomed nature cannot easily or presently forget its ancient and wonted bents: a custom will hardly or never go off, without some after inclinations or dispositions that way.

Another, because the new resistances of a converted heart, and its cares and studies are most against the particular sin of its special inclinations: there it deals most, opposeth most, humbles most: Now sin doth usually stickle and stir most, where it is most pursued: that particular sin, whose death thou layest at most, that will strive to assail and perplex, and entangle thee most: the more humble thou laborest to be, the more shalt thou find proud thoughts to assault,

though not to conquer thee; and the more meek thou labors to be, the more ado shalt thou have with thy passions: for as much as no sin will be executed quietly, and every nature stirs busily in its own defense: we are weakest there, and God draws our greatest watch and strength thither: a man sooner falls under lesser conflicts: when a sin hath been beaten upon by much temptation and conflict, the heart grows hereby more ready, resolute: and you shall find it, that after frequent and long exercise with a particular corruption, that it shall not easily get within the soul, but upon a pause and cessation.

Fourthly, observe, that there is a difference twixt the life of motion, and the life of affection: its true, thy special inclination lives in thee still by way of motion, but doth it live in thee still by way of affection? it did incline heretofore, and thou lovedst it, it inclines now and thou hates it: the inclination is the same for the matter, but thy heart is not the same for the disposition toward it, when the iron is hot, you may bring a figure, and put it on, and the iron will take the stamp and impression: bring the same figure and seal to it, when it is cold, now it will not receive it; the seal, and the figure of the seal is the same, but the temper and the disposition of the iron, as hot, and as cold is not the same. Saint Ambrose relates of the young traveler, who went out an unclean person, but returned a chaste person, and his old quean met with him after his return, and began her wanton salutes unto him, from whom, and which he angerly turned aside and neglects her, why, said she, Ego sum ego, yea, but, saith he, Ego non sum ego, I am not; so is it here in this case, the inclination is the same to the same sin; yea, but the affection is not now to that inclination as it hath been But where sin hath dominion affections do concur with the special inclination.

Take all that I shall say to this in a few words.

1. It is certain, that in an evil man there is a frequency in a particular inclination, and so there may be in a good man, but thus they differ.

In an evil man, the frequent inclination, is the frequent progress of a King: In a good man, it is the fervent egress or attempt of an enemy.

In an evil man, the frequency of inclination is to maintain possession; In a good man, it is but a malicious endeavor, by force (if it were possible) to regain an entrance.

2. This is some comfort, that though the assault be frequent, yet the resistance is constant, and that concludes against sins dominion.

3. Not the frequency of inclination, but the ardency of subjection evidenceth sins dominion: not who quarrels with me most, but who effectually commands me, he is my Lord: not he who makes the most motions, but on whom the woman casts her heart, that is the husband: 'tis my love and service, which infallibly concludes dominion.

Obj. 3. But yet the soul sticks, I am sold under sin, and taken captive: sin hath inclined and prevailed, what surer argument of dominion then victory.

There are three things which I would say to this scruple.

1. One is this, that it is a very sad scruple, any particular victory of any great sin (for to that I intend the case) makes a wonderful change.

2. Another is this, comfort cannot be applied, neither will the conscience receive it till repentance be renewed.

3. Yet there is a difference twixt a particular victory, and the dominion of sin; there may be a surprisal, where yet a Kingdom is not established.

1. For the first of these, all particular victories are sad things: I do not now speak of victories in respect of inward motion, or of passion or distemper through dullness and melancholy, but of victory in respect of action, and that not by mere omission, not by imperfection in best services, but by gross commissions, suppose it David's case, or Noah's case; the one for uncleanness, the other for drunkenness: These acted wickedness's are sore evils, very abominable to the Lord, very inglorious to religion, very wounding to conscience, extremely quenching of the spirit of grace.

For as much as the more gross any sin is, the worse is it in the commission; every acting of sin receiving some intention and aggravation, from the immediate kind and quality of the sin.

Again, the better the man is, the worse is a lewd kind of sinning in him, the quality of the person ever contributing more exceedingness to the sin, for he sins against more light, against more mercy, against more help and strength, against more active corrections of conscience, with more advantage to the corruption of other men, with more advantage to the beauty and credit of holiness: yea, besides these formal vileness's; O what strange effects break in upon the soul, what horror, what fear, what misgivings, what despair oftentimes, with the fruits thereof.

2. Comfort will never be applied to a person in this condition until repentance be renewed:

Beloved, there is a difference of persons, and a difference of actions, and a difference of times, and a difference of applications.

Do I find an evil man brought to the sight of his sins, to saddest humbling for them, to sincere desire to come off from them, to panting's after grace, and mercy, I now come in with the blood of Christ, with the tender and gracious promises refreshing such a soul with assurance of freest and fullest mercy: Do I find a good man, weak in duty, strong in affection, hearty against all sin, yet troubled with the insolent motions of many corruptions? would not do evil, and yet is not rid of it; would do good, but then finds evil is present with him; I labor to raise and hold up such an heart to look on God through Christ for acceptance, to lay hold on Christ, for strength, for life, for power, for victory.

Do I find a good man weakening himself, bowing under the actual power of some viler lust, O beloved, comfort is not his medicine, but repentance; comfort is not his first help, but godly sorrow; sorrow is the work which belongs to a sinner, and comfort that which belongs to a penitent sinner: until that thou doest thoroughly humble thy soul, till thou doest bewail mightily thy wickedness, till thy heart be turned into extreme loathing of thy sin, and thyself for so sinning; thou shalt not get a good look from God, a good word from Conscience, any favorable encouragement from the Ordinance. Yea, well it is, if after many years, that ever thou seest God in that way of graciousness, and free communion, as thou didst formerly find him; however, be sure of it, that without repentance thou shalt not at all meet with any solid comfort.

3. Nevertheless there may be some differences twixt particular victories, and twixt dominion: though dominion be a victory, yet every victory concludes not dominion, they may be thus distinguished in respect of their subjects, viz. Good men, in whom sin hath sometimes a victory; and evil men, in whom sin hath at all times a dominion.



Five differences twixt dominion and victory.

First, particular victory depends upon inequality of actual strength, but dominion depends upon the fullness of a corrupt nature.

There is in all holy men a habitual strength, which is seated in the new nature of grace or holiness, by which they are inclined to all good, and their hearts made averse to all evil, it is the natural temper of true grace thus to work: And then there is an actual strength, by which, when any particular good is proposed, they incline unto the obedience of it; and when any particular evil is objected, they strive against it and resist. Now it may fall out, that when a temptation presents itself and inward corruption works with that temptation; I say it may so fall out, that the strength of grace may be insufficient, it may not actually equal or exceed that vehement & actual strength of inclination and temptation, though it doth resist (as a weak man may a strong enemy) yet it may not be able to conquer, but is surprised and led captive: and here the fall depends, not on the disposition of the will or heart, but upon the impotency of resistance; the person doth not fall down, but is beaten down; the sin is acted, not through choice, but through weakness; not because the person loves it, but because he is not able to conquer the temptation: But where sin hath dominion, there the sinning comes from the heart, as a stream from the fountain: it is natural and not violent: It is acted, not because a man is not able to make sufficient resistance, but because the heart is wholly set that way with fullest complacence.

Secondly, particular victory is a sudden act, but dominion is a more sober work. In the one the soul is surprised, it is hurried, it is precipitated, it is in a flame on a moment, a man hath not space to weigh, to judge, to consider; but sin hath with marvelous quickness seized on the understanding, wrought upon the memory, struck into

the affections, and is driven on in a rash and passionate way: In the other the work is more sober, not only actively devised, but affectionately adhered unto: a natural strength of corrupt and living affection makes the one; and in-advertency and rashness may be sufficient to cause the other that ariseth for want of watchfulness (as a Camp may be so surprised by an enemy) this ariseth out of a sworn obedience, as the soldier follows his Captain.

Thirdly, Where the sinning owes itself, not to Dominion, but to particular victory, or tyranny, there the person, when he comes to himself, feels the yoke, and would shake it off: It is true, that while the heat of corruption remains, and the force of temptation, yet disables the heart to recollect itself, it is most difficult for any person to distinguish; neither is he then come to scruple and question: But when things grow clearer in the judgment, and more calm in the affections, when the hurry and tempest is off; that a man beholds his own face, and ways, and actions in a right glass again. Now it will quickly appear, whether it be tyranny or Dominion. If it be but a tyrannical victory, Ah! how the soul loathes itself; how it abominates the sinner, like a man captivated, and rowing as a forced slave, in the Gally, he would cut the throat of the Master; or like a man in Prison, he would make his escape with the death of him, who was too strong to keep him. But if it be Dominion, then a man will not only serve his Master, but plead for him, he desires not to escape, he loves his Master, and would dwell with him forever.

4. Therefore in the fourth place, if it be but victory, the person is not only troubled at his fall, not only loathing of the actions, but he is actively working, he is using his victorious weapons, to raise up himself, to free himself again; he is grieved at the bondage, desires liberty, and will fight hard for it: O the humbling's, and praying's, and workings, and applications of the soul to the sword of the spirit,

the declination of the helps of sin, the contentions with the motions of lust, the watching's, the meditations, &c. which such an heart will use: But where it is dominion, the sin is committed with joy, and the sinner would continue with it in peace.

It is granted that there may be (sometimes) some distemper in such a heart, both before the sinning, and after the sinning, but that before the sinning is raised only upon carnal grounds, because of subsequent shame, loss, prejudice, and that after the sinning is only judicial, just throws of an accusing conscience, of which when the vile slave of sin hath got free, when the cry of the world is off, and when the cry of his conscience is down, he prepares his heart again for the sin, is sad and heavy, until he returns to his vomit and mire: the work goes on again as freely and as heartily as ever.

Lastly, if it be but particular victory the soul will rise again, and it will not rise without revenge; Though the enemy hath got the battle, yet he shall lose the battle: before the vanquished soul hath done, it will not only rise, but fight, a naked combat shall not suffice, but assault and pursuit; it will work with the art of holy strength to the more deadly offense of that particular corruption.

Obj. 3. Yet there is a more difficult case, then any which hath been already proposed, and that is renewed acting's of the same sin: the person falls into the same sin again and again, and this repetition of sinful acting, seems to be sin in custom, and sin in custom is sin in dominion; thus is it with me, or hath it been with me (doth some troubled soul) reply, and therefore my case is miserable.

Sol. To which case divers things must be said.

1. Repetition or renewing of the same sinful acting's, is (without all doubt) a very fearful and abominable thing: what is it else but a

further and stronger wedging in of the corruption: frequent acting's of sin do ever strengthen the sinful nature: Every soul being made more apt to sin by more sinning's; what is it else but a broadening and widening of sin? the sin grows bigger in the bulk, and higher in the guilt, by a continued, then by a single commission.

Now a man sins against that which his own conscience hath condemned, as well as the pure word of God: Now a man adventures into troubles against all his former trouble, he hath felt the sin to be bitter, and knows that it must cost him either Hell (into which God may presently cast him) or great sorrow and repentance, (which God may now judicially deny him.) Now a man sins against all the workings of grace, so that God may bring forth all the former acts of the soul, and set them against the thus sinning person: Look thou, here are the wounds which thou didst make heretofore; and yet thou strikes into the same again. Here are the tears which thou didst shed for this sinning heretofore; and yet thou wilt provoke me again; here are the sighs which thy heart did break out, here are the fears which did distress and perplex thy soul, here are the prayers which thou didst make for my tender mercies, here are the Covenants wherewith thou didst bind thy soul, here are the Chapters which thou didst read, to support thee, here is the place where thou didst pour forth thy anguished heart in fasting and crying, here is that goodness, and gracious love of mine, whereby I did accept of thee, upon thy humbling tears, into favor again; here is that peace, which I did thereupon create, and command into thy conscience, here is that word which thou didst say, should guide and rule thee for the time to come; here is that spirit which I sent to raise thee again. And yet after all this thou art at the same sin again, I might have cast thee off at the first, I might have shut up my mercies, denied thee recovery, avenged myself on thee for thy foul transgressions, yet I spared thee; though thou didst offend me, yet I recovered thee; though thou didst

provoke me; when thou didst very evil, even so that thou didst admire at the wickedness of thyself; yet I did thee good, shown thee kindness, would not presently forsake thee, who didst so foully forsake me; this my free and great grace did then melt thee, did then move thee, did then excite and stir thee to great sorrow, to much care and love: And now after all, thou hast returned not in inclination, but in action, into, not a little or small transgression, but into a gross and foul iniquity, yea, and when multitudes of withdrawing arguments did strive against it, when the conception of that sin, being with so much secret trouble and fear, could not but presage the great dishonor which would redound unto me, and the fearful terror which would befall thee, upon the active commission thereof; So that, beloved, without all scruple, a doubling of sin is in itself a more formal intention thereof in its corrupt nature, and a more fruitful aggravation of it in guilt and miserable consequence, &c.

Secondly, consider, that it is such a way of sinning as may justly stagger the heart about its condition.

First, in regard of the eminent propriety which it hath in persons who do thus sin generally (though not absolutely and simply) three sorts of persons run on in the frequent and manifold acting's of great sins, viz. Such as are notoriously profane, such as are closely hypocritical; such as are despitefully opposing the spirit of grace; these are they who grow from evil to worse, and add sin to sin, and make and fill up the measures of their particular iniquities which must needs stagger any soul, though perhaps not yet run on so far as they, if yet repeating steps in the same paths, which the vilest of sinners have trod in before it.

Secondly, in regard of that dark and rare exemplarity of such kinds of sinning, by any, in Scripture canonized for Saints or godly persons: it

is easily admitted, that you may espy, upon some of the best, something of the worst: and perhaps thickly heaped, upon the same sudden passion and temptation, but you shall rarely find any one of them often at the same foul transgression, I say, you shall rarely find it.

And believe me, it will be a staggering case to any sinning heart, where its wages are such, as to see multitudes of the worst, and scarce any one of good note so pacing and walking.

Nay, thirdly, until the soul thus sinning doth bestow infinite labor, strong care, continued humbling's, incessant cries to raise itself again, in respect of any other evidence, it shall hardly or never distinguish the yet secretly remaining, the miserably. defaced frame of goodness within it. A soul in this temper is not so much to dispute and question, as to rise and work, the case of frequenting or renewing the same sinful acts, will never be answered in thy conscience, but by fullest humbling's, sound judging's, speedy repenting's, careful watching's and declining's, wonderful strengthening's of the contrary grace and acts, diligent fear, fervent communion with God, and more upright walking.

Yet fourthly, though it be a rare case, this doubling or renewing of some great sinful act (very few good men do it, and that too, very seldom, perhaps as Job spake, so they may do, once have I spoken, yea, twice, but I will proceed no further, Job 40. 5. I say, though it be rare) yet it is a possible case, that sin may have more than one particular victory where yet it hath not dominion.

I speak not this to hearten any man to sin, for this would argue sin indeed to have dominion, but to recover a man that hath sinning, whose soul is extremely bruised with his second fall, and whose second wound bleeds with such sad and bitter dejection of spirit for

his renewed folly, that this is an argument, that he is not a cheerful and willing servant to sin, but only an enemy, not able enough to bear off a second shock or assault.

Object. Yet this satisfies not, for the most still objects this is custom, and custom cannot be without Dominion.

I answer three things.

First, suppose the worst, that it were custom and dominion, what is the course to be taken? wouldest thou think it best to hold on? wouldest thou live thus still? God hath pardoned and he hath changed many a soul which hath been customary in sin, and in whom sin hath had dominion, nay, not any before conversion, but sin had dominion in him, and some sin or other was his customary path. Thy safest and wisest course were not thus to stick at the custom and dominion, but to come unto God, and to beseech him to show thee mercy, and to give thee grace and Christ to subdue the dominion, and to break the custom.

Secondly, I think that a custom of sinning is a direct symptom of sin in dominion. No man can trade in a sin, but you may easily say, who is his Master? his servants we are whom we obey.

3. But then I would have you to remember, that as all continuing inclinations argue not dominion, so some continued or repeated acts of sin, do not always argue custom though custom necessarily (includes either in good or bad things) a repetition of acts, a going over of the same part or lesson again and again, it being a path often walked over. Yet every gemination of acts is not presently a custom, I think we may thus distinguish twixt sinful acts multiplied by custom (which is rooted in dominion) and those which fall out by accident, as it were, and rooted only in tyranny.

Three differences twixt acts geminated and custom.

1. Where the renewed acts of sin owe themselves to custom, there the possession is both strong and quiet: for (if I mistake not) it is not merely how often, or how long I have been at, or have dwelt in the house, which makes custom, and see me, the Lord of that house, but what right, and what peaceable possession. One stronger than I may hold my land from me, and dwell in my house a long time, yet if I make my exceptions, and hold a suit against him, his long dwelling is but a usurping; neither is it a legal custom, though perhaps of long continuance. Though sin still dwells in a good soul, and continues there in despite of him; and the person doth oftentimes (through the captivating force of it) do many sinful acts, and perhaps the same; yet it is not custom, unless the possession be quiet and peaceable: if he did like Issachar, bow under the burden; and yield up the writings and keys, if he did quietly resign up his heart to sin, and so go on from sin to sin, this were custom and concluded dominion: But so long as that soul puts in exceptions, prefers a bill of tears, complaints, supplications to Christ to conquer this usurping tyrant, to give grace to recover its hold, and strength to withstand and subdue it: Though the acts be many, and to be bewailed, yet they are not come to a custom, which sets up Dominion.

2. Where the renewed acts are acts of custom, there the acting is natural and easy: Custom (we know) is another nature, and every nature doth easily let go its acts, how easy is it for the eye to see, and the ear to hear, or the water to moisten, or the earth to descend: Let nature alone, she hath no impediment from herself to her acts; and it is her perfection to act, and therefore her acts are easy. It is thus with sinful acts flowing out of Custom, they come from the heart as waters from a spring, and rise from it as sparks from the fire, O how nimble, and dexterous, and quick is the sinner to sin, you need not tempt



him, he can tempt himself; you need not use arguments to persuade and entice him, the accustomed drunkard knows the way, alone, to the Cup-house, and the covetous heart to unlawful methods of gain; Balaam can quickly get on horse-back for moneys sake, to curse Israel; and Judas needs no messenger, he can go himself to the High Priest: But when the renewed acts depend rather on tyranny than custom, there they come off more hardly with more difficulty, the sin is marred (perhaps many times before it is done, the person sees it is vile and resists it, then the pleasure and profit tempts him, to which he begins to hearken, but presently his heart misgives him it is not right, and it will end in bitterness, he prays and yet is tempted, fights and yet is tempted, resists and yet is vanquished.

3. Where the renewed acts owe themselves to custom, there a man is not easily brought off: 'tis my custom, saith the man, I cannot help it, and I will not leave it I assure you; where sinful acts rise to custom, there is no argument, but either a present fear of hell to hold them in, or a mighty presence of grace to put them off; words will not prevail with men accustomed to sin: But where the renewed acts owe themselves to tyranny; though many words did bring into the sin, yet a few words will serve to break off the sin: one whisper of conscience; ah, what hast thou done? one word of Nathan's to David, thou art the man; one look of Christ on Peter made him remember, and to go out and weep bitterly.

## SECT. VI.

Now I proceed to a third Use, which shall be the last that I will make of this subject; and that shall be for direction, how to get off the dominion of sin.

You remember that I distinguished heretofore of a twofold Dominion of sin, one was natural, under which every man is held before his conversion: Another was actual which consisted in a particular prevalency, even upon a man converted and changed: According to either there must be distinct Directions;

1. Against Natural Dominion.

For this we must consider two things.

First, what keeps and strengthens that Dominion.

Secondly, what may demolish and subdue it: and accordingly apply ourselves.

Quest. 1. For the first let us inquire what keeps up and strengthens the natural dominion of sin, and accordingly work against it.

Sol. There are four things which do it.

1. One is ignorance: The blindness of the understanding is a principal guard of reigning sin: you read that they in Eph. 4. 19. Gave themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness; like a soldier, who gives himself up, and takes pay, or like a servant who passeth away himself to service; so these resigned up their hearts and lives to all uncleanness; it was their delight, it was their work, (this shown the dominion of sin) But what was the cause of this: See v. 18. Their understandings were darkened, through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their hearts: The ignorance of sin kept up their earnestness and practice of sinning. If ignorance rules the mind, then sin will easily rule the heart: all sinful dominion is enabled by ignorance: The Devil is a Prince of darkness, and takes special care to keep men blind:

Antichrist is a son of darkness, and therefore above all, sets up his kingdom by ignorance: So is it with sin itself, its dominion is maintained by blindness in the mind; and therefore sin in unconverted men, makes the mighty opposition against the word, and the means of knowledge: it knows well that no man turns from sin who doth not discern it, nor hates it, who knows it not: The prisoner is sure enough under a lock, and in the dungeon.

Now then if ever you would get off this natural dominion of sin, you must get knowledge, a double knowledge in the mind.

1. One direct, and that is a distinct and true apprehension of sin, just as the Lord reveals it to be, both for its proper nature, and genuine affects.

2. Another is Reflexive: that is sinfulness, (which God hath revealed to be so vile, so abominable, so fearful) It is in you, and it is working in you; you are under the powers of darkness, you must come to yourselves, you must fetch your souls unto your souls, if you will not get a sensibleness of sin, (and that is begun by knowledge) you will live and die in your sins.

A Second thing which keeps up the natural dominion of sin, is a violent love of sin: Love is the sinew of the heart, yea it is the chair of state, whatsoever sits in it, that is the King of the soul, whether grace or sin: For love doth bestow the heart, what our love is that our heart is, it makes all to stoop, and yield: There is no talk of parting, while love remains; I will not go free (said the Hebrew servant) for I love my master Why? the soul and sin are in a sworn covenant (like David and Jonathan) if the soul doth love sin, until you take off the love, you shall never be able to take down the dominion.

Therefore, this shall be another direction, break down the love of sin.

Ob. But how should that be done?

Sol. First, convince the heart, that sin is no lovely thing; There be three things which should not fall under our love.

1. That which is the object of God's hatred, No man may love that which God hates.

2. That which is the object of God's curse: that cannot be good which he curseth, and therefore not lovely.

3. That which is the cause of man's damnation and misery, for no man is to love the cause of his undoing: Now sin is the only thing which God hates, and which God curseth, and which will damn a man.

2. Give to thy soul a solid and full object of love, find out something which thou shouldest love; Is there not a God, a Christ, a Holy spirit, His word, heaven, &c. There is no loveliness in sin, and all loveliness in these things

3. Another thing which keeps up the dominion of sin is error and deceit, there is a lie in every sin, and the judgment is deceived where the sin is retained, either a man thinks he sins not, but is escaped out of the hands of lust, or that his condition is sound and good; or if it be bad, yet not so bad as others; or if very bad, yet he can at pleasure release himself; and thus through a vain fancy, he continues under the bondage of his corruptions: And so for the actions of sin, he deceives his soul, he doth not behold them in a comparison to the rule, he doth not judge of them by the word, but in a reference to his own corrupt desires and delights, which swallow down infinite sins, sugared over by pleasure and profit.

Now if ever you would get free from sin, get your judgments to be cured: a sound judgment may be a good means to breed a sound heart; thou wilt never be persuaded to be good, until the erroneous confidence that thou art not bad be removed: convince thy mind of these truths against all errors, that indeed thou art sinful. And that no sin is little in its merit, and it is not, what is least wicked, but he who is really good, shall be saved: Do not judge of acceptance or disacceptance by sensible pleasures, or profits; but beyond these, look what that is which is so colored and disguised, it is even a snare for thy life, and that which hunts for the precious soul.

4. A fourth thing which keeps up dominion is custom: the heart by customary sinning grows strong in sin, and resolute and is by often committing's made more naturally sinful, and more apt for further sinful actions.

Now observe a little, Give some checks to the ordinary course of sin: why? you will say: It is impossible? nay but it is not: Though it be Impossible for a man alone, to change his sinful heart, yet it is not to check an outward sinful act, a man may choose whether he will go and be drunk, whither he will speak and swear, &c.

Ob. But if it were done, this were vain and fruitless, for the dominion of sin Subsists in the nature, though manifested in the acts.

Sol. I grant it, yet first If the heart be brought to set against the sinful acts, it may be brought to set against the sinful nature, secondly, the abating of the acts, may virtually conduce to the abating of that sinful nature.

Qu. 2. What may demolish and break down the natural dominion of sin.

Sol. I will Tell you a few things for this, and I pray you to remember them:

1. That which doth this, it must have a greater power then sin, for natural dominion goes not of but by a stronger hand: Satan is not dispossessed but by a stronger than Satan: And we are not translated from the powers of darkness, but by a hand of omnipotency.

2. That which doth this, it must be a contrary nature unto sin, for no kingdom can subsist by division, let something come unto the soul which makes a division, sin will quickly lose its dominion.

3. Again It must be something which may gain the affections; it must be able to win the heart, to dispose of love and hatred for dominion is made or marred by one of them.

4. Again, it must be something which may breed a stiff and courageous resolution, that the heart will not serve sin, but will go free: And hereupon, against all inward and outward opposition, breaks forth into the use of victorious means.

Now then the directions are these?

1. If ever thou wouldest get down the dominion of sin, thou must look up to God and Christ, they are able to disannul the covenant with sin, and to subdue iniquities, Rom. 8. 2. the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death, look as it must be a Rich mercy which pardons, so it must be a mighty power which conquers sin, why? but what is it to the Lord to command thy heart home to himself, to cast down the high imaginations and strong holds? As Jehoshaphat spake against those strong armies, we know not what to do: yet our eyes are upon thee; so in the sense of thy natural vileness and sinful dominion, O Lord I

am bound, I am in bondage, I am dead in sins, Lord I am unable to escape, but thou art able to deliver, O deliver my soul for thy mercies sake, and subdue mine iniquities, and show forth thy power, &c: who shall deliver me, I thank God through Jesus Christ, Rom. 7. 24, 25.

Secondly, because mere power doth not do it, but power in a quality, working through some quality, Therefore beg of God, that he would give thee the grace of his spirit, it is true, that naked power takes not off the sinful dominion: nor doth the quality alone do it, but both can do it: If God gives a man grace, and mightily assists and works by and through that grace; this now will beat down the dominion of sin.

The light, though it be but a little at first, yet assisted by a mighty principle of light shall conquer darkness: pride will have dominion till humility comes in.

Now, then beg of God, for grace, for his holy spirit, for another heart, for a new heart and a new spirit.

Thirdly, labor earnestly for faith: if two things were done, sin could not possibly continue in dominion. viz.

If Christ did rule in the soul;

If thy love were drawn off from sin.

But faith sets up the scepter of Christ, it will know no Lord, but Christ, my Lord and my God, said believing Thomas: And faith turns the love to Christ, makes Christ the center of the heart? O it represents such goodness such excellency, such propriety, such bounty, such love in Christ, as inflames the heart and knits it with love to Christ again: Nay to add to all this, faith bestows the life on Christ too, He died for me, said faith; I judge it therefore most

reasonable, that I should live to him; Now where Christ comes to rule, and hath love and life, there sin without all doubt, loseth its dominion.

4. Lastly, take a courageous resolution: we are held many times by our lusts, through a faintness of spirit: why? we shall never get down these sins, and what will people say? and we know not what to do.

Sol. Why? up and be doing: for what is past, the Lord will mercifully pardon all of it, if now the yoke be broken, and be confident of this, if thou art setting against thy sins, thou doest that which God likes very well, for he hath commanded thee it as a duty, and hath set out means, and promised his help and blessing: Therefore stand not hovering and hammering, were I best? shall I? shall I yet? O no, thy life lies upon this, or thy death.

Therefore resolve on it to set against thy sins, say this with thyself, if I suffer sin to rule thus I perish, forever, if I get off the dominion I live forever, if I continue in this sinful estate, I must bid God farewell, and Christ farewell, and heaven; and all the comforts of my poor soul farewell: I confess I may get a little pleasure by my sins, & a little profit by my sins but I am not sure to enjoy them one moment, and why should I venture eternity of misery for one draught of sinful water: If I could get off sins dominion, O what a God might I look on, plead with, sue unto: what a Savior should I get? what precious joys? what heavenly consolations: what peace here? what hopes for hereafter? well, come of it what will, though I have been sinful, I will not still continue so, to God will I come, to Christ will I go: I will beseech them to have mercy upon me a sinner, and to give me grace, and to change my heart, I will not serve my base lusts any longer, I will never leave praying, hearing, reading, studying, inquiring,



working, till I be delivered from this bondage, and translated into the glorious liberty of the sons of God?

## 2. Against Actual dominion.

Thus for directions, Against the natural dominion of sin: Now I proceed to some helps against actual dominion, which is the particular prevalency of a sin into act.

Let me premise a proposition or two, and then you shall have the special directions themselves.

1. Actual Dominion (I speak in respect of gross acts) is usually in respect of some particular lusts: which works with more strength in the soul than any other lusts; Though it be most true, that in every man there is a universal root of sinning, yet you find it in experience that the multitudes of sinful inclinations, and thoughts and temptations, run ordinarily in some peculiar way, with most frequency and violence.

Secondly, actual Dominion is ordinarily by such a sin which hath the advantage of a natural complexion, and outward condition, and occasions, and affections, upon these doth sin set the temptation, as an Enginer doth place his battery upon such a piece of ground, which doth best advantage and further his shot against a City.

A man's natural temper and complexion doth mightily facilitate his acts, and a man's calling or condition of life may (accidentally) be a forcible persuasion to him to much infidelity, and impatience, and indirectness: And occasions in conversing actively or passively, have infinite baits in them, and when our affections may run in some lawful measure and manner, there sin takes occasion to tempt and prevail with ease; if we look not to it, he may quickly be cast down by

a sinful temptation, who is already prepared thereunto by a sinful faction.

Therefore if ever you would keep off the prevalency of a particular sin, observe distinctly, and work wisely, against all the things which may advantage it in its temptations.

Thirdly, consider that many things may keep back (for a while) the explicit acting's of a particular sin, which yet are not able to weaken the natural power of the sinful inclination.

There are two sorts of principles (as it were) which have an influence upon a man: some are violent and forcible, which work by a strong hand thus far (sometimes) prevailing, to hold back that a man dares not do such an evil (as shame, love of a man's credit, quiet, profit and safety) and some are powerful too; but yet inwardly weakening the very nature and disposition, as all sorts of graces: Now then if ever you would be thoroughly kept from the actual dominion of sin in gross, do not content yourselves with merely forcible restraints, for as much as these may oftentimes fail you, and then your hearts will deceive you; you will venture to foul iniquities, having nothing now within you of a contrary virtue: But above all be striving for grace, which is contrary not only to the sinful acts, but to the sinful nature, which is the fountain inclining the soul unto them; get chastity into the heart, and meekness into the heart, and humbleness into the heart, and soberness into the heart, and heavenliness, and faith, &c.

Fourthly, improve that strength which God hath given unto thee every way.

Though this be true, that a man by his natural strength can never change his sinful nature, yet assuredly he may do much against sinful acts; if that he would bestir himself, why? is not a man able to deny

his eye a look, or his tongue a word, and his feet a walk? you know this, that sin is set on fire by occasions, and by many things which lie directly under our power? and it may be much staid by the doing of many things which we are able to do. If a man will let his eyes still roll upon vain objects, whereas (if he would) he might check their motion, no marvel if his heart be still set on fire by lust, and if he will associate himself with persons provoking him to filthiness and drunkenness, (whereas if he would, he might decline that society) who can think it strange that such sins should have actual dominion over him. If thou wilt thou mayest read, and hear, and apply thyself to all the means by which grace may be wrought, and sin subdued, and if thou didst so, what canst thou tell what God may do for thy soul.

Nay, let me tell you more, that a man who hath received grace, (and therefore more power than a natural man) if he will not improve his strength, he shall hardly keep off the actual dominion of someone sin or other; if he will not decline that which he should and may, and if he will not do that which he should and can, it is not his naked praying that will keep him up: Prayer (without all question, as you shall hear by and by) is of singular force and use against the prevalency of all corruptions, but we must not rest only upon the prayer, but pray and work, pray and forbear, pray and deny ourselves, pray and shun occasions, pray and follow our help, &c.

Now I come unto some special directions against the actual dominion of a particular lust.

Four special Directions.

First, preserve in thy soul a constant and humble fear, and that will keep off the actual dominion of thy sin. Remember Solomon's advice, Blessed is the man that feareth always, Prov. 28. 14. And God's

promise, I will put my fear within them, and they shall not depart from me, Jerem. 41. q.d. without this you are gone, you will quickly lose your standing, if you lose your fear.

There be some graces which are as it were the guard of other graces: look as faith is a grace which feeds all the rest: So fear is a grace which keeps all the rest. This holy and humble fear hath these properties (all which strengthen the soul against actual dominion of sin) It hath God still in eye; it sets a man and his ways, and acts in the presence of a holy and glorious God: Now saith Joseph, how can I do this great evil and sin against God, Gen. 39.

Again, it prefers God's pleasure and God's frown above all encouraging or discouraging temptations; yea, but I must do this, for God requires it, and delights in it; yea, but I may not do this, for God hates it, and will be provoked by it; I prefer his favor above all false honor and pleasure, and I account his frowns worse than death itself. Now if I should thus sin, why? I provoke his wrath, and provoke the Lord to jealousy, I cause him to rise in displeasure against me, i. e. why? how would the Lord take it, if I should thus sin.

2. Get a sound and uncorrupt judgment: there be three cases in which a man is apt to fall under the actual dominion of sin, and corruption of judgment is a main cause of them.

One is, when he thinks or says that the sin is little.

Another is, when he saith, that his own strength is great.

A third is, when he assures himself of easy pardon and recovery: sin usually is a cloud, and then a shower, a corruption in the judgment before a victory in the affections: a man will quickly tremble under the guilt of some great commission, who hath dallied with little sins,

or with the opinion that they are so: And he who ventures far unto any occasions, upon his own strength, that man bids fair for some foul fact, under which he shortly falls, if God show him not the vanity of his self-confidence: And so is he ready, very ready for a gross transgression, who hath secured his soul already for his pardon: what sin will he stick at, who hath persuaded himself, that the pardon is already granted, although he presume to sin.

Now cleanse the judgment of these corrupt principles and believe it.

1. That no sin is little: That must needs be great which provokes a great God, and endangereth a precious soul; he who is brought to such an holy tenderness, that he sees greatness of guilt in littleness of sinning, shall by God's grace be kept from the dominion of any sin: Every sin (even the least) is a foul spot: And is the object of divine hatred and curse, it may prove like a little spark to consume an house, or like a little leak sufficient to drown a ship; or like a little thrust into the heart, enough to lose a man his life.

2. That your own strength is not sufficient: even the strongest ship left to itself cannot venture far, but it is upon rocks or sands: Anything may prove too strong for him, who conceives himself too strong for anything.

He that will venture upon sinful provocations, and occasions, disarms his soul, and lays his very heart naked to a conquest: A Christian may do very much in good ways, which have God's warrant to lead him, and God's promise to keep him, but if he alone will be presuming, as the Israelites, who would go up to fight upon their own humor, fell and lost, so shall a man presently learn his own weakness by the strength of sins surprisal; many a man hath been spiritually wounded, not because he had no grace, but because he

would adventure upon the strength of it without any security from God.

3. That pardon is not so easily obtained; Nor the soul so quickly recovered after particular dominions.

It is an easy thing to slip into sin, it is difficult to get out of it: a little thing will serve to distemper our health, and yet much Physic is required to set the humors straight again: All entrances to sin are with the greater facility; for then temptations and carnal affections blind our judgments, but the recoveries are the harder; for now the vileness and heinousness of the sinning appears more distinctly, and the conscience works more sharply and vehemently, and our very graces are the more disabled.

Assuredly, if you will venture to sin, you lose a friend of God, and encouragement in conscience, and strength in your souls; this very conceit that thou shouldest easily make thy peace with God and find mercy (though thou didst sin) I say this very conceit will mightily afflict thy soul, and aggravate thy transgression, when thou beholds thy soul in blood for sinning's; mercy is the most singular ground of repentance; and nothing stings us more for sinning then this, that we abused mercies to invite us: Therefore when sin tempts thee, resist it, yield not to it, say thus who would adventure the sweet mercies of a gracious God, to satisfy the lusts of a damnable sin, and why should I be so mad? having health to make myself sick, to break the bones which yet are whole; to unsettle the peace of my conscience, to weaken my graces, to dis-joint my estate: If as now I am, I have much to do; ah, what folly is it to make more woeful work for my soul? How justly may God leave me, who will forsake him for that which I know will displease him? and what if he should righteously deny me grace to repent, who proudly will abuse his grace to sin?

Beloved! let the judgment at all times be thus effectually convinced, and it may prove a singular means and help against particular temptations of sin by which dominion is attained.

3. Be not in the ways of Dominion: great sinning's do not always prevail at first sight, but they have a train and method to prepare the soul, and then on a sudden they violently surprise it.

There are these methods.

First, perhaps naked motions, the vile heart gives up only a show of a particular sin, in an imagination our thought presents the kinds of sinning, and so falls in again.

Then perhaps a careless use of our senses, which wandering (without regard) light upon some object which fits the former sinful motions, and strongly enlivens them.

After this active contemplation of these sinful motions, not to detest and bewail them, but to look upon them in an idle way.

After this a meditation of them, which is a more deliberate entertainment of them, which now riseth to a kind of treaty in the mind, where the sinful motion craves entertainment, by arguments of profit, or pleasure on credit, then a darting down to the affections to hearken and delight.

Then upon the next occasion, an acting of all this sinful imagination and plot.

Brethren if you love your souls take off sins in their entrances, before they gather head; if a man could keep sin from pleading, he might keep himself from acting. Break the egg, and you need not fear the flying of the bird: Crush sin in motion, and it is a clear way to prevent

sin in dominion: The match will never be made, if all treaties be rejected: little motions are the principles of great sins, as springs of rivers, and sparks of flames. Therefore, let us this do, resist motions to sin as a man should resist the acting's of sin: do not say, it is but a thought, Jehu's army came after the scouts: Great sinning may attend little and flattered imaginations, he who slights inward thoughts, and is careless of his outward senses, is in a fair way to become a great sinner.

Fourthly, sue out your standing by prayer and faith: I will tell you two things.

1. That the strongest grace cannot free us from the fiercest assaults: even the best heart, and most eminent Christian is exposed to the foulest and most violent temptations of sin and Satan.

2. That this resisting strength which keeps sin from dominion, is in God, and not in himself: As that we become good, is from the goodness of God's grace; so that we prove not bad, is from the greatness of God's power: no man is able to change his own heart, nor is his heart his own guard.

Therefore under all temptations, be at prayer and faith: These are the two wings of the soul, &c. Some victories are best had by standing up, but that against sin is surest by kneeling down: O when the heart is much in prayer, it is then most in strength; prayer engageth all heaven against a corruption: And God hath promised to subdue iniquities, and that sin shall not have dominion, Rom. 6. 14. Now what he hath promised, that he is able to perform, and will if we can pray and believe. We give sin the great advantage, when we slack our prayers and lay aside our faith.



It is the wisest art of a tempted soul to decline all occasions, to be under prevailing Ordinances, and to use prayer, and exercise faith according to the nature, kind and measure of sinful motions and inclinations.

## CHAPTER V.

Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from that great transgression. - PSAL. 19.13.

You may remember that heretofore we have handled David's petitions against sin, 1. In secrecy. 2. In presumption. 3. In dominion. Now we proceed to speak something of the conclusion or inference, which that holy and sweet Psalmist draws from all this [Then shall I be upright and innocent from that great transgression.]

To me it seemeth that David's special aim, that white or mark which he had in his eye, was this, to be upright, he knew well, that that was it which God looked for, which God most of all prized, and which (for his soul) would prove most necessary and comfortable; and withal he well knew that the allowance of secret sins, or the wallowing in great transgressions, were quite contrary thereto; And therefore he prays earnestly against them, that he might secure and maintain this.

q.d. O Lord, above all things in the world I desire to be upright, and this I shall never be, unless my heart be cleansed of secret sins, and my life of presumptuous and reigning sins, for thy mercies sake cleanse my heart, let me not love and work wickedness there, and for thy goodness sake keep my life, let me not act transgressions there, O that thou wouldest do this for me then, then should I be that which (above all) I desire to be, then should I be upright.

I will stand no longer about the words, only they afford unto us this proposition.

That it should be the great bent, aim, desire and endeavor of a man to be upright. Gen. 17. 1. I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou upright. q. d. this all in all which concerns thee, which I esteem, and which thou must study, Deut. 10. 12. And now Israel, what doth thy Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. q.d. I have done you much good, thought on you in your afflictions, brought you out of Egypt, preserved you through the sea, and in the wilderness vanquished all your enemies for you, presented you into a land flowing with milk and honey; Now all that I require, and that you are to look too, is that your hearts be upright, that you bestow your love on none but me, your service on none but me, that I have all your heart, and all your soul, Josh. 24. 14. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth, q. d. this is the thing that doth concern you nearly, this is the end of all your mercies, and the utmost of all your returns, if you will be anything, or return anything to God (who hath done all for you) then be sincere and true, be upright, 1 Sam. 12. 23. I will teach you the good and the right way, ver. 24. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart. Q. D. You have shown false hearts towards your God, in that you would put off his government, and you may perceive by the thunder and rain, how he takes this at your hands, but repent, and forsake him no more, but get you upright hearts to walk with him, and cleave unto him, Phil. 1. 9. This I pray, &c. ver. 10. That you may approve things that are excellent, that you may be sincere.

I need not quote more places from the Scripture, which abundantly delivers this truth unto us: only for the farther Explication of it, I shall inquire these particulars.

Four things.

1. What it is to be upright.
2. Why we should so studiously aim at, and labor for uprightness.
3. What useful applications in all kinds of this to ourselves.
4. Then the resolutions of some Cases of Conscience for the stay of those who suspect their own uprightness:

## SECT. I.

Quest. 1. What it is to be upright?

The Logicians observe a double quid, 1. Quid nominis. 2. Quid Rei, I will briefly therefore open the several words and phrases which are used in the Scriptures to import uprightness, and then I shall with more ease, and better satisfaction, Couch out unto you the lively nature of it.

For the first of these, know that uprightness is sometimes applied,

1. To God; Psalm 25. 8. Good and upright is the Lord, Psalm. 92. 15. to show that the Lord is upright, Isaiah 26. 7. Thou most upright doest weigh the path of the just.

In this respect, it notes that just and equal nature of God, which is (as) an answering rule, Righteously disposing of all his acts and dealings.

2. To man; And thus it may be applied both to good men and bad men; for uprightness may be considered, either as arising out of a renewed disposition, or as appearing in the course of a renewed

conversation (in which respects it is proper to good men only) or as manifesting itself, in a particular fact, and so Abimelech might say, in the uprightness of mine heart I have done this, Gen. 20. 5. Now uprightness, or to be upright, as applied to good men, is delivered unto us, both in the Old and in the New Testament by sundry words and phrases. Sometimes it is called sincerity, as Josh. 24. 14. serve the Lord in sincerity: that is said to be sincere, which is without mixture, a metaphor from honey which is then reputed pure and right when it hath none of the wax commixed with it. The heart is upright, when it is sincere, and then it is sincere when it is unmingled: Beloved there's a difference 'twixt Adherence and Commixture.

To the purest wool there may adhere some thread or spot uncomely, but in commixture the qualities or substances are in a sort mutually confounded; sin adheres or cleaves to the nature of the most upright person, but yet it mingles not, it is a thing which the renewed heart is thrusting off; it would be rid of it, the new nature like a spring is working it off, so that a man may be said to be upright, whose heart will not suffer any sin to incorporate or settle itself: Search me, said David, see whether there be any way of wickedness in me, Psalm 139. 23, 24.

If a man hath an heart, upon which sinful ways do not only fall, but with which they close, if his heart knows it, and allows it, and will walk in it, that man's heart is not upright in him; Sometime it is called one-ness, or singleness, so Jer. 32. 39. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, Act. 2. 46. They did eat their bread with gladness, and singleness of heart.

There are two sorts of persons, hypocrites and upright persons, and the Scripture opens them by their hearts.

Hypocrites are said to have a heart and a heart, Psal. 12. 2. with a double heart do they speak, in the original it is, with a heart and a heart, So Hos. 10. 2. their heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty: and therefore, James 1. 8. they are called men of two minds, double-minded men; they are in some things for God, and in most things for themselves; now for his service and anon for their lusts; look as hypocrisy mingles sin and the affection together, so it mingles God, and sin, and the world together, it doth not look on God for God's sake, but for profits sake, or pleasures sake, or honors sake; On the contrary, upright persons are persons of one heart, or of a single heart: as the Zebulonites are said, not to be of a double heart, 1 Chron. 12. 33. which is expounded, v. 38. by a perfect heart: A man's heart is upright when God alone, and his ways alone, and his truth alone, satisfy, and order, and bound it; when a man can say in truth, as they in the matter of Choice, Nay, but the Lord is our God, him will we serve. I have chosen the Lord to be my God, and his truths to be my guide, and his precepts to be my paths, and his glory to be my end, and hereto only will I stick, when the soul doth not halt between two, or divides itself in a service of any side or way, but keeps only to God.

Sometimes it is called perfection: and the upright are called perfect: as Gen. 17. 1. Walk before me and be thou perfect, Deut. 18. 13. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God, Psalm 37. 37. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright.

There is a double perfection:

One Absolute, in respect of degrees (which no man can now attain unto in this life, no not the most upright: for in many things we offend all.

The other Evangelical, which consists in the evenness of desire and endeavor: when a man sets up and exalts the word of God, and strives to square his heart and his life in all things thereby.

As Paul, exercising himself to have a conscience void of offense, and willing to live honestly in all things; when a man doth (as it were) measure his paths as by a line, he doth set them by the compass of a divine rule or warrant, not willingly straggling on the right hand, or bending toward the left: not willingly omit the least duty, and commit the least sin; he is an upright person when the heart is as large as the precept, and the whole will of God is complied with, in will, and desire, and endeavor.

Sometimes it is called a spirit without guile, so, Psal 32. 2. Blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no guile, and Christ of Nathaniel, Joh. 1. 47. Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. An hypocritical heart is a cunning heart, it hath many devises, shuffling's, windings, and turnings, this heart is not plain and sound: Therefore the hypocrites are said to have corrupt thoughts, and to flatter with their tongues, and to have crooked ways: They do not indeed hate the sin which they pretend, nor love that holiness which oftentimes they praise, and sometimes act: some ends they have of Religion for their belly, and for their own advantage, but they do not heartily hate sin, nor truly love holiness. Now on the contrary, an upright heart is without guile, it is even plain and down-right, therefore is it in the parable called an honest heart, and saith Paul, we speak the truth in Christ; and upright walking is styled a walking in truth, and serving of God in truth and in spirit; The meaning is this, that the upright man is indeed that which he professeth: his life and profession is not a painting which owes itself to an Artificer, but a natural color which owes itself to the soundness of temper: he is one who hath truth in the inward parts (as David speaks, Psal. 51. 6.)

He doth without base ends directly love God, and from his very heart hate sin. Though he cannot express himself in that flourish of formality, yet for Christ, he can plainly say as Peter, Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee; And touching sins, as David of God's enemies, I hate them with a perfect hatred: this he is in good earnest.

Sometimes it is called the allness, or wholeness of heart, so Deut. 4. 29. If thou seek him with all thine heart, Deut. 26. 16. Thou shalt keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, Psal. 119. 10. with my whole heart have I sought thee, &c. when the heart is upright, the whole man comes in unto God, all the soul, and all the body: none shall dispose of them but God: And God shall dispose of him in every precept: the very bent of a man is to please God in all things; and the whole soul, in the understanding, will, memory, affections, bears a respect to all his Commandments. There be other phrases to set out this business of uprightness, but I must pass them over, and pitch upon the description.

2. Now to the second quid Rei, I conjecture that uprightness may be thus described.

Uprightness is a sound and heavenly frame or temper of a gracious heart or spirit given by God, by which graces are acted, sins are opposed, duties are performed affectionately, directly and plainly, In reference to God, and not for by-respects.

I will briefly open this description in its particulars.

First, it is the temper or frame of the heart: The seat of uprightness is the heart or spirit: hence is it styled uprightness of heart, 1 King. 3. 6. Thou hast shown unto thy servant David my father great mercies, according as he walked before thee in truth, in righteousness, and in



uprightness of heart: So 'tis styled singleness of heart, Act. 2. 46. and Truth in the inward parts, Psal. 51. 6. and a service in spirit, Rom. 1. 9. God is my witness whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son. Hypocrisy is a color but skin deep; A painting which lies only upon the superficies or surface of the wall, upon the visibles or outwards of profession or action: but uprightness, like health, it is an inward crisis or temperature; as the conversation renders itself to the eye of man, so the inward disposition strives to render itself to the eye of God's approbation; if a man be upright, it is with him as with Solomon's Temple, though the outward parts were comely, and uniform; yet the inside was covered with the most precious gold, and had the sweetest incense.

All counterfeit things are best in their show, and worst in their substance and virtue: But uprightness is best there where least can be seen: The actions are nothing to the Inward affections and desires.

We do but as the Queen of Sheba, here, no not half of the goodness of an upright man by what he doth, if you would but look into his heart and converse with him there a while, you should find, the heart, the disposition, the desire of his soul, infinitely to exceed all that he doth, Psal. 119. O how I love thy law, O that my ways were so direct?

The heart ofttimes mourns, when the eyes can shed no tears, and the heart believes, when the tongue cannot speak much faith, and the inward man (the heart) would do that and much more, then what is done or performed.

Secondly, it is a temper or frame of the heart, a composition: as it were in which methinks, two things may be observed.

1. One that uprightness is not a single, or transient act or motion: I think that even an Hypocrite, whose heart is rotten, corrupt, false,

abominable, may yet, as step out into actions materially good, so feel motions within him both against what is evil, and unto what is good, he may (either through the force and power of evidence and conviction in his judgment, or through the unresistable actions, of his enlightened and stirred conscience, or through the great desire, of a glorious blessedness, have many fits and inward humors of being good and doing good.

But all this is passion and not temper: the Philosopher In his Rhetoric's accurately distinguish twixt the readiness, which springs out of a natural complexion, and that which ariseth out of a violent Anger and passion which soon fades off, being not rooted in nature, but in distemper: so is it with the Hypocrite. But uprightness is a temper and frame, like an instrument well-tuned, or if that hit not full, like a complexion, which is a uniform (if not principle yet) instrument of actions. It is like that leaven, of which Christ spake, which invades the whole lump, it sweetly seasons and disposes the whole man for God, as the bent of the stone is to the center, and of the fire to ascend.

Another, that uprightness is rather a general Influence in the graces, then any distinct grace: I will not make this point a controversy, only so far as I yet apprehend, uprightness is rather the temper of a grace; then the grace itself; It is not fear, but fear rightly tempered and ordered, it is not love, but love rightly set; it is not desire, but this orderly carried.

3. It is a sound and incorrupt and heavenly frame of heart.

1. A thing may be termed, sound or solid, either when it is real, not light, slight, superficial, or when it can abide trial: as true gold is Really so and not in color only, and if you reduce it to the touchstone you shall find it so: if you cast it into the fire, &c. Thus it is with the

heart that is upright, and it hath not a form of Godliness, but the power; and not a name that it lives, but the life itself: it is (indeed) holy, humble, meek, believing, loving of God and his servants, desirous to walk with God, Psal. 116. 160. Lord truly I am thy servant, &c. q. d. I am so indeed: this is not a complement, a garb, a pretense but a reality, so is it with the man indeed: an Israelite indeed, said Christ of Nathaniel, Joh. 1. 47. Yea, so real, that if you bring the heart either to the examination of the word (which being truth can find out all truth) or to God himself who can search the heart and reins, or to conscience that heareth witness, 2 Cor. 1. 12. or to afflictions, yet even there can uprightness find approbation and testimony, that the person doth love, and serve, and fear him, Job. 1. 8. the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou not considered my servant job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.

2. Again, it is an Incorrupt frame: though the extreme parts may sometimes be faulty, yet if the vitals be sound, if the heart, if the lungs, if the liver be so, we say that man is a sound man; In morals it holds so, that if the heart be void of all obliquity the person is upright; Many infirmities in action may consist with uprightness, but not in affection, the very bent of the heart is set against sin, without distinction of great or less, advantageous or incommodious, honorable or dishonorable; if it be not so, then the heart is corrupt; it mingles, it is not sincere and upright, but of this more anon.

4. Given by God; so the Prophet Jerem. 32. 39. I will give them one heart and one way? Every man naturally is a Hypocrite, would seem to be that which he is not, and so likewise misdirects all his actions to a wrong end: God hath set a certain beauty in goodness, and left a notion of vileness upon sin, so that most men though they hate goodness, yet would be thought good (they think it a more Creditable

title) and though they love and act sin, yet would not be thought or reputed evil.

Besides this, if we did but seriously observe and confess how it is in our own spirits, we should find in all our pious pretenses (take us in our naturals) we are all of us most formal and Artificial hypocrites: Draw near to God with our lips, but our hearts are far from him, and come to Church when we mind neither prayer nor Sermon, and listen oftentimes, and (God knows) not to obey but to censure, or but to get matter to talk of and the like: and when we have got ability to speak of any good, the Lord be merciful unto us, we do it not minding God's glory, but our own vain applause and estimation; So then the hypocritical heart is from ourselves, but the upright heart is from God; Every good and perfect gift is from above, James 1. 18. The perfect heart is from the perfect God, the true heart from the God of truth; It is he who teacheth truth, and makes upright, and writes his law in the inward parts.

5. The fifth thing which I would observe in uprightness, is its office of administration, it is such a thing as deals, 1. about graces. 2. about sins. 3. duties.

1. [For our graces] uprightness looks to them that they be rightly acted: Beloved, uprightness doth not give grace: but orders and directs the acts and operations thereof.

Two things I grant! that all the habits of grace (are in themselves intrinsically considered) really true; and though imperfection may be in them, yet no moral falsity or counterfeitness: and that the actions of those holy habits, considered entirely as streaming from them (only as so) are likewise truly holy, and good.

But then, these acts or actions of gracious habits as working in a subject which hath some falseness and byeness yet remaining, may by reason of that corruption be misdirected & misguided.

3. For hypocrisy doth not only consist in the putting of a good shape upon an evil action (as a fair color upon a rotten thread) but also in the ill intention or application even of an act (in itself) truly good. Charity (without all doubt) is a gracious quality, yet if uprightness attends not some of its acts, they may be referred to a private and vain glorious end, the like may be said of some other graces, as of the love of God, and the fear of God, &c.

2 For sins) here also uprightness comes into act itself: holiness (which is nothing else but the newness of Nature) that makes opposition to sin, But uprightness, that now is an evenness or impartiality of opposition.

To oppose a little sin, and yet to close with a great sin, to oppose many sins, and yet to hold a known and a willing confederacy with any one, to oppose sin in others, and yet to act it ourselves, to oppose sin as open to the eye of man, and yet to fall to it in secret, where it is naked to the eye of God; To oppose a sin to which constitution and age deny concurrence of delight or strength, and yet to wallow in others agreeable to our complexions, conditions, and years; to oppose the unprofitable sin, which brings nothing in but pain, and yet to admit of gainful sins, which come with rewards of divination in their hands, to oppose any sin, only because it is painful, and not because it is sinful; To oppose sin in our straits, and not in our liberties, in sickness, and not in health, when only we fear death and not at all under life and strength; I say all these are but hypocrisies, there is an unevenness of the heart as was in Saul, who spared the choicest, and mortified the coarsest of the cattle, or as in Balaam,

who would have been happy in his death, though a Curser of God's people (in respect of his own intention) in this life.

I Confess this to be true, that uprightness is not the utter Annihilation of sin, No, that effect appertains to glory, and perfection above; but it is the even and Impartial opposition of sin: of secret sins, and of presumptuous sins, (as David here in this Psalm) of great and small; in a word it is a conjunctive opposition of sin, that is it carries the heart against all sin, Psal. 119. 1. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, v. 3. They do no iniquity (i) their hearts are for no sin: and the prime reason of all this opposition, I say the prime and immediate reason, is direct and not reflexive; It is because sin is so opposite to God and not primarily, because it's so painful in the event to the person.

3. For duties: here uprightness expresseth itself, both for matter, wherein, it doth not shuffle and cut, pick and choose, take the lighter (like the hypocritical Pharisees) and leave the heaviest to others, but it makes a man to have (with David, Psal. 119. 6.) a respect to all God's commands.

For the manner, Any performance will not serve, where the heart is upright, David danceth before the Lord withal his might; and Paul serveth God in his spirit, That which came next to hand will serve Cain, but Abel must present the best of the Cattle, not the lame and the blind, the best, God, shall have the best manner of service, If I hear, that sufficeth not, unless it be with reverence and faith; If, I pray, that sufficeth not, unless with brokenness of heart, humbleness of spirit, fervent affections, and faith in Christ: A mere tale of brick will serve for Pharaoh, though the Israelites reputed the service a bondage, but when we bring offerings to the Temple, they must be willing, and of the best too.

6. The last thing which I would observe in uprightness is its end and scope.

Beloved I pray you to remember that uprightness causeth a threefold reference of our services: one is to God's precept: that's the square and Rule and compass of upright motions.

Another is to God's glory, that's the spring which turns the wheels, the wind which blows the sails: it is for Christ sake, said Paul: and whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God, said he again.

A third is to God's acceptance and approbation, so that God will accept, and commend, and approve, 2. Cor. 5. 9. we labor that whither present or absent, we may be accepted of him, 2. Cor. 10. 18. Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

More plain and punctual is that of the same Apostle, in Rom. 2. 29. He is a few which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.

The schoolmen's observation is sound and true that a particular deficiency is sufficient to mar a good, morally considered, but a universal concurrence of circumstances, is required to make the action good. Look, as in reading of Hebrew, leave out but one tittle, one point, you mar the sense, or as in a doses of Physic, leave out one ingredient you spoil all. So our actions if one circumstance be left out, if the Right and genuine end, be not eyed, it is enough to blanch them with hypocrisy, though for substance they may be commanded to pray, and to give alms, no man will question that these duties substantially considered, are good, and such which the upright person doth perform. But then if a man prays, or gives alms to be

seen of men, Christ tells him that he plays the Hypocrite; If in the performance of any piously external duty we set ourselves as the end, if all these things be done, and with very much fervency and Assiduity, yet only to play the Merchants for ourselves, to make a bridge over to our own estimation to blow up our names; This is but Hypocrisy, and I fear a kind of Idolatry, we fall down and worship ourselves, like the men of Shechem who would admit of circumcision, shall not their cattle, and all that they have be ours; The like indifferentness may be found in men forward for outward duties, shall not profit be ours, preachers good opinion ours, The Glory and Credit ours, this is a gross Hypocrisy?

Now uprightness consists in this, to devolve all the honor of holy services on God, like the faithful servant, who works painfully, and speaks considerately and all this for his Master; or like the shadow which in the dial moves from point to point, and all this points upward to the sun in it motions; The humble heart knows no fountain but God's grace. and the upright heart knows no end, but God's glory.

They distinguish of a double end.

One is *finis operis*, the end of the work, and that shall be our glory hereafter, as the Apostle spake of faith, the end of your faith the salvation of your souls, 1 Pet. 1. 9.

Another is *finis operantis*, the end of the workman, and that (if the heart be upright) is God's glory, for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to him be glory forever, Rom. 11.

Yet by your favor this I must suggest by the way, (and perhaps shall handle it more copiously shortly) that in a way of subordination; an upright heart may do God good service: and his glory no wrong, if



with all in its fit place, and order, and measure, it cast an eye also on its own reward, Moses had an eye to it, Heb. 11.

## SECT. II.

Quest. 2. Now I proceed to a second question why we should strive and aim at (as David here did) and endeavor to be upright.

There are abundant reasons thereof, I will deliver a few unto you.

First, this uprightness is the great thing which God looks for; Joh. 4. 23. The true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the father seeketh such to worship him. God's seeking, notes either his grace which prevents us, or his pleasure which enjoins us: The father seeketh such to worship him (i.) the Lord by all means would have men in his services to come with spirit and truth, to be upright, Prov. 23. 26. My son give me thy heart, q. d. though the body be made by me; and every part thereof, and though that whole frame be made for me, as well as by me, and thou art to glorify me in thy body, yet that which I principally enjoin thee in thy services, is to bring them with thy heart, with affections, entirely and not pretensively.

Nay, secondly, this is it which the Lord looks at: See Jerem. 5. 3. Are not thine eyes upon the truth: q. d. Why? it is not your words which God doth so much regard, nor is it your looks, nor your tears, nor your cries; that which the Lord sets his eye on, is the truth of the heart, in and under all these; uprightness there; Excellent is that place in 1 Chr. 29. 17. I know also my God (said David) that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness: As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things. In

that place you find David contributing toward the building of the Temple, and stirring up others to that work; and David for his part gave like a King thereto, even three thousand talents of gold, of gold of Ophir (ver. 4.) And seven thousand talents of refined silver: and the chief of the Fathers, and the Princes gave also five thousand talents of gold, and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron, besides precious stones, v. 6, 7, 8. Now what a goodly gift was all this, but David presently subjoins, I know my God that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness, q.d. O Lord all this is nothing, thou wilt not accept of it, thou wilt not look upon it, if uprightness be wanting, O that is it which thou regardest, the heart, the heart thou triest, and if uprightness be found there, that is it which thou regardest: You read of the Jews, that they made many prayers but God would not hear them, brought many oblations but they were vain, (i.) is of no account, Isaiah 1. 11, 12. and 15. They remember the solemn feasts, but prevailed not with God, he did shut his eyes: nay, they were at their solemn fasts too; but God took no knowledge, Isaiah 58. 3. He gives the reason in both places, in Isaiah 1. 15. your hands are full of blood, ver. 16. wash ye, &c. and Isaiah 58. 4. Behold ye fast for strife and debate, to smite with the fist of wickedness, ver. 6. Is not this the fast which I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness. q. d. away ye hypocrites, do you commit and allow cruelties, and villainies, and oppressions, and whoredoms, and then bring multitudes of sacrifices and oblations, and crying's, and think that I am taken with these; go and cleanse your hearts, mend your lives, leave your sins, be plain & upright with me, that is it which I look at more than anything, that is it which pleaseth me; Hence it is that oftentimes in Scripture, that the Hebrew word [Jashar] which signifies Right, is many times translated pleasing, as Numb. 23. 27. perhaps it will seem right in the eyes of the Lord, we translate it, peradventure it will please God: so true is

that of Solomon, Prov. 11. 20. Such as are upright in their way, are his delight, yea, and so that phrase of walking with God (which is nothing else but the path of the just or upright) is rendered by the Septuagint pleasing of God; as Gen. 5. 22. 24. holy Enoch walking with God: The seventy renders it, he pleased God.

Thirdly, this seems to be the only thing that God expects, 1 Sam. 12, 24. only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart, Deut. 10. 12. And now Israel what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. When the Lord did enter into the Covenant with Abraham, Gen. 17. and promised to be an Al-sufficient God unto him: what doth he require of Abraham but only this, be thou upright: when he advanced Solomon to the Kingdom, and enriched him with honor, and wealth, and wisdom, above all that ever sat on the Throne, what did he require of him, 1 Kings 3. 14. Walk in my ways, keep my Statutes as thy father David did; How was that? see back to verse. 6. David my father walked before thee in truth and righteousness, and in uprightness of heart. When Paul had commended many singular things of knowledge and duty to the Corinthians, he closeth up all with, finally, my brethren, be perfect, 2 Cor. 13. 11. q. d. Will you have me to give you all in one word, why then be perfect, be upright.

4. Uprightness doth bring the whole man unto God; It is that which commands all, and carries all with it: the thoughts, these inward and sweet breathings of the mind, Let the meditations of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my Redeemer, saith upright David in Psalm 19. 14. The words, Let the words of my mouth be acceptable; so he there, the mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his talk is of judgment, Psalm 37.

30. The heart, the Law of his God is in his heart, Psalm 37. 31. my heart is fixed, saith David; again, the conversation, that is ordered aright, Psal. 50. hath a man any gifts, many gifts, why uprightness brings in their use and strength to God, hath he any graces, why? uprightness brings in their service to God: it keeps us in with God, and are one with God, and will not suffer us to deal falsely with God.

5. God judgeth of a man by his uprightness; thou art in his judgment good or bad, according to the presence or absence of uprightness; this is that which distinguisheth twixt the precious and the vile, twixt the faithful and the unsound. In outward appearances, and in the color of visible services, the good and the bad may go hand in hand, both may hear, both may read, both may pray, both may preach, both may receive the Sacrament, both may give alms, but God judgeth not as man judgeth by outward appearance, he is a spirit, and truth itself, and therefore judgeth of actions by the spirit and as done in truth; he searcheth the heart and reins, and notwithstanding all the outward appearances of the strict and pompous Pharisees, yet he reputeth them as hypocrites, and so condemns them, Matth. 23. 28. metals (you know) are not judged and valued to be gold by the guilt put upon them, but by that power and excellent substance which is in them. And the natural gold, though it look (sometimes pale) if yet it hath the true nature of gold is judged and reckoned above all counterfeit and gilded pieces; so even pompous services, which seem fair and glorious to the eyes of men, may be rejected of God; and the pretenders severely censured, because their hearts under these, are false and rotten, like a dead man clothed with a fair robe, or a Sepulcher garnished outwardly, yet within filled with dead and loathsome carcasses; And the upright Christian, whose works are not so specious to the sight, whose prayers may be sparing in words, yet filled up with sighs and groans, and whose services may be interrupted with many distractions (by him resisted and bewailed)

may be graciously accepted and rewarded, because his sincerity is observed by God's eye. The poor widow could cast in but a mite, a very small doit, yet of great account was it, it was more in Christ's exposition, then the treasure cast in by others, why? because she did it in uprightness, her heart laid down the mite, and only their hands put in their gifts; her gift was to succor the poor; the end of their bounty was to flame their own praise. The Church of Philadelphia hath more praise then all the other Churches, and yet we read she had but a little strength, Rev. 3. 8. A little strength, yea, but it was upright for she held fast the truth, and God judged of her by that.

Thus for the explication of the proposition; now I proceed to the Application of it to ourselves, which I shall reduce to these heads.

1. Of Trial and Examination.
2. Of Consolation.
3. Of Caution.
4. Of Exhortation.

### SECT. III.

The first Use shall be to reflect upon our own hearts, and to feel their temper: Beloved, this is it which God looks on, and which gives unto us our denomination; It is not naked action which make us or mars us, our affections are (in a sort) all in all; God complains many times of the Israelites, that they brought him no incense, no sacrifice, no service, why? was there none of these at all! perhaps sometimes many of these, yet God accounts them none; It is not what we do, but with what heart, which makes God to reckon of our services. They

are but as ciphers (which makes no number) without uprightness: God you know is truly good, and infinitely wise and searching, and spiritually holy; that must be brought to him which is like to him, or else it is not approved. Would you be paid with counterfeit gold? doth the show please you without the substance? will the complements of men satisfy you without a real friendship? will a gaudy rotten house content you, which hath no solidity and goodness? would you take the words of your servants, and their legs as sufficient? while their hearts are false in their callings. Nay, would you be content that God should make a show only, a pretense that he would pardon you, and help, and comfort, and save you; and yet deny you real love, real mercy, real comfort, real help and salvation, then think how God should take shows from you without uprightness of heart.

Therefore I pray you take some pains with your hearts, bring them to the balance of the Sanctuary, weigh them there, reduce them to the rule, try them there, whether they be upright or no.

Let me premise a few particulars which may prepare and quicken you to this trial for uprightness of heart.

Eight things.

First, There is no deceit or error in the world, of more dangerous consequence, then for a man to deceive himself, and to err about the right temper of his soul. A man may mistake himself in the depth of his riches, or the altitude of worldly friendship, or latitude of his intellectual qualifications and abilities, he may think himself rich, and favored, and learned, when perhaps he is not so; but these mistakes are about nostra, not about nos, ours, but not ourselves, and the danger may be only a tempest, but not a shipwreck: But for a man to deceive himself about his heart, about his soul; why? what

hath he more? what hath he like them? they are fundamental errors; if a man lays a rotten foundation instead of a sound, all his building at length sinks to the ground: If a man sets forth in a fair ship, whose bottom is unsound and leaking, he loseth himself in the voyage. Why? upon the right and solid frame of the soul depends the eternity of our happiness; and therefore the error here is great and irrecoverable: when a man hath past over many years in a form of godliness, in an ingenuity of a civil carriage, in a courting of God by some external and naked performances, and comes to die, and then his conscience riseth up and opens the secrets of his heart and life, and makes him to know and feel, that notwithstanding all his pretenses and conceits that his heart hath continually harbored many known lusts, and he did not mind God, but himself basely in all that he did; what a fearful day will this be? how will it make the soul to tremble, when it hath no more time now but to see, and eternally bewail its own errors and deceits: O Lord, saith that oppressed man, I have deceived my own soul, I thought myself thus and thus; but my heart hath deceived and beguiled me.

2. Yet secondly consider that Hypocrisy, which is apt to beguile and deceive us, is a very natural and common thing.

There are three sorts of persons in the world.

Openly profane: who fail in the matter and in the manner; they are neither really good, nor seem so to be: they are really wicked, and declare themselves so to be; the plague of their heart breaks out into Carbuncles and Botches.

Closely hypocritical, who fail not so much in the matter as in the manner; who are wicked, but seem good; who act some good, but love more wickedness.

Truly upright, who are so in the matter and manner of God's worship.

Now I say that hypocrisy is very natural, it hath been and is a very common sin, Job 15. 34. speaks of a Congregation of hypocrites; as if there were whole Assemblies of them, or at least some of them in every Congregation. Isaiah 9. 17. Complains in his time, that everyone is a hypocrite, scarce a man but did dissemble with God; So Isaiah 29. 13. with their lips they do honor me, &c. David tells us often of the Israelites, that they did flatter God himself with their mouths: gave him (in their distress) as mournful, and yielding, and promising language (O what would they be, and what would they do, if God would deliver them) and yet their heart was not right in them: Jeremiah accuseth those of his time for this very thing too; many of them, nay, most of them, Cried, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, and yet committed adultery and lies, &c. when Christ was in the world his greatest contestation was with Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites; Paul bitterly dealeth against those, who took on them the form of godliness, but denied the power thereof: and in the 2 Tim. 4. 12. He foretells of much lying hypocrisy which should befall in the latter times, and verily we need not go far from the proof of it; how many amongst us, with the foolish Virgins carry Lamps without oil; or with the fig-tree, bear leaves without fruit. Like the Crow which took the feathers, but kept his own nature; or like the Ass, which took the lions skin, but not his body. It was Machivels rule, that the show of virtue was easy and profitable, and therefore he adviseth men to put that on, but the study and habit of virtue was difficult, and therefore he adviseth to let that alone; how abundantly doth this satisfy many, if they can look like good men, though they will not take pains to be so, if they can speak like good Christians, though they will not live so: A trades-man many times when he gets a Minister to Supper, will speak of heaven, and such things as if he



were upon his death bed, and yet that man doth nothing in the world, but scrape for the world, and tires out his own soul and body, and his servants in a drudgery for earth, yea, rather then he will not be rich, he will cast himself upon most indirect means. How ordinary is it for us to frequent the Church, perhaps to listen a while (if we cannot sleep quietly) and then to bestow a little holy water upon the Minister, a word or two, that he spake well and home, and yet we strive not to put any one holy council into the love of our hearts, or obedience of our lives.

Nay, to let these things pass, take us in the general Tenor of our best ways: The good God be merciful to us, what a distance is there many times (when we pretend to serve God) twixt our tongues and our hearts, twixt our eyes and our hearts, twixt our ears and our hearts, twixt our bodies and our hearts. Our tongues are praying, and our mouths singing, and our eyes looking on the Minister, and our ears as if hearing, and at the same moments our hearts are plotting, projecting, ordering our own domestical affairs, or which is worse basely contemplating, and acting of some abominable lust within us. Now call you this uprightness, if this be not hypocrisy, I know not what is: Nay yet, a little more take us in our most complete performances, when we bring our thoughts and intentions, and some affections, some workings to our work, yet tell me seriously whether in it you are not looking besides God; when you many times pray long, and with many affections in company (though when you be alone, a little shall serve the turn) do not you, like the Chameleon live upon the air, is not Jehu's pang in you, Come and see my zeal: is not the Pharisees humor of vain-glory highly acting, to be seen of men, and is not this hypocrisy, directly and intentionally to justle God aside, to serve our own praise in a pretense of serving him, that others may admire us, and speak well of us.

Nay, I could add one thing more (which perhaps may make some of our hearts to tremble) are there not, who explicitly and deliberately with much studious art, snatch unto themselves a robe, a look, a discourse, a garb of holiness, for no other end in the world, but to provoke to sin, and to blind their secret acting's of sinning from the eyes of the world. As the soldiers in the field cast up a transverse line to cover their digging enterprises from the enemies observation. This is a most execrable kind and method of hypocrisy, yet as Gehazi used his Masters name to gratify his covetous desire, so divers abuse the name of Religion, only to satisfy their beastly and damnable lust.

Thirdly, an Hypocrite may go very far, and therefore the more reason have we to see that our hearts be upright.

In the general I conceive that there is not any one external part of religion or duty, into which the hypocrite may not only step, but perhaps (for show) exceed the sincerest and most upright Christian: what Paul spake in another case of himself: Are they Hebrews? so am I; are they Israelites? so am I; are they the seed of Abraham? so am I, 2 Cor. 1. 22. That may the hypocrite say for his part in this case, about the actions and parts of duty, &c. Doth the true Christian hear? so do I; doth he pray? so do I; doth he shed tears? so do I; doth he fast? so do I; doth he give alms? so do I; doth he show respect to the Minister by salutes and invites? so do I; is he forward? I am zealous; doth he reprove? I do thunder; doth he speak some words in prayer? I speak many; doth he any good? I do more, in hearings more, in fasting's more, in discoursing's more, in outward actions, every way more: Cast and order duties every way for object, for place, for time, still the hypocrite keeps up for duties to God (I mean the external parts of his worship) in praying privately, publicly, hearing, reading, preaching, yea, and all these with some transient affections of joy, all this may be in him: For duties to man: why? an hypocrite may be as

civil, as just, as fair, ingenuous, affable, bountiful, compassionate as any one that I know: The Pharisees (whom yet Christ did condemn for very hypocrites, yea, even those self-same Pharisees) were yet the punctilious of the times, no person living were more exact, they did tithe the very mint and cumin, as if they would have observed the whole Law to a hair.

Yea, and for privative piety, which consists in exceptions from gross sins, hear one of them for all the rest, blessing and commending himself, I am no extortioner, no adulterer, nor like this Publican, &c. I fast twice in the week, I give alms of all that I possess.

4. His heart is rotten, and his grounds are rotten, notwithstanding all this.

Though man cannot discern him, yet God can, and hath limned him out for unsoundness in his word; there is some secret lust which consists, and stands, notwithstanding all this, either Herod's sin, or Demas's sin, filthiness, or worldliness; the Pharisees were wondrously covetous.

And his ends are base: the Pirate may rigg, and trim, and steer, and order his ship as artificially and exquisitely as any Pilot, who is the Kings most faithful servant: only their hearts and their ends are different, one is disloyal, and the other is true; one goes out to catch a prey and a bootie, a prize for himself; and the other sails for his Masters honor and service; The upright heart falls upon duty with fear, yet with affections, he cannot do so much, yet it is in truth, and what he doth, as it is by his Masters strength, so it is faithfully intended for his Masters glory. But self-love, and pride, and vain glory, fill the sails of the hypocrite; If you could pair of those accidental and by-causes, he were no more able to hold on in duties

thus, then the bird to fly without her wings, or the ship to run, when the wind drives and fills out the sails.

Will the Hypocrite pray at all times, said he, in Job, so that all which the Hypocrite doth is with a base heart, like a slave, and for base ends, like a flatterer.

5. It is a vain and foolish thing to be hypocritical in our services.

This is certain that a man cannot be a hypocrite, but he must take some pains, he must be very officious in pretenses and duties, it must cost him some money to give alms, and much time to pray, &c. And when all is done, nothing comes of it.

In respect of God, he hath no reward with him; there is no reason to give him wages, who bestows not his service on us: the hypocrite did serve himself and not God, his own praise and not God's glory, and therefore he can expect no reward from him: he cannot say, I prayed for grace, that I might honor thee, and for abilities that I might glorify thee.

In respect of man: for if a man be known to be an hypocrite, then he loseth himself on all hands; evil men hate him, for the very show of goodness; and good men scorn him, for his base dissimulation and rottenness.

But suppose he can conceal his hypocrisy, then all the reward that he hath from men is but an airy applause, Matth. 6. 5. When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men, verily I say unto you, they have their reward, (i.) They have what they look for, the applause of men, and that's all; let them not expect any other reward: And brethren, this is

a sad thing, when a man's reward is only from man: when all his reward is in this life, and no rewards reserved for him hereafter.

Nay, and the hypocrite is not so sure of this reward from man neither, he may miss of it, either for the kind or measure of it, and that will vex his heart: like fiddlers (that regard ear service) whose whole strain is to please the humors of men; they sometimes get but little, and with that many reproachful words and blows; so it may fare with an hypocrite, whose actions are set only to the itch of applause and commendation, &c.

6. Nay, hypocrisy is a most perilous sin, you shall receive the greater damnation, said Christ, Damnation! O that is the eternal grave of the soul, it speaks misery enough, everlasting separation from God, and everlasting flames of wrath in hell, yet that is the portion of the hypocrite, Isaiah 33. 14. The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites, who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

Greater Damnation: An ordinary hell is not all for an hypocrite: As if the furnace were heated seven times more hot: the lowest and deepest punishment shall fall on him, who presumes to put on the fairest show with the foulest heart: And do not think this strange, for what is hypocrisy but a mocking of God: The hypocrite doth (as it were) put tricks upon him, and thinks to cozen omniscience, and basely esteem of him, as if mere shows would satisfy him, nay, he doth justle God out of his prime place, by referring all his services to himself, and not to God, and so doth adore his own name above the Name of God. Verily my brethren, these are sad things, and if our hearts be not made of rock and stone, they may awaken and startle them, to take heed lest we be guilty of this hypocrisy, which is so diametrically opposite to uprightness.

7. Again consider, that it is a very difficult thing to be upright: though it be that acceptable frame of spirit so pleasing to God and so comfortable (as we may hear) to us, yet it is not so easy to be upright, whither you consider-

1. That deceitfulness which is in man's heart: the heart (Jerem. 17. 9.) is deceitful above all things, q. d. there is not such a cunning thing as it, not a thing in all the world which can delude us so easily, so often as our own hearts: O what ado have we with ourselves many times to speak a little duty, what disputes of times against it, many reasonings must be answered and silenced, before we will yield to do the very work, so much as to hear, as to pray by ourselves, and with others, and to give alms &c: And then if the work be extorted from us, yet what pumping before any water comes, what collision, and striking before a few sparks of fire will fly out? my meaning is, much ado to bring our hearts to our tongues, our affections to our services, without which they cannot be upright. And when this is done, then to set up the right end and scope, and there to settle our intention fast and plain: O how difficult! many by aims and indirect ends do often present themselves, that it is with us, as with boys in writing, we draw many crooked lines, or as with them in archery, we shoot by hither or beyond, or beside the mark; it is not easy to do good because God commands it, or only because he may be glorified.

2. That spritualness which is required in upright motions; I tell you that the very soul must act itself, if the heart or way be upright: not only his lips but his spirit must pray; not only his ear, but his heart must hear? he must not only profess against sin, but his soul must hate and abhor it, And there is no revealed and known duty to which his very heart doth not strive to obey: yea, and the ground of all this must be spiritual and not carnal, from God and for God.

Assuredly, these things are impossible to an evil man, and he who is most good, shall confess it to be most hard, to be plain with God, and to walk evenly before him.

8. Lastly to be upright. is a possible thing, a man may attain unto it, Nay every good man doth attain unto it? Noah was upright and walked with God, Abraham was upright before him, David kept him from his sin, and he did serve the Lord in uprightness of heart, Hezekiah did so likewise, Remember Lord that I have walked before thee in truth, and with an upright heart: Paul served God in all good conscience, willing to live honestly in all things? Though no man can say that he doth all that God's commands require, yet he may say he hath respect unto them all; and though none can say he hath nothing in him, or nothing is done by him, which the law of God doth forbid, yet he may say, I hate every false way, and search me, O Lord, if there be any way of wickedness within me: and this is uprightness:

Ob. But you will say if the case be so; how may one know that he is indeed upright?

Sol. There are many discoveries of it, I pray you to observe them, and try yourselves by them, let your consciences testify for you before the lord this day.

1. If a man be upright, he will mostly strive for an inward reformation of his heart.

There are two things which the upright person doth most look at, his God, and his heart. The Hypocrites (as our savior testifies) they are for the outside, they wash the platters and the cups, and beautify the tombs, like an adulteress whose care is to paint, and to set a fair face upon the matter; all their care is to the eye of man: how to be seen and hard, how to be well thought on? Now uprightness is mostly for

the heart and spirit: not that an upright person should or doth neglect the well-ordering his life, O no! as to neglect our hearts, argues hypocrisy; so to neglect our lives argues profaneness.

But the principle care of uprightness is the reformation of the heart; though it looks to the cleansing of the hand, yet principally of the heart, according to that of the Apostle, Jam. 4. 8. Why brethren, it well knows that the heart is it which God looks for and looks at, the heart is it which God delights in, if that be right and true he is pleased, thou lovest truth in the inward parts, Psa. 51. the upright in heart are his delight. David is full in this concerning his heart, Psal. 119. 10. with my whole heart have I sought thee, v. 11. Thy word have I hid within my heart, that I might not sin against thee, incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness Rom. 1. 9. God is my witness whom I serve with my spirit; the heart of man, is the fountain of life or death, and everything is strongest in the heart, and most dangerous: sin in the heart is worse than in the life: (i.) when a man's heart is set upon his sin; now Try yourselves, in this particular: what care have you of your hearts? what pains do you take with them? you many times have humble looks, yea but have you not still proud hearts? you have many times contented words, yea but have you not still impatient and discontented hearts? you have many times heavenly discourse? yea but have you not still earthly and worldly hearts? what do you with them? do you not let your hearts still loose? do you not give them way to be filled with wicked contemplations, vain imaginations, filthy inclinations, with envy, malice, unbelief; or do you mourn under these, do you strive to cleanse within: is it not sufficient that your outward actions look well, unless your hearts be made better; O if this heart were holy! If this heart were humble! If this heart were heavenly! If the heart were believing! The hypocrite cares not though the thread be rotten, if the color or gloss be fair: but the upright person he is more at substance



then show, and hath more to do with his heart, then anything: he would have the law written not upon his tongue, but upon his heart cleansed, as well as his life beautified.

2. If a man be upright, then a little holiness will not serve his turn, he is not contented with some measures, but strives after perfection, see this clearly delivered by the Apostle, in Phil. 3. 12. Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend, that for which also I am apprehended, of Jesus Christ, v. 13. I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; v. 14. I press then toward the mark, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: v. 15. Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded, q. d. If you be upright, thus will it be with you, you will not be satisfied with small beginnings, with received measures, but you will reach on for farther conformity to Christ.

There is a difference twixt desires of holiness, for itself and God, and for ourselves and ends: An hypocrite could be content to have as much holiness, as would serve his turn, his own turn, his own ends; as a tradesmen is willing to be at cost that his apprentice learn to writ and cipher, so much, and so long, as he may be enabled to keep the accounts; but he will not be at cost to teach him the excellency of writing or ciphering. But now the upright person desires grace, and holiness for God; that glory may be brought unto him, and out of an intrinsical love of the beauties of holiness, and for the farther rooting out of sin, And for the better Enabling to holy services: his ends are public and therefore a little serves not.

3. If a man be upright, then a man will walk by a right rule; he orders his conversation and ways according to the word of God. A right

ordering of all our actions, by a right rule, in a right way, by right persons, out of right principles, for right ends, this is uprightness.

3. A person may know whether he be upright or no? by the conscionable disposition of his heart about all sins? David speaking of such, who were undefiled, Psal. 119. 1. And sought the Lord with their whole heart, v. 2. he addeth, v. 3. They also do no iniquity, q.d. this is not their work, this is not the thing which they do approve, or allow, in which they live and walk; sin is not the upright man's work, it is a strange work, and a stranger work: and David being to manifest his own uprightness, saith Psal. 18. 23. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from iniquity: yea Psal 119. 101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way: Job was an upright man one that feared God, and eschewed evil, Job 1. 1. There was never any hypocrite living but his heart was false; it did never condemn all sin in him: peruse the scriptures, and you shall read of none of them but they had someone way of wickedness or other. Jehu had his calves, notwithstanding all his zeal for God: Herod kept his Herodias, notwithstanding all his forwardness and gladness, and reverence to John the Baptist: The Pharisees kept their covetousness notwithstanding all their formal strictness and rigor: The young man would not sell all, notwithstanding all his profession of former obedience and Questionings, what yet lack I; So on the contrary, there was never any person upright, but his heart made conscience of all sin: what is that? that is, he would be rid of all, he would not allow himself in any one, he would not keep up the covenant with sin, by being dispensed with in any one particular.

Ob. But you will say, this may be hard, for who can say my heart is clean, even the just man doth sin seven times a day.

Sol. Beloved you mistake me; I do not say that this is a sign of uprightness, that a man hath not sin in him, or that he doth never act sin, Indeed this were hard, No man living should be upright by this! But I say that the upright person makes conscience of all sin, he sets against all sin, he opposeth, he condemneth, he disalloweth all sin, he will not be in covenant with any sin.

Ob. Yet you may object, but how may I know that I make conscience of all sin?

Sol. I will not insist on all which may be spoken, only take three things, which will show your uprightness in a conscience of all sin.

1. if you be upright, you will make conscience of secret as well as open sins. Why the fear of man? the regard of our own credit, the love of our own advantages, may prevail with an evil man, with a hypocrite, to keep in, to work craftily? Not to sin at noon-day, to hold off in public, and yet the love of sin prevails upon him with ease, to work wickedness in the dark, in private, in secret, for he saith none doth see me; a hypocrite is a secret sinner, (q.) restraints are then taken off. But the upright person, he hates sin because it is sin, and therefore he doth not act it because it is secret, or decline it because it is open, but he shuns both the one and the other, because they are both sinful, Job's heart was not secretly enticed Job. 31. 26, 27. Is David in his family? there will he walk with an upright heart, Psal. 101. 2. Is Joseph alone; yet he dares not to do so great a wickedness and sin against God, Gen. 9. Nay, David hates all vain thoughts Psal. 119. And Solomon saith that the thoughts of the righteous are right, Prov. 12. 5. the upright person strives against secret inclinations, and would have even the imaginations cast down which are seen only by God.

2. You will make conscience of the least sins, sin, we do usually divide into gross, and foul; and into little, and small; not that any sin is small in a relation to the rule; but that one is not so great and heinous in comparison of one sin with another. Now where sins are reputed gross, and foul, and palpable, even the civil man, and the formal hypocrite may be very precise, very conscionable, very tender, but for lesser oaths, for usual omissions, for trifles, for sinful attires, for sinful associating with lewd and vile persons, &c: alas these are poor thins, small things! why should we stand upon them? Nay be not deceived, God is not mocked, the mote must be plucked out, as well as the beam; David's heart smote him for cutting of the lap of Saul's garment, as well as it rose against the vile counsel to cut off Saul's life? he that is not faithful in the least, will not be faithful in the greatest: And that man who will dispense with himself in small sins, if occasion serve, will likewise give himself a commission for great transgressions: uprightness knows no such distinction (in respect of approbation and allowance) twixt great and small; it is probable that Ananias laid down a great part of his estate, yet herein was the falseness of his heart, that he kept back some of the estate; Hypocrisy doth not consist in this, that a man doth wallow in all sins, but in this, that a man will allow himself in some sins: Now try yourselves in this, conscionableness about small sins, even lesser sins, (to upright persons) are objects of great hatred, and causes of great trouble.

3. you will make conscience, of sins which are in a sort more connatural. Though every sin in respect of the original principle of sin be natural to man in his corrupt estate, yet there are special sins, which have in respect of their acting's and course, more immediate favor and countenance from a sinner: v. g.

Those of particular inclination: and those of custom: and frequent practice, and those of a man's particular condition and calling, and those of present profit and pleasure.

I do conjecture that there is scarce any one man living, unless he hath entirely given up himself to Satan, who doth cast away himself upon the service of every sin whatsoever; and that there is scarce a person; who is not more haunted with some particular sinful inclination more then another.

Now where the heart is Hypocritical? though it will proclaim defiance against many kinds of sinning, yet as Naaman spake in another case; so doth the hypocrite concerning some particular lusts, only herein the Lord be merciful unto me, In this I must be spared: therefore Zophar speaking of the wicked and the hypocrite, Job. 20. 5. he saith) that wickedness is sweet in his mouth, he hides it under his tongue, v. 12. and v. 13. that he spares it, and forsakes it not, but keeps it still with in his mouth; he is besotted and entangled, and sets himself unto the power of some pleasant and profitable lust or other, and no word of command or threatening, no passage of affliction and trouble, no experience or sense, no inward accusation and rebukes of conscience, will ever be able to draw of his heart from it, though the Hypocrite may contend against many sinning's, yet he never stands against the sin of his profit or pleasure: like a Fisher he may throw away many of the small fishes, but he keeps those which will make a sale and merchandise. But now if the heart be upright, then a marvelous tenderness, and conscience will be found in thee, even against those sins which formally thou didst love as dearly as thine one life. Thou will set against that profitable sin, of which Demetrius said, that by this craft I get my wealth: And thou will set against that sin, of which Herod spake, that she pleased him greatly, that sin which formerly was to thy affections, as the oil to the lamp, and as

Joseph to Jacob; Now thou wilt strive against it, as thy only choice enemy and betrayer of thy soul and salvation, David (if I mistake not, and Interpreters deceive me not) made this a testimony of his uprightness, in Psal. 18. 23: I was upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity; Iniquity may be called mine, either in respect of approbation and covenant (as a man may say this wife is mine, this Master is mine) or in respect of special inclination, so a man may say, this is mine iniquity (i) that sin to which above all other, I find myself most apt and ready and prone: So David here, I kept my self from mine iniquity (i.) from the iniquity into which I am naturally so apt and prone to fall into: And this he makes as an argument of his uprightness, viz. that as he did not hunt after other sins, so when his special corruption did incline and tempt, when those did work upon him, unto which (if he spake but the least word, and gave the least leave) his natural inclination would have thoroughly and easily kindled and thrust out itself, yet he would not hearken, but did oppose, he did more narrowly and punctually watch, and besiege his heart in these.

Let me add, uprightness appears thus about sins?

1. It will endure trial. Psa. 139. Try me O Lord, and see if there be any wickedness in me.
2. It will often try it self, and examine it self, least any sin should settle.
3. It scares itself, and is suspicious, Master it is I, said the Disciple? and Job offered Sacrifice, least his Sons have sinned.
4. It will bless God for being kept from sin, as David did for Abigail's counsels.

5. It is most severe against our own sins, an hypocrite is a severe judge of others, as the Pharisees against Christ; but an upright person throws the first stone at himself.

6. It condemns sin in all, in parents, as Jonathan did Saul's prejudice against David, and as Jacob did severely judge & condemn sin in Simeon and Levy, and in Rachel; and John the Baptist did in Herod, and Christ in the Pharisees at their own table.

7. It grieves for its own sins, yea and for the sins of others, David doth not only water his couch with his tears for his own sins, but also Rivers of tears ran down his eyes, because men kept not God's Law.

8. It is more moved for sins against God, then injuries done unto ourselves. David cannot bear Goliath's blasphemies and reproaches yet can bear, Shimei's Railings.

9. Abstinence sufficeth not without hatred, hatred sufficeth not without mortification.

4. Trial of a man's uprightness, may be his disposition and temper about holy duties and services? Look as a man's heart is false when it pretends a respect to God, and yet will allow itself in any sin which offends God, so is it false when notwithstanding all semblances of pious observances, it will not be wrought upon to be truly and entirely obedient to God

But I will not digress: I conceive there are five things about our duties and services which may manifest the uprightness of our hearts, viz.

1. Universality? David did take this for a special testimony of his uprightness; that he had respect unto all God's commands, Psal. 119.

6. and Paul thought it so, who did exercise himself to have always a conscience void of offense towards God and man, Act. 24, 16. so Heb. 13. 18. we must trust that we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly: true obedience doth neither dispute nor divide, it is given unto God, upon a bare command, and it doth not crave a dispensation in part, where God's commands are more easy, there the upright persons goes on with cheerfulness, and when they seemstrang and more hard, there also he goes on with readiness: Abraham is resolved to obey God in all things, though it be to part with his country, yea with his son. The rule is good and true, Quicquid propter deum fit, equaliter fit: he who doth serve and obey God, for God's sake, will equally obey all that God commands him: No one command is unjust or unreasonable to him whose heart is upright in obedience; I Question not, but that the hypocrite may go very far, in the visible parts of duties and services, you may find him forward and stirring and not a little boasting with Jehu, come and see my zeal, and yet if Jehoshaphat, had gone a little farther, he might have seen his calves too, contrary to God's commands.

A Hypocrites obedience cannot be universal, forasmuch as his ground, and motives are particular: this is a truth, that no motion exceeds its motive: according to the strength and amplitude or restrictiveness of it, and a man set to work.

Now the reasons and Inducements of the hypocrites obedience are partial, and not conjunctive & common, he may come to hear the word, and he may receive it with singular joy, he may find his affections marvelously raised, only the question now is, how far, and upon what grounds? verily, only because, and only so far as the word is a pleasing word, so far as it is clothed and appareled with a spruce elegancy of phrase, or with some unusual notions, or some delicate elocution, &c. all which do fit his humor, and claw the itch off his



mind. But now he is not equally delighted, this acceptance of the word is not universal: let the same word be delivered as a searching, and dividing, and condemning word, then it is otherwise. Now you shall see, that the shaking of the tree will make the rotten fruit at the core (which yet looked red and ripe to the eye) to fall to the ground: let the word come close, and lay hold, and search him to the quick; Now you shall see the hypocrite like the wounded or crazy part, though clothed as fair as the sound parts, yet if strictly handled, the party cannot endure, he cannot abide it, he grows impatient and unquiet. Touch an hypocrite upon the main duty; Go, saith Christ, to the young covetous person, sell all and follow me; what doth he now, who pretended he had done all before? the text saith, he went away very sorrowful. Herod hears John the Baptist gladly, and did many things, yea, but it is not lawful for thee to have thy brothers wife, said John unto him, how doth this doctrine, this duty go down with him, John lost his liberty, and then his head for his labor.

2. Constancy of obedience: The Physicians do observe a difference twixt the natural and preternatural heat in men's bodies; the preternatural heat which ariseth from distemper, may be more for the present, but as it exceeds for measure, so it abates for time, because the natural heat is a more equal, and moderate, and durable heat, every part hath an equal share; and it is not extreme, and yet it continues: Thus it is with hypocrites and upright persons in the matter of obedience. The hypocrite may (in a kind of preternatural heat) he may in a fit, in a present heat fall violently upon duty, upon resolution; O what a man will he become, how shall his family be reformed; and now he will read, and hear, and pray, and he will leave his sin; but anon he hath lost his heat, the cold fit takes him, he restrains prayer, he lays aside his resolutions; will the hypocrite pray always?

There are three times wherein a hypocrite may express great forwardness in duties, in services to God.

1. One, when straits of conscience are on him, and the fear of death are ready to lay hold on him: In their affliction they poured out a prayer unto me, Isaiah 26. 16. Pharaoh and Ahab were much wrought upon in their exigencies, Psal. 78. when he slew them, then they ought him.

2. Another, when obedience and duty are not dangerous, but calm and commodious: As the Samaritans, when the Jews prospered, &c. Therefore Christ sets out an Hypocrite by that ground which was stony, and had not much earth, upon which the seed fell, and forthwith sprang up (without any more ado) Matth. 13. 5. but when the Sun was up, it was scorched and withered away, ver. 6. He applies it to hypocrites, who hear the word, and receive it with joy, verse 20. And yet this endureth but for a while, for when tribulation, or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended, ver. 21. If God's service be so hot, so dangerous, if it must cost him his liberty, his estate, his friends, his ease, his life, then farwel it: The house built on the sands, when the wind arose, it fell, Mat. 7. 27.

3. When he hath some props, or in the presence of others. Many do duties while Moses is present, or Jehoiadah lives, or the good judges continue; but if Moses be absent, then the Israelites turn Idolaters, and if Jehoiadah dies, then Joash is naught, and if the Judges die, then the Israelites do what is right in their own eyes.

But where the person is upright, there the obedience is constant, he doth righteousness at all times; Paul serves Christ in fasting and prayer, in bonds and affliction, and many temptations: and Job who was an upright person, by God's own testimony, chap. 1. 1. he followed God continually, v. 5. and though that Satan thought that

hard exigencies would have turned him off from his obediential course, yet he did still cleave to God, after the loss of cattle, and estate, and children, yet you may read his constancy, chap. 2. 3. The Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth; a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil, and still he holds fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him? Yet mistake not the right compass of constancy in obedience, as if there were no act of disobedience, as if a man were not upright, unless there were an inviolable succession of disobedience in everything, which he doth at every moment; O no! I know no such kind of constant obedience which is exempted from all interruption, but the constancy of his obedience lives in an opposition to fits, and starts, and imports the course and bent of his life, which is always to walk with, and to obey God.

3. Simplicity of obedience: as Saint Augustine distinguisheth of a love of God, that one may love God for God, and a man may love God for himself; the same doth hold in service and obedience, a man may serve God for God, and serve God for himself. Doth Job serve God for naught? Job 1. that I confess may be truly a friend of an hypocrite, who hath an eye only to the wages, like the Germans in their wars, do nothing without pay: The unsound heart will square out his work according to the pay, his eye is much upon this, how will this make for my profit? how will it advance my pleasure, my credit? these things fire and inflame an unsound heart; come to such an heart, and say, such or such a thing is to be done: For it is God's express will, and it will make for his glory: these (alone) are cold motives, and weak inducements to a false-hearted person. But come and say, God will have you to do it, and if you do it, you shall be highly thought on, you will be esteemed for it, you shall have much applause, you may hap to get well by it, why? now the unsound heart

stirs as the ship, which hath got a right wind to drive it, and carry it on. But the upright person is simple in his obedience; a naked command is reason enough for him to obey, and God's glory is a sufficient motive: If a servant be faithful in his factoridge: why? it is enough to him in the managing of business, if he can set forward his masters stock, his prosperity is all that he looks on: And thus is uprightness descried in our obedience, when we mind God above ourselves, when God alone is cause enough of our obedience unto God.

Quest. How may one know that he looks not at himself, but at God's commands.

Answ. Thus, 1. By his cordial blessings and rejoicings at the good done by others, whereby God hath glory, though he be not the instrument, as Paul, Phil. 1. 18. 2. By his acting for God under disgraces and discouragements, as David, and the three children.

Though our services may want encouragement from worldly motives, nay, though they meet with many discouragements and prejudices to us, yet so that by them God may receive glory, and I may express my obediencial respect to him; here is wind enough to fill my sails; I dare not do it, because God forbids; I will do it, because God commands; I will not cease to do it, though I receive frowns and loss, but will hold on to do it, because God's receives glory, this is simplicity of obedience, and this argues the person to be upright: Paul speaketh of this simplicity of obedience, for his own part in the exercise of his Ministerial function which he well joins with Godly sincerity, 2 Cor. 1. 12. and verily so it was with him, that the love of Christ was sufficient to constrain him, 2 Cor. 5. 14. And he went through good and through bad report: yea, and he was not discouraged by all the bonds which did attend him, nor counted he his life dear for Christ; it

was all one to him so that Christ might be magnified, whether by life, or whether by death.

#### 4. Spirituality of obedience: there is a twofold acting of duty.

One is carnal, when we do them as ordinary works, as works of course, the mere material acting of them sufficeth us: so that we say some words it makes a prayer, so that we give some money, it makes up our charity; so that we be a Church it makes up our hearing, so that we go over a chapter it makes up our reading, so that we study and speak a Sermon, it makes up our preaching; so that we eat no meat, this makes up fasting. It matters not what melody and harmony, so that we touch the strings.

Another is spiritual, when duties are performed in an obedience to God, because he commands them, and also the very heart and soul, the spirit and the affections act themselves, they co-operate with our services: the desires of our souls is to the remembrance of thee, or as David, with my whole heart have I sought thee. When a man can say as Paul, whom I serve with my spirit, Rom. 1. 9. or as David, my soul praise thou the Lord, and all that is within me praise his holy name; Psal. 103. or with Mary, my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Savior, Luke 2. or as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 14. 15. I will pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also, I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also, or as Christ saith, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

An hypocrite, he may do so much about duties as may manifest the excellency of his gifts, but he doth not that about duties which argues the efficacy of grace, he may be high and admirable in the visible parts, in the very works he may hit upon as ample and pertinent phrases in preaching, and sweet expressions in praying as another:

his lips may draw near, but yet his heart is far off, it can suffice him to do service to the eye of man.

But an upright person, there is fire and incense in his sacrifices: he must present living and reasonable services: why? if he hears, and not with attention, not with reverence, not with fear, not with faith, he is greatly troubled: he knows that God must be served with godly reverence, and fear: for preaching, let him speak as the Oracles of God, 1 Pet. 4. 11. If I do this willingly, I have a reward, 1 Cor. 9. 17. see, 1 Thes. 2. 4. If he prays, and his mind be drawn aside by distractions, and his affections work not with sorrow, hope, with earnest desire, and some confidence, he accounts that the work is not done, he hath said something, but he thinks he hath not prayed. 'It is true (and he confesseth so much) that the cause of acceptance of all services is in Christ, yea, but he must serve, and strives to serve the Lord with all his heart; he looks to the manner of service on his part: In singleness of heart, as unto Christ, not with eye-service, &c. Eph. 6. 5, 6. see Rom. 12. 8. 3 John 5. Thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest.

5. Humility of obedience: why? this doth argue the uprightness of a person. There is no person more proud of his work then an hypocrite: Christ tells us, that he cannot give an alms, but the trumpet is presently at his mouth.

There are two things which may befall a man upon the performance of any holy duties.

One is rejoicing, and this is lawful, when God hath enlarged my heart in prayer; when he hath quickened me in his service, raised my affections, animated my faith, assisted me more than ordinary against my dullness, distractions, unbelief, temptations, I may

rejoice, my heart should be raised to bless the Lord, and (in some cases to speak) of this his goodness to his glory.

Another is boasting, when a man (like the cock) claps the wing upon his own body: when he sets out himself the more, deals with others more to admire him, to extol him, when he blesseth himself, and bestows the honor of all his performances upon himself. Now this is base, and argues that the heart is not upright, but the upright heart doth all the holy performances by its masters strength, and for it masters glory; when it is to do duty, it begs for God's grace; when it hath done duty, it gives God the glory: 1 Chron. 29. 13. Now therefore O Lord our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name, ver. 14. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort, for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee? Like a faithful servant who craves direction how to sell and trade; And when that is done, the money which he takes, he puts into his Masters coffer: Nay, more then all this, the upright heart doth much fear itself, least by any means it should finger any part of God's glory by well-doing, let any praise from man come near: O saith the upright person; what have I which I have not received? Not I, but the grace of God in me; it is but duty, and that not done so much, or so well as is required: so that God will pardon my failings, and accept of me in Christ, it is enough.

Obj. It is true, that upon some extraordinary acting's, even an upright heart may feel some secret thoughts of self-applause and ostentation.

Sol. But these are felt as temptations, as snares, and resisted, yea, and such secret flies cause many tears to be cast after singular performance; but the hypocrite he doth seek praise and accept of it, he loves the praise of men, and knows how to cry up himself:

Epaminondas went weeping because of the vain-glory of yesterdays victory and triumph: the hypocrite is proud even of his humility.

5. A fifth trial, whether a man be upright or no, is, if the bent and purpose of his heart be unto God: Meer particular actions do not conclude (either way) the estate of the soul: An hypocrite may do some good act, and an upright person may do some sinful act; But that which even in such Cases, may testify unto a man his uprightness, is the true bent and purpose of the heart: Look which way the heart is set, and purposed in the habitual temper of it, that doth convince either of hypocrisy or of uprightness.

By the heart of man, I mean the soul in its principle faculties: as the mind or understanding, and the will with the affections: If God hath these, then assuredly the man is upright; when a man can say, in respect of his mind, with Paul, Rom. 7. 12. The Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, just and good, ver. 16. I consent unto the Law that it is good: or with David, Psal. 119. 128. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be upright; when he can say in respect of his will and affections, with Paul, willing to live honestly in all things, Heb. 13. with him again, Rom. 7. 18. to will is present with me, ver. 19. the good that I would do, v. 22. I delight in the Law of the Lord after the inward man: or with David, I desire to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy Law is within my heart, Psal. 40. 8. And thou art my God; I have determined to keep thy word, Psal. 119. This in Scripture is sometimes styled a preparing of the heart to seek God, as Jehoshaphat, 1 Chron. 19. 31. and a cleaning to God with purpose of heart, Act. 11. 23. all which intimated uprightness.

But you may reply, if uprightness may be truly discovered by the bent of the heart, then the vilest person may be upright, for they confidently affirm that they mean no hurt, their desires are good,



they would know more, they would believe and repent, and leave their sins, yea, they do strive to enter in at the strait gate.

To this I answer.

First, if any man who hath been wicked, doth now find the purpose and bent of his heart set for God, that the desires of his soul are unfeignedly to please God, I should not doubt but God had changed this man, and his heart were now made upright.

But secondly, I conjecture that no wicked man doth, or can have this bent and purpose of heart to please God, to obey God in all things; for it imports these things;

1. An inward desire joined with love, Psal. 119. O that my ways were so directed, that I might keep thy statutes. But then afterward, thy Law is my delight.

2. An habitual inclination, not a pang of the soul, not a mood, not a fit of an ague, not a flash of lightning, not as the morning dew: But my soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times, Psalm 119. 20.

Thirdly, an active purpose; Herein I do exercise or endeavor myself (said Paul) Acts 24. 16. though the purpose in an upright man doth exceed his actions, yet there is some active and working ability with his purpose, he will be doing service to all, to God. It is with evil men in their purposes, as with Pilate, he was purposed to let Christ go, but yet he gave sentence: so they pretend a purpose to please God, but still live in their sins, and do not stir up themselves at all, to all the means by which they may get grace and strength.

6. There are many other trials which I shall but mention unto you, v. g.

1. The upright person will not baulk the greatest duty, nor the least sins.

2. He will serve God, though alone, Josh. 24. 15.

3. His care is to order his conversation by the word, that's his rule.

4. His motives which sets him to work, are direct: not the breath of the people, praise of man, love of himself: It is a great matter to observe what sets the soul on work.

5. His dearest communions are secret.

#### SECT. IV.

A Second Use of this point shall be for comfort to such as are upright: There are many sweet comforts which may greatly revive and cheer up such as are upright; I will touch some of them at this time.

1. One comfort is this, that there is a gracious acceptance of their weak services: The King of Persia did lovingly accept the poor man's handful of water, and put it into a golden vessel, and gave him that vessel of gold. To set this on, Consider,

First, that all our holy services, they are the tithes (as it were) of our graces, the rents of our helps, a certain homage, which we bring in to God: they are such expressions or actions by which we strive to bring God glory, and to please him.

Secondly, that the best services are imperfect: as no man doth so much as he should, so the best Christian doth not so well as he should: Look, as the highest grace is still in defect, so the most solemn duties are still in default. It is with the best man in duty, as with the Moon, though it be at the full, and shineth most clearly, yet even then it hath its spots; so when the heart is most enlarged with intentions and heavenly affections, there is yet some contrary twang, or some shortness, some blemishableness notwithstanding.

Therefore Aaron was not only to bear the iniquities of the people, but he was also to bear the iniquity of the holy offerings, *Exod. 28. 38.*

For as it was with Jacob after his earnest struggling with the Angel, he arose with a lame and halting thigh, so is it with all of us, both in and after our most affectionate performances, we are weak in our feet: that is not good which is done by a good man; and though he doth much which God doth reward, yet he doth nothing so completely, but God needs in something or other of it to pardon and cover. Not only our sins can accuse us, but some sinfulness in our best actions: no man prays, or hears, or reads, or acts any service of piety or charity, in that full and ample eminency or integrity of degrees, but that he may with the Elders in the Revelations, cast these Crowns down to the ground.

Thirdly, that by reason of these imperfections in duties, there is more reason (in a strict way of Justice) that God should reject all, then that he should accept of anything.

Beloved, it is granted, that God doth not reject the services of his servants; nay, as he doth requite them, so he will accept of them, and reward them; but this is not for the dignity of the servant, but from the graciousness of the Master. For if God should answer any imperfect service (yea, that which hath but a very little, and

particular imperfection, suppose them to be some contrary transient thoughts, or some thinner indispositions hanging about us in our duties) I say if God should answer them from the court of pure Justice, you should find that the mixture of a little sin would easily cry down the acceptance of much good: The most good which I bring in my services it is but duty, and the least evil which I bring is besides the duty, and the evil in duty, be not able to make that part which is good to be bad, yet it is able to shut out the service from acceptance, because, by reason of that evil, the service is not so good as God may and doth require, if he should stand with us upon terms of strict Justice.

But then fourthly; though there be many imperfections cleaving to the services of men, yet if they be upright, God will (for all them) graciously accept of their services. Though I pray (and with many distractions) and though I hear (and within my interpretations) yet if I be upright in the performances of these (i.) if my heart be for God (indeed) under these that I bring in the truth, and present strength of my spirit, with all humble respect to God's commands, and unfeigned integrity of aiming at God's glory, the services are graciously accepted with God.

Yea, though I cannot always use so many words in prayer, though expressions are not so many at this time as at another; nay, though I find not that liveliness and cheerfulness now as heretofore, yet if the heart be upright, the service is done and accepted. There are two things which may assure a good man that his services are accepted.

One is faith, when he presents his services in the name of Christ: look, as every sinner needs a Mediator of redemption, so every good man still needs the same Christ as a Mediator of intercession for his services: And though services (as done by us) can find no favor, yet

as presented by Christ, they are always a sweet savor before the Lord, he is that Angel, who hath a golden Censer, and hath much incense, which he offers with the prayers of all Saints before the Throne, Rev. 8. 3. though our services be but weak testimonies, yet Christ's intercession is a strong and mighty ingratiating both of our persons and actions.

Another is uprightness; when the heart is true and plain in what it doth: Beloved, remember this, that as God doth not respect the strongest parts, which are passive, as I may say, and are idle, so he doth not reject the meanest abilities, if uprightly employed. No, not the day of small things is despised by him; if the flax be smoking, though it flame not, he will not quench it, that is, he will not only, not slight it, but cherish and accept of it, 2 Cor. 8. 12. The widows mite, the cup of cold water was accepted.

If a man can truly say, Lord, I would believe more steadfastly if I could, and I strive to believe, and I would pray better, if I could, yet as well as I can, I now present my supplications before thee, I would serve thee more fully, more entirely, that is the desire of my soul, and my endeavor, if I had wherewithal, thou shouldst have a better heart, more lively affections, more ample and cheerful duties, all should be better, if I had a better power: I say that notwithstanding the many imperfections, yet this uprightness, this holy frame of a complete and active will (wherein all the powers of the soul are bent to services according to the present power of the measure of grace received) is a most sweet smelling sacrifice, and mounts into the most gracious acceptance of God in Christ. I pray you remember that of David, like as a father pities his child, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, Psal. 103. 13. And that of the Prophet, I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him, Mal. 3. 17. The father commands his child to lift up the weight, and the child readily

addresseth to the obedience, he lifts, and assays, and still he gives another ha at it, but perhaps he cannot get it quite up; why? the father likes his child for this, and though perhaps the weight be where it was, yet he calls this act of his child true obedience, why? because, though that be not done which the father imposed, yet it had been done if the child had more strength, and he endeavored with all his strength for to do it. Or thus, the father wills the child to shoot an Arrow, the child draws the Arrow, perhaps but half way, and though his eye were upon the mark, yet his arrow falls short many Bows length; why? the father will yet commend all this, for though he sees that the Arrow is short, yet he observes that the Bows was drawn, and although the mark be not hit with the Arrow, yet it was aimed at with the eye of the child: so is it with God our father, who commands such and such duties, to which, if we address ourselves with uprightness, he will wink and pass by the weakness in action, whiles he both observes and accepts the integrity of intention and affection.

Obj. O saith an upright person, I find such infinite heaps of other thoughts, such dullness and deadness of spirit, such untowardliness, so many weaknesses every way, all which are the grief of my soul, and it troubles me much, that I cannot do the good that I would) how will the Lord take such broken services from me.

Sol. I answer if thy heart be upright in these interrupted services, God hath mercy to pardon the weaknesses, and he hath wisdom to find out the uprightness, and he hath graciousness to accept of the dutifulness.

A Goldsmith will not cast away those lesser rays of gold, though mingled, and (to an inexperienced person) confounded with various heaps of dross and dust: now, he hath an art to find out the little gold, and

put side the dross. Though with all our holy actions there be much corruption and weakness commixt, yet there is such a wise art in God's gracious mercy, as to find out uprightnes, and holines of desire and endeavor in a service commanded with many infirmities, 2 Chr. 30, 18. the Lord pardon everyone, v. 19. That prepareth his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary, verse 20. And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

2. A second comfort is this, that if a man be upright, he shall not only find acceptance for services, but also indulgence for offenses.

You must ever distinguish twixt the cause and the subject; the cause of all pardoning indulgence, is the free grace of God in the blood of Christ, but the subject of indulgence, is the person to whom God is pleased to give his pardon and release.

None comes in under the wings of the mercy-seat so as the upright persons: Uprightnes in Scripture hath (in a well understood sense) seemed to cover all: you read of King Asa, and of many passages which did greatly blur him both as a King, and as a good man, he did not break down the high-places, he sought to the Physicians, he joined to the King of Syria, he cast the Prophet into prison, who reproved him for it, yet (2 Chron. 15. 17.) the heart of Asa is said to be perfect all his days: How? all his days: and yet such sinning's sometimes; yes, all his days, for sins stand upon the account, and seem to be reckoned, not so much when they are done, as when they are done with a sinful heart.

And they lose upon the account, they are struck off, God passeth over them, when the bent of their heart is against them: see that place and passage of David, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered, ver. 2. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord

imputeth no iniquity: verily brethren, that man's estate is blessed, whose sins are pardoned; O! if the Lord be reconciled to a man, if the Lord covers his sin, (i.) will not look upon them in a judicial way, so as to account and reckon with the sinner for them; if the Lord will not impute iniquity to him (i.) though he hath iniquity, yet the Lord will forgive it, it shall not redound unto him in punishment: but it shall be blotted out, and be as if it had never been: tell me seriously, is not this a blessed thing; tell me now you whose hearts are ready to break asunder with the sense of guilt, whither pardoning mercy be not a most blessed and desirable thing. You will freely confess it is, but then the question is, who is that man that is so blessed, what is his temper how is he qualified.

See on (in that ver. 2.) he is one in whose spirit is no guile, what's that? that is, he is the upright person, whose spirit is really and plainly for God, who in truth desires to please him, who in truth hates all sin. This is that blessed man, and in this is a great part of his blessedness, that the Lord will not impute his iniquities unto him, but will forgive and cover them (i.) so forgive them that they shall not rise upon the account anymore: Paul did upon this conclude by way of testimony to himself, and for others, that there was no condemnation unto them, Rom. 8. 1. why? what was Paul? what was his temper? verily it was upright.

Obj. Upright, why? he complains of sin, that he was sold under it, he complains of the Law of his members warring against the Law of his mind, he complains that he was brought into captivity; he complains that when he would do good, yet evil was present with him. How then can be say, that there was no condemnation for him? how was he upright?



Sol. Thus, his being upright did not consist in this, that he had no sin in him; nor in this, that he did no sin; nor in this, that he did all the good which he saw should be done: But in this, that he hated the sin which dwelt in him, that he resisted the evil working in him; that his inward man approved the good, and condemned the evil; that his inward man hated the evil, and was delighted in the Law of God. This was his uprightness, and upon this he concludes, that there was no condemnation, (i.) his sin should not sink his soul to hell, they should not separate him from the love of God in Christ, they should not be imputed to him, but Christ would take them off.

3. A third comfort to an upright person is this, that the Lord is his God in Covenant.

You are not Ignorant of the Covenant which God did stipulate with Abraham, Gen. 17. 1. I am the Almighty (all-sufficient) walk before me and be thou perfect, what is the meaning of that? In a Covenant you know there are two parties, and they mutually undertake and agree: so, here, is God on the one part, and here is Abraham on the other part, and God promiseth, and Abraham promiseth; God promiseth to be All-sufficient unto him, and engageth himself in an everlasting Covenant to be his God, ver. 7. now Abraham promiseth to walk uprightly before the Lord: and this is all that the Lord agrees with him for (walk before me and be upright) and then I am thy God, and I will be thy All-sufficiency.

Obj. Why? you will say, this is granted, it is clear, that God Covenants to be a God to an upright person, But what, so great comfort in that?

Sol. Nay then, I have done, if yet you understand not, If yet you think it so poor, so mean a thing for God to be your God in Covenant. I tell you brethren, when God becomes your God in Covenant, when he saith to a person, I will be a God unto thee; it is infinitely more than

if the Lord should say to a man, I will give unto thee all the world: O for God to be my God, what is it but this, I am thine, and all that I am, or have, or can do shall be thine and for thee. I am an holy God and that shall be to make thee holy, I am a merciful God and that shall be to pardon thy sins, I am a powerful God and that shall be to help thee, to deliver thee, to conquer for thee; I am a faithful God and that shall be to make every promise good which I have made unto thee, I am a wise God, and that shall be to bring in thy comforts, thy deliverances, thy helps in the most desirable season.

When sins trouble thee I will pardon them; when they are too strong for thee, I will subdue them; when thy heart is sorrowful, I will comfort it; when thy graces are weak, I will strengthen them; when men disgrace thee I will honor thee, when dangers arise I will preserve thee, what thou needest, that I will give thee; what thou hast, that I will bless to thee; all this, and far more than this, it is for God to be our God in covenant! Nay, and all this is ours by covenant, that is? it is not a fair and empty pretext, it is not a glorious and vain complement, but really so, and firmly so; the Lord if he be our God in covenant; doth bind himself to be all this unto us, by the fidelity of his nature, by the truth of all his promises, by the seal of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what think you? do you now not think that the people happy, who are in such a case whose God is the Lord, Psal. 144. 15. I tell you we are not able to Imagine the height and depth: and breadth of this one comfort, that God is my God in covenant, and yet whatsoever you apprehend of it, whatsoever you feel of it; whatsoever it is; it is the portion of the upright persons, thou art my portion O Lord forever said upright David Psal. 119.

4. Uprightness entitles the person to all blessings of heaven and of earth, as David spake of Jerusalem, that I may say of the upright person, all my springs are in thee; or what Jacob said of Joseph, that he was A fruitful branch or bough; uprightness is like Aarons Rod full of blossoms, you know that place, Psal. 84. The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, what is the sun? but the great and inexhausted fountain of Light, of life, of heat, of influence, of comfort, that will God be to them that walk uprightly; what is a shield? but the defense and safeguard of a person against shots and blows, that also is God to them, that walk uprightly.

Will grace do their hearts good? will glory do their souls good? is there any good which respects the militant condition? is there any good which respects the triumphant condition? neither grace nor glory, nor any good shall be withheld from them that walk uprightly: Noah was upright, and had an Ark, Ebedmelech had his life given him for a prey, Jerem. 39. 18. Ammunitions of Rocks for the upright, Isaiah. 33. 15, 16.

What shall I say brethren? (all the promises which you know) are the treasures of heaven, the cabinets of our comfort, the storehouse of our wants, the hand which holds and delivers out all our supplies, why? all of them do (as it were) beset and encompass the upright person, art thou an upright person, and looks upon thy family? Prov. 14. 11. The tabernacle of the upright shall flourish, art thou an upright person, and castest an eye up to thy posterity? why? Psal. 112. 2. The generation of the upright shall be blessed, Art thou an upright person, and desirest such or such a necessary outward comfort? why? Psal. 37. 4. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart: Art thou an upright person; and suspectest the continuation of thy outward estate? why? Ps. 37. 18.

The days of the upright and their inheritance shall be forever? Art thou an upright person? and thy comforts seem a while to be clouded, Neither canst thou espy, any one hopeful crevice or future joy? why? Psa. 112. 4. Unto the upright their ariseth light in the darkness; and Psal. 97. 11. Light is sown for the righteous: and Joy for the upright in heart? Art thou an upright person, and knowest not how to break through the manifold fortifications, and strengthen of envy or power? why? The Lord will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, Psal. 37. 6. what can keep down the rising of the sun? And the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through all the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him, 2 Chron. 16. 9.

Fifthly it will comfortably season all our conditions, you know this life of ours is capable of many changes, (the weather doth not alter so often, as our temporary conditions do) calms and tempest, light and darkness, comforts and discomforts, friendship, and then malicious opposition; health, and then a painful fit of sickness; Riches; and then a sinking poverty, liberty, and then some hard restraint or exile, one day gain comes in, another day it is dashed out by the greatness of loss, this day full of joy, the next day all his forgotten by the abundance of sad tears, for the death of a parent, of a yoke-fellow, of a child, of a friend, &c: Nay, and the soul hath its changes too: sad conflicts, bitter assaults, strong accusations from Satan and the like: What now? is a choicer Ark to bear us up in all these waves; what harbor like to this of uprightness? why? saith David Psal. 73. 1. Yet, or (however) God is good to Israel even to the upright in heart, and Paul 2. Cor. 1. 12. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.

O Brethren! a false and base heart, nothing sets on affliction, a loss, a scandal, an accusation, so close as it: when a man's heart can smite him for an hypocrite, for a lover of sin: hypocrisy sinks the conscience under these burdens: But uprightness can look an accusation in the face, and bear up the spirit in a storm, and though uprightness may be exposed to many crosses, yet it can comfort a man in the saddest day, for it hath always a good friend abroad, of God, and within of conscience.

6. Here is another comfort, uprightness will be a good friend in death, Psal. 37. 37. mark the upright man, and behold the perfect, for the end of that man is peace: The upright person hath most conflicts (ordinarily) in life; and most quiet (ordinarily) in death.

O When death shall approach the dwellings of the profane and hypocritical, and shall say I have a message unto thee from God, he hath commanded me to arrest thy soul, and to present it before his judgment seat: How doth the heart of a profane wretch gather into fear and horror, yea, and how doth fearfulness and confusions fly up in the breast and countenance of the hypocrite! his conscience delivers up his morsels from which he would not part, and shames and strikes him for his abominable collusions and Glossing's in the service of God: reports unto him that he must presently stand before a God, who is spirit and truth, and never could abide unsoundness, but will be avenged of hypocrisy, good Lord! how the heart of this man trembles and sighs, he would thrust out the thoughts of dying, but cannot, he would stay a while longer here below, but may not; O! now he is gasping, trembling, sighing dying, and gives out life and all with heart-breaking despair: But now if the person be upright, even the message of death may be welcome. If the Lord calls for me, I may answer, here am I, O Lord, look upon me and accept of me in Christ: and Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked

before thee, in truth and with a perfect heart; and have done that which is good in thy sight, I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my Course, &c. 2. Tim. 4. 6, 7.

More particulars might be added. as,

7. Uprightness begets conscience towards God, the upright hath boldness, he may freely make his prayer, and be sure to be heard, 1. John. 3. 21, 22.

8. It will hold out in evil times, Luk. 8. 15. the fourth ground held out, even in times of persecution, because the word was received into an honest heart.

9. The upright person is sure of salvation, Psal. 15. 1. Lord who shall dwell in thy holy Hill? v. 2. he that walks uprightly, Mat. 5. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Object. But all this will not strike into some hearts: whiles we suspect our estate, we always deny our comfort: O saith a person, I fear I am not upright, therefore all this goodly portion of sweet comfort appertains not to me.

I Answer to this a word or too in the general.

1. A man may be upright or hypocritical in a double respect, either first Really, or secondly in opinion and fancy: If a man be Really a hypocrite, though in his proud opinion and fancy he will think himself to be upright, I say, to such a man that no one portion of that comfort before delivered, belongs unto him: sound comfort was never (by God) laid up for a false heart.

Again a man may be really upright and yet have a false opinion of himself that he is an hypocrite. It is thus with the best, that they

ofttimes both suspect and falsely charge the true estate of their souls: a child in a distemper may question the inheritance which is entailed on him: yet if the heart be truly upright, all comfort is thy portion: as our distrustful fears do not prejudice the reality of the estate of grace, so our frequent suspicions, do not cut us off from the title and right of promised comforts.

2. All prevalent disputes about our personal uprightness, they do hold off the application and taste of comforts, though they do not disannul the title and right: even the good man will walk uncomfortable, so long as he concludes and strongly fears that his estate is sinful; for sensible comfort riseth or falleth, cometh on or goeth off, according to the strength of our judgment and present apprehensions: It is not what indeed our estate is, but what we judge of it, which breeds in us sensible comfort; or discomfort: a false heart may (even) break with a timpani of foolish joy, upon an erring persuasion of his estate; and so may a sound heart be very heavy and disconsolate, upon an unsound misconstruction and judging of its true condition.

3. there are sometimes, which are very unapt, for an upright person to sit upon his estate and to pass sentence: the best soul hath divers changes and straits, sometimes it is clear and free, and able to see things as they are: other times it may be boisterous and perplexed, and then it is apt to Judge of itself by feelings, and new representations, not according to secret truth and substance; remember one thing, times of conflict and afflictions and temptation, are best for praying, and worst for judging: If a man will (at such times) pass sentence on himself or estate as a judge, he will judge uprighteous judgment, for then the soul is not itself, and is apt to take Satan's works for its own proper accounts? yea, and then usually it will see nothing, but what makes against itself.

In passions and temptations we neither see God aright nor ourselves.

Fourthly, we must never stand to that judgment which we pass upon our inward frame, which is Irrational or without sufficient ground? Look as we may appeal from all the sentence of our judgment, which acts its self in time of passion, as he did from Alexander to, Alexander, &c. so neither must we vainly vex our hearts, and dash out our uprightness, when this sentence is rather of imagination then of reason: when a man thinks, and thinks that he is not upright, though all the evidences of uprightness appear in him, and when he cannot produce any one inherently distinguishing ground of an hypocrite in himself; why? this is but an imaginary judgment, and utterly unreasonable, this is to condemn the innocent without cause.

That soul will never be settled with comfort which gives way to its one imaginations: and hath a conceit, that every sinful thought, or violent temptation, or more durable conflict with an inward corruption, or frequent distractions in holy duties, cannot stand with uprightness: where a man hath either no grounds at all, or those that he hath are false, he should never settle so on them, and yield and entertain them, as to question his estate for them, or for them to shut off himself from comfort.

5. If ever we would decide our uprightness, and so take our parts in promised comforts, we must follow the voice of the word, and subscribe to the sentence of conscience following that word.

Be sure of this, that if the word will allow and warrant thy inward frame; If it approves of it as sound, assuredly it is so; for that Rule cannot err, nor is divine judgment (which is contained in the word) capable of falsehood or deceit, actively or passively: If God saith thy heart is right with him, maintain it against all disputes whatsoever.



Yea, and if thy conscience enlightened, rectified and quickened by the word, doth acquit thee for upright, that now standing before the presence of the eternal God and all knowing judge, it can say thus much for thee, that though heretofore thou didst love and allow thyself in sins, yet now thou hates all sin, and there is no known way of wickedness; and that though heretofore thou didest shuffle and cut, dealst falsely in covenant, wouldest not obey in all things, but now thou hast respect to all God's commands, and all out of a respect to God's glory: I say thou art an upright person, though thy misgiving fancy or judgment may give up to the contrary.

But may some troubled and misgiving heart reply, nay, it is not thus and thus with us; sure we are, that we are not upright, and the grounds which make us thus to conclude, are not imaginary, but real; true it is we do labor to abstain from sin, but this is out of a fear to God judgments, and we confess that we perform some or many duties, but these are done out of a fear of Hell: now none of this can consist with uprightness, for as much as uprightness shuts out all duty, out of a pure love to God, and not out of a base fear, which may befall the vilest person, what think you? can the man be upright whose services depend on fear.

This is a notable case, and craves a solemn resolution, towards which observe two things.

1. Some things that must be granted, v. g.

1. That all abstinence from sin is not an infallible testimony of uprightness, forasmuch as there may be many arguments which may be sufficient to hold us in from the acting of sin, yet which are not effectual to strike of the love of sin: shame of men, love of estimation, fear of death, the accusation of a stinging conscience, defect of occasions, denial of opportunities; may be cords to bind the hand,

and yet not be plasters to heal the heart: a man may deeply love that which he doth seldom act: if his abstinence from sin be grounded only on private respects, and not on a divine command, and new nature, I say that such an abstinence may befall a man whose heart is so far from uprightness, that it may be either grossly profane, or basely hypocritical: Not so much the naked absence as the grounds and immediate causes thereof, demonstrate uprightness or hypocrisy.

2. This also must be granted, that all doing of duty is not a convincing or immediate argument of uprightness. Uprightness is not so punctually decided by matter as by manner: as he spake of gifts which should be reputed virtuously liberal, *Non qua manu, sed qua mente*. The quality of the mind consigned them much rather, then the bounty of the hand: That may be safely affirmed of all duties, not so much what is done, as how it is done, argues our uprightness: Let never so much be done, out of base and sordid motives and ends, for by and vain glorious respects, or merely servile reasons, without a voluntary and dutiful affection, all the work, though much, though great, though frequent, yet it doth not infallibly assure and conclude uprightness

Some things though we must be informed of, v. g. 3. things.

1. That all abstaining's from sin, out of fear, or performing of duties from it, do not necessarily conclude that a man is not upright? Nay, a man who is upright, may abstain from the one, and perform the other without any check or prejudice to his uprightness.

Which I shall clear by these arguments.

1. If a man may be upright who in duties hath an eye to the reward; then by the same argument he may be upright, who in them hath an

eye to the punishment: forasmuch as both these are extrinsical motives, and alike conclude for a respect to a man's self? But a man may, be upright who yet in his duties hath an eye to the reward, v. g. Moses who was faithful in all the house of God, Heb. 3. 2. (i.) very upright, had yet in his obedience a respect to the recompense of reward, Heb. 11. 26.

If persons, reputed in Scripture to be upright, have yet abstained from sin, and perform duty out of fear: (and these acts of theirs have been approved) then services done out of fear, may consist with uprightness. I confess that all which hath been done by upright persons, doth not presently testify uprightness, but that which hath been done by them, and is rewarded by way of approbation, that I say doth not prejudice uprightness.

But the upright person in Scripture have abstained from sin and have performed obedience out of fear, and this hath been approved of, Ergo,

Job was an upright person by God's own Testimony, cha. 1. 1. The man was perfect and upright: yet the fear of God's wrath kept Job from sin, see Job. 31. 1. I made a covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a maid; he durst not give way to wanton looks, nor unclean thoughts: why? what with held him! see v. 3 Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity: q. d. this were the way to wrath and plagues, to judgment and to Hell: So v. 21. He durst not lift up his hand against the fatherless, (i.) wrong, oppress or defraud them, why? v. 23. For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure, Paul you will think that he was an upright person who did exercise himself to have a conscience void of offense towards God and man; who had the Testimony of his

conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, he had his conversation, yet was he the more diligent and the more conscionable in his ministerial discharges out of fear, see 2. Cor. 4. 11. knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuaded men; (i.) we know that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and everyone must receive according to that he hath done, whither good or bad? and it will be a terrible day to us: if we be found careless and negligent, and we knowing this terror therefore we persuade men.

3. Nay, a man cannot be upright in duties or services if he doth them not out of fear: The fear of God is the inward principle of them: It is that which God requires, with uprightness: What doth thy Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear him and to serve him with all thy heart and with all thy soul? Deut. 10. 12. Why? What is that fear of God, but an awful regard to God, as when Joseph forbore to sin against God out of a regard to his greatness, Gen. 39. 9.

4. Yea, Lastly let me add one thing more, viz. Jesus Christ requires nothing of us which will prejudice uprightness, but he hath willed us to fear him, who hath power to cast into hell, Luk. 12. 5. yea, I say unto you fear him.

1. For my part, I know no more reason, why service done through fear, should prejudice uprightness, then the services which are done through love; for as much as the motive of my service in both is God immediately, but then in the second place, observe

2. That there is a double abstaining from sin, and doing of duty out of fear.

One is single and absolute, when fear is all the reason or motive, as were there not wrath, were there not punishment, were there not a

hell, I would not abstain from sin, I would not do any one duty, or act of obedience unto God? Like an unwilling slave, who would break away, or would not put forth himself in acts of service, were it not the mere fear of the lash of the whip did force and awe him.

Another is mixed and compounded: when though a man doth abstain and act out of fear, yet not only principally out of fear; but also out of love commixt with that fear: as a child who though he doth forbear many things out of a respect to his fathers power, and displeasure, yet withal he doth cease them out of a love to his fathers goodness, and kind affection; thus may it be with a person who is upright, he may forbear sin, out of a fear of God's power, and justice, and displeasure: and yet withal out of a love to an holy and gracious God and a father, for both of these may have their work in him without a prejudice one to another, or either to the temper of uprightness, Hosea. 3. 5. they shall fear the Lord and his goodness. The love of an upright man is so pitched on God's goodness, that withal it gives way to fear, to apprehend his greatness, and yet the fear of his God is not so awed by greatness, but withal love may come in to inflame the soul to make it either abstain, or act out of a respect to God's goodness. Therefore Paul, though he did persuade men because he knew the terror of the Lord, yet was also exceedingly industrious, because the love of Christ did constrain him, 2. Cor. 5. 11 14. Both had an influence upon the Apostle, Terror and love, judgment and mercy, as we read of the woman who departed from the sepulcher, that it was with fear and joy, with the one and with the other: so may our services come out, and our sins be held of both, out of love, and out of fear. For these two are not opposite one to another, as grace and sin, but may mingle together, as several ingredients in the same Physic.

Yet one word more must be added by way of distinction: that there is a twofold fear:

One is servile, which depends entirely on compelling arguments, without any natural inclination or disposition of the person; The acts here are drawn out, not from any aptness of the will or private approbation of the judgment, nay these absolutely considered, sway and incline a man a quite contrary way, contrary to the acts of abstaining or acting: if a man (who works only with servile fear) might do what he liked, and might chose his own way and service, he had rather A thousand times be at his sins, and lay aside his work of duty.

Now I said, if a man doth abstain from sin, or act duty, merely out of a servile fear, he is not upright, why? because in uprightness, the heart is carried against sin, and the will is inclined to duty, both which are wanting, where fear is only servile.

Another is ingenious & filial, which is an enlarging fear, such a fear as is not only not against the holy bent and inclination of the heart, but it is likewise a furtherance and help, it is as it were a farther strength imprinted into the Bowl which is rightly framed to run and draw with a true by as? This fear doth consist, with uprightness, and is necessary to every good Christian, who ought to set up all the arguments which God is pleased to propound to the soul, either to keep it off from sin, or to draw it out to duty, yet so as love acts its part too.

Ob. But now there will fall in one scruple with all this, how may I know whither my abstaining's from sin, or acting of duty, springs out of naked fear, or else out of a fear commixt with love; And rather out of love, then fear.

Sol. To resolve you in this (and let me tell you) this conduceth much to the discovery of uprightness; consider

1. That where they proceed out of naked and mere fear. Two Things.

1. There is a contrary and full regretting of the heart against them: the bent of the heart is otherwise set for all acts of mere fear, (I speak of moral acts) are reputed, violent and involuntary: they arise from a constraint, and all constraints urge out acts, which the nature, (if it were itself) would not incline to; nay, the nature draws against, what it doth, if it doth do anything out of mere fear.

2. Acts depending upon naked and mere fear do cease, when the motives or causes of that fear do cease and are still? As the fable hath it of the frogs, that though naturally they are inclined to croak, yet when Jupiter threw down the tree amongst them, they were all hushed, and silent, yet at length seeing no harm to ensue; they set up their ugly note again; so evil men, whose hearts are bent to sin may yet in the time of fear, draw in, hold off from sinning, the beastly drunkard will not call for a cup to carouse, nor the filthy wanton for his Quean to embrace, on his death-bed he fears the flames of hell instantly to clasp him; But let the motives of fear cease, why? he is as averse to that reformation which he professed, and he is as facile and forward to that evil which he seemed to defy, as the water is to fly out and run in its course, which hath been for a while violently barred up and stopped, As the Israelites who came off from sinning, and into obedience, upon the mere call of the stroke either of the sword, or of the plague they did start aside Like a broken bow, Psal. 78. 57. they served under the rod, but when that was off; they returned to the accustomed bent of sinning presently.

2. That where they proceed out of fear mixed with love, and rather out of love.

## Four Things.

1. If love is mixed with fear in the obedience; there a man hath an eye to divine glory, as much if not more, then to his own safety? Where mere fear prevails to the work, there it satisfies the man, if he may after all, sleep in a whole skin if he may be preserved, and be secure, what glory God may have he cares not, nor minds it directly: But now, if service spring out of love to God, here my safety, satisfies me not, I do aim at God's glory, for I love him, and love his praise, as on the contrary, where a man abstains from sin out of mere fear, he doth it not, because else God shall have dishonor, dishonor to God is not it, which prevails, but his own quiet and personal exemption from pain, and wrath, and infamy, these only sway with him, and.

2. Where love and fear concurs to set out the obedient acts, there acceptance is propounded by the soul as well as recompense; it will not suffice me that I shall have my pay, but it more affects me that God will be pleased to accept of me. This is a truth that nothing but love will satisfy love: the love of acceptance, exceedingly answers all the acts which come from the love of obedience: that I shall decline vengeance by such duties, alas, that is not all, Nay, but I bend and strive to find acceptance with my God and Father.

3. Love is not only commixt with fear: but is a more predominant cause in abstaining from sins, where the contrariety of the act to God sways, and works more upon the soul, then the contrariety of the punishment to the man: what's that! that is the offense, by the vileness of sinning is far more grievous to my soul then the sense of punishment for sinning, nay, when the soul (in a free and able estate to judge) can utter from a sound conscience, that were it to make its choices it had rather a thousand times submit to the punishment of sin then to the acting of sin, verily, if such a person abstain from sin,



the abstaining is not out of mere fear, but out of love joined with fear, nay, rather out of love than fear.

4. Lastly, much may be guessed by the strong and habitual acting's of the soul, in times of security and in times of perplexity; when a man dares not yet to break out to sin, when all his quiet, and full of peace, but desires to keep everlasting friendship with his God, and communion with his God when a man will not fail in duty, though God fails in courtesy (i.) seem to deal hardy and harshly with him, yet he will serve him, this argues a predominancy of love in our obedience that case, in Psal. 44. 18, 19.

A Second case, in which a man may fear, that he is not upright, may be this, viz. his particular sinning's, the case goes thus, uprightness is an even carriage of the heart and life, and every sin is an unevenness in motion (it is a wryness, a crookedness, a derivation from the right rule and path,) yet this is my condition saith a person, and therefore just cause have I to question whether I be upright or no? for the upright do no iniquity: Psal. 119. 2. he walks according to the rule; he departs from sin; though the line may be strait, which hath many blurs, yet it cannot be so, which hath many, or any windings and turnings.

I will speak something to this case; And it is worth the while, to open unto you; whither and in what respects, any sinning's may consist with, or else contradict the frame of uprightness? for the assoiling of which observe the propositions, viz.

1. That particular sinning's are compatible with a gracious frame, though none are with a glorious condition, Though no darkness, no clouds can be mixed with the sun in heaven, yet both may be in the air which is enlightened below; our best estate on earth is mixed, and not absolute: glory annihilates all sinful principles, but grace only

weakens them, an upright man, is an imperfect good man, and hath reason daily to bewail his failings, as well as cause to bless God for his performances. You never read of any upright person in Scripture, but you find some scars on his ways, Like Jacob halting one time or other: David, very good, yet not upright in the matter of Uriah, Noah, one that walked with God, yet overtaken with excess of wine &c. Such twinkling's do, and will accompany the highest and fairest stars, as he who foots it best, may be found sometimes all along; so the most even Christian may be surprised with many unevenness's.

2. There are some kinds of sinning which do contradict uprightness: give me leave briefly to distinguish.

There is a double uprightness.

One is habitual, which is the constant frame of the heart, and the general course of the life, bent, and inclination to God in duty, and for God against all sin.

Another is actual, which is the even carriage of the heart or life, in respect of this or that particular act or motion.

There are two sorts of sinning.

Some are particular, and by way of fact, when this or that fact, is inconsonant to the rule, and by it condemned.

Others are General, and by way of course, when the frame and tenor of the life, is either notoriously vile or in some private path of wickedness constantly drawn out and followed.

Out of these distinctions, observe these particular conclusions, viz.

1. That particular sinning's, or sinning's in respect of particular fact, though they cannot stand with actual uprightness, yet they may consist with habitual uprightness: Look as tripping or falling, though they be opposite to standing or moving on, in the particular, yet they are not so opposite to the course of motion in a journey, that a man by reason of them, should be said not to be going on in his journey. Or Look as every particular stain, doth not blemish the universal fineness of the cloth, so neither doth this or that particular fact disprove and deny the general bent of the heart: particulars may not decide the estate either way: tis true a man by a particular sinning is denominated guilty, but by no one particular, can a man's estate be challenged either for good and bad, Asa in some particulars, was very faulty (as you heard heretofore) yet the scripture saith, he was perfect all his days: and David? though some grievous sins fell from him which did not stand with actual uprightness (hence that clause, except the matter of Uriah) yet his epitaph is written by God himself from the general bent of his heart and course, that he walked before him with an upright heart.

2. That Courses of sin, known and allowed courses, do directly contradict uprightness, you must distinguish twixt frequently temptations, and daily inclinations, and twixt courses of sin: even the most upright heart may be frequently assaulted by Satan, and daily molested with inward corruption tempting and enticing, but all this may be with resistance, detestation, sorrow and grief, so that the heart may be very upright, notwithstanding all these disquietments;

But if the heart hath a way of wickedness; if it hath a path of sinning, in which it will walk assuredly, such kinds infallibly testify, that the heart is false and not upright.

He who knows sin, and yet will sin, he that doth sin and allows himself in sinning, whither the kind of sinning be single, or multiplied, one or many, as the Prophet spake of the proud man, Hab. 2. that I say of this man, his heart is not upright in him.

There be two things which show great rottenness of heart.

One when any sin hath our warrant sealed with secret allowance.

Another when we drive on the sin with a customary trade and continuances. It may befall the most upright heart, as it doth the pest metal blade, it may be made to bow and bend, yet there it stands not, but returns to its straightness again, so even an upright person may step into an uneven path, but there he walks not, he quickly returns to the Kings high-way, into the ways of obedience and righteousness, but it is with a base heart, as it is with base metal, it will easily bow, and steadfastly keep its crooked figure; the bias draws that way, the heart is set on sin and regards it, doth sin, and allows it, will sin and loves it. Now this is an infallible sign of a false and hypocritical heart, that it regards any known iniquity; as David spake Psal. 66. 28. or that it hath a wickedness, as he spake Psal. 139. 24.

A third case in which a man may fear his uprightness may be some inequalities about holy services, it goes thus, sometimes a man finds his heart much enlarged in duties, yet other times, much contracted and straitened: sometimes he is full of life and quick affections, yet other times, he feels no active or lively disposition, he can find no mind or heart almost, insomuch that either he can do little or nothing, and what is done by him, is but done; all cheerfulness and quickness seems to fall off, like the green leaves from the tree: so that nothing, but a mere naked carcass of duty is acted by him.

Now the case is, whither a man may be reputed upright who many times finds himself thus in his services.

This is A case which ordinarily doth perplex many a good heart, how cunning is Satan still to vex the soul if he can prevail with us to omit duty, why? then thou art plainly wicked, if the soul be less free and compliant in the duty, why? then it is secretly hypocritical, thus he insnares us, but to the resolution of the case thus,

First, all inequalities in holy services, do not conclude, that a man is not upright. Look as the natural life hath many spaces, and as it were degrees of latitude, a man may be able to run, & yet sometimes be scarce able to go, these motions (you will say) are unequal, nevertheless the man lives, both under the one and under the other, so may it be with the spiritual life, for it hath also its different and unequal spaces, sometimes a man may do his services all in Joy, other times all in tears, sometimes his will is great and performances answerable, other times his will is disposed, but he cannot act in any proportion, yet his heart lives uprightly in either.

Nevertheless, we must distinguish of inequalities in holy services, there are two sorts of them.

Some arise from weakness of strength.

Others arise from falseness of heart.

You see a man sometimes able to move a weight of an hundred pounds, at another time he is scarce able to lift a walking-staff, why? because his strength is failed, and then no marvel that his actions vary: so it may be with an upright man, God is pleased sometimes to afford unto him a strong degree of heavenly assistance, he clears his judgment, enables his faith to apprehend and discern, quickens his

affections, restrains Satan, puts down the force of the inward contrarieties, why? at such a time the soul is mightily active in the power of received and conferred strength. At another time the wind slacks, and then no marvel the ship doth not post so fast, the spirit bloweth when, and where, & how he lists, there is not always such a communication of actual strength, and then our desires may be great, but our performances will be unequal: And this observe by the way, that if the inequality depend only on weakness of strength, there the heart still keeps its bent, nay, is most inwardly stirring in desires and propensions, though it be not able to do the good that it would.

But there are also inequalities which arise from falseness of heart; As when a man hath an Ague, which infects his humor or spirits, or both, he hath one good day, and another bad day; or as it is with a land-flood, this hour posting in with such an high speed, as if it would domineer over all the County, and yet by and by it spends away itself, there is no more of it to be seen: so it may be with a man whose heart is false to God: it may be with him thus, he may have his moods, his starts, one while like those, accompanying Christ, and magnifying him with an Hosanna in the highest; another while quite turned, and crying out, Crucify, Crucify him: So here one day, or week, who but God, and what but duty, not a Sermon missed, not a prayer neglected; yet on a sudden slow to hear, careless to pray, indifferent to any holy performance.

Now if the inequality arise from the falseness of heart (and I pray you to observe this) that it is ordinarily in three cases.

1. When the performance was attempted merely to compass some outward good; a very Hypocrite may take much pains for his own ends of honor, profit, pleasure, &c.

2. When the performance was attempted merely to remove some inward or outward evil, as pangs of conscience within, or shame and censure without.

3. When the old lust is returned to new strength, the bitterness of death is off, or the like; and now the heart returns to its former haunt and natural bent, to the love and practice of such, or such a sin, which will easily beget and declare an inequality in duties: for love and practice of sin, will either make all duty to cease, or any method of duty to stagger and change.

2. Observe that there are two sorts of inequalities about holy services.

Some respect the Will, and Actum elicited, as the Schoolmen speak, the first springing's of it, its secret inclining's and motions.

Others respect the Exercise or Fact, and Actum imperatum, as they call it; from these I infer two conclusions, viz.

1. That inequalities of holy services, in respect of the exercise or fact, may consist with uprightness, v. g. A man one day may be able to find words more readily and abundantly in prayer, and lively-hood in his affections, then at another time, and yet be truly upright: Look as a Preacher may be able to study, and to preach one day better than another; and a Tradesman to follow his particular Calling; yet both the one and the other, be truly upright in their particular Calling; so I say of the expressed and external acts which respect the course of our general Callings, &c

2. That intrinsical inequalities, those in the will and purposes thereof, argues defect of uprightness; When a man's will is one while strongly purposed for duty, and by and by it is totally bent and set for

sin, here the inequality doth depend upon the division of the heart, which is Hypocrisy and falseness.

3. Cheerfulness or uncheerfulness in the performance of duties, are not infallible symptoms either way. By Cheerfulness I mean the liberty or freedom of the spirits; and by uncheerfulness the sadness, heaviness or dullness of them. As it may be a day, though the sun shine not; nay, as the sun doth keep on its natural course and motion under the Ecliptic line still, whether you see the cheerful body of it or no: so a person may pass on from duty to duty with all affectionate uprightness, though there be an habitual cloud of sad spirits still seemingly wrapping up all his performances.

I think, that we do not distinguish always aright, and therefore perplex our hearts, there is a difference twixt Affections in Duties, and Cheerfulness in Duties; as much difference as twixt life and lively-hood, twixt burning and flaming. A brand may be red hot, and burn to purpose, and yet not flame at all: so a man may bring living affections to his services, he may present them, and offer them out of the dearest love to God, and truest respect to his honor, who yet may not feel any such sparkling and flaming enlargements of his spirits in the times of disgrace of such services. Defect of affections is one thing; of lively-hood and cheerfulness, that is another thing: If I serve God without any degree of affection, then I am not upright; but I may, and do oftentimes serve him without cheerfulness, with much dullness and heaviness resting upon my spirits, and yet may be upright. For uncheerfulness doth not necessarily, and absolutely, and only arise from want of grace; It may entirely depend upon natural causes: A man's natural temper may be sad and melancholic, his body may be sickly, and faint, and crazy. Now as a Musician may play over his Ditty singularly well, though he doth make every note to reel and tremble with infinite quavers, so the Christian may do his



services with truest uprightness, though not with that lively cheerfulness, as another perhaps may do.

4. Though cheerfulness doth not always accompany our Duties, yet uprightness may be evinced by these things.

By being humbled that we cannot serve with that lively-hood, as we do desire.

By maintaining the services even out of a respect to God, I will yet serve him; though I find reasons to humble me, yet I will not, to keep me off from Duties: though I do want spirit yet I do find an heart to pray, and to read, &c. If I cannot serve God with smiles, yet I will with tears: If my body will not carry my soul to duty, yet my soul shall hale my body unto it.

By bringing in the present measure of strength: so much as I can do, Lord, I do now unto thee; if I were able to utter more, or better, or longer, why, thou shouldst have it.

When I am humbled that I can do no better, and when I strive to exceed myself, when I will serve God for God's-sake, and do not willingly with-hold my strength, and yet present all in the name of Christ for acceptance, this is uprightness, though the looks and spirits may be heavy and clouded, &c.

4. Whether all self-love doth contradict uprightness; As suppose a person doth act his duties out of a regard to himself, whereas uprightness seems rather to set up all work with a single respect to God's Glory.

Sol. I will not insist much on this; only observe a few particulars, viz.

Answ. 1. Self-love (naturally considered) is an inbred quality by which a man affects his own good and benefit, this God hath implanted in every man, to desire and work for his own safety; the first care and respect should be for God, the next for ourselves, and the rest for others.

2. Self-love, as it is natural, (so absolutely considered) it is very lawful. He that said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, said also, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: if as ourselves, then is it lawful to love ourselves; yea, and the Apostle saith, no man ever yet hated his own flesh, and adviseth every man to love his wife even as himself, Ephe. 5. 29, 33.

Duties may lawfully be discharged out of a self-love. A man may (in their discharge) have a lawful respect unto himself, (i.) he may regard his own comfort, and peace, and mercy, and happiness: as thus, now I may lawfully apply myself to the hearing of the word, to reading, to praying, to a very careful walking with God, because I would preserve the peace of my conscience, because I would keep up my comfortable interviews of God's loving kindness, because I would be saved and eternally blessed: A man may lawfully aim at comfort and salvation in his duties, this doth no way contradict or disannul uprightness. Forasmuch as God propounds these things in his Word (which is our rule of doing and working) as motives to set us on to our labor, Be abounding in the work of the Lord (saith the Apostle) forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God; Mat 5. 8. Blessed are you when men speak all manner of evil of you, ver. 11. For great is your reward in heaven. Verse 12. He that continues to the end, shall be saved. Repent that your sins may be blotted out, Act. 3. 19. And will render to every man according to his works, to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor, and

immortality, eternal life, Rom. 2. 6. 7. Whatsoever God propounds as a motive to Duty, and whatsoever God promiseth as an encouragement or reward, on that the soul may most lawfully fix the eye. What doth the Apostle press the Philippians to mutual love and accord, by the consolations of Christ, by the comfort of the spirit, Phil. 2. Why doth he press the Romans to the service of righteousness, by the assurance of eternal life? Rom. 6. If that to cast an eye on these were unlawful, or that a man could not be upright who did so.

Nay, Verily not only that which God hath propounded, and that which God hath promised, but that which I may pray for, on that I may cast an eye. Now may not the upright person pray for peace and quiet of conscience? May he not pray for the joy and comfort of God's Spirit? May he nor pray for the salvation of his soul? Nay, that which another good man may pray for me, may I not pray for that myself? Now saith Paul, My hearts desire to God for Israel, is that they may be saved.

Why? It is granted by us all, and it is practiced by us all, that we desire heaven; and what is it to desire heaven, but to desire salvation? and what is it to desire salvation, but to desire a real, and glorious, and blessed, and eternal union with God? and what greater good can a man desire to, or for himself, then this?

4. But then in the last place, there is a twofold self-love.

One Subordination, wherein my aim is first and most to God's Glory: to myself indeed there is a respect, but not first of all: not most of all, not only to myself such a self-love in the discharge of Duties, is very lawful, and the upright have it.

Another of Competition, wherein I regard not the glory of God; I mind it not, or else I respect myself more then it: so that all may be hushed up, so that I might have joy, and heaven, and escape Hell; I care not for the glory of God, I would not do duty, but to preserve myself: Such a self-love as this, is opposite to uprightness; for though God gives us leave to mind and respect ourselves, yet he commands us first, and most to respect and aim at his glory.

Whether all self-applause, and vain glory, be incompatible with uprightness?

Sol. I shall briefly assoil this Inquiry.

1. Self-applause is the magnifying of ourselves for duties happily performed; It is a kind of adoration and admiration of ourselves by higher opinions of ourselves, or thoughts also, that no others will highly imagine of us, and admire the eminency of our parts, and gifts, and quick abilities, and enlarged affections.

Now this I say, that though a man may be lawfully enlarged with joy and thankfulness to God, who hath graciously assisted and enlarged him in the performance of duties, and his spirit thereupon may be the more cleared. Yet self-applause is naught, and opposite to uprightness; it is nothing else but a forgetfulness of our God, and of his strength, & of his grace, by which we did his service; It doth not spring from humble uprightness. but from a proud conceitedness; and is the After-clap of Satan, and our sinful hearts, which kick down, and undo that work which otherwise had been very well done.

2. Again, Vain glory is the setting forth of ourselves in duty, it is the using of our Masters coin for the servants benefit: When a man doth hear, or preach, or pray, or give alms, only or principally to be seen, to be esteemed, to be spoken of, his own credit is the end of his work.

This is a manifest fruit of Hypocrisy, Christ hath delivered it fully in Mat. 6. Look as he plays the Hypocrite, who doth some good, but yet will not do all duty, and who doth much duty, but loves some sin; so likewise he plays the Hypocrite, that doth all duty, merely to advance and trumpet out his own name, and estimation, and glory. Self-applause is a subsequent Hypocrisy which follows the work; Vain-glory is an Antecedent Hypocrisy which moves us to the work.

3. Nevertheless, you must distinguish of self-applause and vain-glory, that they are either,

1. Naked Acts or Motions.

2. Habitual qualities or Dispositions.

Even the most upright person may find them in respect of motion, but the Hypocrite hath them in respect of disposition. In the one they arise up as temptation, for it is a most difficult thing, totally to be rid of ourselves, either before, or in, or after Duties. In the other they rise up as natural affections; the one feeds on them as on meat; the other is troubled with them as with poison: they break the heart of the one with pride, of the other, with sorrow and humbling: In the one, they are approbations; in the the other, they are vexations: In a Hypocrite they are like the wind which fills the sails; In an upright person they are like the wind which troubles the stomach. The Duties done by a Hypocrite, are like glasses made and blown up, only by breath: the Applause of men breaths strongly upon his affections to set out his services. But it is with an uptight person in this case, as with a leaf on a tree, a little breathing of the air makes it to tremble: An upright person is afraid of his own high opinion, or the commendation of others; He can be highly glad when the honor is cast on God; and if any after-risings begin to grow for former Duties, he is not well, till he hath cast them down, by after-humbling's. The

upright person is much with God before duty, and all for God after it: He takes all the strength of Action out of God's hand, and therefore would not finger the least scruple of praise: He looks on inward applause as a cross, and on public as a danger: In the one I hate myself, in the other I fear myself.

Object. It is lawful (I confess) to know what God hath given us, and to acknowledge the good which he hath done in us, or by us, how else can we be thankful?

Sol. But then, it is necessary to make him the end, whom we acknowledge to be the cause; to give unto God the glory who hath given to us the strength.

No more to this case, but this, beg for much grace to do duty, and when you have done it, beg for much strength to give God the glory of it: A Hypocrite is made up of himself and men; but the upright person is made only by God, and for him.

## SECT. V.

A Third use of the Doctrine shall be to stir us up to get Uprightness, and to keep it, there are two things which here offer themselves, viz.

1. Motives to persuade us.

2. Means to direct and help us.

1. For the first of these, what shall I say? how shall I persuade! If all the Arguments of heaven, or earth, might be available, I have them at hand to present them unto you, to excite your hearts to this labor: If there be any regard of a God, of a Christ, of your souls, of your

comforts here, of your happiness hereafter, then think of Uprightness, content not yourselves till you have it, Why?

1. God regards you not, if you be not upright: his eyes are upon the truth, and he will be worshipped in spirit and truth; thousands of Rams and rivers of oil, daily oblations, solemn humbling's, crying's and callings, he cannot away with them, he hides his face from them, if the heart under these be false and doubting.

The Word of God condemns you; if you be not upright, it will not acquit you; if you have Lamps without oil, a form of godliness without the power thereof, though you make many prayers, though long prayers, though you give much alms, yet if your hearts be not upright in these, the Word will condemn you for Hypocrites, and will give you your portion, with them who shall have the greater damnation.

Your conscience will secretly reproach and vex you in the day of your calamity; when any judgment hangs over thy head, or any affliction comes near unto thee, then will thy conscience rise up, and gall and wound thee for thy close unevenness's and hypocritical practices of sin against thy better profession of holy walking. What the Prophet spake of the unjust gainer, He getteth riches, and not by right, he shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at the end he shall be a fool: That say I of the Hypocrite, he heaps up duty upon duty, works upon works, but the day of trial comes, and then he shall appear to be a fool. Ah, vain man! to think there is not a day for the discovery of secrets, or that there is not a God who searcheth the hearts and reins, who greedily hunts after the applause and credit of men, and declines the approbation of the great Judge. O when thy accounts are to be presented and given up before the tribunal seat of the holy, and true, and terrible God; and thou shalt then say, O Lord, all the

outward good I did, I did it only to get myself a name; all the services of Religion, I labored in them only that men might think well of me: some of thy precepts I did like, but others I did not care for, because they thwarted my ends; much good I did, but it was only to cloak and cover the much secret evil which I did love, and in which I did walk: so many years I lived, and kept company with Christians, against whose powerful practice of holiness my heart did rise; many a time did their heavenly discourses find out and condemn my private lust, yet I bleared their eyes, I yet wrested with my conscience, I would not yet leave all my sins, and now woe is me! thou dost love truth in the inward parts, this I knew, yet I played the hypocrite. Nay, if more may be added, then take this, the Lord God after death will shut the door against such foolish persons who content themselves with lamps without oil, and do cry, Lord, Lord, have we not preached, &c. and heard thee in our streets, and yet were workers of iniquity. Look as the Lord takes notice of a man's Hypocrisy now, (so this people draws near unto me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me) so he will take notice of the Hypocrite hereafter, not only to shut heaven against him, but to cast him into everlasting burnings, Isa. 33. 14. so then, methinks, here were motives enough to stir us up to be upright, because else the Lord regards us not, neither persons, nor works; yea, his Word condemns us, and our consciences do condemn us; we walk under a sentence, and shall die under a curse, and God will be against us too in Judgment, he will not know us, but abominate us from his presence.

2. But then if you consider on the other side, How acceptable a thing uprightness is to God, what delight he takes in such-persons, how his Covenant is with them, and what infinite promises are their Treasuries, how God will hear their prayers, accept of their person, pass over their weaknesses, increase their blessings, establish their comforts; what defenses, and secret, and strong, and comfortable



acquittances Uprightness breeds in the conscience! what confidence it gives in our accesses to God, what solace under all our crosses! what peace, and quietness, and strength, notwithstanding all contrary suggestions! what boldness in death, what grounds to Implead with God! what a certainty of acceptance now, and truest Glory hereafter! O how might these things work upon our hearts, to labor to be upright, &c.

Object. But you will say now, why, what may we do to get uprightness, and to maintain it?

Sol. Now we come to the means of uprightness, for which take these particulars into your consideration;

1. Directions for the getting of it.
2. Directions for the preserving of it.
3. Some other considerations and meditations: for the first, I commend these things unto you.

1. If ever you would have upright hearts, you must then go to God for them. Hypocrisy is a natural weed, we need not go beyond ourselves to find a cause of it: even a Child is able to frame actions to the eye of others: but uprightness is a flower of heaven: only that God who can make new, is able to make the heart upright. I pray you to consider that all the holy qualities and tempers of the new Covenant, come from no other spring then God's grace; none can bestow them but God, and he can do it. Now the upright heart is a spring of the Covenant, Jer. 31. 39. I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever. Is there here a person this day who is sensible of the guile of his spirit, of the hypocrisy in his heart, that he cannot be so for God as he should, that he is uneven, and oftentimes

crooked in his walking's? why? go to God! pray with David, Psalm 51.  
1. O create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me.

But you will say, may an hypocrite come to God, will God regard him though he calls upon him, will he not shut out his prayers; will he hear the prayer of him who regards sin in his heart.

I Answer.

Sol. It matters not how much hypocrisy hath been hatched within thee. and acted by thee heretofore, If now thou comest to be sensible of thy hypocrisy and to condemn it, & to bewail it, & to abhor it, if former hypocrisy be now come to hearty conflict, though be giving out into many thoughts of self and base ends, yet be not dismayed, go to God, he can subdue it, and he can take out that guile of thy spirit, and he can fashion a straightness and rightness of heavenly frame within thee; he is able to make good whatsoever he hath promised.

Secondly if you would find uprightness in you, then get an exceeding and predominate love of God, and his ways: Love is of great force and influence to a man's ways and actions, it is like the Rudder which doth master the ship in the motion, it can turn and wind it any way; so doth love prevail with the soul: it hath a command over it, about a man's ways and actions; if a man had a strong love of God, if he did heartily, and with great affections, incline and strive for God, for his glory, for his truth, this would prevail with him to be upright, Deut. 10. 12. the love of God is put in as a means to walk in all his ways, and to serve him with all our hearts.

The want of uprightness, comes from the want of love; as the falseness of a woman to her husband, grows upon want of conjugal love: it is the love of the world which draws a man so often aside,

which makes him off and on, and it is the love of sin, which makes a man so hypocritical.

If a man could love God above all, he would delight to walk with him, he would be careful to please him, fearful to offend him, ready to obey him, would be kept in for God, he would not make so many straying's, he would mind God's glory more.

Thirdly get to hate sin, A secret love of sin (after all restraints and pauses) will draw the soul aside, It will (like a covered disease) break out again.

There are three things in hatred which contribute to uprightness.

1. It is an inward aversion: the very heart is drawn off from an object, and the heart is filled with a loathing and a detestation of the evil: not the tongue and looks only, but the very inclination of the will is turned aside.

2. It is universal, for hatred is of the kind: the will in the whole latitude of it, is the object of hatred, I hate every false way, said David, Psal. 119.

3. It is permanent and durable: passion is a storm which will quickly off, but hatred is a settled quality, arguments allay it not, nor doth time remove it: what have I to do anymore with Idols, said Ephraim, Hosea. 14. 8. They shall defile their coverings, and say unto them get thee hence, Esa. 30. 22. So that if a man could get the hatred of sin, he should quickly find an even uprightness.

The cause why a man is not even in his walking, is either because,

1. His heart is not bent against sin, but gives a delightful way unto it, it doth not resist and loath it, but harbors and favors it.

2. Some one particular lust wins and gains upon the soul; though some are unacted, yet one special lust is retained which hath power to command and rule the life.

3. He is carried against sin upon mutable, and decaying grounds, which being removed, the heart then returns to its proper and natural bent.

But now if spiritual hatred of sin were implanted, then the combat twixt sin, and the person would be inward, the very heart would loath the nature and inclinations of it, and it would be universal and constant, so that here would arise a general evenness in a man's conversation. Unevenness though it appear without, yet it begins within the heart, is the main wheel of a man's course, and therefore if love gets the heart for God, and hatred rules the heart against sin, you may very well believe that these two will yield out a very upright endeavor and course of holiness. In spirituals, that which keeps the fountain, doth keep the stream, and that which betters the heart, doth likewise well order the life.

2. For the second which respect the preserving means, take these directions.

1. First if you would preserve uprightness, you must preserve a holy fear of God; you know the promise, I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from me, Jere. 32.

Sinning is the only departing from God, He never leaves us but for sin, our departing is our unevenness, and we never leave him but by sin, and our unupright walking's; but that now which keeps us from departing, is fear? The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death, Prov. 24. 27. If a man could always keep an awful and powerful regard to God: that he stood in awe of his

attributes, and of his word, he would keep plain with God, he would not transgress for a morsel, nor think that it may be safe for him to sin.

A Holy fear of God hath these two Properties.

1. It puts the soul and actions, in God's presence, one saith that God is all eye to see everything, and all ear to hear everything, so doth holy fear represent God, as one who is now beholding all that I do, and as one who understands my thoughts afar off, from whom no not the whisperings of the mind; nor the imaginations of my heart, nor the closest, and most secret acting's can be concealed. Its stands in awe of this all discovering God, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God, said Joseph, when there were none but he and his mistress and his God together, Gen. 39. 9. I fear his justice, that it will break out upon me, if I should dare to sin; and I fear his mercy, that it will draw off, if I presume to offend, Psal. 4. 4. Stand in awe and sin not, Psal. 119. 161. Princes also have persecuted me without a cause, Why? this might stir up strange qualities in David, O no) but my heart standeth in awe of thy word, q. d. I dirst not break out to sin for all that; thy word which I feared kept me in.

2. Faith breeds and preserves uprightness and evenness, I remember the Apostles caution, Heb. 3. 12. Take heed, brethren, least there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God: unbelief it is the root of all hypocrisy and apostasy that men are but half in duties, it is because they do not (indeed) believe the extent of obedience to God; and that they keep some private lust, it is because they do not (indeed) believe the truth of God's justice, & power, & wrath. But saith causeth evenness, forasmuch

1. As it sets up prevailing arguments, the soul never doubts in the way, but by the strength of false arguments, either false pleasures, or

false profits is forcible with the heart, & insnares it; we step aside always by the cunning of error. But faith not only discovers false inducements, but also brings better and stronger motives, it knows and teacheth where the soul will be at a loss, and holds it off by the goodness, and kindness, and loving favor of God: who would venture his comfortable aspect of God, and sweet communion with Christ, for a morsel of stolen bread, or for one draught of unlawful pleasure?

2. It constrains the heart to singular love of God and Christ: the more faith the more love: all true faith is inflaming, for it sees and feels much love, and therefore kindles much; now much love raiseth much evenness in walking, whiles the love is kept up close to God, the heart and life ordinarily are kept in an upright motion: for all true love is tender and careful, and pleasing.

3. It purifies the heart: Faith is like fire, which hath one quality to ascend and another to burn: so faith it negotiates for us at heaven, and likewise it breeds more intrinsical renovation of the heart by holiness: faith is the best friend to our graces, the surest help to our affections, the strongest prop to our duties, and the sorest enemy to our sins: No grace doth so much for the heart as faith, our assistance for good and our resistance of evil depends most on it, we find experimentally, that many sins then break out when we lose the sight of God: as long as we can eye God, the soul is safe; see God in his promises, see God in his precepts, and see him in his Threatening's, and then we hold up and go on: but if once we lose him in the sight of his promises, then impatience and murmuring, and discontents, and unlawful projects, and ways appear in the heart and life, so also if we lose him in the sight of his precepts, which guide and bind, Now looseness, and carelessness, and indifferency appears: and lose him in the sight of his threatening's, now pride and presumption and other bold adventuring's appear. But if we could by faith see him who

is invisible, if we could see the goodness and fidelity and immutability of his promises for all kind of good supplies and if we could see the power, and authority, and equity of all his precepts, respecting our actions and ways, and if one could behold the justice and terror of the Lord by faith in all his threatening's: O how might the soul be bounded and kept! like a river twixt its banks in a constant and sweet course of even and upright walking.

3. If you would preserve uprightness, then you must get and preserve humbleness of spirit, Remember this, that the humble Christian receives most good, and lives best. The slow hands writes the fairest copy; and the low valley, of all the parts of the earth is most yearly fruitful: Highness of spirit and much unevenness, ordinarily keep company.

There are three properties in humbleness, which show that it much conduceth to uprightness.

One that it is much with God: hence we read of the cries of the humble, and the desires of the heart; the humble soul is like the weak Ivy which clings about the strong oak, so it is much with a mighty God; you shall seldom find the humble person without a tear in his eye, a complaint in his tongue, a prayer in his heart, either you find him upon his feet standing, to hear what God will say, or upon his knee, craving what God will give.

2. Another, that it hath much from God: There be high mountains which be above all clouds; the proud heart is most empty, because most lofty, but God gives grace unto the humble, Jam. 4. the poor beggar gets the alms, and the low valley gets the showers; and the humble heart the grace of God; and that both preventing grace which makes good an assisting grace with holds on in good, thou hast heard the desire of the humble.

3. A third, that it doth all for God: there are two things which the humble person doth most eye.

One is God's rule, another is God's glory, as a good servant who takes commands from his masters mouth, and lays out himself for his masters advantage: All is from him, and by him, and therefore all must be to him, saith the humble heart.

Now all these conduce directly to uprightness, he is best in walking with God, who is most in calling up on God; prayer being like the firm and solid ground which enables the feet to stand best. And God is near to the humble: the weak child is preserved from most falls, which is held by the hand of the mother, or carried in the bosom of the Nurse: Where divine strength is most communicated, there the life is most uniformly ordered: and then humbleness refers all to God's glory, it puts the cause of gift upon him, and the honor of their use, which is directly opposite to Hypocrisy; therefore labor to be humble, get to be sensible of yourselves, both for naturals, and also spirituals; in the one, see your vileness; in the other, your emptiness, &c.

Fourthly, If you would get and preserve uprightness, then get your hearts to be crucified to the world. Hypocrisy and worldliness are seldom far asunder; It is rare to find a Hypocrite, but he is one, who is either strongly ambitious of honor, or greedily desirous of Riches: search the Scriptures, and you shall find it so, and very clearly in the Pharisees. Now when the heart is set upon the world, it is easily drawn aside; it will ever & anon be uneven: the bowl which hath a bias cannot run long in a straight line. They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, into many foolish & hurtful lusts, &c. For the love of money is the root of all evil, 2 Tim. 6. 9, 10. A thing of naught turns aside the heart which is worldly: the look of a man, the hope of



a nod, a change of garments, a morsel of bread, a meals meat, a few pieces of silver, all of these are to a worldly heart, like the wind to the ship which turned the sails round about. Therefore take heed of the world; most of our uneven carriages arise from want of faith to exalt God, and from the enthralling of our hearts to the world, we are under either the discouragements of the world, and the fear of them make us to step awry, or else the encouragements of it, and the hope, and love of them makes us to omit duties, or put out our hearts to wickedness. The sear of man, and the too high account of carnal power, and too much love of ourselves, and the world are sore enemies to uprightness of heart or life; he who will know no Lord but Christ, and no safety like that of God, and no good like that which is heavenly, his spirit is sound, and his life will be upright.

3. Now to all that hath been said, let me add a few daily meditations, which may be of great force to keep us in upright walking.

Four considerations more.

1. One, that God searcheth my heart, and still looks upon my ways. Whether shall I go from thy presence, said David, Psalm 139. And all things are naked, and open to him, with whom we have to deal, said the Apostle, Heb. 4. There can be no action hid from an all-seeing eye. Nor can the ground, and motives, and ends of our actions be secret to him who searcheth the heart and reins, and understands our thoughts a far off: we may blind the eyes of men, but we cannot delude the eye of God. The Lord seeth me in the dark, and my private courses are as obvious to him, as the mountain to the sun at noon-day; what way I take he well observes, and which way my heart runs, what it favors, and what it dislikes; what I do, and what end I have in all my doings, and what principles and rules sway within the chambers of my breast: This daily meditation may be of force to look

both to the matter of our doings, and to the manner; and so incline us to upright walking.

2. Another, That I must one day appear before God, and then all secrets shall be disclosed. The upright man may be shadowed out by a heart in a clear glass, through which any one may see the pulse and motion of it.

But this is sure, that however in this life, our actions and ways may be wrapped up with many devices and hidden conceits of Hypocrisy. Yet at the day of Judgment every man shall be thoroughly opened, anatomized, as it were, and orderly cut up. What his heart did love or hate, what public or private wickedness it did act, and would not forsake, what pretenses to cover secret sinning's, what balking's and declining's of known duties, what ingenuous or sordid ends in all, and every performance; all these, and more then these must be spread open at the day of Judgment, before the eyes of men and Angels.

Of which did we believingly consider, probable it is that we would attend to uprightness of heart and life, to present a fair copy of ourselves to the eye of God.

3. A little unevenness will mar the comfort of a great deal of uprightness.

There are two sorts of unevenness in walking. One, is Habitual and allowed, which mars the just hopes and expectations of glory. Forasmuch as that is either gross profaneness, or cunning Hypocrisy, both which are excluding sins.

Another, is Actual, which is a trip, a stumble, an out-stripping in the course of a pious walking. I confess it may befall the best, yet it will

embitter our souls: All the good course which a man hath led, and actions which he hath sincerely done, cannot so much comfort him, as many particular obliquities and unevenness's may sad and perplex him. As in a wrench of the foot, the present pain shuts out the sense of all former strength; or as in the sickness of the stomach, the present disease closeth up the sense of all health; so the particular miscarriages in a Christian course they may fold up, or at least suspend the taste of all the sensible comfort which uprightness formerly yielded and shot forth. They may break the bones of David, Psalm 51, and melt the soul of Peter, and cast us both to darkness of trouble and sorrow, and the labor of many active endeavors, before we can see God to be our God again, and be persuaded that our estate is really right and sound.

4. That God is to be set up above all. It is an hard (yet it is an useful) thing to ascribe unto God the Original of excellencies, that he is God, and that Power, Might, and Glory, and obedience, belongs unto him, that he made us, and not we ourselves, and that our beings as they are depending upon his power, so our ways, upon his Rule; and he is Lord of Lord's, all are under him, and being the universal efficient, he ought also to be our universal end.

God is set up above all other. 1. When his Rule and Word sways us against all other. 2. When his Glory is singly or supremely aimed at above all other things, and both these complete uprightness.

FINIS.

# **THE THRONE OF MERCY, AND THE TRIBUNAL OF JUSTICE**

THE THRONE OF MERCY, AND THE TRIBUNAL OF JUSTICE,  
ERECTED IN THE REMISSIBLENESS OF ALL SIN, AND IN THE  
IRREMISSIBLENESS OF THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

In two sermons on Mat. 12.31. Preached before an Honorable  
Auditory.

By Obadiah Sedgwick, B. D.

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THE THRONE of MERCY, AND TRIBUNAL of JUSTICE.

MAT. 12.31.

Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be  
forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall  
not be forgiven unto men.

The best of actions are oftentimes subject to misconstructions; and a  
busy malice will either find or fasten spots upon the purest  
innocence. This Chapter is the Map wherein you may read these  
truths. Christ cannot speak or do, but an envious Pharisee will pry,  
and censure, and slander. Nothing is more offensive to an ill eye,  
then the light; and that which much afflicts an ill heart, is the beauty  
of that good which it sees in, or done by others.

Let Christ's Disciples pluck but some ears of corn, only to make necessary satisfaction to natural hunger, verse 1. the Pharisee will presently pluck at Christ himself, and murmur him not to be a pattern of obedience, but a pattern of licentiousness, Behold thy Disciples do that which is not lawful on the Sabbath day. verse 2.

If Christ doth step from the field into the Synagogue, verse 9. there also shall he have the catching attendance of the Pharisee. Malicious hatred is like the shadow which will pursue the body of pious actions. Here he no sooner finds a fit object for his mercy, but the Pharisees endeavored to divert the execution by an ensnaring scruple, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days, verse 10. as though the duties of piety jostled out all offices of charity, and that God, who commanded sacrifice, had not also preferred mercy. They themselves would reach forth the courtesy of relief to a distressed beast, v. 11. and therefore Christ might justly lend his hand of merciful Charity to a diseased person, verse 12.

In the 22. ver. He heals one possessed of a devil: a miracle that begat amazement amongst the people, and some kind of credence concerning his Divinity; but in the Pharisees it vented plain Blasphemy. This fellow casts out devils by the prince of devils, verse 24. A bitter and high reproach, and such as was for the truth, neither probable nor possible; For, First, Will Satan cast out Satan? He that seeks the constant support, will he willingly overthrow his own Kingdom? Secondly, Can Satan cast out Satan? he that is cast out, must be of lesser power; and he that doth cast out, must be of greater power: but can Satan be greater and lesser than himself? These Arguments could not but convince their judgments, yet they did not extinguish their malice; they could not deny these to be truths, yet will they pertinaciously deny their affections to them; what they could not answer, they would resist; and though they saw sufficient

reason and evidence, yet they are resolved not to believe, but to contemn Christ; Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, &c. Which words are like the two mountains of Moses, Mount Ebal, and Mount Gorazim, of blessing and of curses: here is the sweetest mercy, and the purest Justice, or the Throne of Mercy, and the Tribunal of Justice; or here is set out two glorious Attributes of God, Mercy and Justice.

I. You have the Throne of Mercy erected in these words, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven; wherein you have,

First, The universality of the object; not quoddam, but quodvis peccatum, every sin, or all manner of sin; which yet must not be taken simply, but restrictively; not all manner of sin in comparison of sin to the rule that forbids it, for then the sin against the Holy Ghost should be remitted; but all manner of sin in opposition to the sin against the Holy Ghost, i.e. any sin that is pardonable, all manner of sin,

First, Whether you respect the several species of sin may be remitted, Noah 's drunkenness, Abraham 's lying, David 's Adultery, Manasseh 's Idolatry, Peters denial of Christ were remissible.

Secondly, Whether you respect the many degrees and intentions of sin, either in the multiplied iterations of sinful acts, or in the accessory aggravations of them from the force of circumstances in time, place, person, object, end, &c.

And that we may not doubt hereof, a special instance is given in a sin of deepest die and desert, viz. Blasphemy, this also may be remitted. The schools tells us, it is such a sin as either detracts from God that which belongs unto him of right, or fastens on God reproachfully and

disgracefully that which is not convenient to so pure and sublime Essence and Majesty.

And the Scripture tells us, that it wounds or strikes through the name of God, Lev. 24. 16. nothing so dear to us as our name and reputation, and therefore we are sensible of the least indignities which touch there; God doth himself profess how tender and jealous he is of his name and glory; it goes very near to the quick; yet such is the Miracle of his gracious disposition, that he hath mercy even for Blasphemy. I was a Blasphemer, (saith Paul, 1 Tim. 1. 13.) but I obtained mercy. Only know, that Blasphemy here pardonable, is not that which springs from malice and hatred after conviction, but that of ignorance, as Paul's 's, or of infirmity, as Peter 's.

Secondly, The quality of the act [shall be forgiven;] No such word as that for a sinner, his life and joy lies in it. Some by these words understand,

1. Certainty of pardon: Thus Theophylact, who holds the event so sure, that there needs no repentance to obtain pardon for sins not committed against the Holy Ghost. This erroneous opinion needs the kindness of a large pardon.
2. Desert of pardon: Thus Origen, l. 1. <H&G>, c. 3. Qui peccat in filium hominis veniam dignus est, quia videtur in ignorantiam decidisse; there is some ground of Apology in this: this opinion is not very unsound, but not genuine.
3. Facility of pardon, thus Jansen in Concord. Evang-Remittetur, non quasi cunctis hominibus remittetur, sed quod facile remittetur; there is not so much difficulty to get these, as the other to be pardoned.

4. Not Eventum infallibilem sed possibilem, shall be forgiven, i.e. they are such as are not excluded from hope and offer of pardon, not that they are certainly remitted to all in the event, or that they deserve pardon, or that they are easily pardoned; they do not contract a peremptory incapacity of Mercy, but that they may, and if repentance follow, shall certainly be forgiven.

Thirdly, The indefiniteness of the subject (unto men) not a man guilty of any manner of sin, except that against the Holy Ghost; but such is the rich grace of the great Court of Mercy, that he may take out his pardon. Christ doth not say, not one sin, but All sin, not all sin of one kind, but all manner of sin; all sin of any kind shall be forgiven, not to one man, but to any one; unto men, unto any one of the sons of men: whence we may conclude this comfortable truth.

#### DOCTRINE.

That there is a possibility of pardon for any Sinner whatsoever, and for any sin whatsoever, to all men for all manner of sin, except the sin against the holy Ghost. Hence the infiniteness of Divine Mercy is in Mica 7. 19. compared to the depths of the sea: The Ocean is of that vast capacity, that it can swallow up the highest mountains, as well as cover the lowest Mole-hill. And Isa. 44. 22. it is compared to the strength of the sun, which can scatter the darkest clouds, as well as consume the thinnest vapors. There is in man a continual fountain of sin, in God a continual fountain of Mercy, Zac. 13. 1. still running; yea, there is in man multitude of sins which stream from that corrupt fountain; and there is in God Multitudes of Mercies to heal and stop those various currents; Psalm 51. 1. According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out mine offenses.

In the prosecution of this Truth, I shall speak to three things; 1. The Explication of the terms. 2. The demonstration of the Truth. 3. The



Application.

1. The Explication of the terms.

1. Forgiveness of sin is a gracious act of God in and through-Christ, discharging the believing and repenting sinner from the guilt and punishment of sin.

It is an Act of God.] The Donatists hold that man could forgive the sins of men: and St. Austin challengeth them for so bold an Assertion, that in this they are worse than the Pharisees who maintained this truth; Who can forgive sins, but God?

Object. It is true, Christ committed to his Apostles a Ministerial Absolution; in his Name, and virtute officii, to bind and lose sins.

Sol. But if we speak of an Authoritative Right and immediate Power, thus only God forgives. Life and death are only in the absolute power of the Supreme Lord, and because our sins are directly committed against his Justice, therefore it belongs only to his Mercy to forgive.

2. It is a gracious Act.] No way deserved by the sinner: Gratia indebita liberata, said St. Austin. Hence in Scripture you find our forgiveness like a stream issuing out of rich Mercy, Great love, and the riches of Grace: and the Prophet speaking of forgiveness, usually adjoins, For thy Mercy sake, for thine own sake, intimating that forgiveness is a free Act, not purchased, but given, not merited, but granted. There is I acknowledge, A double graciousness in the discharge of an offender.

One without any satisfaction at all. I am much mistaken if Socinus and his Atheistical Accomplices run not this way.

Another is, When the satisfaction of a surety is accepted for the principal debt. In this respect is our forgiveness gracious; not that Justice is not at all satisfied, but that the offender himself never satisfied it; he is discharged by the price which a blessed Mediator laid down.

3. Discharging the sinner of guilt and punishment.] There are two things in sin.

One is the stain, pollution, or defiling quality of it, and this is the Object of Sanctification, which is to it as a medicine to a disease, or as water to spots, or as health to sickness, gradually altering, healing, cleansing.

Another is the Guilt, which binds over the sinner to punishment, wrath and damnation; this is the object of forgiveness; in it sin is not healed, but pardoned: the disposition of the sinner is not altered, but his condition. When the King pardons a thief, his theft now shall not prejudice him, so in God's merciful forgiveness, sinful guilt is so effectually removed, that finally and redundantly it shall never prejudice the eternal life and salvation of the person: much more might be said of this subject, but I am unwilling to insist on anymore than serves to enlighten the point in hand.

2. Of this Forgiveness there is a Possibility; you must distinguish twixt the Infallibility of forgiveness, which is not to every sin whatsoever, or to any sin whatsoever, without some condition: A grant of actual pardon issues not out of the Court of Mercy, unless persons believe and repent. It is true, there is an infiniteness of Divine mercy considered in itself: but in the dispensation and exercise of it, it is pleased to bound and confine itself to some sinners only, namely to such as forsake their sins.

Possibility of forgiveness. Though perhaps the sinner never comes actually to partake of mercy, but perhaps refuseth his pardon, yet is there a possibility, and that in a twofold respect:

One, In respect of God, who doth not in his Word shut the door of Mercy against him, nor exclude him; nay, so far is he from that, as that he offers freely the blood of Christ, which was shed for the Remission of sins.

Another, In respect of the sinner, there is (except he sin the sin against the Holy Ghost) a Receptivity; he is not utterly incapable, he hath not such absolute contradictions to the Tenor of Divine Mercy, but that God may without violation of his Glory, confirm mercy on him; my meaning is, his condition is not peremptorily sealed up for wrath, but there is a space and away for mercy, and some pleas may be made for it.

3. Though the sins of a person may be for their nature great, for their kind, gross, vile, abominable, for their circumstances, high and crying, died over with many intensive aggravations, not only superstitious, but flagitious enormities as well as infirmities, iterated as well as acted: Before Conversion, and after Conversion, all these are capable of pardon.

2. The Demonstration of the truth. The Extent of Mercy, whereupon ariseth the possible pardon of all manner of sin, is most evident to any considerable apprehension, which can or will seriously weigh.

1. The volumes and records of heaven, I mean the sacred Word revealing and testifying this.

1. In the commands of the vilest sinners to repent; They in Esa. 1. who for the foulness of their wickedness are styled Rulers of Sodom,

and people of Gomorrah, verse 10. and their sins are called scarlet and crimson sins, verse 18. yet, verse 16. are called upon to repent, Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of you doings from before mine eyes; Cease to do evil, learn to do well. So in Jer. 3. 1. Though their sin was spiritual Adultery, they had forsaken the true God, yet are they called upon to Return: Now this is a truth, that though the Precepts of Repentance do not imply an infallibility of the practice of Repentance, yet they do imply a possibility of it, and consequently of Mercy.

2. In the vastness of pardoning promises: the promise of pardon is equal to Repentance. Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Here he speaks to the wicked and to the unrighteous person, and indefinitely to any, and every one of them: and assures them if they do repent, God will have mercy on them.

Object. And whereas they might object, yea, but our sins are many and great.

Sol. He replies, that God will abundantly pardon, he will multiply pardon, as if he had said, do but repent, and fear not Mercy, whatever your former sins have been. So in Ezek. 18. 21. If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes— verse 22. All his transgressions which he hath committed they shall not be mentioned unto him: Mark that phrase, All the sins which he hath committed.

2. The actual grants of mercy and pardon to the greatest sinners; to instance only in a few.

Adam was one of the greatest sinners that ever lived, though not in this respect that he continued long in the practice of sin, yet in a causal sense, he not only committed a most high sin himself, but was also the cause and occasion of all the horrible sins and dishonors against God that ever was, or all the sons of men have done, or will commit, yet God pardoned him, when he made a Covenant with him in Christ, Gen. 3.

Manasseh seems to be a volume bound up with all kinds of notorious sins, and with every kind of sinful aggravation: view his description in 2 Chron. 33. 3.

3. He reared up Altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

4. Yea, In the house of God he built Altars.

5 For all the host of heaven did he build Altars in the courts of the house of God [A most audacious Idolater who durst provoke God to his very face, in bringing of the Ark and Dagon together.]

6. And he caused his Children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom.

7. He offered his own Children in sacrifice to the devil.

8. Also he observed times, and used enchantments, and witchcrafts, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with Wizards, and wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke to Anger.

9. He made Judah and Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the Heathens.

10. And the Lord spake unto Manasseh, but he would not hearken.

One would scarcely imagine that the heart of man could be the womb of such hideous villainies, or that Mercy would ever respect such a sinner, yet verse 12. He humbled himself greatly before the Lord. verse 13. And prayed unto him, and God was entreated of him, and heard his supplication.

Who would have risen so high in sin, but a Manasseh? and what mercy would have so exceedingly condescended to forgive, but that of God?

Paul, before his Conversion, his sins were very high, so high, that as Theophilact, and others well observe, they had but one ingredient to stave them off from being the sin against the Holy Ghost, viz. Ignorance, 1 Tim. 1. 13. he presents a brief survey of his great transgressions.

He was a Blasphemer, (i.) one who did cast contumely and reproach on God and Christ, whose nature was Divine, and therefore every way venerable, but he scoffed and mocked at Christ and his Truths.

He was a Persecutor too, he did not only deride Christ, but endeavored to exile and banish him out of the world, to thrust him away from the society of sinners, who in so great mercy came to save sinners. Whereupon St. Austin judged well, *Nemo acrior Paulo inter Persecutores, nemo ergo peior inter peccatores*; Paul was the quickest persecutor, and therefore the vilest sinner.

Nay, and he was injurious; he did not only exercise his thoughts and heart, his tongue and invectives against Christ, but his hand and strength; he did consent to the death of persons for Christ. To have a hand in blood is a crying sin, but how heinous is it to have a hand in the blood of Christ! to crucify him afresh in his members, yet saith he, I obtained mercy, A blasphemer, yet I obtained mercy; A

Persecutor, yet I obtained mercy; Injurious, yet I obtained mercy: I will give you but one instance more, out of 1 Cor. 6. 9. Neither fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, not effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with mankind.

verse 10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Here are some sinners which have destroyed a whole world, and others which have started up hell on earth to devour sinners, and all of them such as meritoriously shut the gate of happiness, yet mercy hath stretched out the Scepter to some persons guilty of them.

Verse 11. And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

### 3. The essential and natural disposition of God.

Mercy is not a quality extrinsically imposed or acquired, but intrinsical and most natural, and therefore exercisable with freest facility, and readiest constancy. The eye is not weary with seeing, nor God with pardoning, because that is natural to the eye, and this is to God: This you know, the power of anything is answerable to the nature. The nature of God is infinite, and so is his power: *Omnipotentem Medico nullus insanabilis occurrit languor*, saith Isidore Pelusiota. And St. Austin, *Grave est quod habeo sed ad Omnipotentem fugio*. In Psal. 51. Therefore is it that his Mercies are styled, Riches of mercies, and multitudes of mercies, and great mercies, and compared to the depths of the sea, Mic. 7. and to the strength of the sun, Isa. 44. and to the vastness of the heavens in comparison of the earth, Isa 55.

As Mercifulness is natural in him, so is it gracious; The Lord merciful and gracious, Exod. 34. If mercy were to be bought, there were no hope for any sinner, but being free, now there is a possibility for any. A sinner may plead for mercy even out of the goodness of mercy.

As it is dispensed graciously without desert on our part: so likewise delightfully without repining on God's part. He delighteth in Mercy, saith the Prophet, Mic. 7. 18. It is a work that God would do. Two things God delights in, Our Conversion, and our Remission.

4. The virtue and sufficiency of the blood of Christ which was shed for the remission of sins, Mat. 26. 28. that was one end to procure our pardon: but for what sins, that is not expressed, because no sin is excluded: you cannot say that Christ died only for small sins, or only for great sins; nay, the offer of Christ to all sinners doth confirm it; How can this offer be indefinite? How can it be said, Whosoever believes shall be saved, unless you grant a possibility of mercy.

5. The effects of mercy in the Creature, which point to an infinite fullness in the Creator. The virtue in the cause ever exceeds that in the effect; and according to the generality in the cause, is the intention of the virtue in that cause. If I discern any light in the beams, I apprehend much more in the Sun: If I feel any moisture in smaller drops, I know there is much more in the large ocean. All the mercy in the Creature is derivative, and as so many beams and drops lead us to the infinite fullness of mercy in God, the universal and prime fountain of all compassion. God himself reasons from the compassion of a mother to her own; and Christ tells us, If we forgive those that trespass against us, our heavenly Father will also forgive us our trespasses. Surely if we must forgive seventy times, God doth much more multiply forgiveness's.



6. It is all one to the Lord to forgive great sins as well as small. Luke 7. 41. There was a Creditor which had two Debtors, the one ought him 500. pence, and the other 50. pence, and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. There was a difference of the debt 50. and 500. one of them many hundred times exceeding the other; the debts were different, but the forgiveness was equal, and the manner of forgiveness, the easiness was alike, both of them was frankly, (i) freely, readily forgiven.

Now I proceed to the application of all this. Is there a possibility for the pardon of any sin.

1. An impenitent sinner is utterly inexcusable, who will continue in sin where so much grace doth abound. I do confess, that many turn the grace of God into wantonness, and because of the richness & readiness of divine mercy, therefore presume to add drunkenness to thirst, giving the reins to all licentiousness and obduration of Spirit, and why? because God is merciful. But hear what the Apostle saith: Rom. 2. Knowest thou not, O man, that the mercies of God should lead thee to Repentance; but thou through the hardness and impenitency of thy heart, treasurest unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath. I pray you to remember,

1. That the end of mercy, is not confirmation in sin, but a Reformation of sin. There is mercy with thee, therefore shalt thou be feared, said David.

2. That Mercy is the sweetest cord to draw us off from sin. When God might justly doom a sinner, yet he graciously presents his mercy to pardon him. Lo, yet there is mercy; I beseech thee by the mercies of God, to leave thy sins; this is a melting argument.

3. That Mercy is the strongest argument to draw men off from Sin. The torments of hell cannot work so much as the mercies of heaven. Nothing in the world will prevail upon a sinner, if mercy doth not.

4. If mercy doth not prevail, a man's Damnation befalls him without all Apology. Ah, what a sad appearing will it be for us, when we must die, and stand before God, and the Lord shall in that day object to us before men and Angels. This is the person unto whom I freely offered the pardon of all the sins that ever he committed; and offered him in the word of God, that if he would leave his sins, I would forgive them, but he preferred his sins before my mercy; For lying vanities he forsook his mercies. And thy own conscience shall then testify that thus it was, I had mercy offered again and again, and yet I would continue in my sins. Judge what blackness of darkness, and degrees of eternal confusion thou shall contract, when so great a door of mercy is opened, but for a lust sake, thou wilt not enter in, thou wilt not accept of it.

2. Then no sinner hath cause sufficient to despair. I know full well that before God makes us sensible of sin, we are apt to presume, but being once made sensible, we are very apt to despair. It is the great art of the devil, either to make us die in a senseless calm, or else to perish in an unquiet storm; either to make us undervalue our sins, and so to slay us with security, or else to undervalue mercy, and so to sink us with despair: Oh, saith the awakened conscience, my sins are so many, and so great, I have continued long in them, gone on in them after knowledge, after the invitations of mercy, after the strokes of afflictions, after many a secret check, and bitter words from my conscience; now there remains no hope, no, no; others whose sins are fewer in number, lightet in weight, not edged and raised by such circumstances; they may hope, but I can have no confidence; mercy will never look upon such a one as I am; Nay, but readest thou not

the Text, and they are the words of a Savior, That all manner of sin may find forgiveness: though there because enough to despair of thy own strength, yet there is no cause to despair of God's mercy.

Two things only remember here.

1. Despair is no remedy to any sinner. It may bind on his sins the faster, but never heals the soul, nor easeth the conscience, nor pleaseth God.

2. Whatsoever thy sins have been, if at length thou canst find a heart to repent, God can find mercy to pardon. I affirm it, no sinner ever perished because God wanted skill to help, but because he wanted a heart to make use of his help.

3. But the main use I would make of this point, is To persuade men to make out for this pardon: you see here the extent of Mercy, the possibility of pardon. Why do you look one upon another? (said Jacob to his sons) Behold, I have heard there is corn in Egypt, get you down thither, that we may live, and not die: Why stand you amazed and backward, you that are so full of spiritual wants; why come you not to mercy that you may live and not die? here is a storehouse of mercy, Behold, said the servants of Benhadab, We have heard that the King of Israel is a merciful King, let us go to him, peradventure he will save thy life, 1 King 20. 31. We hear that the King of heaven is merciful, and yet we address not ourselves unto him; we hear that there is Balm in Gilead, yet we sue not to be healed; we hear that the Arms of Christ are yet open, and we run not to be embraced; Ah! our folly and madness, that being so greatly diseased, we fly our Physic, that being so in deep rebellions, we lay not down our weapons, and submit not upon the tender of the freest pardon. As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the death of a sinner; Why will you die, O house of Israel? Why do we by lying

vanities forsake our Mercies? how my soul bleeds at the wretched hardness of our hearts. God is merciful, and we are sinful; yea, we are the more bold in sin, because God is the more abundant in mercy, Continue in sin, because Grace doth abound, Rom. 6. 1. Thus do we abuse the grace God to wantonness, and bane our souls by the sweet Remedy of sin. There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared, said David: and he who confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy, saith Solomon: and knowest thou not that the mercies of God should lead thee to Repentance, saith Paul: consider,

1. The presence of Mercy saves not, but the acceptance: the offer of a pardon delivers not the Malefactor, but the receiving of it: only the embracing makes us happy: mercy proves not mercy, but by acceptance; the contempt of it strangely alters it into Justice.

2. The despising of mercy leaves without all excuse; what hast thou to urge against God, who could not urge and fasten his mercy on thy soul? yes, thou wouldst have a license but not a pardon. I know thou warmest thy soul with the sound of mercy, not to abate, but to encourage thy sinful appetite: Why dost thou not break thy arm, because there is a skillful Surgeon, or fall into the strongest diseases, because there is a skillful Physician?

3. Continuance in sin, and efficacy of Mercy are inconsistent: thou through thy impenitent heart, instead of mercy, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. 2. 5.

Now that which I would persuade you too, is to be wise for your souls, and to get your sins to be forgiven and pardoned. If a company of sick men did hear of an able Physician that could and would heal them, who would not be carried to him? or what Malefactor is there so outrageously mad but that would make out to the King, if he were assured that the King would pardon him.

Two things only I will propound, Motives and Means.

1. The Motives to stir us up to get our sins forgiven, are these;

1. We are in such a case that we need pardon: yea, that pardon should be multiplied unto us. Indeed were we not sinners, then we should need no forgiveness, or could we of ourselves make or exact satisfaction to divine Justice, then might we stand off from mercy: but alas! we are sinners by nature and by life; all our days are days of sin; the hairs are not more on our heads, then the number of our sins are on our consciences: they are so many that who can tell how often he offendeth; therefore we need mercy to forgive: yea, and we are without strength: we can find strength to sin, but who can discharge for those sins: the price and ransom could never yet be found in any sinners hand.

2. How woeful is the unpardoned condition: men go on in sin, and make a work of it, but speak slightly of it, but the truth is,

1. Sin makes God our enemy, therefore it is called enmity in Ephe. 2. and a provocation, because it stirs up the wrath of God against us, which wrath if it should seize on thy soul, Ah, miserable man then, thou canst neither suffer it, nor decline it. Jesus Christ standing in our stead, felt some of it, and it made him sweat drops of blood, and to cry out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? How then shall a poor weak guilty sinner stand under the fierceness of his indignation?

2. Sin unpardoned makes conscience our enemy. As long as the Lord hath a quarrel with us for sin, conscience may not speak any peace unto us. Now the Lord be merciful unto us, if the Lord should awaken thy conscience, and set thy sins in order, who knows what would become of thee? Knowest thou the power of conscience when

it is opened to behold a God angry, and sin unpardoned. Read the vigor of it in Cain, and the terror of it in Judas, how it crashed their spirits, and brought the one to the utmost desperation, and the other to the grave and hell in despite of all former advantages.

3. And who can tell how soon he may die. Go and listen sometimes at a dying bed, the person quakes, and the bed trembles, and the heart sighs! what is it that the man speaks so to himself? Ah, Lord, saith he, I would not die! and then tears trickle down his cheeks, and his heart is ready to fly in pieces. But why wouldst thou not die; O no, my sins are many, I now see them, and feel the bitter wrath of God for them; Oh! my sins they are not pardonable, and who can dwell with everlasting burnings, or stand before the holy and just God.

3. What unspeakable comfort is it to have our sins forgiven. Son said Christ, Mat. 9. 4. Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee. When the Israelites got through the red sea, and looked back, and saw their enemies all drowned, what reviving was this; if the drowning of corporal enemies be such a cause of joy, who could but kill our bodies; what cause of exultation for the drowning of spiritual enemies, of sins in the depths of mercy, which else would have destroyed our souls. How shall I express the comfort of it? David saith all in one word, The man is blessed whose iniquities are forgiven. Now blessedness is the center of all joy and comfort. Tell me brethren what think you?

1. Of freedom from hell, that you shall never see the place of the damned; Is that a matter of comfort? why? If sin be pardoned, hell is discharged. There is no condemnation, if Remission.

2. Of God's loving kindness. David said, it was life, nay, better than life: Oh, what is this? God is reconciled unto me in Christ: he looks on me not as a Judge, but as a father with ardent affections and

compassions; why? if sin be pardoned, God is reconciled, enmity slain, all differences twixt you and God are taken off.

3. Of the blood of Christ. Is it worth the having, or of interest in Christ, it is worth the enjoying; why? if pardoned, then doubtless united to Christ; and how many and great are the benefits that result and follow upon union.

4▪ Of Peace of conscience. It is a mercy that Conscience can and may speak peace, cheer us up, assure us, stand for us against men and devils: Why? when sin is pardoned, conscience may not accuse; it hath nothing to do, but direct us in good ways, and to comfort us with the testimonies of our pardon and Reconciliation with God.

5. Of all outward mercies: Oh! what a life doth a pardoned sinner live. If he looks up to heaven, all is peace; if he looks down to earth, all is comfort: he hath lands, and sins pardoned too, wife, children, honors, friends, yea, and his sins are pardoned too.

6. Lastly, What think you of confidence in death. When you are leaving the earth, then to be assured, your next journey is to heaven. After grace to find glory: would you ever be willing to die; be confident in death, live in death, live after death, O then get your sins, whatsoever they are to be pardoned.

11. The Means: if you ask what may we do to get our sins forgiven, I shall answer briefly.

1. Find out your sins, and know them: and that is done by the study of the Law which gives us the knowledge of sin.

2. Beg of God for a contrite heart, so as to be sensible of sin, and weary of it, and broken for it. The weeping woman was forgiven,

Luke 7. 44, 47.

3. And also for a penitential heart. Repent, saith Peter, that your sins may be blotted out, Act. 3. 19. See Isa. 55. 7.

4. And for a Believing heart in the Lord Jesus. In whose blood, and for whose sake we obtain Remission of our sins, 2 Cor. 5. 20. God was in Christ reconciling the world, — not imputing our sins.

5. And for a forgiving heart: see Mat. 6. 14, 15.

6. Make it a daily and vehement petition for Repentance and forgiveness, as did David, Psalm 51. and sue all out in the name of Christ.

Object. But these things are hard and laborious.

Sol. But they are for mercy. O Mercy, I perish without thee, and therefore I will not live without thee, sleep without thee, die without thee. I will pray for mercy, I will go to Christ for mercy; and shall it seem so grievous to me, to leave a sin which will damn me, to get mercy which will save me.

II. The Tribunal of Justice erected in these words, But the Blasphemy against the holy Ghost shall not be forgiven.

These words are the saddest expressions of purest Justice that ever were uttered. Oh, what is the height, what the depth of this, for a sinner to rise to such a peculiar degree and form of sinning, as forever to distinguish himself from all hope of mercy, never, never, never to be pardoned.

In this there are two things to be inquired into,



1. What this Blasphemy against the holy Ghost is.

2. The irremissibleness of this Blasphemy.

Touching the first of these, there are several opinions, and no marvel; for to find the right nature of this sin is a work not of the least difficulty; In *Scriptures sanctis nulla major questio, nulla difficilior invenitur*, saith Austin.

1. The Novations thought every sin after Baptism, especially denial of Christ in time of perfection, to be the sin against the Holy Ghost. I deny not, but each sin that a Christian commits, may in some sense be called a sin, but strictly it is not the sin against the holy Ghost. This error is abundantly refuted by Cyprian, Hieron, Austin, &c. and is repugnant to all religious reason; because,

First, Thus there should be no opposition twixt all manner of sin, and the sin against the Holy Ghost in the Text.

Secondly, Thus no man should ever be saved, or have sin pardoned. And for the Denial of Christ in time of persecution, though indeed it be a very great sin, yet because it may arise not out of the strength of hatred against Christ, but out of the strength of fear, and from human weakness, it is without doubt an act, though sinful, yet pardonable, yet it hath been pardoned, as we read in Peter.

2. Origen thinks, that the Defection from participation of the Holy Ghost, is this Blasphemy, and so he placeth the nature of it in Apostasy. *Qui dignus habitus est spiritus sancti participatione, & retro conversus fuerit, hic reipsa & opere blasphemasse dicitur in Spiritum sanctum*. This is in part true; for Apostasy is a necessary concomitant of this Blasphemy: but yet it expresseth not the full, and complete, and certain nature of this sin, because,

First, Every defection from the truth, or defection alone, is not sin. One may be an Apostate, and yet not sin the sin against the Holy Ghost; he may recedere a fide, and yet not in fidem irruere, and therefore St. Jerome upon this very agreement to Marcella, saith well, Aliud est Christianum se negare, aliud Christum Diabolum dicere: and to that purpose likewise St. Cyprian, Epist. 53.

Secondly much more is required to the constitution of this sin than a defection; yet we deny not, but that a universal apostasy is necessary hereunto.

Thirdly, Austin delivers his opinion by divers phrases in divers places, but most fairly in Epist. 50, which is ad Bonifacium comitem, It is Duritia cordis usque ad finem hujus vitae, qua homo recusat accipere remissionem peccatorum: where you may apprehend, according to his Judgment, three acts in this sin; First, Hardness of heart. Secondly, Perseverance in this hardness. Thirdly, Refusal of remission, which is through malicious obstinacy. This opinion, though it be true in part, yet it is not complete and punctual, because,

First, All this may be without blasphemy.

Secondly, All this cannot be till the last gasp, and yet so may the sin against the holy Ghost be.

Fourthly, The Schoolmen generally run one after another, and place the nature of it in obstinacy or malice: so that to sin against the Holy Ghost, is with them to sin out of a resolved or determined malice: this you may see more fully deliveted by Aquinas and Alexander Ales; which sinning of malice, is not barely a vicious and habitual inclination, but further it hath the access of contemptuous rejecting of those things, which might remove this malicious sinning. Hence it

is, that they break this general into many particulars, as First, Of Desperation, whereby the malicious offender casts away the anchor of hope, willfully perishing in the gulf of sin. Secondly, Of Presumption, whereby he willfully rejects all fear of God. Thirdly, Of Impenitency. Fourthly, Of Obstinacy. Fifthly, Of Impugning known truth. Sixthly, And envying and maligning of Grace in our brethren.

But to omit diversity of opinions in this argument, I shall as fully as I can touch the nature of this blasphemy against the holy Ghost in this brief description.

It is an extraordinary sin wherein the apostatizing Blasphemer despitefully rejects, and maliciously persecutes the Gospel and Truth of Christ after a manifest conviction by the holy Ghost, let us take this description asunder, and consider these parts.

First, It is an extraordinary sin] both for subject, and for degree. For Subject because it is a sin (in comparison with other sins) nothing so frequent, it is not so common in practice. And also for Degree, it is a sin made of the very cream and spirits, as it were of the vilest and most condemning forms of transgressing; but to let that go as being only general.

Secondly, The subject of this sin, An Apostatizing Blasphemer.

1. An Apostate, and therefore in Heb. 6. 6. where this sin is described, the persons guilty of it are said to fall away: not only to fall (for so may the faithfulest servant of truth do, he may fall in the way) but to fall away, to turn the heart, and to turn the back upon truth, to renounce our colors, it is an universal Apostasy. The Schoolmen well observe two things in a Apostasy! One is *Recessio a fide*: the other is, *Accessio ad sectam*, and I think there was never any branded with the sin against the Holy Ghost, but proved guilty of

both; as Julian forsook the truth, and turned Pagan: Hence that conclusion ariseth amongst them, Omnis Apostate est Hereticus.

2. A Blasphemer. What a Blasphemer is, you may collect from the description already given of Blasphemy, he is one who is contumelious or opprobrious to God and Christ, either in Nature, Name or Doctrine; such as the Pharisees here, who fastened on Christ the most reproachful obloquies, of a Samaritan, Devil, companion and friend to Publicans; or as Julian styling Christ in derision, the Galilean and the Carpenters son. To understand this more clearly, know that Blasphemy is sometime taken,

First, Most generally, and so it may be terminated in man as the Object. Tit. 3. 2. Blaspheme no man, <H&G>; Thus he is a Blasphemer, who assumes any disgraceful term, which may blemish the credit of a man.

Secondly, Less generally, and so it is appliable to any word uttered in the reproach of God, or Christ, or the Gospel of Christ, whether deliberately or unadvisedly: in which respect it may be verified in some cases of the best Saints, who affix that unto God in their hast of spiritual trouble, which unbeseems his purity and truth.

Thirdly, Strictly, and so it is a malicious reproachful word against the known Doctrine of Christ: so that the Blasphemer, who is the true subject of this sin, is not he that speaks evil of other men, nor he, who through inconsideration, or violence, or vehement distemper of passion, or any extrinsical pressure, lets fall some unbefitting speeches of God, or Christ, or his Gospel, but he that doth this out of a resolvedness and willfulness.

A man may blaspheme two ways, either Enunciative, as to affirm that Christ is a Devil, or God is unjust, or the Scriptures are a lie; or

Imperative or Optative, by wishing any inglorious thing on God, or Christ and his Truths; both of which may be in actu signato, when the person doth express out in words all this: or in actu exercito, when all this is in conceptu mentis & proposito. Though perhaps he doth speak what is true, and honorable of God and Christ, yet it is modo irrisorio & contemptivo, (as Cajetan observes) after a disgracing and despicable manner. Now then the subject of the sin against the holy Ghost is such a Blasphemy, who doth most unworthily think of Christ, and this is verbum mentis, inward Blasphemy in conceptu, and who doth basely deride and scoff at him and his Truths, jeering at his holiness; and the excellency, and purity of his ways, and this is verbum vocis outward Blasphemy. The which is not occasioned by coercion of Tyranny, as some through torment may speak with their lips that which their heart abhors; nor by the phrensy of the disease, when a person not mentis compos, talks idly he knows not what, but it is a set Blasphemy and deliberate; formal Blasphemy arising from a direct intention to eclipse, and despise, and diminish and disgrace the glory of Christ in himself, truths, ways, servants: and it may be that even in this sense those that thus sin, are said to put Christ to an open shame, Heb. 6. 6.

3. The object of this, the Gospel of Christ. The common Object of Blasphemy is God considered in Essence and Revelation, and man: The Object of Blasphemy less generally taken, goes not lower than God and his Truths; but the special Object of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, is the saving part of the Word, It is that Gospel of Christ: Heb, 10. 29. The Son of God, and the blood of the Covenant, are the Objects of this impiety. O how this raises this reproachful sin: It is a high sin to reproach any Attribute of God, to reproach any part of the Truth of God; but to fasten disgrace on the mercy of God, to pour contempt on the Gospel of God, there where his compassions yearn to sinners, there where his freest grace calls upon sinners, there

where the Sun of Righteousness and salvation shines to sinners, this is the highest Injury; yet on this most amiable countenance and tenderest affections of Heaven, doth this blasphemous cast his most impure, and foulest indignities, which appears in the Acts incident to this Subject.

Thirdly, The Acts, they are two.

1. A malicious rejecting of the Gospel, both in the Truth and in the Goodness of it. The Gospel may be not hearkened to Where it is represented, and yet the person not guilty of this sin; It may be refused, though it be hearkened to, and yet we guiltless of the same: All Refusal, all Disobedience unto it, doth not necessarily infer this sin, but there must be a malicious Rejecting which notes two things.

First A complete and free disposition of the Will: he sins <H&G>, non per ignorantiam, non per violentiam, sed motu spontaneo; for there be some actions which arise partly from the will, and partly from externally impulsive Causes. Secondly, Which arise immediately and totally from the Will: such is this rejection, it is not caused through the darkness or mistake of the understanding, nor through the powerful impression of persecution, nor through any violent distemper or sudden motion of the affections, nor through the importunity of temptation, nor through any phrenetical disease, but through the natural and internal inclination of perverseness in the Will, when the person is set in the fairest of Circumstances and conditions, not blinded, not agitated, but voluntarily and willfully rejects the Gospel of Christ.

II. Access of deepest malice, and constant hatred in the Will; Therefore Alexander Ales saith well, that the *Motus hujus peccati habet originem a certa malitia, i.e. ex malignitate animi cum conscientia peccati, & ex quadam mentis perversitate*, when the

person doth it of set purpose, and with a secret complacence, he is gladdened that he can despite and injure Christ and his Gospel. This despiteful rejecting is expressed in Heb. 10. 29. By, First, Treading underfoot the Son of God, the most base esteem of Christ, respecting him no more than the impurest dirt in the streets, or the most vile thing, as Ambrose expounds it. It were fault sufficient not to accept of Christ, it is a deeper treason to scorn and reject Christ and Mercy; but how infinitely vile is it to do this with a disdain, and with a despiteful humor, with a purpose to vex and dishonor Christ and the Gospel. Secondly, Counting the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing: The blood of Christ is the blood of the new Covenant; it is it wherein Promises of life are made, it is it whereby reconciliation with God is effectually made, it is it by which we obtain salvation, and this blood it is called Precious in Scripture: but he that sins against the Holy Ghost, vilipends this blood, he doth no more accompt of it, then the blood of a most common thief and unhallowed person.

Secondly, A despiteful persecuting of the Gospel] as it is evident here in the Pharisees, who hated the light, and bitterly persecuted the light: and thus was it with Julian, Lucianus, Porphirius, and other odious Apostates, who were so hellishly incensed against the Gospel of Christ, that if it had been possible, they would have plucked this Sun out of the Firmament, they would have rooted out the very Name and naming of Christ; the reasons whereof I conceive may be these.

First, The strong possession of their hearts by Satan, who communicates unto them this eternal malevolence and hatred of Christ.

Secondly, The inward persuasion in their own consciences, that they shall never have part in Christ, whereupon in the fury of despair. For

themselves they are maliciously bent against the possible benefit that any other may draw from Christ.

The Formal Aggravation of these Acts, after manifest conviction by the holy Ghost. A man may reject the Gospel, a man may persecute the Gospel, and do it with his very soul and heart as Paul, who breathed out persecutions, and destroyed them that called upon the name of Jesus, and compelled many to blaspheme, and waxed mad against the Saints, yet not sin against the Holy Ghost; for all this may be through ignorance, the Understanding not knowing, the Conscience being not yet convinced, nay, it being persuaded of the contrary as fit and lawful, Acts 26. 9. The thing therefore that formerly contains the nature of this sin, is the doing of all this after and against Conviction by the Holy Ghost. Hence doth this sin borrow its denomination against the Holy Ghost. Now here I shall briefly open,

First, How the Holy Ghost is taken.

Secondly, What the Conviction by the Holy Ghost is.

1. The Holy Ghost is sometime taken; First, Essentially, for that one infinite, indivisible, independent Deity. Secondly, Personally, as the third person in Trinity proceeding from the Father and the Son. Thirdly, Virtually, In respect of Energy or operation, and this Origen calls, *Proprietatem gratiae*, & Aquinas *bonum spirito appropriatum*: for though external operations be common to the Trinity, yet the immediate manner of working is more common to one person than another, as the work of Creation to the Father, Redemption to the Son, Illumination and Sanctification to the Holy Ghost. Thus is the holy Ghost here considered in his proper operation, viz. Conviction.



Secondly, The operation or conviction of this person by the Holy Ghost, consists in these particulars.

First, The clear Revelation of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, both in respect of Truth and Goodness; of Truth, that he is the true and only Son of God; of Goodness, that he is the Redeemer of the world, and assured Savior to Believers.

Secondly, There is by the Holy Ghost wrought in them an Apprehension of all this by a supernatural illumination, as in Heb. 6. 4. They were once enlightened, not naturali lumine, for by that of conscience everyone is enlightened, but lumine supernaturali, by that of the Spirit.

Thirdly, Not a slighter apprehension, but a more determinate Conviction; so that they cannot deny the truth; the light whereof shines with such clear beams upon the understanding. The testimony of the conscience determinately assents with the testimony of the Spirit, that this Revealed Gospel, is indeed the Gospel of Christ and of salvation. You know who I am, and whence I come, saith Christ to the Pharisees; yea, themselves professed so much, because ye say we see, therefore your sins remain, John 9.

Fourthly, Nay, yet undeniable Conviction is not all, there is also some kind of approbation of those truths, which the Apostle calls A tasting of the heavenly gift, and a tasting of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come. A man may have a little taste of Honey, so that he can say, I know it is sweet; and of wine, that he can say, it is comfortable: In like manner, they who sin this sin against the Holy Ghost may feel his operation, not only in an objective revelation, not only in a subjective apprehension, not only in an undeniable conviction, but also in some degree of approbation. There may drop some effects from the truth imprinted upon the affections that the

Conscience may be persuaded, and give testimony assuredly that these are the very truths of Christ. All which is very evident in some of the Pharisees, who had Christ revealed to them, who did know, and were convinced in their own hearts who Christ was, and what his Doctrine was, yet did they with inward malice break out against him, and his Doctrine, and in words poured the basest contumelies and blasphemies upon him; and in their pertinacious workings did constantly persecute him, even to the most reproachful death of the Cross, and all this against the clearest Convictions of the Holy Ghost in their own Consciences.

Thus for the nature of the Sin. Consider the Irremissibleness of it.

It shall not be forgiven unto men.

The Arians, Eunomians, Macedonians, and other Heretics said, the Holy Ghost was a Creature, and the Photinians denied to him a real substance, i.e. a Personality, as Erasmus interprets it; yet many of these repented, (if we believe Saint Austin) and obtained pardon.

The same Father fitly removes this scruple, by distinguishing between erroneous opinions concerning the Holy Ghost, and this unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It is one thing to mis-apprehend the Essence, or personal subsistence, and hereupon to pronounce according to the dark misconceits of the holy Ghost. It is another thing to blaspheme Christ and his Gospel after clear conviction by the Holy Ghost, this is the sin which shall not be forgiven.

Hence it is, that this sin is called, 1 John 5. 16. A sin unto death. And H. b. 6. 4, 6. A sin that casts a man into an impossibility of renewing. And Heb. 10. 26. All sacrifice for this sin is taken away. Which places strongly refel the errors of Jansen; and Bellarmine, and other

Papists, who interpret this of the difficulty and the rarity only of this remission, not of the impossibility.

Quest. Why is it that this sin shall never be forgiven?

Answ. 1. It is not because the Holy Ghost is greater than the Son; for there is not Major and Minor, where everyone is equal in Nature and Dignity.

2. Nor is it because this sin is so intensively great, that exceeds the absolute power of God to forgive it, or the infinite Merits of Christ. *Omnipotentis Medico nullus insanabilis occurrit languor; Isidore.*

But the Reasons given are these.

First, Because it is Repugnant to the immutable Statute and Decree of the Divine Will. It is God's absolute pleasure, who of himself sets the extent of his Mercy, and the bounds of his Justice. Though he will be pleased to allow a possibility of Mercy to other sinners; yet as a King for some facts will not allow an Offender his book; so God is pleased here to deny Mercy. This Reason is true, but because it is of common equity to some other sins, therefore further satisfaction may be sought.

Secondly, It directly resists, and repudiates the matter of pardon and remission, viz. The blood of Christ. If a Patient could be healed only by one Medicine, and he did willfully reject that, it is impossible he should recover, not that the medicine is not of virtue, but that he willfully rejects this virtual Medicine: so here, there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ; no plaster but the blood of Christ, which yet this sinner despitefully rejects, &c.

Thirdly, It contemptuously, and with a willful obstinacy resists that spirit which should apply this pardon and Remission. Pardon cannot be obtained, unless the Spirit apply it, but here the sinner fights against the Spirit of God, and despites the Spirit of Grace, and will not permit any operation, any saving operation of the Spirit to fasten on the soul, all fitness and disposition for pardon is from the Spirit, who is here rejected.

Fourthly, The constant order of operation in the Trinity suggests unto us the reason of the irremissibleness of this sin; which order is always by descent, and not by regression. If a man sin against the Father, the Son hath an operation for the sinner; if a man sin against the Son, the Spirit hath an operation for the sinner in working upon his conscience, and offering of Christ; but if a man sin against this Spirit, whether should he go? or who is to present pardon? To the Father he cannot go without the Spirit, to the Son he cannot go without the Spirit, but the Spirit is by him rejected and despitefully scorned. He that sins against the Holy Ghost, sins against the whole Trinity, the Fathers love, the Sons death, and the Spirits operation. I know that Jerome saith, this sin shall not be forgiven *Propter blasphemiam*, & Augustine, *propter perseverantissiman cordis durtiem*; and the Schols, *Propter defectum excusabilitatis & indignitatem*; and others, *quod qui sic peccant traduntur in reprobum sensum*, thus Hilary, Athanasius, and some of our modern Writers.

Use I.

The Uses from the explication of this high sin shall serve us both for, first, Information: And secondly, Caution: Thirdly, Direction.

First That the greatest illuminations in the understanding, and determinate convictions in the Conscience, are not able of

themselves to save a man: A person may have a deep insight in the Mysteries of Heaven, an ample apprehension of supernatural truths, a large acquaintance with the Rules of Grace and life, a yielding in his conscience to the revealed testimonies of the spirit concerning Christ and his Doctrine, yet be so far from the assurance and possession of glory, that he may be reprobated to the lowest gulf of misery and damnation, for the damned Devils are invested with most general extent of objective knowledge; and these here who sin against the Holy Ghost do participate of divine illumination, even to the measure of approbation in the conscience touching the truth, yet you see that their condition is utterly incompatible with the just hopes or expectation of happiness, it is not capable of remission, and therefore eternally desperate of salvation: all which must be so understood by you, not that spiritual illumination is not necessary, but that it is not alone sufficient to save. The strongest abilities of knowledge may only serve to purchase us a more learned and full damnation.

Secondly, That greatest knowledge may be in a subject both deprived of the inexistence of sanctifying grace, and also filled with bitterest enmity and malice against the truth of Grace. I justly question, whether any persons uncapable of Glory are convinced with more supernatural light then these who sin against the Holy Ghost; yet sure I am, none are more enraged Lions against the innocence and simplicity of Holiness, and true Grace then these.

A person may put on <H&G>, as the Apostle speaks, and yet his heart be void of the inward power of Godliness. A dead man may be clothed with beautiful Garments; and a heart utterly void of the life and quickening's of Holiness, may yet be adorned with the fair robes and endowments of knowledge.

Nay, Do but consult with the Records of the spirit in the Scripture, and the examples of persons, and attempts in all Ecclesiastical History, you shall not only find knowledge divided from grace, but oftentimes making strongest oppositions against it. None withstood Christ more than the learned Scribes and Pharisees; none withstood Paul more, then the learned Athenians: Whom have we in our age more eager against the Doctrine of faith, then the subtle Jesuit? and against the independency and immobility of grace, then the Arminian. Dull and blind apprehensions are not so serviceable Engines for the execution of Diabolical malice: the most advantageous servant that ever Satan had, was a learned head and a graceless heart: Abstract knowledge will easily blow up pride, and pride will easily fire our malice, and contempt, and these will suddenly break out into our tongues with derision and persecution of Grace.

Thirdly, That our greater knowledge (without sanctifying Grace) adds to our greater ruin and judgment. This illation is most conspicuous in the subjects of this sin, whose Judgment becomes the more heinous and inevitable, because of the greatness of their illumination and conviction.

I know the schools deliver unto us several circumstances whereby a sin common with another in identity of nature, is yet by the access of them variously altered: but amongst all the intensive perfections of sinful guilt this addition of knowledge is one excessively aggravating. If ye were blind, (saith Christ, John 9. 41.) ye should have no sin (comparatively for measure) but now you say, we see, therefore your sin remaineth. An ignorant Offender may have some plea and excuse, but a willful sinner is without all Pretext. None shall find greater stripes then he who knows and doth not, or he who sees to do, but will not. As the most practical Christian shall rise to the

highest seat and Throne of happiness in heaven, so the most illuminated sinner shall sink into the deepest dungeon of misery in hell.

Use II.

Now I come to Caution: you have heard what this sin is, and you have heard the sad condition of this sinner, that he may forever despair to see the face of God! I dare not fasten the complete guilt of this sin on any who hears me this day: Only remember that of the Apostle, Heb. 3. 12. Take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

Yet because this sin is possibly incident unto us, who take upon us the profession of the Gospel: it shall not prove I trust an unseasonable endeavor, if I describe unto you some few steps by which the soul gradually descends unto the bottom of this damned impiety.

First, Regardless receiving of the Gospel of Christ, which is done three ways.

1. When the Judgment hath no reverent estimations of God in Christ, and of the Promises made in the blood of Christ, or of the necessary conditions of the Covenant of Grace to be performed by us.

Secondly, When the heart either in hearing or reading is without life and affections, so that the Gospel draws not our love, and joy, and delight, or any adhesion of the mind. Paul tells us, 2 Thes. 2. 12. of some to be damned. And verse 10. They were such who received not the truth in the love of it.

Thirdly, When there is no conformity to the Gospel-rules of life. Now what shall I say of ourselves? what accounts have we of this pearl? what affections have we to this Doctrine of Grace? Have we any impressions of Reverence, any impressions of love unto the Ministry of the Spirit? Alas! our stomachs begin to loath the honey comb, and we are almost as weary of this Gospel, as the Israelites were of their Manna. Why else those many neglects of this word of grace, why else our slight entertainment of it? why else our very scorn and contempt of it? Shall I speak the truth? the heavenly strains of the Holy Ghost in the Gospel fall too low, and sound too flat in our curious ears. The sharp inventions of some Poet, or the brain-Raptures of a Comedian, shall relish our Palates with more pleasure then the sweetest principles and lessons that ever the wisdom of Heaven hath dedicated. The plain tune of Scripture strikes us not, unless there be also smart descanting's of human wit. Mistake me not, I speak not this to banish the convenient use of fitting expressions in our delivery of the Gospel of Christ, by condemning our inaffectionate attentions to the simplicity of Christ. I do not hereby apologize for the language of rudeness; (no, I would not have the highness of the word to be made offensive by my Barbarisms) only let me tell you, that where the Word of life, coming in the strength and beauty of its own elegant plainness, findeth not only coldness of respect and love, but the lashes also of ignorant censure and scorn, we are mounted upon an high step of profaneness, and are descending to that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, Private or public scorning of holiness. Holiness it is the Glory of God, and in a sort the rectitude of all his attributes. God delights to reveal himself in this holiness, and tells us, that without holiness none shall see his face. It is the most distinguishing effect of the Spirit of God, and that which is both an assurance of divine Election, as also the secular zeal of our salvation. Yet may not I



confidently affirm to you, that nothing is more fallen into the base derisions of witless sinners than this glorious image of heaven. Strip me a person of the well-spoken complements of dignity, wealth, conceited projects, and deportments for the itch of the times, and suppose him only clothed with the endowments of true grace and holiness; who is there that is set forth with more disdain, and derision, and jeering, than such a person; this is the only reason of our scorning's that he is a person of purity, one of the Spirit; A religious David is the song of Drunkards, and the Innocent, Objects of mocking's, reproaches, scorns and jesting's, Bonus vir sed Christianus, so now bonus vir sed Religiosus; Lord, What think we of God, or his Spirit, or Heaven! is holiness beautiful in God, admirable in the Spirit of God, lovely in the Word of God? and yet contemptible effectively considered in the servants of God. As sure as the Lord liveth, if the bounds of public Authority did not awe, and the secret suspicions of public shame did not bank these enemies of Grace, their private Sarcasms, and blemishes of Grace would break forth into public fury against all real power and practice of Grace.

Who but an Ishmael will scoff at an Isaac? and who but a Cain will hate his brother, because his works are good? and who but an ignorant wretch agitated by the Spirit of darkness and perverseness, will fly out with hellish invectives against holiness in heart, and practice, which is the Glory of God, the perfection of Angels; the sacred work of the Spirit, and the pledge of our immortal inheritance in the heavens.

My brethren, be cautioned to sorrow for this, and reform in offering violence to holiness in man, thou fastenest indignity upon the very image of God, and despite upon the Holy Ghost, who is the immediate efficient of Holiness in the Creature.

Thirdly, Slighting the checks of conscience. Conscience especially enlightened, it is our Angel-Guardian, the private Register of our courses, and the faithful Monitor within our own breasts: it is the eye of the soul to oversee the whole occasions of heart and life, and it is the tongue, that reports to us the rectitude or aberration of our ways. The Law testifies de jure, and this de facto.

There is not I believe a sinner partaking of any illumination general or particular under the powerful presence of a sound Ministry, but his Conscience sometimes in the hearing of threatening's from the Pulpit, sometimes in his retired secessions or withdrawing's from company, doth lay unto him the guilt of his sins, and perhaps stings him with unquestionable convictions and horrors, it tells him that his heart is yet desperately foul, and that his ways are not the ways of life and comfort. But now for this person to stop his ears at this faithful voice of conscience, for him to deal with this, as Felix did with Paul discoursing of Judgment to come, go thy way for this time, when I have convenient season I will call for thee, or else to quench and drown their private clamors by the untimeliness of other discourses and fouler actions; O what direct injury do we hereby offer to the workings of God's Spirit, and what stronger power do we add hereby to the workings of our heart.

A tender conscience is like a tender eye or stomach: but neglect of motions in the conscience prepares for hardness of heart. It will be with us in sinning, as it is with the iron, which becomes the more hardened after the fire, and the sinner more sinful, after the slighting of the checks of conscience; or as with a disease which grows incurable by neglect, yet might have been cured and healed by observance; or as a tree which after many shakings takes deeper root, and hold in the earth. It is a fearful Judgment to sin against Conscience, this will breed custom and delight, and defense, and at

length hatred of that Truth, which shall present light for Reformation. Hereby we grieve the Holy Spirit, and quench him, and cauterize, or sear our consciences with senselessness, whence ariseth a greediness to sin, Ephesians 4. 18.

Fourthly, Be not peremptory for worldly ends: he who sets up his resolution, that he will be somebody in the world, he will have his covetous ends, or ambitious projects, no marvel, if such a person sleights the checks of Conscience, and derides the beauty of holiness, and looks on the Word of Grace without all esteem or affection. Let God say what he will, he will do what he please.

The Pharisees guilty of this great sin would not, could not believe Christ; what was the reason? See John 5. 44. How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another? Balaam for gain will ride to curse the Israel of God, and Judas betray his Master; and ambitious Haman, rather than his proud humor shall be neglected, he will endeavor the ruin of all the Jews. What was the reason of Demas 's Apostasy? The embracing of this present world, 2 Tim. 4. 10. O! when the heart is resolved for carnal courses, it will easily part with, nay, rather than it will be crossed or disappointed, it will fall foul upon the very Truths of God. The greatest enemies and opposers of Truth have been a covetous Demetrius, Acts 19. or a proud Diotrephes, 3 John, verse 9. Be therefore submissive in your worldly resolutions; and to bend the mind hereunto, weigh Christ, and the whole world in the same balance: see whether Christ be not more advantageous every way; weigh you souls, and the world in the same balance: see whether the saving of the soul, be not better than the winning of the world.

Use III.

The last use shall be to exhort us, to use all the means we can to prevent it, and to this end I will commend these Advises.

1. Let divine Truths reform as well as inform: a naked sword may do much hurt, and a bare knowledge may prove dangerous: but where knowledge hath heat as well as light, it is Medicum utile: he is right whose knowledge doth not make him more cunning to sin, but more careful to avoid it, and forsake it.

2. Strive to love the truth and holiness. Paul's temper was excellent, We can do nothing against the truth, but for the Truth; Why? What was the reason? surely his great love to Christ and his Truth. Love, entire love to Christ will disarm us of all malice, and opposition against him. Yea, and get love to the Gospel, wherein lies our life, our hope, our stay, our comfort, our all.

3. Get faith, beg it of God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to give thee faith: Faith would not only see a Christ, but prize him too. Two virtues there are in a true faith, Singular estimations, and Inseparable affections. Faith subjects the heart to Christ, and gives it unto him, having none in heaven or earth in comparison of him. Should I oppose him or his Truths, who is the best of all good, and my Savior, he came to save me.

4. Repent in time: often sinning, weakens truth in the mind, and raiseth ill dispositions in the will. By much sinning a man becomes a very slave to sin, and a strong adversary to truth. But speedy Repentance draws off the heart, and being often renewed, keeps it tender and fearful to offend. Divine Truths make easy and ruling impressions upon a heart graciously turned and mollified.

To close up all, Let the Word of God really affect us, let holiness in the power and beauty of it affect us, let the fair and living checks of

Conscience seasonably affect us; let the blood of Christ, the eternal salvation of our souls affect us, so shall we not be guilty of that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which shall never be forgiven.

Of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, see these Authors.

1. Fathers, viz. Origen in Mat. and in l. 1.<H&G>, c. 3. Jerome in Epist. ad Marcel. Augustine especially in Epist. 50. ad Bonifacium. Athanasius Tom. 1.

2. Schoolmen. See Aquinas 2 a. 2 u. q. 14. art 1. &c. Alexander Ales, Tom. 2. q. 155. m. 4. &c.

3. Papists, Bellarmine l. 2. de Paenit. c. 16. Jansen in Concord. Evan.

4. Protestants, Calvin in Concord. Evan. Zanchins, Tom. 4. l. 1. c. 9. Scharpius incursu Theolog. Pareus in Heb. 6. & 10. Ursinus in Catech. Piscator in Mat. Beza fusius in John 5. 16. Byfield on the Creed, Gouge on this Argument. Perkins in the beginning of his cases of conscience, &c.

FINIS.

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