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**GOD'S
HUSBANDRY**

WILLIAM WHATELY



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GOD'S HUSBANDRY: PARTS I & II

As it was delivered in certain sermons, and is now published

By WILLIAM WHATELY, Preacher of the Word of God in Banbury
in Oxfordsheire.

MATTH. 7.21.

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the
Kingdom of heaven, but he which doth the will of my Father which is
in heaven.

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be sold at his shop in Pater-noster-row, at the sign of the Talbot.

1622.

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Table of Contents

[TO THE CHRISTIAN READER](#)

CHAPTER I. Wherein the Text is opened.

CHAPTER II. Showing that there is a mixture of hypocrites with true Christians in the Church, and why.

CHAPTER III. Showing the description and sorts of hypocrites.

CHAPTER IV. Of the diverse sorts of Hypocrites.

CHAPTER V. Showing the general notes of difference betwixt the true man and the hypocrite.

CHAPTER VI. How the hypocrite agrees with the true Christian in knowledge, and withal also how they differ.

CHAPTER VII. Showing how the hypocrite and upright do agree and differ in faith.

CHAPTER VIII. Showing how the repentance of hypocrites may be distinguished from the repentance of true Christians.

CHAPTER IX. Showing how the good conversation of the hypocrite differs from the good conversation of the upright.

CHAPTER X. Containing the first use of the point belonging indifferently to all sorts of men.

CHAPTER XI. Containing the second use for those that are found out to be hypocrites.

CHAPTER XII. Containing a third use for them that be upright.

CHAPTER XIII. Wherein are handled the uses of this point in regard of others.

CHAPTER XIV. Showing that fruitfulness is the true distinctive note of those that profess to be Christians.

CHAPTER XV. Showing what this fruitfulness is.

CHAPTER XVI. Containing the first use.

CHAPTER XVII. Containing the second use.

CHAPTER XVIII. Containing the third use.

CHAPTER XIX. Containing the fourth use.

GOD'S HUSBANDRY – PART II: Tending chiefly to the reforming of a Hypocrite, and making him true-hearted.

TO THE COURTEOUS READER.

CHAPTER I. Showing the order of the words and points to be handled.

CHAPTER II. Showing the certain destruction of hypocrites, and the degrees and means thereof.

CHAPTER III. Showing the reasons of the destruction of hypocrites.

CHAPTER IV. Containing the first use of the point: viz. the magnifying of God's Justice.

CHAPTER V. Containing a second use of the point: viz. A terror unto all dissemblers.

CHAPTER VI. Containing the third use, viz. An exhortation to the Hypocrite to come out of his hypocrisy.

CHAPTER VII. Containing the second Doctrine, viz. that the best branches have need of pruning.

CHAPTER VIII. Containing the first use of the point, for the refutation of two errors: viz. the merit of works, and the conceit of perfection in this life.

CHAPTER IX. Containing a second use of the point, stirring up the servants of God to a holy longing for death.

CHAPTER X. Containing the third use of the point, viz. an exhortation and direction how to keep down our corruptions, whilst we live.

CHAPTER XI. Containing the fourth and last use of the point, viz. a consolation to the people of God against their unallowed sins.

CHAPTER XII. Containing the third point of doctrine, that God will prune the fruitful branches: that is, help true Christians against their corruptions.

CHAPTER XIII. Showing the means and manner of the Lord's pruning.

CHAPTER XIV. The first use of the point, to show their misery that are not pruned.

CHAPTER XV. The second use of the point, to comfort them that are pruned.

CHAPTER XVI. Containing the third use of the point, to encourage the Saints in striving against sin, because the Lord will help them in this labor, and they shall surely prevail.

CHAPTER XVII. Containing the fourth point of doctrine, that the people of God must increase in fruitfulness.

CHAPTER XVIII. Containing the first use of the last point, viz. a terror to them that grow worse.

CHAPTER XIX. Containing an exhortation to all true Christians to increase in goodness, with directions for that purpose.

CHAPTER XX. Containing a comfort to them that have grown, and do grow in goodness.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

It is a thing I think, good Read, if not impossible, yet exceeding difficult, for a Minister of God's word to open his mouth with so much discretion, but that if he seek to beat down the false hypocrite, the weak Christian will come betwixt, and take the blow upon his own head, which was neither meant nor due unto him; and contrarily, if he seek to raise up the weak Christian, the presumptuous hypocrite will by and by lay hold on those words, and pervert them quite, to the nourishing of his foolish security. My care hath been to tread so even a path in the following Treatise, that I might not give any just occasion to the such mistaking of either party. And I hope I have so tempered my pen, that the poor Christian shall not (unless in an over-extreme brunt of temptation) be less able to enjoy his proper consolation for anything that hath been here uttered, to the discarding and amazing of hypocrites; nor the hypocrite (unless out of an extremity of willful blindness) be able to

nestle himself warm, in the misapplying of comforts intended to those alone, that be such as he alone seemeth to be. Now what thou art that shalt read this book, I cannot possibly know; and how thou wilt censure of me for it, as I cannot conjecture, so neither will I be careful or trouble myself about it. If thou shalt commend me, I hope I have a little better insight into mine own imperfections, than to be tickled with thy praises, which perhaps thine ignorance, or partiality may give, rather than any desert of mine (which I know to be none at all of any good thing) may call for and challenge: but if thou shalt reproach and dispraise me, sure I should have both more wit, and somewhat else to do, than to make any account of thy disliking and censorious words; knowing (as I do know well enough) what thou art, my fellow servant, not my Master; a fellow-prisoner, not a Judge. Wherefore if thou beest wise, save a bootless labor of speaking either well or ill of me; neither of which can advantage thee, or do me any good or hurt; and rather bestow thyself in reaping some profit by that which I have here written, with a desire and intention of profiting thee. If I have spoken what thou knewest not before, now inform thyself: if what thou knewest, but consideredst not, now digest thine own knowledge, and (having an addition of one more witness to the truth thou didst formerly confess) know it surer, know it better. If I seem to thee to utter truth, embrace it, because it is truth; if to err, consider by what reasons thou canst convince me, of having erred; and let mine error occasion thee with more firmness to cleave to the truth. In a word, thou mayest (if thou wilt) get some good by reading; if thou wilt not, who can help it? And (that I may be bold a little to touch the sore of those that read books, specially Sermons, which yet there be not many that will read) let me put thee in mind, that the common fault of hearers, is incident to readers also: they hear alone, to be judges of the speakers gifts, or to censure his imperfections: they hear not with any intention of reflecting their thoughts upon themselves, to censure themselves, and find out their own faults. So in reading Sermons, the greater number read only to

see what a man can say: to judge of his learning, reading, wit, phrase, &c. and to carpe at his defects in any of these. Long enough may such both hear and read, afore either the pen or the tongue will convey any goodness into their hearts. Wherefore if thou please to bestow pains in perusing these Sermons, read them with none other intention, but that one of trying thyself, whether thou beest an hypocrite, yea or no; so dare I promise thee some fruit of thy reading: for either (in finding out thine hypocrisy) thou shalt perceive thine unhappiness, and be capable of help; or else (in meeting with uprightness) thou shalt enjoy thy good estate, and be encouraged to proceed. Thus with my best prayers to God for thee, and the good success of all good labors to do thy soul good, and with a request of reaping one particular prayer of thine for me, if thou reapest any good by these lines, I bid thee kindly farewell, and rest covetous of thy souls health, William Whately.

From my Study in Banbury. April 6. 1619.

GOD'S HUSBANDRY- PART I:

Tending to shew the difference betwixt the Hypocrite, and the true-hearted Christian.

CHAPTER I.

Wherein the Text is opened.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth, that it may bring forth more fruit. - John 15.2.

The lips of the wise do feed many, saith the wise Solomon. How truly was this saying verified in our blessed Savior Jesus Christ, who (being the Wisdom of his Father) delighted (as it was foretold of him) to open his mouth in a Parable, and to utter dark sayings of old. And as in the whole course of his life, his mouth was a well-spring of waters of life, evermore sending forth the streams of sweet refreshing doctrine; so chiefly towards his end (in the fore-sight of his near approaching departure) doth he enlarge himself more than ordinary, in diverse most worthy speeches, to instruct and comfort his sorrowful Apostles. In this Chapter amongst the rest, intending to persuade them to goodness of life, he lays down certain grounds as a foundation, whereon to raise his purposed exhortation. One ground standeth fast in these two Verses, which contain a sweet and comfortable Parable, wherein our Savior sets out the care, that himself and his Father take of his Churches welfare. Himself he

compareth to the body of the Vine, from whence the sweet sap of all heavenly graces, is plentifully derived to every branch, according to the capacity and measure of everyone. His Father he compares to an Husbandman, who doth plant, and mound, and dress this Vine: and last of all, gather the fruit thereof in his own eternal and unspeakable glory and praise. And (that the matter may be better noted) he prosecutes this part of the comparison more at large, showing the principal husbandry of GOD the Father about this Vine. This husbandry is set out by the subject and parts of it. The subject of God's husbandry is described by the common nature and different kinds thereof. The common nature is in those words, Every branch in me; that is, every professor of Christian religion; everyone that maketh himself or others believe, that he believeth in Jesus Christ, and embraceth the heavenly doctrine of the Gospel. Faith in Christ maketh a branch, I mean the external profession of faith; and if it be true, then doth it make a true branch; if hollow and feigned, then a branch alone in appearance. The kinds of branches are two; some that do not bring forth fruit, some that do. Some professors of religion are sound-hearted, and some are hypocritical. And the care of the Lord extendeth itself to every particular professor of either kinds: of those that carry a show of being Christians, some do live a godly life in the sight of the world, and some do not; and the Father of Heaven carrieth himself, as beseemeth his Wisdom, Justice and Goodness unto both. And this is the subject of his Husbandry.

The parts of it are two; and those different, according to the different kinds of branches; The unfruitful branch he cuts off: that is, the hypocrite he doth bring to eternal destruction, fitting and ripening him for hell, by more and more separating him from Christ, and all the benefits of Christ, till he have finally brought him to damnation. Every false Christian, whose life is not in some degree and good measure agreeable to his profession, is by God plagued and punished with eternal death; and every of God's ordinances, and whatsoever

else befalleth him, is turned (through his own wickedness, and God's just hand against him) into a means of working out, and increasing his damnation. And this is one part of the Lord's Husbandry, his severity against hypocrites. The second part is that, that concerns good branches, representing the goodness of God or the sound-hearted Christian, set out in the matter, and end or effect of it. The matter is purging or pruning. The Gardener with his pruning-knife doth cut off such unprofitable and luxuriant twigs from the branches, as would hinder the increase of grapes: so God by diverse means which he hath in a readiness, and by name, afflictions, sanctified to that purpose, doth diminish, subdue and mortify the corruptions and disordered affections of his true-hearted servants, which would else hinder them from living in holy and Christian manner before him. The end of this pruning, and also the effect (for these two terms are often incident, yea always, if a wise and sufficient work man have the managing of any business) is no hurt to the branches, but even the greatest good that may be, for the increase of their fruitfulness, the causing of all virtues to grow in them, and the enabling of them more and more to conform their lives according to the doctrine of godliness. And such is the order and meaning of this verse. Now I proceed to collect some necessary points of doctrine from thence.

CHAPTER II.

Showing that there is a mixture of hypocrites with true Christians in the Church, and why.

First then let us mark, that our Savior distinguisheth the branches in the Vine into two sorts; fruitful and unfruitful. Questionless we may

conclude from hence, that Christ meant to teach us, that in his visible Church, there should be a mixture of true-hearted Christians and hypocrites. In the societies of men professing the true Christian religion; neither are all true, neither are all false: but some honest, sound-hearted, upright Christians; other-some, hollow, dissembling, hypocritical actors of Christianity. Some are in very deed and substance, that that they are called and taken for: others have a mere and bare name of Christianity, and nothing within them answerable to that name. This is the point which our Savior teacheth also in the Parable of the Grounds, whereof among four kinds, one alone proved good. So in the Parable of the field which had Tares sowed in it, together with good Corn: in the Parable of the Draw-net, that gathered not good Fish alone, but much unprofitable filth withal. So much also doth Paul signify, when he telleth us, that all are not Israel, which are of Israel; and that he is not a Jew, which is one without, but he which is one within. And again, of the Congregation in the wilderness, he affirmeth, that though all did eat of the same Spiritual meat, and drink of the same Spiritual drink, yet God was not well pleased with them all. And Saint John affirmeth in plain terms, that all are not of us (in truth of heart) which are amongst us, in show of profession. To this truth the continual experience of all Ages yieldeth a manifest and lamentable testimony. In Adams family (the mother Church of all the world) there was Cain as well as Abel, both offerors to God: but the former in a false semblance of piety; the latter, in the truth of faith and devotion. In the Ark were accursed Cam, and blessed Shem. In Abraham's house, scoffing, wild Ishmael, and religious Isaac. In Isaac's house, plain-hearted Jacob, and the murdering-minded Esau. So in the wilderness, gain-saying Core, with his accomplices Dathan, Abiram and the rest, as well as Moses, Joshua and Caleb. In after-times, Eli's sons (a pair of prodigious dunces, ill living and dumb Ministers), as well as faithful Samuel, the Lord's true Prophet. A Saul and a David; an Achitophel and an Hushai; and so upwards even to Christ's family, and there was a

Judas and a Peter. What Church can be free from dissemblers, if this little domestical Church, that had such a Pastor and such members, had yet a Devil lodging within it? Wherefore it was so too in the times of the Gospel; halting Ananias and Sapphira, as well as just Barnabas; Corinthian flaunters, as well as true Teachers: yea, and which is more to be wondered at, false Apostles as well as true, dispersed here and there in all Churches. Lo, how Christ's floor hath chaff, as well as wheat lying in it; and his field hath Goats as well as Sheep feeding in it. Let us inquire a reason of this mixture, both why some be false, and why some be true. Of the former, we must fetch reasons from Man, from Satan, and from God. From Man; because hypocrisy is one of the evil weeds that doth naturally grow in his corrupt soul, it being very agreeable to his naughty heart, to dissemble goodness in some cases; and having seen the truth, to make show of yielding, though in heart he yield not unto it. For oftentimes the truth is laid open so clearly before the eyes of his mind, partly through the evidence of outward proof, partly through the inward light of illumination, as he cannot but acknowledge it, as the eye cannot choose but see such objects, as are set in convenient manner and distance before it. Yea, many times custom, education, and bringing up in commonly received truths, doth so accustom and wont the mind unto them (as usual eating doth the palate unto some kind of food), that he cannot tell how to deny them; yea, that for his credit sake, and out of a desire to be well respected amongst his neighbors, he cannot but be forward in declaring his opinion of them. Nature therefore will attain to the knowledge and profession of divine truths, with the bare help of a common grace of enlightening: but the true doctrine of godliness, is so contrary to the most beloved lusts of men, so opposite to their natural corruptions, and tendeth so wholly to beat them out of themselves, and to bring them in subjection unto GOD, that through the strength of these corruptions, and that voluntary slavery wherein they remain willingly enthralled unto sin, they neither will nor can (indeed they cannot, because they

will not) give a dutiful and submissive entertainment thereunto, and so become but hypocrites at the best. So that it is no more wonder, to see a man prove a hypocrite, then to have a Crow prove black: for the Crow doth not more naturally bring blackness into the world with her, than a man doth bring with him guile and dissimulation; seeing he hath in him so much imperfect goodness, as will make him receive the form of godliness, but withal so much tyrannizing badness, as will not give him leave to receive the power of it.

Again, the devil is very busy to water and cherish the seeds of guile, that are born and bred with us, and within us: for out of his malice, he is very desirous to keep men from salvation, and to hold them under his own command and tyranny. Wherefore if he cannot retain them still, as his absolute and professed vassals, yet he takes great pains to maintain a more secret dominion over them, and to become the Lord of their hearts, in a more private and undiscernible manner.

Wherefore when he is cast out from a manifest domineering over them, by the shining of the Lamp of true religion within them, as Christ sore told that he should; yet still he striveth by craft, and policy, to keep possession of the turret of their hearts, as being loath to be beaten out of his old and long usurped kingdom, so long as any one defensible fort remaineth. Now the devil worketh effectually in the children of disobedience (as the Apostle testifieth), and so finding them full apt to dissemble, and making the matter worse by his forcible temptations, and subtle insinuations, it is no marvel if many come no further than to bare shows; especially seeing men are usually so careless in searching themselves, and in resisting his temptations.

Last of all, the Lord of Heaven doth most justly punish a number of men, that live within the visible Church, by giving them over to the devil, and their own hollow hearts, to be beguiled and deceived with

outward appearances of goodness, so to avenge himself upon their careless or willful contempt, or neglect of the offers of grace made unto them: for where the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ is in any degree made manifest; there doth God proffer the spirit of grace withal, and is ready for his part to bestow it. But when men do neglect or reject this goodness, making more account of the base vanities of this world, then of those most precious treasures, offered unto them by the Lord; then doth he most righteously depart from them, and turn them up into the hands of Satan, to be blinded and hardened by him, and of their own corruptions to be kept under, and vanquished by them, that so he may most holily accomplish his most wise and eternal purpose, of glorifying himself in their just damnation at the last. And thus there is a kind of working of God, as well as of Satan and men, in the hollowness of them that be hollow; the Lord carrying himself most righteously and wisely: the devil and men most wickedly and foolishly: he intending and attaining his own holy and good ends, they following and seeking after their own abominable and unholy desires. And thus we may plainly see how it comes to pass, that many hypocrites are found in God's house.

Now upon what reasons stands it, that all be not as bad as any, but that some do sincerely embrace Christ? the reason of this also must be taken from Man, and from God. From Man; because he is in his very making, capable of truth, and a subject of that nature, as may have truth wrought in it by good means; even as the blind man's eye, because it was a man's eye, was capable of having the power of seeing wrought in it. For it is a very false and caviling exception, that is taken to the doctrine of man's servitude to sin, when it is inferred hence, that a man is turned into a stone or trunk. Nay, man hath a soul endued with those natural faculties, which may receive the impression of grace, by means which God doth sanctify for that purpose. Indeed so far is he subjected to the dominion of sin, that he wanteth all active power of converting himself to God; but yet such

natural faculties remain within him, as that he wanteth not a passive power of being converted, if God convert him. Let a man's leg be cut, and though of itself it will nor heal or knit together again; yet it hath a power of being healed and knit again, by the means of some plaster or medicine skillfully applied: but cut a stick of wood, or break it in pieces, and no plasters will make up the wound, or knit the broken pieces together again. So is it with corrupted mankind; and this is all, that the truth of God's Word will give us leave to ascribe to man, as a reason of his being truly ingrafted into Christ, he is capable of such a work of God's Spirit.

But the Principal and only active cause, is God's power and goodness, that cause, beyond which, it is a madness to inquire for any other cause. The Lord doth please to bestow effectual grace upon those, whom he will receive to mercy; whereby they have not alone their minds enlightened to some perceiving of the truth of God's word, but also their wills, by the mighty operation of the holy Ghost, subdued to the obedience of the same. So by the infusing of a new life into them, they are enabled to become such, as he doth wish them to be, and as themselves desire to be accounted. Were it not for this grace, all in the Church would be hypocrites as well as any: but it pleaseth the Lord to bestow that grace upon one (whom he hath enabled to desire it, that he may graciously bestow it), which to another he giveth not, but leaveth him to his own carelessness of it; that (missing it by his own default) his blood may be upon his own head. So the perdition of hypocrites is of themselves, because they willingly refuse the goodness of God, which he doth offer them; the soundness and happiness of the Saints of God, is of his free grace, that breaks the yoke of sin which held them under; and makes them willing of unwilling, and able of unable, to turn themselves unto him. For to imagine (as some will needs do) that the Lord doth deal no more bountifully with one, than with another, of the members of the Church; but that the cause why one becomes an hypocrite, the other

prevaileth to uprightness, is merely and wholly in themselves, is a fancy (I think) so contrary to all, both Scripture, and experience of God's Saints, that hardly can any be deceived with it, but he that never felt what it was to be upright, and whence it came. And thus have we laid before you the truth of this point

CHAPTER III.

Showing the description and sorts of hypocrites.

Now it is very requisite, that we make a plain and sound explication of it, to the intent, that every man may discern of himself, and of his own estate, whether himself be an hypocrite yea or no. We will therefore do our best to lay the matter open clearly, that it may be evidently discovered (to them that will take the pains of inquiring about the point) who is guileful? who without guile? and for this purpose it is necessary to stand upon these four heads: First, to show what an hypocrite is: secondly, to show the diverse sorts, or rather degrees of hypocrites: thirdly, to set down some general notes of difference betwixt the true-hearted and the hypocrite. Lastly, to declare more particularly the agreement & disagreement of them both, in four principal and main graces, whereof the one hath alone the shadow, the other the substance; that is, first, in knowledge; secondly, in faith; thirdly, in repentance; fourthly, in good life, or in obedience.

First then, for the describing of a hypocrite, we must make use of a necessary rule of Logic, which bids us to define the concrete by the abstract as they term it, as no man can possibly declare what a white

thing is, but by conceiving and expressing what is whiteness; nor what a proud man is but by understanding what pride is; nor what an hypocrite is, but by knowing what is hypocrisy. And again we must understand, that virtues and vices do not denominate their subjects, unless they be in them in so high a degree, as to prevail and be predominant over their contraries: as nothing is called white, but that in which whiteness so prevaieth, that it partaketh more of white, than of any other color: and if a thing do so partake of whiteness, we call it white, though it fail much of the whitest whiteness that may be. So is he called a proud man, in whom pride prevaieth; an infidel, whom infidelity ruleth; a revengeful man, in whom revenge doth bear sway; and a covetous man, in whom covetousness reigneth. And so must we likewise conclude in the present matter, that he is a hypocrite, in whom hypocrisy prevaieth and beareth rule.

To the making of a hypocrite therefore, three things must concur: first, a fit subject; viz. such a one as doth (at least in appearance) profess himself to be a Christian, and to believe in Christ. As nothing can be called an unfruitful branch, if it be not a branch; so neither can any man be termed an hypocrite, unless at least externally he be in Christ: in this meaning, as we now take the word hypocrite, in opposition to a sound member of Christ. Secondly, there must be in that subject an adjunct, that vice of hypocrisy: and thirdly, this vice must be in that subject, in such degree as to bear to rule; and to be, as they term it, predominant. Wherefore for our further information in this matter (which is most exceeding needful to be very distinctly known and conceived of) we must search into the nature of that crooked, self-covering and self-cozening vice of hypocrisy, about which we need not go far, but alone turn our thoughts to the Apostles description of it, viz. that it is a form of godliness, without the power thereof. It a false feigned goodness, a goodness alone painted, and put on, and counterfeited. In plain words thus you may describe it; A

corruption of the will, whereby it inclineth itself to seem good, by doing some good, and leaving some evil for one's own sake. For every man is naturally desirous to have other men esteem him good, and to esteem of himself also, as of one that is good; and because, neither will his neighbors conceive so of him, neither can he so conceive of himself, without some ground for such conceit; he is therefore willing to do something that may work in others, and in himself such an opinion of him, and to avoid some other things, that might procure the contrary opinion. Yea, every man naturally is willing to be happy, and willing to think, that he shall be happy, yet because this thought cannot be maintained, without some color of reason, he is also willing to do some things, that he may think will further his happiness, and avoid some other things that will hinder it. Now when a man that liveth in the Church, out of these natural desires, that are inseparably united to his reasonableness, doth incline himself in some things, to yield to the Doctrine of Religion, that so he may serve his own turn, in fulfilling his own desires: this is false goodness, goodness alone to the eye; it is called goodness, as a false shilling is called a shilling, because it looketh like a shilling, having the same stamp, and a little silver at top, though in the midst it be nothing but brass, or some such base and unworthy matter. If a man (I say) be moved for his own credit or ease sake, yea, or for his own salvation sake, to be willing to do some good, that God in his word commandeth; and to forbear some evil in the same Word condemned, and not to be willing to do all good commanded, and avoid all evil forbidden; this is but guileful hollow, imperfect. dissembled goodness, so esteemed by men, and so appearing to them, that can look alone upon the bark and outer rind of things, not so appearing to the pure eyes of God, nor so accounted in his true judgment, that searcheth into the marrow, and pith, and depth of all things. For God himself is the chief good, and in a manner the only good, neither is anything good, but by participation from him; and so that goodness which is not (as it were) derived from him, as from the

original of it, nor directed to him, as to the scope and end of it, because it hath nothing to do with him, therefore indeed is not goodness, whatsoever show it may carry to the world. So that as true goodness, is will to be good in all things for God's sake; so is false goodness a will to seem good in some things for one's own sake. Ease may move a man to do some good, and avoid some evil, so may credit, so may profit. Now if any of these things do chiefly and principally work upon our wills, as the motives and ends of our actions, then is that goodness but hypocrisy and seeming goodness; and that man who living in the visible Church, suffers this vice (of being induced but to some good things, not all; and withdrawn but from some evil (not all) for his own credit, profit, ease, or the like cause, not God's sake only or principally) to sway and bear rule in him, he is an hypocrite. But when and in whom doth this vice prevail? may some man say, I answer; even then, and in that man, where and in whom it is not seen, opposed & resisted by the spiritual weapons of frequent confessions, hearty petitions, earnest lamentations, and diligent application of the word of God against it for to beat it down: for all vices must be distinguished into two kinds: some are more fleshly and gross (as I may term them) that do follow the temperature of the body, and their strength and weakness doth much what depend upon the constitution thereof: such are wrath and choler, gluttony and filthiness, and diverse other like. Now it is not of necessity, that these vices be actually in all the corrupt generation of Adam; alone they are in everyone (as I may term it) virtually, so that if the same soul were put into another body, whose temperature would fit the turn of those vices, it would be as plentiful in them, as any other man is, or as itself is in any other vice. Now there are other vices of a more spiritual nature (as I may term it), I mean more immediately and principally flowing from the corruption of reason and of will, and from the native defilement of the soul, in its chief faculties; such as are pride, unbelief, forgetfulness of GOD, unconscionableness, and by name, this hypocrisy. And these last

kind of vices are in all men indifferently since the first sin of Adam, by whom all became dead in sins and trespasses; though it must not be denied, that in some they grow more head-strong, than in others; and do more manifestly and violently show themselves, according as they are more or less nourished with means and occasions, and (as it were) soiled with helps and opportunities fit for them. And as for all these vices, there do they prevail, and there they must be called predominant, where they are not observed, bewailed, acknowledged, oppugned, and that by spiritual weapons, and that constantly. For it is most undeniable, that wheresoever any vice is, there it ruleth, unless it be mortified and crucified by the spirit: that is, by spiritual means and ordinances, faithfully used, wherewith God's Spirit faileth not to work; and it is as certain, that this grand member, or him rather, of the body of death, which we all bring into the world with us (I mean) hypocrisy is in every man; wherefore it hath dominion in him, unless it be, as was formerly spokē, discerned and oppugned. And therefore also it is great reason, that such one should receive his name from hypocrisy; & be entitled an hypocrite. And so I would think, an hypocrite maybe fitly called a professor of religion, that doth not see, bewail, and fight against his own hypocrisy, that is, his aptness to make a show of goodness, by doing only some things that are commanded, and avoiding only some things that are forbidden for his own sake, not endeavoring to do, and avoid all such things for God's sake. And this thing is worthy to be diligently marked, that I spake of the predominancy of vice, because it is of marvelous great use, for the true trial of ourselves, according to those things that afterwards shall be set down for that purpose. For not everyone that feeleth in himself some of these signs, and effects of hypocrisy, that shall be named, is by and by a hypocrite: but he that hath them in him, and takes no care to find them out: or if he must needs find them out, continueth not to make war against them by prayers, and tears, & the sword of the spirit, and the like weapons of our Christian warfare. And of the description of a hypocrite hitherto. I go forwards

to show you the sorts or kinds of hypocrites: for well may we say, that a notable difference in degrees, may give just occasion of distributing the things so differing, into diverse kinds, as the Scripture divideth the heavenly Bodies into the greater light for the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the diverse sorts of Hypocrites.

And of hypocrites within the Church, we shall find two kinds; the greater hypocrite, & the lesser hypocrite: the gross hypocrite & the close hypocrite; both well called hypocrites, because in both, that vice prevaieth; and yet the one distinguished from the other by the names of greater and lesser, or grosser and less gross, because the degree of prevailing in one; is far higher and fuller than in the other. As even of Leapers, some were not so much leprous as others; though both leapers & uncured. And of diseases, some are more vehement than others, though both mortal? And of wounds, some are deeper and broader than others, though both deadly.

Now a gross hypocrite is he, in whom hypocrisy so far prevaieth, that he knows himself but to make a show of goodness, for some sinister respect, and yet cares not for it, out of the most exceeding story-hardness of his heart. This hypocrite hides himself from the world, but not from himself; he cozens others, but himself doth not deceive himself: for he is full well acquainted with his own intentions, and perfectly privy to the windings of his behavior; in very deed sometimes, even smiling to think, how he beguiles the

world with a certain fineness of outward carriage, and seeming. Many a man maketh a show to be religious, by doing diverse good things, in the mean space knowing full well, that he doth not in heart regard any of these things, but alone that he thinks it fit so to woo the times, or to fish for the favor of some particular man, or to compass some or other of his own earthly, and self-respecting projects. Many a parishioner cometh to Church usually each Sabbath, and receiveth the Sacrament commonly when his neighbors do, who doth in his heart no more esteem of Church nor Sacraments than a very Pagan; and so much he doth know by himself too, and yet is never touched with any remorse of heart, for his so palpable, and to-himself-evident dissembling. Yea, it is to be feared, that many a Divine studies hard, preacheth (not learnedly alone, but) holily (too for matter and words); and yet in his own soul maketh no more account of preaching, than of a play-book, but that he seeketh by this means to live in the world, and to attain a Benefice. Many a son and servant of a godly father or master, will hearken diligently at Sermon, and bring home (by memory or writing) all the substance of the Sermon; yea, and be diligent at prayers in the family, and perhaps also pray himself, with very good and commendable petitions and words; when as all this while he is guilty to himself, of making no reckoning of any goodness; and in truth careth for, nor thinketh of anything else, but winning the favor of his parent or master, or credit and reputation with those amongst whom he liveth: and yet his soul is no more moved with sorrow, for this his most gross guile, then if he were the truest hearted person under heaven. For in truth, of all sins in the world, nothing doth bring a greater extremity of deadness, and senselessness upon the soul, then this abominable hollowness, when it prevaieth in this degree, that now I am entreating of. Such hypocrites as these were Absalom and Achitophel. Did not Absalom know, that he regarded not the religion of a vow? Did not Achitophel know, that he made nothing of God's house and the sacrifices: but (even as a stall) the better to attain the favor of David, and his own

advancement? Doubtless they were well enough seen in their own purposes and projects, and could not but confess at the bar of their own conscience (but that they would not consider of it), that in very truth they did but serve themselves (and not God) in all their seeming religiousness. Such hypocrites also were the greater number of the Pharisees, which made our Savior Christ, so tart and earnest against them at all times; for well did he see, that they did all their good works to be seen of men; and that their forms of piety and godliness were mere paintings, and that they regarded nothing, but to make themselves great in the earth, and even under color of long praying, sought only to devour widow's houses. Such also were those Preachers, of whom the Apostle affirmeth, that they did teach Christ not purely, but of contention, as it were to put down Paul, and to win the Garland from him, and so to add affliction to his bands. And these be gross hypocrites.

Now there are a sort of dissemblers, not so notorious nor so gross as these, and yet still under the power and dominion of guile; who think themselves to be true Christians, and make account, that they have that religion and piety, which they seem to have, and yet in very truth have it not; but (as S. James speaketh) deceive their own selves, as well as others, though the worst for them is, they cannot deceive God. There are a number of professors of Religion in the Church, of whom all that know them, have a very good opinion: supposing them to be most worthy Christians; yea, which in their own hearts do verily think of themselves, that they be indeed the sons and daughters of God, and that they serve him, and not themselves; when as in very deed, they do nothing else but cozen themselves, and the whole world; for within, they also are very rottenness, and serve themselves alone, and not the Lord Jesus Christ. Such an hypocrite was the Apostle Paul before his calling, who was strict in all the Legal observations, and unrebukable before men, and zealous of the Law, and (as he thought) earnest for the God of his fathers; yea, who was

alive before the Law came (in his own esteem) and made full account to go to heaven; and yet for all that, he was but a whited tomb, and a rotten carcass; a Jew without before men, not within before God, as himself afterwards did know, how (even by experience of his own case) to distinguish.

Now if any man demand, how it should be possible for a man so far to beguile himself, as to think, that he hath that virtue indeed, which he hath alone in show? The answer is; that children and fools, will easily take a gilded copper ring, for a ring of gold; and so blindness and want of understanding is the cause, that many men do so far mis-take themselves. And again, the answer is, that many a man thinks himself a great scholar, whose learning yet doth nothing excel his neighbors: because he compareth himself with himself, and doth not prove himself by exercises of learning, and by comparing himself with others: and so, many a man esteems his estate to be very good, when indeed he is a plain banquerout, and oweth more than he is worth; only because he is slack and careless in casting up his reckonings: even so the close hypocrite is an hypocrite, and yet knows it not; because out of his abundant self-love (which makes him give over easy way to a good persuasion of himself), he is loath to bestow pains, in searching and examining his own heart. Would a man be frequent and careful in trying himself; he could not be a hypocrite, and not know it? but often a thing lies hid, for want of due seeking, that with a little careful searching, would soon be brought to light. So hypocrisy ruleth, and yet is not perceived to rule, because men will not inquire much after it; and the nature of it is, to be crafty in hiding itself. And these be the two most remarkable sorts of hypocrites, whereof yet it must be considered, that there is a great difference to be made.

The gross hypocrite is to God, the most hateful of all the sons of men: no kind of sinners are more loathsome to God, than those that set

themselves wittingly to serve their own turns with a bare show of religion, when in their hearts they do quite and clean neglect it. These men are more grievously to be punished, than any the most notorious and infamous sinners amongst men. A thief, a whore, a murderer, a witch, shall not receive a more bitter damnation, than this most palpable dissembler: for he doth most extremely abuse and dishonor God, and his most sacred ordinances, dallying and mocking with him to his face, and even scorning and deriding him to his teeth (as men use to speak) and trampling under feet the richest and fairest of all his precious treasures of goodness. But it is not so with the close or lesser hypocrite, that is an hypocrite, and knows it not: he is not so bad either in God's account, or in the account of wisemen, as the notorious and open offender, neither shall his case be so hard, as the case of such vile wretches, because his sin is less willful, and therefore also less odious in God's eyes.

And from this difference it cometh to pass, that the gross hypocrite is so seldom converted, as a man may well make a question, Whether any man, having any while continued in such palpable dissembling, were ever truly turned yea or no. But the close hypocrite many times becomes true hearted: many a man (being by education, or by casual falling into some good family, brought alone to a form of piety, and yet not willfully setting himself to be guileful) is after some time truly sanctified, and becometh upright-hearted before the Lord. But a close hypocrite hardening himself against the Word often, will at the last become a gross hypocrite, loosing even these shadows of goodness, which at first he had, and wherewith he did for a time beguile his own soul. Judas (in all likelihood) was at first a close hypocrite, not thinking himself to dissemble, nor of purpose making a show to respect Christ for hope of future advantage by him (in his heart mean while making no more account of him, than of another man), but because he hardened himself in his sin of theft and covetousness, at length hypocrisy grew stronger in him, and he

became as palpable a dissembler as ever was, when he durst betray his Master (that Son of man) with a kiss. For sin will easily grow from a smaller quantity to a greater, and from lesser degrees to more fullness and largeness. And this distinction of hypocrites into two kinds, is of singular use in the examination of ourselves, and serveth excellently to discover men unto themselves, which else would easily think too well of themselves. Many a man, because he knoweth himself to be none of those, that do wittingly play the hypocrites, therefore imagineth, that the name of hypocrite should not be given to him: but now the knowledge of this difference, must make us more wary over our own hearts, and stir us up to take heed, lest happily we be found in the latter kind, though not in the former: for the truth is, neither of them both can be saved, unless they reform themselves.

CHAPTER V.

Showing the general notes of difference betwixt the true man and the hypocrite.

And so have I dispatched the second point I undertook to show, viz. the sorts of hypocrites. I now come to set down certain general notes of difference betwixt the true-hearted, and the hypocrite. These are very many; I will insist alone upon four, which to me seem the most evident and easily-discerned. First, the hypocrite is a great find-fault abroad, a little find-fault at home. Many things (almost all things) are out of order in his neighbors; in him, little or nothing is amiss, if you will take his own judgment. Yea, the smaller faults of others, he knows how, even skillfully to aggravate; his own greater faults, he wanteth neither will nor wit to extenuate: so that in thinking or

speaking of his brethren, and those that live with him, and about him, he can discover diverse great and strange enormities, and is much troubled at them; in thinking or speaking of himself, all things are well, and in very good order, at least not so far amiss, as to procure any great trouble or disquietment to him. Other sins and wrongs (for those sins pinch hardest that seem wrongful) make the hypocrite often even weary of his life: but seldom do his own sins so much perplex him; unless in the agony of bitter temptation, as it fared with Judas, when his conscience and he fell out. This note our Savior Christ doth point us to, when he bringeth in the hypocrite speaking to his brother in this wise, Let me pull the mouth out of thine eye, when in the mean space he felt not the beam in his own eyes. A good man can see a mouth abroad, but not with the neglect of a beam at home: but the hypocrite will make a great stir about a small matter in others; in himself the greatest are slightly passed over. But how now the true-hearted? even quite contrary: the faults of others do less trouble him, than his own; and he can far rather excuse and defend them than himself. Yea, he hath more to say against himself before God in secret, than against all the world besides in public; and he will rather pass by a sin anywhere, than in his own breast and life. He follows Christ's counsel, and pulls out the beam first, that afterwards he may see to pull out the mouth. Thus, Paul speaketh bitterly against himself and his own sins, esteeming himself as the least of all Saints, and the greatest of all sinners; this was after his conversion, for before he would have had him by the ears, that should have so entitled him. And indeed it must needs be so, both with the hypocrite, and the upright, as hath been spoken: for the hypocrite is destitute of the love of God, and moved only by self-love, even to that little goodness he seemeth to have. Now love (we know) is a blinding passion, and will not suffer a man to discern the faults of him, whom he loveth: but the true Christian is endued with the love of God, and out of that love embraceth the courses of piety: but for himself, he is blessed with that excellent grace, of loathing

and abhorring himself in dust and ashes, out of the knowledge he hath of his own corrupt and sinful nature. And from this hatred it cannot but follow, that he will prove a severe censurer of himself; for hatred doth whet on the wit to spy faults, and to amplify them.

Secondly, an hypocrite is always confident of himself, & of his own power, not to be overtaken, at least, of such & such great sins, which (perhaps) he never yet hath committed; yea, he thinks always, and often brags, that all the world should not draw him to do such abominations: and from this presuming of himself it comes, that he is so bitter and pitiless, in speaking against others that have offended; and also, that he is of himself so exceeding venturous, and so ready to rush upon occasions of evil, for that he misdoubteth not himself, but imagineth that he shall certainly do well for all that. And in the main matter, he is most of all confident, likely never so much as suspecting (because he will not suspect) himself to be an hypocrite (unless it be in some heavy cross or temptation) but still sleepeth quietly in a secure opinion of his own uprightness, and being sure GOD'S child. So was Paul once alive without the Law: so the Jews with whom Christ talketh, boldly did affirm, even (say Christ what he could to the contrary) that they had God for their Father, though he assured them, they were of their father the devil; and therefore we may be sure, they were at best but hypocrites. But now, the true Christian is jealous of himself, lest he also should be tempted, and out of this doubting of his own strength, withdraws himself from the occasions of evil, lest that (afore he were aware) he should be overcome by them; yea, he is somewhat fearful oftentimes of his own estate, whether he be a true Christian yea or no; meeting with so much falsehood, and so many fruits of guile, that often he stands amazed at himself, and is fain to call the matter into question with himself, and to discuss it much and hard, afore he can settle his mind in that assured persuasion of himself, that he is upright. Thus the one (not fearing himself) takes all for granted, that he thinks true of

himself, without proving; the other (out of much fear) is much in proving himself, and will not believe anything, without proof.

A third note of difference is this, the hypocrite is (as Saint James speaks) variable in all his ways, wavering off & on, differing according to the difference of time, place, company, and the like, if he be put to it. So in persecution he falls off: when wealth and honor comes in, to draw him another way, he is gone; he is not still suitable to himself. When piece is favored, he is for it; at other times, when it is out of countenance, he is at best a neuter, perhaps against it. In places where goodness is in good request, he is good; elsewhere he alters himself, and gives himself leave to cease being good; and for company, he is most times as the company; and in truth is a man so apt to turn, that (unless he chance to be of a sour, or a testy nature) he is for all companies. He is not the same privately, that publicly; betwixt God and himself, that before others; at home and abroad; neither indeed striveth to be. But the true Christian, he is fixed and constant, always the same, rooted, grounded, established, and doth not give himself over to changes and alteration. I confess, he also findeth it much harder to be good in sometimes, than in some; and in some places and companies, than in others. The devil fails not to take the advantages of time, place, company, and to press more hard upon him to do evil, when he hath these opportunities standing favorably-for evil-doing; and likewise to pull him backward (with more violence of tempting) from God, when these things stand cross to goodness; yea, his corrupt nature is capable enough of the helps to evil, and hindrances from good, which change of place and company do bring with them. Yea, sometimes alterations in these things, may even daunt him for a while, and according as they find him weaker, make him now and then start back from some good deed, or rush forward into some evil: but still he would not alter, he is ashamed that he finds himself somewhat altered, and he returneth in conclusion to be the same, notwithstanding the variation of these

circumstances. A Compass Needlewell touched with the Adamant, will always be turning Northward; and though with shaking it may for a time be pulled backward, yet it returns again (after a little standing settledly) to the old point, and (as soon as ever it can be suffered to follow its own inclination) it trembles and hangs Northward: so whatsoever change of things befall, a true Christian hangs in his desires to Godward; and if the vehemence of a temptation, through fear or hope, do shake him off a little, yet he quickly turns to Godward again, and is never well, till he have returned to the point of obedience. Not so the hypocrite; for he (because he is not good for God's sake, but his own) if matters come to that pass, by occasion of changes, in time, place and company, that goodness may be a hurt to him, or badness a benefit, or no hurt; is wholly swayed by respect of himself, and takes leave to himself, to please himself in his so changing. The one is chaff, the other a tree; so mainly they differ.

Last of all, the hypocrite (as Christ chargeth the Pharisees) are still making clean the outside of the Cup and Platter, not regarding though the inside be full of ravening and covetousness. Christ's meaning is plain enough, That dissemblers look altogether to their outward or open actions and speeches; not regarding the thoughts and corruptions of their hearts. All their care is, that they may not be known to do evil: but the closer disorders of their inward man, they can easily bear withal; it little vexeth them to find, what evil imaginations, and sinful inclinations they have within. But the true Christian (according to the counsel that God doth give to Jerusalem by Jeremiah) is careful to wash his heart, and to make his inside clean, and not his outside only. He laboreth to keep his hand and tongue unspotted of the world; and if any blot cleave to him, he is diligent to wash it off by humiliation: but he is also careful to keep his soul pure from the hidden cogitations and inclinations after evil. And if here it fall out, that he gather any filth, he scoureth the inside

with as much diligence, as the Pharisee used to do his hands. So then the hypocrite hath little to do with his heart: the evils thereof do not much disquiet him, he takes small pains to resist and oppose the secret and dark disorders of his soul. But the true Christian findeth himself to have a world of labor within: he is much vexed with these heart-evils, and hath far more to do in the inward rooms of his soul, than in the outer court of his conversation. A hypocrite (like a slothful or sluttish servant) leaves the nooks and corners unswept, and uncleansed; the true Christian, (as a true lover of cleanness) is careful to ransack, and purge every corner of his soul: so you have the general differences betwixt the fruitful and the dry branch. But the heart will easily put off these generalities; and therefore most hypocrites will not find themselves by these notes: for nothing is more common with our deceitful spirits, than when such general notes are given, to make ourselves believe, that all is well with us, though all be out of order. I will therefore proceed to a more particular discovery of the hypocrite, by showing how he agrees with the upright (and yet still differs from him) in the four chief and principal graces, wherein he oftentimes doth think himself as abundant as his betters: but now I will so plainly lay open his failings, that he shall no longer mistake (with so wide mistakings) unless he will add willfulness to his error.

CHAPTER VI.

How the hypocrite agrees with the true Christian in knowledge, and withal also how they differ.

There are four chief graces; and (as I may call them) Cardinal virtues, which the holy Ghost doth work in the hearts of all the true members of Christ: these are Knowledge, Faith, Repentance, good Conversation, or obedience. In each of these, the hypocrite doth somewhat resemble the true Christian, and yet in each the dissimilitude is as true & evident, as is betwixt gilded copper and pure gold. Let us see the similitude and dissimilitude in Knowledge: Now it cannot be denied, but that the false-hearted man may conceive as many divine truths in his mind, as the truest Christian that is; yea, many times it falls out, that the knowledge of the hypocrite doth in quantity much exceed that of the true Christian. Who can doubt, but that the Pharisees were better seen in the Law, and in all points of Divinity, than the poor blind man? yet he was true; they hypocrites. A hypocrite may have a better wit, a better memory, a quicker conceit than the upright: he may have better education, more means, more teaching than the upright; & consequently may much excel him in knowledge. Nay, no doubt, but that a very dissembler may be so abundant in the knowledge of the Word of God, that he may be able to discourse and talk admirably, of any truth in Divinity: yea, to make a most excellent prayer, with exceeding good words, and exceeding good matter; and also to preach the Word most plausibly, and most fruitfully, so as to gain to himself the name and estimation of a worthy and a godly preacher too. Who can make any doubt, but that Judas did preach, and preach very worthily? and is it not manifest, that there shall be some, who will plead prophesying, and casting out devils in the name of Christ? who must yet be rejected with this grievous (and yet righteous) answer, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity. Did not diverse also preach Christ at Rome, not sincerely, but of contention? yea, and that so, as the Apostle rejoiced in their preaching? Wherefore it cannot be denied, that their preaching was sound and orthodox for the matter of it, and also fruitful and profitable, for the event of it: for else it could not have occasioned the Apostles rejoicing. You see then

most evidently, that a very dissembler may have so much knowledge, as to be a commendable and profitable Minister of the Gospel; when many a man and woman, that is sincere and sound in their very souls, may come far short of the twentieth part of that knowledge.

But where then is the difference of the sanctified, and of the unsanctified knowledge, seeing in matter and degree it may be the same in both true and false persons? I answer: In two things; in the effect, and in the extent. First, for the effect: the hypocrite is puffed up with his knowledge; it swells him, and makes him big with conceit of himself, and disdain of others. The Apostle Paul is plain in that point; knowledge (meaning it of unsanctified knowledge, such as is that of hypocrites) puffeth up. And again; If any man think that he knoweth anything (that is, be conceited of his knowledge), he knows nothing as he ought to do. You may see this point apparently in the Pharisees; This ignorant people that know not the Law are cursed. And again; Thou art altogether borne in sin, and doest thou teach us? Lo, how the understanding of hypocrites doth make them insult over others, whom they think to understand less than themselves; how it fills them as with conceit of themselves, so with contempt of others, as it were simple fellows, and very punies, in comparison of them. For why? the hypocrite knows only to talk, not to practice: he makes his knowledge a rule for his tongue and lips in discourse, not for his life and deeds in conversation: he never useth his insight into the Law, to examine himself thereby; and to mark, how far short his practice cometh of his knowledge: but alone employs it (if need be) to discourse, to teach others, and reprove others. Hence it comes, that his knowledge doth heave him up, and like meat ill-digested, begets the wind of self-conceitedness; because he will needs imagine himself so much the better, by how much he conceiveth more things, and can discourse better: for he with his knowledge will lay heavy burdens upon others, but himself will not touch them with one finger; that is, he is a great exactor of duty from others, and here he

straineth himself to the utmost; but he takes leave to himself to be careless enough of doing after his knowledge, as a man that holdeth a lant-horn in his hand before others to guide them right, himself not heeding the light that is in his own hand, nor caring where he sets his foot. But how now the true Christian? Why he, the more he knows, the more he discerneth how short he comes of his duty, and so is he the more mean in his own eyes, and the more humble, and the more ready to learn of others, and to take directions from them. His understanding doth depress him, rather than exalt him in his own conceit, because he useth it as a strait rule, to discover to himself the crookedness of his own actions, and to make himself see his own exceeding great defectiveness in those things, wherein he ought to be far more plentiful and forward. The nearer his knowledge comes to perfection (because he useth his knowledge as a Lant-horn to his feet, and a light to his paths), the more he perceiveth how far short himself cometh of perfection; for as he knows much, so is he ever calling upon himself to do what he knows, and falling out with himself, for not striving to do more, seeing God hath pleased to make him understand so much. You may see this most evidently in the Apostle Paul; there was not in all the earth (whilst he lived) a man of a larger heart, more richly and plentifully adorned with the knowledge of all the mysteries of godliness, and of a more deep understanding in things divine; and yet there did not walk on the face of the earth, a more humble man, a more mean in his own eyes, more willing and ready to submit himself to all baseness, to bear anything, and endure anything, and to be made and accounted as the refuse of the world, as an abject, of no reputation. To conclude therefore, the knowledge of the hypocrite doth swell his heart, and lift him up with conceit of himself; the knowledge of the upright doth abate the conceit of himself, and makes him viler and viler in his own eyes: and this is a most sensible difference. The true Christian, the more he knows, the more ready he is to learn of any man, out of his humbleness; for he knows as well the imperfection of his knowledge,

as any other thing. The false Christian, if he have any more than common quantity of knowledge, doth even almost scorn to learn of anybody, because he still conceiveth his knowledge to be more than it is.

Further, for the extent of knowledge, the difference is clear; the hypocrite for all his large knowledge, great learning, quick-sightedness, is yet almost always wittingly ignorant of someone or other duty, sin or truth, that he might know, if he would but use his eyes to look about him. It may be ever said of him in some, or other point, as it is said of them in Peter, This they know not, and that willingly. What duty for fear of loss, disgrace, or the like inconvenience he hath no will to perform; that he will not see to be a duty, lest his conscience should check him, for not performing it. And some fault, that he doth not resolve to leave, because it is profitable, delightful, or otherwise beneficial; that, he cannot perceive to be a fault, that he may not be enforced to fault himself for not amending it. In what truths it would be against his credit (as he supposeth) to change his opinion, those he will not see to be truths, though he do see them: yea, he winketh with his eyes (as the Scripture speaketh of the Jews and Pharisees) and will make a shift not to know in the very sun-shine of clearest light, in such points. The Pharisees saw enough to persuade them, that Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, was the true Messiah: but yet they could not be persuaded of it, they would not yield unto it, and they could not see it at length, because they would not confess it. This is to detain the truth in unrighteousness, a plain fruit of hypocrisy, when the light beateth upon a man's soul, and he begins to be convinced, and to think within himself, sure this is a truth; yet because the following of that truth would make against his commodity, or his credit, or some other carnal desire of his, therefore he will cast about again, and set his wit upon the tenders, and never give over plodding, till he have met with some trick or other that may delude himself, and hide the

truth from his eyes, and (if it may be also) from the eyes of others. This is, in seeing, not to see, and to hoodwink one's own self; yea, to give one's self over to the God of this world, to have his eyes blinded by him; and so blind will the hypocrite be for all his knowledge, making himself also, as Christ telleth the Pharisees, a blind leader of the blind. But the upright-hearted man is quite contrarily disposed; He is willing, desirous, ready, to know all that God teacheth, and to see all that the Lord revealeth unto him. If the light begin to shine upon his eyes, he is careful to open his eyes, and let in the light; for he knows how harmful it is, to turn day into night, by shutting the windows (as it were) to stop out the sun-shine. If the Lord please to offer the knowledge of anything formerly not known unto his conscience, and he find himself beginning to be persuaded, that this is doubtless so or so, by such proofs or reasons out of the word of God: he doth not struggle and strive against his own thoughts, because of inconveniences which he sees will follow him, if he should yield: but setting aside all such respects, and little accounting of any inconveniences, in comparison of smothering up the light of his own soul, he resolveth to be convinced, whatever come of it, and so betakes himself unto God, and prayeth, and seeketh knowledge, and findeth it, as you see in Cornelius. A good man useth his knowledge to guide his affections; and therefore will yield to know that, that may make against him in diverse respects. A hypocrite suffers his affections to over-rule his judgments, and therefore will not know that, that may cross his affections; the one guides his foot by his eye, and he will see anything that is offered to his sight; the other guides his eye by his foot, and if he can possibly make any shift, will not see what he mindeth not to follow. How quickly was Peter, and (by him after) the godly Jews, convinced of the calling of the Gentiles? but how willfully did the wicked Jews (which were but hypocrites) resist this truth, and forbid the Apostles to preach to the Gentiles? And thus we have shown the likeness and unlikeness of the true and false-

hearted in knowledge. We will now inquire, how they differ and agree in faith.

CHAPTER VII.

Showing how the hypocrite and upright do agree and differ in faith.

Faith is a most excellent grace, consummated & accomplished by two distinct acts of the mind: by assenting to the known truths, and applying the same to every man's self in particular. In both these acts of Faith, the true-hearted and dissembler do both agree and disagree. For the first; the hypocrite as well as the faithful saint of God doth assent unto the doctrine of the Scriptures, persuading himself in his heart, that doubtless it is from God, and is therefore a most certain truth: by name he may believe the doctrine of the Gospel, (concerning the salvation of man by Jesus Christ, God and man,) to be most sure and undoubted. Thus it is said of Simon Magus, that he believed. The stony ground also did believe: and there were that believed in Christ so, as that yet he did not trust himself with them, which manifestly proveth that they were but hollow. And surely Ananias and Sapphira did persuade themselves that the Gospel was a true doctrine, and gave credit unto it as unto a sure and excellent truth. But the difference is, that the hypocrite assenteth alone confusedly and slightly, to the whole, in gross, and with a kind of faint consent: not to each particular part, with a firm and well-grounded assent. This difference our Savior Christ noteth in the Parable of the grounds, when he tells us that the seed in the stony ground had not much earth, and that therefore it withered. The hypocrite hearing the doctrine of the Gospel, or being brought up

under it, taketh it upon trust, thinks, sure it is true, and (having a little light afforded him from GOD in the reading or preaching of the Word,) thinks sure this must needs be from God, it cannot but be so, and there an end. A more distinct, particular and serious consideration of the things revealed, he standeth not upon: he doth not muse and ponder much of the excellency, fruit, benefit, divinity, and heavenliness of God's word, and the several parts thereof: but the Christian, by much pondering upon the Word, and by often resolving his faith into the truth, wisdom, and power of God, who is the author of the Word, is fast grounded and established in the faith. The true Christian ceaseth not to make himself feel the power of the Gospel in himself more and more, and so indeed he is rooted in believing; the hypocrite neglecteth the thus pondering and musing of the Word, and taking experience of the efficacy of it in himself; and so, soon withereth or is choked up. The house that hath a foundation will stand in strong blasts, the tree that is deeply rooted, will not easily be blown up, but want of root and foundation causeth the house to tumble, and the tree to be blown up, This difference, though it be a certain difference, yet is not so manifest, till the days of tribulation come, or till some trial be made by some means. For often the true Christian is much more molested with temptations of doubting about the truth of the Word (as the holy man was that said, I have washed mine hands in innocence in vain), than the hypocrite. For Satan knowing that the dissembler doth but dissemble (as no doubt he can well enough tell where he reigneth and ruleth) is not so busy to disquiet his thoughts; yea verily if he have any doubting's, he lets them go as they came, because he buildeth not his hopes and happiness upon the truth of this doctrine. But the true Christian, as having laid (as it were) the wager of all his bliss upon the truth of the Gospel, is exceedingly vexed and discontented with these doubting thoughts: even abhorring himself, and ashamed of himself, that in so evident and excellent truths, he should find any aptness to make any question. And this also Satan perceiving, doth strive to molest him

continually with such doubting's, and with the stirring up of many objections, which he cannot tell which way better to answer, than by loathing them, and being much discontented at their rising in him. So that I say, the strength and firmness of the upright persons assent, above the dissemblers, is not so evident till the day of trial: but then it most manifestly discovereth itself. For the one will by no means be turned from embracing and following the believed truth, because he believeth it steadfastly, being rooted in faith; the other quickly gives over following it, because he believed it faintly, having taken little pains to feel his assent unto it, with much strength of assurance, gotten by much continuance of meditation about it. Thus the winds and waves must show where is a foundation to others; but he that is founded, may know that he is founded, by the labor he doth bestow in digging deep to lay the foundation; that is, in much musing to resolve himself of the truth of the Word, by finding the powerful operation of it in himself daily; and he that hath not a foundation, may (if he will) know that he hath none, by his neglect of this labor and pains, to lay it in his soul: but faith doth apply as well as consent. It is manifest, that our justifying faith is a putting on of Christ Jesus, an eating and drinking of him, a receiving of him, that is, an applying of him to every man's self: for how can either food nourish, or apparel keep warm, if it be not applied? and how should Christ profit a man, if he be not made his own?

Now the hypocrite also seemeth to apply the promise of the Gospel, and Christ, and his benefits offered therein, even unto himself in special, being strongly conceited, that Christ is his Savior, and that God is his God, and that he doth rest and stay himself upon God, and upon Christ for his own salvation; and this he doth sometimes so violently, that he thinketh himself to make no doubt of his being saved, being in this matter also given over to a strong delusion, to believe a lie. Surely the stony ground could never have gone away rejoicing as they did, if they had not persuaded themselves of their

own particular welfare, and had not made full reckoning to be made partakers of the benefits of that doctrine, which they did embrace. And did not the Jews in the eighth of John, boast with great boasting, that they had one Father, even God? And can any man doubt, but that Ananias and Sapphira did at first persuade themselves, that they should be saved by Christ as well as others? But let us see the difference then, which stands in these things. The hypocrite, he doth over-greedily feed upon the promises (as a child will do on sweet things, even to surfeiting; and (as you know) children are apt to eat their meat without bread): in the mean space not caring to apply to himself the Commandments for his direction, and the threats for his humiliation; yea, the more forward he is in taking to himself the promises by way of usurpation, the less careful he is of taking the precepts and threats of the Word, and laying them close to his soul also. Thus he maketh it manifest, that it is not the holy Ghost which doth enable him, to lay hold upon the promises, and to rest himself upon them: but that it is the presumptuous boldness of his own self-love, which maketh him forward, to lay violent hands upon anything, that he thinketh is good for him, and to pull it to himself (as it were) whether God will or no. But now the true hearted Christian doth in the same degree, apply the other parts of the Word to himself: that the promises of salvation, and God's goodness in Christ. He doth not sever, what God would have joined: but (because it is the good Spirit of God, that frameth his heart to receive Christ, and rely upon him, therefore by the direction of the same Spirit, which must needs move him to be of the same mind towards those things that are equally true, and equally from God) he feedeth also upon the sour herbs of the threats, to humble himself as need requires, and ceaseth not to urge the precepts upon himself for his continual direction. So the hypocrite separateth, what God would have joined, picking out of the Word that, that likes him best, I mean the comfortable promises; and casting the rest behind his back. But the true Christian joineth those things together, that God would have

joined; making use of the whole Word to himself, as well, as much, as carefully (in their times and places) as of the promises. Again, the hypocrite applies the promises falsely, not according to the tenor of the Scripture, but according to his own fancy; not duly deducting his particular persuasion, out of the general directions of the Word: but sophistically concluding in his own behalf, according as best liketh him. The Lord hath made many gracious promises in his Word; by name, that principal promise of salvation. And it hath pleased God to limit these promises to those that do such and such things, requiring (as you would say) certain conditions to be performed on his part, that must enjoy these promises. Now the hypocrite, he never looketh to his part, nor mindeth what care he hath of standing to the condition, but gapeth after the good thing promised, without anymore ado, and thinks himself sure of that upon some slight reason, and there an end. Therefore John Baptist warned them, that they should not begin to say, we have Abraham to our Father, but should bring forth fruits worthy amendment of life. Here he shows the fore (as it were) of their presuming and false faith, by telling them of the remedy. A hypocrite, he loves to be short in applying the promises, and doth it by enthymemes; Christ died to save sinners, and therefore I shall be saved; forgetting to tell himself what things are required of such sinners as Christ must save, and to consider afore he draw that conclusion, whether himself have the properties of such a sinner, yea or no. Or thus, I shall be saved, because I come to Church, receive the Sacraments, do many good things, or the like; not remembering that more is required than all this, of him that would be saved. But now the true Christian, he is more wary, and better advised in drawing his conclusion, he will be sure to find in himself those graces, which are required in him whom the promises do concern, afore he conclude to himself, that he shall receive the promises. He will not content himself to say, The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord; I come to Church, &c. nor to say, I have Abraham for my Father: but he must find in himself fruits worthy

amendment of life, or else he will never give credit to his own thoughts, that it shall be well with him: So the one doth build his special conclusion upon false grounds, and falsely deducteth his particular assurance out of the general promise, the other truly gathereth his comfortable assurance to himself, and will not hold fast his conclusions, unless he can by the Word of God assuredly justify his premises. The one reasons falsely out of GOD'S Word, because he neglects to prove both propositions from thence: the other is never well, till he can make good, by evidence of Scripture, both parts of his reason, and so his conclusion must needs hold good and sure: for the holy Ghost having wrought those graces in him, which the promises do specify; causeth, that by comparing himself with the promises, he can soundly comfort his own heart: but the hypocrite not having these graces in him, and yet desirous to enjoy the benefits offered, will rather believe upon sleight proofs, than that he will seem to himself to want a part in so precious and excellent benefits. Thus the difference of the faith of the true Christian and the hypocrite hath been laid open. The next thing wherein we must make a comparison betwixt them, is in the point of repentance.

CHAPTER VIII.

Showing how the repentance of hypocrites may be distinguished from the repentance of true Christians.

Repentance (which is a turning from sin unto God) hath two parts: the one humiliation, in regard of the faults that have been already committed; and the other reformation, in regard of that part of the life which is to come hereafter, by leaving the evil one hath lived in,

and performing the good he hath neglected. A hypocrite may go a great way, both in humiliation and in reformation, and yet he will never go far enough. Let us consider what he can do, and wherein he gives himself leave to fail. A hypocrite then may come to be very sorry for some sin or sins that he hath committed, and that so, as to weep for it with some plenty of bitter tears, and also he may come to confess his sin or sins, not alone to men in some cases, but in some cases also to God in secret. And thus Pharaoh once or twice acknowledged to Moses, that he had sinned: no doubt with great sorrow for the present time, that he had so long continued obstinate. So did Saul with tears confess to David, O my son David, I have sinned, and thou art more righteous than I. So Judas came with extremity of grief in his heart (and no doubt also in his face) mainly crying out of himself, and saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. Yea, you know that Ahab did put on sack-cloth, and went softly, and fasted for his sin, and that so as God did note it in him, and forbear him for it somewhat; which he would not have done, if he had not seen him inwardly sorrowful for it, and if he had not even secretly confessed it unto him. So far may a dissembler go (for the best of these was but a dissembler) in being humbled. But yet he doth much differ from the humiliation of the true godly man in these things. First, the hypocrite is sorry for someone or two gross external faults, that are more than ordinarily notorious and foul, as is to be seen in Judas and Ahab, and Saul; murder, shedding innocent blood, and seeking to slay the innocent. These crimes (you see) touched these dissemblers: but you never heard a hypocrite crying out as David; In sin was I conceived; and again, Lord, who can know his errors? purge me from secret faults: nor with the Apostle, vexed with the law of his members, drawing him captive to sin, and crossing the law of the spirit within him. The corruptions of the heart, the secret and unknown, and esteemed little disorders of heart and life, especially (the fountain of all mischiefs) the filthy stinking guzzle of Original sin, the hypocrite laments not, bewaileth not, confesseth not

with sorrow and anguish of heart to God or man; but alone if he fall into some gross notable crime, he is much troubled and grieved for it, and sometimes very sorrowful in confessing it. But the Christian man can find out more hidden corruptions, and acknowledge and bewail them, and feel the burden of less grievous crimes, yea of things by the most, esteemed no sins; and for them can shame and blame, and condemn himself before God. So the one washeth his heart (as I said before), the other his hands only, at the best.

Again, the confession of the hypocrite and his sorrow comes but by fits and starts, sometimes, now and then, once or twice, and use it not. Seldom have you Pharaoh and Saul saying, We have sinned, they are not often in this tune. It is a rare and unusual thing, to see Ahab going softly, to hear him sighing for his sin. For indeed it ariseth not from any such ground in them, as may make it lasting or perpetual; namely, a true hatred of sin, or love of God: but alone from a fearful expectation of punishment, or a weariness of crosses and afflictions. But now the true Christian is very constant in his confessing, and (at least) striving to lament sin. It is his usual and constant course, to blame himself before God for his daily and particular transgressions: and he is not well almost any day, unless he do take some time, to accuse and judge himself before his Maker. For indeed he walketh with God, and seeketh to approve his heart unto him, and therefore cannot but be frequent in laying open his heart unto him, and pouring out his soul before him. His heart will often so smite him, as to drive him into God's presence, and make him say, O Lord, I have sinned greatly, and done exceeding foolishly: but Lord do away the sins of thy servant. Yea, he never almost committeth any sin, which he knows to be a sin, but he will confess it, taking daily notice of his daily slips, that he may the better confess them. So the sorrow and confession of hypocrites is in a qualm, when the good mood comes upon them; as a dry hole that is full of water upon a great shower: but the confessing and mourning of the true Christian is daily

constant, perpetual, in a settled and usual course; as the running of water in a fluent stream, that hath issue from some living Fountain, or Well-head.

Again, the sorrow and confession of hypocrites is likely put upon them by a kind of violence, they be even forced to it by some accident, so pressing them for the time, that they can neither will nor choose, as the common saying hath. This is evident in the fore-named examples. What made Ahab walk in sack-cloth with a soft pace? but because he was threatened, the ruin of all his household, and the utter subversion of all his posterity: a tidings that could scarce choose, but make the heart of any Grand-father to ache and melt within him. When did Pharaoh say, The Lord is righteous, I and my people are sinners? but when the plague lay so heavy upon him, and stuck so close unto him, that he knew not which way in the world to turn himself. And what made Saul break forth with tears, and say, I have sinned? but that David had then even gone beyond all his expectations quiet and clean, and had utterly overcome him with kindness, by requiting his evil with good. So Judas confessed not his treason, till the very sparks of hell fire were all on a light flame within his soul; I mean, till the hideousness of a bitter and exasperated conscience did even furiously pursue him, and drive him to this too-late and bootless remedy. So the confession of hypocrites is wrested and extorted from them, even as that of a traitor by the torture of the rack; and his grief for his sin is a compelled grief, as that of a slave under the whip: but the true godly man, and faithful servant of Christ, doth voluntarily, and of his own accord bring himself before the Lord in humble and sorrowful confessions (though no such violence be offered unto him), even out of a kindly work of grace, moving and inclining him still to desire to be at one with God. The child of God doth even long to be sorrowful for his sins; and when no cross, affliction, or temptation lies upon him, nor no other means of working him to grief is used; then he takes pains to rend his own

heart, and out of a good will to God, and in a kind of comfortable and sweet sense of reconciliation with him, doth acknowledge his wickedness. In very truth God's child sometimes (having almost killed himself with a presumptuous sin) is put to roaring and crying, through the weight of God's hand, lying heavy upon him day and night (as David saith of himself), afore he can come to confess his sin against himself. But this is a rare case with a Christian heart, that it should need compulsion, to bring it down in confession before God: usually he doth (as David after the numbering of the people) through the smiting of his own heart, betake himself unto the Lord, & say, O Lord, I have done exceeding foolishly: and as Peter after his denial of his Master, before any cross, before any force offered, out of his own tenderness of conscience, go forth by and by, and weep bitterly. Neither yet is God's child so insensible of a cross, but that his afflictions do make him look unto his sins, and bestow those tears in lamenting them, which the power of nature hath stirred up. And it is an happy effect of his chastisements, that they increase his godly sorrow, and so help to take away his sins; but yet he doth not only mourn then: he doth labor, even in prosperity to mourn for sin, and to make use of God's kindness in bestowing benefits, to become a means of humbling him, and making him grieve; and in a word, godly sorrow is a content unto him, and nothing doth him more good, than that he can kindly bewail his sins, and mourn over Jesus Christ. A stinging cross, a bitter temptation, an earnest exhortation, and the power of a good Sermon, may draw an hypocrite to tears: but a godly man without any of these things, will set himself to mourn, and lament, and most willingly (out of the love he bears to God, whom his sins have offended) will even turn his joy into sorrow, and his laughter into tears. Thus you see the difference of hypocritical humiliation from that, that is upright.

Reformation is another part of repentance, and here we will show, how much the hypocrite may reach unto, and wherein he is defective.

A hypocrite may reform diverse things that are amiss in him, and that at the preaching of the Word, and by means of the exhortations which he heareth in a Sermon: but herein he faileth, that in someone or other thing, he must be held excused. He brooks not the generality of that little large word (all), you kill him when you press upon him that universal exhortation, Cast away from you all your transgressions. O no! this he cannot do: someone or two faults are (as it were) darlings unto him; his soul is in love with them, and he must be dispensed with, he cannot leave them. In anything else he will be ruled by God: but in such a thing he must needs crave pardon, though it be a sin; he hopes it is not so great, but that he may be born withal therein: for alas, he cannot live unless he do it, or so forth. The hypocrite hath evermore some hand or foot that he will not cut off; some eye that he will not pull out, and fling from him; some dearly beloved sin, some most precious evil, some most sweet or gainful offense, that he cannot tell which way in the world to forgo; and therefore loves not to hear of amending it, would not be reprov'd for it, would not be called upon to forsake it, would not think of it, but would turn away his thoughts from it, and would fain have his conscience also forbear to urge him in that matter. He keeps someone or other wickedness under his tongue, as a most dainty morsel, which he cannot find in his heart to spit out. But now the true godly man desireth, and purposeth in all things to please God; he hath respect (as David speaketh) to all God's commandments, without picking or choosing: he takes the whole Law as it lieth before him, and frameth his will to bow and bend which way soever God will have it: whatsoever thing he knows to be a duty, that he resolveth to do, without any further excepting or caviling; and whatsoever he knoweth to be a sin, that he determineth to cast from him, whatever it be, & whatever may follow thereupon. He knows that God is a Sovereign commander, and that his will must be followed in one thing, as well as another, and that he which keepeth the whole Law besides, failing (yet wittingly) in one point, is guilty of all. Wherefore

he doth not dare to give himself a license, of departing from the known way of God's Law in anything. Indeed a good man findeth some sins harder to him to leave than others, and some duties harder than others to perform: but yet his purpose, determination, resolution, is to be found obedient to God in those things also; and he doth most earnestly strive against his own corruptions there, where he finds them most apt, to be opposite to God's Word; and takes most pains to make himself straight, there where he finds himself most crooked: whereas the hypocrite tolerates some evil in himself, and takes liberty so to transgress, making some shift or other to daube up his conscience, and to secure himself from the checks thereof. Thus Judas would never leave purloining and licking his fingers (as the proverb hath it) after once the bag was committed to his custody. The true heart allows no one known sin whatsoever; the hypocrite evermore allows (at least) someone sin, that he either knows, or suspects to be sin. Satan hath always some peculiar, or exempt place in his heart and life, where he may reign without control, and whether the jurisdiction of God's Word may not be suffered to extend.

And yet sometimes also the hypocrite will seem to make a proffer of pulling his neck out of Satan's yoke, by promising to leave, and beginning (for a spirit) to make as if he would leave his most beloved sin. So Simon Magus for a little while began to desist from following his sorceries: and Pharaoh said once or twice, that he would let the people go: and twice Saul promised David fair, that he would surcease to trouble him any further. But this mood holdeth not long, he quickly returneth to his old wallow, and laps up (like an unclean cur) his filthy vomit, which he had formerly disgorged. I do not mean, that he is overtaken only to do the same fault again, once or twice, or oftener (for that may befall the true Christian also), but he proceeds to allow himself in doing of it, to go on in it, and follow it with greediness; excusing it, or hardening himself in it, at least

coming to this pass, that he cannot leave it, that it is not possible; and therefore it is in vain for him to strive about an impossible matter, and so he returneth to make a trade of his sin, for all his good promises and offers of reformation; as we see in Simon, in Pharaoh, in Saul, and in others. But the true hearted having once set in, to cast off his beloved sin, doth never again return to allow it, and to wallow in it. He may fall again, perhaps more than once or twice (and these relapses are very dangerous, and very troublesome): but he will never step back to a resolution of continuing so to sin, and of thinking that he cannot choose, and there is no remedy; but still he ariseth out of the mire, reneweth his confession, reneweth his purpose of amendment, sets in afresh to bewail his faults, and brings himself again to a firm purpose of sinning no more, and in that purpose holds himself so long, till at length (it may be after many foils) he attaineth strength to offend no more grossly in that matter, whatsoever it may be. Thus his faith becomes his victory, and so he prevaieth against sin, and keepeth himself, that the wicked one doth not touch him, and that he committeth none iniquity. And so much of this third point, concerning the agreement of the repentance of the hypocrite and the true hearted, as also their differences. It remaineth to speak in the like manner of their likeness and unlikeness, in the matter of good life. I know that the leading of a good life, might well be referred to a branch of the second part of repentance, viz. reformation: but I desire to make it a distinct head of duties, for the more full and distinct handling of it in this respect, for which I have now undertaken to speak of it.

CHAPTER IX.

Showing how the good conversation of the hypocrite differs from the good conversation of the upright.

A Good conversation consisteth in freedom from sinful practices, & care of doing the things commanded by God. The hypocrite in both these may have attained a large commendation before men: it may fall out; that he shall live all his whole life long, without the committing of any such sin, as should cause him to inherit reproach in the world: what actions are grossly wicked, and palpably shameful before men, of those the false hearted may perhaps be much more free than the sincere Christian. So the Pharisee (which yet was not justified before God, and therefore was void of uprightness), could make his boasts before God, that he was neither whoremonger, nor extortioner, nor drunkard (& doubtless he might have said), nor curser, nor swearer, nor murderer. This brag may seem to prefer him before David; & before Lot, and before Noah; for never a one of them at his last end, was able to affirm so much of himself. Paul also, when he was a Pharisee, & a notable hypocrite yet (as concerning the Law) did live without rebuke, as himself afterwards (when he had no lust to tell untruths in his own behalf) affirmeth of himself. But the difference betwixt the true and false in this point, standeth in two things. First, the hypocrite in this innocence of his, is proud of himself, exalting himself with cracks & vaunts upon every little occasion, and insulting over others, that are not alike innocent, with a plain contempt and disdain of them. Yea, when he compares the grosser sinners with himself, he doth it not alone with scorn of them, but sometimes also with a kind of bitterness. Thus our Savior brings in the Pharisee, crowing over the poor Publican, because himself was not like him, and thanking God (that is put in for form sake) that he was no such manner of man, as this Publican. And you know, how bitter the Pharisees were against the poor sinners; even, so that they would not endure to be touched by them, or once to sit at meat with them. All this ariseth from the blindness of the hypocrite, who (not

having ever been discovered unto himself, nor perceiving the sinfulness and foulness of his own nature) imagines, that no more evil abideth within, than shows itself without; and that his wickedness of heart is no greater, than that which breaketh forth in act: so foolishly taking to himself the praise of God's restraint, as if a man should commend the carcass for not stinking, when it was embalmed. Now the true Christian in his immunity from such like palpable evils (if it fall out that the Lord have pleased so to restrain him, for often it is otherwise with him), yet knowing the loathsome foulness of his own heart, and being well acquainted with the bottomless quagmire of his own original corruption, is still humble and base in his own eyes: for though he have not committed so foul abominations; yet no thanks unto himself, but to the goodness of God in restraining; for he of himself is even as bad by nature, and should have done as bad (he knows), if the Lord had in like manner given him over to himself. Hence it comes also, that he doth find his heart affected, as with just zeal against gross sinners, so with a pitiful and remorseful disposition towards them, whom he perceiveth to be no whit more wicked than himself should be, if the Lord did not preserve him. But if the true Christian have either before his calling, lived in, or after his calling, slipped into some gross wickedness (as Paul was a persecutor before his conversion; David committed murder after) than is he for his whole life time after, much abashed in the remembrance of it, and made exceeding vile in his own eyes. Thus the Publican durst scarce advance his eyes to heaven, but with a countenance replenished with tokens of grief and shame, smote himself on the breast, and begged mercy. And so the Apostle is very much in vilifying himself (notwithstanding the abundant labors of his Apostleship) for his former bloody (though ignorant) persecution.

Secondly, the hypocrite (though perhaps he be not defiled with the grossest and foulest acts of evil, yet) makes no bones of evils of the

same kind, in smaller degrees, but commits them freely without check of conscience, or any remorse of humiliation for them afterwards. This is manifest by the Pharisees misinterpreting of the Law, to serve their turns this way: they condemned murder, but allowed revenge: they blamed forswearing, or perjury, smaller oaths they take none heed unto; they forbad adultery, but took no care to cut off the hand, and pull out the eye (that is, to mortify the wantonness and impurity of their senses); as our Savior shows in that place they should have done. Doubtless the course of their lives was answerable to their interpretation of the Law; and their lives were as crooked, as they would make the ruler to seem. Contrarily, the true Christian (though sometimes he may be overcome in temptation to commit some gross sin, yet) is usually careful to resist all the degrees of sin, even the very beginnings; and the first risings thereof in heart, as our Saviors more narrow interpreting of the Law (declaring the scantling of a godly man's endeavors above the Pharisees) doth manifestly convince. He looketh to the motions and desires of his heart, and suffers not the lesser evils to go unobserved, and unlamented. So the difference is manifest in the first part of a good life, freedom from sin.

Now in the second-part, care of well-doing, we will track the dissembler, and take him halting. First, he doth oftentimes excel in civil righteousness, and abound in works of bounty and mercy; Who more liberal in great doles than the Pharisees? yea, have not many Heathen men (and an hypocrite may surely attain as much good as an infidel) been famous for diverse moral virtues; and by name, most exact observation of justice in their dealings? yet here the defiance is not hard to find out, if a man could look into the heart of him that is hollow at heart. First, in regard of the end of doing good this way, the hypocrite doth serve himself in vain-glory, seeking the credit and applause of men, and to be commended in the world; and therefore for the most part he is careless of doing such good deeds, if there be

no witness present, nor no likelihood of their being known abroad. This our Savior noteth and taxeth in the Pharisees, who did all things to be seen of men, and even cherished in themselves those fond and foolish conceits and desires of being so commended, so respected, so well thought of, and so full of glory, for their good deeds: but the true Christian is earnest to withdraw his heart from listening unto the worlds plaudit, he laboreth to approve himself unto God; and for the thoughts of worldly esteem, he is ready to fall out with himself, for making account of such foam of men's mouths. He can say of himself in other things, as well as Paul of himself in one thing, that he seeketh not to be commended, he doth not go a wooing for credit. So they shoot both with one arrow, but aim at a far different mark; and this difference is plain enough to be discerned.

Again, the hypocrite will show kindness and mercy, and charity to his friends; or such as have never done him any great matter of wrong; or if they have made him amends, and repaired the breaches of amity by some proportionable submission or benefit. But for his enemy that hateth him, that persisteth to wrong him, that for the present seeketh to do him hurt, he cannot find in his heart to do him good, and scarce to practice righteousness, not at all kindness and mercy to such a one: yea, with the Pharisee, such is his model and square of living, that he will love his quiet neighbor, but hate his troublesome enemy as Christ doth tax them, for perverting the meaning of the Law. The true-hearted Christian standeth far otherwise affected; he remembereth, that God did love him when he was an enemy; and therefore also for his sake he will never leave pressing himself, till he have brought his heart to love his enemy, and to do good to them, that do evil to him; and not alone to deal squarely, but lovingly, kindly, mercifully, and (if need be) bountifully with his bitterest and most causeless adversaries. If his enemy hunger, he feedeth his enemy; if his enemy thirst, he gives drink to his enemy; if his enemy be fallen, he lifts him up; if wronged, he defends him; and so doing

good there, where nature and reason is most averse from doing good; he shows himself perfect, as his heavenly Father is perfect, as our Savior Christ exhorteth. Thus the extent of a sincere man's goodness doth distinguish it from the hypocrites, and (in one word) in such cases, and to such persons as he doth not, nor cannot, expect reward from men; yet the true Christian will execute mercy and judgment. The hypocrite ever faileth, where humane motives fail. And so for works of mercy and justice, we have shown what odds betwixt the sincere and guileful; there are also exercises of piety and religion, wherein the hypocrite is often very forward. Let it not seem out of place that I here speak, what I forgot before. For of the close and gross hypocrites, there are two kinds that must be distinguished each from other, because their differences are remarkable. There are cold hypocrites that are carried forward in the vessel of the time, and love not to overrun the common pace, in matters of religion (as your ordinary civil man, who yet is a very hypocrite, even in that which he doth attain unto) others be more forward and fervent, and carry then selves with a show of more life, in matters of religion: such was Paul before his calling, such were the Pharisees in their times, such were Ananias and Sapphira. Now these latter sort of hypocrites do not alone (as the former) abound in works of mercy and justice, but also in duties of religion and piety; they love preaching, and praying, and take delight in the company of men renowned for piety; they have a very green blade of being forward in God's service, to the keeping of prayer in their families, and accustoming to repeat Sermons, and other like commendable acts of devotion. The thorny and stony ground you know, did yield some more than common shows of goodness. And the wicked Simon conversed with Philip: yea, the sinful Jews were as abundant in sacrifices and fat beasts, as their godly forefathers. Paul was zealous of the Law, and there were many very forward Preachers in Paul's time also, whom a man would have thought fervent, for the spreading abroad of the Gospel; yet they did it not sincerely. And did not the Pharisee keep his weekly fasts, and

other like observations? yea, and did not Jehu also profess (speaking as he thought in his heart), that he was zealous for the Lord? Mark therefore the difference, which stands in two things. First, in the end, then in the matter of their works of piety, they stand far asunder one from the other. For the hypocrite, he doth always serve himself either in vain-glory, or in superstition, or in both. So the false teachers in Galatia, were zealous over the Galatians; but it was with an evil zeal (as Paul taxeth them), seeking to engross the people to themselves, and endeavoring to exclude Paul, that they might wholly be admired. And did not the flaunting fellows at Corinth plainly preach themselves, as being covetous of applause, and followers? And so Diotrephes loved to be had in principal account in the Church; he desired to be reputed the only man, (which is the loving of first-hood, as the Apostle calls it). The hypocrite (if he be a Preacher) doth labor (as with child of a longing desire) to be counted the best, or one of the best Preachers in the country; if he be only a private man, he desireth to be esteemed one of the forwardest professors, and pleaseth himself well in such fancies; yea, he hath a sensible edge, and a kind of kore against those, that stand betwixt him and this reputation. Neither can he well away with such, as bear away the credit and applause from him: as you may perceive plainly in Diotrephes, and in the Pharisees; so his religiousness hath a tack of the same fault, that his civil righteousness hath. But the true-hearted Christian serveth God in humility of spirit, not heeding what men deem of him, further than their want of respecting him, will be an impediment to his doing of good. He seeks not praise of men, neither of you nor others, as Paul saith to his Thessalonians. Wherefore he doth not things of contention, whetting himself on, and putting an edge upon himself, with a hope and desire of doing better than such an one, or putting down such an one; but purely (out of a longing desire to glorify God, sets himself to do the best he can, rejoicing with his whole heart, to see the well-doing of others; yea, glad at the soul, to see them far exceed himself, and wishing (with Paul) that all

men were like him, yea, beyond him in all graces, And if contentious, vain-glorious, emulatory conceits arise within him, he knits his brows against them, with as true heat of anger against himself, as Moses had once against Joshua, when he chode him sharply, saying; Dost thou envy for my sake? But happily it may fall out, that the hypocrite will be driven from serving himself in this vain-glorious fashion; yet then he looketh to himself with a more sinister eye, if more may be: for he becomes a servant to his own heart superstitiously, as those great sacrificers in the Prophet, that would fain come before God with thousands of Rams, and with Rivers of Oil; yea, that would give their children for their sins, the fruit of their body for the faults of their souls, refusing no cost nor hardness, to earn pardon, and deserve remission, or make satisfaction, or redeem to themselves an hope of liberty to sin in some other kind. They would pay. GOD for their evil deeds, with such good deeds; and (after the custom of men) cut scores with him; and therefore they do not likely (that are so disposed) content themselves with enjoined services, but seek some device of their own, or some other sect master, whereby they have great hope to win God unto them. Now the true Christian, he is of a far other mind, he cotuits all dung, and all dross; yea, he reputeth all loss, so that he may get Christ, upon him he relieth, to him he cleaveth, and never dreams of other merits, than those that he finds in him (for he renounceth himself) being the true circumcision, that puts no confidence in the flesh. And hence it is, that he doth not dare to tolerate himself the more in any sin, because of his devotion and zealousness in other points. So the scope of the sound and hollow is opposite; the ones eye looks heavenward, the others is bent still to himself.

The matter also wherein their devotions show themselves, will manifest whence they come: from truth, or from guile. For the hypocrite, his greatest devotion (unless it be when superstition, like as a bree doth the poor beast, doth prick him forward) is in duties

that may be, and are done with a witness: as for those that are private, or rather secret, he is key-cold in them, at least usually, neither in truth, doth he trouble his Closet often with private meditations and prayers. Hence it is, that our Savior correcting the mis-intended devotion of the Pharisees, doth confine them to their Closet, where God alone beholdeth and heareth: intimating, that they had little lust to pray in secret, where God that saw in secret should be their sole rewarder. So you may know if you dissemble yea or no. The dissembling man can preach well to others, he cannot digest what himself hath cooked, and preach it to himself in his privy meditations. He can pray when others stand by, but most times (unless he be whipped forward by a cross for a fit) he is tongue tied, and dumb-stricken in his chamber. So he loves to hear Sermons; and to repeat them in company; but he loveth not to get alone, and concoct the Sermon in his own meditation, considering and remembering what he hath heard, and how it concerneth himself. But now, the true Christian is rather more vehement in private than in public prayers, and can much rather omit the calling upon God with others, than those secret and inward communications with God, wherein he may freely pour his whole soul forth unto the Lord: and he satisfieth not himself, in having heard the Sermon, unless he have chewed the cud, and considered if those things were so, and examined himself by that rule. He is constant also in private services, as well as public, and the most secret, as well as those that must have companions.

Moreover, for the matter, or rather manner of their performing these duties of piety. The hypocrite doth rest himself satisfied in the formality of religion, in the external act, in a good and formal fashion discharged, not greatly heeding the power of religion in his soul, and the secret disposition of his heart. If he have framed a good prayer, in fit words, and uttered it in convenient gestures, he is well appeased, and hopes the service shall be accepted, though he had not any

working of fervor in his heart, any life, any feeling, any true touch of the things which his tongue did utter. If he have said good words with a good intent, all is well; though his affections had not the impression of the matter of his words settled in them. So, if he hear the Word with decent intention, and can carry away a good part of it, to speak of afterwards, if occasion serve, it is well, he is herein satisfied and contented, though his soul hath not been stirred with the power of the Word. Even as the false-hearted Jews esteemed themselves to have abundantly satisfied the Law, if they did tie the sacrifices with cords to the Altar, though their souls were nothing affected with the spiritual things, that those external types did represent. But the upright soul is much displeased with himself and his services, unless he feel the power of godliness in them. Hence it is, that he is very sensible of deadness, and calls much (with David) for quickening, and unless he find the efficacy and fruit of good exercises in his heart, he is much disquieted, and displeased with himself, and cannot tell how to be satisfied with having so served God: for he looketh to God that searcheth the heart, and therefore it cannot give him content, if he have not found his worship hearty. And so do the true and false Christian's devotions differ for end, matter, and manner.

Now there is a third thing considerable in the point of good living, wherein they must be compared together. The hypocrite is often very strict in matters of ceremony, and in such small points that concern God's worship; and in other petty matters also: so a Pharisee would not go into the Judgment hall, to be defiled against the Passover for anything. He would not neglect to pay tithe-mint for a world, you see him straining at a Gnat. And diverse times it falls out also, that the true-hearted Christian (out of scrupulous mis-taking, and an over-tenderness of conscience, not sufficiently tempered with exactness of judgment, or out of a long custom of being of such a judgment, and much conversing with men of such opinion, is even more strict than

he needeth, and depriveth himself of his lawful liberty of doing or forbearing, what he might either do or forbear. But there are two manifest differences in this matter: the hypocrite is as censorious as strict, as large in condemning others, that jump not with him in judgment and practice, as narrow in straightening himself about such matters. He is bitter, sharp, tart in his censures of them, that are differently minded, neither can hold peace with them, nor suffer himself to maintain any good conceit of them, but conceiveth that they make conscience of nothing, because their consciences be not of his own last. So the Pharisees could not brook Christ and his Apostles, for not washing: and the hypocritical false teachers, even made a very rend in the Church, about abolished ceremonies of the Law. But the true Christian in cases of such difference, holds the bond of Peace in the unity of the Spirit, not judging, nor despising others, but charitably referring them to their own master, to whom they stand or fall: he that eateth, not condemning him that eateth not; he that eateth not, not censuring him that eateth; but both lovingly bearing with each other, because they both give thanks, and seek to bring glory to one master. The hypocrite will almost allow no man the name of a Christian, at least, the esteem and affection due to one, if he concur not with his judgment: the true-hearted is ever charitable to the contrary side in such diversities.

Again, the hypocrite is not suitable to himself in his strictness; for he is large conscienced enough in other matters, and can swallow a Camel with the same throat, which did even keckle at a Gnat: if a greater and more apparent fault be more interlarded with profit, it goes down glibly enough, although these little lean morsels do stick in the passage. Such well-oiled faults, though of a larger quantity, either he cares not to see, or amend, so that you would as much wonder at the greatness of his swallow in some things (especially where pleasure and profit plead the case), as seem strange at the too much straightness of it, in other cases; and marvel either how he

should be so Eagle-eyed, as to see so small a matter in one kind; or else so beetle-eyed, as not to see so plain a thing in another. But the upright heart is like himself in his strictness, and equal and proportionable in his making conscience of things. He is more troubled in greater matters, than in lesser; and his conscience will check him, and order him with more or less vehemency, and earnestness in things; according as the things he doth, or doth not, are of more or less weight and moment. And even as straight as he is in some things, so straight will he likewise show himself in other things of the like degree. And thus you have (as near as I was able to gather it out of Scripture) the true and manifest difference betwixt the sincere and guileful in these particular graces. Yet still let me be bold to put you in remembrance, of what I spake at first, and that seasonably in this conclusion of the whole discourse, viz. that because the most uprightly minded is not without some plain admixture of guile: therefore many of the effects and signs of guile, will begin to work and show themselves in him also; but so that he doth observe, lament, resist and oppose the same, and continue to control his own heart for them, till by degrees he have gotten the better of them. And so he cannot be called an hypocrite, though he have much hypocrisy in him: contrarily, the hollow hearted (though he be clean over-run with these effects of false-hood, yet) neglecteth to observe them, or is not much troubled at them, when he finds them; and therefore he must take his name from the vice of hypocrisy, because it beareth sway, and exerciseth dominion over him. And thus now have we explained the point in hand, and so made way for the uses, which we are to gather from it.

CHAPTER X.

Containing the first use of the point belonging indifferently to all sorts of men.

First then, let all men learn hence, not to satisfy themselves, with being branches in the Vine, but consider seriously, whether they be of the good, or of the bad branches. Seeing there are, and always have been, and ever will be in the Churches, dissembler, as well as sincere Christians: it behooveth therefore, that every man, out of an holy jealousy over himself, and a godly fearfulness of himself, do often and seriously try and examine what he is, and not pass sentence of himself one way nor other, till by touch-stone of the Scripture, he hath made proof of himself. In other cases we would all easily condescend to such an exhortation. Were it most certain, that within this quarter of an hour, a hundred or two of this Congregation must leave this present life, how would everyone fear, lest the lot of death might fall upon himself? and how careful would each one be, if it were possible to come unto the knowledge of the matter, whether himself should be amongst the living or the dead. Brethren, it is certain, that in the Church of God, there be diverse hypocrites which must be damned: this our Savior teacheth here, and we have delivered you in his name. Can it therefore but be needful for everyone amongst you, to make a diligent inquiry into his own estate? and that so much the rather, because this very willingness to search into one's self, is a good sign of truth, and the contrary of false-hood. The hypocrite of the closer sort, is only therefore a hypocrite, because he will not endure the pains of discovering his own hypocrisy. A hypocrite in the hearing of such a point as this, can soon see cause enough in his conceit, to think hardly of another man. Sure, if this be so (saith he within himself), such a man must needs be in hard case, for he can be no better than a hypocrite: but for himself, he letteth pass all such thoughts concerning himself, and feeds himself still with his former strong, and long continued conceit, of being a good Christian, whatever men think of him. But the true

Christian, upon hearing of such things (because he hath had some acquaintance with the guilefulness of his own spirit) is therefore apt to be timorous of himself, and thinks to this effect within himself: Alas, what is mine estate, these things come hard upon me! I fear, I fear much, lest all be not well within me! And so searching, he findeth hollowness; finding, bewaileth it; bewailing, confesseth it; confessing, reformeth it; and reforming, is not overcome by it. Wherefore again and again I beseech you, let every man and woman consider diligently of himself; let him try and prove his estate by the notes which I have formerly set down, in as much plainness and perspicuity as I could. Say thou that hearest the Word of God this day, in which thou art taught, that the true Vine hath branches on it that be not true, as well as those that be true; what dost thou deem of thyself? Art thou an upright-hearted man, or a dissembler? Again, I demand of thee, what a kind of Christian thou accountest thyself? In name and show, and profession, thou art one of Christ's members; but art thou so indeed and truth, or art thou not? Thine answer will like enough be this; That thou hopest thou art a true Christian. I say unto thee therefore, that it may fall out, thou couldst not so much as say, thou didst hope so, if thou didst not answer rashly, and without all deliberation, because thou art an errand gross hypocrite, that dost know thyself (if thou wouldest confess it), but merely to counterfeit some outward show of goodness; whereas in thy secret conversation, and the unobserved parts of thy life, thou followest and likest wickedness well enough. And if it be so, suffer not thine heart to beguile thee any longer, and lay no claim to the name of a true Christian, which thyself dost well enough perceive, to be altogether unbecoming one of thy carriage. Come now, and grow to take notice of that monstrous gross guile, which thou canst not but feel within thyself, if thou wilt but lay thine hand upon it. But if thou boast not so grossly, and so palpably hypocritical, but that it may be possible for thee to say deliberately, that thou hopest thou art a true Christian; yet I wish thee to take great heed, that thine hopes be not

ill grounded: for many a man thinketh and hopeth, that he is upright, which in the end proveth himself otherwise, and loseth all his fair hopes; and so is fulfilled upon him that the Scripture affirmeth: the expectation of the wicked shall perish. But wilt thou know indeed what to say of thyself? then lay the line to thine own soul, and apply thyself to the rules formerly set down. Say then; Where findest thou most faults? at home or abroad? in thine own heart, or in the ways of other men? And what faults do most disquiet and trouble thee, and make thee most inward work and heaviness? thine own, or those of other men? If thine own, in all likelihood all is well with thee: if other men's; lo here, the carping vain of a hypocrite; lay thine hand upon it, and feel it with shame and sorrow, and say to thyself; O now! the pulse of my soul beats hollow: and hereafter (till thou have turned thine edge another way) take not thyself for other than thou art, an hypocrite. If thou feelest this busy meddling humor, and lamentest it, thou art not overcome of hypocrisy: but if it carry thee away, and thou satisfiest thyself in it, and thinkest thou hast cause so to do, and resistest it not: I condemn thee for a rank dissembler. But tell me yet further; how standest thou affected towards thyself? art thou bold, confident, adventurous, dreaming that (thou trowest) all the world shall not draw thee to commit such a sin, and bragging that thou art one of these dissemblers? Or art thou fearful of thyself, scarce daring to trust thyself, and often almost ready to tremble for fear, lest thou shouldest be beguiled in thyself? If it be with thee in this latter fashion, I say unto thee, blessed is he that feareth always with such a fear, as makes him examine, and pray, and seek for strength from heaven against his corruptions: but if otherwise, it is certain, this fool-hardiness comes from nothing, but thy not knowing of thine own weakness; therefore I can pronounce thee no better than an hypocrite. And tell me yet again: do times, company, places, make such a change in thee, that what evil thou wilt not do in one place or company; that, thou wilt do in another? and what good thou dost in some places and times, that thou carest not to perform in others? I

say then, thou hast cause to esteem thyself a double minded man: but if thy resolution be, to be still the same, and thy strife not to alter, and so in conclusion, thou art thyself, though Satan may trouble thee by such disadvantages; I say then thou mayest justly repute thyself true hearted. Yea, if perceiving such inclinations to change and vary with time and place, thou see and bewail this folly, and strive against it; thou mayest be true for all that: but if thou extenuate and excuse this varying, and think with thyself, that no man can choose; so casting the blame upon others, and not thyself: I assure thee again, that thou art but hollow. But proceed we in this examination. Is all or thy chief care of the outside, and so that thou neither do nor speak evil, it seemeth not much material to thee what thou thinkest; and if thou canst refrain from being externally naught, thou little heedest or carest for the naughtiness of thine hidden man? I affirm against thee then, that thou art but a whited tomb. But if thou have a wakeful and suspicious eye upon thine own soul, and findest great cumber to keep it in order, seeing and abhorring the lewdness of it, and being much troubled within thyself for it, thou mayest be sure, that thou art true: for doubtless he is good indeed, that is good within, and that strives to remove away the sinfulness of his soul. But let us go a little more particularly to work. Thou hast good knowledge of the Word of God; and what of that? Therefore thou concludest, that thou art a good Christian. I answer, thou collectest amiss, for this may befall a Judas and a Balaam. But what ensueth upon this knowledge of thine? doth it heave thee, and make thee lift up thyself with disdain of others, as of silly fellows? and what shouldest thou care, what they say or think? then assure thyself, that for all thy great knowledge, thou art but a proud Pharisee, and a vile hypocrite: but doth thy knowledge serve to discover to thee thine own vileness? So that by growing in knowledge, thou growest in contempt, and dis-esteeming of thyself, as seeing more and more thine own wants; and therefore more respecting others, who (though perhaps they know less yet)

know what they do know, in a better manner? Then art thou true-hearted.

Again, thou knowest very much; but yet something thy credit, profit and pleasure hang so in thy light, that thou canst not know, but even against the inward offers of thy soul to perceive) removest it out of the eye of thy mind, and art not willing to trouble thyself with thinking of such matters, nor canst not be made to understand: Know then, that this winking and blinking proveth thee false at heart. But if thou findest thyself willingly disposed to acknowledge those truths, that have gone most against thee, & most cross thy lusts, and which thy flesh is least desirous to see; thou mayest be of good comfort, in assurance of uprightness.

Moreouer, thou believest the Word of GOD; so do the Devils also: but tell me; Hast thou rooted the truth in thy soul, by much pondering upon it, and building thy faith on God's authority? if yea; thou shalt stand in the stormy day: if not; thou shalt soon be cast down, and prove thyself to have had none, but a rotten foundation.

Also, thou believest in Jesus Christ, trusting to be saved by his only merits: so many believed on him, which yet he regarded not: But dost thou believe the Law, as well as the Gospel? and humble thyself by that sour doctrine, as well as cheer up thyself with those sweet words? then much good may thy comforts do thee; otherwise, they be false and windy, and shall not be able to sustain thy soul.

Dost thou as well take care, to press thyself to performance of the conditions required in the promises, as to make thyself persuaded, that the promises shall be performed to thee? this is soundness: but if not, it is mere deceit, and thy faith at last shall prove itself to have been but fancy.

I go on forward to examine thee farther: Thou hast often been very sorry for thy faults, and with grief confessed them in secret: well; but Ahab did as much. Only tell; What faults confessest thou? only the grosser acts of evil? such sorrow and confession are unsound: the motions, thoughts, desires, privy inclinations, and smallest degrees of sin; that is hearty confession. Only by starts and fits, now and then, after the coming of some peril or reproach, or that some good Sermon hath wakened thee, as Ahab after the Prophets threats? Here is no truth: but if constantly, day by day, in a settled course; this is sound, rejoice in it.

And when confessest thou? Only when fear of heart and heavy crosses compel thee: or voluntarily of thine own accord, without such dragging (though perhaps more earnestly, when the Lord doth please to quicken thy pace)? if in the former manner, false; if in the latter, true is thy confession.

Again, thou hast mended many faults. But is there not someone or other thing, which thou hast no mind to amend? which thou thinkest thou needest not, or canst not mend? which thou dost not, by daily calling upon God, and traveling with thine own heart, strive to amend? If there be any such exempt place for sin in thy life, I pronounce thee an hypocrite. But if thou have given God the full possession of thy soul and life, desiring and striving for nothing more, than wholly to banish and expel, and cast out Satan, I pronounce thee a true Christian.

Thou art free from gross and shameful sins: But art thou conceited of thyself for this, and despisest others? thou art but a Pharisee: or art thou in such freedom, lowly and mean in thine own eyes? It is a good sign of truth.

Thou wilt not murder: but thou wilt revenge some other way, as by railing, or doing some shrewd turn; this is falsehood: but if thou

labor to forbear the least evils, as well as the greater in all kinds, and dost not bear thyself out in the lesser, because of thy leaving the greater; it is a good proof of sound goodness.

Thou dealest justly with men, and dost many deeds of charity: But when dost thou these things? In secret, when none can take notice? or only then when there is a possibility of having witnesses? and why doest thou them? chiefly (and in a manner only) to please God? or out of desire of winning credit? If the latter, false and guileful be these good deeds: if the former, true and upright.

And canst thou bring thine heart to deal lovingly and mercifully with him, that hath wronged thee, yea or no? If not; I see not how thou exceedest a dissembler: if yea; triumph, for now thou art perfect, as thine heavenly Father is perfect. Thou art zealous in preaching, praying, hearing, conferring. But tell me moreover; Art thou zealous, and as zealous in secret praying, as in public? In private meditations, as in public devotions? Then well is it with thee: if not, that that is open, may be hollow.

And say: Dost thou not feed thyself in a conceit, of being counted a notable Preacher, a very forward man? and hast thou not a kind of keenness against those, that seem by their brightness to hinder this repute of thee? If so; thou art manifestly unsound (if thou keep these thoughts warm within thee): but if thou do abhor these thoughts, laboring not to regard applause, but even to delight thyself, and bless God for others going beyond thee; it is an excellent proof of truth.

Yea, what regard hast thou of thine heart and affections in these acts of devotion? Doth the bare doing of the work content thee? it is stark naught then: Or dost thou look to thy spirit, taking no comfort, unless thou find the inward power of these exercises? then it is excellent, and that is evident truth.

Further, thou art more than ordinarily strict and precise in diverse matters, which the world accounteth light and small matters, it is well. But how standest thou disposed to them that are not of thy judgment? Canst thou not away with them? Canst thou scarce afford them a good word? but art still ready to account them dissemblers, and makest a great question, whether they may be accounted sincere, yea or no? Be afraid of thyself; it is very likely, that thyself art not yet sincere. Nay, if thou go forward in this rash and harsh censuring, not judging and condemning thyself, for so judging and condemning others, without all doubt thou art but hollow: but if thou hold fast the bond of love and peace, to those that are otherwise minded than thyself; and lovest them dearly for the graces sake which thou seest in them, it is a good sign that conscionableness (and not guilefulness) hath framed thee to such strictness of life.

And for thyself, how standest thou affected in other matters? as strict? as careful? as much troubled, with as small matters, in other things that concern thee? and wherein thy purse and profit are interested? It is a good testimony of thy soundness: but if thou canst devour (with some excuse or other) far greater matters in other kinds, thy conscience not greatly disturbing thee, because thou flappest it in the mouth with some sorry shift and pretense: this is a shameful trick of a dissembler.

If thy preciseness be not general (in all matters as well as one) and regular (more in the more weighty), thou mayest be a strait laced hypocrite, as well as a tender-conscienced Christian. O brethren, that you would often, very often commune thus with yourselves: gage your own souls, and by much questioning with yourselves, make yourselves known unto yourselves, and not continue always strangers to your own bosoms. Without searching, the true-hearted shall want the comfort of truth; and the hypocrite be out of all possibility, to come out of his hypocrisy: but this examination will be

exceeding beneficial for the increase of sincerity, or reformation of guile. See therefore that you redeem time, and bestow pains to practice it. I know the flesh will be backward to this work, man's heart loves not to be rifled up. A sore leg or hand shrinks back, when it should be searched. The devil also will find twenty devices to interrupt you, in keeping this assise over your own hearts: he loveth not to have men understand their own estate; he would fain have them go blundering through the world, and let things happen as they may for their souls. But let your natural backwardness to this inquiry, and Satan's sensible opposing it, be sufficient proofs unto you, of its needfulness and profit both. Were it not a great help to the subduing of the flesh, the flesh would not be repugnant unto it: were it not a means of chasing out Satan, Satan would never withdraw you from it. But be jealous over yourselves, fear much, suspect much, inquire much, and prevent the evil of security, and the growth of hypocrisy. I do not wish you always to stand in suspense of yourselves, and still to be doubtful, whether you be true Christians or dissemblers: it is no part of my meaning, to drive you unto this uncomfortable uncertainty. But I wish you not to make too much haste, to think yourselves certain, for fear your certainty should prove but a certain delusion. When thou hast again, and again, and again tried thyself by the things formerly delivered (or any other that thyself canst conceive of, or others of better understanding in these matters can help thee unto), then thou mayest boldly hold fast (if thou findest cause to hold) this conclusion; I am sure I am not a withering branch. But if thou be too willing to think well of thyself, and wilt speedily resolve (to save the labor and trouble of inquiring and narrow trying), that thou knowest thou art upright; then assure thyself, that despair at length will shake thee out of this deluded thought, if damnation do not over-whelm thee in the midst of it. But in very deed brethren, much searching is no hindrance to much assurance of one's own estate, but rather a great furtherer of it. For though all be not hypocrites, yet all have much hypocrisy remaining

in them, and in often considering of their estates, they shall by little and little, purge out the relics of that vice, which will not be thrown out all at once; and so shall grow in good and sound assurance of their own estate. I request you therefore, with as much earnestness as the matter requireth, to take heed of over easy believing your own good opinions of yourselves.

What the proverb prescribeth to be done unto others, if thou wouldest not be cheated of thy goods, that do thou to thyself, that thou mayest not beguile thyself of thy salvation; Try before thou trustest. The most of those that live in the bosom of the Church, are ignorant of the natural guilefulness of their own hearts. They conceive not how subject they are to that notable trick of folly that wise Solomon speaketh of, saying; The foolish believeth everything: especially every good word that his own self-flattering heart will buzz into his ears. But the wisdom of the wise, is, to understand his way, he will have good footing and ground, for his good opinion of himself, or else he will not rest upon them. Wherefore take heed of being deceived with that deceit, which Solomon calleth, the folly of fools: even to take pains to beguile yourselves, in resting upon a lie, in a matter of this main consequence. We see and wonder, that many men will not be dissuaded from accounting themselves true Christians, though every man that hath an eye, may see, that nothing is Christian in them but the outside, and not all that neither. If they make the least semblance of piety; if they be not as bad as the worst of all the limbs of Satan; if they can find in themselves the least shadow of anything, that may be called virtuous; they lay fast hold upon their own fancies, and will not consider, that it is the folly of fools to deceive themselves. O that we could drive you out of this folly! O that we could bring you to see (that that all confess, but in their own cases, few or none seem to consider) that in the Church, I say in the Church, I say again in the truest and purest Church upon the earth, there be not alone some, but many hypocrites; that you

might not satisfy yourselves with such simple allegations; for the proof of your being good Christians, as the most are wont to do: but that by looking narrowly, and digging deeply, and painfully diuing into the bottom of your souls, you may at last know yourselves with an infallible and sure understanding, not to be hypocrites, but true hearted. And this is one use for all men, that all should try themselves what they be.

CHAPTER XI.

Containing the second use for those that are found out to be hypocrites.

Another use is for those, which by this trial shall be found guilty; let them no longer maintain a good opinion of themselves, but take themselves for what they be, whom examination hath found guilty; let Confession therefore prepare him for pardon and amendment: for certainly these diseases of the soul will never be healed, until they be seen and acknowledged; neither will God ever pardon them, till the man in whom they rule, begin to see, and to confess them. If I did require an open confession, of all the dissemblers amongst you (namely, that they should now before GOD and this Congregation, open their mouths against themselves, and entreat all men to take notice, that hitherto they have but sought to cozen the world and themselves, not being indeed the men they have been, and would have been taken for); if I say we did exact such an open and public confession, tending to pull blushing into their faces before men, yet it ought not to seem much to any man, to yield himself to the bearing of his due reproach. For why; what traitor or felon, taken in his

felony or treason by a few, would not willingly yield to confess the same in the face of the Country, at the general Assizes, if he were sure to be forgiven? But Brethren, the confession which we demand of you, and wherewith the Lord will (in this case) be satisfied, is not open and public to the world-ward (that your credit should be impeached by it, and your good names blemished); but it is private and secret to Godward, tending alone to heal the soul and name both, and to prevent the vengeance of God, which cannot otherwise be prevented. Now in thine heart, anon in thy closet, thy doors (as Christ saith) being shut to thee, fall down before the face of him that seeth in secret, and if the fore-named trial have found thee to be an hypocrite, tell the GOD of heaven what thou hast found by thyself: say unto him, O Lord, it goeth against my flesh to see and acknowledge (but alas it is to no purpose to hold my peace, and by hiding to increase) my guile! Wherefore Lord I confess unto thee, I even freely confess unto thee, that hitherto I have been no better than a painted Sepulcher, full of rottenness. I have been more troubled at other men's faults against me, than mine against thee: and I have allowed myself in this preposterous earnestness, and thought I had cause to be so. I have been venturous, confident, and apt to presume of myself, and yet have never lamented this carnal confidence. I have given myself leave to do the evil in secret, which I would not for a world have done publicly, and yet have taken no care to lament it, because I thought, Pish, it is no matter, no man shall ever know it. I have given free scope to the foul motions of mine heart, and taken no care to control and oppose the looseness and licentiousness of wicked imaginations. My knowledge hath made me proud, and in some things I have refused to know, and yet I neither bewailed my pride, nor my witting blindness. I have taken no care to ponder on thy word, and settle it deeply in my soul: and yet have not seen mine own folly, in being careless to cover this seed with earth. I have mis-applied thy gracious promises in Christ, rather emboldening myself in evil by them, then using them to the purging

of mine heart and life: and yet I have not lamented before thee this my presumptuousness. I have confessed my faults, but alas seldom, and when a cross hath compelled me, not else. I have amended some things: but alas something alone, this or this (name thou the particular to God), I could never bring myself to be willing to amend: or if I have been willing for a passion, that willingness hath held but a little time, and yet I have flattered myself with vain shifts, and have not abhorred this my guile. I have indeed forborne reproachful sins; but evils of less grossness I have boldly committed, and never been troubled with them. Vain-glory hath stained my deeds of righteousness, and I have not seen and bewailed it. I could not bring mine heart to do good against evil, nor seriously blame myself for this revengefulness, but been ready to think, it was more than any man alive could be able to do. I have sought the praise of men, in acts of thy service, and it hath not been bitter to my soul to have thus misintended thine ordinances. I have been utterly careless of secret services, when I have seemed forward in public, and yet been well enough contented with that carelessness. I have been well enough pleased with the bare outside of religious duties, and taken no pains to find the life of them within me. I have contented myself with lip-praying, and ear-hearing, and not been abased in myself for want of fervent praying, and powerful hearing. I have been censorious against those that have not been as strict as myself, in matters of ceremony; and could scarce abide them, that could abide those petty things, which I have disliked; and yet I never lamented, but rather applauded myself in this bitterness: and I myself have been very careless of greater things, when profit pleaded for them, that have seemed so very strict in forms and shadows, and external rites: and yet I pleased myself well enough in this largeness of conscience. O Lord, thy Word hath found me out, thy Word hath discovered unto me the secrets of mine heart: it hath judged me, it hath condemned me, I desire to give glory to thee, and no longer to hide my sins, this sin, this upholder of all sins, this damnable hypocrisy. I see it hath

ruled in me, and I (for want of care) have never yet perceived it: but now I perceive it, and now I confess it, O Lord, to thee that knowest it already, to thee from whom it cannot be hidden. I humbly acknowledge, I have all this while been but a hypocrite.

Brethren, will ye thus plead guilty, if you be guilty before the Lord? I know it is marvelous hard, to bring the guilty soul to plain confession: self-love reigneth in our hearts naturally, and that can hardly endure to speak any evil against itself, though upon never so just cause. He that hath long fed himself, and made himself (if not peaceable, yet) secure, with telling himself he was a good Christian; will be very loath now (perhaps after many years abiding in this false opinion) to acknowledge himself to have been deceived. We see it is very hard to draw men out of those errors, wherein they have been long trained up. Every man hath been even trained up in a conceit, that he was a good Christian. It is conceit hath long possessed him, and this error hath become a very prejudice within him, he hath ever taken it for granted, and been angry that it should be once called into question. It is therefore no wonder, if men find themselves loath to recant their own good conceits of themselves, and to go from all that they have formerly esteemed undeniable. But for all this, I pray you be persuaded, to see yourselves to have been dissemblers, if you have been such, for all your unnatural unwillingness. The thief indeed hath cause (as he thinketh) to be impudent in denying himself to have committed felony (though he know full well, that he hath committed it), because confession is required of him, as an help to his conviction, and so to his condemning. But the Lord of heaven doth not desire thee to confess thyself to have been but an hypocrite, because he wanteth other means to convict thee, or because he may the more easily proceed to condemn thee: nay, therefore only he would have thee confess, that thou mayest be capable of pardon; because it is an over-ruled case in heaven, and a thing peremptorily concluded of by the Divine justice, that no sinner shall ever be

pardoned, till he deal plainly, and freely confess, that he is such a sinner as he is. Thy confession is called for, only to sit thee for pardon, not to urge against thee to any worse purpose. Wherefore forbear no longer, wink no longer, be ignorant of thyself no longer, hide thy guile no longer, but in thy very soul now, in the thoughts of it, and hereafter in more words, twixt God and thyself in secret, say unto the Lord, and deny not, but acknowledge: O Lord, I see plainly, that yet I have been but a hypocrite.

Brethren, ignorance of one's ill estate cannot help it. Is a man one jot the better, if he be a hypocrite, because he refuseth to acknowledge it? Shall he scape better, because he can make himself blind, and not see it? Doubtless the Lord will discover the secrets of every soul at the last day, and at the day of death; to every man's soul first, and after to all the world: and then a man shall be discovered to himself fearfully and horribly, without all hope, without all possibility of being pardoned. Suffer the Word of God (wherein he comes to exercise judgment in a merciful manner) to draw you to a plain and saving acknowledgement, that you may not be forced by the last sentence, to see and feel your hypocrisy, when there will be neither leisure nor means to redress it. Now thou mayest be helped, now thou mayest be changed, from a hypocrite to a true Christian, from a dissembler to soundness of spirit. Now therefore, whilst upon confession, mercy and healing may be procured, bring thy soul to it, and suffer the Word of God to over-rule all thine unwillingness, and fall to a free confession, and (as I have often said) tell the God of heaven: O Lord, It is true, too true, too plain, I cannot deny it, unless I will deny it willfully, and against my conscience, I am but an hypocrite as yet. Brethren, we therefore labor about this point so much, because we do well know the necessity of it. If we cannot attain thus much from you, you will always remain hypocrites, and the Word of God (through your opposing it) will prove but a means of hardening you in your hypocrisy: but if we draw you to

acknowledgement, it will not be impossible to direct you to amendment. I know that your hearts may possibly hold off from confession, by thinking to this effect; That if you have been but hypocrites all this while, it will never be better with you, and you shall never attain to be upright. But this is a false suggestion of Satan. If you will not see yourselves to have but dissembled, you shall in very deed never be better, but rather worse and worse, and more and more sold under the power of hypocrisy: but if you will see it, and lament it before God, and oppose it, by striving to cast out the beloved sin, and to step that one step, which hitherto you have not stepped, of falling out with that one sin whatsoever, which hitherto you have harbored, and constant praying against that one fault, which hitherto you have been content to wink at, and let pass with a privilege of, Seen and allowed; you shall be true, you shall be upright, you shall be sincere, and of fruitless & barren, become fruitful and profitable branches. A man may weep out hypocrisy, as well as other vices; confessing and lamenting guile, will surely free a man from the power of guile, and he shall cease to be a hypocrite, that will now begin, & hereafter daily continue, to see, acknowledge, and bewail his hypocrisy before the Lord, who sees and hates it, where it is not confessed: sees & pities it, where it is.

CHAPTER XII.

Containing a third use for them that be upright.

But now some (I doubt not) in this trial, will be found to have no guile; that is, no predominant hypocrisy in their spirits. There be in the Churches true-hearted Christians, good ground, sheep, and good

corn: and those amongst you, that in trying do find yourselves such; and by this infallible proof, can clear it to yourselves, because you have often heretofore found out, discovered and bewailed those effects of hypocrisy, which have been delivered; do you (I pray you) enjoy the comfort of your uprightness, and let God that wrought it, have the glory. The good Christian is almost as fearful to settle himself in a good opinion of himself, as the false unwilling to be driven from it. But there is no reason wherefore the innocent should be condemned. A man may be wrongful and injurious to God and to himself, in being over fearful to confess the good work of God in himself. Christ hath living members in his body: if thou beest one of them, acknowledge it, and be glad of it, that thou mayest with all due care proceed in the ways of godliness, now that thou knowest, thou hast set in, to some purpose. If Satan cannot keep a man from truth, yet he will endeavor to hinder him, from taking the comfort of it: but let not his lies beguile thee any longer. Say unto him; I find mine own faults more burdensome to me than others; I find myself careful of mine inward man, as well as of mine outward; I find myself humbled, even by my freedom from gross sins: and if at any time any fruit of hypocrisy do show itself (as alas too too often it doth), I make haste to bring it before God, and there I condemn it, there I humble myself for it: wherefore I am sure I am true-hearted; O Lord, I bless thy name that hast made me true, and I pray thee make me more and more true. Surely beloved, it will be a great hindrance to your thankfulness, if you do not labor against those cavils, by which Satan would fain cover your comforts from your eyes. He will tell thee of thy censoriousness; of thy falling again, and again, and again, into such a fault, perhaps gross; of thy deadness in private exercises of religion; and of thy many vain-glorious fancies, and of thy much self-conceitedness, and many other things; and he will labor to make thee think, that it is not possible that heart should have any truth, in which so many fruits of hypocrisy may be found. Thou must answer him, that thou confessest thyself, to be very full of these effects of

dissimulation; and that therefore also thou acknowledgest the root from which they grow, to be too strong and big within thee. But thou mayest say withal; I have been taught, and I know it is true, that not the man in whom hypocrisy is, but he in whom it ruleth, must be called a hypocrite: and for thyself, though it abide in thee, yet thou knowest it reigneth not, because thou fightest against it, and against the evil brood of it, with sighs and groans, with confession and grief, with requests and prayers, and with daily renewed supplications. Say unto thyself; I know, and God knoweth, that my censoriousness, my dullness in private duties, mine often carelessness of mine heart, and looseness of the inward man, my vain-gloriousness, my slipping again and again into the same sin, and other fruits of dissembling within me; that these, and all these are too rife: but withal, that they are felt, that they are marked, that they are confessed, that they are lamented, and that they do daily drive me to my knees, and make me come unto God, with humble entreaty for mercy through his only Son; and therefore I am sure, that hypocrisy reigneth not, but that truth prevaieth, and therefore I am a true Christian, and so I will take myself to be, and will with all my soul praise him, that hath made me such; continuing still to strive to grow in sincerity and truth, that when these graces are become stronger, they may become also more comfortable unto me. O all ye, whose feeble spirits are shaken with fear, and to whom nothing is more troublesome than this thought, that sure you be but hypocrites; and yet you do bitterly lament the effects of hypocrisy in yourselves, and desire nothing in all the world so much, as to be found upright with your God: I pray you confirm your souls in peace, and accept the consolation that the Lord doth offer you. Take your portion of comfort, be known to yourselves to be what you are, understand and see how great things God hath done for you, in creating a right spirit in you. Do no longer join with Satan, in belying yourselves, as you have a ready too much & often done, to the great hindrance of your souls. Your custom hath been, whensoever your corruptions have been anything strongly

wrought upon, when any bad motion hath been violent, especially if your passions in any kind have broken forth to some actual evil; then to fall upon yourselves with grievous accusations, and to take part with the devil, in slandering yourselves; then you have cried out, and exclaimed against yourselves, and said; Sure I am but an hypocrite and a dissembler, that have yet still within me such evil thoughts, am still disquieted with such passions, and still drawn to such wicked deeds. But I say unto you, this is no true inference: as the hypocrite in a fit confesseth his sin, and is sorry for it, but yet returneth again to follow it; so the true hearted in a fit doth commit sin, but again returneth to abhor it, and to renew his covenant with God of amending it. As the hollow heart, is good in a passion; so the true hearted may be bad in a passion: but look to the course of thy life, to the settled purpose of thy soul, to the established desires of thy mind, and so long as there is a constant striving against all sin by spiritual weapons, so long thou art good before God, and for God's sake, and must take thyself to be upright. The true Christian shall never gain anything, by calling himself an hypocrite, to see his hypocrisy, to lament it, to shame himself before God for it; this shall much advantage his soul: but to deny the work of God's grace in him, and to rank himself amongst dissemblers from whom he always differs as much, as a man that is sick of any sickness, from him that is dead of that sickness); this doth no good to him, but interrupts his prayers, hinders his humiliation, estrangeth him from God, and turneth godly sorrow for his sin, into desperate sorrow for the punishment of sin. Remember therefore that there be true Christians in the Church, who yet are not free from manifold weaknesses, and grievous corruptions; and having by proof and trial discerned thine own estate, hold fast that assurance, which thine examination hath yielded, and call not thyself a hypocrite, though hypocrisy show itself in thee, so long as thou remainest constant in observing and oppugning it.

CHAPTER XIII.

Wherein are handled the uses of this point in regard of others.

And these be the uses of this point, which every man must make for himself: now two things more follow, in regard of other men, with whom we live. For seeing Christ's body hath in it some sound members, some rotten (I mean his visible body), therefore must we be wary, in not trusting all that carry an appearance of goodness, and far from condemning all as hypocrites, because some prove so. First then, let the plain words of Christ in this text, advertise us to put away simple and foolish credulity, in taking all for that they seem; and putting ourselves into the hands of a man, so soon as ever any good things appear in him. Let us rather use all good discretion, and be reserved from men, until by long experience, we have gotten very good assurance of their sincerity. Our Savior hath made himself a pattern to us of this prudent wariness, as well as of all other graces: for many believed in him, as John tells us, with whom he trusted not himself, because he knew what was in man. We cannot tell particularly, as he could, what is in the hearts of all those, whose countenance is framed to goodness: but yet this we know in general, that much hollowness is in all, and that many are altogether hollow and guileful; wherefore till long continuance in goodness, till the evident demonstration of truth, and the clear shining of virtue, in the much and often denying of themselves, have verified and approved the soundness of men's hearts; we must hold ourselves in such terms with them, that they may not have power to hurt us (through our over-speedy openness towards them), even though they should afterwards grow so naught, as to desire our hurt. I mean not, that any man should be bold to conclude against his brother, sure he but

dissembleth, and I will not trust him. Nay, we should fear to conceive so almost of any man: for even a true Christian may give shrewd signs sometimes of hollowness: but my meaning is, that we should think and hope the best, and be well persuaded of every man, whose outside giveth us cause of a good opinion; but yet so, as still to remember, that we are not able to search the heart, and that guile and hollowness may go very far, and therefore not to adventure too far upon them, in hope that they be such, as will never deceive us. Thou knowest not, that such a man is a dissembler, therefore think well of him. Thou knowest that there is a possibility he may be a dissembler, therefore come not within his danger; give him no such advantage, through laying open thyself unto him, that if he should prove guileful, thou mightest be hurt by him. Credulity is the fault of honest hearts; because they be single themselves, they look to find all like themselves: but Christ's words should give us warning, to try before we trust. If any man say, that this retiredness will cut off the practice and exercise of all Christian communion betwixt the members of Christ's body: I answer, he saith amiss that so speaketh; a man may do many (and almost any) office of Christian charity, to those with whom he liveth, and yet hold himself in such even terms with them, that though they should prove false brethren, yet he shall not receive any hurt by them. There be many acts of godly society, which may be practiced without any peril, especially in the peaceable times of the Church, and these (nothing hinders, but that) we may indifferently exercise towards all: but if at any time some storms arise, we must beware before whom, and towards whom, we carry ourselves so, that they may hurt us, if they list. Take heed whom thou trustest with thy goods, whom with thy name, whom with thy safety, and to whom thou so far engagest thyself, that he may (if he will) deceive thee, betray thee, molest thee. There be some so true hearted, that the world shall sooner remove out of its place, then that they will prove false. There be others, that will quickly change their hue, and be foes, instead of their shows of brotherly love. Pray to God

to give thee understanding, to walk wisely towards them that are within, as well as towards them that are without.

And if any man desire to receive information of the surest notes of truth, that are discernible to others, & in others, let him mark these two things well. The more humble any man is, the less forward to put forth himself, and to show himself, and the more he can deny himself, and show himself loving and pitiful towards those, that yet seem far from goodness; the more soundness and truth do lodge in his bosom: but he that is apt to set out himself, and cannot brook another, that goeth not so far as himself: that man do thou suspect, and from him be thou reserved. Humility and meekness in one's carriage, and a patient waiting for them, that are not yet escaped out of Satan's toils, are (me thinketh) the surest and clearest means of discovering the truth of another man. For hypocrisy in spite of itself, will show itself proud and censorious, and bitter: but truth, even when it intendeth no such matter, will show itself humble and lowly, and gentle-minded, considering it self how bad once it was, and how much hereafter it may be overtaken.

To conclude then; some be false brethren: wherefore trust not all too far, that carry themselves for a time, as if a man might trust them; and trust them least, that seem most desirous to be trusted. Again, do not condemn all of falsehood, because a number discover their guilt daily. When many of those that seemed leaders of the Army of Christians, fall off from their good beginnings, and cast away the very shows of goodness, turning openly profane or worldly, and perhaps also bitter against those, that seem to be such, as themselves once seemed. Let no man take offense at these stumbling blocks: let no man hence entertain a thought of dislike against Piety and Religion, nor a hard conceit of those, that yet continue in good courses. Such terrible examples should make us fear ourselves, and fly to heaven for divine sustentation, they should not make us reject the love of

godliness, and account all rotten branches, because some are so. Hath not Christ told us beforehand, that so it will be, that when we find it so to be, we may not be offended, as he tells his Disciples in another case. The foolish worldling stumbleth exceedingly at the slips, faults, and imperfections of God's true-hearted children; and because he sees faults in them, that bear before them a forwardness in religion, he condemns them all for gross dissemblers, and cannot away with these smooth-faced hypocrites. But if at any time some prove rank hypocrites, he takes that as a warrant for his tongue to out-lash against all, saying, that surely the best of them is no better. But how could they be so foolish, but that they delight in folly, and are glad to make themselves obstinate in evil; and to confirm their inbred hatred of piety, by turning all occurrence to that purpose? were it not (I say) for this malicious blindness of theirs, how could they be so foolish, as not to have learned of our Saviors most plain words, that in him there will be fruitless branches, that must be cut off, and cast out, as well as fruitful, that will continue and increase in fruitfulness? Would any but a very block, or a blind man, stumble at a block, that is plainly shown unto him, and warning hath often been given him, that it will surely be cast in his way? would any but a man void of all understanding, abhor all the Apostles, because Judas turned traitor? I pray you therefore, so many of you as shall live to see such miserable examples, that you draw good, and not evil conclusions from the falls, revolts, and backslidings of other men, and of hypocrites. Say thou, I am sure Christ hath good sheep, as well as goats; and though such and such have manifested their guilefulness, by forsaking the former paths of righteousness, wherein they appeared to walk; yet I will not be hardly conceited of anybody else, for their sakes. In this case the proverb ought to be hearkened unto, that tells us, Every Horse must carry his own burden. In truth, he that stands so slenderly affected, either to goodness and piety itself, or to the servants and followers of so noble a mistress, as piety is; that because of the wickedness, and out-straying's, and final

revolts of some of those, that seemed once to attend upon her, and to be admitted into her train; therefore he cares not for piety itself, nor will ever think well of any of those, that wear here clothe hereafter; he (I say) that stands so slenderly affected to Wisdom and her retinue, shall be sure, never to want occasion of emboldening himself in sin, and of being more and more estranged from that, the entertaining of which, is the only way to make him happy. Yea verily, he whom the backsliding of seeming Christians, doth drive to so much madness, as that he can turn so lamentable a spectacle to no better a purpose, then to triumph and exult over all, and bark against all, and upbraid all with such evil examples: discovereth himself plainly not to hate the sin of the back-slider which he lately fell into, but the very shows of goodness wherein once he walked, and from which he is fain. In a word, he that scorns piety and religion, and those that follow after it, because diverse turn tail, and prove notably wicked at end, shows himself plainly to be void of all religion, & all piety. When the true servants of God do see and hear such tidings, it grieveth their souls, it maketh them mourn in secret, and pray in secret, and fall a fresh to examine and try themselves, lest they also should be in like manner overtaken. But he that fleereth, and jesteth, and exulteth, and scorneth, and casts the dung of one, in the face of others, and would fain blemish all religiousness, by the stains and faults of those that once seemed religious: hath nothing in him but malice and bitterness, and the very spirit of the devil. Beware therefore of making thyself appear stark naught, by so stumbling at the breaking out of some other man's long hidden naughtiness.

CHAPTER XIV.

Showing that fruitfulness is the true distinctive note of those that profess to be Christians.

And so much be spoken of the distribution of branches into two kinds: We proceed now to consider the difference of the branches: for in that they be branches they both concur: but herein they differ manifestly, that the one is, the other is not fruitful. Observe then from these words of our Savior, another point, that fruitfulness is the true note of difference betwixt the true Christian, and the hypocrite. As a man differs from a beast by reason; a beast from a plant; by sense; a plant from a stone, by life or vegetation; so a good Christian from an hypocrite, by fruitfulness. This is the most plain, sure, sensible, infallible, and (as they call it) the very specifical mark of distinction, betwixt the sound professor and the false, that the one beareth fruit, the other doth not bear fruit in the Vine. Where the holy ordinances of God have such power, as to work obedience in the whole conversation, this is fruitfulness, and here is truth: where they do not bring forth this effect, this is fruitlessness, and here is guile. In a word, all true Christians are fruitful, and none but they: all dissemblers are fruitless, and none but they. This point is abundantly confirmed in the parable of the sower, in which of four grounds, one alone was good, and that fruitful; as for the bad grounds, the first did not bear so much as a blade; the other two did indeed put out a little greenness, but it was like the corn upon the house top, which withereth or ever it be ripe, and of which the mower filleth not his lap; only the good ground did requite the labor of the husbandman with a liberal harvest of some thirty, some sixty, some hundred fold. So in the words of the Apostle, the ground that bringeth forth fruit meet for the dresser, is blessed, but that that bringeth forth briars and thorns, is near unto cursing, whose end is burning. And in more plain terms our Savior saith, that he which heareth his words and doth them (this is fruitfulness) doth build upon a rock (this is an effect of truth): but he that heareth and doth them not (that is, to be

unfruitful), doth build upon the sand; that is, is but a hypocrite, and shall have his building tumbling down.

The truth of this point will further appear, if we consider the causes and effects of fruitfulness. The causes of it, are the sanctifying Spirit of God dwelling in the soul; and the Word of God, received into an honest heart. No man bringeth forth fruit, but he upon whom the holy Ghost hath come down, to beget him again, and to make him a new creature in Christ Jesus: for a tree must first live, afore it bear; and no man is unfruitful, but because he is destitute of the work of God's spirit, so forming him into a new creature, because he hath neglected or resisted it. Now it is certain, that whosoever hath the spirit of sanctification in him, is a true Christian; he that hath it not, is none. Wherefore from ones being fruitful, or not fruitful, it may be infallibly concluded, whether he be true or hollow. Again, no man bringeth forth the fruit of good living, until the word of God have entered into his heart, and taken deep root in the very bottom of his soul: and contrarily, where this fruit doth not show itself, there the Word of God did never enter into the soul, neither was soundly rooted therein; and it is doubtless, that if GOD'S Word have copious dwelling in us, we be true Christians; if not, we be but dissemblers. Wherefore the bearing, or not bearing of fruit, is a sound proof of truth, or want of truth. Again, look we to the effects of fruitfulness, or its absence, and it will undeniably appear, that these two do best distinguish betwixt the sincere and hollow hearted: for the ground that bringeth fruit, must obtain a blessing. The reward of a good life here, is eternal life hereafter: but the end of the ground that beareth not fruit, is cursing and burning; and evil-led life, shall end in death eternal. Now none can be saved but the true Christian; and no Christian is damned, but the false: wherefore from this point, the most essential and formal difference of Christians (the branches in Christ) must be taken.

CHAPTER XV.

Showing what this fruitfulness is.

So we have proved the point in hand. It is needful that we do soundly explain it also, that it may be truly useful unto us. For this explication, one thing alone is necessary, namely, to declare plainly, what fruitfulness is. Concerning which, we say in general, that fruitfulness is the same thing which the Apostle meaneth, when he tells us, of living godly in Christ Jesus: and again, of having our conversation as beseemeth the Gospel of Christ Jesus. Not the doing of an action now and then, good and commendable (for the matter of it), as giving alms, laboring in ones calling, dealing justly, or the like, is to be called fruitfulness: but the leading of a godly course of life, and of a holy conversation. But more particularly, that you may be thoroughly informed in this point. Fruitfulness must be set forth unto you, in the matter, motive, end, and properties thereof; any of which four, if it be wanting, the rest are also wanting indeed, though an appearance of them may be present, and the true nature of fruitfulness is not to be found.

For the first of these, the matter of fruitfulness is, A desire and endeavor, to know and to do the whole will of God, revealed in his Word. Every word that we have used in this description, would be marked and considered of. First, I call it a desire, a firm and steadfast bending of the will and inclination of the heart, to the thing desired. For a good man must be measured, and is by God accepted, more according to the desires of his heart, and the earnest propension and moving of his soul, than according to the effect

thereof. In action he comes far short of what he should: in the desire, purpose, earnest and sound inclination of his soul, he doth reach after the perfection required of him by God, and for this cause, is accepted and accounted in Christ, as if he were perfect. He would be void of all sin, he would be rich in every good work, he would have everything within him, and everything that comes from him, perfectly conformable to the will of God, and acceptable to his Majesty. In the depth of his soul these hearty wishes are found continually working; O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! O let me not wander from thy commandments: I will run the way of thy commandments: I have said, that I will keep thy words: I will never forget thy precepts: I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. I have chosen the way of truth. I long for thy precepts: and many such like. This is the disposition of his will, these the determinations, resolutions, conclusions of his soul; thus he saith to, and within himself, that doubtless he will depart from the paths of wickedness, and that he will walk in the ways of righteousness: and thus is he busied in renewing and establishing the purposes of his soul, to walk with his God. And though he find no means to perform according to his desire, yet still his desire standeth to the law of the Lord.

And this desire being a true and settled desire, must needs be seconded with endeavor. It is not a poor, faint, sluggish, wishing and woulding, by which a man (as it were betwixt sleeping and waking) doth think, twere well if I did, and sure I will, and I would if I could, as a sluggard lieth stretched in his bed, and faintly wisheth, O that I could arise! It is not (I say) such a feeble, powerless, avert, desire, as this (which is but, as one would say) the tenth part of the consent of the will, to the thing willed): but it is a desire so mighty, and effectual, as doth bring forth an endeavor. It makes a man put forth himself, to effect the thing desired. He wisheth to obey, as a resolute soldier wisheth victory, so as he will fight for it, and draw his

weapon, and meet his enemy in the face, and hazard limb and life, and give and receive blows, and leave nothing undone, that his wit serves him to think of, for the achievement of victory. A coward also would fain divide the spoil, and feed himself with the fatness of a good booty: but his wishes do not disperse themselves into his hands and legs, nor stir up his spirits and his limbs to be entering battle, and to join hand to hand with the foe: so a good man's desire of obedience, sets his head, and heart, and hand on work, to the attainment of obedience. He thinks; Ah that I could be good according to God's commandment! And further he thinketh; What may I do to get power against such a sin? to attain strength to do such duties? And when he sees what is to be done, he sets about it, he calls upon himself, he calls upon God, he urgeth his own heart, he entreats the Lord Jesus for help, he blames himself, he condemns himself, he enforceth upon himself the remembrance of God's commandments, God's judgments, God's promises, and as David saith, he lifts up his hands to the Law of God which he hath loved. He is busy in laboring to obey, and a man that lives with him, may even perceive in him, and he, in himself, a striving this way. For in truth as there is a great difference betwixt lusting to be rich, and laboring for wealth: so betwixt a bare lusting to be good, and endeavoring after goodness. The sluggard would be content to take wealth, if he could find it under his foot, or if with little ado he could entreat it to fall into his lap; yea, sometimes when he wants money, or clothes, or food, and is pinched with need, he hath a kind of angry eagerness after it, and he would as gladly as his life, have so good a living as his neighbor hath: but he cannot shake off sleep in a cold morning, he can endure no sweats: he can endure no sweat, he loves not to rise betimes, and set to work, he cannot travel, he cannot take pains. Not so the good husband; for he thinks of his business, whither he may go, what he may do, what times he must observe for the getting of a shilling; and accordingly takes those times, dispatcheth those businesses, and goes to such places; and neither heat, nor cold, nor

wet, nor dry, nor night, nor darkness shall hinder him, but he will go forward with those things, which are requisite for his thriving. Even so the foolish man sometimes, could find in his heart to leave such a sin, and to do such good duties. O it were very well if he had such virtues, and were rid of such vices! and what a good turn had he, if he could do, as such and such: and in a twinge of his conscience, or in a fit, when he is told of heaven, he could be content to leap out of his skin to get heaven, and to get out of hell: but after his fit is over, he cannot away with this confessing of his sins in secret, with this rending of his soul, with this earnest contending with God, and with this crossing of his own nature, and fighting against the lusts of his flesh, even with this laboring for the righteousness of God above all things. But the Christian stands otherwise affected, he museth of the way and means of getting grace, he thinketh seriously what is to be done, for the beating down of such a vice, and building up of such a virtue: he beateth upon his own heart, all such reasons as he can bring, to fix his will in a resolution of doing good, leaving evil; he taketh pains with calling hard upon God; takes pains in checking and controlling, in provoking and stirring up himself; in laboring to lament and bewail, to hate and detest his sin; and to work in himself earnest sorrow, and sound grief for sin; and thinks not much, even to weary and toil himself in these spiritual labors. He plows his heart, he sows in the Word, he seeks for showers of grace, he weeds his heart, he breaks the clods of his heart. Thus he sets himself to task, and is a right husbandman in his own soul.

Further, the thing about which his desires and endeavors are conversant, is the will of God revealed in his Word: not the will of men, not the secret and hidden will of GOD, nor a supposed imaginary will of God; but that self-same will of God, which is delivered unto him in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles: for so saith David, His delight is in the Law of God. And again, Thy word is a Lantern to my feet, and a light to my paths. He looks to that

which is revealed, and desires to be wise, according to that which is written, and not above it: his desires and labors are limited by the manifestation of God's will.

In things tendered to the thoughts of his mind, he demandeth how it is written? and how do I read? so far (and no further) stooping, and yielding, as he findeth divine authority, with Prophetical and Apostolical testimony, to call for yieldance. I have walked in thy truth, saith David. He knows, that what the Lord hath commended to his Church, by those principal Pastors of his Church, the Prophets and Apostles, that is God's truth; and therefore he subdues his reason and affections unto it. But if any man will bring anything to him, and press it as necessary to salvation, which hath not the stamp of divine inspiration; he knows not how to submit his conscience to such baseness, as to yield itself to any other, than the royal sovereignty of the Lord of Lord's, and King of Kings; like a right good subject, and withal noble and ingenuous: that as he cannot be induced to with-draw his neck from his Princes yoke, so can he by no means endure the burden of an usurpers Scepter; and therefore he had rather die with the honorable liberty of a subject of the Lord, than live a slave, enthralled to the tyranny of an usurping creature.

Now this will of God he striveth both to know, and also to do. Not to know alone, nor to do alone, but to know and do both: even to do out of know ledge, is the mark that his endeavors aim at. A hypocrite separates these two things; he would know, but regardeth not to practice; he admits GOD'S Word into his head willingly, and with applause in most things; but into his heart, and into his life he doth not admit it. Neither doth he therefore study to understand, that he may be ruled by the light he hath gotten, but alone, that he may make himself a teacher of others, or a carper at others, and a well applauded discourser before others. He hath lame feet, though he have a seeing eye, and never cares to go, where he sees his duty

leadeth him. Thus the forward dissembler; and quite contrarily, the ordinary formal man, he seemeth to be all for doing, and doing, little caring to know or understand; as if a man should talk of dispatching his work in the dark without a candle, doubtless this work would be but bunglingly performed: but the Christian desireth to rectify his life by knowledge, to guide his feet by his eye, and his eye by the lantern of the Word, that so he may neither have a fruitless knowledge, nor a blind practice, but may attain the blessing that our Savior pronounceth, saying; Now you know these things, happy are ye if you do them. And this is the matter of a good life, a settled will and endeavor to know, and do the will of God, set down in Scriptures.

Let us acquaint you with the moving cause thereof, which must be the love of God in Christ, according as our Savior himself assureth us, saying; If ye love me keep my commandments. In like manner the Apostle telling us, that faith must work by love; and saying of himself, that the love of God constrained him to preach the Gospel: for thus did he judge, that seeing one died for all, therefore all were dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should hereafter live, not to themselves, but to him that died for them. The holy Ghost at what time it incorporateth the Christian into Christ's body, and maketh him a true branch of this Vine, doth ground in his soul a settled and firm persuasion, of the unspeakable love of God unto him, in Christ his Mediator. And though he have not always a sense of this love, yet the persuasion of it, doth always take such deep root in him, that it evidently shows itself, in drawing his soul to be one with God, making his heart still to hang towards him, and to be affected with great good will unto him. Now love is an affection, that tendeth to unite the things loved; and because there can be none union betwixt the Creature and the Creator, unless the Creature do even resign and yield up his will to God's will, to be carried, moved, and guided by it: hence it is, that the soul loving God, must needs

subject its will unto him; and therefore be careful to know and do his will, because it is his will, that he should so endeavor to know and do. And so is the Christian heart allured forward to obedience: for we love God, because he loved us first, faith the Apostle; and then must our love needs bring forth this obedience. And this thing is of so absolute necessity, in the point of good living, that without it, no seeming goodness can be acceptable unto GOD. For so we have the Apostle plainly affirming unto us, that though a man give his body to be burned; and though he give all his substance to the poor, yet if he have not love, all is of no worth or reckoning. Whatsoever therefore doth not arise out of his fountain, and grow from this root, it is not to be called fruit, unless you will mean rotten and worm eaten fruit. And we may say assuredly, that unless the thing inducing us to the care of knowing and doing God's will, be a dear and hearty affection which we bear in our souls to him, out of a persuasion that we have, of the great and tender compassion that he bare unto us in Christ, and an apprehension of the infinite riches of his grace and wisdom, shown in his Son; our endeavor is not accepted, neither can be called holy. But the people of GOD, do find themselves so linked and tied unto God, in regard of that, his most wise, gracious, and favorable dealing with them in his son, and those infinite excellencies, which from the sight of this goodness, they begin to discern in him; that out of the sweet and gentle motions of this love, they are fully resolved to obey him. Thus there is a joint operation of faith, and love in their obedience, it being utterly impossible, that the creature should love God, but out of some true persuasion of God's love to him. Wherefore how godly or good soever any man's life be, in show and appearance; if the main motive to that goodness be the love of men alone, or the love of himself, or any such like, and not the love of God, springing from an inward, and grounded apprehension of God's grace towards him, in the face of Christ; it is not to be called Goodness indeed, neither is so in God's account. Let us instance in one or two particulars. A man meeting with a miserable person, is

liberal towards him with money for his relief. The thing that induced him thereto, was the entreaty of the party, or a kind of natural compassion, or the labor of some friend: but he never considered, that God (who so infinitely loved him, as to make his only Son poor, that he might be made rich) hath required such duties of love and bounty at his hands, towards his brethren for his sake; neither did provoke and stir up himself to exercise this bounty, with lifting up his mind to God's commandment and good pleasure, and to the goodness and kindness of God towards him (to whom it were a shame of all shames for him to deny so small a matter, as the bestowing of a little pittance of his own wealth at his appointment). This alms-deed, this act of liberality, is not a fruit of piety; it is not a fruit of Faith, it is not a fruit of Christianity, it is not in him, and to him a good deed, or an act of obedience to the Lord: but another meeting with the like person, is provoked by the forenamed meditations, to help and comfort him, and by the stirring of such thoughts in his mind, hath his heart inclined to give him what he needeth: or if the suddenness of their meeting, or some other like occasion, cause, that he hath not these thoughts presently stirring in his mind, yet they have been in him often before, to beget in him an habit of liberality: this now is a fruit of grace, this is to bring forth fruit in Christ, this is a true good work, and such as God himself accepteth, and accounteth good. So in going to Church to hear the Word, or to receive the Sacraments, in laboring in a man's calling, in doing of justice, and in all other particular points of goodness; if we be not moved to these by love to God, in obedience to his Commandment, out of faith to his gracious promises in Christ, but by considerations taken merely from ourselves, whether in regard of the present life, or that that is to come, we cannot say, that we be fruitful branches, neither do we indeed serve God in such duties: but when our mind doth lift itself up to God, and by the consideration of his good will and pleasure, doth stir up itself to do good, because we know, he would have it to be done; whom we so love, that we cannot

but desire, that his will should be satisfied and accomplished (for he that loveth any person, doth also carefully bind himself, to fulfill his will whom he loveth; unless his will be to have that done, which would be for his own hurt, which can never befall the Lord of heaven, because of his perfect and infinite wisdom): when (I say) our minds do thus stir up themselves to do good, or avoid evil, then do we truly serve God, and this is such obedience, as God doth take pleasure in, as it were in grapes of good taste, that grow upon the Vine of his own planting.

Furthermore, the end of our doing God's will, must be God's glory, or (which is all one) that we may please him; for in seeking to please him, we glorify him: and these two things are always coincident. So the Apostle directeth, saying; Whatsoever you do, let all be done to the glory of God. And again, That we may be to the praise of his glory. And again, You have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to please God. The main scope and drift you see, of all our actions must be this, that we may do that which is good in God's sight, and so content and satisfy him, and witness our high and honorable esteem of him, and testify our acknowledgement of his infinite and incomparable excellencies. The principal thing that must stand before our eyes, alluring and inviting us to the aforementioned care, of doing and knowing the will of God, must be this, that we may honor and please our Maker. Not to please men, not to win favor, credit, wealth in the world; nay, nor to get eternal happiness to ourselves: none of all these (I say) must be the chief scope of our obedience, but that we may bring some honor to him, to whose honor all his creatures ought, in reason, to addict themselves, and that we might content him, whose content all things should seek to work, because all things are from him: for the Lord taketh pleasure in those that fear him; he desireth that the sinner should turn and live; he wisheth, O that my people would hearken! their prayers be as incense in his sight; their obedience, a sacrifice of a sweet smelling

savor; and their Alms-deed, an offering, with which he is well pleased: and by doing of these things, and avoiding the contrary, is the Lord highly honored, in that hereby he is acknowledged to be the King of Kings, & Lord of Lord's; and we do make profession of our esteeming him, the Sovereign Lord and Commander of ourselves, and of all creatures. And this is the very white (as it were), at which all our obedience must be levelled. Not but that there are inferior ends, respecting ourselves, and our own good, whereupon we may look, and by which we may be moved to do good: but the chief thing of all, and that which must sway us most of all, must be this, that God may be pleased and honored by us. A man may lawfully purpose, to gratify a friend in some good deeds, to procure some temporal benefit to himself by other good deeds; and in all to further and work out his own salvation. But the main and chief end, the utmost, the upshot of all the rest; that, that his mind must look to, in, and above all the rest, and make more care of than all the rest, and which must be of such power, that it would draw him to obedience; though all the rest were absent: this supreme and most potent end, must be the forenamed things, the pleasing and glorifying of God. Even as a good servant, in doing his service to his Master, hopeth and purposeth to do himself good, by being capable of his Masters bounty, and receiving liberal wages from him, whom he knows to be so good, that he will not deal niggardly with any of his faithful servants: but the special thing he aims at, is, that he may advantage his Master, and please and content him, by doing his business: for he that doth chiefly aim at wages (in so much I mean, that were not that wages an attractive, he would not do the service which he doth) cannot indeed be said so much to serve his master, as himself. So the servants of God may, and do aim at their own eternal welfare, and at the obtaining of the blessings of GOD which he hath promised: but there is an higher thing, and a further matter, at which they look more directly, & whereto they bend their thoughts more specially, and that is the pleasing and magnifying of him their Lord and

Master, whom they know to be so abundant in goodness, that he is ready to bestow such happiness upon his servants. So our Savior; Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee. Lo, the first thing he looked at, was the glory of his Father; and his own glory was respected by him none otherwise, than as a fruit, or means of the glory which his Father should have by him: for so that is truly called the principal end, which of itself, though all the rest were set aside, would allure a man to do a thing, although he may perhaps the rather also work, by the coming betwixt of some other inferior and subordinate end: as the chief end of a trades-man's going to the fair or market, is to buy and sell, though he may perhaps the more readily go to meet some friend there; for his business would draw him thither, though his friend should not happily come thither. So ought the glory of God to carry so great a sway in our souls, that in regard of it chiefly, we do as we do in a godly conversation; standing so resolved, that we would carry ourselves in that holy manner, even simply for the glory sake of GOD, though our selves should not attain happiness thereby, although now that he hath pleased inseparably to conjoin our felicity and his own glory, we do so much the rather, and so much the more willingly and thankfully perform such obedience unto him. But as for those worldly and base ends of credit, gain, and the like, we should even quite and clean neglect them; unless it be so far forth alone, as they be referrable to that highest end, in that we may be the better able to attain that by means of them. This is in very truth to deny ourselves, and not to live to ourselves, but to live to him: and so we ought (as it were) to forget ourselves, and to sequester our thoughts from ourselves, sending them up swiftly and plentifully to him, who is infinitely better than ourselves, and than all creatures: for what more reasonable, and equal, and convenient, than that his glory should be preferred above all things, in whom, and from whom all things have their being and continuance. And these be the causes of fruitfulness, the matter, motive and end.

It must further be known by two properties, namely generality and constancy. The godly man's care of knowing and of doing, must reach to the whole revealed will of GOD: as David saith; I shall not be confounded, whilst I have respect to all thy commandments. And the Prophet saith; Cast away all your transgressions: for God is an absolute Sovereign, and his will is a supreme will, that must guide us in each thing, one as well as another. It sufficeth not to yield unto him in a few things, nor in all things, except one; but universally in all things, without any exception, must we submit ourselves to him, in the desire and endeavor of our souls. A good man may be ignorant of many things that God revealeth, but he must be willing and ready to know his whole will. He may likewise come short of doing many things which he knoweth; but he must purpose, labor and strive to do all things, that so he may show himself a true and absolute inferior to the Lord. For God cannot in anything be deceived, or command amiss in any matter. For men, it is lawful to deny subjection to them in many things, because they may mistake and err in many things, and because their power and authority is limited: but GOD'S will is without all restraint and limitation to be yielded unto, because he hath a full and perfect sovereignty over us. And indeed no man is moved by the love of God, or aimeth at his glory in anything, unless he be universally obedient; so that is but a counterfeit obedience, which is not general. Here is no place left for picking or choosing, neither may we lawfully refuse his commandment in any particular, but must say, as once the Israelites did; Whatsoever the Lord our God commandeth, that will we do. There is no sin forbidden by GOD, but our resolution must be to leave it; no duty commanded, but our resolution must be to do it: and when in any point we fail, we must even condemn and chide ourselves for failing: laboring still after perfection, and praying for more and more strength to obey; and it must be our greatest burden, and continual grief, that we cannot attain to fullness of knowledge and obedience.

Again, constancy must accompany our obedience; we must not walk in this way for a spirit, a little, now and then, and afterwards give over: but we must proceed in a settled course, without any giving over, or desisting. A good man followeth goodness, as a Trades-man doth his trade; he is at it, today, and tomorrow, and the third day, and all the days of his life: as David saith, I will keep them to the end. And again, I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end. And, Blessed is the man, whose meditation is in the Law of God day and night. The most painful laborer hath now and then a fit at play, and sometimes he meeteth with a holy-day: but usually (though not still with the like intention of pains, yet in a settled course) he is found in doing his work and business. So a Christian man is not always a like earnest; yea, sometimes he makes indeed an holy-day, or a loitering idle day (for which he doth well repent himself afterwards), but yet usually and in a steadfast course he follows after goodness, and is still applying this great and necessary work of a godly life: for God who hath appointed him this task, doth not allow him any discontinuance. And this is fruitfulness, or a good life, when a man, out of a persuasion of God's tender love unto him in Jesus Christ, doth entertain in his soul such an earnest and hearty love unto God, as maketh him careful to please and honor him, by continual striving to know what is his good, holy and acceptable will, and framing himself in all things to do what he biddeth, (leave the contrary), without any final surceasing: so that though he slack his pace now and then, and some dullness do creep upon him, yet he quickens himself, and sets to it again, resolving never to give over quite, so long as life lasteth. This is to live as beseemeth the Gospel of Christ; this is to hear the Word of God, and do it; this is to walk in the truth of God; this is obedience, better than all sacrifices. And so have we sufficiently explicated the point: we must now make some use of it.

CHAPTER XVI.

Containing the first use.

And first we must call upon every soul to make a true trial of himself, whether he be fruitful yea or no. The Word of God must judge us all at the last day: let us therefore judge ourselves by it in the mean, that we may the better hold out, in that final and terrible judgment. If we hear not God's word in such sort, as thus to apply it to our own souls; our hearing is but loss of time and pains, and will but make our reckoning heavier at the end. Weigh yourselves in these balances, and touch yourselves at this touch stone. Mans heart is very prone to beguile itself, & to be beguiled by Satan: searching it by the word of God, is the surest means to save it from the danger of being beguiled. Some men mistaking fruitfulness, esteem themselves fruitful, when they be nothing less: others again, for want of sound information in the matter, condemn themselves as unfruitful, when indeed they be fruitful. Before we either affirm or deny, it is needful for us to prove ourselves impartially, that our affirmations may not puff us up with counterfeit and windy comforts; our denials cast us down with harmful and unnecessary dejectedness. Tell me then (that come from GOD) or rather, tell the Lord that comes by me, to inquire of thyself, concerning thyself. Art thou a fruitful branch in Christ, yea or not? That thou art a branch, a Christian in name and profession, it is yielded; thy coming hither seemeth to affirm so much. But say: Art thou a fruitful branch, or not? Make not over great haste to answer this question either way, but deliberate well of the point, and call to mind what hath been formerly spoken, concerning this fruitfulness, and accordingly answer for, or against thyself: say in truth, and without dissembling, which way go the greatest number of thy

thoughts, and to what end are the chiefest cogitations of thy mind-directed? Aim they at this? Busy they themselves about this? To please the living God, the Author of thy life, by knowing and doing his most righteous will? Art thou careful and desirous to become acquainted with thy duty? To that purpose giving thyself to hear, and read the Word of God, and perform all such good exercises, as thou hast means to perform, that thou mayest know it? Art thou likewise careful and desirous, when thou hast found it out, to put it in practice also, and that not in some things alone, but without exception in all things? Doth thy soul thirst after God's statutes? Doth thine heart often, daily, continually raise up itself with such hearty wishes? O that I could understand what I might do to please God! O that I could hold my feet fast in his precepts! Dost thou make it the chief business of thy life, to keep thyself unspotted of the world, and be found plentiful in all the good works that the Law of God requireth? Dost thou muse of this? ponder of this? and fixe the strongest of the desires of thy soul on this? still recalling thine heart, and turning thyself again to these desires and wishes, when thou findest them wandering to by-matters? Can thy soul witness for thee before God, that thou dost put forth thyself after thy strength, and labor to gather more strength to get understanding of God's will? and that thou urgest and enforcest thyself, to the constant obeying of it? rejoicing and praising God, when in some measure thou canst do it? and when thou failest grieving and afflicting thyself, condemning and blaming thy carelessness and weakness: and arming thyself still and still against all such hindrances, as thou meetest withal? findest thou thyself carried forward this way with the wings of that love of God, which is enkindled in thy breast, towards him the God of thy salvation, and that with an earnest intention to please him, and show thyself regardful of his greatness? It boots not at all to lie and fain and dissemble: but true and plain dealing is necessary, when thou hast to deal with him that searcheth the heart, and demands of thee these things, not because himself is ignorant of them, but because he

would not have thee remain ignorant to thy own destruction. Wherefore consider advisedly, and answer truly; Can thine heart say in God's hearing, that these things are found in thee? or that they are not found? Doubtless brethren, it is as possible for us to tell, and that certainly and infallibly, whether we follow the trade of godliness, as any other manual trade or occupation. He that tills the ground, he that tendeth cattle, he that is a Smith, or a Carpenter, or the like; I say, every one of these can tell, that he follows such a Calling: one can say; Mine hand is often at the Plow, and I am still about the husbanding of my ground, I am thinking of sowing, of reaping, of soiling, and such like; another can say, I am still attending my cattle, I follow my sheep, I fodder them, I dress them; another, I am conversant in building houses, and my thoughts, and my hands, are taken up in framing, and preparing timber, or stone for that purpose. Doubtless it is as plain, whether a man follow godliness, as whether he follow any of these vocations. A man may if he will, know whether he be taken up with thoughts and desires of pleasing God, of avoiding sin, of subduing his corruptions, of planting and watering grace, of doing his duty, which he hath learned out of God's word, or whether he be a stranger to these things, and whether he do them constantly, or by starts; & whether he be heedful in all things, or spare himself in something, and whether he study to please God in these things, or look wholly or chiefly to himself: these things are not performed so secretly and undiscernibly, but that he which performeth them, may easily find and feel, that he doth perform them. Wherefore be not ignorant of thyself, for want of in quiring into thyself; and for want of a due consideration of thy life, do not mistake thy life, whether it be a fruitful life in Christ Jesus, or else idle and unprofitable. And if any man find not this general endeavor to please God, it is not the giving of now and then an alms or a piece of money to the poor; it is not the reading of now & then a Chapter, or coming to hear a Sermon, or doing here and there some good and commendable work, that can entitle him to the name of a fruitful

branch. And if any man do find in himself this universal stable endeavor to glorify and please God, in the knowing and doing of his whole will; it is not the failing and coming short of his desires, it is not the being ignorant, or mistaking of many things, it is not the slipping into many sins and faults (though sometimes too gross and palpable) that can dispossess him of this name, and make him to be accounted no fruitful branch. It is very needful, and withal, possible and easy for thee to know what thou art: therefore be entreated to consider of it seriously and unfeignedly, and not to mistake through heedlessness or willfulness.

CHAPTER XVII.

Containing the second use.

And in the next place, for those that are found in this trial unfruitful, let them not hide it from themselves, let them not deceive themselves, but let them see and confess it, and withal see and feel their unhappiness in regard of it: for in God's name we must deal plainly with them, and assure them, that (whatsoever hitherto, either they have thought of themselves, or others have thought of them) they be no better than very plain hypocrites. For all their hanging upon the Vine, for all their flourishing greenness of profession, for all their fair and pleasant leaves, of coming to Church, delighting to hear Sermons, loving some good men, commending Preachers, speaking against profaneness and common abuses, dealing truly with men, and such like; for all these I say (and an hundred more things which they trust upon, if an hundredth more there be of the like kind), they be but dissemblers, guileful persons, goats in sheep's skins, painted

tombs, rotten-hearted persons, and very rank hypocrites. Brethren, I pray you conceive not, that we delight in disgracing men, in terrifying their consciences, in discouraging their hearts, in making their states and themselves appear evil, if they were not so. Alas, what good shall we get by your discomfort or disgrace! what benefit will your misery bring unto us? Nay verily, we have no pleasure (yea, we have much grief) in pronouncing against men, that they be hypocrites. But we must needs speak the truth, that God hath put into our mouths, and that with all plainness, and with all earnestness, and with all authority: yea, so much the plainer, and more earnest must we be in this matter, by how much we do better understand, both the needfulness of discovering to the hypocrite his hypocrisy, and withal the difficulty of making him perceive it, though it be discovered. For you know in how many places, the Scripture tells us of such, as in seeing, see not, which must needs be verified in this matter, as well as in any other. A hypocrite is exceeding loath to count himself a hypocrite: an harlot will scarce call herself a harlot; a thief will scarce give to himself the name of thief? how much less will those that sin in dissembling, take to themselves their own names? Out of the natural love of ourselves, which doth inordinately possess us; and out of some common notion that every man hath, of the vileness of many sins; it comes to pass, that most sinners are unwilling to entitle themselves by their sins. But of all others the dissembler (the principal piece and business of whose occupation it is, to hide that which is evil, out of sight) will be most backward to throttle his hypocrisy (as it were) by laying his hand upon the throat of it, and drawing himself to a round confession, in plain terms saying, In very deed I am but an hypocrite. A man that hath been thought by himself and others, to be worth many thousands, is very unwilling to acknowledge himself a bankrupt, and it sounds as terrible as death in his ears to say, I have cast up my reckonings, & find myself not worth a groat: even so a man that hath long been taken for a good Christian, is very backward to see and confess, that

all his Christianity was in forms, and that he is not the man he was taken for but an errand dissembler. For why, the heart of man is loath either to perceive himself so wretched, as he cannot but confess himself to be, in case he be but a hypocrite, or else to take the pains, which he must needs take, to make his estate better: for doubtless it cannot but prove a painful piece of work to weed out a vice so deeply settled, and so far over-spreading. But brethren, until hypocrisy be plainly discerned, it can never be reformed; neither this, nor any other vice will ever be conquered, if it be not espied. He shall forever remain a hypocrite, that being so, will not confess himself so to be. For when a man is ignorant of his unhappiness, he will never set himself with all diligence to redress it; and certainly sin will never be overcome, without striving against it. This and this alone, is the true cause of our earnest plainness in this matter. We would show you your disease, that you might in time seek remedy, and not perish by it. We would lay open your sores, that you might procure a plaster, and not be destroyed for want of healing. And therefore returning again to the matter we were about, we do now certify every person amongst you, in whom that universal care of knowing, and accomplishing the whole will of God in each point of it, and that out of the love he beareth to him, and for the honor and glory of his holy name (that he I say in whom this care) is not to be found, though he have lived never so honestly, to the world: though he come to the Church never so duly; though he have been constant in frequenting Sermons; though he have been very kind to the Ministers of God's Word; though he have prayed many times with great feeling; though he have fits of great sorrow for diverse sins; though he repeat Sermons, and pray in his family; though he have obtained great credit amongst godly men, and go in the name of a most worthy Christian; yet for all this (and more than this, if more may be, without the fore-named general endeavor) is but a flat hypocrite, a rank dissembler, a cozener of the world, a beguiler of himself, a whited sepulcher, a picture of a Christian, and not a Christian

indeed. This is thy case, whatsoever thou hast heretofore deemed; this, and none other, is thy condition, if thou beest destitute of that fruitfulness, which hath been plainly described unto thee. Open thine eyes now, and see thy wretchedness; now suffer thy soul to be wrought upon, and begin to feel thy misery, that thou mayest be capable of help.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Containing the third use.

Thirdly, let all men be now exhorted to get this fruitfulness, by which they may approve themselves to be the true members of JESUS CHRIST. Men do many times delight to nourish in their Orchards, trees that bear no fruit, only for the comfort of their shade in hot seasons. It is not so with God, he likes not any tree that can do nothing else but yield a shadow: if you will find favor in his sight, you must be trees of righteousness, you must be trees that yield some good fruit, and be not wholly barren. Learn I beseech you not to satisfy yourselves with shows, with formalities, with bare leaves; but show your faith by the fruits, and let the grapes and figs, that may be gathered of you, testify for you before God, and your own consciences, that you be trees of God's own planting. Content not yourselves with a form of religion; applaud not yourselves in your hearing and receiving, in your talking and seeming, and your outward good dealing: but, O let your lives, your whole lives, and the tenor of all your whole conversation be uniformly, constantly, and in all things conformable to the doctrine, and example of our Lord Jesus Christ; walk as he hath walked, and hath commanded you to

walk. Let me urge upon you the words of John the Baptist to the Pharisees (men that went for as devout holy and religious persons in their times, till Christ the heart-searcher came to deal with them, as any of you likely can be taken now); begin not, saith he, to say with yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, but bring forth fruits worthy amendment of life. Satisfy not yourselves, in having Abraham for your father, I mean in the external formalities of religion, but look to the course of your lives, and see that it be such, as may beseem repentance. Why will you lose your labor? why will you die, O house of Israel! why will you rest yourselves in that, that will not profit? Labor now to lead a godly conversation in Christ Jesus; let the common stream and current of your actions, favor of the holiness of that Word of God, which you say you believe, and of the virtues of that Lord Jesus Christ, in whom you say you place your confidence. Assure yourselves, you shall never attain the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection, unless you show forth the power of both in your lives: that is to say, unless the serious consideration of the love and goodness of God, shown in these two; and of the hatefulnes and filthiness of sin, manifested in the former of them, do leave so deep an impression in your souls that here-hence you grow both resolute and able (in some degree) to cast away all the former lusts of your ignorance, and now to turn your feet into the paths of righteousness, to fight against all the corrupt lusts of your hearts, to labor to forbear all wicked actions, to endeavor to plant in your souls all virtues, and to be abundant in religious, merciful, just, temperate, and all other godly actions, that you may show forth the virtues of him, that hath translated you from darkness to light, and be holy in all good conversation, even as he is holy. Urge and press yourselves therefore to this fruitfulness, and make the constant carriage of your whole man, inward and outward even depose for you, that you are truly ingrafted into the true vine. This fruitfulness shall arise for you in the day of temptation, as it did for Job and enable you to stand for your uprightness against all accusations of men and devils, and against all

fears and doubting's of your own hearts. When a man is cast into the furnace of adversity, then will the leaves be blown off (as in the winter they be from trees) & then if the grapes of a good conversation do not lie by him, to witness that he was a true branch in Christ's body, nothing will remain for him but horror and amazement, and a fearful expectation of vengeance to befall him for all his shows. Be you therefore prepared for the day of trial, which will surely come upon all the inhabitants of the earth. Strive to be fruitful: stir up yourselves to consider seriously of the Lord's infinite bounty in Christ: show to yourselves the sweetness and goodness of the divine Majesty, in that work so admirable & inconceivably gracious. Provoke yourselves to make high account of him, & to love him with the most vehement and fervent of all love: that your hearts being knit-unto him, and set upon him, you may even for his sake set yourselves to know the good, & the evil, that pleaseth and displeaseth him, to shun the last, & embrace the first. Urge yourselves not to dally with-him, not to offer him a parcel of obedience, a halting goodness, but enlarge your desires and endeavors to the knowing and keeping of his whole will in all things. Let none objection, none inclination of flesh and blood, make you to give way to the sinfulness of your hearts in anything, but still continue and persist to fight against the sins, which you cannot wholly subdue, and to mortify that by the spirit, whereof you cannot quite be rid. Provoke and animate yourselves to the doing of these things: say within yourselves, O that I could do so; long for grace and strength so to do, and call upon thyself to be more and more careful of bearing fruit in this Vine.

The Vine itself is a most sappy and juicefull Vine, abundantly stored with that heavenly verdure and moisture, that may serve to make the branches fruitful. The husbandman is no way defective, either in skill or pains; he is neither ignorant, nor heedless of anything, that may further the branches in their fruitfulness. There is no want either on

God's part, or on Christ's part, but all on ours. No man is unfruitful, but for lack of will and care to be so. I pray you be not wanting to yourselves, but strive to be fruitful: for in this Vine, every branch might be fruitful, if he were not either willful, or slothful, or both. But that mine exhortation may not be bootless, I shall direct you how you may do to be fruitful, and declare those things unto you, by the doing of which you shall be sure to attain power to live holily: and these directions shall be both so few, that you may remember them; and so easy, that you shall not need to complain of difficulty in performance.

The means therefore to become fruitful, are these: First, a man must see & lament his former unfruitfulness, freely confessing, that of himself he is dry and barren, and utterly unable to bring forth fruit. Whosoever would live godlily, must with sorrow observe and confess, that his life hath been far short of that godliness, which he should and might have obtained, and that in him as of himself, there remaineth no power to make himself godly, and to make his conversation holy for the time to come. Yea, this must be a means of making him heavy in heart, and base and vile in his own eyes, as that he hath been fruitless; so that he shall remain fruitless still, unless he have a supernatural work of God's Spirit, to make him fruitful. And for want of this sense & acknowledgement of their own wants, it comes to pass, that most men still remain, and still will remain unfruitful. They think they do already live a godly life; they think they can turn themselves when they lust to a godly life; they are over highly conceited of their own sufficiency, & they dream they have gone further than they have. But would you not be fruitless & barren for hereafter? see then (with sorrow) that you have been so (at least in some measure) heretofore, and know, that it must not be a power dwelling in yourselves, which must make you better, but a borrowed power, derived from above.

And when you have been drawn to this acknowledgement, then give yourselves with all diligence, to attend unto the Word of God, both read and preached; be attentive (I say) to the Scriptures, both in reading and hearing them: for this is that good seed, which if it be not received, no fruit can grow; if it be, there is a possibility of being fruitful. Remember that the Lord hath appointed, to derive the graces of his Spirit into your hearts, by means of his Word; and that he hath appointed men (as instruments and fellow-laborers) to make you, of evil, good, and of good, better; and therefore you must submit yourselves unto the will of God, and give your minds to an heedful attendance upon his ordinance. But remember, that we do not require your bare bodily presence at the Church, and in the ordinances of God: a man may be present in body, and absent in mind; & this his presence shall but provoke God against him, because it is but a direct mocking of God. Yea, you must bring your souls to the Church, as well as your bodies; and mark, & hearken, and observe, and consider what is spoken to you in God's name. A man must come to the Word of God, as to the Word of God; knowing it to be God's power to his salvation, and a means that God hath appointed by the commandments, reproofs, exhortations, comforts thereof, to plant and water all graces in him, to beat down his sins, to build up his new man, and to translate him into the image of Jesus Christ. Most people that come to the Word, for want of esteeming it as an institution of God for so happy a purpose, have no care at all of themselves in hearing, never look to their thoughts, never incline their ears, never listen, never heed what is spoken. They sit there (it may be) quietly and stilly for their position of body, but are shaken up and down in their souls, with a world of idle or evil imaginations, which stop out all that, that should be conveyed into their minds to do them good: so they give Satan leave to fill up their minds with vanity, that there may be no room for the grace of God. To such hearers we can promise no blessing: but it is the attentive marking and observing the Word (out of a good opinion of it, and an

honorable esteem, as a saving instrument appointed of God to make men holy) which we prescribe unto you as a means of changing your barrenness into fruitfulness; by the lips of his faithful servants, will Jesus Christ drop virtue into the hearts of those, that come to seek it there. But

Thirdly, after hearing and reading, you must meditate and consider of that which you have heard, you must apply it to yourselves, you must try yourselves by it, you must duly consider, whether you perform the things which it declareth unto you, yea or no; and if you have been failing, provoke yourselves to more carefulness; you must urge yourselves to give credit unto the promises and threats, and to say within yourselves, this good or evil, shall surely be performed unto me accordingly. And so mighty is the Word of God, that if it be thus hidden in the heart, it shall surely purge the heart, & make it good; if it be ingrafted in the soul, it is able to save the soul; if it be covered with earth, it will bring forth a crop; neither is any branch so barren and unfruitful, but by thus applying the Word to itself in private meditation, it shall by little and little be made fruitful. But many men do want the power of the Word, because they content themselves barely to read or hear the Word; or if they mark it a little for the present, they esteem that sufficient, never taking care to go alone, and lay it fast unto their own hearts. Take knowledge (I pray you brethren) of the true cause, why the Word of God doth not profit the most of your souls: you come hither to hear it, perhaps also you give some reasonable heed to it, and can remember what was spoken, and can talk of it a little, if occasion serve: but the world with its businesses or delights, doth so bewitch and beguile you, that you can find neither heart nor time, neither will nor leisure to call again to mind, the things that you have heard; and to ask yourselves, Do I this duty? am I guilty of this sin? doth not this reproof pertain to me? have I any part in this promise? and accordingly to strive with your own hearts to be either humbled or comforted, and so to resolve on

amendment and reformation according to the Word. This is the cause that we have so too too many fruitless hearers. Hence it is, that so much is taught, so little practiced. How long will you continue to neglect this most saving and most profitable exercise, of binding the Word on the tables of your hearts, and of incorporating it into your souls, and being God's instruments, to engrave it in your own minds, by meditating on it, and by busying your cogitations upon it afterwards, as a thing that much concerneth you? How often have you been told, that much hearing without meditation, will breed nothing but a swimming knowledge? that it will not beget holiness? that it will not renew the soul? but that hearing seconded with meditation, will quicken and will sanctify? I pray you take notice of this fault, & amend it. Redeem time, as to come and hearken to the voice of God speaking to thee; so likewise to get alone afterwards, and apply it to thyself in thy serious meditations. Certainly if we did thus declare our high esteem of God's Word, and make it appear, that our souls did account of it, as of a thing most precious and healthful to our souls, the Lord of heaven would not fail to give his blessing, and to make it mighty, to the working of a godly conversation in us, & it should bring forth the fruit of good living.

But lastly, you must also join with your meditating (which he that meditateth cannot but do; he that meditates not, can hardly do in any earnestness) constant prayer unto God for his holy Spirit, to write his Law in your inward parts, to engrave it in the fleshly tables of your hearts, and to move and incline your wills to obedience, that so you may become the Epistle of God, ministered by men. For fruitfulness is a supernatural effect: it comes not from any power inherent in man's soul, or arising from his own will: but it is an effect of the spirit of life and grace, which is sent from Christ the Vine, as it were sap, into the several branches, that do suck and draw it from him in his ordinances, and by name, by faithful, and earnest, and continual requesting it at his hands. You must therefore make

conscience to call upon God, for the good work of his spirit, to help you to live holily, to make you assured of his love, fervent in love to him, zealous of his glory, and constant in walking in his laws. And in particular, you must daily beg of him to strengthen you, for the performance of such and such duties, and leaving of such and such sins, as from time to time the Word of God which you hear, doth call upon you to leave or to perform. God will be entreated for all good things, and he hath bound himself not to deny the requests of all that call on him. Everyone that seeketh, findeth: O comfortable and large promise! answering all objections, and able to stay up the soul against all discouragements. Never any man was so wicked & sinful, but if he would come to the Lord, & earnestly beseech him for his name sake, to change his heart and life, and continue constant in following this suite, the Lord did surely hearken unto him, and make him godly. You cannot be good of yourselves, but you may (if you will not wink) see your own badness, and your own impotency. You may (if you will not harden your own hearts, and make yourselves careless of your own souls) cry and call to God to make you good, and importune him with perpetual supplications, to bow and incline your hearts to keep his precepts, to open your eyes to see, and your hearts to entertain his holy Law; that you may convert, and he may heal you. This I say you may do, if you do not make yourselves willful and obstinate, by contemning the exhortations of God's Word, and even stopping your ears against it, and by willful turning your hearts after other matters. I have shown you now, how the barren may become fertile, how the dry may be filled with sap, and how the lives of them may be made godly and Christian, which are yet far from godliness and Christianity. See your barrenness; and to attentive hearing, join diligent meditating on the Word you hear; and constant prayer unto GOD for the strength of his Spirit, to make his Word effectual, and to give you grace to obey it; then shall you surely be made branches bringing forth fruit; for then do you abide in Christ, and his word

abideth in you, and that our Savior himself doth after wards prescribe as an infallible way to bring forth much fruit.

CHAPTER XIX.

Containing the fourth use.

But now it is time that we turn our selves unto the fruitful branches, to divide unto them that comfort, which GOD hath allotted unto them, & which this text affordeth, and they stand in need of. For all those therefore that do bring forth fruit in Christ, in such sort as hath been showed, we have much good to speak, and joyful tidings to deliver. We are to assure and secure them, against all the fears of their own hearts, against all the cavils of Satan, and false censures of the wicked world, that they be not hypocrites, but true-hearted, and sincere Christians. Whosoever amongst you findeth, that in his soul, the consideration of God's infinite goodness through his only Son, hath had such a powerful working, that it hath even knit his heart fast unto the author of so great kindness; and made him even say and swear within himself, that he would surely keep his righteous judgments; & made him constant in taking all pains to mortify his corruptions, & to do his duty in everything, according to the divine direction: so that there is no one thing so comfortable to him, as when he can carry himself in some good manner, as beseems the Gospel of Christ; & nothing doth more humble & abase him, than when he fails of this holy walking; & if it were demanded of his very soul, what in all the world he most heartily desires and would fainest attain in all his life? his heart would make this answer for him, that it is to please God, to get acquaintance with his duty, and to accomplish

it accordingly: this he wisheth, this he longeth for, this he coveteth more, than all wealth or greatness, or other gilded toy, that the world hath to give him. I say now in God's name to every such person (and require him in God's name to give credit unto my words, because they are infallibly grounded on God's Word) that he ought to be of good comfort, that he is a true Christian, and no dissembler, & that for such an one he ought to take himself, notwithstanding all the blemishes, errors, ignorance's, imperfections; and it may be also sometimes gross out-straying's of his life. Brethren, the true-hearted had need to be made to understand their truth, as well as the false-hearted their falsehood. For as the latter out of his self-liking disposition is ready to flatter himself with sweet words; so the former, out of his acquaintance with his own guilefulness, and the sight of his own badness and unworthiness, is ready to threaten himself oversharply, and to charge himself eagerly (though wrongfully) that he is but an hypocrite. But now ye servants of God, consider that it is a fault to molest yourselves with causeless accusations of yourselves, or to be ignorant of the unspeakable favor that God hath shown you, or to deny the blessed work of his good Spirit in you. Yea you are bound in conscience to acknowledge your own true-heartedness, and with hearty thanks unto God, & much cheerfulness in yourselves, to approve yourselves to him, and to your own consciences. I confess, that it is far more dangerous to hope than to fear without a cause: but yet the inconveniences of these false fears, are also very many & very great. When a man that is upright. doth not account himself so to be, he is unable to think comfortably of dying, and leaving this World; he is backward to prayer; he can hardly give thanks for anything; he cannot long for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; he cannot so much delight himself in the contemplation of heaven; he cannot be so patient in affliction: he cannot be so abundant in godly speeches, to the edification of others, as else he might be. These fears therefore (though by God they be made profitable for the beating down of pride, and for the ferreting

out of the relics of guile that remain in us) are yet (unless they be seasonably opposed & removed) very noisome and hurtful, & (like an East wind, cold and dry) do bite & nip the branches, and cause the grapes to grow, but few, and little, upon them. Wherefore you must be given to understand, that fruitfulness may well stand with the having many weaknesses, sins and corruptions; though not with the allowing, excusing, maintaining, extenuating, denying, and willful winking at any. Thou hast manifold corruptions in thee, much pride, vain-glory, worldliness, lust, passion, revengefulness, & twenty other like. But tell me; Dost thou see and feel these corruptions? Dost thou constantly observe the motions & risings of them with grief, dislike, detestation, & judging of thyself for them? Dost thou make opposition to them, by pressing on thine heart the promises, threats and precepts of the Word? by consideration of the death and sufferings of Christ, by groans in thyself, and by supplications unto God; and so keepest them from usual breaking forth in extremity and grossness? or if they do at any time break forth, dost thou arrange thyself for them in God's presence? not ceasing to wound and pierce thine own heart, till thou findest it wrought to a renewed loathing of them? not ceasing to confess them to the Lord, and cry for his help, till thou hast renewed in thyself a firm purpose of no more returning unto them? Dost thou these things, I say, in all thy faults, weaknesses and wanderings? then I affirm, that thou mayest be, and art fruitful, notwithstanding all these faults; and I tell thee, for the comforting of thine heart, that these things cannot bereave thee of the title and privilege of a fruitful branch, and an upright person. Again, thou art very defective in virtues of all kinds, in faith, in meekness, in patience, in thankfulness, in heavenly-mindedness, and the rest: But dost thou take notice of these thy defects? Art thou grieved and ashamed of them? Dost thou call upon God to make a supply? and call on thyself to labor for an increase of them? Dost thou stir up thyself to grow in these graces? & not excuse, please, and content thyself in thy wants; pretending that every man must have his faults,

and so hast thou, thus slightly passing them over? then I assure thee again, that for all thy wants thou art yet fruitful in Christ, and so undoubtedly a true Christian. For to fruitfulness is not required an actual knowing and doing of all God's will, but a laboring and striving to know and do the same, and that constantly, out of love unto him, & for his glory. Wherefore if the love of the Lord do so inflame thy soul, that thou resistest earnestly to all thy corruptions; and if the intention and purpose of pleasing and honoring him, do so constantly stand before thine eyes, as to make thee take continual pains, to reform and amend thyself; I dare pronounce thee a fruitful branch, & a sound-hearted Christian: and I do now require and enjoin thee, to fall down before the Lord with hearty praises, for this so unspeakable goodness of his, in engrafting thee into the right Olive, and making thee a living member of his Son the Head and Prince, in whom all fullness dwelleth. Yea, I wish thee to rejoice, & to delight thyself in abundance of peace, through the certain acknowledgement of thine happy estate that thou art not alone in, but also of the Church, and truly partaker of the fatness and verdure of the right Olive tree. To know a man's self fruitful in some degree, will make him fruitful in a higher. The man that suspecteth himself to be worse than nothing, goes fearfully & faintly about his business: but he that is certain he hath something of his own (though not so much as he would) is cheerful and forward in following his calling. It doth likewise even damp the courage of a good Christian, in following the trade of godliness, when he is still causelessly accusing himself to have no truth, no sincerity, no uprightness: but to know that he hath truth indeed (and yet is far short of perfection), this encourageth him to go forward in striving after perfection. The consolation that piety affordeth, is a principal furtherer of our good proceedings in it; and therefore thou must take comfort in the truth of thy beginnings, that thou mayest go forward with a livelier pace, and greater diligence. Consider here, how that our Savior doth not name the bringing forth of as much, and as fair fruit, as others, for

the note of a good and pleasing branch, but simply the bringing forth of fruit: and therefore if thou beest in any degree fruitful, though neither so much as thou wouldest, or shouldest, or seest others to be; yet there is just cause of receiving comfort. Indeed the littleness of our fruit should humble us, but not discourage us. It should stand before our eyes, to keep us from pride, not from peace; to stop us from conceitedness, not to hinder our comfort in God. Satan that desireth to make all things harmful unto us, labors also to turn the relics of sin (which remain in us), to the over-much disquieting and terrifying of our consciences, and to the shaking of our faith, and interrupting the consolations we might enjoy in God: but let us not yield to the subtlety and malice of Satan in this behalf. When thou seest thyself failing in the measure of fruit, observe this failing well, but turn it not the worst way. Let it make thee charge thyself with too much negligence, not with utter hollowness; conclude from it, that thou art but weak and feeble, not that thou art but a hypocrite and dissembler. And now let all God's people, chiefly those that are full of doubts and fears, depart away confirmed and established in comfort: let their spirits be at peace within them, and let them feed of the fat and sweet portion, which the Lord hath allowed them. The joy of the Lord will be their strength; these comforts will ripen their fruits, as the Sun-beams do the fruits of the earth, and they shall with most ease and assurance grow better and better, when they find the comfort and benefit, of being truly good already. So then conclude thou thus for thyself; every fruitful branch is a true Christian, I am fruitful (though not of so large, fair & ripe clusters as others, yet) of Grapes: my life is truly holy and good (though not approaching so near to perfection as it should); and therefore I will not doubt to esteem myself a true Christian, and to give the Lord the glory & praise, and take to myself the comfort and peace of my sincerity. And so we have spoken of the object of God's Husbandry; the parts of which we will hereafter entreat of at some convenient time, if God afford us life and opportunity.

Deo Solí gloria.

FINIS.

GOD'S HUSBANDRY – PART II:

Tending chiefly to the reforming of a Hypocrite, and making him true-hearted.

The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts. 1. Cor. 4.5.

TO THE COURTEOUS READER.

I Make bold (good Reader) to present unto thy view, this second part of God's Husbandry, containing a few Sermons, which I preached upon the words of Christ, in the fifteenth of Saint John's Gospel. My main intention herein was, to help the people of God, against that miserable sin of Hypocrisy, which in the former Treatise I sought to discover. Doubtless all our pains, and all our preaching, is little enough, and too little, to make men see, and reform so perilous, and withal so subtle a vice. This is a disease of so dark a working, as will hardly be discerned, until it be past cure. And though a man be not so totally possessed and overcome by it, as that he deserve to be called an Hypocrite, yet are the remainders of it (which abide in the most sanctified hearts, as the Canaanites amongst the sons of Abraham) exceeding troublesome, and exceeding noisome, calling for all diligence and labor to expel them. It is the daughter of ignorance and self-love, the mother of pride and self-conceitedness, the sister of vain-glory and contention. It is, of all sins, one of the most hideous, because it damneth those, that seem to themselves

little less then free from all other sins. When the whole army of vices is fled before the face of virtue, and seems to have yielded a full victory, then doth this vice (as it were by stratagems and devices) undermine victorious virtue, and rob it of the victory which it seemed to have gotten. It is the refuge and hiding place of all other faults: neither can we further prevail against any corruption, then we prevail against this: neither can any corruption further foil us, then this doth lend it aide and succor. This vice maketh those things abominable in God's sight, which to menward seem praiseable, and causeth that heaven doth detest, what earth applauds. It comes to Church with men, and poisons preaching, praying, hearing, reading, receiving the Communion, and all the parts of God's service. It is bold to creep into the closet also with some men, and doth many times corrupt their most retired devotions. It maketh that the Lord accounts himself but mocked, when men account themselves to have well worshipped him. It turns mercy, justice, chastity, into vices after a sort, and causeth that they be in true judgment, but fair and gilded sins. It marreth in one word, all good things, and changeth the not committing of sin, into a sin, and the performing of the most commendable duties, into very loathsome evil. A devout Hypocrite, is little better than a profane Epicure, and a painted Sepulcher, is little different from a very dunghill. Happy shall that man be, that is careful to spy out the working of this crooked and deceitful vice in himself, and that with earnestness, diligence, wariness, and constancy, doth strive to chase it out of his own heart. When the Ziphites, (wretched claw-backs as they were) came to waken Saul's sleeping malice, by offering him their service to deliver up David: the Story tells us, that he sent them back with this instruction, Go and prepare yet, and know, and see his place, and where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there; for it is told me, that he dealeth very subtly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all his lurking places, where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you; and it shall come to pass, if he be in the Land,

I will search him throughout all the thousands of Judah. This was maliciously spoken by an envious Prince, against his faithful subject and son. But well were it with us, if we could all make use of his words, in the pursuit of our hidden guile, and follow it as close as ever Saul did follow David, even to seek and search, and spy out all its lurking places, and never cease seeking, till we have found it, nor fighting, till we have vanquished it, as one of the most dangerous of all our spiritual enemies, the very soul of the body of death, and that, that giveth life to all the rest. I beseech the living God for thee, Reader, that he will please to sanctify, as other means, so these my weak endeavors, (if thou please to make use of them) to help thee against this pestilent fault. And I crave thy prayers for me also, that myself may be able to practice what I have taught thee, and that woeful thing befall me not, which Paul speaketh of, upon another occasion, that having preached to others, I myself should be a reprobate. For this hateful and baneful vice, the worst of vices, doth sometimes step into the Pulpit also, and causeth even Ministers to condemn themselves in judging others, because they that judge, do the same things; and because they lay heavy burdens upon other men's shoulders, and themselves refuse to touch them, that is to say, are very earnest exactors of good duties, and very slow performers. But from this most mischievous mischief, the good Lord vouchsafe to deliver me, and thee, and all his people: with which prayer, because I cannot make a better, I commend thee, and myself to God, and rest,

A well-willer to thy souls happiness, William Whately.

CHAPTER I.

Showing the order of the words and points to be handled.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit. - John 15.2.

Concerning the subject of God's Husbandry, we have already spoken, namely, of the branches of the Vine, in which we have considered, a distribution of them into their several kinds, and a distinction of them by their special differences of fruitless and fruitful. Let us now proceed to declare the parts of God's Husbandry, which are diverse, according to the diverse nature of the branches. For the unfruitful branch, the hypocrite, he carries himself towards it, as beseemeth a good husband; he cuts it off, that is to say, he doth by little and little separate him from Jesus Christ, and from the benefits of Christ, with whom he seemed once to be united: Causing that he loseth the good things he seemed to have, and so by falling off from those appearances of goodness which were in him, he discovereth himself to have but counterfeited, till, proceeding to greater sinfulness, at last eternal death do overwhelm him. But for the fruitful branch, the upright-hearted Christian, the Lord's dealing with him is far otherwise: he is alone purged or pruned. The hypocrite is himself taken off from the Vine, the true Christian hath only something taken off from him, that he may very well spare, being pared about to the removal of that, that by continuing upon him, would have done him much hurt. You all know what the natural pruning is, viz. the cutting off from the branches, such unprofitable and overgrowing twists, leaves, or the like, as do no way benefit the branch, but hurt it rather, in causing the fruit thereof to be lesser and scancer than it might be. The thing signified hereby, is the subduing of the corruptions of God's servants, viz. their pride, passion, self-love, earthly-mindedness, voluptuousness, and the like disorders, which if they were not mortified, they would run all out into a fair show of

profession, not at all fructifying in an holy conversation: but when these corruptions are taken away by diverse needful means, as the Lord himself knows the fittest means (for he is but an ill Vine-dresser, that wanteth his pruning instruments, then is that end obtained, which God intendeth) and then follows that effect wherein themselves rejoyce, viz. they bring forth more fruit. They become more rich in the work of the Lord, more plentiful in all godliness and righteousness, and in all excellent services to God and man. They do more good, they live more profitably and serviceably, and are every way more abundant in all the fruits of the Spirit, joy, peace, love, righteousness, temperance, meekness, goodness, and the rest, then ever else they would have been. And thus you may see, that in these words we are led to speak of four most necessary points. The destruction of hypocrites The corruptions of God's true Saints, in that they need pruning. The help they have against these corruptions by pruning. And the good they get by this pruning, viz. growth in godliness: of which, whilst I do speak with as much plainness and evidence as I can, let me crave you also to attend with all diligence and reverence.

CHAPTER II.

Showing the certain destruction of hypocrites, and the degrees and means thereof.

[Doct. 1] Come hither therefore, I pray you, in the first place, and behold the end of the hypocrite; He is to be cut off. All false-hearted, guileful, and hollow professors of Christian Religion, that are not in truth, which they seem in appearance, shall by degrees be surely

brought to naught and destroyed. The Lord will no more suffer such persons to remain in his Church undiscovered and unconfounded, then a good husbandman will suffer dry and rotten branches to remain upon the trees of his Orchard uncut off. So you have it in the other Parables also, The tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire, saith John the Baptist, to the men that came to his Baptism. The house that was built upon the sand, when the wind, rain, and tempest did beat upon it, was quickly tumbled under foot, and the fall thereof was great, saith our Savior, in the conclusion of his Sermon on the mount. The stony ground also withered away in the heat, and the thorny was overrun with thorns. The earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh upon it, and bringeth forth no better fruit then thorns and briars, is near unto cursing, whose end shall be burning, saith the Author to the Hebrews: And from him that hath not, (meaning in truth) that shall be taken away which he seemed to have, as our Savior tells us. Saint John doth give us examples of this ruin of dissemblers, saying of many in his time, They went out from us, because they were not of us. Thus hath the Lord been abundant in discovering his intended vengeance against the counterfeit Christian.

That you may the better conceive of God's Wisdom and Justice herein; we will show you in what degrees, and by what instruments, the Lord doth cut off these dry branches. The degrees are likely these, and thus they follow one upon another. First, whereas they had some works of common grace bestowed upon them, as the enlightening of their minds, in some measure, to conceive divine truths, the framing of their wills to a liking of exercises of piety, a gladness to hear and speak of the Word, a gladness of the company of good men, and the like; these works are (by God's just Judgment, because they refuse to make a good use of them, in turning all to the thorough changing of their hearts, and reforming of their lives) even quite withdrawn from them; and so there follows a sensible

withering: they care not for the Word, they care not for the company of the Saints, that once contented them, and Religion seemeth nothing so goodly a thing unto them, as sometimes it did. Secondly, whereas they had once the spirit of restraint bestowed upon them, to hold down their corruptions, and to keep the badness of their hearts from showing itself in extremity: the Lord doth now please to remove these bars, so to avenge himself upon their ingratitude and stubbornness, that did wink with their eyes, and resist the offers of love made to them, and refuse to open the door when he stood there and knocked, and to give them over into the hands of their own evil natures, that they may break forth openly, and discover themselves how rotten they were at heart, by running into some such vile practice as carries them quite away, so that they never return again by repentance, nor never show themselves to be soundly humbled for the same. Then doth he send the temptations of Satan, together with the affreightments or allurements of the world, whereby they are so clean pule away from the show of godliness, that at last, they grow professedly cold and careless in open show, bearing before them an allowance of themselves, in such their lukewarmness; yea, perhaps also they turn very enemies of that goodness which they seemed to have; fall out with those persons that they seemed best to love; brook least that company that seemed most to satisfy them, and become bitter, harsh, sharp, violent, in speaking evil of those persons and things that were once approved by them; and lastly, some miserable and fearful end (wherein they are either swallowed up of horrible despair, or sold over to the most stony hardness that may be) doth rent them from the land of the living, and send them down to hell. And so is fulfilled that of our Savior in the sixth verse, The branches that abide not in him, are cast forth and wither, and gathered, and cast into the fire and burnt. Now the means of cutting them off, are many, even all things that do befall them: for all works together to the ruin of them that sell themselves over into the hands of sin, as well as for the good of them that work righteousness: but chiefly the

Word of God itself (a two-edged sword) because they will not yield unto it, that it might cut off their corruptions from their souls, becomes a savor of death, a weapon of vengeance, to cut off their souls from God: for by their often resisting it, and much setting of their wits and consciences upon the tenders, to shift and dally with it, they become blinder and blinder, and harder and harder, till at length they be sold over unto utter blindness, and given clean into the power of sin and Satan, from which they seemed once to be redeemed. And thus was Judas cut off, as the Scriptures show us. He was first a thief, allowing himself in his covetousness and purloining, and not heeding the checks of his own heart, which, every man must needs know, would be apt to be moving within him, being a person of so great knowledge as he was, and after he proved a very devil, when he dipped his hands into the warm and innocent blood of his heavenly Master, and well-known Savior. The Lord, to punish his guile, in not opposing his covetousness and falsehood, put him clean up into the hands of the devil, and his own both rage and lucre, till Satan had possessed him, with a full purpose of turning on the Pharisees side, (where he saw more likelihood of rising) and of making himself a fair way into their favors, by selling his Master unto them for a little money. And those reproofs and warnings of our Savior Christ, which should have withdrawn him from this revolt and treason, did nothing else through his desperate willfulness, but enrage, embitter, and envenomed him; provoking him more and more against his Master, till he was separated from the very show of his former appearing goodness, and changed from being Christ's Apostle, to be his apprehender: and a little after he was utterly cut off, and gathered and thrown into the fire and burnt, when despair was sent against him in such fierceness, that it drove him to hang himself, that is to say, to leap quick into hell, his own place, as Peter calleth it. So also was Achitophel, the type of Judas, cut off, and so Amaziah, and Joash, and Ananias, and Sapphira, and many more: and so also are all hypocrites sooner or later cut off, being carried

away, either with heresies, or schisms, or persecutions, or worldliness, or voluptuousness, and at last with despair or hardness, with some heavy hand of God likely, and damnation for the up-shot.

CHAPTER III.

Showing the reasons of the destruction of hypocrites.

Thus have you seen how sure it is that hypocrites must fearfully perish. Let us consider, why it must needs fall out so hard with them. And the reasons hereof are to be taken from God partly, & partly from themselves, and from all other of God's Saints. From God, [Reason 1] First, because he sees them. Secondly, because he hates them. Thirdly, because he will gain glory by them. For the first of these, Though the hypocrite do cover himself over with such a thick cloudy as the eyes of men are not able for the most part to pierce thorough it, and discern him: yet the Lord of heaven doth always see him, and see thorough him. His eyes in every place behold the evil and the good: He trieth the hearts, he searcheth the reins, he spyeth into the deepest and darkest corners of every soul. Hell and destruction are before the eyes of the Lord: how then should the hearts of the sons of men be hidden from him? Nay doubtless, there is neither darkness nor the shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves, but his eyes do observe, and his eyelids do ponder all their paths. From men like himself, a man may make an easy shift to keep his heart secret, yea, so is this vice given to cloaking and sculking, that from a man's own self, he will make a shift to hide the odiousness of his inside, and this filthy guilefulness of his own spirit; But after all the turning, and shifting, and winding

of mankind, that shall prove true at length (in spite of all) which Paul affirmeth, viz. that God is not mocked. There is no beguiling of that all-searching eye of our Maker. There is no possibility of offering cozenage, and putting tricks upon the King of heaven. The Lord of all the world is not subject to the weakness of earthly Princes, that often take flatterers for friends, and fawning sycophants, for loyal subjects: but even such as a man is in deed and truth, such doth God esteem and take him for: for he doth not judge after the outward appearance, but judgeth righteous judgment. A man may say of hypocrisy, as once Job in another sense said of Wisdom: That it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the Fowls of the air: but God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof: for he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven. Did not our Savior Christ know what was in man? and therefore also refuse to trust himself, with those hollow-hearted believers of his time? Did not he give Judas his right name, when he carried himself most fairly and commendably to the world-wards? even then, intitling him as he was worthy to be intitled, a devil, when as yet, he remained disguised with the vizard of Apostleship? Doubtless, as no wisdom, counsel, nor understanding can prevail against the Lord, to disappoint him, (as Solomon's Proverb affirmeth;) So neither can any fraud, guile, or dissembling, prevail to beguile him. And is it possible that his pure eyes should discover him, and his just and almighty hand not be stretched out to destroy him? Nay verily: for as he sees him, so he loathes him also, and loathes him in a very high degree, even as we do loath a rotten sepulcher for all its paintings: and as we would abhor a cup full of filthy liquid within, though the outside were never so cleanly washed, and fairly scoured: and as we could not but do him, that should bear great outward semblance of friendship and goodwill unto us, when his heart did harbor nothing but neglect of us, or malice against us. A false friend is always more detestable unto a man, when once his falsehood is made known, then the most violent, but professed

enemy. Do you not think that David was as much or more embittered against Achitophel, then against the Philistim or Moabite, that ever he fought with? The hypocrite, by seeming good, declares that he knows what is good, and how it should be embraced: And by but seeming alone, he proveth that he hath no love to that which he confesseth to deserve love; and so sinning against the light that is enkindled in him, must he not needs provoke the holy eyes of the Divine Majesty against him? In truth, an hypocrite even of the closer kind, doth exceeding grossly abuse the Lord, and all his ordinances, and exceeding heinously pervert his patience and kindness, and turn the great mystery of our salvation, into a very fable, seeing that he is not good in good earnest, but in jest, as one might well call it: and how then can it be otherwise, but that the wrath and indignation of God should burn against him even unto hell? seeing that in the last place he having fully purposed to glorify himself by all his creatures, finds none other way left, of reaping honor from the dissembler, but alone by magnifying his Justice in his overthrow. For he neglects the offers of his love, and refuseth to convert, and will not accept of salvation upon those conditions, on which God would bestow it upon him. We know all, that God hath made all things for his own glory, in the clear demonstration of his own unspeakable excellencies by them, and of this end he can no more fail, or be disappointed, then be defective in wisdom & goodness; which, because they be essential in him, he can no more come short of perfection in them, then that he can cease to be himself. Now the hypocrite, by the continuing such, doth make himself utterly incapable of becoming an active instrument to glorify the Lord, by performing that that is good in his sight: for fruitful he will never be, his impotency arising always from willfulness, or carelessness, or both, seeing these twain cannot at all or very hardly be separated one from the other: wherefor needs must he be made a passive instrument of God's honor, whether he will or no, serving to declare his infinite justice in his due destruction, by being forced to suffer the deserved punishment, which his grievous

wickedness doth challenge at the hands of his righteousness. If it be objected, that God might convert the hypocrite if he would: The answer is, By his omnipotent power he might, and so he might the devils too, and the very prince of the devils, Beelzebub himself. But we must understand, that the Lord hath set down a certain way and order of converting men unto him, agreeable to the rules of his own unsearchable wisdom: even such a way, as is in itself most plain, sure and infallible, if the negligence and obstinacy of men do not hinder, and such a way, as is most convenient to procure the greatest honor that may be unto him, in their salvation, and that is, that man himself should become a working instrument with God, to his own conversion and salvation. Which seeing the hypocrite will not do, the Lord will never be so over-gracious unto him, as to bring him to heaven by another way, but will even magnify himself in destroying him, because he neglected to take the right course that was shown him, to do himself good.

So you see reasons enow on God's part, why such branches should be separated from the Vine. Consider we of ourselves, and see if there be not more than cause of handling them with such severity. First, they thrust away salvation from themselves, [Reason. 2] as it is said of the Jews in another case, Because they will not entertain, and yield unto the good motions of God's Word and Spirit, that do urge and press them to turn unto the Lord, and therefore, what can be expected in reason, but that they should procure unto themselves even sharp and swift damnation? For is it not most equal, that he which will not receive salvation, when it is proffered unto him by God, should utterly perish; as that he should be starved, and die for hunger, which will not receive food, when it is put into his hands? These men resist and oppugn the Spirit of God, and will not accept of life upon such terms, as it may stand with God's Justice to bestow it upon them. If he would save them, and give them leave to go on in their beloved sins too, O how glad they would be of such a carnal way

of coming to heaven! But if he will not give eternal life, but unto those that are careful thoroughly to reform their hearts and lives, they know not how to be at all that pains. Surely the matter standing thus betwixt the Lord and their souls, it could not stand with his righteousness, to preserve them from ruin. The dissembling Christian dealeth by God, as the Disciples of Christ did deal by him in the sixth of John. When he told them of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, they said, This was an hard saying, who could hear it? and so went back, and walked no more with him. So the hypocrite, hearing of remission of sins, of life, of salvation, thinks they be things very desirable, and out of a will to have a part in them, he will go a great way with God: but when he hears of a general renouncing of all sin, and of washing and cleansing his heart, and that without this care there is no salvation, he will not believe that the way to heaven is so narrow, he shrinks back at these exhortations, and thinks, the Lord is an hard Master, and will go with him no further. So then, seeing the fruitless branch doth carelessly or obstinately let pass the opportunity of saving himself when it is often offered unto him, what can be more righteous with God; then that he should bring upon himself eternal destruction? Again, the hypocrite abuseth the richest of all God's benefits, his Word, his Sacraments, his Gospel, the blood of his Son, his tender of mercy, and the rest of those supernatural things that he hath to do with. He turneth the grace of God into wantonness, and like a very Swine, doth tread underfoot the most precious pearl of God's goodness in Christ; and must not a heavy vengeance therefore needs oppress him? Meat, drink, apparel, wit, strength, health, these be worthy gifts of God, and exceeding sinful is the abuse of them accounted in the sight of God, as reason there is that it should; and very heavy have the punishments been, that have lighted upon the abusers of such mercies. But these are common favors, every day's benefits; the outcasts of the world have them, as well as those of God's household. Only the Word of God, his holy Ordinances, the knowledge of

himself, & of his Son, and of his Kingdom, and the offers of mercy to save them from hell; these are peculiar favors, highly-esteemed kindnesses, specially bestowed upon those of his own family, with whom he pleaseth to be in Covenant. Now the hypocrite abuseth these, he perverteth these, he flatters himself in his sins for all these, and when God himself doth even as it were, come a wooing unto him, in all these ordinances, and beseech him to be reconciled to receive himself for a husband, his Kingdom for a dowry, and Heaven for a jointure, he will none of the bargain, unless he may have the liberty of enjoining his sins besides. O how great an indignity is here offered unto God? how shameful a repulse doth the Lord receive, and how undeserved a refusal? wherefore, by how much the mercies of God, that the dissembler abuseth, in continuing obstinate against them, are greater, by so much must God, in justice, needs increase the sharpness and strength of his blows against his soul. Again, the hypocrite doth procure a number of mischiefs in the vine where he grows, which must needs occasion and hasten his cutting off. These discredit Religion, and cause it to be ill spoken of; these being of God's family in show, do bring an ill name upon it, as once the spies did upon the land of Canaan. They do grieve the hearts of the upright, and strengthen the hands of other sinners, and fill their mouths with insultation. Their barrenness and want of good fruit, doth administer matter (unto those that are ready to cavil) of casting reproaches upon the root on which they grow, and upon all the branches that grow by them. Never did any professed enemy do so much hurt to true Religion, and so much hinder the proceeding of true piety, as the hypocrite hath done. He is one of the chief stumbling blocks in the world; and if a woe be denounced against him by whom offenses come, then the heaviest of all woes must light upon him, from whose default the greatest of all scandals do come. Do you not conceive what triumphing there was against Christ, when his own Disciple had sold him for money? The dry branch is a great impediment to the fruitfulness of the neighbor branches: and the

unfruitful Fig tree doth even keep the ground idle. He keepeth many from goodness that might have come unto it, but for his ill example: he discourageth those that would have been more abundant in goodness, but for his ill example. He makes those that are willing to sin, bold also to be more outrageous in sinning, by his ill example. In a word, the Church of God did never receive so great mischiefs, as from the false members of it. It is then but need for the Lord to take a sharp and speedy course against them. Lastly, you may conclude all the other evil they do, with putting yourselves in mind of the evil that they do unto themselves, by making themselves unfit to bring glory unto God any other way, but in their punishment, as we said before. They say of a Swine, that he never doth good till he come to the knife: so may we say of the Hypocrite, that he doth not bring any honor to God, till he be fain to honor him perforce, in suffering the strokes of his infinite Justice. In his praying, in his receiving the Sacraments, in his laborious following his calling, in his works of mercy he dishonoreth God, in all the actions of his life he doth wholly dishonor him, & would forever, if he might be suffered, continue to dishonor him, doing all these things hollowly & guilefully, serving and seeking himself in them, and preferring himself the creature, before the Lord his Creator. Doth not he then compel the Lord to take such a course with him, that he may no longer dishonor him, but may procure unto him, though against any proper intention of his, the glory of being an hater of sin, and a punisher of all unrighteousness: yea of being a searcher of hearts, and a discoverer of the secrets of all men's souls? An unfruitful branch is good for nothing but to be burnt: wherefore the Gardener doth best to make him a fire of it.

[Reason 3] And one more reason we may fetch of the woeful end of Hypocrites, even from all the rest of God's Saints, who with one mouth do continually sue unto the Lord for their cutting off, they being principal hindrances of the hallowing of God's Name, proceeding of his Kingdom of grace, doing of his holy will, and the

sanctification also of his children: against all which hindrances, the people of God are enjoined by our Savior, to make their prayers. Indeed the Saints of God do not know, nor mention in their prayers, the particular dissemblers that are in the Church: but the Lord that knows them each in special, must needs be provoked against each, by the incessant prayers of his Saints that are made against all. Yea the Hypocrites themselves, when they do pray after their fashion, and according to their manner, though not intending any such matter, nor heeding the scope and purport of their own prayers, do yet pray even against themselves, after a sort devoting themselves, and crying unto God, to have his fury and vengeance dispatched against them. So have you the point made strong: shall we also make it useful? We will do so, and entreat you to attend, whilst we show you the uses that are to be made of God's severity against counterfeits.

CHAPTER IV.

Containing the first use of the point: viz. the magnifying of God's Justice.

[Use 1] First then let the God of heaven have his due honor, in the due punishment of these most secret malefactors: as the keeper of the Vine is praised for his good husbandry, in the seasonable cutting of the dry and withered boughs of the Vine. For how should the Lord more clearly reveal to the sons of men, his most exact wisdom, and strict righteousness, then in finding out, and casting off these wicked offenders, for all their cunning disguisement, and subtle dissimulation? Hereby he makes it apparent, that he is so perfect in understanding and in righteousness, as there is no way of finding

favor with him, but by being good, and truly good, and by walking in his ways, and being sound in the same. It will not serve the turn to be close and retired, it cannot avail to be of smooth and fine carriage; all coloring, all cloaking is idle and bootless. It is not possible to escape his eye and hand, but by casting away our sins in good earnest, and a true and hearty obedience. Let the Hypocrite offer thousands of Rams, and rivers of oil; let him not spare the fruit of his body, even his own sons and daughters, and put himself to never so much cost and charges; all is one, God will not be bribed by these gifts to tolerate his wickedness. Let him speak the Lord never so fair in words, and make never so many & long prayers; let him carry himself never so devoutly and religiously, and wear God's cloth, as it were, and call him Master, and Master, and tread in his Courts, and frequent his House, still he loseth his labor, God will not bear with him, nor spare him for all this, so long as he hath respect to iniquity in his heart, he shall never be accepted.

Men are oftentimes partial to them of their own family, and will not deal so rigorously with those that use them kindly, though they sin; but the Lord is utterly void of all partiality, even to those that shroud themselves under his elbow, as it were, and seem to be as good servants to him as may be, and give him the sweetest words that they can invent. Oh how pure and searching are the eyes of our God? how clearly doth he show unto us, in the overthrow of Hypocrites, the truth of that, that the Psalmist singeth? His eyes behold, his eye-lids try the sons of men: but again, Evil shall not dwell with him, the foolish shall not stand in his sight; and he hateth all the workers of iniquity. Look we therefore upon the ruin of Saul, Achitophel, Joash, Amaziah, Judas, Ananias, Sapphira, and the rest of those whom the Scriptures do tell us of; consider we also of the examples of our own time, wherein our eyes may have seen the experience of the Lord's sharpness against such as have trod in the evil steps of these forenamed, not learning to avoid the ways of mischief, wherein they

have seen others to be overwhelmed before them; and in all such accidents let us contemplate the righteousness, severity, wisdom and providence of God, admiring his just government of his Church, that will not be slack (according to his threatening long since) to make desolate the congregation of Hypocrites: and learn we here-hence to establish a loving and awful admiration of so great justice, mixed with so great wisdom.

It is a great fault to rob God of the glory of his glorious works, and not to take notice of his excellent attributes, discovered unto us in the rare effects thereof. The Lord desireth to have us think and talk of these wonderful works of his, and to implant in our own souls a clearer knowledge, and a deeper reverence of him, by means of them. For he knows, that nothing is more beneficial to our souls, then if we do thus usefully behold the lifting up of his high hand: wherefore we must not suffer our natural dullness to prevail against us, and to turn away our thoughts from observing such observable things: which yet in this particular case, we are most apt to do. For I know not how it comes to pass in men, that whereas those of them that are not extremely carnal and earthly-minded, can consider the works of his goodness and mercy, with some admiration, wondering to find so great kindness shown to creatures, that can so little either deserve or requite the same: yet it is far otherwise in the works of his Justice: here a kind of unjustifiable pity of the persons misery, stops our eyes from beholding the beauty of God's righteousness, and men are nothing apt to praise him for the strict proceeding of his judgments against malefactors. Doubtless this is a corruption in us worthy to be blamed.

We seldom praise God, for showing himself just against Hypocrites. Indeed if in the practice of their malice against the Church, and the true members of it, they fall down wounded, as often it falls out, here our interest maketh us to be somewhat glad, and we can find in our

hearts to thank God, for that which procured our own ease and safety: but if it fall otherwise, that the Lord execute his vengeance against those whom himself sees worthy to be hated, we not having any part in the quarrel, we do not make such executions a part of the matter of our thanksgiving, as if we regarded God's works nothing at all, further then some benefit redounds therefrom unto ourselves, or as if we thought them worth nothing, further then they serve our own turns.

But now let us learn, that it is a necessary duty for us to praise the Lord, for showing himself severe, as well as gentle, for exercising his rigor, as well as his grace, and for making known his hatred of sin, as well as his love of the righteous. Praise thou him, for that as he doth favorably accept the meanest endeavors of the true-hearted; so he will by no means be deceived, by the glorious ostentation of hypocrites: praise him, for that as he will not let a man, that in truth of charity doth give a cup of cold water, to lose his reward; so he will not respect him, that out of other respects, destitute of charity, shall give all his goods to the poor. Praise him, that as he doth accept and requite the poor widows mite, that came from soundness of devotion; so did he nothing heed nor affect the rich and pompous bounty of the wealthier persons, that served their Idol of vain-glory, in seeming to make their offerings unto him Praise him, for that as he highly prizeth the neglected and despised services of those that are sound in his precepts, so he doth count those things no better than abomination, that seem glorious in the eyes of men, when they are done for sinister ends.

We do observe in Princes, as well their prudence and justice, in finding out, and taking and executing the crafty offenders that live under their charge, as in showing bounty, and liberality, and courtesy towards their better subjects. If a King have declared himself to be so wholly devoted to right and equity, that if his nearest

favorites do things worthy of death, or bonds, he will not spare them, and that no gifts nor bribes can purchase favor for those that are bold to build their faultiness upon such hopes of impunity: how do the present livers honor him, how do they applaud his uprightness, and give him all the titles of honor that they can invent? yea, how do those that write such histories, enlarge their words and discourses in his commendation, and advance him to the skies, for the most hearty lover, and constant follower of equity that might be? Why should not the King of Kings enjoy the praises of the just and severe executions that he hath done, and daily doth upon the hollow-hearted? Though men call themselves after his name, though they make long prayers, though they profess great love, and fear of him, and make a show of much devotion, though they preach him in the streets, and work miracles in his name, and make as if they were the best affected to him and his honor that can be; yet when he comes to them, and sees them destitute of a true godly conversation, not soundly reformed in heart, not universally obedient in life, not upright hearted, he makes no more ado, but cuts them off by the sword of justice, and sweeps them away with the besom of destruction. Why do we not extol the name of the Lord, in these works of his hand? why do we not open our mouths to show forth his praise, and say with the Psalmist, Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments: and thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes, for their deceit is falsehood, and thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: and my flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments: for thou dost judge the world with equity, and the people with righteousness. If a Judge do behave himself discreetly, for the searching out of a matter, and do clearly lay open a cunning pack of closely contrived villainy, all that hear him, applaud him, and praise his prudence and great understanding, as they did Solomon's, in the difficult case of the two harlots, about the dead, and living child. Now when the Lord doth order matters with so great discretion, as to bring to light the wickedness of the hypocrite, which he with such

exceeding cunningness of skill, and shifting and turning doth strive to hold under darkness, and to keep from the knowledge of men and Angels, yea often of himself (and of God too, if he could go beyond the Lord) should not the seeing and hearing of these most righteous judgments of the Lord, cause us to break forth into his praises, and to honor and fear him as a Judge, before whom it is to no purpose to double and to wind? Yea if a man encompassed with deceitful and hollow meaning sycophants, who seek by all smoothness of behavior to make him think well of them, and account them among the number of his friends, shall yet with so happy an insight, discern their falsehood, as that he do not at all suffer himself to rest upon them, or to be beguiled in them: do not we commend such a man, for his wisdom and care, and wonder at his prudence and circumspection? The Hypocrite is one of God's flatterers, he would fain win favor with God, by seeming and shows, and work himself into God's favor, by a smooth behavior of his outside: but it will not be, the Lord looks into the bottom of his soul, perceives all his tricks, plainly findeth that he doth but flatter, and therefore quickly discardeth and punisheth him. Why do we not return unto him the glory of his deep and all-searching wisdom, and magnify his name for his infiniteness in that excellent property, whereof a drop or a shadow rather in a creature, doth take us with such approving and admiration, that we cannot choose but extol it? Know therefore that from hell, as well as from heaven, we are to fetch matter of thanksgiving, and by the damned as well as the saved, to grow acquainted with God's most holy properties, and to love, fear and honor him for them. Princes and Judges are in great reputation for their wisdom and justice, as well as for their mercy and bounty: and so must the Prince of princes, and the Judge of Judges.

CHAPTER V.

Containing a second use of the point: viz. A terror unto all dissemblers.

Secondly, [Use 2] this point ought to adauant the Hypocrites that are amongst us, and if it were possible, even cause their hearts to melt like wax within their bodies. And verily, were not Hypocrisy always accompanied and attended on, yea fortified and maintained by two naughty and desperate companions, unbelief, and hardness of heart, it could not be but that the hearing of this point, that shows how sharp God will be in taking vengeance upon the dissemblers, should cast them down into such an extremity of amazement, as scarce any comfort would lift them up again. Oh what tongue can express, what wit imagine the most extreme wretchedness of all dissemblers? They lose all their good words, and all their good prayers, and all their good hopes, and all their good deeds, (for so they account them) and all their painful services. Though they appear most excellent to men, and to themselves, and oftentimes perform things that win them in the world honor, applause and admiration; yet are all these deeds like so many worm-eaten nuts, or apples rotten at the core, even scorned and rejected of the Lord; and after all this, their final and certain doom shall be cutting off, and burning, even eternal damnation. Hearken and give ear, all ye well painted Hypocrites. Let this terrible tidings be admitted into your very souls, and if it may be, by main force shake you out of your hard-heartedness and presumption. Not alone Pagans and Turks, not alone Infidels and Jews, not alone Heretics and Schismatics, not alone the open swearer, drunkard, whoremonger, belly god and profane beast, in whose faces all civil men are ready to spit shame and contempt, but even the unfruitful branch also must be cut off. The Hypocrite must perish, the hollowhearted professor of Christian Religion, (who is also in some, and in many things a follower and practicer of that

Religion) even he, I say, he that so much magnifieth himself, and is so much magnified of others, he must pass into hell. He that is very sorry for diverse faults, and mendeth diverse. He that comes to Church forwardly, and gladly heareth, and gladly practiceth many things he heareth. He that loveth preaching, and Preachers, and will bid both Ministers and godly men welcome to his house and table. He that can pray in his family, and likes well to read in the Bible: he that can weep at a Sermon, and be much moved at the reproofs of sin: he that lives unrebukable to the worldward, and feareth not the face of any accuser: he that is counted zealous for the Lord, and is hot against diverse disorders and abuses of the times: he whom almost all men take to be in the way to heaven, and that accounts himself even sure of coming into heaven, and cannot be driven from thinking that he shall assuredly be saved, even this man, I say, such a man as this, that doth all these things, may be damned for all this; and unless he do more then all this, must needs be damned. Oh hard speech will some man say, and who can receive it I confess indeed, it is an hard speech unto the dissembler whom it concerneth, but not less true then hard; and therefore all ye that be but Hypocrites, will ye not stand amazed at the hearing of these tidings, and even tremble before the Lord, and before his Word? You may perhaps desire to be informed more particularly who the men be, that must be thus horribly & fearfully destroyed, even as a dream when a man awaketh, and that notwithstanding their doing of all the forenamed good things. I answer you out of that, that you have formerly heard, all that are conceited of themselves, and despise others, turning the knowledge and goodness they have, into matter of pride and lifting up themselves. All those that never flinch at evil thoughts within, if their sins come no further then to thought, and even please themselves in wicked imaginations which they dare not act: all that are bold to sin in secret, and care not for it, securely and sorrowlesly committing the same things in the dark, which they would not for a world should be known unto the world. All that are bitter in crying

out against the sins of other men, and in aggravating the wrongs and unkindness's they have received: but have little enough to say against themselves, and their own sins, and the injuries and unkindness's that themselves have proffered unto God. All that hate their enemies in their hearts, and cannot abide to forgive and do good unto their wrongdoers: all that hear much, and it may be also repair it with others, but like unclean beasts that chew not the cud, never care to muse and ponder upon it alone, and to turn it into a prayer, and apply it unto themselves: all that have not the dispositions of their hearts changed, and their affections set upon God, though their outside seem never so much altered: all that allow themselves in any known sin, extenuating it as little, and flattering, and excusing themselves, and neglecting to take care of amendment, because they think that no man can choose but do as bad as that cometh unto. And in one word, all that see not, feel not, lament not, resist not, and purge not away the guile and deceitfulness of their own hearts. All, and each of those that are found such, for all their many prayers, much hearing, fair blade, and good hopes, shall sooner or later, by temptations, or afflictions, or allurements of pleasure, profit, or credit, or fame, or other means, be drawn away from the goodness they make show of, and at last be surely and irrecoverably damned. It is in vain to flatter yourselves, and say, you hope the matter is not so bad as I would set it forth to be, and that God will be more merciful then so. Nay brethren, the Lord will not be more merciful, then may stand with his justice and truth, he should be unrighteous and unholy, if he should not cast into hell fire any of those kinds of men to whom any of those things agree that I have set down unto you. He should be untrue, and falsify his word, if he should not bring damnation upon all, each of those that I have said. Princes often threaten, merely to terrify, and pronounce harder sentences in public, then they mean shall be executed, as they do with us in case of those that are adjudged to be pressed to death. It is not so with the Judge of all the world, not one tittle of a word more is to be found in

his sentence, then shall be felt in his execution: his blows shall be as terrible as his threats, and his just menaces as exactly accomplished, as his most gracious promises: not one tittle of the Word of God shall fail, (and therefore no part of the misery denounced against Hypocrites) till all be fulfilled.

Mark then, I pray you, the precise and punctual dealing of our Lord in this place: he saith particularly, every branch, lo, everyone, without any partiality and exception: and (He) the God of heaven, that hath a strong arm, and (no question) a knife sharp enough for this business, and cutteth off, taketh quite away, utterly removeth from the root, and all the benefits of the root, even to his endless destruction, as it must needs be granted: for what but damnation can betide him that is separated from Jesus the author of life, by whose Name alone salvation is to be found? Wherefore take no more pains to flatter thine own soul, and make thyself hope to speed better than thou hast heard; whosoever thou be whom the forenamed things have discovered to be but a dissembler, thou shalt surely have thy portion without, amongst the fearful, and dogs, and enchanters, and thieves, and whoremongers, in that fiery, and yet dark Lake, that is provided for the fairest Hypocrites, as well as for the blacker, and more infamous sinner: there is no escaping, there is no getting out; no one Hypocrite shall be able to shun the eye and hand of God, he will pick out everyone by himself, and everyone shall be cut off, and utterly destroyed; the Word shall prove an axe, affliction shall prove an axe, prosperity shall prove an axe, and all God's ordinances, and all that thou doest, and all that thou seest and hearest, and is done to thee, shall be but in the nature of a sharp cutting knife, by little and little to take thee off from Christ, and ripen thee for vengeance. In coming to Church, thou hastenest towards hell; in preaching, thou speedest towards death; in giving alms, thou runnest forwards to hell; in living as thou callest it, justly, thou doest but step a step nearer to hell; all that thou dost, and all that betideth thee, helping to

increase and further thy damnation. O miserable man, and beyond all conceit wretched, unless thou wilt hear, and fear, and prepare thyself to come out of this misery, by feeling it! Be thou cut off from the Vine, be thou spiritually excommunicated from Christ; let thy sins be bound upon thee as a bundle, and be thou bound over to the great Day of the vengeance of God Almighty, what should we add to that that we have already spoken again and again? The case of the Hypocrite, not alone the gross hypocrite, that knows himself to be such, & cares not, but even of the close hypocrite, that takes himself to be far better, is most wretched, hideous, & intolerable. O that you could believe it! O that the deceitfulness of sin might not harden your hearts, & that the effectual working of Satan might no longer blind your eyes, but that you may see and feel yourselves to be, if you be dissemblers, and withal, to be so unhappy, and sure and certain of such an unhappy end! I fear, brethren, lest in laboring thus mainly to affright the hypocrite out of his guile, I may perhaps against my will and purpose, scar the truehearted out of the present fruition of their comfort; as if a shepherd set his dog upon a Goat, feeding amongst a flock of sheep, all the sheep will run and be afraid. But I hope. I have so plainly deciphered this child of hell, this son of Satan, the Hypocrite, as that I hope none of God's true Saints shall catch any harm, by hearing them thus prosecuted with fears, and terrors, and threats, from whom they may perceive themselves to be thus manifestly differenced. I say, not everyone, in whom much, and very much hypocrisy, (and many very bad effects of very much hypocrisy) is to be found, shall be damned; but every Hypocrite in whom this sin ruleth, and shows itself to bear-rule, by not being seen and bewailed, and opposed, and the other notes before set down; every such one, I say, and say it again, unless he become new, shall surely be damned. But if the true-hearted, out of his weakness, shall be put into some fear, by the hearing of this terror, (so that he do seasonably return to enjoy comfort) it will do him good, and not harm, to be so feared: for these causeless fears of the upright,

proceed from the want of uprightness, though not from the utter absence of it, and from the too much hypocrisy, though not overruling hypocrisy that is in them. And so, if for a while they be even almost out of conceit with themselves as with Hypocrites, till these doubts have made them more bitterly to lament, and heartily to confess, and mightily to fight against their hypocrisy, they shall receive none other evil by having been so frightened, then the being purged from that, that was the cause of their fears. And if through the smallness of the quantity of truth and sincerity, they cannot so evidently perceive it at the first, but that they see cause to become suspicious of themselves, the grieving for the want of truth, and laboring and praying for increase of it, which the holy Ghost will work in them, by means of such suspicions; will be helpful (though accidentally, as the besieging of a City to its fortification) to the growth of their uprightness.

But the truth is, that this aptness to fall into jealousy of one's self, and when such terrors are delivered to fear, lest they belong to him, and so framing one's self to be humbled, because so many fruits of much hollowness are seen in him as do minister matter to such fear: this aptness, I say, to fear, is even as sure a sign of one that is not a Hypocrite, as can be named. I would not wish a better proof of ones not being dead, then to hear him complaining, that sure he is but a dead man: neither can one likely find a truer note of one that is not dead in this sin of hypocrisy, then when the work of the Word, in the reprehensions and menaces thereof, doth drive him to complaints and fears of his own guilefulness, only so, that he be driven to prayer and confession hereby, and so to seek strength against the mischief feared. But on the other side, a worse, and more likely sign of a man wholly sold over into the hands of guile, we can scarce meet with, then this, to be unmoved in the hearing of such threats, to have no risings of fear, and doubt, and suspicion, nor no troublesome conceits of his own estate: either such man is so abundantly and

extraordinarily sanctified, as that the over-evident proof of his uprightness, doth presently secure him from such thoughts, or else he is wholly buried and bound hand and foot in the hollow grave of guile; and therefore cannot feel it, because he is altogether under the power of it. For this is the nature of these dark and hidden vices, they are ever the less felt, by how much they do more strongly prevail, even as the pangs of death are least troublesome, when they have quite overcome the strength of nature. Wherefore, nothing fearing any danger that may come unto y e true hatred by this earnestness, let me yet once again settle unto those that be dissemblers, & adjure & protest, and call Angels & men, and Christ & God, and their own souls, and all things that are, to witness against them, that unless they will open their eyes, & see themselves to be in a damnable estate, they shall surely be damned. You may perhaps marvel that we should press the point so hard: but the cause is, we know the Hypocrite to be the most noisome weed in God's garden, and fain would we make him see his danger, that he might escape it. Yea, we know that hypocrisy doth harden, and deaden the heart above all other sins, & that nothing in the world is more difficult, then to make him see and feel his peril, who will rather think any man, yea all men Hypocrites, then himself, (although by this his over-aptness to think so hardly of others, & hardness to be made conceive so hardly, though truly of himself, he might, if he were not blind, discern himself to be as he is.) But now if thou beest such, and so proved by what hath been formerly spoken, how good soever thou hast been to see to, and beest still: how full soever of knowledge, and of zeal, blazing outward: how glad soever to God, and hear Sermons: how able soever to pray, and to repeat Sermons: how well soever accounted of by others, and by thyself: and how strongly soever persuaded, and in that persuasion joyed of thy being God's child, and being saved: (as all this may befall thee, and yet the former notes discover thee to be but hollow.) I do now in God's name adjudge thee, and prejudge thee, unless thou repent, to cutting off, to

burning, to eternal death, lo, here is the portion of thy cup: At length God's arm and axe shall fell thee, and grub thee up by the roots, if thou wert as tall as the Cedar of Lebanon, and as tough as the Oaks of Bashan, and as strongly rooted, as the tree that groweth near a rock.

CHAPTER VI.

Containing the third use, viz. An exhortation to the Hypocrite to come out of his hypocrisy.

[Use 3] But to what purpose do we thus earnestly fight against Hypocrites, with the sword of Christ's mouth, which he hath put into our mouths? Only, only, at least chiefly, if it may be, to convert him, and to make him cease to be a Hypocrite. when he sees the lamentable condition of such kind of men. It is your conversion which we wish, O all ye that have been dissemblers; and your reformation, which we aim at, which we are well assured, can never be effected, but by showing you the woe which is coming upon you. Now therefore, seeing the case of counterfeit Christians is so bad, so hard, so intolerably, so desperately, so inevitably wretched, but by turning; we beseech you suffer yourselves to be wrought upon, to be converted, to become true, and to receive the Spirit of uprightness, which the Lord of heaven is now ready to pour forth upon you. Be it known unto thee, O thou that hast been hither to but a Hypocrite, that thy case is not altogether irrecoverable, but that thou mayest, if thou wilt not at this time also refuse God's gracious offer, be made sincere, and so be received into grace. For brethren, be ye well assured of this truth, that when the Lord of heavē sends his servants

unto you, in his own name, to call upon you to perform any good duty, tending to your own salvation, that then he is also present in his ordinance, by the gracious cooperation of his good Spirit, to enable you with strength from himself to perform that duty. For God's ordinances are not idle, neither shall his Word return in vain, but shall be effectual for all for which he sendeth it, and he that desireth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he may turn and live, will effectually turn him from his evil way, if he do not willfully harden himself therein, and even refuse to be converted. Be willing therefore to be made upright, that thou mayest be so indeed, and be it for certain delivered unto thy soul, that thou shalt be made able to become such, if thou do not stiffen thyself in the natural unwillingness of thy corrupted nature. I demand therefore of thee in the same question that our Savior used to the sick man that lay at the Poole of Bethesda, Wilt thou be made whole? If thou be willing, now the waters are stirred, now the Spirit of God is come down in this ordinance, now thou mayest be put into these waters, and now thou shalt be made whole. If thine answer be, that thou art willing, then I say unto thee, make it appear that thou art so in very truth, and that thou dost not only say thou art so: for many a man's words and meaning are far distant each from other: many a man affirmeth with loud voice, and open profession of speeches, that he is willing to receive that grace which he is not willing to receive.

There is a faint motion of the will, which is rather an act of the understanding convinced, that one should be willing to get a thing, thē any true and earnest working of the will towards that thing; and this kind of willingness must men take for a true being willing. But herein they do much deceive themselves; for a man may be enforced to acknowledge, that he ought to be willing to get such or such a thing, and withal, find in himself some slothful wishes to have the same, and yet be destitute of that steadfast and fixed resolution of the will, which is indeed the motion of the will required to be in us, if

we will receive good from the Lord. But how shall it be made manifest whether a man's willingness be settled or overt, well-grounded or shallow? Surely he that indeed bendeth his will to anything, will be contented to devour the pains of seeking and striving after it, as he that would be rich in good carriest will labor for riches. But he whose will is a little weakly stirred towards wealth, but yet doth give itself over unto ease and pleasure, after he hath affirmed that he would be wealthy, shows, that his will is not settled upon wealth, by taking his ease, and following his pleasure, rather than that he will cross himself in these things to get wealth. It is even so in things spiritual for this matter, as it is in things temporal: he that weakly wisheth to be upright, but hath not his will soundly carried after uprightness, after his seeming to be willing, discovereth his unwillingness, by refusing to do that by which he might be made upright. But if thou wouldest indeed be made sincere, as a sick man would be made whole, thou must be content to take that physic, though troublesome in working, which will purge out thy predominant hypocrisy, and beget sincerity in the stead thereof.

Give me leave therefore to go forward in this business, and to show unto you by what means the Hypocrite may prevail against his guile, that hitherto hath prevailed against him; and he that hath had nothing but shows, may be made sound and substantial. In the first place then, he must see and confess himself to have been hitherto but a Hypocrite, & must suffer the Word of God to make him known unto himself.

This is the first and hardest piece of this business, of which it may be said, that he hath half ended which hath well begun, and without which it shall be impossible ever to make any good and fruitful end in this matter. For though the gross Hypocrite knows himself but to dissemble, yet (such is the winding deceit of this vice, and so true is it that Solomon hath said, The counsels of the wicked are deceit,) that

he will not be known to himself, of that which he doth know. For when I say, he must confess it, I mean not that he must in a fit bare lie say so, or being forced by the power of his conscience cry out, that so it is; but he must be willing, though against the hair, and the heart too, to mind himself of it, to consider it seriously, to set the point down certainly within himself, and to affirm against himself freely in his own soul, in secret, at the bar of his own conscience: Ah, I am an Hypocrite, a Pharisee, a dissembler, a dry branch. An inward, hearty, secret, plain, free acknowledgement of one's guile, grounded upon diligent enquiry, sound search, due conviction, & plain evidence, is the first thing that must be done for the reforming of hypocrisy, without which it is not possible to get the better of it. A man must set himself with all seriousness, as in a matter of the greatest importance in the world, even that whereupon his eternal estate doth depend, to find out his own falsehood; and having with some pains of seeking, perceived such and such notes of over-ruling deceitfulness within him, must set down and cast out all self-loving, and self-flattering fancies of former times, (whereby he was better persuaded of himself, or at least did put off the thought & remembrance of this matter) and say unto himself, Ah, now I have met with this cozening deceiver Hypocrisy, which hath all this while beguiled me, and tyrannized over me, unseen and undiscerned. Now I see by my carelessness of pondering on God's Word, which I hear and speak of, and yet not condemning myself for such negligence: Now I see by mine uncontrolled censuring of others, now I see, by my letting evil thoughts and secret sins pass away without lamenting; by my excusing and lessening mine own faults, and making nothing of that, that I am not willing to mend, and casting the fault still upon others, rather than myself, that I am not sound at heart, yea, that I am stark hollow and rotten at heart. This hunting out, and arrainging, and convicting of the sin we speak against, before the bar of a man's own heart; this must needs be done, if ever we will subdue and overmaster the same. And why? why I say, O thou man or woman

whosoever, shouldest thou be unwilling to see and confess thy guile within the walls of thine own soul, before the eyes of God, that do already see it plain enough? This confession is not required of thee, as an evidence to be produced against thee, for thy easier condemnation; but as a necessary antecedent of thy pardon, which none can obtain from God, unless he plead guilty: for it is an over-ruled case in heaven, and shall never be altered or swerved from, No man shall be forgiven from God's Tribunal, but he that asks pardon; and no man can ask pardon, that doth not acknowledge guiltiness. I say then again unto thee, that thou shouldest not be unwilling to see and confess that which thou shalt have none hurt by confessing: yea, which in very truth it is utterly in vain to refuse to confess; for deny it whilst thou wilt, from the eyes of God, the Husbandman, and from the eyes of our Lord Jesus Christ, the root of this Vine, no denial, no covering can hide it; when coloring and denying cannot keep the fault secret, and plain acknowledgement may get the fault pardoned; would any but a very fool, or obstinate and willful man, that had vowed to seek his own ruin, refuse to confess? I do not wish thee with open voice (so as men should hear it to thy reproach) to cause thine own mouth charge thee with guile, (which in truth were somewhat hard, and yet not so hard, but that a wise man would readily do it to get remission) but alone in the secret thoughts of thine own breast, or in the secret prayers of thy closet betwixt God and thyself, where none other ear cā hear, but his, that is already acquainted with the matter, and knows more than thou canst confess, but alone here, I say, to sigh out thine humble acknowledgement, and say, O wretched man I, to this moment I have but dissembled, and seemed to be good, without being so. Alas, I am (I will no longer be ignorant, or deny, or not heed it, that I am) an Hypocrite, I find I am not changed in heart, some sin I think too pleasant, or gainful, or needful to forsake; some duty too hard or expencefull to perform; I never yet accustomed to take the pains of binding the law of wisdom upon the tables of mine heart; I never yet

regarded to feel the power of Religion mortifying my most beloved lusts, and framing my very soul to newness: I never heretofore did feel and bewail mine hollowness; and therefore, Ah, it must no longer be gainsaid by me, I am an Hypocrite. In truth, brethren, you must needs do thus, or else ye shall forever remain Hypocrites. Were it not better for thee thus to shame thyself before Christ, then to make him shame thee before the whole world at the last Judgment, or make thee shame thyself to no purpose, before many on thy death-bed? Every secret thing must be made open, every hidden thing must be brought to light. O now drag this corner-seeking, and light-shining vice into the open view, by a free and plain confession as thou hast been exhorted, that it may not at that day remain to be laid open to thine eternal confusion. If thou tellest me that thou hast been long time a professor of religion, & hast long accounted thyself the child of God; & therefore if the matter be brought to that pass, that after all this while thou must be fain to take upon thee the name of a Hypocrite, thou canst not see any hope of ever being true. I answer thee, that this is a vain fear, with which Satan seeks to hinder thee from doing that that is absolutely needful to thy salvation: for this is one, and a principal cause that thou wast never yet true, because thou wouldest never yet be made to see thyself false. But remove this impediment (by the much persuaded confession I call for at thine hands) and whatsoever thou hast been, and how long soever thou shalt be made true; for God comes hither now in this his ordinance, to make thee true, if thou do not make thyself incapable of truth, by refusing to acknowledge thy want of truth: wherefore breaking thorough all unwillingness and delays, and laying aside all shifts and defenses, fall upon thy knees in thy secret chamber, and there say unto thyself, and in more words complain against thyself unto God, that thou art as yet an Hypocrite, a barren branch, that standeth every hour in peril of being cut off.

This done, in the second place frame thyself to mourning and sorrow for thine hypocrisy, and ferret out thy guile by lamenting it. For there is no sin or corruption in the heart of man, so tyrannous and over-ruling, but that godly sorrow will fetch it down and over-master it. Indeed a little whimpering grief, a sigh or two, a tear or two, a sad countenance for a Sermon time or so, will not prevail. The best medicine that is, will not heal a sore, if there be not a sufficient quantity of it applied, if it be not constantly applied and followed close. He that will be content to grieve a little at Church, or so, for his guile, and out of the present evidence of the Spirit working with the Word, will perhaps yield to see and to lament his hollowness, but lets the matter pass quickly, and takes no more pains about it, shall anger the sore, as it were, and not heal it, and by careless neglecting of God's grace in such motions offered, he shall cause his hypocrisy to fester more, and grow more incurable: for even this weak work of the Word will help (out of his own erroneous disposition) to cozen him, and to make him too soon think himself upright, and so he shall never become upright. But the sorrow I speak of, must be a settled and constant sorrow, which a man must let rest upon his soul, and willingly entertain within himself many a day together, though not in a violent manner to hinder his other occasions, yet in a still quiet manner, to make his thoughts in the midst of all other occasions, (as well they may, without offering any wrong unto such occasions) be still running upon the matter of his guile, and in an inward and silent manner continuing to bemoan the same within himself. A spirit of grief will not change a Hypocrite into a true Christian, a constant grief will. This then do, (as he that hath a grievous sore or wound, applies the curing of that wound above all things, until it be whole) set thyself for a good space of time together, to make it thy principal work to observe the working of thine hypocrisy, and to bewail the same. Sometimes be earnest with thyself, and in thy solemn and secret prayers and confessions, labor to rend and break thine heart with grievous sorrow, and to be wonderful vile in thine own eyes,

because of thy long continued hypocrisy: and strive to do as Peter did for his denying his Master, (for a counterfeit following him, is little better than a denial of him) even to get alone and weep, (at least grieve, which may well be without weeping) very bitterly: and when thine other occasions call thee from thy chamber, yet hold thy thoughts still on work (and let the plaster lie to the sore all the day.) Be thinking, Ah wretched creature I, that have so great a space of time continued a Hypocrite, a professor of Religion, not changed in heart, not washed in the inner man, not made a new creature! O how great cause hath God to abhor me, have I to abhor myself, that have so long gone about to cozen God, and to mock mine own soul! And so whatsoever thou beest doing, let thine heart be feeding on this bitter herb of inwardly bemoaning thy guile and thine irreformedness, and unchangedness of heart. Bid these cogitations welcome as thou sittest at meat, and count them as the best sauce for thy meat, yea, as the best dish on thy table. In company let these cogitations be thy most esteemed companions, and in solitariness give thyself over to them, and so continue to do, till thou find a plain change of thine heart, a manifest alteration, and so evident a framing thee to be another then thou wast before, that at last thou mayest be able, (which if thou wilt not be weary of striving, within no long space of time thou shalt be able to say) Now I find and feel, that I am made new. Brethren, if any of you had a very sore leg, or arm, he would be content to go to some Surgeon, to dress the same every morning and evening, and let (perhaps) a smarting plaster lie upon it all day long, and all night too, for three weeks, or a month's space together, that he might be healed and not lose his joint. O why should not he that hath an heart diseased with that grievous fistula of hypocrisy, be contented, as it were, to dress it twice a day, by some solemn, secret, and earnest lamenting it before God, and to let the plaster of grief lie at it all day, by frequent renewing of his sorrowful thoughts for it, that this foul and festered sore may be healed, and he may not lose his soul and body both by it? Wilt thou not bestow as much time,

pains, care, in healing thy soul, as thy leg or arm? Doubtless this care would go happily forward, for God himself would be the Surgeon, and health would follow without fail; for the medicine is sovereign, and hath been tried by many, and prescribed by an excellent and skillful person. Saint James bids wavering-minded and double-hearted men, he meaneth Hypocrites, to turn their laughter into tears, and to afflict themselves and weep: lo, how affliction, grief, sighs tears, be the ingredients of this medicine that will kill hypocrisy! Saint Paul, after God had met him going to Damascus, took this medicine carefully, and in the space of three days it healed him clean, almost, and made him of a proud hypocritical persecuting Pharisee, to become a most true-hearted and sincere Apostle and Preacher of the Gospel. For, coming to Damascus, he neither ate nor drank for three days, but gave himself to mourn for his hollowness, bloodiness, unbelief, and other sins, and so was healed of all at once. O happy medicine! O speedy and blessed cure! O blessed grief! O the most gainfully spent three days that ever were spent, to work such an alteration in such a soul! Wilt not thou take the same course, that did good to one so far gone with guile? O now settle thyself to mourn for thy guile, that thou mayest be healed, and mayest be comforted. But some man may perhaps say, that it is not so easy a matter to soften a hard heart. I answer, It is not indeed, but it is a possible matter, and that it may be effected through God's blessing with careful endeavors, from which God's blessing will never be kept back. I will therefore show you two or three means to mollify even a guileful heart, and to make it, if not weep, yet mourn earnestly: and let every man know for his comfort, that mourning may be accepted before God, though tears be away. The Lord will not reject dry sorrow, if he see it hearty and true, and such as a man is even out of conceit with himself, because he cannot make it greater, and wetter too.

Understand then, that there are three things that will help even the man that hath been hitherto but a Hypocrite, to lament and mourn

for his hypocrisy.

The first is, to lay open before his mind in some settled and serious meditation, the infiniteness of that evil which shall surely come upon him for his hypocrisy, unless by lamenting it he do prevent the same. Put thyself in mind of the certainty of thy being damned if thou continue a Hypocrite, and of the intolerableness of the punishment of damnation. Say, O how inevitable (but by repentance, whereof sorrow is a necessary companion) and how extreme is the peril wherein I stand! If I cast not out this guile out of mine heart, it will certainly keep me out of heaven; if I keep it still in my soul, it will surely cast me down to hell. I must, I must of necessity, (because of the truth of God that hath said it, and his justice that hates this sin) be damned everlastingly, and forever fry in those unquenchable flames (which none can suffer without being swallowed up of their torment) unless I be changed, and of a Hypocrite as I have been, become sound at heart. This cannot be without bewailing mine unsoundness: and ah then shall I not bewail it? Tell thyself again, and again, and many times, in what excessive danger thy soul standeth, of being forever tormented with the intolerable sense of God's anger (a thousand times more scalding then the worst fire that can be made of any artificial matter) unless by lamenting thou prevail against thy sin; and this will help thee to lament thy sin: Muster up all the threats and menaces of God's Word against hypocrisy, and against Hypocrites, and laying them close to thine own soul, say, Upon me shall all these be fulfilled, if by mourning I free not myself from them. Faith in God's threats will make the heart ache and prick; and much pressing them upon a man's soul, and considering the author and firmness of them, will cause them to be believed: and so thou hast one way of melting thyself.

To this add a second, and the effect shall follow without doubt, and that is, consider of the certainty of God's accepting even thee also

graciously in Christ Jesus, upon thy so mourning and confessing. The Lord of heaven is so good, say thou unto thyself, that even a Hypocrite, and myself the worst of Hypocrites, may be, and shall be accepted into favor, for all his gross dissembling, and frequent abusing of God's goodness, and resisting of his Spirit. Hope of pardon will turn the hardest hardness into softness: I say, hope of pardon, well and firmly grounded upon the promise of the Word: for false and presumptuous hope, that beareth itself bold in the false application of the promise, looking for the benefit promised, without respecting the condition whereupon pardon is promised, doth rather add to the hardness of the heart, and make it more stony. Speak thus therefore unto thine own soul, and say; Well, for all I have been but a Hypocrite hitherto, yet I may be pardoned, and I may be saved, if I lament for mine hypocrisy; and therefore I will bewail it, and strive for that breaking of the heart with grief, which will cause the Lord to bind it up with mercy and with comfort.

Lastly, fall down before the Lord, and if thou dost not feel the sensible motions of sorrow, yet stir up anger and dislike against thyself, for thy too much hardness now, and too much folly in former time, that tookest pains to delude thyself, and to delude him that was too wise to be deluded: say with the Psalmist, Ah, why have I been so very a fool, yea a beast before the Lord, as to please myself in a bare show of goodness, and in a mere outside of piety? how could I be so far hood-winked all this while? doth not the Word of God plainly enough show this folly? have not I received many warnings in many examples? What got Saul by dissembling? What did it profit Judas to deal with guile? and what availed it Ananias and Sapphira, to daub and counterfeit? Ah wretched creature I, why have I followed the pattern of such unhappy persons? where was my reason all this while? and what was become of understanding? Ah, Lord, I am ashamed of my folly, of mine unthankfulness, of my presumption, of mine abusing thy sweet and gracious proffers of mercy. And thus

continuing for one hour in a day together, to blame, and shame, and condemn thyself, and to quarrel with thyself for thy guile, at length thou shalt find thyself, with laboring, cast into a kindly sweat, as it were, of holy grief for this thine hypocrisy, which will so open the pores of thy soul, that this ill humor will evacuate, and be much reformed.

Now having seen and striven to lament thy guile, proceed to stir up hearty desires, and make fervent prayers unto God for his spirit of truth & of uprightness. We cannot overcome the smallest corruptions of our heart in our own strength, but it must be a divine power, which must enable us to prevail against sinful dispositions. Now this strength the Lord of heaven, the strong God, the author of all strength, is ready and willing to bestow upon all that humbly sue unto him for it, for he giveth to all liberally, and hitteth no man in the teeth. Beg then for the spirit of power, and of a right mind, and beg heartily and confidently, because thou beggest of him that is able to give, and much more willing, then thou art to receive. He that hath made others of weak, to become strong, and of false, to become true, can, and will perform the same grace to thee, according to his promise. For he commandeth all to ask, and shuts up his mercies from none that truly and heartily beseech the same at his hands. Perhaps the devil may seek to turn thee from this exercise of prayer, by casting in a cavil against thee, to this purpose, that the prayers of Hypocrites cannot be accepted, and thou having been hitherto but a Hypocrite, how should thy prayers prevail in heaven? For the settling of thy soul against this doubt, know, that the prayer of an Hypocrite that doth not see and lament his hypocrisy, cannot indeed be bidden welcome in heaven, but all that are heavy laden with sin, have a command to come unto Christ Jesus, and a promise that they shall be refreshed: wherefore, now thou having begun to see, and detest, and be burdened and grieved with thy guile, good warrant hast thou to ask help, and good assurance that thine asking shall not be in vain.

Therefore I say again, lift up thine heart and voice, and cry mightily to God, for the powerful work of his Spirit, to make thee sincere before him. O Lord, say thou, which art only able to form the soul of man anew within, create thou in me a new heart, and form a right spirit within me; make me sound in thy precepts, and let not iniquity have dominion over me. Make me (Lord) a true Israelite, in whose spirit there is no guile. Make me truly good; good for thy sake, and because thou wouldest have me good that I may please thee, and not only or chiefly that I may serve mine own turn, yea or save mine own soul; yea generally and universally good: good in all things, with such a goodness as thou accountest perfect in thy Son Christ's perfection, because he in whom it is, doth strive & labor after perfection. Follow this suit most closely and earnestly, and give not over till thou findest it granted; & if thou canst not go on in variety of words, yet repeat over the same petition often, and often, and be not weary; for so they be hearty & fervent, the Lord of heaven will never be weary of such repetitions. Our Savior hath spokē a Parable, to the intent that we should pray always, and not wax faint. Thou knowest I presume what y e parable is. A poor Widow, by importunity, forced an unrighteous Judge to do her justice against her adversary. How much more shall the righteous God avenge the cause of his servants that cry day and night unto him? And if his compassion be such towards them, that he will avenge them of their external enemies, which only seek to make their lives tedious by persecutions; shall he not much rather assist them against their inward corruptions, which tend to bring their souls to destruction? wherefore resolve thyself to be importunate, and to take no nay, nor ever to give over till thou hast sped in thy suit: wherein nothing can hinder thee from speeding, but thine own too soon giving over the suit through weariness. Men are troubled with earnestness and importunity, and amongst them many times a stout beggar hath a stout nay, because they condemn it as a matter of impudency, to be a stout beggar: but to God nothing is more pleasing, then this stirring up ourselves to take hold upon his name,

and this giving him no rest day nor night till he hear our prayers; and with him only faint suitors, that will take a repulse easily, and be soon put back, do go away empty of the thing they sued for. Know then, that thy salvation dependeth upon this matter, and therefore as in a case of the greatest importance in the world, make thy desires fervent, and resolve never to cease asking, till thou shalt receive the Spirit of truth and uprightness: And know, that God doth not deny to hear thy prayers at first, because he is not able or willing to grant them, or because he counts it a matter too troublesome for him, but alone to endear the benefit obtained, to make thee see the worth of it, and become the more thankful. Pray therefore, and pray fervently, and pray continually: O Lord, create a right spirit in me, and make me sound in thy precepts.

And to prayers, join in the fourth place holy meditations of the nature of God: for he that knows God thoroughly, and is to any purpose acquainted with the excellency of his nature in himself, and sees the beauty of his grace in the face of Christ, cannot but be so far in love with him, as even to be good for his sake, and to make him the beginning and ending of all his desires and endeavors. It is alone ignorance of God, that makes us set ourselves in God's room, and aim at our own benefit instead of his glory. But he that will take pains to clear up his own eyes, and to behold the glory of God, as he hath revealed it in his Word, and in his Gospel, shall be so affected with the splendor thereof, as that now he will account nothing worth anything, but that surpassing glorious Majesty, that infinitely excels all things, and so hypocrisy must needs vanish. The knowledge of God will make a man to perceive how little it shall avail him to disguise himself. The knowledge of God will make him to see how worthy the Lord is of all the service of all creatures. The knowledge of God will make his heart to become in love with God, and no man will dissemble with him whom he loveth: wherefore labor to get, and to grow in this knowledge, by a frequent pondering and musing upon

the nature of God, and beholding in his Temple the beauty of his Majesty, as David speaketh. Tell thyself often of his infiniteness and eternity, and that all things are from him, and by him, and for him, and he alone is from and of himself. Say unto thy soul, he is the owner of all things, and the ruler of all things. All the good properties of all creatures be but drops of his sea, and sparks of his flame, and there is infinitely more of all good things in him alone, then in all them; and whatsoever is in them, it is more his then theirs, and theirs no longer, nor further, then as he will impart: with him is wisdom, with him is power, greatness, and riches, and Majesty, and dominion are his. He is infinitely just, and righteous, hating sin with ten thousand times more vehement hatred then we can think he doth, and punisheth it with ten thousand times more severity than we can think he will. He is thoroughly and thoroughly acquainted with all that is in man, & needeth not to receive information from any other. His eyes in every place behold the evil and the good, and he is most fearful and terrible to the sinner, and even far more burning than any consuming fire. Put thyself therefore in mind frequently, of his all-searching eye, all-hearing ear, almighty hand, and every-where-present presence. Say with David, Lord, whither shall I go out of thy presence? And thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. He that will thus set his mind on work, often to muse of God's excellencies, shall find the candle of the knowledge of God to be lighted up within his soul. And as a thief endureth not the light, and therefore if a candle be tinded, he flies: so this sly thief of hypocrisy will be gone, if we set up and renew this burning lamp of knowledge within us. Wherefore gather together such worthy texts of Scripture, as tend to set forth God unto us, and bestow much time in pondering of them, and telling thine heart how true they be, and most inconceivably great and good he is that hath in them discovered but his back parts unto thee; and thou shalt soon find, that the beams of this Sun will dispel the fogs of guile within thee.

Last of all, thou must be constant in examining thyself by the Law of God, and in discussing thine own life, calling thyself to account often, at least every day, for the thoughts, words, and deeds of the day; renewing the sorrowful confessions of thy soul for what thou findest to be amiss, and thine hearty purposes of amendment. Hypocrisy cannot prevail, but where a man doth suffer himself to pass on carelessly & heedlessly thorough the world, not regarding much how matters go with his soul, nor caring to set himself in God's presence, and consider how he hath behaved himself towards God. He that lets his reckonings run on a long time without setting them in order, or considering how they stand, is many times a very bankrupt, and knows it not; but he that doth often make his accounts even, doth likely keep beforehand. We must daily cast up our accounts with God, we must daily reckon with him and ourselves for our debts and arrearages. But especially a man must have a special eye unto that most beloved sin of his, which he takes most delight in, is most prone unto, and is loathest to see and leave, and most watchfully mark and observe each stirring, and turning, and moving of it within his soul, be it what it will be, worldliness, passion, revenge, vain-glory, lust, voluptuousness, carking, or the like. Likely hypocrisy, that is itself a close corruption, and loves not to be seen, hath some lieutenant, as it were, some master-sin, that keeps its place openly, and holds up its dominion. See this, oppose this, subdue this, and the reign of guile is overthrown. This ferreting out of all sin by the Law, and chiefly of the master-sin; this frequent appearing before God to try our daily conversation in his presence, will cause that a man shall not be under the dominion of guile. He shall discover so much hypocrisy, and so much hurt coming to him by hypocrisy, and so much good by the purging out of hypocrisy, that by confessing and opposing it, he shall gain certain freedom from the tyranny and usurpation thereof.

Lo, brethren, so many of you as have hitherto been servants to guile, I have revealed unto you the means of recovering your liberty. Do

these things, and though you have been to this time arrant hypocrites, you shall be changed and become upright. Only do these things now for the present, from this time forward, without deferring or delaying, without putting off the Lord until another time: for the plaster will come too late when the sore is past cure: After a man is dead, make him a caudle, saith the Proverb. This is madness indeed; when God hath so long borne with thy dissimulation, as that now he resolves to bear with thee no longer, nor ever to pardon thee, and therefore turns thy conscience loose upon thee to pursue thee, as he did on Judas, then shalt thou be unable to do these things, and then shalt thou find it past time a day to think of reforming thy guile, when God is now in cutting thee off for it: for the night will come when no man can work, as Christ telleth. Wherefore now at the pure reproofs of God's Word, and at the gentle and loving motions of his Spirit, address thyself to this, though painful, yet happy and needful labor of reforming thy guile; and I protest unto thee in the name of the Lord, that thou shalt prevail. See thine hypocrisy, grieve for it before God, considering the certain and insufferable danger of it, and the assurance of escaping it by this means, and even falling out with thyself, because thou canst not grieve more for it, and withal, pray earnestly unto the Lord for his Spirit: meditate much of his excellencies and presence, and use to mark and examine thy life daily, chiefly in respect of thy most dear sin which thou findest thyself loathest to see, and leave, and then hear thou the Word of the Lord unto thee, Thy sin shall be pardoned, thy guile shall be removed, and thou shalt (from this time forward) become a living and a fruitful branch. O how happy shall this change be? how comfortable this alteration? and how shalt thou bless the time, the day, the means, the cause that so changed thee? And now I pray you, brethren, give me leave yet a little further to press this exhortation upon your consciences. Answer each of you within himself, and say, What is thy resolution, and what intendest thou to do? Wilt thou pass over this exhortation, as carelessly as thou hast already done

many others? and go as fruitlessly from this Sermon, as from others heretofore; never regarding to amend the sin which the Word of God discovereth unto thee to be so mischievous? wilt thou, I say, even neglect and set light by this admonition, and even forget it so soon as thy back is turned on the Church, and never take care of following it? or wilt thou heed it, observe it, follow it, and now begin to make thyself a true Christian, by purging out the formerly prevailing guile of thy soul? Come to a resolution, before thou goest hence, what thou wilt do, whether obey the Word of God, or disobey it, practice it, or let it slide, without endeavor to practice. Me thinks it should not be possible that any amongst you should have a heart so desperately hardened as not to observe an exhortation so nearly concerning him, and so much and earnestly beaten upon him. Me thinks it cannot be that any marking it, should possibly settle himself in a willful obstinacy of going on as he hath begun, and not mending so damnable a sin. All the way that Satan hath to make you lose the fruit of this exhortation, is to nuzzle you in a good conceit, that sure you be not Hypocrites, but already true-hearted: and therefore the exhortation, though needful, yet is to you impertinent. But thou must understand, that though thou beest not a rank Hypocrite, yet the things delivered concern thee, and are needful for thee also, as well as for him that is. For there is none of all God's Saints so perfectly renewed, but that a great deal of the leaven of hypocrisy may be found in him, though not so much as by quite overcoming him, should give him the name of a Hypocrite, yet so much as by often breaking forth in him, may justly cause him to take heed and beware of hypocrisy, as our Savior Christ biddeth.

Now the same things that are available to beat down any vice from bearing rule in the heart, the same things are also needful for the further and further weakening of it, that it may be less and less noisome to the heart. Wherefore howsoever the case go with thee, thou hast a portion in this work; if thou knowest thyself to have been

but an Hypocrite, most of all doth it appertain to thee to practice it, that thou mayest no longer stand in hazard of being cast into hell every hour. If thou canst not tell whether thou beest an Hypocrite, it beseemeth thee to put it in practice, that thou mayest in such a degree subdue hypocrisy, as to be able to know and say, that thou art none Hypocrite.

If thou beest already so sincere, that thou canst truly and assuredly affirm thyself to be no dissembler, yet thou also must do the things persuaded, that by more prevailing against guile, thou mayest have more comfort: and lest, if thou do not thus continue to mortify this corruption, it get head against thee again, so far, as almost to lay its yoke upon thee the second time: for a man that is now so true and upright, as that he is well assured the power of guile is broken within him, shall yet (if he fore-slack the performing of the things I have formerly prescribed) by little and little have guile so apt to grow in him, (as weeds in a garden) that he shall be little less then quite overrun with it in a short space. Wherefore though the things be somewhat tedious to flesh and blood, and though corruption hath no mind to set about them, (for when did any man, whose body was wounded, come otherwise then unwillingly to be searched, tented, plastered? and whoever took a potion, but with some rising against it of his stomach?) yet enforce thyself, & urge the necessity of doing upon thine own soul so much, till thou have made thine heart resolute to do them; and so mayest not alone cease to be an Hypocrite, but daily more and more cast out this sour leaven, and keep the feast of an holy conversation in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Brethren, be not deaf to the voice of the living God, frustrate not his ordinances, disappoint not yourselves of the good his Word would do you by neglecting its directions; but now consider what course hath been prescribed unto you for the healing of hypocrisy, and put it in

practice, and be healed. And, O Lord of heaven, thou that knowest who they be that have but dissembled hitherto, vouchsafe so to work with thy Word now, that they may be made to see, bewail, and resist their guile henceforward, that so thou mayest win glory to thyself in making them fruitful, rather than in cutting them off. And so much for the first part of God's Husbandry, his just severity against Hypocrites.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing the second Doctrine, viz. that the best branches have need of pruning.

Let us now go forward to consider his Fatherly goodness towards the upright. Every branch that bringeth forth fruit, he purgeth or pruneth, that it may bring forth more fruit. It should seem then that they have need of purging, and therefore have some things amiss about them. For it were an idle labor, and a matter deserving reproof and reproach in a gardener to be paring a branch that hath nothing about it, which would do more hurt then good: and surely the Lord of heaven need not to remove anything from his branches, if he did not meet with some things evil & superfluous upon them.

Know you then, [Doct. 2] that the most fruitful branch that grows upon this Vine, hath something in it that will require the use of a pruning knife, that is to say, the truest hearted Christian that ever was in this world hath had his faults, and whiles he liveth in this house of clay, shall have them. Even those boughs that are hanged with large clusters of ripe and pleasant Grapes, have yet some

superfluous leaves, some out-growing sprigs, some dry and rotten twists, that were better away then there, and that cause the Grapes to be neither so many, nor fair, nor sweet as else they would be. Doth not Saint James tell us, that In many things we offend all? Lo the express plainness of this text: for there is great force in the words many, and we, and all; for who shall exempt himself from that confession, wherein Saint James himself found cause to bear a part, and that so, as he includeth in it with himself, all the number of the Saints of God then living? and who shall come after and say, that himself, or such and such in his time, offend in nothing, or in few things, when, of all the Saints in the Apostles time, it is confessed by the holy Apostle, and the holy Spirit that guided him, not alone that they formerly have offended, but also that they presently did offend in many things. Solomon also is plain, and saith, that there is no man which liveth, and sinneth not. If in the Old Testament there were none which lived sinless; and under the New Testament they did all acknowledge themselves offenders in many things: I hope then it is plain enough, what hath been, and in all ages will be the state of good Christians, and true-hearted, even that they shall be troubled with sins, and with many sins. David saith also, by way of confession to God, Lord, who can know his errors? not alone confessing of himself, but of all, that they have not alone some errors, but many more then they can possibly come to the understanding of, in this life. Paul also tells us, that when he would do good, evil was present with him. And who can boast of freedom from this cumbersome presence of evil, if the Apostle himself could not? Some would elude the evidence of this text, (but to no purpose) for the matter we are in hand to prove, because, if this place should fail us, yet the other places alleged, and to be alleged, do by their plainness refuse to be eluded; but this text they would elude, by saying that the Apostle doth not here speak of himself, as he was after his regeneration, but as he was before regeneration; so describing a mere natural man, brought as far as the Law without grace could bring him. But this fancy the Apostle

himself doth plainly enough cut off, saying in the conclusion of his discourse, So then, I myself in my mind do serve the Law of God, but in my flesh the law of sin. This I myself, joined with the present tense, can denote none other but Paul himself, as he then was, when he wrote these words, and according to the condition in which he then remained. And doth he not to his complaint, O miserable man, subjoin his triumph of Thanks be unto God, through Jesus Christ? Can the mere natural man come to such a sight of his miserable servitude to sin, as withal to give thanks unto God, in Christ, for his deliverance? It is manifest then, that the Apostle affirmeth thus much of himself, as he then was after his believing in Christ, and many years spent in his Apostleship. And if it were thus with Paul at that time, shall any man in all the world expect to find it otherwise? Saint John also writeth most plainly, saying, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

The point then is fully proved, needing indeed none other confirmation, then the continual experience of all God's Saints agreeable to the Word of God. But for your better satisfaction in the matter, we will show you, both the cause why it is so, and the reason why it standeth better with the wisdom of God to appoint it so to be, rather than otherwise. For without all doubt, the Lord could give us perfection of sanctification in this life, if so it seemed good unto his wisdom. And the cause of it is, our not being fully and perfectly united unto Christ Jesus our Head, from whom all graces are derived, as water from the fountain. If we were conjoined to Christ in the highest degree of union, we should also be void of sin. For as in our uniting unto the first Adam, we did so wholly receive his corrupt image, that there remained no good thing in us: so in our uniting to the second Adam, we should so wholly be filled with his holy Image, as to have none evil abiding in us. But whilst we remain in this world, we have not a full possession of him, we are not so nearly united unto him. We are like a maid contracted, espoused, made sure to a man,

which hath an infallible right into him, and hath received diverse tokens, even rich tokens of love, to assure her of the marriage in due time, but is not yet married unto him, nor is put into the possession of his person and estate wholly and fully, as at the consummation of matrimony. And this also ariseth hence, that he is a glorious, incorruptible, immortal and spiritual Man; we are mortal, corruptible, mean, and natural men, and so weak, feeble and imperfect a thing, as a mortal unnatural man, though it may in some degree be joined unto so glorious a nature and person as that of Christ's, (namely, in respect of a certain right and interest into him, and of the receiving of some first-fruits and benefits from him) yet cannot be admitted into a full, and whole, & perfect conjunction with him, namely, so far, as to see him as it is seen, and know him as it is known, and to be all in all with him. Now so exceeding deeply doth the stain of sin cleave unto us, which we have received from our first parent Adam, that an union of less closeness then this, even of wholly possessing Christ, and being wholly possessed by Christ, will not serve the turn wholly and altogether to expel the corruptions of our hearts. You see now whence it comes, that in this life we remain obnoxious to diverse imperfections.

Next, let us consider why the Lord of heaven will have it to be so, rather thē otherwise. In truth it should be an intolerable presumption and sauciness in us, to demand a reason of God's actions, if himself did not vouchsafe to stoop so low, as to render us a reason thereof himself. But in this matter the Scripture saith plainly, that God hath shut all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all. Doubtless this is principally to be understood of giving over man to be sinful in his first corruption, showing the reason why God did permit and appoint it so to be: but withal, it may very fitly serve to inform us in the present matter, showing why the Lord doth please to leave even his own servants, after their engrafting into Christ, unto the sinfulness of their nature, so far, that they shall not be wholly free

from it; namely, that it might most manifestly appear that they be saved of grace, and not of merit, and that he may fully and unquestionably enjoy the praise of having given it them of free will and bounty, not paid it them as a thing earned by the worthiness of their works, although in another respect, the Lord pleaseth to call it a wages, viz. (not in regard that it is given for the dignity of the works, but) because of the certainty of such an over-abundant requital. For as an honest man will surely pay his laborer his hire (according to the Law,) so the Lord will surely give eternal life unto his servants, that by continuance in well doing do labor for the same.

Now seeing the Lord did principally aim at his own glory, in giving salvation unto men; it is most agreeable to reason, that he should in such sort bring them unto salvation, as may most manifest the riches of his mercy, the glory whereof he doth most affect and seek in that work: and it is a more clear demonstration of mercy, to give them salvation, through the justification which is by faith in Christ, notwithstanding that themselves remain very weak, feeble, imperfect, sinful, and unable to perform exact obedience to his Law, then if he should at the first moment of their regeneration, free them wholly from all weakness, and after a life spent in all fullness of obedience, and in perfect freedom from sin, crown them in the end with eternal glory: for such unspotted holiness of life might carry a show of claiming life for the dignity thereof, but the guiltiness of manifold weaknesses doth stop the mouth of every man before the Lord, and forceth all that have any wit in their heads, and feeling in their hearts, to acknowledge that they are freely saved by his grace, and that of his own will, not by the works which they had done.

Secondly, the Lord's will is, to make us conformable to Christ our Head, and to go to heaven the same way that he went before us; namely, through manifold afflictions, that so out of the sense and feeling of the burden of sin, and out of our long and troublesome

wrestling with it, we might be become more heartily and abundantly thankful unto him for our deliverance. Therefore the Apostle tells us that we must suffer with Christ, before we can reign with him; and himself tells us, that whosoever will be his Disciple, must take up his cross and follow him; for he will have trial of the love, fortitude, and patience of his soldiers, and see whether for his sake they will endure the conflict, afore he set the Crown upon their heads. Now if he should not leave us in a state subject to some sin, we could not be subject to any affliction: for where there is no fault imputed to be punished, nor none inherent to be purged, there it should be unrighteous with the Lord, to lay any punishment: for justice will not suffer that the creature be made subject to correction, where he is not subject to blame. Hence the Lord of heaven, that would have us pledge our Savior in the bitter cup of sorrows on earth, before we feast with him, with the new wine of consolation in his Kingdom, hath left the relics of our flesh in us to exercise us, that though sin have not dominion over us, yet it hath a dwelling and working in us, as the remnants of the Canaanites kept under tribute. If any shall object within himself, How can it be, that creatures so full of sin, should possibly be united unto Christ? how can it agree with his holiness, to take men and women defiled with corruption, and make them so near unto himself, as flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone? (for so we are made unto him in this life.) The answer is ready, that the fruitful branches, at the time of their engrafting into Christ, are made partakers of the blessing spoken of by David, in the Psalm, viz. Their transgression is remitted, their sin is covered, and the Lord imputeth not iniquity unto them. Through the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness unto them, and acceptation thereof for them, all their sins are made as if they were not, and therefore cannot possibly hinder them from being in their measure united unto Christ, and reconciled unto God. For all the sins of the penitent believers, that ever they have committed, or shall commit, are (in respect of God) fully and wholly forgiven, and quite done away; God

pronouncing them perfectly just in his sight, and not imputing to them any iniquity at all: whence it must needs follow, as from the next and immediate ground thereof, that they shall never fall away from grace: for God can never pronounce him unjust, whom he hath once pronounced just; nor never impute iniquity to him again, to whom once he imputed none iniquity, because this were a manifest change and alteration, whereof there is no shadow at all in God. And so you have this point sufficiently cleared.

We will show you also what good use you are to make of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

Containing the first use of the point, for the refutation of two errors: viz. the merit of works, and the conceit of perfection in this life.

Now this truth, in the first place, [Use 1] is strong enough to overthrow two grand errors at once. The first is of the Papists, of the merit of works. No obedience can possibly merit in any kind of meriting, but that which is complete, absolute, and perfect. For the life promised by the Law, cannot be challenged by virtue of the Law, unless the condition, whereupon the Law doth promise it, be wholly, and in every part and particle fulfilled: seeing if one man make a covenant with another of giving him such a reward, upon condition that he do go to such a place, and dispatch (for example) four several businesses: the man with whom this bargain is made, cannot, by virtue of the bargain, challenge from the bargain-maker, the reward specified, if he go to the place and dispatch but half the businesses, or all, or any of them but by the halves: for a conditional promise, in

reason and equity, bindeth not the promise-maker, but upon the perfect fulfilling of the work for which the promise was made. Now the Law, the covenant by which we must challenge life, if we will stand upon any kind of merit, saith, Do this, and live, and that we may know its meaning to be, do it fully, perfectly, exactly, without any failing; it explicates itself, saying, Cursed be the man that confirmeth not all the words of this Law to do them. Wherefore by virtue of the Law, upon the worth and desert of the works thereof, no man can lay claim to life, unless he can say, I have done this, I have confirmed the whole Law to do it. Now whosoever hath sins and corruptions, and disorders in him, whosoever offendeth in many things, whosoever doth the evil he would not, cannot say that he establisheth the whole Law by doing it: and our point hath made it plain, that the best of all God's Saints the Apostles, Paul, James, John, Peter not excepted, (and I hope, none will be bold to think himself better then these pillars) must be fain to confess that they transgress in many things, and must not dare to say that they have no sin in this life; wherefore it follows inevitably, plainly, clearly, uncontrollably, to any reasonable man's understanding, that they can in no sort lay claim to heaven, by any manner of worth, or deserving of their works. And in very deed, the Papists themselves are fain to yield us this cause in somewhat a close manner, and with a fair cover of words, that they may not seem to yield it. For they tell us, that these works of the Saints are dipped in the blood of Christ, and so being cleansed of all stain and blemish, what hinders but that they may merit? This is in a show of difference to come unto us, and grant the point controverted. For now who sees not, that if there be any worth in these works, it doth not abide in themselves, nor grow from themselves, but from gracious acceptation of them in that blood, by dipping wherein, the spots of them are done away. For there is (I think) none of us which denieth, but that God accepting our works as perfect in Christ, doth reward us for them, as if they were perfect; but seeing the reward becomes due in Christ, and not by the works

themselves, we think it a foolish pride to maintain the stately name of merit of works, when we are fain to beg the reward for another's sake, and cannot challenge it simply for the works sake.

Thus this truth enforceth them, after much turning and winding, in effect to confess it, though the truth is, they would not have it seem so, for fear of a sore loss that might follow thence unto their Clergies kitchen and manger, I mean their living and pomp. But let them pass.

There is a second error of heretics, (so they may well be called) no less dangerous, yea verily, I suppose much more dangerous than the former, of old condemned under the name of Puritans, from a conceited and imaginary purity, or absolute freedom from all sin, whereof they boasted, and now as the speech goes, revived in some parts of this Land. This is that the Saints of God in this life may attain to such perfection, as not at all to commit any sin, (with such gay fancies they please to seed themselves, and their seduced followers) Now it is most certain, that these men are the most abominable and dissembling hypocrites in all the world, or else the most besotted and benumbed spirits: for their own whole carriage, and continual experience doth confute them, even to themselves, and yet they will not see themselves confuted. If ever any of you meet with any foolish Hypocrite, offering to tell you a tale of such perfection, that he hopes to get, or that he hath got, or that may be gotten by any in this life, as never to sin anymore, never anymore to need repentance: do no more but turn him to Saint John's Epistle, and tell him, that he that saith he hath no sin, deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him. Bid him consult with Solomon again, who propoundeth the question as of a thing impossible, Who can say, his heart is pure? and tell him again, that the same Solomon knew what he said, when he said, that there is a generation which is pure in their own eyes, but are not cleansed from their filthiness: and tell him,

that those branches in Christ which need no pruning, are sure (like a branch overladen with Grapes) through the conceit of their much fruitfulness, broken off from him: for he saith, that everyone remaining in him, needeth, and receiveth pruning; which were not needful, if he were faultless. And so leave the fond, deceived, and self-conceited Hypocrite unto himself, and have no more to do with him. For either he speaketh altogether against his own heart, or else his heart is naught worth: as Solomon saith of the wicked; yea, more hope is there of the salvation of the most desperate sinner alive, then of such a one. Seest thou a man wise in his own eyes, saith Solomon? there is more hope of a fool, then of him. Surely he is wise in his own eyes that thinketh he hath no sin: wherefore we can have little hope of him.

This error is so contrary to all the feeling and sense of all God's Saints, who are fain still to say with David, Lord, who can know his errors? as that a man would marvel how any man, in whom there was ever any knowledge of the Word, and any show and beginning of goodness, should be so far seduced and drawn away, as to entertain such an opinion. But the cause is manifest: hypocrisy is always accompanied with pride; and the growth of hypocrisy breeds also a growth of pride, and pride swells out the eyes, that a man cannot see the clearest truths.

And thus have we briefly discovered unto you these errors, to rectify your judgments. For if the words of Christ be true, these opinions that are directly opposite unto the truth contained in them, must needs be false. Now hear some other uses to rectify your practice also.

CHAPTER IX.

Containing a second use of the point, stirring up the servants of God to a holy longing for death.

[Use 2] See here then how great cause we have to follow the Apostle Paul, and to long that we were once dissolved, and perfectly united unto Christ, that (as he prays for us) being where he is, and seeing his glory, we might be perfectly like him, in a spotless purity and holiness. Impatient folks are many times so tormented with worldly crosses, (made so troublesome unto them alone by their own folly and pride, whereby they neglect to see God, and to stoop unto him in crosses) that they are even altogether weary of their lives because of them, and our of a kind of stomach full sullenness against God, as once Jonah, or else a feeble sinking under the burden of misery, as once Elijah; they even think with themselves, I would I were dead, and are bold to trouble God with that unsavory petition of making an end of their days, that they may be rid of their crosses: which they have neither patience enough to bear for the present, nor hope enough to look for a good issue out of, for the time to come.

But (my brethren) consider, Have you not other and worse things to be weary of, then crosses, and for which, if for anything, to be weary of life also, as of a burden, which you long to be removed from off your shoulders? Hast thou not pride, passion, worldliness, ambition, lust, envy, vain-glory, blindness, hollowness, deadness of heart, and a thousand more, besides these corruptions within thee, which give thee far juster cause of panting for the period of thy days, and wishing that thy life here might be but short, then the frowardness of a yoke fellow, the stubbornness of a child, the meanness of thine estate, the falseness of thy friends, the power and fury of thine enemies, or any other cross (if any be) worse than these? Ah, we have not sufficiently informed ourselves of the loathsomeness of sin,

neither are we sufficiently heavy laden with the sense thereof, if the cumbersomeness of this do not cause us, even in the time of our greatest immunity from other miseries, to covet our departure hence. If sicknesses make men cry for death, because they be terrible to the body; how should not the sicknesses of the soul make us much rather to seek for it, seeing we shall not cease to suffer the fits of this disease, till death be sent to sever our souls from our bodies, and both from our corruptions? But death at once with a most happy parricide (as I may term it) kills both itself, our last foe, and sin its mother, our first foe, and sorrow its sister, our daily foe. That one pang which pulls away the soul from the body, doth also pull away sin both from the soul and the body. O most desirable pang, and worthy to be thirsted after, more than any earthly thing. Job, when his body was full of botches, could say with much vehemency of passion, Why died I not from the womb? why gave I not up the ghost when I came out of the belly? then should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept, then had I been at rest. He could in elegancy of speech commend death, and say, There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest; there the prisoners rest together, and hear not the voice of the oppressor; yea he saith, that a miserable man would long for it, and dig for it more than for hid treasures, and would rejoice exceedingly, and be glad if he could find it.

This impatency of life is no way worthy commendation: it savors too much of self-love, to be good and allowable. But if, out of a holy impatency of sin, we could as feelingly take up speeches of a like nature, O how truly might it witness with us, that we did hate sin, that we were enemies to the lusts of our hearts, that our corruptions were to us as imprisonment, sickness, pain, captivity, and so that we were sure of our part in Christ's goodness, who comes to preach liberty unto the captives! Verily our souls are as full of notches, many of them, as Job's body; and it will hardly be better with many of us,

so long as we abide in these earthly tabernacles; were we as full of spiritual life, as he of natural, and our souls as truly endued with holiness, as his body with sense, we should complain of this burden with much bitterness, and say, O that I could tell where to seek death! O that I might find the grave, and come to those quiet regions, where worldliness and pride, and wrath shall no more torment me, and where my will shall be no more carried away with any fleshly perturbation! I confess, that this is the least part of the good that death bringeth unto the Saints, that it doth utterly dismiss them from the servitude of the flesh; but were we so thoroughly spiritual as we should be, this would seem of so great worth with us, as we would prefer it before all that the world counts delightful. The Bridegroom would rather go to his grave, then to his bride-chamber; the traveler would rather lie down in his bed of earth, then in a bed of down; and every man would be of Solomon's mind, and count the day of death better than the day of birth. I confess that we must so far resign our wills to God's will, as with all contentedness of mind to wear out the days of our apprenticeship and pilgrimage. For so long as God hath any service for us to do anywhere, though the place and company be full of troublesomeness, yet should we force our wills to do him service, with our own disquietment; but yet a virtuous desire of being separated from this unhappy condition of life (wherein we shall never fully be separated from the sin that cleaveth so fast) would be very commendable, and very profitable. The gods of this world would not so easily beguile us, the cumpers of this world would not so frettingly trouble us, if we did dis-sweeten the one, with making ourselves to taste the bitterness of our sin, and dis-embitter the other, with feeling the far greater bitterness of that which is as far more harmful than it, as lead is heavier than cork. Then should we prove ourselves to be men and women of a discerning spirit, that can know, of things, what is good, what is bad; and of bad things, what is more, what is less bad. Then should we show ourselves to approach near that height of grace which the blessed Apostle had, who in

relating of bonds, imprisonment, hunger, thirst, nakedness, whipping, stocking, shipwreck, and daily dying, never bursts forth into lamentations; but rather recounts with joy, that which was so painful to suffer; and seemeth to be glad of life, for nothing else, but that (by suffering more of those troubles) he might do more service to the Church, and honor to Christ: but when he hath occasion to declare his sinfulness, the body of death, the law of his members, the rebellion of his flesh, then only is heard bewailing and crying out, O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body?

Let therefore the feeling of sin make our desires so earnest after full freedom from it, that we may for this cause even breathe after death, (when there are none other adversities to distaste the comforts of this life unto us) that by it we shall be set at liberty from the devils temptations, the worlds affreightments & allurements, but specially from the corrupt lusts which we both do, and whilst we lodge in this dungeon, shall carry about with us. And let each of us say often to himself, O that I were parted from husband and wife, from children, from friends, from lands and goods, and from this world, and all that in this world is counted worth having, so that I might also be parted from my corruptions, and never more hereafter stand in need of pruning! Fasting and prayer will purge, the Word and Sacraments will cleanse, and all God's ordinances, and all our Christian endeavors will help to lop off these disordered passions that are within us. But this is alone a cleansing in part, a paring off some evil, and leaving much behind: only the last blow of death will make a full riddance of all that is evil in us; and after that blow given, there shall nothing remain behind that may call for anymore purging. This is the sovereign medicine that will consummate the cure of our diseased souls, which, till then, shall never be delivered from all diseases, though we be in Christ as the Vine, and have God the Father for our Husbandman. O then, Lord, send thou this last enemy, which may do me more good, then all the former friends I meet with can do,

even work a dissolution of my soul from my body, and of my sin from them both. Let it come, Lord, let it come speedily, do thou hasten it in due season, and take away all sin, by taking away this life of nature, to make way for a far more excellent life of glory. Desire of death is then only warrantable, when a desire of God's full presence, and of sins perfect absence, be the causes moving that desire.

CHAPTER X.

Containing the third use of the point, viz. an exhortation and direction how to keep down our corruptions, whilst we live.

[Use 3] But as we should moderately wish for death, that death might be the death of sin; so likewise all the while we do live, (knowing that we cannot be free from sin perfectly) we must increase our care of keeping down our sins, and striving after that perfect freedom which death will bring with it. For though we shall still remain so feeble, as to sin in many things, for all our labor to the contrary; yet our labor against corruption shall not be in vain, because by virtue of it, we shall make sin much weaker then else it would be, and save ourselves from many sins which else we should fall into. A besieged City keeps its gates fast locked, and the walls well manned, and never gives over watching and warding, so long as the enemies army doth engirt it: so though it receive some damage, and lose many men, yet the enemies army cannot break in upon them, and take the City, and kill all the inhabitants, or make them captives. Our corruptions encompass our souls round; if we cease to be watchful, and to be ready in arms, they will prevail against our souls, and bring us to destruction, or very near unto it, but by

resisting with all diligence, we shall be safe from this utmost mischief. Some diseases will stay with men's bodies for term of life, but by keeping good diet, and other good means, a man may save himself from much torment, and escape many a sore fit, which cannot but follow from his carelessness. So our spiritual maladies will break forth lesser and seldomer, and put us to less misery by far, if we keep a good diet, and use other good ways of helping our souls against them. He that goes in a foul way, shall meet with some spots of dirt, though he be never so wary in choosing his ways, yet he shall not be all mire and dirt, as he that is heedless, and goes through thick and thin without making difference. Some stains also our souls will gather, in our passage thorough this dirty world, but nothing so many and great, if we pick our way, as otherwise. Grosse, foul, presumptuous, infamous sins may be shunned, all sins may be lessened, and caused to break out seldomer, and in lower degrees, if considering our aptness to them, we bestir ourselves to keep them under. Be we wise therefore for our souls, as we would be for our bodies and states, and seeing we cannot be without corruptions, let us hold them in subjection, as much as is possible; for who can tell to what height they may grow, and what mischief they may do us, if our diligence this way be wanting. But me thinks it should not be necessary to use more words in persuading a Christian man to strive against his corruptions: they be so contrary to the life of grace that is in him, and so opposite to that new nature which the Lord hath infused into him in the time of his regeneration, that he can no more choose to oppose them in some measure, then a man can choose whether he will strive against that that offers to stop his breath.

A man, out of an instinct of nature to preserve himself, stands so disposed, that he finds himself moved without deliberation, (even out of an undeniable principle that always beareth sway in his mind and will) to thrust away from him things that offer to cut the body, or slay it, or rob it of life. The eye will wink and shut its lids when a man

thinks not of it, if anything offer to come near that might be offensive unto it. It is none otherwise in the life of grace: he that hath it, finds in himself (even as it were a main principle that beareth rule in his whole soul, when he thinks not of it in particular) that he cannot but be an enemy unto sin, he cannot but bear a grudge against it, and wish, and labor the rooting of it out of his heart, and holding it hard in, from breaking forth in his actions. Alone there be diverse Saints of God that want skill to do that which grace doth put in them a perpetual inclination to do. Wherefore I will be bold (not to make so large a discourse of this matter as the thing requireth, but) to give you some three or four special directions, which in following, you shall find yourselves much helped against these remnants of sin which move within you. The first rule is as followeth.

Let a man frequently stir up in himself thoughts of dislike, grief, sorrow, loathing, detestation, and dis-esteeming himself for the sins he hath committed in any kind, and specially for such grosser sins as he hath fallen into, and such as he finds himself most apt and likely to fall into again. For he that can make himself vile in his own eyes, for evils past, and can bring his heart to a due abhorring of himself for wickedness's already perpetrated, and even look back upon them with loathing and abomination, is most likely to be kept from running into them again. For this is even a punishing and chastising of himself, and a taking of a most just vengeance of himself for them; and we know that the force of punishment is, to bridle and restrain offenders, and keep them from offending anymore afterwards. In so doing, he doth as one would say, whip and scourge his own heart, and exercise severity against himself, which cannot but cause him to stand alienated from the same faults afterwards, as he that is whipped or scourged by another, is thereby made more careful, not to make bold in that kind again. So the Prophet having offended through impatient repining against the prosperity of the sinner, provoketh himself to an abhorring and abasing of himself for it,

saying, So foolish was I, and unwise, and even as a beast before thee. And so Paul doth make himself contemptible in his own eyes for his persecution of the Saints, saying, I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Saints of God. And Job saith, I am vile, I have spoken once and again, but I will add no more: and after again, I abhor myself. And these thoughts and motions a Christian man must not alone pursue with more largeness and earnestness in his solemn and set meditations, as he shall find opportunity; but must ever and anon (as he goeth about his ordinary affairs, and is conversant in worldly businesses, and occasioned by company, to call to remembrance any fault of his) be saying within himself, Ah vile sinful wretch and hate-worthy creature that I am, have not I sinned against God, and mine own soul, in such passionateness, such wantonness, such injustice, and the like? O that I could even detest myself for this; who but a very beast or fool, would have been so often and so grossly overtaken? It is not possible to imagine, unless one do take experience of his own practice, how much the renewing of this holy anger against a man's self for sins past, will strengthen him against the same, and abate the power of those corruptions of his heart, which brake forth into such rebellion. Wherefore do thus often, many times, many score times in a day, put thyself in mind, as occasion shall offer itself, of thy former sins, with a rising of thy soul, against thyself, and with an holy kind of sharpness and tartness, being even out of love and conceit with thyself, saying, Ah vile creature, how could I find in mine heart to do such things? would any man have thought it possible for any creature from whom all piety and reason both were not banished, to run out into such words, such deeds? and what is wanting to the length and largeness of these cogitations throughout the day, in regard of the interruptions of other affairs, that labor to supply by their oftenness, and by their earnest working within thee, closing still with a turning away of thy liking from them, and a wishing that thou hadst never so offended God.

Secondly, let a good man hold always fast within himself a resolution of not committing such and such sins as he is most apt to commit, and in regard of his condition, calling, place, bodily temper, or the like, is most in danger to commit; and let him often revive in himself also thoughts and motions to that end, saying within himself, Well, through God's gracious assistance, whatever come of me, I will no more transgress the Law of God, and displease him in such and such offenses. Should the creature wrong the Creator, and the child do injury to the father? Nothing is more unreasonable than that I should for anything, sin against my strength and my Redeemer: of myself I cannot cease to sin; but God will work in me both the will and the deed: and doubtless by his help I will not sin in such kind, measure, manner, anymore. I will no more be so bitterly wrathful, nor use such indecent gestures and speeches in my passion. I will no more be so foolishly wanton, nor use such evil and defiling speeches and behaviors. I will never be so impatient and discontented again. The Apostle Peter prescribeth this remedy against sin, and useth the phrase of being armed with it, because a Christian soul, so long as it remaineth peremptory in this resolution, is like a soldier clad in strong harness, who though he be smitten at and receiveth a blow, yet through the faithfulness of his armor is defended from the piercing of the weapon, and from the wound. If Satan, or the flesh suggest a motion, or present an occasion of doing such evils, as a man hath often said within himself, Well, by God's grace nothing shall ever make me do it; the will having bent itself fully against such things in general, flings away from this particular motion, and rejecteth it with disdain. Wherefore Saint Peter (as I was in saying) commendeth this matter unto us, in these words: For as much as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind, that he who hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. You see how a Christian should go fenced; well, I will no longer follow sin, nor do after the corrupt

lusts of men, but the holy will of God. And you see also by what argument, pressed upon himself, a Christian should fortify this settled determination in himself, namely, because Christ hath suffered for us.

And this determination must not alone be prosecuted more plentifully and earnestly in our settled and solemn meditations, but perpetually also renewed and confirmed, even as we go about our other affairs: for a man's hand may be working in his calling, and his heart drawing itself to the main work of his calling of Christianity, by lifting up itself with such thoughts as occasion may offer itself. Surely that sin that slew Christ Jesus our Lord, is too vile a thing in itself, too hateful to God, too hurtful to the committer, for a Christian man to live in, or once to practice: and therefore whatever may befall, I will not commit such, and such, and such a sin, naming that, that the present occasion shall give him most cause to name, or that his heart hath most reason to be most careful of shunning. And this a good man should do, not once, twice, or thrice in a week, but ever and anon, twenty, and twice twenty times in a day, in half a day. For though we live in the world, yet our main business is to travel towards heaven; and therefore the soul must take all occasions of furnishing itself with thoughts that tend to further it in that journey.

Thirdly, a Christian ought ever to keep a most wakeful eye over the motions that stir in his mind, that so soon as ever any sinful or frivolous fancies begin to steal or break in upon him, he may make speedy and resolute resistance, by raising up some holy affection of loathing the fault, grief for it, anger against it; or else reverence of God's holy presence, fear of his fierce anger, trembling at his just threats, or else by sending up some present and short request unto God, for the assistance of his Spirit, saying, Lord, help me with thy grace, should I ever do so vile or fruitless things? nay, should I suffer the cogitations of them to dwell in my soul? God forbid. Lord,

strengthen me by thy Spirit, that I may not dishonor and offend thee by such words, such actions. Thus the Spirit by lusting against the flesh, shall mortify the deeds of the flesh. Yea, and if it so fall out that these shorter ejaculations, or brief petitions of the soul will not serve the turn, but that the motions grow more thick or vehement, and the heart begins almost to consent unto them, and so we find ourselves on the losing hand, (for when once the will hath given ground, by either thinking, Why should I not do it? or by making but a faint refusal, a man's soul is foiled; and if occasion be not for the present committing of it, yet the next time occasion doth come, unless he have gotten more strength, and armed his will more strongly, he will soon be drawn to commit it;) I say, when we thus perceive corruption strong, and grace weak, we must take so much care of our souls, as if it be possible to lay all other things aside, and in the solemnest manner fall on praying to God for strength against that corruption: but if other occasions stand so averse, that we cannot have time or place to make a solemn prayer, yet we must double and redouble the desires and groans of our heart, thinking within ourselves, O heavenly Father, thou seest I am weak, and I feel I am yielding, and sin is ready to get the upper hand; O strengthen me with grace, strengthen me with thy power, and let thy Spirit rule in me, & crush down these foul passions, for thy mercy sake; and if yet the evil thought follow him, as oft it will, he must not be weary of renewing the same requests, saying, O I must not yield, I will not yield, but, Lord, without thee I cannot resist; Lord, beat down for me these wicked desires and inclinations, according to thy promise, and so still (though it cannot be without exceeding much wearisomeness of Spirit) continuing to raise up holy wishes and holy affections, (seeking and taking the first opportunity of getting alone to his solemn prayers) he shall be made strong in Jesus Christ, and in the power of his might, and shall be a conqueror over the temptation. For (brethren) we must conceive the case to stand thus with all the members of Christ; without him they can do nothing, and all their

sufficiency is of him: he doth indeed implant in their souls, at their first regenerating, an ability of turning away their wills from evil things, and of departing from iniquity, but yet so, that there is necessary to their performing of these holy actions, a special cooperation of his sanctifying Spirit; and they must know that they do good, and shun evil by a borrowed power, not a power originally in themselves, and by a borrowed power given of grace above nature, not dwelling in their nature of itself. And whilst they do acknowledge this dependence upon the Lord, by making him their refuge in the time of temptation; and therefore do not alone stir up their own strength, and set their own good affections and desires on working: but withal, send to heaven for aid, and (as utterly distrusting themselves) implore present assistance from God: (because they do indeed give honor unto God) they seldom fail to get the victory: but when in these spiritual encounters they satisfy themselves with their own endeavors, and think it sufficient to set their own spiritual strength on work, forgetting to beg help of God's holy Spirit, because this is a manifest demonstration of self-confidence, and of a spiritual kind of self-conceitedness; therefore the Lord, to make them know themselves, doth withdraw his special grace, and so, (after a few faint resistances) because they renew not their strength by running unto him their strength, they are in some degrees or other plainly foiled and overthrown. Wherefore we must know, that when we find the flesh to abate nothing of his forwardness to evil, by our opposing good purposes and thoughts against it, (yea rather, that it seemeth to grow more violent as water, the current of which is stopped) then I say we must know, that the Lord doth now of purpose turn Satan, with our corruptions upon us, that we might find our frailty, and betake ourselves wholly to him and his might; and then as having a special calling to seek to God, we must, as I said above, not wax faint, but double and redouble our desires; and if that will not serve, so soon as we can possibly get opportunity, address ourselves to solemn invocation.

Thus doing, we follow the example of the Apostle Paul, who when he was molested with a thorn in his flesh, (me thinks that should denote some troublesome corruption of his own heart, which is said to be given unto him: because even poison may be given in a receipt by the skillful Physician) did presently apply himself to God in prayer for the removal of it, and so was answered, that God's grace should be sufficient for him. Wherefore neither let thy thoughts and first motions of thy soul pass away unobserved or unresisted: neither yet resist them alone in thine own strength, but spy them out speedily, and presently oppugn them, partly by setting on work the grace already received, partly by requiring a new supply of grace: and he that will make this practice familiar and easy to himself by use of doing, shall find by proof, the unspeakable good that will come of it to his soul.

Lastly, the Christian man that would prevail against his corruptions, must deny to himself those things which being otherwise in themselves lawful, do yet become unto himself, through his corruption, occasions of evil in any kind. For such is the sinfulness of man's evil heart, that even that which is not in itself sinful, may give an advantage to his sinfulness, and draw him to the committing of sin. These things when his experience hath discovered unto him, he must carefully shun and avoid, and not suffer his over-free use of his liberty to become a snare unto him. Divers exercises, sports, meetings, times, places, and other like there are, of which a man cannot say precisely that they be sins, yet they do so strongly work upon the naughtiness of the heart, that they do even tempt and draw the heart unto evil: these he that will not restrain himself from, shall never be able to keep himself unspotted of the world, but shall be, even with a kind of force & violence, hailed to the committing of wickedness against his firmest resolution to the contrary. In using them, a man doth even lay himself open, & tempt lust and Satan to tempt him, and tempt the Lord of heaven through his unbridlednesse

of heart, to deliver him up into the hands of temptation; and then how shall he choose but be vanquished and overcome thereof? Wherefore our Savior tells us, that if our hand or foot offend us, we must cut them off and cast them from us; yea, if the very eye offend us, we must pull it out and fling it away. His meaning seemeth to be, not alone that all, even the dearest things that are sins, must be abandoned, but even also, that things which allure, provoke, and solicit us to sin, because of the weakness of our souls, must be likewise renounced and forsaken, for all their delightfulness or profit. For he that doth not so much love holiness and innocence, that for the attaining thereof he can be content to abridge himself of some part of his lawful liberty, shall never reach to any soundness and perfection of holiness. Even as a weak and crazy body, if he make no choice of his food, but will indifferently fill his stomach with any kind of meat that liketh his appetite, shall so increase the ill humors of his body, and so strengthen his natural diseases, that it will be impossible for him to escape diverse terrible pangs of them, as experience shows us in bodies subject to the Gout, or Colic, or to a consumption, or to the like malady: so rightly fareth it with our infirm and sick souls, some sinless sports, some company not in itself, or to any other unlawful: some liberty not to be condemned as wicked, will yet so confirm and strengthen certain peculiar distempers of some man's soul more than of others, that the enjoining of such contents will prove exceeding mischievous, and do him an hundred times more harm, then the content thereof can be worth unto him. Be we therefore as wary and cautelous for our spiritual health, as for our natural: Let us set bounds to ourselves even in the use of our lawful liberty in things indifferent, and not please our senses and fancies, to the wounding and hurting of our souls.

Now brethren, these are the most needful directions for the overmastering of the evils of our inward man, which I thought fit to

commend unto you. He that will follow them, shall find a sensible decay of the body of death; he shall find the flesh more and more subdued unto the Spirit; he shall find himself able to prevail against those passions and lusts, that he had sometimes thought impossible to be prevailed against; he shall be kept from many gross faults, and many dangerous our-straying's, and shall far less frequently, and less violently be foiled of his spiritual enemy, then without them, it will prove or seem possible. Yea in thus pruning himself, he shall save the Husbandman a labor of pruning, and keep himself at ease from many burthensome crosses that must needs come upon him otherwise. Consider therefore of thine own infirmity, consider that thou art in part alone sanctified; consider that sin is not quite and clean taken from thy soul, but alone deposed from that tyrannical dominion which once it did exercise over thy soul: consider that Satan watcheth all advantages to catch thee in a snare, and to bring thee back again to folly; and because thou art not fully perfect, be content to devour the pains of helping thyself against thine imperfections; which if thou wilt not be persuaded to do, know that thou shalt even enforce the Lord to compel thee, as it were, by foul means, to the doing of that, without which he doth well know that thou canst not be safe, namely, of fighting against the fleshly lusts that fight against thy soul.

CHAPTER XI.

Containing the fourth and last use of the point, viz. a consolation to the people of God against their unallowed sins.

But moreover, [Use 4] this point we have spoken of, though it seem at first hearing to be altogether uncomfortable, doth yet afford a sure and needful comfort unto the servants of God, that have wisdom to apply it the right way. For why, it follows hence necessarily, that the branches in this Vine should not be appalled nor out of heart, because they are continually troubled with the feeling of many things amiss, which it were far more desirable to have lopped off, then continue upon them. Here is cause not of not being humbled, but of not being discouraged in the sense and feeling of our manifold corruptions. For it is sure, a man may be a lining and a fruitful branch, and yet stand in great need of much pruning. It doth often arise in the hearts of the truest of God's people, as an argument against their truth, that they have so many sins still stirring in them, and that they do daily transgress so many ways, and oftentimes in very high degrees, and gross kinds.

Now if we had well consulted with the Saints of God that lived in former times, and of whose lives the holy Scriptures do give us a map or abridgement, we should easily perceive that there were no force at all in this argument, unless in so speaking, we will offend against the generation of God's children, as the Psalmist speaketh in another case. For what reason were strong and good against me, or any of you that now live, the same had been also firm and strong against many of those that were members of the Church in former times; and if the Scriptures do assure us of their being dearly beloved of God, and surely ingrafted into Christ, even at the self-same time when they did complain of like corruptions to those that we now do complain of: then we may safely collect hence, that we also are in Christ, and in the favor of God, notwithstanding that we cannot deny ourselves to be polluted with such evils. Wherefore if you will truly conclude of yourselves in this behalf, whether you be, or be not in Christ: you must not look so much only to what corruptions you have, as to what you allow. For true grace may stand with the having

of many, but not with the allowing of any. He that excuseth, extenuateth, makes light of any sin at all, and thinks he needs not greatly care for leaving off that, because it is so small a matter, and because he is persuaded that there is never a man alive but doth as bad; and therefore bears himself boldly upon God's misapplied mercy, that he shall do well enough for all that he allows sin; he gives it liberty and license, and yields himself to the dominion of sin, and this man is not a living member of Christ's body, nor a fruitful branch of this Vine. Let him by no means beguile himself, nor suffer any forms of seeming goodness that he hath in other things, to make him conceive well of himself; he is doubtless an halter, and Christ Jesus will reject him at last. But he that hath many sins, sees them, acknowledgeth them to God, hath his soul troubled at them, and desireth, rather than his life, to be freed of them, and becomes exceeding base in his own feeling, because of them, still casting himself upon God's gracious and free favor in Christ for pardon of them, may be, and is a fruitful branch, though he have a thousand sins of infirmity in him; yea though he be overcome of temptation to commit the same sin again and again.

Let not the devil abuse any of you, to make him less careful of lamenting, and opposing, and being humbled under his sins, because he hears he may be a good Christian, and partake of the benefits of Christ for all them: for in so abusing this comfort, you shall make yourselves incapable of this comfort, because it belongeth alone to those that so have sinned, as they be troubled, vexed and disquieted with it, as with the breaking of a leg or arm, and do even make haste to the binding of their souls up again, by the renewing of their repentance. Indeed the Hypocrite, if he can once get a conceit fastened in him, that though he do commit such a sin, yet he may go to heaven well enough for all that, he thinketh himself safe, and is little careful to oppose or bewail that sin, which he conceits will not damn him: but the true Christian will be no whit less careful to frame

himself to mourning for sin, and to take pains against it, because he is secured for the matter of damnation. For the thing, in regard of which he doth hate sin, and would fain be rid of it, is neither only, nor chiefly this, that it is like enough to bring his soul to hell: but this also, yea this chiefly, that it is offensive to God, and displeaseth his loving Father, and makes him unable to hold such familiar and friendly society with God, as else he might have. So that the misapplying of this consolation, to nourish security, presumption and boldness in sinning, is a sore sign of a man that is far enough off from any truth: wherefore, we desire that none of you should so abuse the sweet comforts of God's Word. But make the right and true use of this comfort, and lay it like a good plaster discreetly and seasonably to thy wounded soul; and when thy doubting heart, by Satan's crafty prompting shall tell, that thou art none of God's, because of such and such faults that thou hast committed, and dost often fall into, (and that to this end, that thereby he may cause thee to give over all hope, and cast off all care of praying to God, and humbling thy soul in confession, and suing for pardon in Christ, and so to frame thee either to utter desperation or utter looseness, one of which things must necessarily-follow upon the believing of that conclusion:) When, I say, Satan is busy thus to turn thy sins to the overthrow of thy faith, and to the turning thee quite out of the way of godliness and peace: now answer by the seasonable remembering, and due applying of the present point, No, not O mine unbelieving heart! I am full of sins, but I confess them, and am troubled with them. I fall often, but I ever rise, and ever resolve to rise to go to the Lord; and acknowledge, and strive to bewail them, and to crave and beg his help against them more and more earnestly. Wherefore I am sure that those sins cannot disprove my being a true Christian and a child of God: and therefore I will both call upon him, and stay upon him, and resolving still to strive to be more free from sin, will rest upon Christ, for what I cannot but acknowledge to be wanting in myself. To see our sins, so as to grow vile in our own eyes, and more

and more contemptible in our own account, and more and more to labor to have our souls contrite and broken for them; this is a good sight of them, and we must be persuaded to it: but to see them, so as to give over hoping in God's mercy for their pardon, and laboring against them in his strength, because our often foils and failings do make us conclude, it is in vain: this is no way allowable. As good scald as burnt, the Prover be saith: As good not see our sins at all, as make so bad a use of the sight of them. But now, O all ye that are fruitful branches, keep fast your title and interest into that name, and let not your many superfluities (so long as you find them in pruning and cutting off) make you deem yourselves incapable of that honor.

CHAPTER XII.

Containing the third point of doctrine, that God will prune the fruitful branches: that is, help true Christians against their corruptions.

And that you may the better enjoy, and not abuse this comfort, proceed we now to the third of those four points which we propounded to speak of: viz. God's goodness in purging his servants. This pruning must needs import some act of God, which is the same to the soul of a Christian man, that cutting off the superfluities of the Vine-branches is to them; and this can be nothing else but the helping of them against their corruptions. For look what superfluity of leaves, twigs, or the like is to a branch, the same are corruptions of all sorts to the Christian man: and therefore pruning is the taking away, removing, strengthening them against these corruptions.

Know then for a surety, that as a good and husbandly Gardener will take away from the Vine all out-shooting and over growing things, that might make it yield him less increase of Grapes: [Doct. 3] so the Lord will lessen, weaken, redress the disorders of all sorts that are in his servants, even their ignorance, their blindness, their pride, their passion, their self-love, their worldly-mindedness, and the like. The Lord is very careful and ready to help his servants against the sins of their hearts and lives, and against all the evil of their corrupted nature. The most High is a partner with a Christian in his combat against his lusts; yea the chief workman in this business of reforming what is amiss in him. He will bestow dressing on his sheep, whiting on his linen, weeding on his garden, and on his field. Those sins that are in the people of God, not reigning with their good liking, but usurping without their allowance, have God's holy eyes bent upon them indeed, to observe and take notice of them, not to hate the person in whom they be, (for he looks upon the person through Christ; and as Paul saith, It is no longer they, but sin in them:) but to help and assist the person against them, even as a good and loving father observes the spots of his child's face, to make him wash them off, and his scabs or itch, to provide him a medicine: or as a kind Surgeon looks on a sore, to search, and dress, and heal it, not to kill the man for it. As he that meeteth with an Apple rotten at core, though it look soundly on the outside, casts it away from him to the dunghill: so the Lord, meeting with those in whom sin hath dominion, cuts them off, and rejects them utterly: but as a man meeting with an Apple a little specked here or there, picks out that is naught, and pares and eats it: so the Lord finding men in whom sin is dwelling in some degree, but is not predominant, picks out that sin, and preserves them for the use of his glory. The Apostle saith, that God will tread Satan under our feet shortly; and it is out of question, that Satan can never be trodden under foot, if sin be not: yea sin (saith the same Apostle) shall not have dominion over your mortal bodies. Can we desire a more express promise? The same thing we

may note in the words of the Prophet: I will take away the heart of stone out of your bodies, and give you a heart of flesh. And again, I will deliver you from all your uncleanness's. We see the Lord's intention plain enough, he will help his servants not alone against one or two, but against all their filthiness. So doth the Prophet Isaiah foretell, saying, The Lord shall wash away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and purge the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, with the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning. All these places put the truth of the point out of doubt; and the reasons of it are as clear as can be, not only from the truth and power of God, (who is able abundantly to mortify our sins, and hath told us that he is faithful and true to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness) but also from two other pertinent considerations; namely, first, that their need requireth it: secondly, that it standeth upon his honor to perform it.

For first, [Reason 1] if the Lord their God should not undertake the purging and cleansing of them, their sins would totally and finally prevail against them, and they could not possibly but perish. If a Garden be not timely weeded, it will quickly be so over-run with weeds, that there will be no place left for good and wholesome herbs and flowers to grow therein. If a dangerous foot be not plastered with convenient salves, it will fester and rankle, and rot the joint, and bring death to the body wherein it bred: even so would sin also prevail against the best of God's servants to their utter destruction, if he himself did not join to help them against it. For in truth, all their power, without the perpetual assistance of his special grace, would be to little purpose for the subduing thereof. Either therefore the Lord must purge his people, or see them die forever, for want of purging. This latter, his tender pity and fatherly compassion, his eternal, infinite, unspeakable, free, and unchangeable love can never endure to see; wherefore his wisdom, power and goodness will set themselves on work to effect the former, even to purge them that

they may be saved. And that the rather, because in the second place, [Reason 2] it much importeth his own honor so to do.

For this is one of those ways whereby he is made glorious in all his Saints, for that his working in them is so miraculously effectual, as to change blindness into sight, lameness into soundness, weakness into strength, and death into life. For as a Physician having undertaken the cure of some desperate disease, will not (for his credit) leave it off bunglingly in the midst, half whole, half ill, but must perfectly consummate & accomplish it, to the total strength of the member ill-affected, and person diseased, because the glory of a Physician doth stand in the multitude of those whom he hath perfectly healed of grievous maladies: So the Lord of heaven and earth, having begun to heal the sick, yea desperately sick) souls of his poor afflicted and sinful servants, must even go through with that hard work, for his glory sake, that it may not be said, he laid the foundation, and was either so weak, that he could not, or so inconstant, that he would not set up the roof, and he must win to himself the glory of infinite power and skill in making them every whit sound, as our Savior speaketh of one whom himself had restored to bodily health. It is his honor to show himself strong in their weakness, true in their falsehood, wise in their folly, good in their badness, and fuller of excellent ability to redress their evils, then they can be of evils that may need redressing; and the glory of glories that he affecteth to have in his Church, is this, that he turneth Lions into Lambs, Wolves into Sheep, and Bears into Kine, and Serpents into Sucklings, fools into wise men, and sinners into Saints, so taking away the most mischievous, violent, overbearing, and but by his strength unsubduable corruptions of their nature, whom he sanctifieth by grace, as that he worketh the quite contrary virtuous qualities in them.

CHAPTER XIII.

Showing the means and manner of the Lord's pruning.

Now having sufficiently manifested the present point to be true, let us, for the better clearing thereof, and to make it more easily and plentifully useful, acquaint you with two necessary points about this pruning. First, by what means it is effected, and then in what manner. For the first, the means of purging are of two sorts, proper, (that are fit to bring forth that effect, of their own nature) and accidental, that do not of their own nature serve for so good a purpose, but by God's wisdom and power are over-ruled to the helping forward thereof. The proper means are also of two kinds, principal, and instrumental. The principal is the blessed Spirit of God, for that reason termed a Spirit of burning, because it serveth to consume the corruptions out of our souls, as fire doth the dross out of the metal. The holy Ghost is given unto them that believe, that they may mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit, which bestoweth his efficacy upon them, in those spiritual ordinances of his that he hath appointed: & they are then said to crucify their lusts by the Spirit, when they do carefully use those spiritual weapons, wherewith the holy Ghost will never fail to cooperate. And if there were not a supernatural operation of the Spirit of Christ Jesus in us, to heal and help us against these evils, never should we, by all our own endeavors, attain any sound and thorough purging, but alone a slight and superficial washing of the outside. And it is of great importance for us to understand, that the holy Ghost is the chief worker in this work, without whom it would never succeed happily, though we should labor therein with all our might, both that we may be able with a more abundant thankfulness to acknowledge his care

of us, and love to us in so great and beneficial a service, giving away the whole praise from ourselves to him; and also that we may be ready with more humble carefulness to receive and yield ourselves up unto this heavenly work of his, which can by no means be hindered or interrupted, but by our not regarding, or not submitting our souls unto it. We must be strong in Christ Jesus, and in the power of his might. His Spirit must clothe us, and come upon us; through him we must do valiantly in this spiritual warfare, and he must tread down those lusts that rise up against us:

But this Spirit worketh in, and by an excellent instrument, the Word of God, the Law and Gospel read, preached, heard, meditated upon, which therefore we term an instrumental cause of our purging. For when as a Christian man doth exercise himself in the Word, as for example, by coming to hear it preached, the Spirit of God doth then work withal, to make those speeches effectual, stirring up, and inclining his heart to mark and observe the corruptions that are discovered unto him, and so to heed the words as to be moved by them. So we read, that God cleansed David from his impenitent continuance in his foul sins, by the wholesome reproof of Nathan the Prophet. And now are you clean, saith our Savior anon after the text, by the word that I have spoken unto you. And as all the exhortations and admonitions of the Word of God do serve to rub off the rust from the souls of his people: so chiefly the doctrine of the Gospel, by virtue of the blood of Christ which it offereth and giveth unto them, is a most cleansing doctrine. This leaveth in the will of the truly justified man, such a deep impression of the bitter death of Christ for sin, as worketh in it a loathing detestation of sin, and maketh it to turn itself away from a thing so abominably evil. And this is to crucify our sins upon the Cross of Christ, when the consideration of the extreme foulness, and unutterable odiousness of sin (which is clearly manifested in the sufferings of our Lord for it) and of the most excellent beauty and brightness of the tender mercy and kindness of

God shining forth in the same passion, is so seriously received, and doth so deeply sink into the very heart-root of a man, that it mightily draweth him to set down and enact this conclusion in himself of sinning no more. In this meaning it is said, that faith purifieth the heart, and that having this hope, we purge ourselves, as Christ is pure: and therefore the Word of God, chiefly the Gospel, being applied to the working and increasing of our faith and hope, becomes a blessed instrument of our purging. And with these proper and natural means, are used also certain accidental means that are made so beyond their own nature. These are chiefly three, Afflictions, Tentation's, and falls into sin; for even by poison, oftentimes is poison cured, and by iron is iron driven out.

For the first, the servants of God are, and must often be chastised, that they may be whited. These corrections are fit to stir up sorrow in those to whom they befall; which sorrow, by grace, is turned into godly sorrow, the most effectual corrosive to eat out the dead flesh of the soul, and so the fruit of them is, as the Prophet speaketh, the taking away of sin. Afflictions make us to feel the dangerousness of sin: they testify God's dislike of wickedness; they manifest our own frailty and baseness; they convince us of the vanity of the world; they pull down the pride of our stomach, so eating out the proud flesh that grows within us, that the medicine of the Word may come near the sore; they quicken us to prayer; they drive us to examine ourselves, and enforce us to consider of our ways, that at last we may be able to profess with the Prophet, Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep thy righteous judgments. There is scarce anything more needful for God's children, then these Fatherly chastisements: they do break open the heart, to make a free passage for the Spirit of God to enter in at. They do plough up the heart, to make it capable of the seed of life, the holy doctrine of the Word of God that is spoken to them. In prosperity, many times, the soul is dull of hearing, and scorneth to be reprov'd: It is sated with outward

contents, and takes no delight in remembering the death and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ: It taketh pleasure in vanity, and cannot have while to think of things spiritual and most profitable. But afflictions awaken the heart out of the deep sleep of security: they distaste the sweet meats of the world, and bore the ear, and cover the pride of heart, and make a man, in whom the Spirit of God is, to hearken and attend unto the motions of the Word, and of the Spirit. The truth is, that afflictions, of themselves, and in their own nature, as being fruits of sin and evil, are not of this force to purge the heart, but through the wisdom of him that is able to turn all things to the best, and by the working of the Spirit, which taketh advantage of all seasons and opportunities, they do become most happy instruments of our cleansing: and there is scarce any one of all the Saints of God, but may from his own experience affirm, that it hath been a great part of his happiness, to take and drink these potions from the hand of his wise and loving Father: for they have purged out of his soul those noisome, and evil humors, which would otherwise have made him little less then deadly and desperately sick.

But moreover, the Lord doth make the devil himself an unwilling instrument of pruning his servants, by means of those fierce temptations wherewith he doth mightily assault them. Even Satan's violent buffetings are, by God's goodness, turned into most excellent purgation's. When the devil is let loose upon a Christian man, (as the shepherds dog upon the sheep) and with fury and craft strives to bring him to utter despair, making him believe, that the very pit of hell itself stands gaping before him, ready to swallow him up; or when he doth work mightily upon his sinful affections, with a kind of excessive violence, haling him to the practice of those detestable sins which his soul hateth, and making none end to lie at him with incessant and vehement solicitations to commit such and such foul deeds: Oh this cuts, this woundeth, this vexeth and tormenteth; this sets them on praying, on weeping, on crying, on bleeding; this doth

so shame him and disgrace him to himself; this makes him so far out of love and conceit with himself, and so extremely vile and odious in his own eyes, that he thinks no name nor usage bad enough for himself; this also maketh him, with a blushing and confounded face, and with a most dejected and a broken spirit, to run and cry unto the Lord his God for help and strength. Thus the more Satan striveth to stir corruption, the better it is purged, (for stirred it must be, before it can be purged) and by his temptations being brought to see and feel a number of corruptions, which else we would never see and feel; we find his sinful malice, by God's goodness, made an excellent furtherance to our cleansing of our selves.

And not only so, but in the third and last place, our own sins, faults and slips, do become instruments of our making clean from sin, even as a man doth better scour his foul hands, having first smeared them with some foul thing that helpeth more to rub off the foulness that cleaveth fast unto the skin: not that the Children do, or may at any time of purpose commit sin to this end, (for it is quite besides, and against the nature of them to bring forth this effect; yea every sin is apt to leave, as a filthy spot behind the committing of it, a greater proneness to commit it then before) but that the Lord doth please diverse times to give them over to be foiled of their own sinful lusts, that by smarting for them, they may be more humbled under them, and made more careful to see and resist them afterwards. Thus Peters fall before the high Priests servants, was a means to make him a better, (that is to say, a more humble and self-contemning man) for his whole life after; and in a sense a man may well term it, an happy fault for him. And so the Prophet David's heinous and presumptuous sin did excellently prune him, by helping to abate that conceit of himself, which the great prosperity of a rich and flourishing kingdom had wrought in him. So we may say of many a Christian man, that he would never have been good, if some of his actions had not been stark naught; and had not the Lord given him over to the committing

of such and such gross sins, he would never, to any purpose, have been convinced of sin, and so never have been cleansed of it. We think not our selves subject to all manner of evils, we make no great matter of the lower degrees of sin, and so grow slightly, and fashionable, and dead in our confessions, because we think we have nothing worth speaking of, to reckon for before the Lord. Hence the Lord is provoked to give us up unto ourselves, that by some notable foil, or soils, we may be made to know what is in us, and so be enforced to set about the cleansing of ourselves, with much more care and earnestness then otherwise we would have done. So have you heard the Lord's means of purging. Know also the manner of doing it: and that is to be conceived of thus: First, he doth it by degrees; secondly, by making a man's self a voluntary worker of it.

The Lord doth at once, in one act within himself, justify perfectly each believer, fully acquitting him of all sin whatsoever, through the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness unto him, though this be manifested unto his soul by degrees, as he doth particularly seek the sight of it, upon occasion of his particular sins: but sanctification is not wrought in an instant; yea, it is effected by little and little, some now, some then, as a sore is healed by laying on of one plaster today, which draweth out some corruption, and makes the wound or ulcer less filthy, and another tomorrow, another next day, whereby it groweth less and less filthy, and less deep, and less wide. For indeed, such an extreme change from the utter foulness of corrupted nature, to perfect holiness, cannot possibly be wrought in an instant, unless the Lord himself should please even immediately, and more then miraculously to work it, which it seemeth not good unto him to do. Hence it is, that having ordained to purge us by means, (and namely those that you heard of before) he performeth it in such manner as sorteth to the nature of the means; alone this is to be noted, that still the change of God's servants from sin to holiness, is made more apparent, by making the corruptions more felt, as they be more

healed, contrary to that which falleth out in bodily sores. For if a man's hand be wounded, the nearer it is to healing, the less pain he feels with it, and the less troublesome it is to him: but if the soul be wounded with any corruption; for example, with pride, or worldliness, or the like, the more it is cleansed from him, and the lesser degrees of it remain in him, the more troublesome and offensive will those remnants prove unto his soul, so that the little pride and worldliness that remaineth behind unhealed, will vex him more then the greater quantity of those vices did when they were less healed. Evermore sins prove most tedious and cumbersome, when a man hath attained a greater perfection of strength against them. For the soul, the more holy it is, the more it hateth unholiness, and the more sensible it must needs be of the thing that it more hateth. A man in his utter unregeneracy is dead in sin, so that he doth not feel it at all to be burthensome unto him; but when grace comes in small degrees, it begins to be felt, and the more mighty grace grows, the more it is felt, till at last, in that measure of perfection that is in this life attainable, the smallest imperfections are more discontentfull, and breed more anguish, then at first the greatest did. Hell, and death, and the punishment of sin is more bitter to God's servants in their weaker estate; but sins, and disorders, and corruptions are most bitter, as they grow most confirmed in spiritual strength.

But as this help against sin doth come by small degrees, so likewise it cometh unto them by a sweet and gentle manner of working, God drawing and alluring their wills, and moving them to become willing instruments of purging themselves, according to the words of the Prophet, Wash you, make you clean: and again, Wash thine heart, O Jerusalem: and again, Make you a new heart: and so faith Saint John, He that hath this hope, purgeth himself. The Lord doth not make a Christian man good, as it were, in despite of his heart, and whether he will or no, but doth work in him a desire of goodness, and inclineth his will to wish and pursue it, and stirreth up in him a

detestation of sin, and turneth away his will from it, and so is he a fellow-worker with God to his own cleansing, when the Lord hath once breathed the breath of a new life in him. By his own crying, striving, laboring, praying, resolving, resisting, opposing, he gets the victory against his sins, and becomes more than a conqueror. The Lord will not beat down the sins of his people, as sometimes he did the Canaanites with hailstones, without any help of their own, that they should, without fighting, come after alone to the spoil: but they must fight against their fleshly lusts, and must work with God, as it is said that Jonathan did, and so God doth subdue their enemies under them, by working in them a resolution, care and endeavor to vanquish them, and stirring them up to meditate, pray, cry, and use the spiritual weapons of this holy warfare. And thus doth the Lord purge the branches in this Vine.

Now having sufficiently proved and cleared the point, we must make some use of it.

CHAPTER XIV.

The first use of the point, to show their misery that are not pruned.

First, [Use 1] this point doth evidently discover the wretchedness of those men that find no pruning, no growth of mortification at all, none abatement of their corruptions, no diminishing of their carnal lusts and disordered affections: but after much hearing of the Word of God, and a long formality of Religion, they remain still as wrathful and impatient, as lustful and unclean, as worldly and unjust, as voluptuous as vain glorious, and in other things as much disordered

as ever they were. The Lord hath come near them in his Word, it hath not purged them; he hath come near them in afflictions, and lo, their dross will not be melted from them: nay, their sins seem to wax stronger and stronger, and their corruptions grow every day more heady and violent then other, and yet they see not this impairing of their souls, with grief and shame of heart, but rest themselves well satisfied in so miserable an estate.

Brethren, there are not a few people inhabiting under the roof of God's House the Church, with whom it fareth directly in this manner that I have described, to whom we have a dismal tidings to deliver, and that is this; that they be not fruitful branches in Christ, because they want that which our Savior Christ affirms, that every true branch obtaineth. Whatsoever person he is, that liveth a reputed member of the Church, frequenteth the ordinances of God, meeteth with diverse sorrows and calamities, and thus hath a long while continued, and yet seeth no more sin in himself then before, is no more troubled at his sin then at first, gets no more power against his sin then at the beginning, but goes along still in a kind of settled civility of living to men-ward, and there resteth himself, neither perceiving, nor greatly caring to perceive any healing of privy pride, of secret guile, of deadness and coldness of spirit, of unbelief, of the love of earthly things, of wrath, of revengefulness, of other naughty lusts of his evil heart: let this man come hither, and out of this text of Scripture truly interpreted, truly applied, collect and gather a most fearful conclusion against his own soul, in this wise: Every fruitful branch in the Vine, that is, every true member of Christ, every sound-hearted Christian is purged, that is, healed and cleansed of the sinfulness and corruptions of his heart and life: but I, though I have been trained up in the bosom of the Church, and enjoyed all God's ordinances, and have also tasted of some sourness too in my days, which should have helped to my reformation, have found no purging nor cleansing, am no whit helped against my sins of all sorts;

wherefore I am not a fruitful branch, I am not a true member of Christ, I am no sound-hearted Christian. Is not this a sound, certain, and infallible conclusion, that is so directly, plainly and truly inferred out of the words of our Savior? And how then can you flatter yourselves in vain, O all ye that are not cleansed of your iniquities? How can you make yourselves believe you are good Christians? how can you promise to yourselves remission of sins and salvation, and all other privileges of true Christians, and enjoy a kind of false content in a false hope of finding favor with God? Doubtless it is true that Solomon saith, There is a generation that are clean in their own eyes, and yet are not purged from their filthiness. These persons that have no pruning, feel no need of pruning, and are most apt to brag of cleanness, by how much they are more uncleansed. But miserable is that man, whose best remedy against misery is this, that he will not see it. I pray you therefore, if you be branches destitute of pruning, that you would not suffer yourself-love to hinder you from taking notice of your uncleansedness, nor from a serious consideration of your misery following thence, in that it is most certainly concluded from this Scripture, that you be but Hypocrites at the best. And yet let not my weak Christian misconceive this point to his own needless and causeless vexation, concluding against himself, that if that be no true branch which wanteth pruning, then himself is doubtless in an hard case: for alas, diverse of his corruptions are so far from being purged from him, that they do rather gather strength, and prevail more and more within him. For doubtless it may befall even a true sanctified man, to have some sins more violent and headstrong in him, after that he hath a long time continued in the profession of Christian Religion, then they were at the first, and the corruptions of his heart in some kind may discover themselves by much and often breaking forth, which informer time he was better able to keep, as we know it by record of holy writ, to have fallen out to David, Asa, and other of God's faithful children.

Far be it therefore from the heart of a Christian, to conclude he hath no soundness, because he finds someone or other disorder rather grow more mighty in him. This may be, and yet he enjoy the benefit of pruning, which God performeth to all true branches: if he see and feel the working of this corruption whatsoever, if he lament it, if he continue to strive against, and become vile in his own eyes because of it, this sin doth not rule in him; and this is the very pruning promised, which shall at length so far prevail, till that he himself do perceive a very sensible conquest over this lust.

So long then as sins in general do decay, and that one sin that lifteth up itself more than before, is seen, lamented, resisted, a man may, and must account himself a living branch. But the men whom I condemned as Hypocrites and dry branches, are those, which satisfying themselves in a formal performance of outward exercises of piety, are quite destitute of the efficacy of them, for the subduing of sin, so that further then credit and natural respects do sway with them, they follow any sinful lust of their hearts, and yet feel not their misery in that behalf, but applaud themselves in their estate, all the while that they are free from such gross practices as would cast them into reproach and obloquy amongst men. A man professing Religion, and being thus uncleansed of his filthiness, is sure no better than a withering branch, which yet these kind of men will scarce ever be made to confess. Wherefore leaving them, we will make a second use of the point, to comfort all God's Saints, that if they will not deny the good work of God's grace in them, must needs confess, that the Lord hath mercifully vouchsafed to prune them.

CHAPTER XV.

The second use of the point, to comfort them that are pruned.

Hearken therefore, [Use 2] all ye servants of God, whom he hath pleased to purge and cleanse, and whiten, whose corruptions he hath much abated and subdued: hearken you, I say, and accept of that portion of comfort which the Lord doth allot you. Do you not find in yourselves that self-same operation of God, which our Savior here doth appropriate to living branches? why then, collect a joyful assurance to yourselves, that you are indeed true members of Christ, seeing that the Lord hath pleased to make you known for such, by doing that for you, which he doth perform for all true Christians, and only for them.

I confess that there is a kind of cleansing, which is not from God's sanctifying Spirit, such as hath been found even in Heathen men, without the Church, and without Christ. This is such a leaving of someone or other outward gross sin as ariseth from age or misery, or other like natural causes: the heart, in the general disposition, still remaining the same; for a man's own rod may so beat him, as the common Proverb speaketh, that he may be forced from those evil practices which once he followed: as the unthrifty man, after he hath wasted his estate almost to the bottom, and perceiveth penury coming against him, may so far return to himself, as to cease to be riotous; and the these that hath been frighted once or twice with the narrow escape of hanging, may cease to give himself over to thievery; and the man whose age and bodily decay doth not serve the turn to perform his unchaste pleasures, may cease to follow harlots; and so in other like particulars. This departing from a few outward acts of evil, the heart remaining still empoisoned with the wonted inward disorders, or other as bad, is not the cleansing which the Lord doth afford to the true branches of the Vine, neither may any man entitle himself to the comfort we have in hand, from such a maimed kind of reformation. But if any man do find himself cleansed in soul from the

love and liking of all known evils proportionably, that what by the Word, what by afflictions, or such like means, he hath been made to take notice of more corruptions in himself, then ever before he thought to have been there, and seeing the same, to detest them, and abhor himself for them before God, craving his strength and power to reform them; and by craving strength, hath obtained at God's hands, though not a total release from these corruptions, yet a great decay of them, and a far greater ability to leave them, then in former time: Let these men rejoice in the living God, and take this work of his Spirit in them, for an assured proof of their being truly ingrafted into the body of Christ. Those that do mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit, they shall live; those that are crucified together with Christ, shall reign with him, and having been made conformable to his death, shall also be made conformable to his glory. Wherefore as Samson fed on the honey which he found in the carcass of the Lion that he had slain; so let all God's people feed upon the comfort which grows unto them from the sins that they have overcome. For doubtless, nothing is more available to increase the work of mortification, then with joy to look upon the good beginnings thereof, and comfortably to behold the dying of sin, that a man may say to himself, Lo, now, mine inward and spiritual enemies are smitten down before me, and become like foes that are put to flight, and many of them slain in the chase. When a man looks into himself, and comparing himself with himself, finds, that by God's grace, such and such evils do less prevail within him then they were wont; yea, that now the least motions of them are more hateful to him, then formerly some gross outward faulting's therein; and that the inclinations of that kind which he feeleth in himself, are either fewer, or weaker, or both, that he sooner spieth, more heartily and inwardly lamenteth and condemneth, more carefully and diligently resisteth and opposeth them, at least is much more humbled and abased to himself by means of them, then formerly: This is to be pruned, and this is a true sign of a lively branch in the true Vine Christ Jesus.

Neither let the people of God take less comfort in this pruning, because it is not total, nor all at once; but if they find it to go forward, though slowly and by small degrees, and to have been attained by their spiritual industry in the use of spiritual means: now let them clap their hands and triumph in God, saying, Through God I have done valiantly, for he hath trodden down mine enemies that rose up against me. We must not suffer ourselves to be so much vexed with the remainders of our corruptions, as to deprive the Lord of the glory, and our own souls of the comfort which we might reap from the beginning of their overthrow: but must make ourselves exceeding glad of this their first falling before us, that so we may more assuredly conclude as they do concerning Haman, when he began to fall before Mordecai, that he should not prevail, but should surely fall quite before him. When we observe the fruits of our faith, as means to confirm our faith, and the good works of God's grace, as arguments to assure us that we are received into the state of grace; this is an excellent means to make these fruits of faith, and works of grace to grow stronger and stronger in us. A heart cheered up in beholding and acknowledging the goodness of God, that hath in some measure blessed his endeavor against sin, shall be greatly furthered in this spiritual combat. It animates soldiers to fight: when as Jonathan speaketh concerning Saul's soldiers, they eat the spoil of their enemies: but when they do keep themselves fasting, as it were, like as Saul did his soldiers, pretending thereby to make them more eager in following the chase; this makes them to be faint and weary, and so doth very much hinder the slaughter of the foe. Wherefore, ye Christian soldiers, that have fought manfully under Christ your Lord, with the weapons of the Word and Prayer, and the like, and have found that your holy meditations and prayers have diminished the force of your corruptions, in some good measure eat you the spoil of your spiritual enemies; comfort yourselves in the sense of this good work, and with great contentment of spirit, conclude for yourselves

that you are true branches, because the Husbandman doth bestow the pains of pruning upon you.

CHAPTER XVI.

Containing the third use of the point, to encourage the Saints in striving against sin, because the Lord will help them in this labor, and they shall surely prevail.

But this point doth yield likewise a third use, [Use 3] to animate the people of God to a resolute opposing of all their corruptions, because, lo the God of heaven is ready at hand, to cut off those evils which they are hewing at. A man is sure of success in the work of mortification, if he want not diligence to labor in that work. The flesh must down, corruptions shall tumble, the Spirit shall be victorious; stronger is he that is in us, then he which is in the world; and certainly the grace of God shall have the upper hand, and our faith shall be our victory. We are many times little less then out of heart, because the proceedings do seem very slow, and well-near indiscernible. But be not discouraged, O ye Christian souls, promise yourselves victory in this spiritual conflict; for the Lord doth fight on your side, and you shall conquer. In truth, we want much of that mortification which we might attain, if out of this confidence we would put forth ourselves to the utmost. The devil labors to make us believe, that it will be to no purpose to resist our lusts: we have so often resolved to leave such a fault, and cannot yet leave it; we have thus often resolved against anger, lust, pride, worldliness, and the like, and yet behold, the passions and motions of them are stirring, and also break forth again; sure therefore it will never be better, and

it is in vain to continue striving about that, which cannot be effected. These be the heartless and unbelieving conclusions, wherewith the devil and the flesh would dismay us.

But now know thou that these conclusions are false. I tell thee the quite contrary in the name of the Lord: It shall not be in vain to strive against sin: the husbandman will prune the branches; and shall not he be able to bring his works to pass according to his promise? Tell me from thine own feeling: do not these sins vex thee more and more, and art thou not more and more angry and discontented against thyself for them, and more and more out of love with thyself because of them? if so, as sure thou canst not deny but it is so, then all is safe; this is to be in pruning, now the sin is dying: only do thou make use of God's words to Joshua, fighting against the Canaanites: Faint not, nor be discouraged, but take to thyself a valiant spirit, to continue praying against, meditating on the Word of God, and the death of Christ, opposing the first motions of it, and using all other good ways that God hath directed thee unto, for the subduing of it, and I say unto thee, thou shalt prosper: go up and fight against these Philistines, and the Lord will deliver them into thine hands. Our want of being sufficiently purged, doth come from want of sufficient endeavors to purge ourselves; and this want springeth from a want of faithful assurance of God's assistance, and good success in our endeavors. But now I beseech you all that be members of Christ, set in earnestly and with a good courage, and you shall vanquish them, you shall more and more prevail against them, till at last you have quite overcome them, in the overcoming of the last enemy, which is death. If we did labor against sin alone in our own strength, we should find indeed, that vain is the help of man, and the labor of flesh and blood in this behalf; but the God of heaven, he is the husbandman, and he pruneth. The Lord is present with thy prayers, to make them effectual for the killing of thy lusts. The Lord is present in his Word, to make it a two-edged sword, to cut off all

carnal affections, and to wound the body of death more and more. The Lord is present with thine holy meditations, to make them effectual to weaken any of thy sinful passions. Faint not therefore, but stir up thyself to work with God in those holy exercises, & know, that thy success shall be, as often it hath been with God's people in the natural battle, far beyond thine expectation. And of the matter of God's Husbandry so far. We must now look into the end and effect of it: (for God will never miss of his ends, though he often miss of those ends, whereto his actions in their own nature are fitted, and which, speaking after the manner of men to our capacity, he tells us that he intended.) This is, that they may bring forth more fruit.

CHAPTER XVII.

Containing the fourth point of doctrine, that the people of God must increase in fruitfulness.

So are we come to the last point we intended to speak of: [Doct. 4] viz. that the true branches of the Vine must labor to increase in fruitfulness.

Every true Christian man must proceed and go forward in the fruits of the Spirit, growing better and better, and more and more abundant in the work of the Lord. As we look that a tree, the longer it grows in our Orchard, the more and more increase it should yield us; in like manner should we behave ourselves towards God. The Apostle Peter wisheth us to long for the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. A Christian is like a young child that sucketh on the breast of his mother, who doth to this end receive that kindly

nourishment, that he may increase in stature and strength of body. Paul adviseth the Thessalonians, saying, I beseech you brethren, as you have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God, that ye abound more and more. And afterwards concerning brotherly love, We beseech you, that you increase more and more. And David saith, Psalm. 92.14. that the trees which are planted in the courts of God's House, do bring forth fruit in their age, and are fat and flourishing. But the point is without denial; and the reasons of it are more than evident.

[Reason 1] First, they are short of perfection, so long as they live in this world, and therefore must strive forward to perfection. Paul himself tells the Philippians, that he pressed hard towards the mark, because he not yet reached it, and wisheth as many as are perfect, to be so minded. In a race, a man must never cease running till he touch the goal; we shall never touch the goal of perfection, till we have delivered up our souls into the hands of God by death, (for here we know but in part, and therefore can do nothing in whole:) hence it follows, that till death we must be still going onward. When a man hath attained his full stature he must grow, then indeed he needeth only nutrition, but till then, augmentation is requisite: (for these two motions are very different, as you know) and his limbs must become greater, and stronger, (yea and will do so, unless diseases hinder) Now we be but striplings or rather infants in goodness. In truth we are but in the womb of the Church; all the while we walk in this world, our death-day will be our birth day, and then we shall at once be made full and complete: wherefore till then there must be a continual addition of grace, to that we have already received. Indeed some Christians, in comparison of others, are called strong men, (as even of infants in the womb, some are perfecter then other) but simply there is none a full grown man, brought to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ, till he be fully united to Christ, and walk no longer by faith, but by sight, seeing as he is seen, and

knowing as he is known. We must conclude then to be walking forwards, till we lie down in graves, for never are we at our journeys end till then.

Secondly, [Reason 2] the Lord hath afforded and provided us sufficient means and helps to grow. The Word of God is able to build us up yet further: the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper doth bring the body and blood of Christ unto us, to be our spiritual food. The Spirit of God that worketh in, and with these, and all other means, is a spirit of life, and serveth not alone to mortify the deeds of our flesh, but to quicken our inward man also, till we come to be perfect men in Christ, and have his Image fully renewed in us. We want none helps this way that we can desire, if we want not care to use them; and we may be well assured, that he which hath provided them, did never intend that they should be provided in vain, but that he would have us use them, and by the using, attain the fruit of them.

Thirdly, [Reason 3] if we grow not better, it cannot be long afore we grow worse. There will be a sensible decay of grace after a little while, if there be not some addition to it. We move either upward or downward, and we cannot long hang in the midst; for things that do but tend to perfection, and have not yet gotten it, if they approach not nearer to it, will be removed further from it. If the fire be not fed with fuel, it will go out: and a young tree, if it cease shooting up its branches, doth quickly cease to live. All natural motions are more and more earnest towards their ending, and so much more swift, by how much they grow nearer to their proper place of rest: so must all the motions of goodness be in God's Saints.

Last of all, [Reason 4] our growing in grace here, shall procure unto us a growth in glory hereafter. The more holiness we attain in this world, the more happiness we shall attain in the other world. Every dram of grace shall be rewarded, as it were, with a pound of glory. If

we be rich in the work of the Lord, our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, but he will exceeding plentifully requite all the services which we have performed for him, and all the virtues which we have for his sake labored to get and exercise. He that sows liberally, shall reap liberally; he that sows sparingly, shall also reap sparingly. This life is our seeds-time; that to come, must be our harvest. Who would not be encouraged by so inestimable rewards, to strain himself to all painfulness, that he may grow? So it is possible to grow in grace, for we have sufficient helps and means: it is profitable, for we shall grow in glory, and that also proportionably: it is necessary, for we are not yet come to our full growth: yea, it is of absolute necessity so to grow, for else we shall grow worse and worse, even from ought to naught, as the Proverb speaketh: and all these reasons confirm the point, and show, that it is the duty of God's people to wax better and better, only it may be demanded whether that all the Saints of God do perform this duty, and be in act, more holy and virtuous, every day then other? To which I answer, that it is with God's people, as with children who are subject to many sick sits, in which they do wear away, and even lose their flesh and strength; but yet for all that they recover, and come to be men at last, yea and strong men too.

A Christian oftentimes doth go backward for a season, but he recovers himself, feels his going back, returneth, and at the last, becomes better indeed (though not in his own feeling) then ever he was. For after (it may be some long) fainting and fading of grace, he is brought back with a deeper sense of his own baseness, then ever he had before, and so growing in humility, grows likewise in all graces, (for with the growth of that, all do grow,) though perhaps he may not live to do so many excellent works, as formerly he had done; and so the story of holy Writ doth show that it was with David, who seemed worse after his settling in the Kingdom then before, and was so for a while, but rising up again, he was more holy than ever before, though he fought not so many battles as before.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Containing the first use of the last point, viz. a terror to them that grow worse.

Now this point concerning the branches bringing forth more fruit, [Use 1] serveth to discover the unhappiness of those men, in whom no such growth is found, but the quite contrary, viz. that are grown backwards and fallen behind hand, being more feeble in all graces, and scant in all good works, then formerly they were wont to be. And thus, alas, it is with many a man. Time was, when they were frequent in hearing the Word of God, and could not be kept from it by any means: now their hunger after it is turned into fullness, and the least occasion that is, will detain them from it; yea, rather than fail, they will quarrel with the Minister, (either for some point of doctrine which he teacheth contrary to their minds, or for some faultiness in the manner of teaching, or for some mis-behavior of life, or for something or other, against which they can allege any probable show of quarrel) rather then that they will not seem to themselves to have cause of not caring to come to hear. They were wont to read much, and pray often, and take time to meditate upon those things which they had heard; but now all these things are either quite laid aside, or very seldom performed: once they were abundant in works of mercy, now they are scant and sparing: formerly they were lively in their services, now little less then dead: and so it is with them, that any man which hath occasion of conversing with them, may plainly perceive them to be changed from better to worse. O, this is a lamentable condition, having its original in the overgrowth of voluptuousness, worldliness, pride, or some other like carnal

affection, and shall have its issue either in some grievous sin, or heavy calamity, or both, even though they be God's children. I dare not say, brethren, that it may not befall a true Christian, thus to fade for a season, (and yet the withering of the blade is a sore sign of a stony ground:) But this I dare say, that unless they do seasonably recover themselves, and return to their former goodness, or more, the Lord will surely chastise them in grievous manner, sending some or other heavy calamity upon them, either inward or outward; or if he do not so fetch them home again, this decay of seeming graces, is in truth the first degree of the cutting off of Hypocrites. So long as a man continues thus in the wane, he can enjoy no comfortable assurance of himself, nor can other men maintain any full persuasion of him that he was upright, but he must needs be subject to the misery of being always questioned both in the opinion of others, and in the account of his own heart, for matter of his entireness and truth; and so though it were rashness to say, that all they are dissemblers that fare in this manner; (for a man may recover himself, as I shown above,) yet this may one safely say of such, that they are so like to dissemblers, as neither others, nor scarce themselves can distinguish them from Hypocrites. Indeed there is one note of difference betwixt the winter of a true branch, and the withering of a dead, which we will anon show unto you: but yet this note of difference will afford but a small quantity of comfort to them with whom it is winter. Let that man therefore, whose soul is guilty of such decrease in piety, see, and take notice of its unhappiness. Woeful is the estate of him, that if he be not a Hypocrite, yet is now become so near in likeness to that evil brood, as his own heart will hardly be persuaded to take him for better. I will show you a true note of distinction betwixt a living branch, one the decays that it may suffer, and a dead branch thus beginning to be cut off from the Vine, that we may not leave the upright hearted destitute of that comfort which appertaineth unto him, even though he be at his worst that ever he can. The false-hearted man doth likely please himself in his

growing backward, conceiting that he was too forward before, but is now grown sober, and stayed, and wise; though indeed, what he formerly did, was no more than he ought to have done, and so he satisfieth, yea and magnifieth himself in his lamentable decays. But the true Christian is exceeding weary of his going down the wind for his soul. It is a clog to his soul to find himself worse than he was; yea, if he seem to himself but to stand at a stay, it is an anguish unto him, and his life is tedious, when he finds not that life of Religion and goodness in himself that once he felt. Now then, if your decays be by you thus felt and bewailed, if they be an heavy load and burden to you, very troublesome and discontentfull to your minds, you may have been true-hearted, for all these fainting's and swoons, and yet your case is much to be pitied: for the Lord must be at pains to prune you, that you may bring forth more fruit, because it is nothing else (as I said before) but the over-growing of some corrupt lust that hath brought you to this evil pass. But if any amongst you be so fallen away from his former shows or beginnings of piety, that he be well apaid with this his backwardness, and take it for his glory, that he is now grown lukewarm, so boasting in his shame; let that man know, that he was but an hypocrite before, and that this is a beginning of his cutting off from the Vine; yea and that his estate is not recoverable, without exceeding much labor and pains. Take notice therefore, I entreat every soul amongst you, whether it be decayed, and in what manner it stands affected under these decays, that you may accordingly censure yourselves, and fruitfully accept this reproof of the Word. For, give me leave a little to reason with you on God's behalf: What unfaithfulness, what ungenerousness, what churlishness have you found in the God of heaven now alate, that you should be less zealous and careful in doing him service, then you were formerly accustomed? Is God grown worse to you, y t you are so changed towards him? Is the Word of God less mighty to bring you to salvation? Is prayer less effectual to draw good things from heaven? Are holy meditations less comfortable to the soul? Are the exercises

of repentance, and of godly sorrow less gainful, that you do now bestow less time and care in these duties, then in former season? or is the fear and love of God, humility, faith, mercy, bounty, zeal, less pleasing to God, less beautiful, less sweet, less profitable in itself and to the possessors, then once it was, that you have now suffered yourselves to be less studious of any of them? O consider how extremely you do dishonor God and goodness, and endamage yourselves, and discourage others by this your going back in the way of goodness. Consider how wrongful it is to the whole Church, and how every way exceeding scandalous, if your decays be public, that you are waxen less good than you were. Lay these things to heart, and put not off a reproof lightly. Consider with yourselves what corruption it is, that as a bad humor becoming excessive, hath brought your souls into this consumption. Lament before God your shameful folly, in bringing the estate of your souls behind, and cease not confessing, bewailing, and praying, till you find yourselves quickened and restored. Assure yourselves, that if you have been any other then arrant Hypocrites, and dry branches, who being cut off, are cast out and wither, till they be gathered up to burn; you must sometime or other take the pains of thus restoring yourselves to your ancient fruitfulness. Were it not as good accept of this admonition, as tarry longer, and make the work harder by delays? If words will not bring you to a sense of your misery, in that your souls are so ill affected, you shall compel the Lord to become severe in chastisements; for much rather had he to make you smart, then to see you perish. See, see the sickness of thy soul, which hath made thee to grow weak and feeble in all inward graces and holy duties, and suffer not thyself to be so hardened, that the hearing of these words should be in vain unto thee. Shew thyself not to have been a dissembler in thy former forwardness, by suffering thyself to be restored to it again by this exhortation. Make it appear, that all was not false which did aforetime seem to be in thee, by recovering thy first estate, and doing thy first works. O now yield to the call of the

living God, and let these words of his in his own ordinance, be as a good restorative to thy sick soul, to make it whole & strong again.

CHAPTER XIX.

Containing an exhortation to all true Christians to increase in goodness, with directions for that purpose.

And let me in the next place call earnestly upon each soul amongst you, [Use 2] to approve himself a true branch, by endeavoring after this increase in fruitfulness: for nothing doth more infallibly argue life, then growth, I mean, a suitable and proportionable growth of each part. Be not therefore satisfied with what you have already gotten, but strive to get more. Make yourselves even insatiably covetous after grace: account yourselves never to have enough, but for this matter: imitate the Horse-leach, and the grave, and be always saying, Give, give; for no grace is further sound, then it is joined with an hungering after more. O then, travel forward in the paths of righteousness daily. Labor to be each week more holy, more heavenly minded, more patient, more temperate, more contentful, more prayerful, more abundant and affectionate in holy cogitations, and to do all good things more sincerely, and more heartily, with a more particular and actual intending of God's glory in each of them, and with a more feeling attractive of love inducing you to them. Grow, I say, continually, either bigger, or better, or both. Let these words put wings to your souls, and let this exhortation, as it were a good gale of wind to a ship, carry you more swiftly towards the haven of perfection. You cannot glorify God, or profit yourselves, or edify your brethren more, or better; you cannot make a better preparation for

death, or the day of affliction, nor make your assurance of eternal happiness more large and undeceivable, then by making a continual progress in the virtues of Christ Jesus, Faint not therefore nor grow weary; let not your hands fall from this work; slow not your pace in this journey: but provoke yourselves, and let the Word of God provoke you to be yet more and more godly, righteous, sober, and to proceed from faith to faith, from virtue to virtue, till you be made at last fully conformable to the Image of Christ. Let there be no going back in any hand, no flying, no revolting. By going back, you shall as much as proclaim to all the world, that you account God's service an ill service, and his work an unprofitable work, not worth the while to employ yourselves in it. By going back, you should give occasion of discouragement to others, and lay up matter of grief and shame for yourselves. Offer not God this injury, do not such hurt to yourselves and to your brethren. But as the God of heaven reneweth his mercies daily, and enlargeth his bounty, so do you daily renew your obedience, and let your graces be still on the thriving hand. But that my words may not be fruitless in persuading you to grow, let me also declare unto you what it is that you must do, to the intent you may grow.

Growth, you know, doth presuppose life, and that we must take for granted to be in all those that shall be fruitful hearers of this exhortation. And yielding a man to live with a spiritual life in Christ, the means of growth to his soul, may not unfitly be resembled to those that concern his body. The body will grow, if it be of a good constitution, and have a good stomach, good diet, and good digestion; so will the soul also: and therefore we will speak a word or two of each of these.

First then, as the body, so the soul must enjoy the benefit of a good constitution. Now as the good constitution of the body consists in a right mixing together, and tempering of the four first and chief

qualities; so the good constitution of the soul standeth in a right and due ordering of the principal faculties of the mind towards the different objects thereof: I mean, the judgment, the will, and the affections: when the judgment entertaineth an high and excellent esteem of God, and things divine, but a mean and base esteem of one's self, and all things earthly: when the will most vehemently and earnestly inclineth itself to God, the chief Good, and carefully withdraweth itself from feigned or inferior good things: when the affections are inflamed towards God and heaven, and cooled towards earth, and the things of the earth; This is a sweet and happy constitution of the soul: and if this constitution be not preserved by a diligent watching over the moving and working of our minds, and a daily striving to pull them from things below, and set them on things above, there is no possibility of growing: but if this constitution be carefully preserved, the means following will infallibly procure a proceeding in all the fruits of good living.

And the second thing required, is, to keep a good stomach or appetite, that is, a continual desire of more grace, feeling its wants, and longing for a supply. We must tell ourselves often how far short we come of that we might attain, and others have attained; and we must earnestly provoke ourselves to desire a supply of what we feel our selves to want. We should often say to ourselves, Alas, how poor a quantity of faith, patience, hope, charity, temperance, heavenly-mindedness have I gotten? how slender are all graces in me? If I compare myself with those of God's Saints, whose examples are commended in Scripture for mine imitation, I come so short of them, that it may almost be a question, whether I have any goodness or none at all. What a little meekness have I, in comparison of Moses? what a little zeal of God's glory, in comparison of David? what little patience to bear affliction for Christ's sake, in comparison of Paul? what little faith in God's promises, in comparison of their faiths that the Apostle to the Hebrews commendeth to me? O how far did Job

surpass me in patience, in bounty, in religiousness, in the fear of God? How far did Nehemiah go beyond me in love to the Church and people of God, and zealous desire of promoting the worship of God? So weigh thyself in the balance against the godly men which are famous in holy Writ, and seeing how much thou wantest of what they had gotten, (and yet that which they had, cometh far shorter of what they should have had, then what thou hast, doth come short of what they had) then move thy desire to an increase, and think thus, Ah that I could get at least a little more grace! Ah that my grain of faith were made two grains! Ah that my one talent were made two talents, my two five! What might I do to get more grace? what course might I take to fil up that which is wanting to my faith, patience, temperance, confidence, and other like virtues? To whet a man's appetite in this manner, and to sharpen his desires towards virtues, doth exceedingly help to make him capable of them, and is, as one may term it, a great inducement to the Lord, to bestow more upon him; for the Lord, as once Job, doth love to feed the hungry, and to give drink unto them that thirst. But some man may haply demand, How shall one get his soul a good stomach? To this question I answer, that the bodily appetite is stirred up by two things, sharp sauce, and due exercise; and so is the appetite of the soul after grace.

Now the sauce of the soul, in which by dipping its morsels, it may provoke its desires after holiness and virtue, is the renewing of sorrow for sins past, and present. And when a good man findeth himself to grow dull in holy desires, if he will set a little time apart, to call himself to account for his sins past, and to consider the greatness and multitude of them, the heavy punishment he hath deserved, and Christ hath suffered for them, the exceeding great dishonor he hath done to God by them, and how exceeding vile and base they have made him; and here hence to enforce himself to be sad and heavy, and to sigh and groan for these offenses of his; This will quicken his

spiritual desires, this will revive and stir up his longings, and make him earnestly covetous after grace.

But exercise is needful to get a stomach; and the souls exercise is to set itself on work about good duties, to stir up frequent acts of virtue within itself, often bending his heart in love to Godward, melting it in compassion toward the afflicted, enlarging it in congratulation to those of God's Saints that are in good estate, and so in other virtues, especially when we have been taught any good work in the Word, to watch the next opportunity of doing that duty, and to set ourselves, for some good space of time together, principally to look to the practice of some principal virtue, the love and fear of God, joy in the holy Ghost, godly sorrow, confidence in God, and the like. This addressing one's self to the practice of good duties, will beget a desire of grace. And this is the second thing necessary to cause an increase of grace.

The third is, good food. And the food of our souls is Christ Jesus, offered unto us, in the Word, and in the Sacraments, and in some sort also in the works of God, that we may feed upon him, and grow strong in him, and in the power of his might. Christ Jesus is the bread of life; when by the Word and Sacraments, and works of God, we are moved and drawn to go out of ourselves, to rest, cleave, stay upon him for grace, life, salvation, strength, & all good things, then we do even fill our souls with him, and then we are sure to wax strong. In all the ordinances of God we must be directed to Christ, neither can they do us any good, further then they guide us to Christ, and to a depending upon him. If you remain in me, saith our Savior by and by after, you shall bring forth much fruit. Lo our food. In the Word, and in each part of it, we must seek Christ; in the Sacraments we must seek Christ. All the works of God's hand must lead us unto Christ; I mean, to look to him for grace, to stay upon him for all good things: when the Word teacheth any good thing, it must cause us to

rest on the Lord Jesus for strength to perform it; when it discovereth any sin, it must drive us to Christ for power to amend it, and favor to pardon it; when it promiseth good, it must still draw us to the same Christ, in him to obtain the promises; when it threatens evil, it must drive us to Christ, that we may trust by him to escape it. So the Sacraments must conduct us to Christ, and settle our souls in assurance of attaining all good things in him. When we receive blessings of any kind at God's hand, they must make us taste the sweetness of his love in Christ; when we feel the sharpness of his chastening hand, it must spur us forward to a more earnest seeking of our reconciliation with him in Christ: and thus all that God doth to us, and all his ordinances that we enjoy, by leading us unto the true Bread of life, shall happily confirm and strengthen us in the inner Man. For if we abide in Christ, and Christ's Word in us, then shall we be surely fruitful.

The last thing to help growth, is good digestion: when the bodily food is conveyed into the stomach, and there concocted by the native heat, then it becomes fit to be dispersed abroad to the strengthening of every limb and joint: so the Word of God, the Commandments, the promises, the threats, and the works of God, both of mercy and justice, must be mused, meditated, pondered upon. A man must set himself seriously to consider how true those promises be, and how much they concern him, and so settle his heart more and more in the embracing of them. He must tell himself how holy those Commandments be, how much he is bound to obey them, and so even enforce his heart to a resolved purpose of following the direction of them. A light perfunctory hearing and speaking of the divine truths, of the Word, concerning God, Christ, our selves, and our duty, and the like, will afford little or no strength; but if a man will bestow pains and time to consider of these things seriously, and to make his thoughts dwell upon them some good while together, striving to beat them into his heart, and to frame his affections

accordingly; this would be as sure a means of strength unto his soul, as good and wholesome concoction of good food unto his body.

And thus, my brethren, so many of you as are living and true branches in Christ, may see what is required of you, that you may bring forth more fruit in him. Lay to heart that which you formerly heard, consider the profit, possibility, necessity of this growth, and be not a sluggard for thy soul. Thou seest how the worldly-minded man doth toil his head and body, in seeking to grow in riches: thou seest how the ambitious man bestirs himself, in getting more preferment: thou seest with what an eager and unsatisfiable greediness, the voluptuous man doth pursue his pleasures: why shouldest not thou, that art a Christian, and a spiritual man, with at least some measure of the like diligence, address thyself to thrive in the goods of the soul, to get an higher degree of this best promotion, and to enjoy more and more of these most pleasant of all pleasures? No profit is so profitable, no honor so honorable, no pleasure so pleasurable, as to be fruitful in good works, and to abound more and more in the virtues of the inward man, and all the good effects thereof. Wherefore again and again be entreated to make it the principal scope of your lives, to wax more and more godly, and righteous in life.

CHAPTER XX.

Containing a comfort to them that have grown, and do grow in goodness.

In the last place, [Use 3] let all those that do perceive themselves to be growing in fruitfulness, receive much comfort herein. O well are they: growth is a most sure sign of life: a rotten branch grows not, a rotten arm grows not. Whosoever therefore perceiveth that his care of living godlily in Christ Jesus increaseth, that he is more and more desirous to obey God, and that his works are better at last, then at first, blessed be he of the Lord: let him receive this happy comfort from the mouth of God, and conclude himself infallibly to be a living branch, a sound-hearted Christian. Indeed the people of God, to whom this consolation doth most duly appertain, are not ever forward for the most part to embrace the same: yea, they are ready to deprive themselves of it by diversity of objections, and by name thus you shall have them speaking against themselves: Alas, is there not a growth of Hypocrites, as well as of the true-hearted? Doth not the blade spring up as well in the stony, and in the thorny ground, as in the good ground? And how can I assure myself, but that this growth of mine is such, as may befall a dissembler? I answer, It must not be denied, that the man of a guileful spirit, the close Hypocrite hath his fullness, his period, his state, to which he may come, and to which, till he have reached, he seemeth both to himself and others, to grow.

But the difference is manifest and express. The Hypocrites growing in the shows of goodness, causeth him also to grow in conceit of himself; he thinks better of himself, and much applaudeth his own proceedings: but the godly man groweth in a mean conceit of himself, and as he waxeth better and better, so doth more & more condemn himself, that he is not better than he is. He sees things to be better with him then they were; but alas, he sees them also to be so far short of what they should be, that he is even grieved with himself, to think of his wants and defects. The true godly man grows in humility, as in other graces; but the Hypocrite grows in conceitedness, and high esteem of himself. When a man prays, but is much moved with dislike of himself, because he prays no better;

meditates, but blames himself, because his meditations are so shattered and distracted; is merciful, but is angry against himself, because he is not more merciful: this man's growth is a sound, perfect, and sincere growth; but when he performeth these duties so, that he is good in his own eyes, because of the performance of them; this is but a shooting up of a blade, that after will wither and come to nothing. The fruitful branch, in his fruitfulness sees so many wants, that he is humbled thereby, the unfruitful branch is so satisfied with his shows of fruitfulness, that he still magnifieth himself, and despiseth others, being increased in pride, by the increase of those things that seem good in him. It is a most manifest thing in all true godly men, that when all men else do perceive them to grow, and commend them for it, they do most complain and condemn themselves for want of growth; for they are so still carried onward to that y e is before thē, as they forget that that is behind: but the dissembler so looketh behind him, and forgetteth what is before, that he stands admiring himself for that which he hath already done, and thinks he is better than this man, and that man, and compareth and preferreth himself before others. Again, the godly man doth commend others that are better than himself, and beholds their goodness with great liking and approbation, being discontented with himself that he is outstripped by them: but the Hypocrite is moved with envy and indignation against those that go beyond him, and will have some quarrel to pick against their (as he counteth it) over-forwardliness. The godly man saith still, he is an unprofitable servant; the Hypocrite brags of his service, and glories in himself that he is increased in wealth. Now then, consider if thy growth in goodness be accompanied with a growth in humility, and in an abasing of thyself, and thinking better of others, then of thyself; or if it be joined with conceit of thyself, and magnifying thyself above others, and envy against them that seem to obscure thy praises: and if it be with thee in the former manner, thou growest indeed, and must enjoy comfort; if in the latter manner, thou growest alone in

show, and hast no right nor interest into this comfort. But further, the good man will say against himself, Alas, I do not grow, I do not bring forth more fruit. I demand then, Upon what ground is it that thou chargest thyself with not growing? Is it because thou findest thyself not all out so able to continue praying and mourning, as in sometimes heretofore? I answer, that the true Christian is likely most affectionate at the first, by reason of the strange alteration that he finds in himself. But say, Is not thine heart more abased now, in the sense of thy faults? Art thou not more sharp against thyself, more favorable to others? Is not thine heart now more carried with a respect of God, less with a respect of thyself? Doest thou not become more hardly conceit of thyself, then formerly? Surely when a man's mind is more and more alienated from himself, then he grows most, though he seem to himself least to grow, and though he think himself less able to perform many good duties, then formerly he was. Wherefore now let all God's servants stay up their hearts with divine consolations, and gather to themselves a joyful assurance of their being upright, by their increase in fruitfulness. When a rich man casts over his accounts, and findeth his stock to be greater than it was, and his revenues to be enlarged, O how his heart leapeth within him, and what good it doth him, to perceive that he is increased in wealth! Why should not the godly man, whose wealth is inward and spiritual, perceiving the stock of virtue to be augmented, and his two Talents to have gained other two, behold this with much praise to God, and with a great deal of content and peace in himself? We are bound in conscience to see and acknowledge the goodness of God this way, and to prepare ourselves for a further increase, by taking delight in the gains which we have already made to ourselves in the trade of godliness. I deny not, but that a godly man must still consider how far he is removed from the goal of perfection, and comparing himself with the Law, complain much of himself for being unprofitable. But there is no contradiction betwixt these two. A man may well consider of his wants, to be humbled in them; and yet

withal, take notice of his increase to be joyed in that: both must be done, and the one of these will exceedingly help to the doing of the other. If we do not join these two together, we shall find much inconvenience by separating them. He that still thinketh how much he is able to do in the work of obedience, and doth not seasonably mind himself of his many defects, shall be in danger of swelling and puffing up. But he that always looks to his wants and imperfections, and doth not sometimes raise up his heart in the meditation of the work of grace within him, which hath edified and built him up in godliness, and made the little he had at first, far more then it was, shall become hereby dejected, uncheerful, and unthankful. Wherefore, feed humility with the one of these cogitations, and thankfulness with the other. It is yielded, that thou art, as Paul saith, nothing; yea, less than nothing, in comparison of what thou shouldest: but again, thou art something, in comparison of what thou wast, and what thou shouldest have been, but for the work of God's grace in thee.

Acknowledge therefore, to the glory of the Vine, and the Husbandman, and to the consolation of thine own heart: Lord, what by thy Word, what by afflictions, what by one or other means that thou hast used and blessed, and by the gracious assistance of thy Spirit, in, and with all: I do truly perceive myself to be in some measure confirmed and strengthened in grace, my faith is stronger, my patience more steadfast, mine heart more set upon heavenly things, my care of shunning all sin, and the occasions thereof, my desire of serving thee in all obedience, more constant and earnest then it hath been. Blessed be thy name, thou art indeed a good Husbandman, and by thy good husbandry, hast made me, that else should have been a dry and barren branch, to be somewhat fruitful, and to increase in fruitfulness. Virtue is then improved to the best, when it is put to the use, of making our souls to give more glory to God, and to take more comfort in him.

FINIS.

MONERGISM BOOKS

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