to further us herein; for the matter is of great importance whereabout we goe.

Here some will say, We like this well; but true Religion hath alwaies many enemies and few hearty friends: besides, if a man runne this way, he must runne alone, and suffer many crosses and reproches. *Ans.* This is most true: and therefore the holy Ghost addeth, That we must runne this race with *patience*: We must not be discouraged because of these crosses and afflictions; but labour with patience to beare that part of afflictions, what-ever it bee, that shall light upon us in our journey. This is Christs counsell to his Disciples, Luke 21. 19. *Possesse your soules in patience*: as if hee should say, If you would save your soules, you must labour to beare all crosses that fall on you with patience. In the parable, Luk. 8. 15. *They that receive* A *the seed in good ground, are they which with an honest and good heart heare the word and keep it, and bring forth fruit.* But how? *with patience.* Every one that heares Gods Word, and makes conscience thereof, will have enemies to scoffe and mocke, and to afflict him; which the devill sets a worke to hinder the growth of the Word in his heart: but must hee therefore cease to bring forth fruit? no, he must bring forth fruit *with patience.* And so must we doe in the race of true religion: for crosses, afflictions, and mockings will come; but these stormes must not turne us backe: nay, the more they beat upon us, the more must we arme our selves with patience, by which we shall be able to beare them all. And thus much for this third duty; as also of the exhortation unto constancy in the faith, after the example of all these godly Fathers.

FINIS.

A godly and learned

EXPOSITION OR COMMENTARIE VPON THE THREE FIRST CHAPTERS OF the REVELATION.

Preached in CAMBRIDGE by that reverend and judicious Divine, Mr. WILLIAM PERKINS, Ann. Dom. 1595. published for the benefit of Gods Church by ROBERT HILL, Bachelour of Divinitie.

The third Edition,

Revised and enlarged after a more perfect Copy, at the request of Mr. PERKINS Executors, by THOMAS PIERSON Preacher of Gods Word.

Hereunto is prefixed an Analysis of the Vision in these three Chapters.

PROV. 13. 9. and PROV. 4. 18.

The light of the righteous rejoyceth by increase, shining more and more unto the perfect day: But the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

LONDON,
Printed by IOHN HAVILAND,
1631.

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFVLL AND VERTVOVS LADY, THE LADY Elizabeth Mountagu OF HEMINGTON in North-Hamptonshire,

Grace and peace.

VST cause there was (Right Worshipfull) as well in respect of the Reverend Author, whose rest is now in glory, as also of the godly Reader, whose good herein claimes speciall stroke; that some refining hand should recommend unto the Church of God, a more perfect copie of this godly exposition, than the first Edition hereof did afford: & yet no cause I find, why your worthy Children, who no doubt for the Authors sake, did more gratefully accept former dedication, should by me be deprived of their right: Nay, rather as they in heart (I am perswaded) did highly honour the Author for his double labour in Christs Vineyard; so I doe rejoyce this recompence is returned for their love, That with this worke, their memory with posterity shall long indure. And sith my paines herein yeelds me this right, to make choyce of some, to whom I also may commend the patronage hereof; I doe presume to present the same unto your Ladiship. If this be any kindnesse on my behalfe, I confesse it is farre short of your desert, and of my desire: some others (I know) may challenge mo herein, as unmindfull of their love; yet because God may offer me opportunity hereafter, to give them good content this way, I will intreat their patience for this time, that I may joyne the Mother with the Children in this worke of love, to afford tuition to these godly labours of the dead. It sits you best (good Madam) in sundry respects; for neither will your children complaine of your admission into the society of their right, nor you esteeme the lesser hereof, because of their claime hereto by former possession. They are your owne, and you theirs; this comes unto you all, as unto one, accounting your united love farre greater safety: and looke what grace it findes by your protection, like grace it yeelds by many a good instruction. Salomon *saith,* [a] Good understanding maketh acceptable (*meaning to such as feare God,* for fooles [b] hate knowledge) *how welcome then will this be unto you,* who [c] have said unto Wisdome, thou art my sister, *and doe esteeme the words of her mouth,*

a Prov. 13. 15.
b Prov. 1. 22.
c Prov. 7. 4.

mouth, [d] The joy and rejoycing of your hearts *sith herein you shall finde on every leafe some pleasant fruit of the tree of life: a taste whereof I will here set before you, that you may judge the better of the store. When the Disciples hearts were full of griefe for Christs departure then at hand,* Philip *said unto him in the name of all,* [e] Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth. *Loe* * *here, behold and you shall see, not the* Father *alone, but with the* Father *the* Spirit of grace, *and with them both, the* * Sonne of God, *so lively described to your view, that you may truly say of this knowledge, (God sanctifying it unto your soule)* * It is eternall life. *When Christ would hearten his Disciples for the great worke of their ministery, he doth it by the promise of his presence, saying,* [h] Behold, I am with you alway. *The evidence and fruit whereof, you shall* * *hereby so well perceive, that hereupon I trust, both you and many moe will learne to say with* David *in temptation,* [e] I have set the Lord before mee alway; for he is at my right hand, therefore I shall not slide: *And with* Ieremy *in affliction,* [d] The Lord is with me like a mighty Giant, therefore my persecutors shall bee overthrowne, and shall not prevaile. *What shall I say more? It would be too long to speake of the dignity of Christs Church and ministerie here handled at large: and to instance in particulars, thorow the seven Epistles to these seven Churches of Asia: only this, in the* Preface *of each Epistle, learne what* Christ *is in himselfe and to his Church; in the* Matter, *behold the state of every Church, and see what Christ approveth, and what his soule detesteth; in the* Conclusion, *see his bounty towards his children, and the duty of all to him againe. The handling of these things will much delight your Christian heart: for beside the* [e] Plaine evidence of the Spirit, *in opening the Text, which is best pleasing unto God, and most profitable to his Church (wherein this godly Author had a speciall grace) the application is so fit and pertinent to our times, that I had wel nigh said, Hee did foresee what wee now behold; and hath foretold what we for our* lukewarmnesse *and* decay *in love, may justly feare:* [f] Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. *Hold fast that which you have, be faithfull unto the death, and the Lord will give you the crowne of life.* [g] For God is not unrighteous that he should forget your workes and labour of love, which you have shewed toward his name, in that you have ministred unto the Saints, and yet doe minister. Now the God of hope [h] fill you with all joy and peace in beleeving, *and increase your joy* by the constant walking [i] of your children in the truth: *yea, the same Lord,* [k] make all grace so to abound towards you all, that alwaies having all-sufficiency in all things, you may abound in every good worke, [l] which is by Iesus Christ, unto the praise and glorie of God; *unto whose gracious protection both now and ever I humbly commend your Ladiship, with your godly family.* *London, December* 10. 1606.

Your Ladiships to command.

Thomas Pierson.

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFVLL SIR EDWARD MOVNTAGV, Sir Walter Mountagu, Sir Henry Mountagu, and Sir Charles Mountagu, Knights, M. Iames Mountagu, Doctor of Divinity, Deane of *his Majesties Chappell, and M. Sidney Mountagu, Esquire, the Lady Susan Sandys, and* the Ladie Theodosia Capell, children of that right worthy and religious Sir Edward *Mountague of Boughton in the Countie of North-Hampton Knight, and of the Ladie* Elizabeth his worthy Wife, Sister to the Right Honourable Sir John Harington Baron of Exton, and Father to the vertuous *Lady the Countesse of Bedford,* Grace and Peace.

RIght Worshipfull, as the Patriarch *Iacob* had [a] twelve sonnes; so Christ the *Messiah* had [b] twelve Disciples: but as *Ioseph* was beloved above [c] all those sonnes, so *Iohn* was beloved above [d] all the Disciples. *Ioseph* was apparelled better than the rest, and *Iohn* was inspired farre better than the rest. [e] Had it not beene for *Ioseph* Ægypt had wanted her food temporall; and had it not beene for *Iohn*, the Church had wanted her food eternall. [f] The future state of Ægypt was revealed to *Ioseph*, and the future estate of the Church was revealed to *Iohn*. The one [g] was exiled, because his father loved him; and the other exiled, because his master loved him. The place of his exile was into the [h] Island of Pathmos, being before by *Trajan* put into a vessell of [i] scalding oyle. But that God who shewed his visions to [k] *Abraham* in the mount, to [l] *Iacob* in the field, to [m] *Ioseph* in the stockes, to [n] *Moses* in Midian, to *Ieremy* in the [o] prison, to [p] *Daniel* in Babylon, and to the Apostle *Peter* [q] in the house of a Tanner, even hee sheweth his visions to *Iohn* in his exile.

He is not bound to persons, hee can advance whom he list; he is not bounden to place, he can reveale where he list. For persons, hee can preferre [r] *Abel* before *Cain*, [s] *Iacob* before *Esau*, [t] *David* before *Eliab*, [u] *Matthias* before *Iudas*. He can make * *Moses* a Courtier, [x] *Ieb* a Patentate, [y] *Samuel* a Iudge, [z] *David* a King, [a] *Salomon* a Soveraigne, [b] *Elisha* a plow-man, [c] *Amos* a neat-herd, [d] *Ieremy* a Priest, [e] *Daniel* a Prince, *Isaiah* [f] of the blood Royall, [g] *Matthew* a Publican, [h] *Peter* a Fisher, and [i] *Paul* a Tent-maker, to be penners and preachers of the word of God. For place, as no time can prescribe against the King of a nation, so no place can prescribe against this King of all nations: [k] *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and the spirit worketh where it listeth.*

It pleased *Christ*, who is called in this Revelation, that [a] *faithfull witnesse, that first begotten of the dead,* [b] that Prince *of the Kings of the earth,* [c] *Alpha and Omega*, the first *and last,* [d] *he that hath the Keyes of hell and of death,* [e] *which hath that sharpe sword,* [f] *his eyes like fire, his* [g] *feet like brasse,* [h] *the seven Spirits of God, the seven Starres in his hand,* [i] *the key of David*, who is called here [k] *Amen, the beginning of the creatures of God*; and in *Daniel*, he that [l] revealeth *secrets*, it pleased this *Christ* to reveale secrets to *Iohn*. Not by dreame, as to [m] *Iacob*; or apparition, as to [n] *Moses*; or by voyce, as to [o] *Adam*; but partly by vision, and partly by voyce, as he did when he turned [p] *Saul* into *Paul*. This *Iohn* was *Leanus à Latere*, that Embassadour who leaned on his Lords breast. He written Christs history, and there hee sheweth his love unto Christ: hee written the Churches historie, there Christ sheweth his love unto him; above all this, that hee will doe nothing, which hee doth not reveale to his [q] *fellow* the Prophet. For the Church in his time, we may see how it stood, in the three first Chapters, and what condition it should have for the time to come, it is plainly set downe in the rest of this booke. If we respect the generall estate of the Church, after *Iohn* had described the

Iohn was

Authors of this Revelation, which are God the Father, chap. 4. and Christ his Sonne, chap. 5. he commeth to the workes of God, which are predictions, chap. 6. obsignations, chap. 7. indignations, chap. 8, 9. Predictions of things to come, obsignations of such as must be saved, and indignation on things to be destroyed. And for the more particular estate of the Church, having (chap. 10.) shewed his warrant to write, hee commeth to her actions: first, in her Prophets; secondly, in her body. In her Prophets, their fighting, falling, rising, chap. 11. In her body, comparing her to a woman cloathed with the Sunne, chap. 12. and describing her by her combats, conquests, triumphs: her combats defensive, chap. 13. and offensive in Christ by words, chap. 14. threatnings, chap. 15. and judgements, chap. 16. her victories gotten against that [r] whore, chap. 17. and 18. the [t] Beast, chap. 19. and the [u] Dragon, chap. 20. And all that glory which she shall have in the Kingdome of God, is under the type of Ierusalem most comfortably set downe, chap. 21, 22.

The things in this Booke were (I grant) very darke to them that lived in the daies of *Iohn*, as the Prophecie of *Daniel* was to them who lived in the time of *Daniel*. But as that Prophecie being fulfilled, we can now tell what was foretold in it; so, many things being fulfilled which were foretold in this booke, wee may easily see what is meant by it: and the posterity to come shall better understand this booke than we doe, because it may be all things are not yet fulfilled. Neither is this booke like the cities of the [a] *Anakims*; or the [*] *tree of knowledge*, which may not be reached to: for [z] *Blessed is hee that readeth the words of this booke*. But to come to these three Chapters written by *Iohn* surnamed the Divine, and expounded by one, a most worthy Divine. The first Chapter is a Proeme or Preface to the booke: the two latter are Epistles dedicating this booke. The dedication is made to [y] seven severall Churches, and by name to the Ministers which are called *Angels*. In the Word of God, Ministers have many excellent titles given them, (though now they are scarcely graced with titles) they are called [a] *Prophets*, [b] *Seers*, [b] *Remembrancers*, [c] *Trumpets*, [d] *Watchmen*, [e] *Husbandmen*, [f] *Stewards*, [g] *Maidens*, [h] *Fishers*, [i] *Leaders*, [k] *Elders*, [l] *Salt*, [m] *Starres*, [n] *Angels*, and [o] *Shepherds*: *Prophets* to teach, *Seers* to foretell, *Remembrancers* to put in minde, *Trumpets* to sound, *Watchmen* to admonish, *Husbandmen* to plow up, *Stewards* to distribute, *Maidens* to keepe pure the doctrine of truth, *Fishers* to catch men, *Leaders* to go before, *Elders* to governe, *Salt* to season, *Starres* to give light, *Angels* to declare, and *Shepherds* to feed; to feed (I say) soundly by doctrine, liberally by charity, and religiously by life. By doctrine: for *Sacerdos sine doctrina, est navis sine velis*, a Priest without knowledge is a Ship without saile. By liberality: [p] for *Nihil habet homo adeò divinum quàm benefacere*, Man is in nothing more like God, than in doing good. By life: *Cujus vita despicitur, ejus oratio contemnitur*: his words are nor esteemed, whose life is not approved. And that it may be said of them as it was of *Origen*, *Quale habuit verbum, talem habuit vitam*, as his words were, so were his workes. They must not be barren like Mount [q] *Gilboah*, but [r] weaned as *Samuel* was, before they be offered unto the Lord. They must bee pure water, if they will cleanse others, and more than whetstones if they will sharpen others. They must be in [s] integrity *Abrahams*, in meeknesse [t] *Moses*, [u] in knowledge *Aarons*, [x] in paines *Pauls*, [y] and in praying *Samuels*: and remember, that as *Augustine* said, *Manus pauperum sunt gazophylacium Christi*, The hands of the poore are the treasury of Christ. I need not speake much of the duty of a Minister, for every one will teach him his duty, that will not be ranged within any duty himselfe.

These Churches were then like [1] *Davids* Worthies, excellent above all the Churches of the world: but because they *lost their first* [k] *love, were not* [l] *faithfull to the death, maintained* [m] *the doctrine of Balaam*, [n] *suffered women to teach*, [o] *have a name onely to live*, [p] *has but a little strength*, [q] *were neither hot nor cold*, and [r] *repented not as they should have done, of all their sinnes*, they are reprehended by *John*, threatned by Christ, and the *Candlesticke* of the Gospell is now taken away from them: *Iam seges est ubi Troja fuit*: Now *Mahomet* rageth, where *Messiah* did raigne. Are they reprehended? let us hearken: are they threatned? let us feare: are they fallen? let us labour to continue. From *Iohns* reprehension we see, *That* (as one saie) *hereof our Elders have complained, hereof doe wee complaine, and hereof they which live after us will complaine, that men wax worse*; and here

not according to the doctrine of Gods Word. From Christs threatnings we see, that God is mercifull, [f] who first *offereth peace* before hee fight against us, that wee being fore-warned, might be fore-armed. And by the wofull downfall of these seven Churches, *let* [t] *us that stand take heed that we fall not*: for if God spared not the [u] old *world* who despised *Noah*, the *Sodomites* who vexed *Lot*, [*] *Ierusalem* which abused the Prophets, [x] *Colossa*, *Hierapolis*, and *Laodicea* who rejected *Paul*, and these Asian Churches who did not grow in righteousnesse as they did in riches, how shall we escape, [y] *if we neglect so great salvation*? and for this cause these Sermons are most worthy to be considered of in this present age. O then let us now [z] *consider this season*: [a] *redeeme the opportunitie*, [b] *not harden our hearts*, but regard the time of our present visitation. As the day openeth and shutteth with the Sunne, so salvation openeth and shutteth with the Gospell, [c] *Whilst it is called to day, let us heare his voice*: [d] *He that laboureth in Summer is the sonne of wisdome, but he that sleepeth in harvest is the sonne of confusion.*

All things in the world doe take their time, the bird to build her nest, the *husbandman* to sow his seed, the *Mariner* to goe to Sea, the *Gardiner* to set his trees, the sicke patient to take physicke, the *Cooke* to season meats, and the *Dresser* of the Vineyard to gather his fruit. It will be too late to build in Summer, to sow in Harvest, to goe to Sea when the Ship is launched, to transplant Trees when they are old, to take Physicke when we are dying, to season Meats when they are unsavoury, and when Winter is come to gather fruit. The [a] five foolish Virgins came too late, *Dives* [b] in hell repenteth too late, the time present is only ours. Is the fig-tree fruitlesse? it shall heare that sentence, [c] *Never fruit grow on thee any more*. [d] *Get thee thine righteousnesse before thou come to judgement: use Physicke before thou be sicke, and whilest thou maiest yet sinne, shew thy conversion*, as the wise man exhorteth every man. But alas, whereunto shall I liken this generation? We are like the *Ephesians*, we have [e] lost our first love; or the *Laodiceans*, we are [f] neither hot nor cold: or the *twilight*, neither day nor night: or the *Autumne*, neither faire nor foule: or one sicke of an Ague, one day well, another ill: or a man in a *Lethargie*, neither alive nor dead: or *Hermaphroditus*, neither male nor female: or to those creatures called Αμφίβια, which live in water or on land: or the *Lionesse*, which the oftner she breedeth, the fewer cubs shee beareth: or the *Marriner*, who is only good in a storme; or the *Marigold*, that shutteth and openeth with the Sun: or the *Mermaids*, which are halfe flesh and halfe fish. I would to God we were either hot or cold: that as the hottest regions bring forth sweetest spices, so most zealous people might be most fruitfull in good workes: that as the Sun in the Heaven is swiftest at her setting, so the sons of God might bee best at their ending. But is it so? no: the more we are taught, the more ignorant are many; and the older we are, the colder in Religion. We have indeed many of us, as it was said of *Aristogiton*: *Martem*, or rather *religionem in lingua*, religion in tongue: but when trial is made of us, every [g] *Phocion* can espy our halting, and then with [h] *Archilocus* we thinke it better, *clypeum abjecere, quam interire*, even to cast off all Religion, than to undergoe the least disgrace for Religion.

[i] The *Moone* desiring to be apparelled as the rest of the Planets, answer was made her, That her divers changes could admit no kinde of habit: and we desiring to be attired with the robes of Christians, it is to be feared, that since we *tread* [k] *not the Moone under our feet*, we shall never be cloathed as the Church was, with the [l] *Sunne*. [m] *Who is wise, and he shall understand these things*; *and prudent, and he shall know them*. Let us therefore labour to [n] *grow in grace*, to abound in knowledge, to be full of good workes, and to overcome all the underminers of our future salvation. Then shall wee [o] *eat of the tree of life*, not be *hurt of the second death, taste of the hidden Manna, have power over nations, be cloathed in white, made pillars in Gods Temple, and sit with Christ Iesus in the throne of his Father*. And though the [p] *sonne of Ishai* cannot make us Captaines of thousands, yet that *Sonne of David* will [q] make us the sonnes of God. That wee may doe so, wee must *beleeve the Gospell, put on Christ Iesus*, and be renued by *repentance*. The first is necessary, the second comely, the third profitable. To come to the first; it is necessary we should beleeve: for *he that* [r] *beleeveth not, is condemned already*, hee is condemned in the counsell of God, in the ministerie of the word, and in his owne conscience, and he shall be

condemned

condemned in the day of judgement; for [f] *the wrath of God abideth upon him.* The more I consider the fruits of faith, the more I see the necessity of faith. Through [a] it we are *saved*, [a] by it we are *justified*, [a] in it we *live*. We are saved from Satan, justified before God, and live in the Church. In the Church? nay, by it we live in Heaven: for [x] *He that beleeveth in the Son of God, hath everlasting life.* Faith is that which [y] *purifieth the heart*, maketh the whole man to [z] *runne the waies of Gods Commandements*, [a] *giveth entrance to grace*, [b] *accesse to God in prayer*, [c] *made the Elders well reported of*, and each Christian to [d] *stand* in the profession of Christ. It is that [e] *hand* by which we must apprehend Christ: [f] that *shield* by which wee resist all the fiery darts of the Devill: and that [g] meanes by which we doe good to others. [h] By faith we *receive the spirit*, [i] *we are members of Christ*, [k] *we are risen with him*, [l] *he dwelleth in our hearts*, [m] *we feed on him continually*, [n] *resist Satan*, [o] *are the children of God*, [p] *and the Word which we heare becommeth profitable.* And what shall I say? faith is of such a quality, that it [q] *uniteth us to Christ*, [r] maketh us *certaine* of our salvation, [s] *bold in our profession*, ministreth [t] *true joy*, [u] giveth temporall *blessings*, [x] sanctifieth our *gifts*, and maketh us refuse the [x] *pleasures* of this present world. In a word, no sinne can condemne him who hath this true faith, and no vertue can save him who wanteth it.

To come to the second, which is Christ, the object of faith. The most comely garment that ever we can weare, is to be covered with the [y] robes of *Christs* righteousnesse: [z] *Iacob* was blessed by *Esaus* garments; and we are blessed by *Christs* garments. What we see thorow a greene glasse seemeth all to be greene: and what God seeth through *Christ*, it is all amiable. We must put on this apparell, not as the Church in the *Canticles*: [a] *I have put off my clothes, how shall I put them on againe?* or as a gowne that wee cast off when we come to our home; but we must so put him on, that we never put him off againe. Wee must put him on by imputation, imitation, infusion, and profession: by *imputation* of his righteousnesse, *imitation* of his vertues, *infusion* of his Spirit, and *profession* of his name. Thus we must labour to get *Christ*: for what though a man could command the earth with *Alexander*, the [b] Sea with *Moses*, the [c] fire with *Eliah*, and the [d] Sunne with *Iosuah*? What though he were as rich as [e] *Salomon*, as wise as [f] *Achitophel*, as strong as [g] *Sampson*, as swift as [h] *Ahimaaz*, as beautifull as [i] *Absalom*, as fortunate as [k] *Metellus*, and descended as [l] *Paul* was, of the bloud royall of Princes? yet having not Christ, he hath nothing. Yea, say a man had the abstinence of *Aristides*, the innocency of *Phocion*, the holinesse of *Socrates*, the almes-deeds of *Cimon*, the moderation of *Camillus*, the honesty, justice, and faithfulnesse of both *Catoes*; all these out of *Christ*, were but [m] *splendida peccata*, and to be esteemed as [n] dung, in regard of *Christ*. For have him, and have all things; want him, and want all things; he is in, at, and after death *advantage*. I come to the last: it is profitable to repent: for if we [o] *turne* to the Lord, he will turne to us: and that we may turne, consider his [p] *mercies* in forgiving, his [q] *benefits* in giving, his [r] *patience* in forbearing, and his [s] *judgements* in punishing: The [t] *Word* preached, [u] *sinnes* committed, and that [x] *few* shall be saved: the [x] *shortnesse* of life, the [y] *uncertainty* of life, and [z] the *certainty* of death: the *joyes* of [a] Heaven, the *torments* [b] of Hell, the [c] *comfort* of the Elect, and that else we can have no [d] *comfort* in death; [e] *pray* we cannot, unlesse we repent; and [f] *perish* we shall, unlesse we repent; but blessed shall we be if we doe repent. But *manum de tabula, Magister adest*: this discourse following will teach us these things: and it am I bold to present unto your Worships. *John* sent his Revelation to many Churches; and I present his Epistles to many worthy personages; and to whom may I better present them than to you. *John* was a Disciple full of love, and you are brethren full of love. The Preacher of these *Lectures* was well knowne to many, but to none better than to many of you, especially to those who were in my time worthy members of that most worthy [g] *College* with him. And the rather I doe it, that times to come may rejoyce in the Lord, that from one honourable root have issued so many profitable branches to the Church. You are six brethren as pillars of your house, there were three sisters as fruitfull Vines of the same; one is not, but is with the Lord, and her I knew a Lady of admirable vertues: the other two are, and long may they be so. You are all brethren, by *nature* of one venter, *nation* of one country, *grace* of one spirit, *affection* of one heart, *fortune* in great favour, and of one hope by your holy behaviour. And concerning [a] brotherly love, I need not write unto you:

[f] Iohn 3. 36.
[a] Rom. 5. 9.
[a] Rom. 1. 17.
[a] Hab. 2. 4.
[x] Iohn 3. 36.
[y] Act. 15. 9.
[z] Psal. 119. 32.
[a] Rom. 5. 2.
[b] Iob 27. 9.
[c] 1 Cor. 1. 5.
[d] Eph. 6. 14.
[e] Heb. 11. 33.
[f] Eph. 6. 16.
[g] Act. 9. 36.
[h] Iohn 15. 26.
[i] Iohn 14. 17.
[k] Rom. 6. 4.
[l] Eph. 3. 17.
[m] Iohn 6. 56.
[n] Iam. 4. 7.
[o] Rom. 8. 16.
[p] Iohn 15. 3.
[q] Iohn 3. 36.
[r] Rom. 5. 1.
[s] Iohn 5. 24.
[t] Iohn 16. 33.
[u] Iohn 1. 29.
[x] Iohn 1. 17.
[y] Iohn 3. 34.
[z] Iohn 1. 14.
[a] Cant. 5. 3.
[b] Iob 14. 4.
[c] 2 King. 1. 10.
[d] Iosuah 10. 12.
[e] 1 King. 3. 12.
[f] 2 Sam. 15. 12.
[g] Iudges 16. 28.
[h] 2 Sam. 18. 19.
[i] 2 Sam. 14. 25.
[k] Plutarch.
[l] Act. 13. 8.
[m] Augustine.
[n] Phil. 3. 10.
[o] Iob 22. 23.
[p] Leviticus 26. 40.
[q] Rom. 2. 4.
[r] Iob 10. 12.
[s] Rom. 2. 5.
[t] Iob 36. 10.
[u] Iob 7. 20.
[x] Psal. 119. 96.
[y] Iob 14. 5.
[z] Heb. 9. 27.
[a] Luke 16. 22.
[b] Luke 16. 23.
[c] Psal. 90. 11.
[d] Iob 3. 17.
[e] Iob 27. 9.
[f] Luke 13. 3.
[g] Iohn 15. 16.
[h] 1 Cor. 2. 9.
[i] Matt. 25. 46.
[k] Luke 15. 10.
[l] Act. 13. 41.
[m] Ier. 7.
[n] Iob 22. 22.
[o] Act. 20. 40.

[a] Christs College.

[b] Mrs Lady Wray.

[a] 1 Thes. 4. 9.

you: *for you are taught of God to love one another.* Your [b] *Scilurus* at his death need not to teach you concord, by giving each of you a sheafe of Arrowes, which cannot well be broken whilest they are conjoyned: for you by your amity make your selves invincible. If [c] *Chilo* the Lacedemonian died for joy to see one sonne crowned at *Olympus*, and [d] *Diagoras Rhodius* did the like, when his three children gat the garland at a wrestling: and [e] *Iacob* so rejoyced to heare of his sonne *Ioseph*, to be advanced greatly in the Kingdom of Ægypt; how might that happy Father of yours rejoyce, to see at one time one sonne sitting as high *Sheriffe* of the shire, another *preaching* before the Iudges of the Assize, and the third *pleading* as Counsellor at the bar, and all the rest of great expectation in the Kingdome? Thus *wise* [f] *Sons are a joy to their Parents*, and all may behold [g] *how good and comely a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.* *Aristotle* could say, that Parents were not blessed, unlesse they were after their death blessed in their children. And surely it is no small part of a Fathers blessednesse, to see his children like to flourish when he is gone. Nay, of all monuments that Parents can leave behinde them, there is none (as one saith) like to a vertuous sonne. But all Parents are not to be blessed. [h] *Adams* two sonnes could not agree in one field, [i] *Abrahams* in one house, [k] *Isaacs* in one wombe, [l] *Davids* in one Palace, nor *two* [m] *brethren* in the division of an inheritance. And though concord amongst brethren (especially such as divide the inheritance) be very rare, yet doe you even in this, most comfortably agree. You are not as *Simeon* and *Levi*, *Romulus* and *Rhemus*, *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, *Atreus* and *Thyestes*, *Æta* and *Perseus*: but as *Castor* and *Pollux*, *David* and *Ionathan*, *Ioseph* and *Benjamin*; and (as a true friend is described to bee) [n] one soule in two bodies. It seemeth that as *Agrippa* the brother of *Augustus* was beholding to *Salust* for that one sentence, *Small things increase by concord, but perish through discord*: so you have all learned the same lesson, as being perswaded, that as the members of a body being once disinembred, they cannot possibly be joyned againe; so if naturall brethren be once unnaturally disjoyned, no glue will conjoyne them fast againe. It were infinite to shew examples of brotherly love and hatred, and [o] others have eased me of this paines. Now that good God, who hath brought you from one root, placed you in one country, advanced you to like credit, and given you one heart, give you also one inheritance in the Kingdome of Heaven. Thus, right Worshipfull, I am bold to speake unto you, and the world knoweth I speake the truth, and the Lord knoweth I desire not to flatter. Goe on therefore I beseech you, continue in love, be setled in the truth, and labour to honour him who thus honoureth you. Be not carried away with the shew [p] of this world, but thinke Religion the best nobilitie, and that [q] as *Prudentius* saith,

Generosa Christi secta nobilitat vires,
Cui quisquis servit, ille verè est nobilis.
He noble is that comes of Christ his race:
Who serves this Lord, he surely is not base.

And this made *Theodosius*, more to thanke God that he was a Christian, than a King; considering that he must lose the one, he could not lose the other. Now as to one of you I am bounden in particular; and by him, being a Minister, the despised Ministery is not a little graced: so for him I pray, that he may be an [a] *Abraham* to our *Abimelech*, a [b] *Nathan* to our *David*, a [c] *Iehoiada* to our *Ioash*, an [d] *Ebedmelech* to *Ieremiah*, an [e] *Elisha* to the widow of this Prophet deceased, a light in the Court, and a trumpet in the Church, and that [f] *Ahasuerus* may long hold out his golden Sceptre unto him: that by his meanes, [g] *great men may not want such as will tell them the truth*: not [h] earthly *Alexander* accounted a sonne of *Iupiter*, and that no man be more respected than a good [i] Pastor, and that he may ever remember that saying of wise *Solomon*, [k] *He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips, the King shall be his friend.* His *Cyrus* will not be spoken to, *verbis bisimis*, in silken words; to his *Alexander* he needeth not speake [illegible], either sweet words, or no words. For if one *Antiochus* might bee surnamed *Holy*, and another good Prince called the *Good King*: much more may he, whose religious knowledge surpasseth all the Princes that have beene of this Nation; and whose humility is such, that he will have his sonne to remember, *that* [l] *bee differeth not in stuffe, but in use from the rest of the people, and that by Gods ordinance.* I am the bolder for that one, to make

[b] Which had eighty sonnes. Plut.

[c] Theatr. Philos. p. 194.
[d] Arist. Gold. 3. Nicolai.
[e] Gen. 45. 10.

[f] Prov. 10. 1.
[g] Psal. 133. 1. Eth. 10. bib.

[h] Gen. 4.
[i] Gen. 21. 9.
[k] Gen. 25. *Fratrum gratia rarum.*
[l] 1 King. 1. 11. Luke 12. 13.

[n] [illegible] *Sunt sub [illegible] gronovius.*

[o] See Franc. Academ. pag. 542. &c.

[p] *Tudimur hoc & [illegible] evangelium mundi.* Tertullian. Apolog. c. 39.

Hist. Eccles. M. Doctor Montagu.

[a] Gen. 20.
[b] 2 Sam. 21.
[c] 2 King. 11.
[d] Ier. 38.
[e] 2 King. 4. 1.
[f] Hester 6. 2.
[g] *Dictum regis, dictum regius qui vocant Iesus.*
[h] *Plutarch. in vita Alexandri reports, that his sister Priests called Alexander the son of Iupiter sonne.*
[i] *Chrysostom Homil. 9. p. 42.*
[k] Prov. 22. 11.

[l] Basilius Magnus. p. 55. *Quidam vere regalia.*

make choice of all in the Dedication of this booke: no man knew, loved, conversed with, and respected this *Author* more than he. He resorted to him in his health, visited him in sicknesse, and preached a learned Sermon for him at his death. Concerning this Author, as he said of *Carthage*, I had rather be silent, than say little: and his worthy labours doe speake enough for him; by name, that his [m] *Posthume*, dedicated to his excellent Majestie, by an excellent [n] Divine. In a word therefore, whatsoever this man did, he desired to profit others by it; hee thought (as it is written [o] of *Bernard* in his life) that he was not his owne man, but deputed to the service of others. He was never idle, but as [p] *Ierome* reporteth of *Ambrose*, and *Bernard* of himselfe, hee did either *reade*, or *meditate*, or *pray*, or *conferre*, or *counsell*, or *comfort*, or *write*, or *preach*. And thus (as the [q] Emblème is of a faithfull Teacher) he like a wax candle, in giving light to others, in short time extinguished himselfe. Yet in this short time of his, what Art was he not master of? what vertue was he not endowed with? He was a compleat Divine, and hath his blessings in the Church, that no mans writings are tead of all sorts, and in all Countries, with greater grace and profit than his. He was peaceable in the Church, patient of wrongs, and free from ambition. For as *Ierome* said of *Nepotian*, *Aurum calcans, scheduias consectabatur*; hee regarded not his purse, but followed his booke: and as *Bernard* said, he lived *in terra auri sine auro*, in a Kingdome of gold without gold. An excellent gift he had to *define* properly, *divide* exactly, *dispute* subtilly, *answer* directly, *speake* gravely, and *write* judicially: and how he preached, if these *Sermons* doe give a testimony, what witnesse had they who often heard him themselves? I have published of his now two Discourses, and I onely did it, that these his labours might not perish: I have no benefit by them, but exceeding great paines. And since I understand that his other labours are in the hands of his friends, to make benefit for his children, I will ease my selfe of the like labour, and be a meanes that they may have the benefit of the future impression of this booke: the which, how faithfully I have published, I appeale to the godly and indifferent Reader, and I hope no honest minded man will be hired to calumniate it. Thus as one desirous to be *serviceable* in my calling, *profitable* to the Church, not *forgetfull* of my friend, and to testifie the happinesse of your house, which was in your Fathers time, and is now (as it is said of *Aureliam* the Emperours) *Refertapiis, & Ecclesia Dei*, replenished with the godly, and a Church of God: and withall, to leave a monument of my duty unto you all, I have as you see, published this Exposition of seven Epistles under your eight names, nothing doubting but it will be as welcome to you, as by your countenance it may be profitable to the Church. The God of Heaven give you all that blessing of blessings, which (if *Ierome* say true) few men have, that you may *transire à deliciis ad deliciae*, goe on from grace to grace, and bee a long time happy in this life, and for ever happy in the life to come. *London*: Saint *Martins* in the fields, from my worshipfull friend Master *Oldisworths* house, by which family (as *Paul* was by the house of *Onesiphorus*) in the time of this late (and I wish I may say) the last visitation, I have received no small refreshing. *March* 12. 1604.

Your worships to command,

Robert Hill:

Fellow of S. IOHN: College in *Cambridge*.

[m] Philipp. Thes.

[n] Sir Samuel Hieron fellow of Christ College.

[o] Bernard. vita lib. 2. cap. 1.

[p] Hieron. ad Sacerdotum.

[q] Ut doceat verba, vita quoque serviat.

[r] Hieron. ad Tullianum.

[s] 2 Tim. 1. 16.

To the Godly and Christian Reader,

Grace and Peace.

I Am not ignorant (good Reader) how ungratefull a thing it is to deale by way of censure or reformation, in those things wherein others have gone before: and many times for the smart that followeth, doe men beshrow their owne fingers. Yet the warrant of a good calling will breed peace in his conscience, that herein shall endeavour the observance of these rules of Love, to wit, [a] Judge the best of that which is done; and [b] referre his owne paines to the glory of God in the good of others: Hereto I aime in this third Edition of this booke. For my calling to this worke, when mine accusers stand forth, the executors of the dead shall answer for my discharge. And for mine endeavour to doe good; the small gaine of this revised worke, was truly returned to the right owners thereof: If thou therefore returne glory to God, for good received to thy soule, in this behalfe I have my desire. Here only rests the doubt, how this third Edition should not be prejudiciall to his good estimation that published the former: I answer, well enough: For I hope he intended [c] the glory of God in the good of his Church, and the credit of the reverend Author of this worke. Now if any addition bee brought hereunto, his intent is furthered, and wherein then can he be grieved? If one man should help poore Orphans to some lands or living, he would not thinke himselfe wronged by another, that should inlarge their just claimes, or settle their possession in a better tenure: so I trust it fareth in this worke; where thou shalt finde upon thy diligent view, in some doubtfull [d] things the Authors meaning truly cleared, his method reclised, many repetitions omitted, and the matter (specially towards the latter end) somewhat inlarged. If any thing be dissonant to the Authors judgement in his three-workes (which I hope thou shalt not perceive) rather charge the fault on me through ignorance, or misunderstanding, than entertaine in thy heart the least conceit of wavering levitie in so godly, learned, and judicious a Divine, who hath so well deserved of thy love, if thou love the truth. Thus craving thy favourable acceptance of my helping hand to doe thee good, I end with him, That is the beginning and the end: Let him that hath an eare heare what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

Thine in him, who is the Lord of all,

Thomas Pierson.

[a] 1 Cor. 13. 5. Love thinketh not evill.

[b] Iesek. 10 not her owne things.

[c] See his Preface towards the end.

[d] As touching the Images of the Trinitie pag. 53. col. 1.

A GENERALL ANALYSIS OF the Vision shewed to *John*.

- The three first Chapters consist of 2
  - Preface containing the
    - Title of the Booke, *viz. Apocalyps*, or *Revelation*, described by seven Arguments, *vers.* 1, 2, 3.
    - Inscription of the Vision, wherein is *Iohns*
      - Dedication, *To seven Churches.*
      - Salutation including the
        - Blessings wished for
          - Grace.
          - Peace.
          - *vers.* 4.
        - Authors of them, *viz.*
          - 1 *The Father.*
          - 2 *The holy Ghost.*
          - 3 The *Sonne*, who
            - is described by
              - His Offices,
                - Propheticall.
                - Priestly.
                - Kingly.
              - The execution of his office in foure workes:
                - 1 Loving us.
                - 2 Washing away our sinnes.
                - *vers.* 5.
                - 3 Making us Kings and Priests. *vers.* 6.
                - 4 Comming to judgement. *vers.* 7.
            - doth confirme the same description, *vers.* 8.
  - A vision containing
    - Circumstances foure:
      - Person to whom, *Iohn.* *vers.* 9.
      - Place where, *Isle Pathmos.*
      - Manner how, *In a traunce.*
      - Time when, *On the Lords day.* *vers.* 10.
    - Parts,
      - The entrance into it: containing
        - The meanes of *Iohns* preparation, *viz.* a voice, set out by
          - The place whence it came.
          - The greatnesse of it.
          - The matter of it, *vers.* 11.
          - *vers.* 10.
        - Parts of his preparation,
          - Hearing, noted in the meanes, *vers.* 10.
          - Turning himselfe, *vers.* 12.
      - Matter, *viz.* a representation of Christ in majestie, set out by
        - The place where *Iohn* saw him, *vers.* 13.
        - His forme or figure in
          - His attire, *vers.* 13.
          - The parts of his body, *vers.* 14, 15.
          - The properties thereof, *vers.* 16.
        - His actions,
          - 1 A confirmation of *Iohn* being sore afraid, *vers.* 17, 18.
          - 2 A commandement to write, *vers.* 19.
          - 3 The interpretation of the Vision, *vers.* 20.
          - 4 Seven severall commandements, to write seven Epistles to the seven Churches. *Chap.* 2. 3.

A GODLY AND LEARNED EXPOSITION OF the three first Chapters of the REVELATION.

REVELAT. I. 1.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly be done: which he sent, and shewed by his Angell unto his servant John.

BEfore wee come to the words, wherein is contained singular matter fit for this time and age, this question must bee handled; Whether this Booke of the *Revelation* be canonicall Scripture? For some have heretofore, as also in our time, called the authority of it in question. But wee are without all doubt, to resolve our selves that it is Canonicall Scripture, of equall authority with the rest of Gods Booke. Our reasons be these: First, the doctrine contained in this Booke is Apostolicall, as any shall perceive which seriously reads the same. Secondly, the stile of this booke is Apostolicall; that is, plaine, simple, and easie, if we consider that the matter thereof is Propheticall. Thirdly, this booke hath beene approved and received for Canonicall by the common consent of Gods Church in all ages since the daies of *Iohn*, and was never refused of any whole Church, but onely of some private men. Fourthly, the things foretold in this booke, come to passe as they were foretold: as among the rest (in one for all) may appeare by the Prophecie of the two beasts; whereof one came out of the Sea, the other out of the earth, Chapter 13. the one prefigured the Roman Empire, the other the Hereticall Apostolicall Church of Rome: both which in all things are come to passe in these latter ages, answerable to the Prophecie.

A The contrary reasons brought to improve the authoritie of this booke are of no moment. 1. *Reason. Iohn* nameth himselfe sundry times in this booke; whereas in penning the Gospell, hee did not once mention his owne name, though hee had just occasion so to doe: therefore it was not penned by Saint *Iohn*, but by some other, and published afterward in *Johns* name.

Answ. The reason is not good: for there is great difference betweene an Historie and a Prophecie. The Gospell of *Iohn* is an historie of Christ: now there is no necessary reason why one man penning the historie of another, should name himselfe. But this Booke of the Revelation is a Prophecie; in penning whereof it is more requisite the Prophet should put to his owne name: so did the former Prophets. *Ieremie* mentioneth his name in his Booke at least an hundred times; so doth *Isai* and *Daniel* almost in every Chapter. Then seeing they doe it so often, it is no marvell if Saint *Iohn* doe repeat his name five sundry times in this whole Booke.

2 They object, that his stile in this Booke is not the same with that he used in the penning of the Gospell. *Answ.* The difference of the stile ariseth from the difference of the matter, seeing there he writes an Historie, here he penns a Prophecie. Againe, hee writes not his owne words, but those which he received from Christ by particular revelation.

B 3 They say, this booke hath beene rejected in

in diverse ages as not Canonicall. *Answ.* It cannot be proved that it was ever refused of any whole Church, but of some particular men. Now the disallowing of any private man cannot make a whole booke to bee rejected: for then the Epistles to the Hebrewes, of *James*, and of *John*, should not be Canonicall; which yet be received of all Churches for the pure Word of God.

Now come to the words, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, &c.* These three first Chapters consist of two parts: A Preface and a Vision. The Preface is an entrance to the Vision, contained in the beginning of the first Chapter, from the first verse to the ninth. The Vision it selfe is set downe in the rest of these three Chapters. The Preface hath two parts: First, the title of the booke: Secondly, the inscription thereof. The title in the three first verses. The inscription from the fourth to the ninth verse. The title in these words, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, &c.* A *Revelation* is nothing else but a manifestation, or discovery of things secret in regard of men for the common good of the Church: and so this word is taken in this place.

Revelations from God in Scripture were shewed three waies: First, by dreames: secondly, by vision: thirdly, by created voice of God face to face, as we may see, Num. 12.6,8. Now this was not by dreame, not by vision or voice alone, but is a mixt Revelation, received partly by vision, and partly by voice uttered in the vision from the Lord.

In the three first verses, this Revelation is described by seven arguments: first, by the author: secondly, the end: thirdly, the persons to whom it was directed: fourthly, the matter: fifthly, the instruments: sixthly, the manner of delivering it: seventhly, the fruit of the Revelation. First, the Author is *Jesus Christ*: It comes from him, and it is called his Revelation in these respects: First, not to exclude the Father, and the holy Ghost, but to shew the speciall office of Christ, the second person in Trinitie; which is, to reveale, to publish, and to manifest the will of God the Father to his Church: and for this cause he is called the [a] Angell of the Covenant, the [b] doctor of the Church, the [c] wisdome of the Father, and the [d] Word of God.

[a] Mal.3.1.
[b] Mat.23.8.
[c] 1 Cor.1.24.
[d] Joh.1.

Secondly, it is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ, to teach us to put difference betweene this and all Satanicall Revelations: For as God hath his true Revelations, so Satan (who herein may bee called Gods ape) hath his counterfeit visions, and delivers them in shew like to Gods, but they differ much: *First*, the devils Revelations bee for the most part ambiguous, doubtfull, and uncertaine in speech and phrase, so as a man cannot tell which way to take them: But the Revelations which come from Christ, the Author of truth, who knoweth all things and the reasons of them, are certaine and in plaine termes delivered. *Secondly*, the Devill sheweth his Visions to none but to the wicked and bad men that bee his instruments: But the Lord chuseth the godly which feare his name, and to them he revealeth his secrets, as to *John* in this place. Thirdly, the Devils revelations evermore tend to set up and uphold heresie, wickednesse, Apostacy, and Idolatry, Deut. 13. 1, 2. but these that come from God serve to erect and maintaine truth, according to godlinesse; even pure Apostolicall doctrine, and the sincere worship of God.

Thirdly, it is called the Revelation of Christ, to shew unto us his speciall kingly office in heaven: for being ascended and exalted to the throne of Majestie, he sitteth at the right hand of his Father, farre above all principalitie and power, might and domination; and there doth direct, rule, and governe his Church upon earth according to the good pleasure of his will: for all these visions serve to direct his Church in their obedience to his command.

Whereas Christ Jesus is Author of this Revelation, and after his ascension and exaltation, gives the same unto his Church; we may observe his constant care over his Church in this last age of the world. Before his incarnation, even from the beginning, he gave unto his people such doctrine of faith and manners, as was needfull for their salvation; and still from time to time revealed such prophecies of things to come as was meet for them to know.

And now behold the continuance, or rather the increase of this his care in the new Testament: for beside the perfection of the former prophecies, and the full manifestation of his blessed will by his Evangelists and Apostles, for all things needfull to bee beleeved and done unto eternall life: Loe, here is added the Revelation of this worthy Prophecie concerning things to come, for the great and good comfort of his children to the end of the world.

Which God gave unto him. These words bee added to shew how this became the Revelation of Christ: namely, by the gift of God, that is, of God the Father the first person in Trinitie; for this is a rule to be observed, *That where the title God, in any sentence of Scripture is opposed to Christ, there is importeth the first person the Father*: though this be also true, That sundrie times in Scripture, the Father alone is called *God*, without any addition of the other persons; because he is the first in regard of order, and the fountaine of the deity; for the sonne receiveth the god-head by communication from the Father, and the holy Ghost receiveth it from them both; but the Father hath his god-head of himselfe, and receiveth it not by communication from any other.

Here some will say, this seemes strange, that any thing should be given to Christ, seeing hee is God, and hath all things of himselfe. *Answ.* Wee must conceive of Christ two waies; first, as God: secondly, as Mediatour and head of the Church. As Christ is God, the Father

ther giveth him nothing: for so he is of himselfe the same with the Father, and hath all things belonging unto him that the Father hath (excepting personall properties) and is no way inferiour to the Father, neither receiveth any thing from him, but giveth all things as well as the Father doth. But yet as Christ is Mediator, he is not God simply, but God incarnate, or God made man; and so is said to receive of his Father, (in respect of his manhood) as himselfe confesseth, *All power is given to mee*, Mat. 28.18. And *Paul* saith, *God gave him a name above all names*, Phil. 2.9. *He received of his Father the promise of the holy Ghost*, saith Saint *Peter*, Act. 2.33. And, *God made him both Lord and Christ*, ver. 36. and so God gave him this Revelation in this place.

If it be said, this makes Christ inferiour to his Father: for the receiver is usually inferiour to the giver. *Ans.* As Christ is God, he is equall with the Father; but as he is Mediator, God incarnate, and made man, he is inferiour; and receiveth of him. So much himselfe confesseth, *My father which gave them me, is greater than all*, Joh. 10.29. And in the same respect, *Paul* calleth God the Father, *The head of Christ*, 1 Cor. 11.6. And as Christ now sitteth at the right hand of his Father, being Mediator and ruler of his Church, he is inferiour to his Father, and *receiveth his Kingdome from his Father, which he must give up at the last day*, 1 Cor. 15.24.

And here wee must consider in what manner God gives his Revelation to his Sonne. First, therefore Christ Jesus as he is Mediator, is made Lord of this Revelation; so as he may say, it is his owne right and royalty, being a part of that Law, whereby his Church is now governed, whereof he is Lord and King. Against this Revelation was revealed unto Christ as hee is man, before it was ever knowne to any creature, man, or Angell, by reason of the union of his manhood with the Godhead.

In this which hath beene said, wee may observe, that this Booke of the Revelation is Christ his right, and belongeth unto him as his owne royalty and privilege. For as the Lawes in any Kingdome belong to the Prince thereof, and are called his lawes alone, and no man selfe: So this booke, being a part of that law whereby Christ governeth his Church, is his royalty alone; for God gave it him, and he hath by his Angell sent it to his Church. And that which is here said of this Booke, must be understood proportionally of all other bookes of holy Scripture; Christ is made Lord of all, and they are all of them his royalties and possessions. And from hence will follow necessarily: first, That no man in the world hath authority above this Booke, or any other part of Canonicall Scripture: Indeed, Monarchs and Princes have great authority and preheminence in their dominions over all persons, and over all causes of men: but in the Church, they with all others owe homage unto Christ: there he hath the Canonicall Scriptures to be his lawes, whereto every one must subject himselfe. The dispensation of the word, and the administration of the Sacraments, be his royall ordinances, over which none may dare to claime rule or authority: for so should the Scriptures have been given unto them for their prerogatives, as they were unto Christ; but God gave them unto him alone, and he disposeth thereof, as pleaseth him. And therefore the Pope, in taking upon him to dispense with the word, and to mangle the Sacraments, doth heresie step into the roome of Christ, and so declare himselfe to bee that man of sinne, by seeking to rob him of that Princely royalty which belongs to him alone.

Secondly, that the soveraigne power and authority of expounding Scripture, belongeth to Christ alone, and to none other with him. True it is, that man hath a ministery committed unto him, by vertue whereof hee may expound Scripture by Scripture: but men have no power of themselves, to determine of the proper sense of Scripture. And therefore the Popish practice, in giving to the Church absolute authority, to determine of the sense of Scripture, of themselves without Scripture, is flat robbery against Christ: for therein they give unto men that soveraigne power which is proper to Christ.

Thirdly, herein we observe the excellencie of this booke, and of the whole Scripture of God: for all of it is the gift of the Father to the Sonne, and of the Sonne unto his Church. The like cannot bee said of any writings of men whatsoever, be they never so excellent: herein the Scriptures surpasse them all. Whereby wee are taught, to esteeme more reverently of the Scriptures of God, than of all the writings of men in the world. Here then behold the sinne of this age, which more delighteth to speake and heare the sayings of men, in the publike ministery, than the glorious word of the ever-living God. Whereas the writings of men bee full of darknesse, of errour and deceit: but the word of God is most holy and pure, and every way perfect, proceeding wholly from the Father of lights, unto his beloved Sonne, who hath faithfully dispensed the same for the good of his Church.

To shew his servants the things that must shortly be done. These words contain the second, third, and fourth Arguments, whereby this Revelation is described, *viz.* the end of it, the persons to whom it must be shewed, and the matter which it containeth.

Arg. II. The end of this Revelation is, *To shew*, that is, *to make knowne, and manifest things to come, for the good of the whole Church.* Whence we may observe, that the Papists serre exceedingly in debarring lay people (as they call them) from the reading of the Scripture: for the end of this booke is, *To make manifest to Gods servants things to come.* And who are Gods servants? Are the Clergie onely and not lay people

ple also? God forbid; the lay man is Christ his servant, as well as one of the Clergie. And therefore it is Gods will, that hee should learne to know and understand this booke, like one of his servants. And here consider, that if this booke of Scripture, which is hard and difficult, must be learned of the lay man, then much more must hee search into all other bookes of God, which be more plaine and easie, as the histories of the Gospell, Epistles, &c.

Arg. III. The persons to whom it must bee shewed; *viz. The servants of Christ.* This Revelation was not given of God for all men indefinitely, but for all his servants; that is, such alone as repent of their sinnes, and truly beleeve in Christ for the pardon of them, and shew forth the same by new obedience. So he teacheth elsewhere; *The secret of the Lord is with them that feare him, and his covenant to give them understanding.* Psal. 25. 14. *The Lord will reveale his secret to his servants the Prophets,* Amos 3. 7. And, *God will not keepe backe from Abraham, the thing he was to doe unto Sodome and Gomorrah, because he knew Abraham would doe his will, and teach his family after him.* Gen. 18. 17, 19. The consideration whereof should admonish us not to content our selves with the bare hearing of the Word, and outward participation of the Sacraments: but to labour principally to become Gods servants, and to shew the same by the practice of that which wee heare. Hereby shall wee receive instruction from the Lord, and grow in knowledge daily more and more: our understanding shall more easily conceive the will of God, *for they that will doe the will of his Father, shall know his doctrine,* Joh. 7. 17. Here then is the cause why most hearers after long teaching profit little, but remaine as blind and ignorant as ever they were, even their owne impiety; they live in their sinnes, and labour not to become Gods servants.

Secondly, in this argument we may observe, that *Christ Iesus is true God*: for here he is made the head of the Church; every true beleever is his servant, and he his Lord: the Angels of the Churches be his Angels, as after wee shall see: which prerogative none can have, but hee that is true and very God.

Thirdly, in this argument are those confuted which hold that God would have all to be saved, and cals all men without exception. For if he called all effectually, then hee would offer the meanes to all: to wit, his holy word, that so they might be called to the state of grace. This he doth not: for as wee see, this booke is given not to all, but to his servants; and that which is said of this booke, is true of the whole Scripture. *The Lord shewes his Word,* (saith *David*) *not to all the world, but to Iacob*; that is, his people with whom he made a covenant, Psal. 147. 19, 20.

The fourth argument whereby this Revelation is described, is the matter thereof, *viz. things that must shortly be done*, that is, things to come. Whereby in generall wee may observe a difference of this booke from the rest of holy Scripture, which treats of things present, and past; this being a prophecie of things to come.

The matter of this booke is described by two Arguments: first, by the necessity of these things to come, *They must be done*: secondly, by the circumstance of time when, *shortly, or quickly.*

For the necessitie of these things, they bee such, *as must needs be done.* So speaketh the holy Ghost elsewhere of sundry things to come: of offences, *It must needs be that offences should come.* Matth. 18. 7. of heresies: *There must bee heresies in the Church,* 1 Cor. 11. 19. and of afflictions: *Through manifold afflictions wee must enter into the kingdome of heaven,* Acts 14. 22. And, *They that will live godly in Christ Iesus, must suffer persecutions,* 2 Tim. 3. 12. From whence I gather, that things which come to passe concerning Gods Church, and the enemies thereof, doe come to passe necessarily. This doctrine must be wel observed: for though it be the truth of God, yet the reason of man will not agree unto it: for some will say, If all things come to passe necessarily, then in their actions and proceedings men have no free will: for necessity and liberty of will cannot stand together. *Ans.* They may; indeed constraint and mans free will cannot stand together, but mans will and unchangeable necessity may well accord: As I shew thus; In God there is a most absolute freedome of will, yet hee doth many things of necessity: as he willeth that which is good necessarily, (for he cannot possibly will that which is evill) and yet he willeth the same most freely. So Christ died necessarily; he could not but die, if we consider the counsell of God, and yet he died most freely; *For he laid downe his life of himselfe, and no man tooke it from him.* Joh. 10. 18.

It will be said againe, if things come to passe by necessity, then it is in vaine to use any meanes for the effecting of them; for Gods will must be done, doe we what we will. *Ans.* This is mans corrupt reason: these men must consider, that as God hath appointed what things must come to passe, so he hath appointed the means how they shall be effected: and seeing the Lord hath appointed as well the meanes as the end, wee should by this necessity rather bee induced to use the meanes, than any way moved to neglect the same. To make this more plaine, wee must know there is a double necessity: one is *absolute*, another in *part*. I call that *absolute necessity*, which cannot be otherwise possibly: as that God liveth, and cannot die, is omnipotent, infinite, &c. Necessity in *part* is, when any thing done is necessary onely, because it depends on necessary causes: as fire to burne is necessary, in regard of that order which God hath set in nature by creation; yet this necessity is not absolute: for fire would not burne, if God should please to change that order set in nature, as he did when the three children were cast into the

the hot fiery oven, Dan. 3. 27. Now, whereas we say, *Things to come must necessarily be done*, it must be understood of necessity in part, and not absolute: for in themselves they be changeable and contingent, and necessary onely in regard of Gods decree appointing them, which is unchangeable: in regard whereof all things to come are necessary. And yet we may not think, that the unchangeablenesse of Gods decree doth take away freedome from mans will; it onely inclines the same to one part: and so disposeth, that man should freely will that to be, which God eternally hath decreed.

The second thing whereby the matter of this booke is set out unto us, is the circumstance of time, when these things must be done; *Shortly*, must bee well observed: and howsoever some things foretold, were not to be done till many hundred yeares after, which space of time might seeme very long, yet in two respects it is but short: First, in regard of God, *to whom a thousand yeares are but as one day,* 2 Pet. 3. 8. Secondly, in regard of men, to whom a hundred or two hundred yeares seeme but a short time when once they be expired, though before they seemed long.

This circumstance of time is set downe for two causes: First, to terrifie all carnall and carelesse men: for this booke foretelleth judgements, plagues, and destruction, for the enemies of Gods Church, which must shortly come upon them; which is a thing worthy our carefull consideration in this secure age of the world, wherein men blesse themselves in their sinnes, without feare of Gods judgement, and say they shall have peace, though they walke after the stubburnenesse of their owne hearts, putting farre from them the evill day; saying, spare thy selfe, this shall not come unto thee. But shall the Lion rore, and the beasts not tremble? Yet the Lord threatneth his judgements, but men will not repent. Well, let us consider this, whether we be young or old, high or low, that Gods judgements are shortly to come; and let this bee a motive to raise us out of the sleepe of sinne, and of security. That which *Peter* said of false teachers, is also true of all impenitent sinners, unlesse they prevent the same by speedy and unfained repentance: *Their judgement long ago is not farre off, and their damnation sleepeth not,* 2 Pet. 2. 3.

Secondly, this circumstance of time serveth greatly to comfort the servants of Christ, and to furnish them all with patience, and long suffering under any adversity, or distresse that may befall them in body or minde, or both. Indeed, many are brought to impatience and distrust by afflictions and crosses: But the child of God in such a case, must call to minde what the holy Ghost hath heretofore downe concerning the prophecies of this booke, which foretell deliverance for Gods Church, and for every member thereof: namely, *That they must shortly be brought to passe: yet a very little while, and he that cometh* (for their deliverance) *will come, and will not tarry.* Heb. 10. 37.

Thus much for the matter of this Revelation: now follow the Instruments whereby the Lord doth convey the same unto his Church, which is the fifth argument whereby hee is described, in these words, *Which he sent and shewed by his Angell to his servant Iohn.* Where two points must be observed, first, the action of Christ, which is the ground of their imployment; secondly, the persons imployed therein as his instruments. For the first: *Christ sent and shewed this Revelation.* This action of Christ is noted by the holy Ghost for two speciall causes; first, to shew that S. *Iohn* did not pen and publish this booke rashly, but by calling and warrant from Christ. This teacheth us what must be our behaviour in all our actions, whatsoever wee take in hand: we must looke we have warrant from God for the doing of the same, by vertue of our calling; and without this we should not dare to enterprise any thing.

If this duty were practised, there would bee more conscience of the service and worship of God, and more care of just dealing with men, than there is in the affaires of this life.

Secondly, this action of Christ is noted, to get more reverent acceptance, and greater authority to this booke: for which cause also it was sent by an holy Angell. If an earthly Prince should write his letter to his subject, and withall send it by one of his guard, no doubt the subject would receive it most reverently. Behold, this booke is the Epistle and letter of Jesus Christ, sent by his Angell for the benefit of his Church. What reverence therefore, and acceptation ought this to find? surely, a thousand fold more with every one, than the writing of any earthly Prince whatsoever.

The second point to be observed, is the persons whom Christ imployeth about this Revelation; and they be two: An holy Angel, and S. *Iohn.* For the first, It hath pleased God in all ages to use the ministery of Angels, as a meanes whereby he would convey the knowledge of his will unto his Church. The Law in mount Sinai was given to *Moses* by the ministery of an Angell, Act. 7. 38. Gal. 3. 19. And *Daniel* received the exposition of sundry dreames and visions by an Angell, Dan. 8. 19. and 9. 21. and 10. 14. And the seven visions which containe the substance of this booke, were shewed to *Iohn* by an holy Angell. But here wee must take heed, that we doe not like the Papists, ground hereupon the invocation of Angels, because they be about us, and bring unto us particular messages from the Lord: for before we may pray unto them, we must have from God a particular commandement so to doe, and also a promise to be heard in that wee aske, or else our prayer is not of faith: but the whole Scripture affords no word of command, or promise for any such action, and therefore wee cannot doe it without sinne.

The ſecond inſtrument here imployed by Chriſt, is *Iohn*. This *Iohn* was ſonne to *Zebedee*, and ſo kinſman to Chriſt; a bleſſed Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, which penned one of the Goſpels, and the three Epiſtles which beare his name. This was that Diſciple whom Jeſus loved. And to procure the more credit and reverence to this booke, he deſcribeth himſelfe by two arguments: Firſt, by a property, calling himſelfe *Chriſt his ſervant*: Secondly, by an effect, or action, *in bearing record to Gods word*: verſ. 2.

For the firſt, note that *Iohn* doth not call himſelfe that Diſciple whom Jeſus loved, nor the kinſman of Chriſt, which he might have done, being allied unto him, (for *Iohns* mother was ſiſter to *Joſeph* Chriſts ſuppoſed father, and couſin german to the virgin *Mary*:) *Iohn* had learned of Chriſt himſelfe, *that the hearers, and doers of the will of his father, were eſteemed more deere, and neere unto him, than any bond of outward alliance could poſſibly make them*, Mat. 12. 50. Luk. 11. 28. But he cals himſelfe *Chriſts ſervant*, having yeelded up himſelfe to doe his will: for herein ſtands the dignity of a Chriſtian, to doe ſervice unto Chriſt. The bleſſed Virgin had never found ſuch favour with God, to have beene Chriſts mother, if ſhe had not withall become Chriſts ſervant: She bare him in her heart by faith, as well as in her wombe by conception, or elſe ſhee had never beene ſaved by him. Hence we learne, that outward dignities, as bloud-royall, noble parentage, and ſuch like, will nothing further a mans ſalvation: hee that would be acceptable unto Chriſt, muſt become his ſervant, by beleeving his word, and doing his will, having caſt off the old man, which is corrupt, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſſe and true holineſſe. So *Paul* ſaith, *Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing, but keeping the commandements of God*. 1 Cor. 7. 19. and, *henceforth know we no man after the fleſh, but if any man be in Chriſt, hee is a new creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 16, 17.

Againe, conſider in what regard *Iohn* is here called a ſervant of Chriſt: not onely for that he beleeved in Chriſt, and obeyed his will, as all true Chriſtians doe; but more ſpecially becauſe he was an Apoſtle, and did ſervice unto Chriſt in the worke of his miniſtery, which was his particular calling. So *Paul* writing to the Romans, calleth himſelfe an Apoſtle and ſervant of Chriſt, *Cap.* 1. 1. And hee rendreth a reaſon thereof, *verſ.* 5. Becauſe he did ſervice unto him in preaching the Goſpell. Hence we are taught, that we muſt not onely ſhew our ſelves Chriſts ſervants, in our generall calling of Chriſtianity, but eſpecially in our particular callings and offices, after the example of Chriſts bleſſed Apoſtles. It is a good thing to profeſſe ſervice unto Chriſt, by hearing his word, receiving his Sacraments, and keeping his Sabbaths: but unleſſe therewithall wee ſhew the power of godlineſſe in our particular callings, our outward profeſſion is flat hypocriſie. This Magiſtrates, Miniſters, husband, wife, parents, children, maſters, ſervants, buyer, ſeller, and every one in his lawfull calling ſhould carefully obſerve: for unleſſe in the particular duties of their ſpeciall callings, (as the Magiſtrate in the duties of a Magiſtrate, &c.) they doe ſervice unto Chriſt, their publike duties in religion ſhall never commend them unto God be it never ſo glorious, Mic. 6. 6, 7, 8.

V. 2 *Which bare record of the word of God, and of the teſtimonie of Jeſus Chriſt, and of the things that he ſaw.*

Here is the ſecond argument whereby *Iohn* deſcribeth himſelfe; namely, by his action, or effect, *in bearing record to the word of God*: for partly by writing the Goſpell, and partly by preaching, hee bare witneſſe, and teſtified that the word of God was true. And becauſe the word of God hath divers parts, the Law and the Goſpell, he ſhewes in the next words, that he meanes eſpecially the Goſpell, adding, *and of the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt*, that is, of thoſe things which Jeſus ſaid and did. And that no man might call into queſtion the truth of his teſtimony, he profeſſeth himſelfe to have beene *an eye witneſſe of all thoſe things whereof he bare record*, ſaying, *and of all thoſe things which hee ſaw*. And here he alleageth his teſtimony to the Goſpell, to prove himſelfe a faithfull pen-man of this booke, that ſo it might have more reverence: for he which was faithfull in penning the Goſpell of Chriſt, the ſame is alſo faithfull in penning this prophecie of the Church.

In this teſtimony wee may obſerve, that the doctrine of Gods word is an infallible marke whereby to know the true Prophet of God, and alſo to diſtinguiſh him from all falſe Prophets. God foretold his people, that *falſe prophets ſhould come among them for their triall*, Deu. 13. But how ſhall they diſcerne them? ſurelly by their doctrine: for though they ſhew wonders, yet if their doctrine tend to draw men from the true God to idolatry, they are falſe prophets, and ſhould dye. When our Saviour Chriſt was asked, *By what authority hee did thoſe things*, Luk. 20. 2, 3, he approved his authority by the teſtimony of *Iohn*, (*who bare witneſſe of him*, Joh. 1. 15.) and confirmed the calling of *Iohn*, by the truth of his doctrine, which (themſelves being witneſſes) *was from heaven*, Luk. 20. verſ. 4, 5.

Hereby then we ſee the errour of the Papiſts, who teach, That the onely note of a true Prophet, is to confirme his doctrine by a miracle, and that he which cannot doe ſo, is a falſe prophet. But this note of difference is not true: for falſe prophets may confirme their lying vanities by ſignes and wonders, as we may ſee, Deut. 13.

And

And ſo doth Antichriſt, 2 Theſſ. 2. 9.

The ſixth argument by which this Revelation is deſcribed, is the order and manner of propounding it to the Church, and it ſtands in foure degrees: Firſt, *God the Father giveth it to Chriſt the mediator, and head of the Church*. Secondly, *Chriſt giveth it to an Angell*. Thirdly, *the Angell conveyes it to Iohn the Apoſtle*. Fourthly, *Iohn directed and aſſiſted by the holy Ghoſt, delivereth it to the Churches*.

Now as this particular booke was, ſo no doubt all other holy Scriptures were conveyed to the Church: from whence we may obſerve; Firſt, the conſtant love of God to his children, by this his ſpeciall care in propounding and deliverring his will and word to his Church.

Secondly, that this booke, and ſo all other parts of holy Scripture, are in their kinde moſt perfect and excellent.

Thirdly, that the Church of Rome blaſphemeth in calling the written word of God *a dead letter, and dumbe Iudge, matching generall Councels with it for authorities*; and teaching, *that the univerſall conſent of the Church is above Scripture for interpretation, and gives life and ſenſe thereto; which otherwiſe of it ſelfe were but an inckie letter and dumbe word*.

V. 3 *Bleſſed are they which reade, and they that heare the words of this prophecie, and keepe thoſe things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

Here is the ſeventh and laſt argument whereby this Revelation is deſcribed, to wit, the fruit, effect, and the profit which comes of it, even *true happineſſe*. This prophecie concerneth the preſent and future ſtate of the Church: the reading and hearing whereof, joyned with careful keeping, bringeth with it *true bleſſedneſſe*, that is, fellowſhip with God, and life everlaſting.

In this Argument we may obſerve; Firſt, the end of this booke, and ſo of all other books of Scripture, viz. *to bring men to happineſſe, to fellowſhip with God, and life everlaſting. Theſe things were written* (ſaith S. *Iohn*) *that ye might beleeve that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and ſo beleeving might have eternall life*, Joh. 20. 31. Againe, *he declared to them the word of Chriſt, that by it they might have fellowſhip with God the Father, and with his ſonne Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Joh. 1. 3. In which fellowſhip is true happineſſe. Chriſt himſelfe ſaith, *Search the Scriptures, for in them you thinke to have eternall life*, Joh. 5. 39. And in this they differ from all other bookes and writings of men; for mens writings be penned either by the light of nature, and ſo be erroneous, and miſſe the end of true happineſſe: or elſe they be penned by them which have direction from the word, and ſo all the truth they have, leading to true happineſſe, is borrowed hence; when as the Scriptures of themſelves doe directly guide men thither.

From the conſideration of this bleſſed end of holy Scripture, we may obſerve, firſt, That the opinion and practice of the Church of Rome is dammable, who barre the people of God from reading and hearing the Scriptures in their vulgar tongue. For in depriving them of this meanes (as much as in them lyeth) they barre them of their ſalvation, and they doe directly croſſe the purpoſe of S. *Iohn*, who doth therefore pronounce him bleſſed, that ſhall heare and reade this booke, with conſcience to keepe and obey it, that hee might allure and draw all men to doe it with delight.

Secondly, wee are hereby admoniſhed with all care and diligence to reade and meditate in Gods word. That place before named is moſt excellent, *Search the Scripture*, Joh. 5. 39. even as we would ſearch for gold, or ſome precious thing which we would faine finde (ſo the word imports:) And he addeth the reaſon; *For in them you thinke to have eternall life*. The ſame is wiſdomes counſell, Prov. 2. 4.

But ſome will ſay, I cannot reade, I was never brought up in learning, and therefore I cannot ſearch. S. *Iohn* cuts off this excuſe in the next words, ſaying, *Bleſſed is hee alſo which heareth the words of this prophecy*. As if he ſhould ſay, though he cannot reade, yet if he heare, and keepe it, he is bleſſed. Here then is the duty of thoſe which cannot reade the Scriptures, they muſt procure others to reade unto them, and by hearing and keeping, they ſhall be bleſſed.

Thirdly, by this ſcope and end of Scriptures, wee muſt learne to carry in minde this plaine difference betweene the bookes of God, and writings of men: Gods word bringeth a man which keepes it, to happineſſe; but mans writings of themſelves cannot doe ſo, unleſſe they have light from the word of God. If this diſtinction were imprinted in our hearts, wee ſhould not bee ſo delighted as many are, to heare or ſpeake the words of God mixed with the words of ſinfull men, ſpecially in the publike miniſtery. In former times the Lord forbade his owne people *to ſow their field with mingled ſeed, or to make them garments of divers things, as of linnen and woollen*, Levit. 19. 19. And no doubt the ſame God doth miſlike, that the pure ſeed of his word ſhould be mingled with the ſayings of erroneous and ſinfull men, when the ſame is ſowne upon the furrowes of mens hearts.

Secondly, in this ſeventh Argument we may obſerve the right manner and way of hearing and reading the Scriptures: a point worthy all ſerious conſideration. It ſtands in two things: Firſt, we muſt ſet downe with our ſelves a certaine end, why we reade, and heare the Scrip-

tures, which is, that wee may attaine to true
happinesse standing in fellowship with God, and
life everlasting. This end must be the motive to
induce us to heare, and reade the word of God;
and when this takes place in our hearts, it will
be of force to make us read, and heare with care
and conscience, which beseemeth Gods word.
Secondly, wee must keepe in minde the things
we reade, or heare; so saith the text; *And keepeth the things which are written*: which word
imports, that by diligent observation (wee should
lay them up in our hearts. This is a weighty duty,
and seriously commended unto us of God:
*Bind up the testimony, seale up the law among
my Disciples*, Isay. 8. 16. And *Mary* is therefore commended, *because she kept in her heart
the words of Iesus*, Luk. 2. 19. 51. It was *David's* practice: *I have hid thy saying in my heart*,
Psal. 119. 11. And hereto tendeth Christs encouragement, pronouncing them rather blessed, *which heare the Word and keep it, than those
which bare Christ, and gave him sucke*, Luk. 11.
27, 28. And *Iames* calleth it *the incorrupted Word*,
Jam. 1. 21. because it should abide in our hearts
like a Siens in a flocke, and never bee removed,
but there grow, and fructifie unto life eternall.

Now because this is a point of great difficulty,
and the want hereof the cause of so little
profiting after much hearing and reading; I
will therefore shew how (by Gods grace) in
hearing and reading the word of God, a man
may keepe the same in memory.

First, a man must learne the grounds or elements of religion, commonly called the Catechisme, for they are the foundation of all knowledge: without which a man shall never understand the Scripture to his comfort, nor keepe
the same in memory. The Apostle saith, the
Hebrewes were *dull of hearing* the deepe things
of God in Christ, *because they had not well learned the first principles of the word*, Heb. 5. 11,
12. This all ignorant persons should well observe, specially the aged, that they may finde in
themselves the cause of their ignorance and dullnesse, even want of knowledge in the Catechisme. They think it a disgrace to bee brought
unto it now they are old: but if they would not
be ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth, they must lay in themselves
this good beginning, and learne the principles
of religion.

Secondly, we must not rush upon Gods holy ordinance, but before wee either come to
heare, or reade, with reverence prepare ourselves thereto. Most men at this day use to prepare themselves before they come to the Lords
table, and so they ought to doe before they
come to heare the Word: for God ordained
both for this end, to bee meanes to bring men
to true happinesse: they differ onely in this, that
the Sacraments are the visible, and the Scriptures the audible word of God. At the giving
of the law, *The people that must heare it, were
sanctified three dayes before*, Exod. 19. And
when they did offer sacrifice, or eat the Passeover, both Priests and people must be sanctified: and the same thing for substance, must we
performe before we come to heare the word of
God. This preparation stands in two things:
First, wee must put out of our hearts all bythoughts, all delights, and cares of worldly affaires, and *set our hearts* (as *Ezra* did) *to seeke
the law of the Lord*, Ezra 7. 10. Secondly, wee
must make our earnest prayers to God, that hee
would open our eyes, that we may see his will
soften our hearts, and make our eares attentive,
as *Lydiaes* were; and also give us grace to embrace his word, and keepe it: For Christ is the
only Doctor of the heart by his Spirit, without
whose inward teaching wee can never learne
unto salvation.

Thirdly, when we are about the holy exercise
of Gods word, the frame of our heart should
be thus disposed:

I. *It must be an humble heart*: for the Lord
resists the proud, *and gives grace to the humble*,
Jam. 4. 6. *The meekes will he guide in
judgement, and teach the humble his way*, Psal.
25. 9. A proud heart is so stuffed with selfelove, that there is no roome for the word of
God to lodge in. But the heart that is lowly in
it selfe, through the conscience of sinne, that is
the heart in which the Lord by his graces will
take up his abode, Isay 57. 15.

II. It must be *an honest heart*: such as hath
no manner of purpose to live in any one sinne
whatsoever, but (though it feele corruption in
it selfe) is resolved to please God in all the
wayes of his commandements, and that continually: such an heart have the good hearers,
resembled by the good ground, Luk. 8. 15. As
on the contrary, that is a wicked heart, which
reselveth to cherish, though it be but any one
sinne whatsoever.

III. It must be *a beleeving heart*. The old
Jewes heard the Word, but it profited them
not, because *they mingled it not with faith in
their hearts*, Heb. 4. 2. where hee compares the
heart to a vessell, in which there must bee both
the Word, and faith: these two must bee mingled together, and then it will bee a Word
of power, of life, and salvation. Therefore
when wee heare the threatnings of the Law,
or the promises of the Gospell, we must labour
to resolve our hearts of the truth thereof. But
incredulity, whereby men except against the
Word, as not pertaining unto them, is the mother of forgetfulnesse. *The old world knew nothing of the flood, because they did not believe*,
Mat. 24. 39.

IV. It must be *an hearing heart*, such as
is pliable to the Word: *Sacrifice and burnt
offerings* (saith *David*) *thou wouldst not, but
mine eares hast thou prepared*, Psa. 40. 6. As if he
should say, besides those bodily eares which thou
hast given me by creation, thou hast bored new
eares in my heart, so as I can by thy grace attend

tend and listen to thy Word. And when God
saith, *Seeke ye my face*, this hearing heart will
answer, *I seeke thy face, O Lord*, Psal. 27. 8, 9.

Fourthly, after wee have heard or read the
Word, *we must become doers of the same*, even in
the duties of our vocation. Wee see every man
more skillfull in the workes of his owne trade,
by reason of his daily exercise therein: even so
the constant practice of Gods word will make
us expert in it, and cause us to keepe it in perfect memory. And these are the right meanes
to become good hearers and readers of the
word of God.

Thirdly, this benediction pronounced upon
them that heare, read, and keepe the prophecies
of this booke, serves to induce every childe of
God (as much as in him lyeth) to keepe in memory the whole word of God, but specially
these prophecies of things to come, that concerne the state of the Church; for therefore did
God reveale them, that they might be remembred, When the Angell had told *Daniel* the
state of the Church, from his time to the coming of Christ; he bids him, *Shut up the words,
and seale the booke, till the end of the time*, Dan.
12. 4. meaning, that hee for his owne comfort
should hide them in his heart. And Christ saith
to his Disciples, *When ye see the abomination of
desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet: let
him that readeth, consider it*, Mat. 24. 15. *Behold
I have told you before*, meaning things to come,
verse 25. shewing, That hee would have his
children to marke, and remember those weighty things that are foretold, concerning the
state of the Church.

For the time is at hand. Here is a reason of
the former benediction: for seeing the time of
the accomplishing of this prophecie is at hand,
and must shortly be fulfilled, therefore those
be blessed which reade and keepe the same in
memory. And it is an answer to a secret objection; for they might have said, we need not
to reade or remember this prophecie, seeing it
shall not be fulfilled in our daies; but he addeth,
The time is at hand, wherein they must be fulfilled, and therefore it must be marked. These
words for substance were in the first verse;
where it is said, *The Revelation was of things
that must shortly be done*. And here they be repeated againe. Whereby hee would teach us,
That these prophecies containe weighty matter,
to be deeply considered, and earnestly thought
on. And S. *John* repeats the same for two causes:
First, to awake the members of the Church out
of the sleepe of security, and make them stand
upon their watch continually: for though they
cannot fall into the dead sleepe of sinne, yet the
slumber of security may overtake them: the
wise virgins slumber, as well as the foolish,
Matth. 25. 5. and the spouse of Christ, the true
Church, confesseth, that she sleepeth, though her
heart waketh, Cant. 5. 2.

Secondly, to confirme and hearten the
Church, and all true members of Christ, against the afflictions to come: for hee is the
common saying true, *He that is forewarned, is
fore-armed*.

Now in these words (*The time is at hand*,)
Christ would teach us to observe, That whatsoever thing may befall the members of Christ
in this life, whether afflictions, temptations,
death, or the last judgement it selfe, all will come
shortly. This consideration ought to take place
in our hearts, being of great use in our lives: as
to stay us from many sinnes, so to move us to
doe all things with good conscience. And the
want hereof is the cause of much evill: *The bad
servant saith his fellowes, because he thinks his
master doth deferre his comming*, Mat. 24. 48,
49. *The old world went on in sinne, never regarding Noahs prophecie, and so knew nothing till
the flood came and swept them all away*, Mat. 24.
39. We should lay these to our hearts, and
alwayes thinke with *Paul*, *the Lord is at hand*:
The rather, because we have had the Gospel, and
peace, with all temporall blessings these eight
and thirty yeares: now the state of the Church
is interchangeable, one while peace, and then
trouble: so as it is like, this peaceable state will
not long continue, but wee must be tried. And
the time of our triall is at hand, for whatsoever
must befall the Church, will come shortly. We
must therefore prepare for trouble, and so wee
shall finde it the lesse grievous.

2 Phil. 4. 5.

V. 4 *Iohn to the seven Churches which are in Asia, Grace be with you, and Peace from him, which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.*

Here beginneth the second part of the Preface, to wit, the inscription of this vision, and it
hath two branches: First, a dedication, in these
words: *Iohn to the seven Churches which are
in Asia*. Secondly, a salutation, in the next
words: *Grace be with you, and peace, &c.* to the
9. verse. In the dedication, observe first, the penman that dedicated this booke: secondly, the
parties to whom it is sent. For the first, the penman is *John*, who here againe repeats his name,
to shew and certifie every reader of this booke,
that he was without all doubt the true penman
of the holy Ghost, in writing this Revelation.
But though he repeats his name, yet hee doth
not adde any titles of honour, or commendation, as he did in the first verse. Wherein he gives
us a true patterne of modesty and humilitie,
which is never to speake in our owne cause to
our owne praise, but onely in cases of necessity,
when Gods glory may bee advanced, and the
credit of our particular callings maintained.

This *Paul* practised, who often humbles himselfe, and calls himselfe *the* [a] *least of all the Apostles*, yea, *the* [b] *chiefe of all sinners*: yet when the credit of his Apostleship came into question, then he sets out himselfe, shewing he was a true Apostle, one of the chiefe, and above those which did falsly call themselves so, as we may finde in both of his [c] Epistles to the Corinthians.

[a] 1 Cor. 15.
[b] 1 Tim. 1. 15.
[c] 1 Cor. 9. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 15. 9.

Secondly, the persons to whom hee wrote were *the seven Churches in Asia*: concerning them note two things: first, hee writes to Churches; secondly, to the Churches in Asia. For the first: why writes he to the Churches, rather than to the Church, seeing there is but one onely Catholike Church? *Ans.* The Church may be considered divers wayes; first, as it is the whole company of the elect, and so it is but one: secondly, as the same is parted into severall branches and companies, one part being in one Country, and another part in some other. Wherein also every severall congregation, professing the Gospell, is a particular Church. And so there may be many Churches, all of them being members of one Catholike Church: As the Sea is onely one, yet it consisteth of many parts, which taking their names of the Countryes whereto they adjoyne, are called so many particular Seas: as the English Sea, the Spanish Sea, French, Italian, Scottish Seas, &c. And of particular Churches must *John* bee understood in this place.

Now *John* chooseth rather to write to Churches, than to particular men: First, because the matter of this booke, concerneth the Church, being a Propheticall History, touching the state of the Church to the end. Secondly, because particular Churches, which bee true members of the Catholike Church, are the pillars and ground of truth, 1 Tim. 3. 15. And the Church is so called, not that her authority is above the the Word: but first, because it is the treasure-house wherein the Scriptures are preserved from age to age, against the rage of Gods enemies. Secondly, because the Church gives testimony to the truth of Gods word. And thirdly, because it publisheth the truth of Gods word by vertue of that ordinary ministery which God hath ordained therein.

Secondly, in the dedication of this booke, among all particular Churches God directs him to make choice of those seven in Asia; no doubt for speciall cause; First, because they were then most famous Churches, as the chapters following, and the Histories of the Church doe plainly shew. Secondly, that the calling of the Gentiles to the light of the Gospell, which long before had beene foretold, might be more evident: for here the Jewes are passed by, and the Gentiles first unto.

Lastly, wee may here observe, That S. *John* knew no prerogative of the Church of Rome above other Churches: for if it were the mother-Church, whereon all other Churches

A should depend, as the Papist would have it; I would know of them why *John* passed by it in the dedication of this booke, which containeth matter needfull for all Churches to know.

Grace be with you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. Here begins *Johns* salutation of the seven Churches. Salutations be of two sorts, *Civill*, and *Religious*. *Civill* is that which men use ordinarily one to another, wishing health, welfare and such like. *Religious* is that which is peculiar and proper unto the Church, comprehending in it a benediction also. And such is this here used by S. *John*. It may also be called *Apostolical*: because it is so usuall with them in their Epistles.

B And they used it the rather, because it is so correspondent to their ministery: which stood in two things; first, *in preaching*, which is the ministery of grace and reconciliation, the things here desired; secondly, *in prayer*, whereto belonged the duty of benediction, to pronounce a blessing upon the people: as did the Priests in their ministration under the Law, Num. 6. 22. and our Saviour Christ with his Apostles, when they preached the Gospell; and as every Minister should doe to his whole congregation, before they depart. And this is also included in this salutation: for hereby they blessed those Churches to whom they did write.

But to come to the words, which be most excellent, and containe in them the summe of

C the Gospell. *Grace* in Scripture signifieth two things: first, Gods favour; secondly, some gift of God freely bestowed. Now here by *Grace* is meant not any particular gift of God, but the gracious favour and good will of God, wherby he accepts of some in Christ for his owne: for it is here opposed to peace, a gift of grace, and therefore cannot signifie the same thing.

Now marke, S. *John* in this salutation begins with grace; because it is the foundation of all happinesse and of all Gods blessings: whatsoever we are, and all that we have, is of grace, our election, redemption, vocation, justification, and sanctification; our faith and repentance, and our preservation in them, both proceed from this fountaine of Gods free grace. It is the

D beginning, and the end of all; yea, it is all in all in the matter of our salvation: first, wee must have this, and then we may looke for all other blessings.

And Peace. *Peace* is taken sundry wayes in the Scripture; first, for welfare and good successe in things of this world by Gods blessing. Exod. 18. 7. *Moses* and *Iethro* saluting, aske *each other of their peace*, that is, of his welfare; and so it is partly taken in this place. Secondly, for that unity and blessed concord which is in the kingdome of God, among Gods children: and so it is especially taken here. And in this sense it hath six parts, every one whereof is a most worthy blessing.

The first, is peace with God: which is, when we

wee stand in the favour of God, reconciled to

A him in Christ Jesus, Rom. 5. 1. Secondly, peace with Gods Angels, for *they guard* such as be in Gods favour, and *carry them* as a nurse doth her childe in her armes, *That they hurt not their feet at any stone*, Psal. 91. 11. and they rejoyce at our good estate. The third, is *peace with a mans selfe*, when his conscience will not accuse him, but excuse and cleare him, being washed in the blood of Christ: This is that *Peace of God, which passeth all understanding*, Phil. 4. 7. The fourth is, *peace with Gods Church*, notably prefigured by the peaceable habitation of wilde beasts and tame together, *as the Lion and the Calfe, the Wolfe and the Lambe, the childe and the Cockatrice, &c.* Isay. 11. 6. and plainly to

B be seene among the beleevers, Acts 4. 32. *Who were all of one mind and heart.* The fifth is, peace with the enemies of Gods Church, so farre as it is for the good of the Church, and the glory of God. So *Joseph had peace in Pharaohs court*: so *Daniel had peace in the court of Nebuchadnezzar*: for when the three children were cast into the oven, we must not thinke that he did revolt unto idolatry, or hide himselfe: but being in favour in the court obtained privilege to bee excused. The sixth is, *Peace with all the creatures of God*: with the beasts of the field, fowles of the ayre, and fishes of the sea. This the Lord promiseth in the covenant that he will make for them with all his creatures, Hosea 2. 18. yea, *The childe of God shall tread upon the Lion and the Serpent, and they shall not hurt him*, Psal. 91. 13.

C And this his peace stands herein, That by Gods blessed providence he shall find help and comfort from all Gods creatures.

In this place, whether we take peace for outward welfare, or for the concord of Gods Church, yet it is placed after grace, because it followeth as a fruit thereof: First, a man must bee in Gods favour, and then come all the blessings of peace unto him. This then is the meaning, *Grace be with you, and peace*; That is, I wish you the favour of God in Christ, with peace, the blessed fruit thereof, even all outward welfare, and especially the concord of Gods Church, having peace with God, with his holy Angels, with his Church, with our owne hearts, with your enemies (as farre as may be for Gods glory) and with all his creatures.

Vse. Whereas S. *John* wisheth grace unto the Churches in the first place; he would teach us, That the favour of God is to be sought for above all things; for the Apostles practice must bee our precept. So did *David*: *Many say, who will shew us any good: But Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me*, Psal. 4. 6. As if hee should say, Let the most of the world seeke what they will, as riches, pleasures, &c. yet my desire is of thy love and favour above all. And oftentimes he calleth *God his portion, his rock, and castle of defence, the thing that hee longeth for*; to shew, that all his joy was in

D Gods favour. And so it should be with us: but we little practise this, because wee bring from our cradles naturall presumption, which perswades us that we bee in the favour and love of God. But we must cast off this false perswasion and take a new course; and labour first, to see that we be out of Gods favour, lost sheepe, prodigall children in our selves, yea, the very firebrands of hell: and this, to see our owne want of grace, is the first step to grace. Secondly, feeling this want and misery in our selves, we must earnestly desire, and in our soules hunger and thirst after the love and favour of God in Christ, above all earthly things. Thirdly, we must by the hand of true faith lay hold upon the grace and mercy of God in Christ, propounded in the promises of the Gospell, and apply them to our selves particularly.

Secondly, after grace he wisheth unto them *Peace*: where note, the true order of seeking for the blessings of this life: we must not begin with welfare and prosperity, but our first and chiefest care must be, to obtaine the grace and favour of God. So Christ bids us, first, to seeke the Kingdome of God and his righteousnesse: for when we are in Gods Kingdome of grace reconciled to him in Christ, then all things needfull shall bee ministred to us, Matthew 6. 33.

This discovers the bad practice of most men every where, who in seeking the blessings of God, begin at the wong end. They will toile themselves in their callings to get wealth, honour, pleasures, and preferments; but the favour of God in Christ is not regarded: which notwithstanding is the true and right foundation of all outward welfare. Vse.

Here some will say, if God give me wealth, honour, and reputation, then he loves mee; for these be signes thereof. I answer, These bee no sure tokens of his favour in Christ, for those that be his enemies may enjoy them all, as Job 21. 7. to the 14. This *David* perceived, *how the wicked might florish in their outward prosperitie, having more than heart could wish*, Psal. 37. 3, 7. *And yet they stood but in slippery places.* And therefore let no man herewith deceive himselfe: he that wanteth Gods favour in

D Christ, is but a cursed wretch, and a firebrand of hell, though he had all the world for outward things at his command. For all earthly things severed from Gods speciall grace, are but an heape of miseries. The wicked mans peace is *no peace, saith the Lord*, Isay 48. 22. And the man that hath Gods grace in Christ, though he want all worldly benefits, yet he hath more than all the world without it: for hereby alone he is truly blessed and happy.

From him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne. Here is set downe the first cause and author of these two, *Grace and Peace*, to wit, *God himselfe*, distinguished into three persons, *the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost.* The

Father

Father is noted in these words, *Which is, and which was, and which is to come.* The *holy Ghost* in these, *And from the seven spirits which are before his throne.* The *Sonne* in the fifth verse, *And from Iesus Christ, which is a faithfull witnesse, and first begotten of the dead, and Lord over the Kings of the earth: unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sinnes in his owne blood, &c.*

Saint *Iohn* in the first place describes the Father by a distribution, which expresseth the true nature of God in these words, *Which is, was, and is to come.* In which he alludes to that, Exodus 3. 14, 15. where *Moses* demands of God, If the people should aske who sent him, what he should answer? The Lord bids him say, *Ehieh, Iehovah hath sent me:* which two names serve to one end, namely, to expresse the nature of God. They are translated, *I am*, and *the Lord:* but these English words doe not fully expresse their signification. Yet S. *Iohn* expounds them here, making *Ehieh* to signifie *him which is, which was, and is to come.* Which words of *Iohn* also in the originall bee more full in sense than our English tongue can well expresse. And yet they may bee thus explained: *Grace and Peace be from him which is in himselfe, and of himselfe, a most perfect and absolute substance; which was a most perfect substance, and which is to come, a most absolute, perfect, simple substance and essence.* In these words are touched sundry weighty points:

First, touching the nature of God, namely, That *God is a most absolute perfect substance and essence, which hath his being in himselfe, of himselfe, and from none other.* *Paul* saith, *An Idoll is nothing*, 1 Cor. 8. 4. that is nothing subsisting in nature, but a meere fond device of mans braine: But the true God is an essence subsisting, and that of himselfe alone perfectly; and herein differeth from all Idols and false gods.

Secondly, hereby wee see a difference betweene God and all his creatures. Every creature is a substance, as *Angels and Men:* likewise mans body and soule are substances: yet none of these have being of themselves, but from God, and of God. And yet we must not conceive, that the creatures are parts of God; though they have their subsistances and being of him; for then each creature should be God: for the communication of the divine substance cannot be without the divine nature: but Gods substance is indivisible, and incommunicable to the creature. My meaning then is, that God made the creatures out of himselfe of that matter which hee created by his Word; and preserveth them being made. Which by the way, should teach us to returne our bodies and soules by obedience unto God, in lieu of thankfulnesse, endeavouring his glory all the dayes of our life.

Thirdly, hence we learne, that the Lord is *Eternall* every way, without beginning or ending: for it is he *which is, which was*, and *which is to come.* Angels and the soules of men, they be eternall; but not every way: though they be eternall in that they shall never die, yet had they a beginning. Secondly, they are eternall, not absolutely, but by participation; for God made them eternall: but the Lord is most absolutely of himselfe eternall.

Fourthly note, he saith not them him which shall be, but *from him which is to come*, that is, to judgement: to give us to understand, That this eternall God is also a Judge of all his creatures, especially men and Angels. A point of speciall use, to move us to walke before God with all good conscience. If any shall flatter himselfe, thinking he shall be dead before that day come: I answer, it may be so. What then? thinkest thou thereby to escape his judgement? No verily: for this God commeth to judge thee particularly by death, and thereby to reserve thee to the judgement of the great day. Oh, that we would seriously thinke on this; it would bee a meanes to move us to repentance, by breaking off the course of sinne, and endevouring to keepe a good conscience in all things, Acts 24. 16. And so shall we be ready to meet him at his comming, whether by death or judgement.

And from the seven spirits which are before his throne. These words commonly are expounded of seven Angels of God which stand before the throne, and minister unto him. But it cannot be meant of them: first, because Grace and Peace is here said to proceed from these seven spirits; but it cannot come from the holy Angels, which attend to minister before the Lord. Secondly, in this verse, which is a benediction, or a salutation of *Iohn* to the Church, the seven spirits are set before *Iesus Christ*, the second person of the Trinitie; but there is no reason nor respect, for which the Angels should be placed before Christ. The words are rather thus to be expounded, *And from the seven spirits, &c.* that is, from the holy Ghost. This Exposition is most agreeable to all the circumstances of the Text; and the holy Ghost may bee called by the name of the *seven spirits* for two causes: First, because though hee be onely one in substance, yet he is *seven*, that is, *manifold* in regard of gifts and operations which proceed from him. Secondly, Saint *Iohn* here speaketh of the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost, as he saw them in vision: (for here he setteth downe one vision which hee saw) now he beheld the holy Ghost in forme of seven lights in a vision, Revel. 4. 5.

Which are before his throne. This he speakes by comparison taken from earthly Kings: which sitting in their thrones, doe there shew their glory and majestie. So Saint *Iohn* saw in vision God the Father sitting in his throne, and Christ at his right hand; and before the throne the holy Ghost. Which manner of appearance proveth not, that the holy Ghost is inferiour to the

the Father and to the Sonne: but hereby is expressed the office of the holy Ghost: which is to be sent from the Father, and from the Sonne, to the Church, to enlighten the members thereof.

This then is the meaning of the words; *And from the seven spirits which are before the throne:* that is, Grace and peace bee with you from the holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Father, and of the Sonne, who from them both is sent unto the Church, to enlighten, to sanctifie, and to governe the members thereof.

Vse. First, hence we learne, that the holy Ghost is God: for looke from whom commeth grace and peace, that same is very God; but here grace and peace proceed from the holy Ghost; and therefore he is very God.

Secondly, we learne, that we may and ought to direct our prayers to the holy Ghost: for by whom grace and peace is given, to him we may direct our prayers: but grace and peace are given by the holy Ghost; therefore we may pray to him for them. This is the rather to be observed, because there be some which doubt whether we may pray to the holy Ghost: but they may as wel doubt whether he be God. They say we have no example hereof in Scripture. *Ans.* It is not true: for in this benediction *Iohn* prayeth to the holy Ghost, saying, *Grace bee with you, and peace from God the Father, &c.* For in substance it is as much as if he had said thus; *Thy grace and peace, O Father; and thy grace and peace, O holy Ghost; and thine, O Sonne, be with thy Church.*

Thirdly, in this description of the holy Ghost, by standing before the throne of the Father, we may observe, That the holy Ghost is a person subsisting, and not a quality. Some heretikes that acknowledge the God-head of the Father, denied the God-head of the Sonne, and of the holy Ghost: and concerning the holy Ghost, have held, That he is nothing but the vertue and qualitie of the Father. But this is most false: for as the Father is a substance sitting upon the throne; so wee see the Holy Ghost is a substance standing before the throne.

Fourthly, here we learne that the holy Ghost is a distinct person from the Father, and from the Sonne: for hee sitteth not in the throne, as doth the Father, nor sitteth at the Fathers right hand, as doth the Sonne: but standeth before the throne apart from them both.

V. 5. *And from Iesus Christ, which is a faithfull Witnesse, and first begotten of the dead, and Lord over the Kings of the earth: unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sinnes in his owne blood.*

That is, grace and peace from Iesus Christ. Where Christ Iesus is joyned with the Father, and the holy Ghost, in bestowing grace and peace on his Church. Here some may aske, Why is Christ the second person in Trinitie, placed after the holy Ghost, the third person? *Answ.* For two causes: First, in regard of his office: for Christ is to be considered two waies: first, as he is the sonne of the Father: secondly, as he is the Mediatour of the Church. As he is the Sonne of the Father, he is the second person in the Trinitie, and so before the holy Ghost in order. But as he is Mediatour, so he is after the holy Ghost: Isay 61. 1. *The spirit of the Lord is upon mee, hee hath sent mee to preach.* Where Christ confesseth himselfe to be sent by the holy Ghost, as he is Mediatour, and in that respect he is set after him. Secondly, he is placed after the holy Ghost for the fitter progresse of the historie: for the manner of them which pen the Scriptures is, to set them in the last place, of whom they mean to speake most; as Matth. 1. the Evangelist setting downe the genealogie of Christ from *Abraham*, (though among them all was none so excellent as Christ) yet placeth him the last, because he intended to goe on with the history of his life and death. So *Iohn* placeth Christ the last, because he purposed to make a large description of the person and office of Christ; which he could not so fitly have brought in, if hee had placed him before the holy Ghost.

From this fifth verse till the ninth, he describes Christ at large: First, by his offices; secondly, by the execution thereof. His offices are three: first, his Propheticall office, in these words; *Which is that faithfull witnesse.* Secondly, his Priestly office; *The first begotten of the dead.* Thirdly, his Kingly office; *And that Prince of the Kings of the earth.*

The execution of all his offices is particularly set downe in the words following, *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sinnes*, and so forth to the ninth verse.

Touching his offices. In his Propheticall office we may note three things: First, he is a *witnesse*; secondly, *a faithfull witnesse*; thirdly, *that faithfull witnesse.* First, *he is a witnesse*, Isa. 55. 4. *I gave him to be a witnesse to the nations.* By his witnes-bearing is signified two duties of his Prophetical office: first, to reveale the will of his Father to his Church: secondly, to certifie the Church of the certainty of the same: and in these two stands his whole office Propheticall.

For the first, to reveale his Fathers will to the Church immediatly, is his office as he is a Prophet: *for none hath seene God, but he which came from the bosome of the Father, and he hath declared him*, Joh. 1. 18. Now Christ declares the Father, by making known his will: and that he hath done not only in his own person, while he lived on earth, but from the beginning by

all the Prophets, and so will doe to the end by all true Preachers; for in the Church the Father doth all things by the Sonne. When the Lord rained fire on Sodome, Gen. 19. 24. there *Iehovah the Father rained downe by Iehovah the Son*. So when the Covenant was made to our first Parents, it was made in Christ the promised seed. It was renued to *Noah*, *Abraham*, and the Patriarchs, from the Father by the Sonne: for that *Iehovah* which appeared to *Moses* in the bush, Exod. 3. is by S. *Paul* called Christ, 1 Corinth. 10. The Prophets and the Apostles wrote as they were inspired by Christ, they were but his instruments to speake and write that he put into them by the holy Ghost. The matter, and the stile, and phrase of the Scripture, all came from *Christ*. Nay, when any particular man comes to understand the Scripture, this is by the working of *Christ*, hee opens his eyes. He gave the Disciples understanding as they went to Emaus, to understand the Scriptures.

Luke 24.

The second duty of *Christs* Prophetically office is, to certifie men in conscience of the truth of his Fathers will. This certificate is two-fold; generall or particular: generall, when hee certifieth men in conscience, That the word written or spoken by man is the Word of God, neither nature nor learning can doe this, but it is proper to *Christs* Prophetically office. And for this he saith to his Disciples, *He will send them the comforter, which shall lead them into all truth*: that is, reveale Gods will unto them, and assure their heart that the same is true. Unto this assurance two things are requited: the outward meanes, which is the Word it selfe: and an inward cause, which is the principall, to wit, the operation of the holy Spirit.

Iohn 16.13.

By this doctrine three points are resolved: First, this demand of the Papists, How a man can come to know, that the Scriptures read and taught, be the Word of God? *Ans.* We must here have recourse to this faithfull *witnesse*, and desire of him his Spirit, whereby the mind must be enlightened, and made able to discerne the things of God: for no naturall man can doe it of himselfe. Secondly, we must have *Christs* testimony of Scripture in the Scriptures themselves: for in them hee letteth downe his testimony of the Scriptures.

But some will say, if *Christs* testimonie of Scripture be set downe in the Scriptures, why doe not all men know this testimonie, and receive it? I answer, the shining of the Sunne before a mans face is not sufficient to cause him to see, unlesse he have in his eyes the gift and sense of seeing: Even so, it is not enough for a man to have in Gods Word the testimony of *Christ*, that Scripture is Scripture; but withall hee must have in himselfe the light of the Spirit, revealing that testimonie to his conscience: and then in reading or hearing the Scripture, in marking the manner and stile, the majestie and power thereof, he shall be able to see in every sentence the testimony of *Christ*, assuring his conscience that the same is undoubtedly the Word of God.

A

A second doubt resolved by this doctrine is this, *How can a man know the true Religion*, seeing the Turke, Papist, Jew, and Protestant have their severall Religions, and die in them? I answer, We must have recourse to *Christ*, this faithfull witnesse: and looke whereto hee gives his testimony, that we must hold for true Religion. Now the Scriptures bee as a letter sent from heaven to the Church, wherein *Christ* hath set downe his owne testimony of the true Religion; which in tryall shall be found to be the Religion of the Protestant, and not the religion of the Jew, Turke, or Papist.

B

A third doubt to bee resolved by this Doctrine is, *How to know the particular truth in matters of religion, when as sundry men professing the same religion be of divers opinions. Ans.* Still we must have recourse to this faithfull witnesse and Prophet of the Church, hee is the Judge of all controversies in Religion, and in the Scriptures, if we marke them we shall see his judgement. *Quest.* But if there be divers opinions about Scripture it selfe, and every one give a severall sense unto it, who must then bee Judge? *Answ.* In this diversitie of opinions, yea, of the Scriptures themselves, we must still have recourse to *Christ*, and that in the Scriptures alone: for although there were a thousand diverse expositions of one place; yet by the circumstance thereof, conferring it with other like places of Scripture, a man shall be able to finde out the true sense: for *Christ* in Scripture expoundeth himselfe.

C

The particular certificate of *Christ* belongeth also to his Prophetically office: and that is, to assure men in their consciences, that the promises of the Gospell, with all the benefits therein contained, as Justification, Sanctification, and life eternall, which in the Word bee generally expounded, doe belong unto them particularly: as to *Peter*, *Iohn*, &c. And this assurance (as the former) is principally wrought by the Word, not barely read, but preached, for therein by the inward work of the Spirit, the generall promises be particularly applied. This *Paul* imports, saying, Yee have the Spirit of adoption, which testifies with our spirit we be the sonnes of God, Rom. 8. 15, 16.

D

Hence wee learne, that the doctrine of the Church of Rome, and of all others, which hold, That men cannot bee assured of their salvation by faith, is wicked and damnable: for hereby they cut off a part of *Christs* prophetical office, wherein the dignity thereof doth consist, that is, to assure a man particularly of the truth of Gods promises unto himselfe. And in this hee differs from all other Prophets and Apostles which be witnesse: for they can witnesse onely outwardly to the eare; but hee can speake and testifie to the conscience. Neither can any of them certifie any man particularly

ticularly, though their Ministery tend to that end.

Secondly, observe Christ is not onely a witnesse, but a *faithfull witnesse*: and so hee is for these causes; First, because hee testifies not his owne will, but *his which sent him*; namely, *his Father*, Joh. 8. 26. Secondly, hee testifies all his Fathers will, neither adding thereto, nor detracting from it, Joh. 17. 4. Thirdly, because hee teacheth his Fathers will sincerely, in the same manner which he received it, not altering, changing, or depraving any part thereof: *As my Father taught me, so I speak these things*, Joh. 8. 28.

Thirdly, Christ is called that *faithfull witnesse*, to distinguish him from all other witnesses. The Lord hath sundry faithfull witnesses: as the Prophets, Apostles, the Church, nay the *Sunne and Moone*, Psalm. 89. 37. but Christ alone is that faithfull witnesse: First, because his witnesse is[a] authenticall, sufficient of it selfe, and needs no other confirmation. The testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, is not of it selfe authenticall and certaine, but as it consents with Christs witnesse, and proceedeth from his Spirit. Secondly, hee is that witnesse, because he is the Lord of that house, whereto hee gives witnesse, namely the Church; but the Apostles and Prophets are but servants there, Hebr. 3. 5, 6. Thirdly, Christ his witnesse is inward: It speakes directly to the conscience, and there gives undoubted assurance: but the witnesse of men, as of the Prophets and Apostles is outward onely; it comes to the eares, it never binds and assures the conscience of it selfe. And thus we see why he is called here, *that faithfull witnesse*.

1 Joh. 8. 14.

The use.

For, whereas Christ the Doctor and Prophet of the Church, is called that faithfull witnesse, wee learne, That all Ministers of the Gospell ought to bee faithfull witnesses: For every Minister of the Gospell, when he preacheth Gods word, is in the roome of Christ, and speaketh that unto the Church, which Christ would speake. That they may bee faithfull witnesses, sundry things are required at their hands: First, they must deliver the testimony of Christ above all other things, and before all testimonies of man in the office of their ministery. This was meat and drinke to Christ, to [b] *teach his Fathers will*. *Eleazer Abrahams* eldest servant, shewed his fidelitie, in that hee *would not eat or drinke till hee had done his Masters message*, Genes. 24. 33. Much more ought the Ministers of Christ to have speciall care of that weighty message committed unto them. Secondly, they must testifie all the will of God concerning matters of salvation, as faith, obedience, and a godly life: among men, we count him a faithfull witnesse, which testifies all the truth, and no more but the truth: So should it bee with all Ministers, that bee Gods witnesses to his Church. Herein *Paul* cleared himselfe, That he was free from *all mens blood*, *seeing he*

b Joh. 4. 34.

A

delivered the whole wil of God in matters necessary for salvation, and kept nothing backe. Thirdly, he must neither adde unto, nor take away, much lesse in any case deprave the word of God. And this is the true marke of a faithfull witnesse: For false Prophets teach some truth, but withall they adde something of their owne, or detract from Gods truth, something that they ought not. In the Church of Rome a man may heare things concerning morall vertues, handled soundly; but come to Justification, and thereto they adde the merit of mens workes: and so they deale with faith, and repentance, matters of salvation: they take away one part, and adde another to the Scriptures: they hold the Creed in word, yet in deed they deny the same, as by their doctrine may appeare; and so shew themselves false witnesses. Fourthly, a faithfull witnesse must deliver the testimony of Christ in that spirituall manner which best beseemeth the majesty of God, and which hee best approveth; that is, in a plaine, easie, and familiar kinde of speech, that the conscience of the sinner may bee touched, and the understanding of the simple may bee edified. When the Word is otherwise delivered, as in the inticing words of mans wisdome, or for ostentation of wit, or much reading, though nothing be said but the truth; yet hee that so dispenseth it, is an unfaithfull witnesse, because hee corrupteth the Word by his vaine delivery. And this is the sin of this age in many ministers, who teach the truth indeed, but yet in such sort, as it may appeare, they seeke themselves, and not Gods glory, respecting little the edification of the simple, to themselves may be famous for wit, eloquence and learning. But these men make *merchandise of the Word*, like to huxters, that by starching, blowing, and spicing, set a glosse upon their ware, to make seeme that which it is not: which is a grievous sinne, and such as will banish the Gospell out of our Land, unlesse it bee reformed.

B

C

D

Act. 20. 26, 27.

Secondly, this title of Christ, *That faithfull witnesse*, doth discover unto us the damnable practice of men in the sinne of unbeleefe: for Christ this faithfull witnesse hath given testimony to his word which is preached, that the same is true. And therefore *they that beleeve it not, doe make Christ a false witnesse, and a lyar*, than which, what can bee more horrible? and yet this is the common sinne of this age. For when the law is applied, who is afraid? and when the Gospell is preached, *Yet who beleeveth our report?* Gods Ministers may say with the little children, *Wee have piped unto you, but you have not danced; wee have mourned unto you, but you have not wept*. This deadnesse of heart, whereby men are not moved with the Word preached unto them, is an evident argument of this fearefull unbeleefe, whereby they make Christ a false witnesse. This therefore should move us to consider

1 John 5. 10.

in our selves, the heinousnesse of this sinne, that so wee may strive against it, and labour to give free passage to the Word into our hearts, trembling at the Law, and rejoycing in the Gospell, that so each part thereof may have his perfect worke in us: For which end also wee may consider, That amongst those which shall have their portion in the burning Lake, unbeleevers are set in the first ranke, Revelat. 21.8.

Thirdly, seeing Christ Jesus is that faithfull witnesse, which giveth testimony to mens consciences in particular of their salvation; wee learne, That every one which professeth himselfe to repent, is bound in conscience to beleeve that the promises of the Gospell, and the benefits thereof, as Election, Redemption, Justification, Sanctification, and Salvation, belong to him particularly. And though this be against all humane sense and reason, yet seeing we have a faithful witnesse, avouching the same, we must submit our selves unto his testimony: for by unbeleefe wee greatly dishonour our witnesse-bearer, by denying truth unto his record. Here then wee see, it is no presumption (as the Papists say) to beleeve our election and salvation in particular: nay, it is an horrible sinne in every one that repenteth, not to beleeve it; seeing Christ, a most faithfull witnesse, testifies the same to our consciences by his holy Spirit. Hereto also serve the Sacraments instituted by God, to seale up unto every worthy receiver, Christ and all his benefits. The Ministers giving of the Bread and Wine to them that truly repent, is as much as if Christ should say, Beleeve thou, and life eternall belongs to thee.

And the first begotten of the dead. In these words is contained the second office of Christ, namely, his *Priesthood*: the principall actions whereof stand in dying, in rising againe from the dead, and making intercession for us. And here Saint *John* alludeth to the estate of the families among the Jewes, comparing Christ to the first borne: for as among them, hee which was first borne, and eldest of the family, had many privileges and prehemincnces above his brethren; as Lordship, right of the Priesthood, and double portion, &c. so Christ hee hath his privileges; yea, even Christ crucified, hee hath his prerogatives among the dead, above all that are dead. So *Paul* expounding this title, calleth him *the first borne, and beginning of the dead, that hee might have in all things the preheminence*, Col. 1.18.

The privileges of Christ dead, and buried among all the dead, are two: first, That he was the first that ever rose from death to life, and so to glory. Some indeed have risen before Christ from naturall death to naturall life, as *Lazarus*, but it was to die againe. And *Moses* and *Elias* assumed their bodies in the Mount with Christ in his transfiguration: But yet they laid them downe against to the former misery of corruption for a time. But Christ Jesus rose from death to life eternall, never to die againe: and his resurrection was the first step into his glory. Secondly, that by his owne power he raised up himselfe, and by vertue of his Godhead, quickned his man-hood: the most godly man that is, or ever was, cannot doe so: but all the Saints of God are raised from death by vertue of Christs resurrection, through that mysticall union which is betweene Christ the head, and all his members; by meanes whereof, the power of Christ his Godhead, which raised up his manhood, is conveyed to all his members in their resurrection from death to life. And therefore is Christ called, *the first fruits of them that sleep*: because as the first fruits of corne which was offered to God, did sanctifie the whole croppe; so Christ his resurrection did make acceptable unto God, the resurrection of all his members. 2 Cor. 15.

In this title is comprised a notable comfort for all Gods children against the immoderate feare of death. If *John* had said, *Christ is the first borne of the living*, it had beene a great comfort: for then had he shewed, that the living Saints on earth were children in Gods family, having Christ for their eldest brother: but calling him the first begotten of the dead, here is a further comfort: the Lord sheweth hereby, what speciall regard he hath to the faithfull that be dead: for even then, when they be dead, they continue members of his family, and have Christ Jesus dead and buried, reckoned among them for their eldest brother. In regard whereof Christ hath a double right among the dead: first, of a King, secondly, of a Priest. The right of a King hee hath, to command his members to rise again, and to enter into glory after him. The right of a Priest, whereby hee offered up himselfe in death a sacrifice acceptable to God for the sanctifying of the death of all his members: for by his death, hee tooke away the sting of death, and hath made unto them a sweet sleepe in the grave, as in a bed of downe, out of which they shall one day rise to eternall life and glory.

And Prince of the Kings of the earth. Here is the third title given to Christ, wherin his kingly office is expressed. Hee is called a *Prince of the Kings of the earth*, in two respects: First, as hee is God, the sonne of God, equall with the Father, and so is King together with the Father and the holy Ghost, governing all things with them by the same divine power, in heaven, in earth, and in hell. Secondly, as he is Mediator and Redeemer, God and Man, in two natures. In this respect hee saith of himselfe, *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth*, Mat. 28.18. And *Paul* saith, *God gave him a name above every name, at which every knee should bow*, Phil. 2.9,10. even as hee is Mediator. And in this second respect hee is called, *A Prince of the Kings of the earth* in this place. Now Christ being a King, must needs have a Kingdome, which is

is not of this world, standing in the might and policy of a man, as earthly kingdomes doe; but it is spirituall, directly concerning the hearts and consciences of men, where he ruleth by his Lawes. And this is his privilege, which cannot be given to any creature, man or Angell, to rule and raigne spiritually in the heart and conscience. This spirituall Kingdome of Christ is exercised, not by dint of sword, or force of armes, but by his holy word, through the work of the spirit: for he *is a King, which carrieth his sceptre in his mouth*, even his Word, Isay 11.4. *That is the rod of his power, by which he rules the heart and conscience, even in the middest of his enemies*, Psal. 110.2.

Now Christ is here intituled, *Prince of the Kings of the earth*, in two respects: First, because hee (and hee alone) as Mediator, can give lawes to binde the consciences of men; yea, of the greatest Monarch in the world. Secondly, because hee hath soveraigne power over all Kings and Potentates, as well as over others, to save, and to destroy: for not only hath he power to make a law to bind their consciences; but also if they keepe it, to save them; if they breake his law, he hath power to destroy them, be they what they may be. *He hath the keyes of heaven and of hell, to open, and to shut at his pleasure*, Rev. 3.7. Hee can, if hee will leade them to life, and save them: or else leave them to their owne minde, and so destroy them. Hence arise sundry instructions:

First, seeing our Saviour Christ is a Prince of the greatest Monarchs of the world, and is farre above them; wee must then with all feare and trembling, reverence his Majesty. Great is that reverence which men yeeld to earthly Princes: oh then, what reverence should wee performe to him, which is Prince and Lord of all the Kings of the earth? Wee cannot conceive what honour wee owe unto him, which is advanced in the throne of all Majesty. And this our reverence wee must shew, by hearing his word, with *trembling and beleeving hearts*, as *Esay* saith, Chapter 66.2. Wee must not dare to chinke, or speake of Christ, without great reverence: *At his name every knee must bow*: that is, at the consideration of the great Majestie whereto he is now exalted, every heart, even of the greatest Monarchs, should be touched with submission, awe, and reverence. If this tooke place in mens hearts, the name of Christ would not bee so prophaned and blasphemed as it is; in jesting sports, in cursing and swearing, whereby men tosse it like a ball, without all reverence to so great a Prince, as is the King of Kings.

Secondly, seeing hee is a King of Kings, wee must give him absolute obedience. Princes on earth must bee obeyed, so farre as they command in Christ, but he must be obeied without exception, not onely absolutely and perpetually in all his commandements, but most willingly & freely (as it is said) *his people come freely in the day of assembling*, Psal. 110.3. Men will say they beleeve in Christ, as hee is their Saviour; but that is not enough, they must obey him also as hee is the King of Princes. Many perswade themselves: they have a good faith in Christ their Saviour, which little regard obedience to him, as their King and Lord. But they deceive themselves: for none can have Christ for their Saviour, which have him not for their Lord and master: neither doth that man beleeve in Christ, which will not strive to doe his will. And this our obedience must be shewed, in performing those duties which we heare, and learne out of his holy Word.

Thirdly, seeing Christ is King *of Kings*, all Princes must doe him service: for they be all inferiour and subject to him, Psal. 72.11. This is the counsell of the holy Ghost; *Be wise now O ye Kings, bee learned ye Judges of the earth: kisse the Son, &c.* that is, inwardly reverence, and outwardly obey him. This their homage must be shewed, in all the affaires of their kingdomes; they must frame their lawes after the lawes of Christ Jesus; they must shew mercie, exercise judgement, keepe Courts, Assizes; begin, end, and continue warre according to his commandements. And so in every thing, the direction of Christ should be their guide, as it was to *David, thy lawes, O Lord, have been my Counsellors*, Psal. 119.24. Psal. 2.10,11.

Fourthly, if Christ be soveraigne King, then all earthly Princes are bound to plant, and establish in their Kingdomes the religion of Christ, else how can they shew themselves his loyall subjects? Many imagine, that earthly Princes may admit unto their subjects any religion, for the peace of the civill State: but this is against the equity of Gods word in this place: for wherein can earthly Princes doe homage unto Christ, if they maintaine not his religion? And their duty in this behalfe is signified plainely in the parable of the marriage. For when they that were bidden did not come, the King sent forth *his servants* (which may be understood of the Christian Magistrates) *to compell men to come to the marriage*: for that is the Magistrates duty, in respect of the outward profession of true religion. Luke 14.23.

Fifthly, seeing Christ alone is Prince of the Kings of the earth: hence we learne, that Kings on earth in their dominions, are soveraigne governours over all persons, and in all causes next under Christ: he is King of Kings absolutely, and they are under him alone, and have no other head but him. Whereby we see the presumption and arrogancy of the Pope and sea of Rome in claiming Supremacie above all Kings and Princes in the whole Church upon earth. This is a device of the Devill, and high treason against Christ; for hereby hee is robbed of his royall prerogative, to be the only Prince of the Kings of the earth.

Lastly, seeing Christ is King of all Kings, we must not be discouraged, when wee bee called to

to suffer any affliction for his truth: let the tyrants of the earth rage and bend their force to hurt us, yet wee have a King above them all for whom we suffer: he is their King, he can stay and bridle them, and if he please, confound and bruise them in peeces. They cannot doe any thing, but that which he permits; for hee *rules in the midst of all his enemies*, Psal. 110. 2. he can break them in peeces like a potters vessel. Thus much of the offices of Christ.

The second part of Christs description is by the execution of his offices, which consists in foure works: The first contained in these words *Vnto him which loved us*: the second in these, *which washed us in his blood*: the other two, in the two ver. which follow, *viz.* 6, and 7. For the first, *which loved us*, that is, *John* and the Churches of Asia, and by proportion, all other Churches, being parts of the true Church. The love of Christ hath three degrees: the first is a generall love, whereby he loves all his creatures, approving the same to bee good, as they are his by creation. The second is the love of mankind, in that hee was content to become a Redeemer for mankinde afect their fall, and not for any other creature; no not for the Angels, which fell as well as man: who therefore remaine without all hope of salvation. The third and principall, is that whereby hee loves his elect and chosen children; which is, *that speciall favour, whereby he accepts of them to life everlasting*. This third degree hath two parts: first, it is taken for his purpose to love: as when he saith, *I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau*, Rom. 9. 13. Secondly, for the act of loving; which is the declaration of his purpose by spirituall benefits: 1 Joh. 3. 1. *Behold, what singular love God hath shewed unto us, that we should be called the sonnes of God:* noting the declaration of his love in the gift of adoption. So in this verse, by the love of Christ unto his Church, is meant the actuall declaration of his speciall favour, in accepting them for his children, and bestowing many singular blessings upon them.

Whereas Saint *John* placeth this in the first place of all the benefits of Christ, *That he loved us*; he would teach us, That this speciall love is the very ground of mans redemption; which excludeth all fore-seene faith and workes from being motives of mans election in Gods eternal counsels, and so proportionally, all fore-seene sinnes, from being motives in God of mans reprobation.

It may be objected. The love of God as also of man, respects a thing as it is good: first, the thing must bee good, and then it is loved: and so in mans redemption, God first foresees their goodnesse, and therefore chuseth them. *Answ.* There is great difference betweene the love of the creature, and of the Creator. The love of the creature followes the goodnesse of a thing: because hee seeth it is good, therefore hee loves it. But God the Creator first loves the creature before it be good: and hence it comes, that it is good, because he loves it.

Secondly, whereas Saint *John* and all the Churches of *Asia*, as other true Churches doe beleeve, and are assured that Christ loves them (for that S. *John* taketh for granted) this should move all men to have this care, to labour above all things to bee rooted and grounded in the love of God, seeing hee placeth that in the first place. This is a principall thing, wherein the Apostle would have the Ephesians rooted and grounded: and therefore praieth, *That with all Saints they may be able to comprehend, what is the breath and length, depth and height thereof*, Ephes. 2. 17, 18, 19. This we doe when wee are assured in heart and conscience, by the working of Gods spirit, that he loves us in Christ. So that he which denies unto us the assurance of Gods love in Christ, takes away the very ground of our salvation.

Now that wee may have this assurance of Gods love, wee must in all good duties to God and man draw neere to God with our hearts, keeping a good conscience in all things, and then will God draw neere to us. *If any man love me* (saith Christ) *he wil keep my word, and then my Father will love him, and we will come in unto him, and dwell with him*: Joh. 14. 23. meaning by the holy Ghost; which *shall shed this love into our hearts*, Roman. 5. 5. causing us to increase in the feeling thereof, as we grow in faith and obedience towards him.

And hath washed us from our sins in his blood. Here is the second benefit and action of Christ to his Church. Where first of all the very phrase *hath washed us*, doth import the very sinnes of men are as filthy spots in their soules: and that himselfe and this Church of God were touched with a serious consideration of their vilenesse, by reason of their sinnes: for washing presupposeth former filthinesse and pollution. Thus did *David* most sensibly feele his owne filthinesse, and see his miserable estate, when he desired the Lord to *wash him thoroughly*: confessing thereby, that his soule and body were so foulely stained, and polluted with sinne, that once washing was not enough: but saith hee, Wash me againe, and againe, rince, bathe, and swill me in the bloud of Christ, till I be purged and cleansed from all my sinnes. And this same affection should bee in every one of us; wee should labour that our hearts may bee touched with a lively sense of our vile estate by reason of our sinnes, which make both body and soule most ugly and filthy in Gods sight: and that the staine hereof is so deeply set in our soules, that wee can never bee cleansed, but by the washing of Christ his owne hand, and that in his owne hearts bloud: yea, that one washing will not serve, but wee must be rinced and bathed therein. For untill such time as this consideration doe in some measure take place in our hearts, it is not possible that wee should loath sinne as wee ought: or come to this comfortable assurance of Gods

Psal. 51. 1.

love, that hee hath washed away our sinnes in his bloud: for this humility in our soules by reason of our sinnes, is the beginning of all true grace and comfort. Now this worke of Christ in washing us from our sinnes, doth comprehend a double benefit.

First, the remission of our sinnes, whereby the guilt and punishment due to them is taken away. Secondly, the mortification of sinne, whereby the corruption of sinne is removed and abolished. And wee must observe, that S. *John* propounds this benefit generally without limitation, saying, *Which washed us from our sinnes*. That is, from all our sinnes; to give us to understand, that if any beleeve truly in Christ, he hath pardon of all his sinnes without any restraint or limitation, either of number or qualitie, bee they never so many, or never so great.

By his bloud. How can bloud wash away filthinesse? nay, it rather defiles a man. *Answ.* This washing stands not in the substance of Christs bloud, but in the merit thereof: for that substance of bloud which was shed, is lost, and we know not what is become of it, whatsoever the Papists say: but the merit thereof remaineth still. And Christs bloud deserves to purge away sinne, rather than any other mans bloud, as of *Peter, John, &c.* because his bloud was *the bloud of God*, (not of the God-head) but of him who was both God and man. For the man-hood of Christ was received into the union of the second person. And so it may bee called the *bloud* of God, as *Paul* saith, [a] *God redeemed his Church by his bloud*, that is Christ, God incarnate. And so it being the bloud of him, that is God, is more meritorious than the bloud of any creature whatsoever. Besides Christ was appointed by God to be a publike person in the worke of Redemption, and in his death and passion hee stood in the roome and stead of all his elect; so as when his bloud was shed, their bloud was shed, because it was shed for them. But the bloud of any other private men cannot answer for any beside themselves, because it is shed only for themselves. Then damnable is the doctrin of the Papists, who hold the bloud of Martyrs, can merit for others, being applied unto them: for seeing they be but private men, and suffered in their owne persons only, they cannot profit any other thereby.

By *bloud* we must understand the passion of Christ, a part for the whole, and withall his fulfilling of the Law upon the crosse: for in his suffering he fulfilled the Law, & in fulfilling the law he suffered. These two cannot bee severed, save only in thought. And so this word contains the whole obedience of Christ, whereby hee procured the remission and mortification of our sins. Here then wee see two notable benefits of Christ unto his Church, his love, and the washing away of sinnes: which Saint *John* sets down to move the Churches with reverence and diligence to reade, and delight in this booke. All of us will say, wee are the Lords, loves us, and hath pardoned our sinnes in Christ: why then do we not shew our love againe to him, by hearing and reading his word, set down in this, or any other Booke of Scripture, and by yeelding answerable obedience thereto? why then doe we not offer up our selves, soules, and bodies, to serve him, as the Apostle requires, Roman. 12. 1. by way of recompence for his mercies and love shed out unto us? But alas, that is more common which is most shamefull, to turne Gods grace into wantonnesse: for when men say God loves them, and hath washed away their sinnes, yet they rebell against him: whereas these two benefits are here recorded to bee inducements of continuall love, and obedience to his holy word.

[a] Act. 20. 28.

v. 6 *And made us Kings and Priests to God even his father: to him bee glorie and dominion for evermore, Amen.*

In these words is set downe the third worke and benefit of Christ, bestowed on his Church, and on every true member thereof. For the better understanding whereof, wee must consider in them foure points: First, the dignity and excellency of all true members of Christ, *They are Kings and Priests*. Secondly, when they be made Kings and Priests in this life, noted by the phrase of speech, *hath made*: Wherein hee speaketh of the Church on earth, and useth a word that signifieth the time past. Thirdly, the manner how they become Kings and Priests; they are not so borne, but Christ hath made them such. Fourthly, to whom they be made such, *to God even the Father*.

For the first. The dignity of all true beleevers hath two heads; first, *They be kings*. secondly, *Priests*. They are called Kings, not in regard of an earthly kingdome, for usually the condition of most beleevers on earth is base and contemptible: but in regard of a spirituall kingdom, the Kingdome of Heaven, whereto the Lord gives them right, title and interest, in, and by Jesus Christ. So our Saviour Christ speaketh to his Disciples: [a] *Feare not little flocke, it is your Fathers will to give you the kingdome*. And againe, *Behold I give unto you a kingdome*. Now the faith full are Kings in these respects; first, because by Christ, they be Lords and Conquerors of all these enemies, sinne, Satan, the world, death, hell, and their owne flesh. Secondly, because in, and by Christ, they are partakers of the glory of Christs Kingdome and salvation: for they receive of Christ grace for grace, and so answerably glory for glory, and felicity for felicity. Thirdly, because they be made Lords of all things in heaven and earth (except good Angels, and the Church.) *All things are yours*, whether

[a] Luke 12. 32.

1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

whether it be Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, whether things present, or to come, even all are yours, and ye Christs.

Quest. But if Christ be King, and all his members Kings, how doe they differ? *Answ.* In two points: First, Christ is the sonne of God by nature, and so a King by nature, having the right of the Kingdome of heaven by inheritance: but the members of Christ are sonnes of God by adoption in his sonne, so that our right to that kingdome is not by nature, but by grace. Secondly, Christ is an universall King over the Angels in heaven, the Church on earth, and all other creatures wheresoever; his regiment is absolute in the hearts and consciences of men, and hee can by his word binde all things: but true beleevers be not universall Kings, for they have no superiorities above good Angels, and the Church. Neither are they absolute Kings as hee is, nor of themselves; but by Christ Jesus, and as they participate with Christ in his kingdome.

The second part of the dignitie of true beleevers stands in this, That they be Priests consecrate and set apart by Christ, to the worship and service of God here in this life in spirit and truth, and in the life to come, to serve and praise him eternally. Christ he is a Priest, so are all his members; but yet there is difference. First, Christ he is an eternall and reall Priest of the new Testament, which offers up a true, reall, and externall propitiatory sacrifice to God the Father for the sinnes of mankind. As for beleevers, they are not reall and externall Priests, but spirituall, offering up spirituall sacrifice unto God. As when any member of Christ gives an Almes, hee offers a sacrifice to God, not a corporall sacrifice, though the thing given be a bodily substance: but it is every way spirituall: for to offer a reall outward sacrifice in the new Testament, is proper to Christ. Againe our Saviour Christ he is a perfect Priest, and offers up a perfect sacrifice, but wee being imperfect, doe offer up imperfect sacrifices, tainted, and blemished with sinne; yet accepted as perfect, for the worthinesse of Christs sacrifice.

The second point to bee considered, is the time when beleevers are made Kings & Priests; namely, *in this life*. For as in the entrance into an earthly kingdome there bee degrees: First, to have good right and title to it; secondly, to get possession of it, which is more than title onely; and yet if a mans title be good, though he want possession, he may be called a king: So is it with Gods children, they have the right given them of the kingdome of heaven in this life, and in that respect are Kings. Further in the possession of a kingdome there be two degrees: first, the entrance upon some part: secondly, the full and perfect enjoying of all. Now every true beleever begins to enter possession of the kingdome of heaven in this life: for it stands[a] in *righteousnesse, joy, and peace*: and they which have these things in their hearts, have the kingdome of God begun in them in this life. But the full fruition and perfect possession of this kingdome, is reserved to be given at the end of this life, and at the day of judgement. And as true beleevers be *Kings* in this world, so likewise be they *Priests*, in offering spirituall sacrifice to God, and dedicating and consecrating themselves to his service all the dayes of their life.

a Rom. 14. 17.

The third point is, the manner how true beleevers become kings and priests: they are not such by nature, neither doth this dignity come by descent in the bloud or birth-right, or by any other privilege they have from man, but onely from Christ Jesus, who by divine calling makes them spirituall Kings and Priests, like as under the law, by solemne election and ordination, some were made earthly kings and priests. Now in this calling of Christ, two things concurre: First, Christ giveth his members right to his owne kingdome and priest-hood: yet not so that they can execute the regiment sustained by Christ, or performe the office of his Priest-hood; but because they have right in part to these offices, and the benefit of them both redoundeth to them wholly. And this right they have, is brought to passe in the covenant of the Gospell: wherein they are bound to beleeve in God through Christ, and God is bound againe to give unto them Christ with all his benefits: among which, these two must be accounted: for indeed, every thing which belongs to Christ as hee is mediator, is conveyed in some sort to every true beleever. Secondly, in this divine calling, Christ endues all his members with gifts and graces, whereby they are inabled for the duties of spirituall Kings and Priests unto God. For as Christ is annointed, so are all his members. So the Psalmist speaking of Christ saith, *Hee is annointed with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellowes*, Psal. 45. 7. Therefore his fellows (that is, beleevers) are annointed with the same oyle, though in lesse measure. And Saint *John* saith; *Yee have received the annointing*, 1 John 2. 27. Yea, God himselfe chargeth wicked men *not to touch his annointed*, Psalm. 105. 51. meaning not onely Patriarchs, Kings and Prophets, but all true beleevers, who are then annointed, when they are indued with the gifts of the same spirit, in some measure, where with Christ in his manhood was filled above measure.

The fourth point: To whom hath hee made them Kings and Priests? *Answ. To God, even the Father.* This is added for speciall cause, to prevent that carnall liberty which mans nature might claime from this spirituall royalty: for men might say, If all beleevers bee Kings, then may they live as they list: but their words (unto God) doe shew, that the right of their kingdome, with the offices of their priest-hood, must all bee referred to the honour and praise of God, unto whom they are made Kings and Priests.

Lastly, he addeth, *Even his Father*, by way of exposition to shew more particularly to which of the persons they are first of all made Kings and Priests: for the title God, must not here be taken absolutely for the divine nature, but with restraint to the first person, the Father: unto whom all true beleevers are made kings and priests in the first place, and from the Father to the Sonne, and from them both to the holy Ghost. And the first person in Trinitie is here named above the rest, not as being above them in degree of honour, for so they be equall: but because he is the first in order, and the fountaine of the Godhead, which is conveyed from him to the Sonne, and from them both to the holy Ghost.

Thus much for the meaning of the words: Now follow sundry uses, from the consideration of these two dignities of beleevers. And first, their kingly dignitie affordeth matter both of instruction and consolation.

Instruct. I. Whereas all true beleevers are made true kings in this life; hereby every one that professeth Christian religion is taught, to carry himselfe as an enemy to all those that are of the kingdome of darknesse; as namely, to sinne and Sathan, to the flesh and the world, even thorow the whole course of his life: for by calling every Christian hath title to the kingdome of heaven. What affinitie then can wee have with those that bee both enemies of this kingdome, and of Christ himselfe, that made us kings? Now that we may so carry our selves, as enemies, wee must doe these three things; First, have care to keepe guard, and defend our selves as kings against all our enemies, sinne, Sathan, our owne flesh, and the inticements of the world. As kings protect their kingdomes, so must we labour to keep our soules & bodies, and every facultie and part of them, our wils, affections, thoughts and inclinations, from the power of sin: *He which is borne of God, keepeth himselfe* (as with watch and ward) *that the evill one, that is Sathan, touch him not by the assaults of sinne*, 1 Joh. 5. 18. Secondly, wee must make warre continually against Sathan, sinne, our own flesh, against all our spirituall enemies, and all the inticements of the world: we must make no truce with them, because they will never be reconciled unto us, so long as we have interest unto the kingdome of heaven; and if we yeeld to them, wee lose our kingly dignitie, and become their vassals, and boundslaves. Thirdly, we must labour to kill and destroy these our enemies as much as possibly we can, by that power we have from Christ our head, and like valiant kings seek to have the bloud of these enemies, and them day to day strive to vanquish Sathan, his power and might, to overcome the world, and to weaken our owne corruption.

Instruct. II. If in this life we be kings, then must wee become Lords over our selves, and keepe in subjection unto God our wils and affections, and the secret thoughts and inclinations of our soules. We must not looke for rule over earthly kingdomes; but herein stands our kingdome in this world, That we can subdue our corrupt affections, and keepe our bodies and soules in obedience unto God. If a man were Prince over the whole earth, and yet could not rule himselfe, he were but a poore Prince, nay, he were no Prince indeed. But though a man have not so much as a foot of ground in this world, and yet can rule and matter himselfe, his thoughts and affections, this man is a valiant prince, and one whom Christ hath conferrate to be king in heaven.

Instruct. III. Seeing we be kings, we must doe the dutie of Judges: for to him that is a king, belongeth soveraigne judgement. In the day of judgement, the *Saints shall judge the world, and Angels also*: but wee must be judges in this world. And yet here wee can neither judge men or Angels, but we must be our owne Judges. Wherefore, as Judges summon, arraigne, condemne, &c. so must we examine our selves, call our selves to account, and as guilty persons accuse and condemne our selves for our sinnes: acknowledging wee bee worthy to bee cast into eternall damnation with the Devill and his Angels: and withall plead for pardon, and approach to the throne of grace, and forgivenesse in Christ: and in this wee shew our selves upright spirituall Judges, and by this meanes we shall bee free from the judgement to come.

1 Cor. 6. 2, 3.

Instruct. IIII. If we be kings by Christ, we must carry our selves as Kings courageiously, and constantly in the afflictions and miseries which wee shall suffer for Christs sake. For herein among the rest, stands the royaltie of a king, that hee beares with a valour and courage all the troubles which befall him. Hence it is, that S. *Peter* exhorts us to rejoyce in *afflictions, because wee are partakers of Christs sufferings*, 1 Pet. 4. 13. and so are made conformable unto him that was consecrate the Prince of our salvation through afflictions, Heb. 2. 10.

Instruct. V. Seeing wee bee spirituall kings, wee must above all things labour and seeke to have our part in the kingdome of Christ, and in his righteousnesse. A Christian must not have his heart glewed & fast tied unto the things of this world, it is against his calling: but he must so use this world, as though hee used it not. If a king should lay downe his crowne, and goe and become a shepherd, or of some manuall trade, all men would marvell at it: So it fareth with them that professe themselves to be Christians, and yet bend their wits and endeavours wholly for these worldly things: they doe as it were cast aside their kingly crowne, and abase themselves to slavish bondage. But wee must ever after have our hearts fixed in heaven, striving to come to our inheritance there.

Instruct. VI. Seeing all the true members of Christ be kings and princes; this should be an inducement to all backward persons to love and

and embrace true religion. In these carelesse dayes Religion is accounted priciteneſſe, and the profeſſion thereof made matter of reproach. But this ought not to be ſo, ſeeing that by it we come to have right and intereſt unto the kingdom of heaven, and to the Lord of all creatures. And why ſhould wee not eſteeme the Goſpell preached as a moſt precious jewell, ſeeing that we which are vaſſals of Sathan, and firebrands of hell (as all men are by nature) become thereby the members of Chriſt, yea kings & princes to God? Yea verily, the conſideration of this ſhould make the Miniſters of the Goſpel to joy in their callings; and to take all paines to preach the Word, ſeeing by it men become of vaſſals of Satan, the true members of Chriſt, and heires of the kingdome of heaven. In this world it is counted great honour to conſecrate and eſtabliſh one in an earthly kingdome. What a bleſſed and honourable thing then is this, to conſecrate ſpirituall Kings for the Kingdome of heaven? And this is done, when by the Word preached, men are converted and brought to unfeined repentance for their ſinnes, and to true faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

Thus much for the duties. Now follow the conſolations to every true beleever onely. It is an heavie croſſe, which breeds much anguiſh to the ſoule, to be in povertie and contempt among men; yet herein may the childe of God ſtay his heart, and leſſen his griefe, by conſidering that even in this ſtate of miſerie, he is a King unto God; though hee ſeeme base to the world: yet it appeareth not what he ſhall bee, for he is heire to the kingdome of heaven. If a man bee in ſickneſſe, he muſt conſider it is but Gods meſſenger, to call him out of this world to the full poſſeſſion of the joyes of his kingdome. If he be in trouble of minde, having his owne conſcience tormented fearſully by Satan with his ſinnes: yet he muſt not deſpaire, the Lord will give him an happie iſſue: he muſt remember he is a King, and therfore ſhall one day have full conqueſt over ſinne, Sathan, and his owne corruption, yea, over all his enemies whatſoever, if he be in the heat of perſecution turmoiled and toſſed from poſt to pillar, which fleſh & blood cannot brook; yet then he muſt conſider his calling to be a ſpirituall king, whoſe property it is in the moſt violent afflictions, even unto death it ſelfe (as *Paul* ſaith) *to be more than conqueror*, Rom. 8.37. Laſtly, in the very pang of death, when nature muſt needs bee diſſolved, ſoule and bodie ſeparated, then muſt the childe of God remember, that he is a King in Chriſt, and this will ſtay his heart againſt the feare of death; for herein ſhall he ſee that by death, as thorow a ſtrait paſſage, hee ſhall enter into full poſſeſſion of his kingdome. And thus much in that we are kings.

Rom. 16. 20.

From the ſecond dignitie of beleevers, which is to bee Priests unto God, wee are likewiſe taught ſundry duties:

Firſt, *to teach and inſtruct one another*. It was A the office of the Prieſt under the Law to teach the people the will of God: *The Prieſts lips ſhould preſerve knowledge*, Mal. 2. 7. And now under the Goſpell not onely the Miniſter, but every true beleever is a ſpirituall Prieſt, and therefore ought to *teach and admoniſh one another*, Col. 3. 16. When the Lord ſaith, *Touch not mine annointed, and do my Prophets no harme*, Pſal. 105. 15. he calleth all his faithfull by the name of Prophets, becauſe they ought to have the knowledge of his will, and bee able alſo in due time, and upon juſt occaſion to teach the ſame unto others, that ſo the Goſpell of Chriſt may flouriſh. And as this dutie belongs to all men; ſo eſpecially to governours, as Parents and Maſters, they muſt ſhew themſelves priests B to their charges. *Abraham* did it, Gen. 18. *David* did it, Prov. 4. And *Bathſhebath* did it, Pro. 31. All muſt doe it, that deſire a holy generation to ſucceed after them. Wee teach them other things, why not religion?

Secondly, ſeeing wee bee Prieſts, wee muſt pray unfeinedly, not onely for our ſelves, *but* a *for all men*, eſpecially the members of Chriſt. The Prieſt in the old Teſtament muſt pray and make requeſt, not onely for himſelfe, but for the people alſo. And herein ſtands the praiſe of a Chriſtian, to pray for his brethren. Hence it is that *Paul* ſaith, *Pray for all the Saints, and for me*; Epheſ. 6. 18. *Moſes* is highly commended for this dutie, eſpecially when he prayed for the *Iſraelites, and ſtood before the Lord in the* C *gap, to turne away his wrath*, Exod. 32. *Elias* for his power in prayer and prophecie, is called the *chariot and horſemen of Iſrael*, 2 Kin. 2. 12. And this is recorded for the praiſe of *Hezekias*, That when the people were unprepared at the eating of the Paſſover, *Hee prayed to the Lord for mercie, and was heard*, 2 Chron. 30. 18. And ſo when we finde any commended in Scripture for his gift in prayer, it is not ſo much for that he prayed diligently for himſelfe, as for the whole Church of God.

a 1 Tim. 2. 1.

Thirdly, being Prieſts wee muſt offer ſpirituall ſacrifice unto God, that is, dedicate our ſelves, our ſoules and bodies, and all that is in us, our wit, learning, knowledge, and every gift of bodie or minde to Gods ſervice. That we D may doe all this to his glorie, wee muſt looke that every thing wee take in hand have his beginning from *a pure heart, a good conſcience, and faith unfeined, and be directed to a good end, to Gods glorie principally, and the good of others, whom it may concerne.*

Fourthly, we muſt be full of bleſſings. The Prieſts in the old Teſtament, Numb. 6. uſed to bleſſe the people: ſo muſt we if we be Chriſtians, becauſe we are ſpirituall Prieſts. We muſt take heed of all curſed ſpeaking, of flandering and backbiting, of ſwearing and forſwearing: and give our ſelves to bleſſed and gracious ſpeeches to all men, and of all men, friends or foes, Rom. 12. 14.

Fifthly, wee muſt ſeeke to have God for our

portion: The Levites had no portion in the Land of Canaan, but the tenths onely, a *The Lord was their portion*. So wee being Prieſts to God, muſt bee content with any eſtate in this world, for God is our portion. Wee muſt not ſeeke too much after any inheritance on earth, for then we cary not our ſelves like prieſts unto God. The favour of God in Chriſt muſt be the thing we long for, and therein muſt we rejoyce.

a Deut. 10. 9. Pſal. 119. 57.

To him bee glorie and dominion for evermore, Amen. Theſe words are a thankſgiving to God for the former benefits of Chriſt beſtowed on his Church; Which S. *John* putteth in before he have ended his record of the gracious works of Chriſt for his Church, as it were interrupting himſelfe, for the great deſire he had to the glorie of God. Whereby we are taught, that the conſideration of Gods benefits towards us, eſpecially ſuch as concerne the kingdome of heaven, ſhould ſtirre up our hearts to give continuall praiſe and glorie to God. This was *Davids* affection, when he felt in his ſoule the pardon of his ſinnes, and therefore he breaks out into this thankſgiving: *My ſoule praiſe thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits*, Pſalm. 103. 1. And ſo did *Paul*, after the bleſſed memorie of Gods mercie in his vocation, 1 Tim. 1. 17.

Secondly, in this example of *John* wee may learne, what is the true forme of giving thanks to God, namely, to aſcribe unto him all power, glory, and abſolute dominion for evermore. But alas, it is too too manifeſt, that our corrupt nature will not doe this, but taking from God his due, beſtoweth it on creatures, yea, on our owne ſelves. It is a matter of grace to know what is due to God, and to aſcribe the ſame unto him, and therefore we are charged *to give unto the Lord glory and power*, which in the next words he cals *the glory of his name*, Pſal. 96. 7, 8. So Chriſt he teacheth us to aſcribe all power, glory, might, and dominion to God, when we ſay in the Lords prayer, *For thine is the kingdome, the power and glorie*: that is, The kingdome of heaven is thine: all power in heaven and earth is thine, and therefore all glorie is thine; and from our hearts we doe aſcribe the ſame unto thee.

Laſtly, S. *John* addeth, *Amen*, that is, *ſo bee it*. Let all glorie and dominion bee given to Chriſt; which is the ſame hee ſayd before. Whereby he doth teſtifie his fervent affection, and ſtrength of deſire, after the glorie of Chriſt, elſe hee would not have doubled his thankſgiving. And ſo it ſhould bee with us, wee ſhould not freeze in our thankſgiving for Gods benefits, but labour to have our hearts and tongues to double the ſame, that thereby we may teſtifie our fervent and earneſt deſire after his praiſe and glorie.

v. 7 *Behold, he commeth with clouds, and every eye ſhall* A *ſee him: yea, even they which pierced him thorow: and all kindreds of the earth ſhall wayle before him, Even ſo, Amen.*

Theſe words are a declaration of the fourth action of our Saviour Chriſt towards his Church; and that is, his ſecond comming to judgement, to judge both quicke and dead. Wherein we are to conſider ſundry points: firſt, this note of attention, *Behold*: ſecondly, the action of Chriſts comming it ſelfe, *He commeth*: thirdly, the manner how, *with clouds*: amplified B by the manifeſtation thereof, *Every eye ſhall ſee him, even they that pierced him*: fourthly, the effect of his comming: *All tribes of the earth ſhall waile*: Fifthly, the concluſion of this narration, with two notes of aſſeveration, *Even ſo, Amen*, to confirme the ſecond comming of Chriſt to all people.

I. Point, *Behold*. Firſt, S. *John* beginneth this narration with a note of attention. The Spirit of God is accuſtomed, when any thing is of ſpeciall weight, and worth our careful marking, to prefix before it this note of attention; *Behold*, or ſuch like. Hence then we are taught this ſpeciall dutie, namely, often and every day earneſtly and ſeriouſly to bethinke C our ſelves of the ſecond comming of Chriſt to judgement. This conſideration is a matter of great uſe, for it is a notable meanes to begin and continue the converſion of a ſinner unto God. When the Scribes and Phariſies, obſtinate enemies, came to the Baptiſme of S. *John*, hee uſed this as a meanes to make them to turne and beleeve in Chriſt, ſaying, *Oh generation of vipers, who hath forewarned you that you ſhould flie from the vengeance to come?* Matth. 3. 7. So *Peter* uſeth this ſame argument, to bring the Jewes to repentance: exhorting them to *turne that their ſins might be put away, when the day of refreſhing*, (that is) *the day of judgement ſhould come*, Act. 3. 19. *Paul* perſwades the Athenians to repentance, *Becauſe there is a day appointed in which the Lord will judge the world by Jeſus Chriſt*, Acts 17. 30, 31.

Secondly, this note of attention ſerves to D ſtrike our hearts with a feare and reverence of Chriſt Jeſus: for it gives us warning that he ſhal come to be our Judge. Wee are touched with awe and reverence toward earthly Magiſtrates, when wee conſider that they have authority to attach, apprehend, and to bring us to their courts and aſſiſes: How much more ſhould this worke in us a reverend awe towards Chriſt, when we conſider, That one day we muſt all be brought before his tribunall ſeat, and there be judged of him.

II. Point. The comming of Chriſt himſelfe, *He comes*: that is, Chriſt locally deſcendeth fro the

the highest heaven, in his manhood, to that part of this world, where the clouds be, there to give judgement upon all mankinde, quicke and dead. Here marke in what manner *Iohn* propounds his comming: he saith not, he shall come, but in the present time, *hee commeth*. Whereby hee would teach us: First, that this sound comming of Christ is as certaine, as if it were now present. Secondly, that it is not long to, or far off, but will be quickly. Thirdly, that our dutie is, to consider of the comming of Christ as of a thing present. This Saint *Iohn* learned, and so should we by his example, for it is a matter of great use. For hence weare taught, to desire and doe that every day, which wee would desire and doe in the day of judgement; and blessed is he that attaineth hereunto.

Now that wee may come to the practice of this dutie, wee must daily consider of the comming of Christ, not as a thing to be delayed or farre off, but as a thing present. We must every day call our selves to reckoning and account, and perswade our selves this may bee the last day; and so shall we carry our selves every day, as we would in the last day. Now wee would wish at the day of judgement, that we did repent and beleeve in *Christ*: and therefore every day of our life, before the last judgement come, we ought to repent and beleeve in Christ. If this dutie were practised, we should finde lesse corruption, and more grace in our hearts, and lesse sinne, and more obedience in our lives every day than other: but grace is wanting, and sinne abounds, because this meditation takes no place in our hearts. Againe, in that he saith, *He commeth*, meaning in respect of his manhood; hence wee gather, he is absent from us, in regard of bodily presence; and the heavens must containe him untill the day of judgement: But if Christ were alwaies bodily present in the Sacrament, he could not be said to come, but onely to manifest himselfe, being before present. And therefore the opinion of those which hold the bread to be really Christs body, to be in or about the bread of the Sacrament, is most false and frivolous, flat against that article of our faith, whereby wee hold, That he comes from heaven, onely at the last day, in regard of his manhood.

III. Point. The manner of *Christs* comming, in two things: First, *that he comes with clouds*: Secondly, that his comming is *open, and visible to every eye*.

First, *with clouds*. Here S. *Iohn* speaketh after the manner of the Prophets, who to set out God in his majestie and glorie, say, *hee comes with clouds, rides on the wings of the wind*: as though hee had said, hee comes in exceeding majestie and glorie. These words are added to make a distinction betweene the first and second comming of *Christ*. His first comming was in humilitie, borne of a poore virgin, entertained in a stable of an Inne: but his second comming is with glorie, majestie, and dominion in the clouds. And the reason is, because he came first to be a redeemer, and a Saviour by his suffering; and therefore came in the state of a servant. But his second comming is to bee a Judge of all men, yea, of his enemies; and therefore hee commeth with all might, majestie and glorie, to shew himselfe king and Lord of all.

Psal. 18. 57.

The uses of this his second comming, are set downe in the 97. Psalm. to make the verie mountaines to tremble, to confound the wicked and ungodly, and to comfort the godly in that day.

Secondly, for his open appearance; *Everie eye shall see him*, hee shall come in majestie and glorie: not secretly, but in visible shew to all the world. All men shall see him with their own eyes: All I say, which were since the world began to his comming.

In these words hee toucheth three points: First, hee takes it here for granted, that every man shall rise from death to life, though their death were never so strange, or never so long before. Secondly, that all men being raised againe, shall have life, and motion, and their senses restored to them, as before they died. Thirdly, that all men, none excepted, shall come and stand before the tribunall seat of Christ, and there be judged of him in the clouds.

The consideration whereof is, First, an exceeding comfort to Gods children, in that they being dead and rotten in their graves, shall rise, and receive their life and motion, and see *Christ* their Saviour, and Judge of all men. If a man when hee layeth him downe to sleepe, should bee told, that when he rose, he should see his dead father and mother; or his dearest friends, whom he saw not of long before; this would be a notable comfort to him, that now he should enjoy them againe: but how farre greater comfort shall this yeeld to all the godly, who have been dead and rotten in the grave, That they shall bee raised up, and not onely meet with godly friends, but enjoy Christ Jesus the sonne of God, which is the friend of friends; who shall give them not onely life and motion, but eternall life with his owne majestie. This was *Iobs* comfort, that though hee *died, yet hee beleeved hee should see his redeemer with his eyes*. And this should be our comfort against the feare of death, and last judgement.

Secondly, this is a terror to the wicked, and to all impenitent sinners, that they shall (will they, nill they) bee brought to the barre of *Christs* judgement seat, and there looke on him who is their Judge, whom they have in their life contemned and despised. And this consideration may seeme to move them to repentance, which have not begun to repent, and to labour to become the members of Christ; as also to increase and further repentance in them, who have by Gods grace begun the same. It may be some doe thinke when they die, all is

done, and there is no further account to follow; but though we lie rotten in our graves a thousand, or two thousand yeares; yet we shall rise, and looke upon our Judge with our owne eyes. And if wee have not in our life time repented, we shall heare him with our owne eares, giving the dreadfull sentence against us, *Goe yee cursed into everlasting fire*: and therefore it is best for us in this day of grace to prevent this danger, and now repent and beleeve in Christ, that then we may rise with joy, and stand with boldnesse before Christ Jesus. No doubt if we were perswaded that we should thus appeare, it would move us to repent.

Thirdly, *Everie eye shall see him*: that is, all men with their owne eyes shall looke on him. Hence it may be gathered, that those who wanted their sight in this life, shall have it then restored. It is granted of all Divines, that the Elect shall have all their senses and other defects restored, wherin they were wanting in this life: And it may also be added, that the wicked shall then have some of their senses restored, if they wanted the same in this life; as hearing, and seeing at the least: for the deafe shall heare, and the blinde shall see this Judge. And this can be no glorie to them, seeing it is to increase their miserie: for the more senses they have, the more punishment they shall feele, because by sense we apprehend miserie.

Even those which pierced him. Here is added a further evidence of Christs manifestation of his comming, and that for three causes: First, to shew that no power, or wisdome in the world, can free any one from his appearance. For if any could escape, in all likelihood it would be those Jewes and Gentiles, who prevailed most against Christ, and put him to death. But none of those can escape his judgement: for even *they which pierced him, they shall see this Judge*, and also be summoned before his Majestie. For though they had power to kill him, yet none of them shall then have power, to absent themselves from before his barre of Judgement at the last day.

Secondly, to shew the case of all wicked men: namely, that such woe and miserie shall befall them, as they never once thought of. The Jewes and Gentiles which crucified Christ, never dreamed of this; that he whom they then put to a temporall death, should one day be a Judge, and condemne them to eternall death, unlesse they had repented.

Thirdly, to shew the rufull and woefull estate of all impenitent sinners: they shall rise to judgment, and have their greatest enemie their Judge, who will shew rigour upon them, and justice without all mercie: for this piercing of Christ is meant not only of the Jews, which put him to death, but of all ungodly persons: because all such doe by their sins, as with swords and speares, wound him at the heart, as the souldiers did. Impenitent sinners be as the Jews which crucified Christ, as *Iudas* which betraied him, and as the souldiers which goared his side: and unlesse they now repent, they shall one day be judged as his enemies.

Even they which pierced him. Out of these words some gather, that the bodie of Christ hath still the wounds and skarres which were given him at his death; the print of the nailes in his hands and feet, and that these shall be seene in him at the last day: adding withall, that it is no blemish to Christ to have these, but rather an increase of his glorie, but this cannot be gathered hence: for though it be said, *They shall see him whom they pierced*; yet it followeth not, that they shall see him as hee was pierced: what though they see the person, whom they wounded, shall they therefore see his wounds? Many shall see Kings and Queenes whom they crowned in this world, but it followeth not, that therefore they shall weare their crownes. So we shall see our fathers and mothers, but not as fathers and mothers.

IV. *Point*. The fruit and effect of his comming, especially in the wicked, in these words; *And all tribes of the earth shall wayle before him*. Where S. *John* speakes of the whole world, according to the condition of the land of Canaan: for onely that part of the world was divided into tribes. And in like case, our Saviour Christ setteth out the judgement of the whole world, according to the state and manner of judging the visible Church, Matth. 25. So that his meaning is, that they which repented not, of what nation soever, of what state, or condition soever they had beene, shall wayle, and mourne at that day. And he addes a reason of this their mourning, in these words, *for him, before him, or over him*: that is, they shall wayle, and lament with exceeding lamentation, because they beleeved not his word, but contemned him and his doctrine, and therefore now they want all helpe to free them from the punishment of their unbeleefe, and contempt of the Gospell: for this time is the onely time of grace and mercie: afterwards there is no worke nor invocation, that can alter mans estate.

ἐπ' αὐτόν.

Here then we are admonished, first, that in this world we labour above all things to be reconciled to God in Christ, to get our sinnes pardoned, to beleeve and embrace his holy Word; and unlesse we attaine hereunto in this life, we shall waile eternally: for when the last day is come, there is no hope of helpe, no way to escape, no time of grace to repent. Remember the foolish virgins, that sought for oyle, when it was too late, and knocked when the doores were shut, Matth. 25. But if by Gods mercy we can in this life get his love and favour in Christ, then shall we enjoy the same eternally: yea, at this dreadfull day to all the wicked, we shall lift up our heads, & our hearts when we shall see Christ comming to our full redemption all teares shall be wiped from our eyes, while the wicked shall crie and houle, woe and alas

for evermore. The Devill knowing the worth of this admonition, will labour by all meanes to keepe it from our hearts. But this ſhall bee our wiſdome, betime to ſue for grace, and ſo ſhal we defeat ſatan, & prevent eternal wailing.

Secondly, here ſee what an evill conſcience is: It lieth aſleep here while a man lives, and never troubleth him, and ſo it may doe in death alſo: but in the laſt day, when he ſhall ſee his Judge with his eyes, then it will ſtirre, it will ſcrutient him, it will attach, accuſe, and condemne him, it will lay to his charge all his ſins, his contempt of Chriſt and his Word, his unbeleeſe in the time of grace; and then it will breake his heart, being as good as a thouſand witneſſes to condemne him.

This ſhould cauſe all men to labour to get a good conſcience, waſhed and purged in the bloud of Chriſt, which will not ſuffer us to lie in any one ſinne; and upon our repentance will aſſure us we be in the favour of God: Which if it doe in this life, then it will never make us to wayle at the laſt day; but it will excuſe us, and make us looke up to our Redeemer, and to rejoyce in him. But take heed when thy conſcience lieth aſleepe, and accuſeth not for thy ſins, no not at death; that is an evill conſcience which will awake at the day of judgement, to torment and condemne thee.

V. *Point.* The meanes whereby hee confirmeth the certaintie of the ſame comming of Chriſt: that is, by a double note of aſſeveration: *Even ſo. Amen.* One of theſe is taken from the Greeks, *Even ſo*: the ſecond from the Hebrewes, *Amen*: being both as much as *Amen, Amen*; or *verily, verily*. In which phraſe S. *Iohn* teacheth us, how to confirme the things we avouch. There be three wayes, whereby a thing may be avouched: Firſt, by a ſimple and bare affirmation, or negation: Secondly, by an earneſt aſſeveration: thirdly, by an oath. Now S. *Iohn* uſeth theſe two notes of aſſuring in this weightie matter of Chriſts ſecond comming, ſaying, *He commeth, even ſo, Amen*: that is, certainly, and without all doubt it is ſo. Hereby teaching us, firſt, that an aſſeveration muſt not be uſed, but onely when the matter is of great weight and moment. Here then wee ſee; that wretched is their practice, who uſe to bind every word with an oath (which is a degree above this aſſeveration. Yea, they alſo are here juſtly reproved, who in their ordinarie communication, have ever in their mouth ſome weighty aſſeveration. Our Saviour often uſeth theſe words of aſſeveration, yet onely in matters of weight and moment, and when the hearers were to bee moved to greater attention, and their hearts were to bee more fully ſettled in ſome truth of great importance.

Secondly by theſe aſſeverations *Iohn* would teach us to holt againſt the practice of atheiſts, that the comming of Chriſt is moſt certaine and undoubted. Which thing we ſhould more ſeriouſly obſerve; becauſe in our corrupt nature, there is bred this falſe perſwaſion, That either we ſhall not be ſummoned to judgement, or els that Chriſts comming is farre off: like to the evill ſervant, who ſaith, *My Maſter deferres his comming*: which evill ſervant by nature is every one of us.

Thirdly, hereby *Iohn* gives us to underſtand, one ſpeciall note & marke of the child of God: namely, to deſire and long after unfainedly the ſecond comming of Chriſt to judgement: for as theſe words bee an aſſeveration, ſo withall they containe a moſt earneſt deſire, *Even ſo, Amen*: as if he ſhould ſay by way of anſwer to the proclaiming of his comming, *Lord grant it bee ſo: yea Lord, let it be ſo*. Hence it is that S. *Paul* deſcribes all thoſe, who muſt receive the crown of righteouſneſſe, by this propertie, that they love *his appearing*, 2 Tim. 4.8. As for the ungodly, it is not ſo with them, (they being not juſtified nor ſanctified, and ſo not reconciled to God in Chriſt) cannot love this appearing. Nay they could wiſh withall their hearts there were no hell, nor laſt judgement. And by this one note we may well judge of our eſtates; for if from our hearts we deſire and long for this ſecond comming to judgement, and wiſh hee would come *quickly*, then it is a certaine token and ſigne we be reconciled to God in Chriſt, and ſhall receive the crowne of righteouſneſſe. But if as yet we feele not this longing and hungring deſire in us, then wee muſt ſuſpect our ſelves, and labour every day to feele it: for it is the deſire of the Saints to ſay, *How long Lord.* And with *Iohn, even ſo, Amen.*

Rev. 22.20.

Rev. 6.10.

V. 8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, ſaith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come, even the Almightie.*

After S. *Iohn* had deſcribed Chriſt at large, in the former verſes: he bringeth him ſpeaking of himſelfe by a figure, as may appeare by this clauſe (*ſaith the Lord.*)

The end and ſcope of theſe words in this verſe, is to confirme that which was before ſpoken of Chriſt, being a proofe and reaſon thereof, after this manner to be conceived. He which is the beginning and the end of all, &c. hee is ſufficient to be a King, Prieſt and Prophet to the Church, and is bothable and willing to beſtow on them all bleſſings which ſerve for their good. The firſt part of this argument is omitted, the ſecond part is contained in this eighth verſe: But *I am the beginning and the end*; and *therefore I am ſufficient.*

In this eighth verſe are three poinnes concerning Chriſt: Firſt, *hee is the beginning and the end.* Secondly, *he is, was, and is to come.* Thirdly, *he is Almightie.* For the firſt: that Chriſt is the beginning and end, S. *Iohn* expreſſeth by a comparison taken from the Greeke alphabet; and it ſtandeth thus; As in the *A, B, C*, of the Greeians, *Alpha* is the firſt letter, and therefore the beginning of all the letters; and *Omega* is the laſt, and therefore the end of all the letters: So (ſaith *Chriſt*) *I am the beginning of all things that are*, and the end of all things. The firſt part of this ſimilitude is in theſe words, *I am Alpha, and Omega*: that is, *I am as Alpha, and Omega*. The ſecond part in theſe words, *The beginning, and the end.*

From this, and ſuch like manner of ſpeaking, the Papiſts gather, that it is lawfull to worſhip God in a ſtrange language! And that the Scriptures are to be read and delivered to the people in an unknowne tongue. But their collection is frivolous: For though the unlearned Engliſhman know not what *Alpha* and *Omega* is, yet the Churches to whom this was written, being Greeians, knew generally what was meant hereby.

Againe, though the ſpirit of God uſeth here and there a ſtrange word or phraſe, yet we may not follow that practice in the whole ſervice and worſhip of God, wherby neither the word nor prayer, ſhould be underſtood of the people as the Papiſts doe.

I am the beginning. Chriſt is ſaid to be the beginning for two cauſes: Firſt, becauſe he was the very firſt of all things: there was nothing before him, hee had a being when all creatures were not; then was he the ſame that he is now; and for this ſaith S. *Iohn*, c. 1. 1. *In the beginning was the word*, that is, the Sonne of God; he had his being and ſubſiſting, when all other creatures wanted it, and began to be.

This proveth the eternitie of Chriſt, becauſe hee hath his being before any creature; hee was a ſubſtance and eſſence begotten of the Father before all worlds, not created as other creatures are, or made of any other.

Secondly, he is called the beginning; becauſe hee giveth a beginning to all creatures: For all things which were created, and had a being, were created by him, and had their being from him. So ſaith the Apoſtle, *All things are from him*, Col. 1. 16. And hence we learne, that when we go about any buſineſſe in word or deed, we muſt begin it with invocation in the name of Chriſt: for Chriſt he gives the beginning, and proceeding to all things. And without his help, we cannot have in any thing good ſucceſſe.

Secondly, the ſame Chriſt is the end of all things, and that for two cauſes: firſt, becauſe he is the laſt of all things, and after him is nothing in ſubſiſting, and being: for all creatures, if they were left to themſelves, would come to nothing. And whereas ſome creatures be eternall, it is not of themſelves, but by him, and from him which is the end. But though they all ſhould come to nothing, yet Chriſt would remaine the ſame he was for ever, namely, the eternall Sonne, and Word of the Father. This then ſhould make us with full purpoſe of heart to cleave unto Chriſt in all things, if we would enjoy eternall happineſſe: for without him is nothing but changing; and unleſſe we have our ſtableneſſe from him, we cannot but come to an end.

Secondly, he is *the end*; becauſe all things in heaven and earth were made to ſerve him: *For him were all things created*, Col. 1. 16. that is, to ſerve for his glory and praiſe.

The ſecond thing here ſaid of Chriſt is this, *which is, was, and is to come.* Theſe words were expounded in the 4. verſe, where the very ſame are affirmed of the Father. The meaning is, that Chriſtis in preſent a *perfect ſubſtance and eſſence, or being, ſubſiſting in, by, and from himſelfe, and ſuch a ſubſtance hee was in time paſt, from all eternity, and ſuch as ſhall continue in time to come for evermore.*

Hence wee learne three things: Firſt, that the ſecond perſon in the Trinity is conſubſtantiall with the father, that is, of one and the ſame ſubſtance and nature with him. The reaſon is, becauſe there can bee but one onely ſubſtance or eſſence, which hath being in, and by it ſelfe, and from it ſelfe alone: neither can we conceive how there ſhould be two, or more, but onely one; as there cannot bee two eternals, or two infinites, two omnipotents and abſolute Lords, which have nothing one of another. Now in the 4. verſe it is ſaid of the Father, *That hee is a ſubſtance of himſelfe, in himſelfe, and from himſelfe alone.* And here the ſelfe ſame thing is ſaid of the ſecond perſon, the ſonne. And therefore hee is of the very ſame ſubſtance with the Father: for though they be diſtinct perſons in the Godhead, yet they have but one and the ſame ſubſtance, one and the ſame divine nature, and Godhead.

Secondly, hence we may gather, that Chriſt is *God of himſelfe*; becauſe as the Father is, was, and ſhall be; So the Sonne is, was, and ſhall be; and that in the ſame reſpects; So that as the Father is God of himſelfe, and from none other, ſo the Sonne is God of himſelfe, and from none other. Indeed as hee is the Sonne, the ſecond perſon, ſo hee is of the Father, and hath his being from him by eternall generation: but as he is God, he is conſubſtantial with the Father, and coequall with him, and hath his eſſence of, and in him alone. And the ſame is to be affirmed of the holy Ghoſt; as hee is the third perſon, hee proceeds from the Father and the Sonne, but as hee is God, hee is of himſelfe, and from none other.

Thirdly, hence we learn, that Chriſt is coeternall with the father, being everlaſting as the father is, and every way coequal, having the ſame attributes of the Godhead that the Father hath.

The third point touching Chriſt is, that hee is the *Almighty.* There is in God, and ſo in Chriſt, a double power: firſt, a Potential: ſecondly, an actuall power. Potentiall is that, whereby he can do many things, more than ever hee did, or will doe: as he could raiſe [illegible]

Abraham of the stones, but he would not: hee could have delivered Christ from death, but he would not. Now Christs omnipotency is not to bee understood of his potentiall power here principally, but rather of his actuall power, whereby hee bringeth to passe without let and impediment whatsoever he decreeth, willeth, or promiseth.

From this omnipotency of Christ, ariseth a double comfort to his Church: first, that whatsoever he hath promised in his Gospel, *is yea, and Amen*: that is, shall be brought to passe effectually without stop and let, as assuredly as he promised it. Now Christ hath promised in his Gospell to all penitent sinners, remission of sinnes, mortification, justification, and life everlasting: every one whereof, shall in due time be done to every true beleever, which is a singular comfort to them: for all men and Angels cannot give one of these to any one man; but Christ hee is omnipotent, and hee both can and will effect them all to his elect.

The second comfort; that Christ both can and will give his Church sufficient security and protection through all the miseries of this life: he can defend and guard her against all the fury and malice of Satan, and all her enemies: hee is above them, and can bridle their might, when and how he pleaseth.

Hence also, that Christ is Almighty, wee are taught two duties: First, under the crosse and in tribulation, to humble our selves under his mighty hand: for it is he which correcteth us, who is Almighty, able to doe what he list, and more than he will; resistance and repining will doe us no good. Secondly, this should move us to performe hearty obedience unto Christ in all things: both in our generall and particular calling to walke uprightly before him: for hee is Almighty, and seeth whether we walke sincerely before him or not; if we doe not, he is able to punish us. By this Argument God perswadeth *Abraham* to walke uprightly before him, because he is *Almighty*, able to correct and destroy those which refuse to obey him, Gen. 17. 1.

v. 9 *I Iohn, even your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdome, and patience of Iesus Christ, was in the Isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the witnessing of Iesus Christ.*

Hitherto wee have intreated of the Preface of this booke, containing the title and inscription thereof. Now from this ninth verse, to the end of the third Chapter, is contained one of those seven visions which were shewed unto *Iohn*, and are set downe in this booke. In this first vision two things are to be noted: first, the circumstances: secondly, the parts thereof. The circumstances in the ninth and tenth verses: the parts, from thence to the end of the 3. Chapter.

The circumstances of this vision are foure, first, the person to whom this vision was shewed, namely, *Iohn*: The Second, the place where, at *Patmos*: The third, the manner how it was propounded; It was delivered unto him being *ravished in the spirit*: The fourth the time when, *on the Lords day*.

For the first: *Iohn* is the person to whom this vision befel, who doth therefore name himselfe to shew, that it was given him of the Lord; for as the Lord hath his visions and revelations, (as hath beene said) so the devill hath his: but they may be distinguished by the persons to whom they be given. God giveth his visions not to all men, but unto those which are most fit for them; such as be most holy men for life, endued with exceeding gifts of God, as knowledge, wisdome, continency, zeale, piety, and religion. So in the old Testament, he delivered not them to all, but to his servants the Prophets, men of singular gifts and graces, and of exceeding holinesse and piety. Indeed the Lord revealed some particular things by wicked men, as by *Balaam* and *Caiphas*, but they never knew what those things meant which were shewed unto them. It is a property belonging to the servants of God, to receive a vision, and to know the same to their comfort. And for both these was *Iohn* throughly qualified; he was a man of exceeding holinesse of life, (for Christ loved him) and of singular and rare gifts, full of zeale, love, and piety, and also had the knowledge of this vision made knowne unto him: but the devill maketh no such choice; his visions befall men which are Heretikes, wicked notorious sinners, who have no such rare and speciall gifts as the other have; so that wee must esteeme of this, as a singular gift of God to his owne Apostle S. *Iohn*.

Now *Iohn* having named himselfe to be the receiver of this vision: for the greater credit hereof, hee describes himselfe by two modest termes: First, *A brother*: secondly, *A companion*. First, hee cals himselfe *their brother*: that is, of them who by faith were all members of the mystically body of Christ. For the Church of God is a family, wherof God the Father is head and householder, Iesus Christ is the elder brother, and all beleevers are fellow-brethren, in and by Christ, being by faith the adopted sons of God, members of that family, and brethren each to other.

By this title (*your brother*) first he setteth out his humility, and great modesty. For hee was a man at that time above all men which lived, in regard of his gifts and holinesse of life: hee was the last Apostle, and had the Apostolicall authority, being a most zealous and constant professor, yet he calleth himselfe a brother to all true beleevers, and maketh himselfe but equall

equall with them, though they were farre inferiour to him. And so should we esteeme better of our brethren than of our selves, and make our selves inferiour to them.

Secondly, by this title we see he had his heart full of brotherly love, to all the members of the Church of Christ; he loved them as brethren. So we are bound to love all men even our enemies, as they bee of the same flesh with us: but those that be of the same faith and religion with us, to these especially should we shew our love and affection. So *Paul* saith to the Christian Romans, *Be affectioned to love one another with brotherly love*, Rom. 12. 10. And great reason: for beleevers are linked each to other with the necrest bond: they have the same Father, which is God, the same Redeemer, the same faith, hope, baptisme, and the same benefit by Iesus Christ his death and obedience.

But this duty is not practised: there bee that cal themselves brethren, who (as *Isay* saith) *hate them that tremble at the word, and mocke them even for the profession of the same religion, whereby they think to be saved*. If any seem to make more conscience of their wayes than others, they are reviled and hated for the name of Christ: which ought not to bee, for among all true Christians should be brotherly love.

The second title, *Companion*, or *Copartner* in three things: in tribulations, in the Kingdome, and in the patience of Christ. Hee cals himselfe *Copartner* with them in tribulations, for two causes: First, because at that time when he wrote this vision, the whole Church was in tribulation and persecution, under that cruell tyrant *Domitian*, about fourscore or an hundred years after Christ, who banished *Iohn* into Patmos: where he was not unmindefull of the afflictions of the Church, whereof he was a member: and therefore cals himselfe a partner with them in affliction.

By which hee sheweth, what is the state of Gods Church in this world, namely, to be under the crosse: and the members thereof must not bee companions of peace and ease, but copartners in affliction and tribulation. And therfore Christ teacheth those which will bee his Disciples, these lessons: First, to deny themselves, to take up his crosse daily, and to follow him. And because of this estate, the Church in this world is called *the Militant Church*, being in continuall fight against the devill, and his instruments. The consideration whereof is of speciall use: first, we in this land have had peace and quietnesse for many yeares without persecution, which we must acknowledge for a speciall blessing vouchsafed to us for this end; that now in the time of peace we might prepare our selves against the day of triall. For seeing the estate of the Church is to bee under afflictions; wee are all in duty bound to wait continually when God will call us to suffer for his sake. No man can define the time, or the manner of our triall: but yet that it will come, wee must resolve; because of the usual estate of the Church. God hath for a long time sent forth labourers into his harvest, whereby no doubt many sheaves are gathered into the Lords barne. Now after this long gathering, there will come a day of fanning: The Lord will take into his hand the fan of affliction, and put it into his corne, and thereby trie the chaffe from the wheat. It stands us therefore in hand to prepare our selves in this time of peace, that wee may bee found good corne in the Lords sieve, and not chaffe, which must bee cast into unquenchable fire.

Secondly, hee cals himselfe their *copartner in affliction*; because his pitifull heart was moved with the bowels of compassion, towards all his fellow-members; when hee remembred their persecution and affliction under the cruell tyrant *Domitian*. And the same affection should bee in every one of us towards the poore afflicted servants of Christ: seeing they be our fellow-members, we should have a fellow-feeling with them, weeping with them that weepe, and shew our compassion in pitying them. If the foot bee pricked, the head stoopes, the eye beholds and looks on it, the finger puls it out, the hand applyes the plaster, the other foot is readie to runne for helpe, the tongue to aske for counsell, and all the members are ready to afford their naturall helpe in pitie and fellow-feeling: so when any members of the Church suffer affliction, bee pricked with persecution for Christs sake; then should we as members of the same body, be ready to doe all the help we can to them, especially in shewing our fellow-feeling with them.

The second thing wherein hee is this copartner is, *in the kingdome of Christ*, that is, the kingdome of heaven. Where observe, that hee placeth fellowship in affliction, before companion in the kingdome: to give us to understand, that through afflictions and crosses for Christs sake, is the ready way to this kingdome. It is that way which is beaten and troden by the Prophets, Apostles, and the Saints of God: as the Apostle saith, *Through many tribulations wee must enter into heaven*. And *this momentary affliction causeth to us an infinite weight of glory*; not by deserving it, but by shewing the plaine way thither. Whereby wee are taught, not to thinke it hard when trials doe befall us, but rather to count it a good thing, yea, exceeding great gladnesse, when any affliction doth befall us for Christs sake: for hereby we are brought like wandring sheepe into that beaten path which leadeth to heaven. Nay wee must rather marvell when we professe the Gospel, and have no affliction; then we may feare wee be out of the way, seeing the *Lord afflicts every childe which he his owne*.

Act. 14. 22. 2 Cor. 4. 17.

Iam. 1. 2.

Heb. 12. 8.

Thirdly, he is *Copartner in patience*; which he addeth, because it is a most worthy vertue, whereby wee are made able to persevere in affliction till we come to heaven. Afflictions are

the beaten way, heaven is our joyfull end, patience is the meanes to make us goe on till wee come thither: *Whatsoever things are written, are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort in the Scriptures might have hope,* Rom. 15. 4. Where true hope to come to heaven is obtained by patience, which maketh a beleever to goe on in suffering, till hee come to life eternall. There is much fruit in the good ground, but not brought forth without patience; and the true beleever is saved by hope in this world, yet cannot come to heaven without patience, Jam. 5. for thereby hee must possesse his soule.

Matth. 10.

Now because men will say, patience is a hard matter, and so are discouraged from seeking for it therefore to set an edge on their desire, he addes, *It is the patience of Christ*: and it is so called, either because hee commands it, or because it is his gift, and commeth from the Spirit of Christ; or chiefly because he himselfe suffereth in his members, and as their misery and suffering is his, so is their patience. The consideration whereof is a singular motive to induce every childe of God to patience, in bearing the crosse for Christs sake: for they have Christ their fellow-sufferer, he takes part with them, and puts under his shoulder: Who would not then bee content to suffer with patience? And thus much of the branches of his fellowship severally.

Now consider them jointly, and they contain a notable description of the communion of Saints, which is a speciall Article of our faith, standing in three things: in tribulation, in the Kingdome of heaven, and in patience. And marke well, that this communion begins in tribulation, therein we must be partners, and that with patience, before we come to have fellowship in the Kingdome of Heaven. That man therefore that hath afflictions laid on him, must bear them patiently; and when the members of Christ are under the crosse, he must in tender compassion be touched with their miseries: and when he doth truly feele in his heart this Christian patience and compassion, then may he assure himselfe he is entred into this communion, and shall undoubtedly with all Saints bee partaker of the joyes of heaven. But if patience and compassion be wanting, we persuade our selves in vaine of this communion: and therefore let us strive against impatience, and against the deadnesse and hardnesse of our hearts; that we may neither murmure against God in our owne afflictions, nor yet want compassion towards our brethren, that any where suffer affliction for the name of Christ. Thus much for the circumstance of the person.

Was in the Ile called Patmos. In these words is the second circumstance, namely, the place where this vision was given to *John*. This Patmos is one of those Iland, which the Geographers call *Sporades*, lying in the West part of Asia the lesse, neere to the Churches to whom *John* writ, and by the Sea commonly called the Ægean sea. This Island was a small, base and poore Island, little or never a whit inhabited.

Saint *John* had his vision, not at Jerusalem, at Antioch, or Rome, but in Patmos, a base, poore, and little inhabited Island. By this we see, that in the new Testament there is no respect of one place above another, in regard of Gods presence, and our fellowship with him: he doth as well manifest himselfe to *John* by this vision in Patmos, as to other his Prophets and Apostles in Jerusalem the holy City. In the old Testament there was difference of place in regard of Gods solemne worship and presence; as the Lord shewed his presence, and tyed his worship especially to his Tabernacle and Temple at Jerusalem. This *Daniel* sheweth by his gesture in prayer: for being in captivity, when he prayed in his chamber, *He opened his window*, which was toward the Temple at Jerusalem, and turned his face thitherward. But now in the new Testament, that difference of place is abolished in respect of Gods worship. And therefore *Paul* willeth, *That men pray every where, lifting up pure hands unto God*: and so for all the duties of religion we must thinke the like.

Dan 6.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

I. Then away with Popish Pilgrimage to Churches and Chappels of Saints, or to their reliques. This is meere superstition: for God is present every where, and a man that will worship God in spirit and truth, may have fellowship with him in one place as well as another.

The use.

II. Also this may serve to correct a false conceit which many have of our Churches and Chappels: for when they come to a dwelling house, they thinke it not their duty, there to humble themselves, to kneele downe, and call upon God; but if they come into a Church or chappell never so often, upon ordinary affaires, they fall downe to praier. The reason is, because they think these places be more holy, and God more present there, and they shall sooner bee heard in them than in their common houses: which is untrue: for in the new Testament, all such diversity of place is abolished in regard of Gods service and presence: the dwelling house is as holy as the Church. Indeed Churches must be maintained, because in them the people may more orderly and conveniently meet together to serve God publikely, in the word and praier: for which time all due reverence must be observed in them: but wee must not thinke that they are more holy than other places.

More particularly, in this circumstance of place note two things: First, by what meanes S. *John* came thither: secondly, to what end, and for what cause. The meanes was *banishment* by the Emperour *Domitian*: the cause was for the *word of God*.

For the first, he came and abode in Patmos, being *banished thither for the Gospels sake*. In this his banishment consider many excellent things:

things: first, S. *John* was a most worthy Apostle, endued with rare gifts, a singular maintainer of the gospel, and a famous founder of the Church of God, and chiefe pillar thereof in those dayes when hee wrot this booke: and for this cause hated of the cruell persecuter *Domitian*, and of the Romans. And yet observe, That whereas other true Christians were put to the sword, S. *John* is not, but escapeth by banishment. The cause of this was Gods speciall providence, by which hee reserved him for the benefit of the Church, that he might receive this Revelation, and commit it to writing, for the perpetuall good of all his children. And so though *Domitian* was a cruell Tyrant, and wanted no malice towards *John*, yet hee could not kill him; God overruled him, that he did but banish him, and that into such an Island, wherein he might quietly receive these visions, and pen the same for the good of the Church. By this we see the great care and providence of God over his Church, that hee doth bridle and over-rule the cruell mindes and might of bloodie persecutors; that they cannot for their hearts doe any thing, but that which serveth for Gods glory, and the good of his Church, though they intend the contrary. For *Domitian* intended onely the hurt of *John*, yet see, by his banishment into that Ile, hee had fit place to receive these visions for the good of the Church. So in the death of *Christ*, the Jewes and Gentiles, and all the people banded themselves together, to put *Christ* to death, and the devill hee laboured to stirre them to practise their intended malice. Yet the overruling power of God, who bringeth light out of darknesse, directeth and ordereth this their malice and wicked practice to the most excellent worke that ever was, even the redemption of mankinde. So *Josephs* brethren intended no such deliverance as God wrought by him, in selling their brother. This consideration should comfort all Gods children in the time of any outward distresse, even the remembrance of Gods overruling hand.

Secondly, in that *John* went into banishment, when it was so appointed, wee learne, That when we are oppressed and persecuted by tyrants for *Christs* sake, wee must not make resistance, or offer violence, but suffer all injuries with patience: for as one saith truly, *The Christians weapons in persecution, are only prayers and teares.* And Saint *John* often in this booke addeth this conclusion, after the foretelling of persecution, *Here is the patience of Saints*, shewing that patience must be the complete armour against all our bloody enemies.

Preces & lachrymæ, sunt Christianorum.

Thirdly, here also observe, That *John* came into this Island, not of his owne accord, as chusing a solitary life to bee the most happy state of perfection, but by violence and constraint. For if hee had come into it voluntarily, being little or not inhabited, hee could not have done the duty of his Apostleship in preaching the Gospell, and laying the foundations of the Church. This then consisteth the Monkish life, which is no life of holy perfection, (as Papists call it) but of glorious superstition and that impiety before God: for hereby they forsake their callings, and utterly disable themselves to doe those duties which God requireth of them in Church, common-wealth, or family.

Fourthly, whereas *John* being banished, received his visions in a barren and base desolate place: wee see, that those which honour God shall bee honoured of God, even then when men seeke most to disgrace them: For what greater disgrace could they have put upon *John*, than to banish him into so base an Island; yet because it was for Gods glory, even there doth the Lord appeare unto him, and honour him much in revealing unto him these visions. So when *Joseph* was sold of his brethren, and most dishonoured of them; then did God exalt him most of all. The same may be said of *Daniel* in Babylon, whom God did most advance when his enemies sought his greatest ruine: and the same is true of all Gods children, Them which honour God, will he honour.

II. Point. The cause for which he came into this Ile, is expresly set downe, *for the word of God*: that is, because he was a publisher and preacher of the word of God: for the performance of which duty hee was banished. By which wee may note, That all naturall men (as *Domitian*, and his Court, and all the Gentiles, without Gods speciall calling) doe beare a deadly hatred towards Gods word. For Saint *John* was a most worthy Apostle, a famous man for gifts, a singular Preacher of the Word of God; yet is hated, nay, banished, not for his owne cause, but for the Word of God. This hatred hath appeared in the heathen Emperors by their bloody persecutions against the Preachers and professors of this Word: and yet though men hate it naturally, the same Word winneth them, and taketh place in their hearts for their conversion, and causeth them to love it: so as successively it hath beene spread over all the world. Which shews against the Atheist, That the Word taught by the Prophets and Apostles, is indeed the true word of God, not the invention of man: for mans word being hated, cannot win unto it him which hateth it: but the Word of God prevaileth by grace in the harts of those who hate it by nature, which it could not do, unlesse there were in it some divine power.

Againe, seeing *John* was banished *for Gods word*, all ministers are to cast their accounts, and make this reckoning, that they may and must suffer trouble and persecution, yea, sometime banishment it selfe, for the Gospels sake, if they will be faithfull. For that which befell the principall founders and chiefe builders of the Church, cannot bee avoided of them which are ordinary Ministers, if they will be faithfull. *Christ* acquainteth his Disciples with this, telling them, *That they are even accursed, when all*

Luke 6. 26.

shewes ſpeake well of them. Let none therefore thinke it ſtrange at this day, if for well doing they heare and receive evill; nay, let them feare the curse, when all men praise them.

And for the witneſſing of Jeſus Chriſt. Here *John* doth note more ſpecially the cauſe of his banishment, to wit, for teſtifying the Hiſtory and doctrine of the Goſpel, the ſumme whereof is this, That *Jeſus Chriſt the ſonne of Mary, is the ſonne of God, and redeemer of all that believe in him to the ſalvation of life.* This teſtimony S. *John* puts downe, to give us to underſtand, what part of Gods word that is, which is moſt hated of the world: and for the preaching whereof Gods Miniſters are perſecuted and banished, to wit, the Goſpell of Jeſus Chriſt eſpecially: for the law is in part naturall, but the Goſpell is ſupernaturall, and to mans reaſon abſurd; for the preaching whereof, men in all ages have beene perſecuted. The reaſon hereof is this, God in the beginning made a covenant with man, promiſing, *That the ſeed of the woman ſhould breake the Serpents head:* Now that Goſpell is that glad tidings, wherein is declared, that this promiſed ſeed is come, who hath indeed bruiſed the head of the Serpent. Hereupon the devill maligneth the Goſpell above all parts of GODS word, and accordingly hath laboured by all meanes to ſuppreſſe the ſame, partly by perſecution, as he did in the firſt three hundred yeares after Chriſt; and partly by bringing into the Church damnable hereſies, which did deſtroy the Goſpell by depraving the natures and offices of Chriſt, when by outward violence hee could not prevaile.

Now ſeeing the Devill and his inſtruments doe ſtrive to extinguiſh the Goſpell, and labour to extinguiſh it; we on the contrary muſt labour to know, and to believe, to love, and embrace the Goſpel, that ſo wee may uphold and maintaine the ſame.

verſ. 10 *And I was ravi-ſhed in the ſpirit on the Lords day, and heard behinde mee a great voice, as it had beene of a Trumpet.*

In this tenth verſe are ſet downe the third and fourth circumſtances of this viſion. The third is the manner of receiving and giving this revelation to *John*, namely, *in a trannce.* The fourth is the time when it was given, *on the Lords day.*

Touching the manner, it is noted in theſe words, *I was in the ſpirit*; That is, I was by the mighty and extraordinary worke of the Spirit of God caſt into a trannce. That this is to bee ſo expounded, appeareth by comparing this phraſe with the like in the whole prophecie of *Zacharie*, who uſeth to ſay, *I was in the Spirit,* when hee expreſſeth and ſignifieth that he was caſt into a trannce, and therein received ſome viſion by the Spirit.

To underſtand this the better, conſider two things: firſt, what a trannce is: ſecondly, the end of it. Firſt, *A trannce is an extraordinary worke or action of Gods Spirit.* Wee muſt not thinke that trannces come from the vertue of the ſtarres, nor from the conſtitution of mans body, or by the ſtrength of imagination, as ſome have fondly thought: but they are wrought by the holy Ghoſt. Secondly, it is not every worke of the holy Ghoſt, but an *extraordinary worke,* above the order of nature. It is alſo powerfull and mighty, wherein the whole man, both in body and minde is altered: which Saint *John* here expreſſeth, ſaying, *I was in the Spirit.* This extraordinary worke of the Spirit conſiſteth in two actions: one upon the bodie, the other upon the minde. Firſt, in procuring a trannce, the Spirit of God caſteth the body of man into a dead ſleepe: whereby all the ſenſes, both inward and outward, are benummed: ſo Gen. 15. 12. When God renewed his covenant with *Abraham, hee caſteth* him into *an heavie ſleepe:* that is, into a trannce, wherein all his ſenſes were benummed: only his mind was waking. The action of the holy Ghoſt on the minde is, to draw it from fellowſhip with the body, and all the ſenſes, to have a neere fellowſhip with God, that ſo the Spirit of God may enlighten it with divine light, that it may underſtand the things which are revealed to it: as we may ſee in other extaſies and trannces of the Prophets and Apoſtles. As in that of [a] *Peter,* when hee ſaw the viſions of the beaſts cleane and uncleane. And thus wee ſee what a trannce is, namely, *an extraordinary powerfull worke of the ſpirit upon the whole man, caſting the bodie into a dead ſleepe, and making the minde fit to receive the things which are revealed unto it of the Lord.*

[a] Act. 10. 11.

What a trannce is

II. Point. The end of trannces. God for two cauſes revealeth his will in trannces unto his ſervants, as to *John* in this place: Firſt, that they might know, that the things revealed were not invented of themſelves, but given of God. *John* herein had no uſe of his bodily ſenſes, he neither heard, ſaw, nor felt, but they were aſleepe. And therefore the viſion muſt needs be from God, and the glory thereof wholly his.

Secondly, and chiefly that the things revealed might take the deeper impreſſion in the underſtanding: for the minde being freed from fellowſhip with the body, and not hindered by any phantaſies of the ſenſes, (they being all aſleepe, and quiet) doth then moſt lively, and ſenſibly apprehend and retaine the impreſſion of things revealed. Here then wee ſee the great care of God, that his ſervants might throughly underſtand, certainely believe, and conſtantly keepe in memory the things hee delivered unto them. The like care he ſhewed in revealing his will to all the former Prophets; hee would not have

have their mindes troubled with the fellowſhip of the bodie, nor hindred of the ſenſes inward or outward; but wholly taken up for the ſervice of his ſpirit. And there is good reaſon of this, for if they muſt faithfully teach Gods will to others, to make them know and underſtand to believe and remember the ſame: is it not neceſſary that they themſelves ſhould thoroughly underſtand, ſoundly believe, and firmely keepe in memorie whatſoever God revealeth?

This dealing of the Lord for this end with his holy Prophets, teacheth us, that the ordinarie miniſters of the Goſpell at this day ought to imploy themſelves with all care and diligence, that they may thorowly underſtand the will of God in his Word; and withall believe it ſoundly, and remember it carefully. We muſt not now looke for trannces and viſions, as they had, but we muſt uſe continuall ſtudie in the Word, which is the ordinarie meanes to come unto this knowledge. This dutie concerneth all ſtudents in divinitie, and all others which deſire a good underſtanding in the Word of God. And for their furtherance herein, they muſt have principall care to ſearch into the text of Scripture thorowly: thereby ſhall they beſt conceive the proper meaning of the holy Ghoſt, and with greater facility keepe the ſame in memorie. For one ſaith truly, That every good miniſter ſhould bee a good Text-man. Whereby is deſcried a common fault of many ſtudents: who rather imploy themſelves in the ancient writings of men, than in the Word of God: nay, many ſpend their beſt time, in the baſe writings of wicked and hereticall Monks and Friers. It cannot be denied, but many of the fathers were worthy members of Gods Church: but if the fountaine be left, the miniſters will ſoone be tainted with the filthy puddles of mens inventions.

Mark 4. 24.

Againe, in this dealing of God with *John*, we may obſerve the truth of Chriſts ſaying, *to him that hath, it ſhall be given.* For though *John* was indue'd with rare knowledge, and ſingular gifts, yet the Lord addeth more knowledge to his former. The Lord found him faithfull in the duties of an Apoſtle: and therefore revealeth the knowledge of many ſecrets unto him in moſt full manner: even ſo it is in Gods Church at this day: all that have care to know the will of God, and doe it; though their knowledge bee ſmall at the firſt, yet the Lord will helpe them, and adde daily to their knowledge. And the cauſe why many heare the word of God, & profit not, but wax worſe, or ſtand at a ſtay, is, becauſe they labour not to have their knowledge increaſed, by putting in practice that which they know: for if they did, then to him which hath, ſhould more bee added, and hee ſhould have abundance. As on the contrarie, when wee be negligent to heare or know, and to obey the will of God: wee have a ſpirit indeed ſent upon us, yet not Gods ſpirit, but the ſpirit of ſlumber, of blindneſſe and ignorance, *ſo that we ſee, and ſee not, heare, and underſtand not,* Iſay 6. 9.

On the Lords day. In theſe words is the fourth circumſtance, namely, the time when this viſion was ſhewed to S. *John.* This day which is here called the Lords day, among the Jewes was the firſt day of the week, called by us Sunday. It is called the Lords day for two cauſes: Firſt, becauſe on this day *Chriſt* roſe from death to life: for *Chriſt* was buried the even of the Jewes Sabbath, which is our Friday; and hee reſted in the grave their whole Sabbath, which is our Saturday; and roſe the firſt day of the weeke early in the morning, which is our Sunday.

Secondly, the firſt day of the weeke (according to the Jewes account) came in ſtead of the Jewes Sabbath, and was ordained a day of reſt for the new Teſtament; and ſanctified for the ſolemne worſhip of the Lord. And for this cauſe eſpecially it is called *the Lords day,* the manifeſtation whereof (as ſome thinke) *John* chiefly intended in this title. And touching this time, for our better underſtanding, let us conſider three points: Firſt, who changed the Jewes Sabbath: ſecondly, for what cauſe: thirdly, whether the Church hath now in the New Teſtament, power to change the Sabbath day wee now celebrate, to any other day of the weeke.

For the firſt; it is commonly thought that the Jewes Sabbath was changed into this *Lords day* by Chriſtian Emperours, long after the aſcenſion of *Chriſt.* But it is more conſonant to the tenour of the New Teſtament, to hold, that *Chriſt* himſelfe was the author of this change. My reaſons are theſe: Firſt, that which the Apoſtles delivered and injoyned the Church, that they received from *Chriſt,* either by voice or inſtinct; for they delivered nothing of their owne head: But the Apoſtles delivered, and injoyned this Sabbath to the church, to be kept as a day of holy reſt to the Lord, as appeareth, 1 Corinth. 16. 1. where *Paul* ordained in the Churches of Galatia, and Corinth, *That the collection for the poore ſhould be on the firſt day of the weeke:* This hee left not to the choyce of the Church, but appointed it by authoritie Apoſtolicall from Chriſt.

Now the day of the collecting for the poore, (as appeareth in the hiſtories of the Church) was the Sabbath day, when the people were aſſembled for Gods ſervice. For this was the cuſtome of the Church for many yeares after *Chriſt.* Firſt, to have the Word preached, and the Sacraments adminiſtred, then to gather for the poore: and for this cauſe in the writings of the Church, the Lords ſupper is called a ſacrifice, an oblation, and the maſſe: not a reall ſacrifice as the Papiſts uſe it; but ſpirituall, becauſe there with was joyned collection for the poore, which was a ſpirituall oblation, not to the Lord, but to the Church, for the releefe of

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the poore: and it was called the masse, because the collected releefe thereat was sent to the poore Saints abroad. A second reason is this: The Apostles themselves kept this day for the Sabbath of the new Testament, Acts 20. 7. And it cannot bee proved that they observed any other day for an holy rest to the Lord after Christs ascension, save onely in one case, when they came into the assemblies of the Jewes, who would keepe none other but the old Sabbath of the law. A third reason is, Joh. 20. 19.26. *The same day whereon Christ rose from the death, being the first day of the weeke, he appeared to his Disciples, being* gathered together, *and taught them many things, which concerned the government of his Church.* And *eight dayes after being the first day of the weeke,* hee appeared unto them for the same end. Now it is more than likely, that Christ in his owne person gave them an example to celebrate and keepe that day, wherein he rose againe, for a Sabbath of the new Testament.

II. Point. The Sabbath of the Jewes was changed for two causes: First, to maintaine the libertie of the Church of the new Testament, whereof this was a great part, that they were freed from the ceremonies of the Jewes; For when this day was changed, the Church was no more tied to the Jewes Sabbath, neither had any such regard of dayes and times.

Secondly, that there might bee a more fit time for the memorie of the worke of mans redemption: For God in the old Testament appointed the seventh day to bee a day of rest to remember the first creation: So in the new Testament it stands with reason there should bee a day to celebrate this worke of redemption; which is a wonderfull creation; wherein (as *Isay* saith, *are made a new heaven and a new earth,* Chapter 66. And whereby *men become new creatures,* 2 Cor. 5. 17. Nay this redemption is a more glorious worke than the creation; for in that creation *Adam* was the head, but in this redemption Christ Jesus is our head. By the first creation wee received a temporall life; but by redemption wee receive life eternall. In the creation, *Adam* was espoused to *Eve*, but in the worke of redemption every Christian is espoused to Christ Jesus. By creation *Adam* had an earthly Paradise: in this redemption we have an heavenly kingdome. In the creation, Gods power and wisdome did principally appeare: in this redemption with power and wisdome hee shewed mercie and justice: Justice in Christs passion, and mercie in our forgivenesse. By creation he made man of nothing, but by redemption hee made him of worse than nothing, and better than hee was. Therefore seeing this worke of our redemption is farre passing the creation; it was meet a day should be set apart for the memory thereof: Now no day could bee more fit than the first day of the weeke, in which Christ rose againe: whereby he confirmed the work of our redemption: for he died for our sinnes, and rose againe for our justification, Rom. 4. 25.

III. Point. whether may the Church of the new Testament, change this Sabbath day to any other day of the weeke, as to tuesday, wednesday, &c. *Ans.* The Church hath no such power, for time is the Lords, and the disposing thereof is in his hands. Therefore Christ saith to his Disciples, *It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath kept in his owne hands,* Act. 7. 6. As if he should say, The Father hath kept times and seasons, in his owne power: and therefore it is not for you to know them. Now if that were a good reason, as no doubt it was, then is this also sound and good. If God have the disposing of times in his hands, then it belongeth not to the Church to dispose of them: but God hath the disposing of al times in his hands: *ergo.* And it may bee otherwise hence gathered thus: If that which is lesse belong not to the Church, then that which is more doth not: but the knowledge of time and seasons which God hath in his power, belongeth not to the Church, which is lesse than the disposing of times and seasons: And therefore the Church hath not power to dispose of them: and so by consequent may not alter the Sabbath day. *Object.* In the old Testament the Jewes appointed festivall dayes: as the feast of Dedication, which Christ kept holy, Joh. 10. 22. instituted by the Maccabees, in token of thankfulnesse for their deliverance: and for restoring of religion and the Temple which *Antiochus* had pulled downe. And also *Mordecai* instituted the feast *Purim*, which was celebrated of the Jewes afterwards.

1 Macc. 4.

Esth. 9. 17.

Now if they had power to make holy-dales, then they might alter the Sabbath day: and so may the Church in the new Testament. *Answ.* These feasts of the Jewes were no Sabbaths set wholly apart for the solemne worship of God: but were onely dayes of the solemnity appointed by the Church in token of joy and thankfulnes for the repairing of the Temple, and deliverance of Gods people: And were onely celebrated as they served to put the people in mind of these outward benefits. So that whereas some hold that the Church hath power to alter the Sabbath day; or to make two more Sabbath daies in a weeke, if it were convenient: it hath no ground in Gods Word. For that authoritie which doth alter this day, must not be lesse than Apostolicall. And thus wee see why this day was called the Lords day.

Now if the first day of the weeke bee the Lords day, set apart for his honour in the memorie of so great redemption, then here are three sorts of men reproved: First, those that make the Lords day a day of vain pleasure and delight. This is the manner of all sorts of men, but especially of the younger sort and servants, who spend this day in carnall rejoycing, in riot, gaming, and wantonnesse, never thinking of the worship of God, which is then to be performed.

formed. But these sin greatly against the Lord: for hereby they pervert the end of the Lords day: it should be kept holy and glorious to the Lord, but they turne it to the worship and service of the Devill.

The second sort here approved, are those which love more civilitie than the former; but yet they thinke they may doe what they will on the Lords day; as to take their journeys thereon, and imploy themselves in their ordinary affaires; perswading themselves they may serve God with as good an heart when they are alone about their businesse, as they doe who goe to the Church. But these men sinne grievously against the fourth commandement; for hereby they make that their own day which is the Lords.

A third sort here reproved, though not so bad as the former, are those, who thinke it needfull to serve God at those ordinarie times of the Sabbath, which the lawes of the Land injoyne unto men, and therefore they will come duly to morning and evening prayer, thinking that they are not bound beside to heare the Word of God preached, and that all the rest of the day they may do what they will pertaining either to their profit or pleasure. Of this sort are our ignorant people, and a great number every where. But they sin grievously against God, for the Sabbath day is called the *Lords day*, because it is wholly consecrated to his worship, but they part stakes with the Lord, and give him but a part of his owne day, and that the lesser, taking the rest unto themselves, which they mispend upon their lusts. Now as these vices must be abhorred, so on the contrarie, wee must with all conscience keepe the Lords Sabbath holy according to the fourth Commandement. And therefore wee must thereon cease from all workes of sinne, and from the works of our callings; and sanctifie this day wholly, by applying it all to the honour and worship of God. And here wee must remember, that there is a double sanctification of the Sabbath, publike, and private. Publike, when men assemble themselves together publikely, to heare Gods Word for the increase of faith and knowledge: and to call on Gods name for further graces; as also to give him thanks for his mercies, and to receive his sacraments. Private, when men in their private places imploy themselves in holy duties of prayer, reading, meditation upon Gods Word and Workes; whereby God is honoured, and their soules edified; and both these must bee performed to the Lord every Sabbath day of every man. For wee may not abridge God of that time, wherein glorie should bee given to his name. If the officers should take our servants in the weeke day from our private businesse, and imploy them in publike affaires, we would thinke much at it, though it were for the common good. And shall wee not thinke that God will take himselfe dishonoured often, when we shall take either whole or part of his holiday, and imploy it in our busines? A maine cause why many profit little by the publike ministerie, is want of private sanctification of this day. Therefore we must learne to sanctifie the Sabbath of the Lord, for else we shall never increase in faith, knowledge, or obedience as wee should: for the begetting and increase whereof this day hath beene set apart, and sanctified from the beginning.

Objection. 2. Why did the Lord shew this vision unto *John* rather on this day than any other? *Answ.* Though *John* were absent from the Church in regard of bodily presence, yet hee was present in spirit with all the faithfull, and therefore no doubt in this day he gave himselfe to prayer, and other duties which he could performe for the glorie of God in that solitarie place. Now it is the Lords manner when his servants are thus humbled, then to come and reveale himselfe unto them in speciall manner. So hee did unto *Daniel*, Dan. 9. and to *Cornelius*, Act. 10. And to *Peter* praying alone in the house top, Act. 10. 11. And so doubtlesse finding *John* thus imployed this Lords day, hee revealed his will unto him touching the state of the Church to the end of the world.

Hence we learne sundry instructions: First, whereas *John* being in a solitarie Island kept the Sabbath; we may observe, that all persons who are severed from the assemblies of the Church; as the prisoners, and those which are sicke of a dead palsie, or other great diseases; as marriners though they bee in the middest of the sea, should keepe holy the Lords Sabbath by performing such duties as God requireth; as prayer, confession of sinnes, and thanksgiving; whereby God may bee glorified, though they cannot come to the publike ministerie of the Word.

Secondly, in that *John* received his vision on the Lords day, when he gave himselfe to prayer and holy duties: Hence ariseth a consideration to Gods Church, *that God draweth neere to them that draw neere to him*, as James 4. 8. And let us humble our selves and draw neere to the Lord by prayer and thanksgiving; and the Lord in mercie will shew himselfe sundry wayes, and draw neere unto us.

The cause why men have so little taste of Gods mercie and love toward them, is because they doe not draw neere unto him, by doing those duties which he requireth at their hands. For when men draw backe from God, is it not good reason he should draw backe from them?

This therefore must stirre up our hearts, and move us to come often to God by prayer and thanksgiving: for by use in these duties shall we get acquaintance with the Lord. Thus much of the circumstance of this vision.

And I heard behinde mee a great voyce, as it had beene a trumpet. First, here followeth the parts of the vision, which are two; The beginning

ning or entrance into it, in this eleventh verſe, and part of the twelfth. Secondly, the matter and ſubſtance thereof, from the twelfth verſe to the end of the third chapter.

The entrance into the viſion is a preparation whereby the Lord maketh *Iohn* more fit to apprehend and receive the things revealed. In which preparation wee muſt obſerve, firſt, the meanes: ſecondly, the parts thereof. The means whereby God prepareth him, is a voyce: *And I heard a voyce.* The like manner of preparation hath God uſed in former times: When he intended to make with *Adam* the covenant of reconciliation in the ſeed of the woman: Firſt, he prepared him by a voyce ſpeaking unto him before he appeared, and by his voyce cauſed him to flie for feare. Then having rebuked him for his ſinnes, he made with him this covenant of grace, Gen. 3.

Exod. 19. and 20. And in Mount Sinai before the Lord gave the Law, he firſt came downe in thundring and lightning, and with the ſound of a trumpet to terrifie the people: and then he uttered his law to *Moſes* and to his people. So when the Lord would inſtruct *Samuel* touching the houſe of

1 Sam. 3. *Eli*, hee awoke him by a voyce againe, and againe: and then ſpake plainely unto him. And in all viſions uſually, and generally the Lord uſeth to prepare his ſervants by voices, by ſignes and words, that they might bee more fit to receive ſuch things as he revealed.

This dealing of God with *Iohn*, in preparing him to the worthy receiving of this viſion, teacheth us, that we much more ſhould be prepared to heare and receive the will of God; for we come farre ſhort of thoſe excellent gifts of God which were in *Iohn*, who yet muſt be prepared.

Our comming to heare Gods Word, is to learne the ſame for the increaſe of knowledge: faith, and obedience. Now the Word of God is hard, and we dull to learne; we muſt therefore by all good meanes prepare our ſelves, that our minds and hearts may be fit to receive the ſame with profit. The cauſe of ſo little profit after long hearing, is want of preparation: but hereof wee have intreated already upon the third verſe.

The voice is here ſet out unto us three waies: Firſt, by the place whence it came: Secondly, by the qualitie of it: Thirdly, by the matter and ſubſtance which it contained. For the place: it was uttered from *behind him*: which the Lord obſerved to ſtirre up more attention in *Iohn*; for uſually men do more carefully marke thoſe things which come on a ſudden behinde them, than thoſe which are ſpoken or done directly before their face.

Secondly, for the qualitie of it, this voyce *was great*; as is expreſſed further by a ſimilitude, *Like the ſound of a Trumpet*: that is, full of majeſtie and power. Which alſo God added unto it, to further attention in *Iohn*. For if it had beene an ordinarie voyce, or ſmall, he would not ſo much have regarded it: but being ſo ſudden, ſo great and full of majeſtie, it could not but make him verie attentive.

Now ſeeing Chriſt is ſo carefull to prepare *Iohns* minde with attention and diligence to receive the things which ſhould be told him: this teacheth us, that when we come to heare Gods Word, we muſt uſe all meanes of attention; for if it were needfull to *Iohn*, then it is farre more neceſſarie for us, who are farre inferiour to him in all gifts of underſtanding and memorie. And here alſo is another cauſe of ſmall profit and little liking of Gods Word, namely, want of attention in the heart. Wee muſt therefore like godly *Lydia*, Act. 16. ſtirre up our dull and heavie ſpirits, and with all diligence marke the things we heare. And here we muſt take heed of two enemies to attention: the firſt are bythoughts: as when the bodie indeed is preſent, but the minde wandieth from the word, and is wholly poſſeſſed with thoughts of pleaſure, or other worldly affaires: For theſe be thornes in the ground of our hearts, which choake the good ſeed of the Word. Many will complaine, they cannot marke and remember that which is taught: now the cauſe is in themſelves, their wandring thoughts, which hinder both underſtanding and memory: for the mind conceiving other matters, cannot obſerve how one point dependeth upon another, much leſſe remember them afterward.

The ſecond enemie to attention, is dulneſſe and heavineſſe in bodie and ſoule: a common fault in many hearers, which ſheweth it ſelfe by drowſineſſe and ſleepineſſe in the time of preaching, when they ought to ſtirre up their bodies and hearts to all attention. If a man ſhould bee dull and heavie when his Prince is ſpeaking unto him of ſome weighty matter that is for his good, it would be taken for a part of contempt and diſloyaltie towards his majeſty. What diſloyaltie then is this unto the King of kings, that we ſhould be dull and heavie, when himſelfe vouchſafeth to ſpeake unto us out of the Word, the myſteries of our ſalvation? And ſurely, among other things this drowſineſſe is one cauſe of ſmall profit, by the miniſterie of the Word. And therefore, if we would increaſe in knowledge, and in the gifts of grace unto ſalvation, we muſt prepare our ſelves before we come, and in hearing caſt off al dulneſſe of fleſh and ſpirit, and with all might ſtirre up our ſelves to attentive hearing: ſo ſhall the word be bleſſed unto us; otherwiſe our hearing ſhall turne to our deeper condemnation.

V. 11 *Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt: and that which thou ſeeſt write in a booke, and ſend it unto the ſeven Churches which*

are in Aſia: unto Epheſus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamus, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Theſe words containe the third deſcription of this voice, whereby *Iohns* heart was prepared, touching the ſubſtance and matter which was uttered: which conſiſteth in two things: The firſt is a teſtimonie, in theſe words; *I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt.* The ſecond, a commandement in the words following: *That which thou ſeeſt, write, and ſend, &c.*

I. Touching the teſtimonie, the ſubſtance thereof is ſet downe in the eighth verſe, where the words were handled, and the meaning ſhewed. They doe ſerve directly, to prove the Godhead and eternitie of Chriſt, which Chriſt himſelfe doth here avouch, to give unto *Iohn*, and unto the Church full aſſurance, that the things now uttered and delivered, were from God: for ſaying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt*; is as much as if he had ſaid; *I which ſpeake unto thee am God, and therefore the things I deliver, are from God.*

In this teſtimonie, note Gods ſpeciall care in regard of his truth: he doth not content himſelfe with revealing his will unto his Church; but more ſpecially his care is, to certifie the Church of the truth thereof, that it is indeed from God. This hath been Gods care from the beginning. When *Peter* received a viſion from God, withall Gods Spirit aſſured him that the things revealed therein were certaine and ſure: And ſo when Chriſt preached the will of his Father among men, he did withall work ſtrange miracles, to confirme and ſeale up the truth of his doctrine, that it was from God.

Act. 10. 19.

This ſpeciall care of God over his Church, doth firſt confute the Papiſts opinion touching Scripture. They hold the Scripture to be certaine in it ſelfe, but not unto man till the Church give teſtimonie thereunto. But this is falſe: for God ever had this care over his Church, not only to reveale his will unto them, but alſo to uſe meanes for the aſſurance of their conſciences, that that which was revealed was his undoubted and perfect will. And therefore the Word of God is certaine, and ever was, not onely in it ſelfe, but to the conſciences of beleevers, and that without the teſtimonie of the Church; and ſo ſhould be, though the teſtimonie of the Church ſhould never come thereunto.

Theſe.

Secondly, hereby are confuted many carnall men, who will be of no religion; becauſe (ſay they) there is no certainty in the matters of religion: mens opinions therein are ſo divers, that ſo many men, ſo many mindes almoſt, and no man can tell who ſpeakes the truth. *Anſ.* It may be that men in ſundry matters hold ſundry private opinions: yet in the Church of God, all the true members of Chriſt hold the ſame opinions touching the foundation of religion. But let it be granted, That all men on earth were of divers opinions touching matters of religion, ſhould religion therefore be uncertaine? God forbid. For religion is certaine unto men, by the meanes that God hath appointed to certifie the conſcience of the truth thereof; and thereby might men come to the truth and certaintie of religion taught by the Prophets and Apoſtles, though all men in the world were of divers opinions touching the ſame. Thus much of the Teſtimonie.

II. Point. The commandement given to *Iohn* in theſe words; *That which thou ſeeſt write in a Booke, and ſend it to the ſeven Churches which are in Aſia.* This commandement hath two parts: Firſt, *to write the things ſeene in a booke*: ſecondly, *to ſend the booke to the ſeven Churches here named.* And both theſe muſt *Iohn* doe, being now diſabled by his exile to preach theſe things unto them perſonally, for theſe cauſes: Firſt, that theſe Churches might be edified in the faith, and ſtrengthned in theſe moſt grievous times of perſecution. Secondly, that they might become keepers of this booke for the good of others: for the Church of God is the pillar *of truth*; not onely for that it doth publiſh Gods truth, but alſo becauſe it keepeth it, and giveth teſtimony thereunto.

In this commandement note ſundry things: Firſt, that the Word of God, written and penned by the hand of man, is a notable helpe to the Church of God, and a worthy meanes to edifie the ſame, elſe Chriſt would never have commanded *Iohn* to have written theſe viſions, and ſent them to the Churches. Which ſerveth to confute the blind Papiſts, which ſay the word written is but an *inkie letter*, and a *noſe of wax*; becauſe the ſenſe thereof may be turned every way as man will. This alſo confuteth the Anabaptiſts, which ſo much magnifie their Revelation, and make no account of the word written. If the Lord had thought it beſt, he would have taught theſe Churches by Revelation: but they muſt learne by the word written.

Secondly, that the reading of Gods Word either publikely or privately, is an ordinance of God: for the Lord commanding *Iohn* to write this booke, and ſend it to the Churches, hereby impleyth, that they muſt read the ſame as they did other books of Scripture. The preaching of the Word is indeed the moſt worthy inſtrument for the founding and confirming of Gods Church, whereby ordinarily juſtifying faith is wrought in the heart: and yet reading muſt have his due reverence, as a meanes to confirme and increaſe true knowledge, faith, and repentance where it is begun.

Third-

Thirdly, here note that a man may be under the crosse, and in persecution, and yet remaine in the speciall favour of God: for this banishment into such a desart place, was unto *John* a grievous crosse; and yet the Lord vouchsafed there to reveale himselfe unto him, and to make him the penman of this booke. Which honour he vouchsafeth not to all, but to them that are most deare unto him. Which thing each one should observe: for our nature is so corrupt, that when wee are under the crosse, it would persuade us, we are cast out of the love and favour of God.

In the end of the verse, the seven Churches Ephesus, Smyrna, & the rest are named. Which 7. places, were 7. famous cities in *Asia*, wherein were planted the most famous churches that were in those parts, and for their excellency are they named. And thus much for the meanes of *Johns* preparation; now follow the parts thereof, which are two, first is hearing, folded up with the former meanes: *And I heard a voice*: second is, *Turning of himselfe* to see the partie that spake unto him, in these words;

v. 12 *Then I turned backe to see the voice which spake with me: and when I was turned, I saw seven golden Candlesticks.*

That is, so soone as I heard this sudden and mightie voice, I turned my selfe to see who it was that uttered the same. In this behaviour of *John* we are to learne our dutie: so to dispose our hearts towards God in the receiving of his word, as *John* disposeth himselfe towards Christ in the receiving of this vision. So soone as the voice spake, *John* hearkened; and because the sound thereof came behind him, he turned himselfe to looke on him that uttered it. Even so must we doe; we are by nature strangers with God, slow to heare when he speaketh, and readie to turne our hearts from God, when wee heare. Therefore when God speaketh unto us in the ministerie of his Word, we must hearken. And though we be going another way, yet we must turne our selves from our evill wayes, and incline our hearts to his voice, that wee may have fellowship with him. S. *John* had not seene this marvellous vision, unlesse hee had turned himselfe to behold him that spake. No more shall we at any time feele true fellowship with the Lord, unlesse we turne our hearts unto his Word, and that betimes, while he speaketh unto us in the ministerie thereof.

Thus much for the first part of the vision, *viz.* the entrance thereunto. The second part is the matter and substance of the vision, containing a most worthy representation of Christ in his Majestie, as he is the Prophet, King, and Priest of his Church: set downe at large by a description of Christ, continuing from this twelfth verse, unto the end of the third chapter; where *John* sheweth what he received of Christ, partly by hearing, and partly by seeing. And first he beginneth his description of Christ, as hee saw him represented in vision: and so describeth him by two arguments: First, by the place where he saw him; secondly, by his forme and figure wherein he appeared.

I. For the place. *John* saw him *in the middest of the seven golden Candlesticks*. These seven golden candlesticks here seene, are seven Churches of *Asia*: the particular Churches of God, being compared to candlesticks, as Christ expoundeth himselfe, ver. 20. Now the particular congregations of Gods Church be called candlesticks, for that resemblance which is betweene them. For as the candlesticks serve to beare up, and hold forth the light that is set therein: so the particular Churches of God on earth, they beare up and shew forth the light of the Gospel unto the whole world, partly in the ministerie of the word, and partly in the profession of the faith of Christ.

From hence sundry things are to be learned: first observe, that the Churches are rather called *candlesticks*, than *candles*; To give us to understand, that they have no light of themselves, or from themselves, but onely are Gods instruments to beare up and hold forth the light in the ministery of the Word, and profession of the faith: for Christ Jesus is the only true lamp and candle, that giveth light to the heart and conscience by his holy Spirit in his Word.

Secondly, hence every one that professeth himselfe to be a true member of Gods Church, must learne his dutie, which is earnestly to labour to become a shining and burning candle. Indeed this principally concerns the Ministers of the Church: and therefore *John Baptist* is called a burning and a shining light, Joh. 5. 35. but yet it must also bee verified of every member thereof, as S. *Paul* commandeth; *Shine* (saith he) *as lights in the world, in the midst of a naughty and crooked nation: holding forth the doctrine of life*, that is, the Gospell. *Quest.* How shall every member of the Church become a burning light? *Answ.* First, he must have his minde enlightened in the knowledge of Gods will and Word, and then as a candlesticke, hold out and send forth the beams thereof to others, partly by teaching within the compasse of his calling, and partly by example of an honest and blamelesse life and conversation. Thus we should doe, if wee would bee answerable to our profession. And to induce us hereunto, let us observe the reasons following:

Philip. 2. 15, 16.

First, it is Gods Commandement, *Shine as lights* (saith S. *Paul*) *in the world*, Philip. 2. 15. And *walke as children of the light*, Ephes. 5. 8. Secondly, consider the fruit hereof, which is wonderful great; for by godly instructiõ in our places, & by answerable obedience in our lives, we win many to the Lord: shewing forth such lights,

lights, whereby others may walke in this dark world to the kingdome of heaven, which is a most blessed light. In the winter season, men thinke they doe others a great pleasure, if in the night they hang forth a light to guide passengers a little way in an earthly walke. What a blessed thing then is this, that a man should always hold forth that light which shall guide a sinnefull wicked wretch to leave the wayes of death, and to walke in the paths of righteousnes to eternall life? But on the contrary, when men live in Gods Church like candles put out, by reason of the blindnesse of their minds, and the badnesse of their lives; hence commeth great hurt and danger to others with whom they live: for they lead others that depend upon them to the pit of destruction, especially, they who know the will of God, and yet make not conscience to shew forth the same by good example of a godly life. For as in an haven towne, if any man in the night time doe remove the sea-marke which guideth the ships in the right channell, he doth as much as in him lyeth to cast away all the ships that are comming neere the shore, by causing them to run on rockes and sands: even so they that should give light in the Church, if they give either no light, or false light to such as depend upon them, who are sayling in the sea of this sinfull world, hereby they leade and direct them to a wrong haven, and instead of heaven, bring their soules to eternall perdition; which must terrifie us from ignorance and evill works, and make us labour to shine as lights in this world, by good instruction and godly conversation. Third reason: Consider the fearefull judgements of God, against such as live in his Church as members thereof, and yet give no light: they doe incurre the fearefull wrath of Christ. In the Temple, the keeping of the lamps and lights belonged to the Priest, and therefore he had his snuffers, and other instruments to trimme the same; which notably figured the duty of Christ in the Church of the new Testament: for he is our high Priest, who looketh to every light in the Sanctuary, that is, to every member of his Church, who ought to shine as a lampe; and when they burne but dimmely and darke, hee hath his snuffers to trimme them, and make them give a better light, both by godly life, and good instruction. But when hee hath snuffed them againe and againe, if still they doe burne darke and dimme, and give either no light, or else a false light, then surely hee will either cast them out of the Temple, or else tread them under his feet. Wee grant this liberty to every governour, when hee hath light up candles for his family, if any of them will not burne clearly, hee may snuffe it; if that will not serve, hee may cast it into the fire, and set another in it place. And shall we deny to *Christ Jesus* the like authority in his church, which is his house, over them and women, who ought to shine as lights? God forbid. The Minister therefore in this place, and every other Christian in the compasse of his calling, must labour to be a shining candle, both for knowledge and godly life before all the world, that so he may escape Gods fearfull judgements. In common reason wee ought to carry our selves as shining lights before others. It is an usuall thing in the winter time to hang forth lights for the guiding of mens bodies safe from place to place. Now if wee have such care over their bodies, wee ought to have much more over body and soule both, that by the light of grace in us, sinners and wicked men may bee guided in the darke and dangerous way of this world, to the Kingdome of heaven.

Here then all ignorant persons and loose livers, who abound in every place; must bee admonished to reforme themselves, and labour to become lights in Gods Church. They stand as candles, but they are extinct and give no light to others. Ignorant persons therefore must cast off their ignorance, and labour for knowledge: and wicked livers must reforme their loosenesse of life, and become obedient to the Word of truth, that so they may shine unto others. If a man have a candle set up in his family, and shall assay to light it, and snuffe it once or twice, and cannot get it burne, then in displeasure hee will trample it under his feet, or cast it into the fire: Even so, *Christ Iesus* seeking to enlighten the minds of these ignorant persons, and to reforme the lives of these loose livers by the Ministery of the Word; when he shall perceive that they refuse the light, and will not be reformed, undoubtedly in fury of his wrath, he wil at length pluck them *from their places*, and stamp them to powder, and cast them into hell. Many be ignorant in every place, and more be prophane, and small is the number of good shining lights: but wee must remember our dutie, and walke worthy in our calling. If wee hold forth the light of knowledge and obedience, we shall shine as the firmament in the world to come, Dan. 12. 3.

Psal. 52. 5.

Golden candlesticks. The Churches of God are not base candlesticks, but candlesticks made of gold. There bee two causes of this resemblance: First, because gold is the most excellent of all metals: so Gods Churches here on earth, are the most excellent of all societies. The companies and societies of men in families, townes, and kingdomes, and in other common affaires of this life, be the ordinance of God, and good in their kinde; but yet the society of Saints in the Church of God, doth farre surmount them all, and that in these respects; First, because in Gods Church salvation may bee obtained: but in other societies as they are societies, though sundrie benefits arise from them, yet salvation is not to be had in them, unlesse they bee either particular Churches, or members thereof. Secondly, the Church of God is the end of all other societies: and they are all ordained to preserve and cherish the Church, which is

is the society of the Saints. Thirdly, the Church beautifies all other societies: the principall dignitie of any towne, houshold, or kingdome is this, that they are either Churches of God, or true members thereof.

From this prehemineance of the Church wee are taught, above all things to labour to become true members of this society. Men have great care to become members of incorporations and townes of greatest privileges; but few there bee that seeke for the privileges of Gods Church: And commonly those that seeke most for privileges in chiese townes, have the least care to become the true members of Gods Church, which is a wretched practise, and ought not to be among us, seeing the Church hath privileges farre above all other societies.

Secondly, hence wee are taught above all things, to have care to preserve the society of the Church of God. True it is, the Minister and Magistrate must have chiefe care thereof, and yet every man in his place must doe his bestendeyour hereunto, because it is the most principall society.

Thirdly, in that Gods Church is the most excellent society, giving honour to all others; wee are taught within the compasse of our callings, as much as we can, to bring all other societies unto this. Those that are masters of families, must labour to bring every one in their family to bee good members of the Church: And so in civill societies, men of government must labour that the members of the civill bodie, become also members of Christs body. Thus governours of kingdomes should labour that the parts of their dominions may be particular Churches of God. And there is good reason of this duty; because all other societies without this, ate companions of men in the darke, sitting in the shadow of death, being spiritually blind, and without allsound comfort in their soules. Secondly, the Church is compared to a candlestick of gold, because of all societies among men, it is most precious and deare unto God: and therefore it is resembled to a *seale on Christs heart, and a signet on his arme*: yea, it is as deare unto him *as the apple of his eie*, Zac. 2. 8. *The church is the Queen that standes on Christs right hand in a vesture of gold*, Psa. 45. 9. yea, that which surpasseth all, *Christ redeemed the Church unto himselfe by his owne blood*. Oh then how deare and precious is she in his sight! And hereby also weare taught the same instructions that did arise from the former prehemineance; namely, to have speciall care of Gods Church to preserve the same, and to labour to become our selves, and to bring others to bee members thereof. And thus much of the title of the Church.

Cant. 8.

Act. 20. 28.

Vers. 13. Now it is added, that Christ the *Messias* is *in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*: whereby is signified: first, that Christ is present with his Church at all times: and secondly, that being present, he hath care to gather his Church: and being gathered, to preserve the same against the gates of hell, and all other enemies.

From hence wee learne sundry things: First, that the supremacy of the Church of Rome, wherein one is made head of the militant church is needlesse: for Christ is present alway with his Church, having speciall care to gather, guide, and preserve the same; and he needeth no Vicar generall to supply his roome: for in the presence of the Prince, all commissions of vicegerency doe cease; though Christ had granted this supremacy to any, yet so long as Christ is present, their commission must ceate; and it is as great pride, and greater, for any to presume to be head of all Churches in Christs presence, as for a man to sit Vicegerent in the presence of the Prince.

Secondly, seeing Christ is alwayes present with his Church, we are taught to walke with God, and before God, as *Enoch* did, Gen. 5. 22. Which dutie stands in these points: First, whatsoever we say, or take in hand, we must doe it as in the presence of Christ. Secondly, wee must continually depend upon Christs providence, who is ever present with his Church, providing all things for the good of his Church, and of every member thereof. Thirdly, wee must doe all our actions as looking for approbation at the hands of Christ: for which end we must take direction for the same out of his word. The practise of this duty is most excellent: for by waiking with God, wee shall be enabled to many good duties, as namely, live unblameably in this wicked world, making conscience of all sinne, and approving our selves both to God and man in heart and life. And thus much for the place where *John* saw Christ.

The second argument whereby *John* describeth Christ, is his figure, or forme, in these words, *One like the sonne of man*. Some thinke that these words are a description of some Angell, not of Christ, because hee is said to be *like the sonne of man*, not the *sonne of man himselfe*; but they are deceived. For he which is here described, is before called the *first and the last, it is he which was dead, and is alive*; which cannot agree to any but to Christ. Now the words may more significantly bee translated thus, *One like to a sonne of man*: for if it bee translated *that sonne of man*, then Christ must needs bee the resemblance: for so he is called, Act. 7. 56. But here Christ is said to bee like to a *sonne of man*, by the usuall phrase of the old Testament: whereby is meant that hee is like unto a man. And Christ is not here called a man, but is said to be like unto a man, because he appeared unto *John* not in his true Man-hood, which was then in heaven, but in the likenesse of his manhood. And note this, that as Christ here appeared to *John* in this vision, so did he always appeare after his ascension. *Stephen* indeed saw his true manhood, but it was in heaven: and *Paul* heard his voice whenhe was converted: and saw the Lord, 1 Cor. 9. 5. But no man can prove

Act. 7.

Act. 9. 5.

that

that Christ appeared unto him in his true manhood, unlesse it were in heaven. And in all these visions *John* saw not his true manhood, but a resemblance thereof. Now Christ appeared thus for speciall consideration. For man is too much addicted to his bodily presence; this was the fault of his owne friends and Disciples. Therefore Christ would hereby teach us, not to seeke for his bodily presence, but rather to lift up our hearts to heaven, and therefore seeke to have fellowship with him by faith. For this cause hee said to *Mary* after his resurrection, *Touch me not, I am not yet ascended to my Father*, John 20. 17. This *Paul* had learned, *Though we had knowne Christ* (saith hee) *after the flesh, yet hence-forth know we him no more*, 2 Corin. 5. 15. Now if Christ after his ascension never appeared in his true manhood, it teacheth us, that the defence of Christs reall presence in the Sacrament is needlesse. For if Gods Church have spiritually fellowship with Christ by faith, it is sufficient. Againe, whereas Christ appeareth in the shape and forme of man after his ascension, the Papists gather, that we may make images of Christ, and so answerably of the Father, and of the holy Ghost, in those formes wherein they appeared: as of the holy Ghost in the form of a dove; and of the father in the likenesse of an old man. *Answ.* It is not unlawfull to make, or to have an image of Christs manhood, so that it be out of religious use, (though it be doubtfull whether any now have a true picture thereof:) but it it be to represent whole Christ, God and man, or be used to remember Christ thereby, or to worship Christ therein, it is an idoll. As for the formes of an old man, or of a dove, they may be made for the manifestation of the history of the Bible, when it is painted or pictured: but then wee must conceive, that these formes are no images of the Father, Sonne, or holy Ghost, but onely representations of such visible appearances, as sometimes were signes and pledges of the presence of those persons. But now to abstract those formes apart from the History, and to make them images of any person in the Trinity, is flat against the second Commandement; which doth generally forbid all images of God, not accepting those verie shapes, in which himselfe tooke liberty to testifie his presence for some time. And there being no exception against Gods commandement, it is in vaine to seeke shifts and excuses for a thing forbidden, specially considering wee may not meddle with God, above our commission from God.

Matth. 3. Dist. 7. 3.

De Deo a Israe Deo.

Cloathed with a garment downe to his feet: Here Christ is further described by his attire. The first part whereof is, *A long garment reaching to his feet*. The causes why hee is appeared may be these: First, to signifie that hee is the high Priest of the new Testament, and so continueth, doing the offices of the high Priest for his Church after his ascension, in presenting the merit of his owne onely sacrifice, and making intercession to God the father for them. For the long garment was one of them, wherewith the high Priest was cloathed in his ministration under the Law.

Secondly, to signifie that he is the *Prince of peace*: for the long garment, not onely in the Church of God, but among the heathen, hath beene alwayes a note of peace: and so Christ is called, Isa. 9. 6.

Thirdly, to shew that *he had in his brest the treasures of the wisdome of the Father, and the spirit of counsell*. For this long robe alwayes pertained to them that excelled in counsell and wisdome: and so Christ is described, Isa. 11. 2. Now in this example of Christ, we may learne a duty touching our attire; namely, that the out ward garment of the body, should be suitable to the good things that ought to bee in the heart: as to our wisdome, knowledge, feare of Gods name, to our sobriety, modesty, temperance, humility, and all other vertues whatsoever. Wee must not onely in speech and action, as in hearing Gods word, and receiving the Sacraments, shew our selves to be burning lights; but even by the gesture and attire of our body, both for matter and forme, shew forth the grace of our hearts. But miserable are these times, wherein mens attire is suitable, not to the graces of God that should bee in their hearts, but to the common corruption of the times. For such it is generally, whereby a farre off (though hee never had acquaintance with one partie) a man may see the vanity and lightnesse of his minde, the pride and folly of his heart that weareth it.

Colos. 3. Isa. 11. 2.

The second part of Christs attire is this: *Girded about the paps with a golden girdle*. It hanged not loose about him, but was girded close to his body: whereby is signified, that hee is a Mediator, every way ready prepared to doe the office of a Mediator for his Church: for in all ages, the girding or the attire to the bodie, hath beene a signe of care and diligence in the businesse they have in hand; and the contrary not girding, a signe of carelessnesse, and negligence therein. When *Christ* was here on earth, he was most pitiful to all penitent sinners, he rejected no such that came into him, but regarded them farre more than the Scribes and Pharisees, that were the learned men among the Jewes. And since his ascension he doth not lay off his care and diligence, but is alwayes ready, doing all such duties which may appertaine to their salvation.

Luke 15. 5, 6.

The consideration whereof, is a matter of excellent comfort unto all such as have any sparke of grace. First, hereby wee learne, that when we truly humble our selves, *Christ* is ready to receive our prayers, and in all our troubles and temptations ready to releeve, to comfort, and deliver us; & in our death ready to receive our soules; yea, at all times prepared to do whatsoever may further our salvation. He is not like to *Pharaohs* butler, who promised to remember

Gen. 40. 23. member *Ioseph* while he was in prison with him, *but forgat him quite when he was advanced to honour againe*. But hee is alwayes mindefull of us and ever ready to doe all the workes of a mediator for us. Whence we are taught answerably, to have our loynes girded, as Christ commandeth, Luke 12. 35. being ever ready to doe all duties that concerne Christianity: as to call on Gods name, and to praise God, to practise faith, repentance, and obedience; fit to die, and fit to live: never suffering our selves to bee unfit for any thing that concernes our salvation, but at all times to stand upon our watch, that whensoever God shall call, we may be ready to enter into the kingdome of heaven. But alas, the case with most men goeth farre otherwise: they fit themselves for the world at all times; but few seeke to prepare themselves for the Kingdome of heaven till death doe come.

This ought not to be: it is a treacherous part in any subject, to bee unprepared for the service of his Prince, and yet ever ready to receive a common enemy. And it is no lesse treason against God, to forellow our preparation for the Lord, by fitting our selves for the world.

Further, he is said to be girded; not *about the loynes, but about the paps and brest*. Whereby some say, (and not unfitly) is signified, that there is no defect, or aberation in any motion or affection in our Saviour Christ, but every thought and inclination of his heart, is kept in order by the fulnesse of the spirit, which dwelleth in him bodily.

v. 14. *His head and haires were white as white wooll, and as snow: and his eyes were as a flame of fire.*

In the third place, *Iohn* here describes Christ by the parts of his body. The *whitenesse of his head and haires*, signifieth the eternity of *Christ*. For howsoever as hee is man, hee had a beginning, yet in regard of his Godhead he is eternal, and therfore is called, *The ancient of daies*, Dan. 7. and is said to *have been in the beginning*, Joh. 1. 1. that is, to have had a being before all other things had their beginning.

In this resemblance of his eternitie, by head and haires as white as wooll and snow, hee giveth us to understand, an honour and prerogative in the aged man, whereby he excelleth the younger sort: to wit, the hoarenesse and whitenesse of his haire: for which cause in the word of God it is set forth by most worthy comparisons as by the *white Almond tree*, Eccles. 12. 5. and by a glorious *silver crowne*, not made by man, but by the hand of God set upon his head. And herein doth this excellency of the aged consist, that they beare the Image of Gods eternity before all that are of younger yeares. From

Lev. 19. 32. whence all younger men are taught to reverence the aged, by *rising up before them*: acknowledging thereby the preheminence of the hoarhead.

Againe, hereby the aged are taught to carry themselves answerable to their estate and condition: they ought to excell all their youngers in knowledge, wisdome, and experience of good things: 1 Joh. 2. 13. *I write unto you Fathers, (that is, aged men;* who by reason of years are fathers) *because ye have knowne him who is everlasting*.

Also they must be holy, as he that is eternal is holy, whose eternity they shew forth: And therefore *Salomon* saith; The white head is a crowne of glory when it is found in the way of righteousnesse: that is, in one that walketh in the way of righteousnesse, Prov. 16. 31. for his white haire signifieth, that he hath spent much time and care about good duties. But it is no ornament, unlesse it bee joined with holinesse of hart and life. Which I say, because many youngermen excell the aged in the knowledge of God, and other vertues, which is a shame to the gray-headed; for as they goe before others in yeares; so they ought to excell in piety, knowledge, and all vertues. Ignorance and loosenesse of life is a foule vice in any; but in him that beares the silver crowne, intolerable. For how can they looke for reverence from the younger, when as they be far inferiour to them in gifts of grace? It is no excuse for old men to say, Their wits are not so ripe as young mens are, and their memories faile them. Their aged ignorance argueth, that they spent the time of their youth loosely, and prophanely: For *they that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall bring forth fruit in their age*, Psal. 62. 13, 14. A plant is young, and therefore hee that would weare the crowne of glory in his age, must receive the sap of grace in the house of God while he is young.

And his eyes were as a flame of fire: Here *Iohn* proceedeth in describing the parts of Christs body. In the handling whereof, it is hard for any to set downe certainely, what the holy Ghost intendeth in every particular. It shall be sufficient for us to follow that interpretation which is most probable, and best agreeing with the tenour of Gods word.

In this description of Christs eyes, are signified to us two things: First, that Christ the mediator and redeemer of his Church, is of most quicke, sharpe, and piercing sight, so as he beholdeth all things that are done upon the earth: yea, hee seeth into the very secret thoughts of mens hearts: thither can the eyes of his Godhead more easily pierce, than fire can doe into the substance of bodily things. And there is great necessity it should bee so: for being head and governour of his Church, hee must know all the parts and members thereof; he must behold their severall estates, and see the malice and practices of Satan, and other enemies against them.

Now in that Christ our Saviour hath this piercing sight, we are taught to have care, not onely

onely of our words and actions, but also of the very secret thoughts, purposes and desires of our hearts: for the piercing eye of Christ seeth them all, therefore we must be sure they be well ordered. In the courts of men, thoughts and inward motions beare no action; but with God it is otherwise. Christ Jesus hath a fiery eye, that seeth into all our thoughts, and there hee holdeth a Court of Judgement. Therefore wee must keepe a godly watch over all the imaginations of our hearts, that they may be approved of Christ, lest for them wee be judged and condemned.

Secondly, this teacheth us in matters of religion to be that in deed, which wee seeme to be in profession. For though we may deceive men, which know not our hearts, yet wee cannot deceive Christ: For by his fiery eyes hee seeth whatsoever is in us. And yet the common practice of the world is here to bee reproved, who termeth them hypocrites that take upon them any profession for the name and religion of Christ. But herein men goe beyond their calling; it belongeth onely unto the piercing eye of Christ, to judge and looke at mens hypocrisie of heart.

Secondly, by these fiery eyes is signified, That Christ is full of anger, wrath, and judgement against all sinners, ready to take vengeance on all those that will not yeeld subjection unto him by turning from their sinnes, and beleeving in him: for Christ as he is a Saviour, so is he a judge; and therefore in the parable he saith, *Those mine enemies that would not that I should rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before mee*. The consideration hereof serveth to awake many an one out of the sleepe of sinne. This age is miserable, if we regard the practice of faith and repentance which God requireth; for men live in ignorance without knowledge, they goe on in loosenesse of life without reformation; which is both scandalous unto men, and odious unto God: not one of an hundred turneth to God at the preaching of his word, renewing his waies by daily repentance. But unto many it is meat and drinke to goe on in those sins wherein their hearts delight. But let these men consider, that Christ is a righteous Judge, beholding his enemies with fierce and fiery eyes, alwayes ready to take vengeance on them that doe not repent: and therefore they must in time consider their estate, for if they persevere in their evill wayes as they have begun, the truth is, hee still beholdeth them with his fiery eyes, and though in his great patience he spare them for a time, yet at length he will put in practice the execution of his judgement, and slay them for enemies; as it is in the Parable, Luke 19. 27. Let them remember what a fearefull thing it is to fall into the hands of God, if his wrath bee kindled never so little, Psal. 2. 12.

vers. 15 *And his feet like unto fine brasse, burning as in a furnace, and his voyce as the sound of many waters.*

The word in the originall signifieth Brasse that shineth, which for substance is pure and durable, a very choyce and excellent kinde of brasse. And hereunto Christs feet are compared, to signifie unto us his invincible power, whereby he is able not only to encounter with sinne, Satan, and death, but also that he hath already entred combat with them, and hath bruised the heads of these his enemies. Yea, hereby is signified, that hee hath not onely done these things in his owne person, but also will doe the same in all his members, by his invincible power, unto the end of the world. Which is a matter of exceeding great comfort to Gods Church and people, never to bee forgotten. If any man be exercised in any grievous temptation of Satan, he must not be astonished and confounded therewith: but remember, that Christ our Saviour hath the brasen feet, wherewith he hath bruised the head of the Serpent, and will (if hee seeke unto him unfaindly) bruise in him the Serpents head: so by experience shall wee finde the benefit of his brasen feet.

If any bee oppressed with the corruption of his nature, whether it be in thoughts or affections; let him come unto Christ Jesus, lay open his wants before him, shew his sinnes, and make knowne the strength thereof unto him, and withall cry unto him for helpe: and hee shall finde by joyfull experience, though they were never so many or mighty. That the power of Christ in him, will vanquish and subdue them all.

Againe, doth any feare the terrours of death (as all men doe by nature) lee him consider, that Christ hath his feet of brasse, wherewith hee did encounter with death upon the cresse: and not content with that, went downe with him into his owne denne, and there did bruise his head, and subdue his power. Indeed if death were to encounter with us in his full strength, it were a matter of feare: but considering that Christ hath bruised his head, this must stay our hearts against overmuch dread. And as it serveth to minister comfort to the godly, so it is a matter of all terrour and woe unto those that live impenitent: for Christ hath feet of brasse to bruise the head of all his enemies, and such are all those which goe on in sin: unlesse they turne, destruction will bee their end. Let every one therefore looke unto his soule, that hath led a course in any sinne. Let him forsake his old master Sathan, and the workes of darknesse, and turne unfaindly to Jesus Christ in the practice of faith and true repentance, and by all obedience in the duties of his callings. For howsoever the patience of God may stay for a time the execution of his justice & wrath, yet in the end they shall feele by woefull experience

rience the destroying power of these his brasen feet.

Burning as in a furnace. Feet ascribed to God and men in Scripture, doe oft-times betoken their wayes: So here by *Christs* feet wee may understand his workes and wayes. And whereas they are said to *burne as in a furnace*; thereby is signified the perfection thereof. All the counsels of God, with the execution therof in the creation and government of the world, with all his works therin, are all most holy and pure, like fine brasse purged in the furnace. Psal. 18.30. *The waies of God are uncorrupt*, yea, *hee is holy in all his wayes.*

The consideration whereof, must teach us to conceive and speake reverently of all the workes of God, even of those most secret and strange judgements, whereof wee cannot comprehend a reason. Yet because they proceed from God, wee must acknowledge them pure and just. In sundry points of religion there is a learned ignorance, whereof this is not the least: to hold our selves content, and to reverence the workes of *Christ*, though wee see no reason thereof; nay, though to us they seeme against all reason: for all the wayes of God are uncorrupt. Though the blinde eye of man cannot discerne the light of the Sunne, yet the Sunne is full of light: so though our blinde eyes cannot beheld the purity of Gods workes, yet they are all done in justice and equitie, yea, they are justice it selfe: for his will is the rule of justice. And we must not thinke that God doth a thing because it is good and right, but therefore is the thing good and right, because God willeth and worketh it. Example hereof wee have in Gods word: [a] *God commanded Abimeleeh to deliver Sarah to Abraham, or else hee will destroy him and his houshold.* In mans reason this might seeme unjust: for why should *Abimelechs* servants be punished for their masters fault? So [b] *Achan sinneth, and all the hoast of Israel is punished. David* committed Adultery, [c] *and the child which hee begat dieth. David* numbreth the people: *but all the people are smitten with the plague*, 2 Sam. 24. All these to mans reason may seeme unequall: yet being the workes of God, wee are with all reverence to judge them most just and holy. Againe, the Scripture sheweth plainely, that God in his eternall counsell hath decreed to save some, and to reject others: and his reason moving him thereto, is not any thing foreseene in them, but his will and pleasure alone. This in mans reason seemeth to bee cruelty towards some: and therefore sundry men disclaime this doctrine, as charging God with injustice and tyranny. But herein they greatly offend: for it is the manifest truth of God in his word, and therefore ought with reverence to be acknowledged, though we can see no reason thereof: *For who art thou, oh man, that pleadest against God?* Rom. 9.20.

And his voice as the sound of many waters. The voyce of Christ is resembled to the sound of many waters for two causes. First, to signifie the loudnesse and greatnesse of it: the sound wherof hath beene heard thorow all the world in the Ministery of the Gospell. Secondly, to shew the power and efficacie thereof in the eares of his creatures: for such power it is of, that when the creatures were not, *Hee but spoke the word and they were made*, Hebr. 12. 3. This powerfull voice of Christ, brought [d] *Lazarus* out of the grave *after hee had beene dead foure dayes, bound hand and foot.* And by this voice of Christ shall they that have been dead six thousand yeares before, bee raised up to life: *The houre shall come, in the which all that are in the graves shall heare his voyce, and shall come forth to judgement*, Joh. 5.28, 29.

Hereby then wee may see the great security and the deadnesse of mens hearts in this age. For though the powerfull word of Christ bee daily sounded into the eares of many; yet it entereth not into their hearts. They live securely in their sinnes, though they be daily exhorted to repentance. But shall dead *Lazarus* start out of his grave, when Christ saith, *Lazarus come forth?* Nay, shall they that were consumed to dust many thousand yeares before, at the hearing of Christs voyce, rise out of their graves? And shall wee which live in body, be no whit affected with it in our soules? Oh, fearefull death in sinne! And yet this is that state of all those that will not bee moved to leave their sinnes by the ministery of the Word. It may be the outward eare receiveth the sound, but the dead heart receiveth no instruction. Wee must therefore apply our hearts to this powerfull voyce of Christ; and leave the sinnes wherein wee have lyen dead, that so the quickening power hereof unto salvation may appeare in us.

Psal. 12. 6.

a Gen. 20.

b Jos. 7.
c 2 Sam. 12. 18.

Rom. 9.

A

B

C

D

v. 16 *And hee had in his right hand seven starres: and out of his mouth went a sharpe two edged sword: And his face shone as the Sunne shineth in his strength.*

Here *John* proceedeth further, to set out the parts of Christs body, and the properties thereof. By *seven Stars* wee are to understand *seven Angels*: that is, (as Christ expounded them, verse 20.) the seven Ministers of the seven Churches of Asia. And they are called starres for these causes: First, starres give light to men on earth: And so the Ministers ought to give spirituall light to them that live in the Church, both by doctrine, and by an unblameable conversation. Secondly, starres have their continuall abode in heaven, and descend not unto the earth: So Ministers above all others ought to have their conversation in heaven. This indeed is

d Joh. 11. 43, 44.

is the duties of every Christian: but especially of the Minister, in regard of his calling. And this heavenly conversation hee must express: first, by seeking the conversion of his owne soule; and then the conversion of others, that they may have an eternall mansion in heaven. Thirdly, they are called starres, because (if they be faithfull) they shall bee honoured of God, and made *to shine as the starres for ever and ever*, Dan. 12. 3.

It is added, that *they are in Christs right hand.* Whereby is signified that to him belongeth the regiment, and government, and the whole disposition of the ministerie for matters that concerne the Church. From whence arise sundry instructions:

I. That it is Christ who giveth to his Church ministers which preach the Gospell. For hee [a] *ascended upon high, and gave gifts unto men, some to be Apostles, some Prophets, and Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers for the gathering together of the Saints, and for the worke of the Ministery, and for the edification of the body of Christ.* And for this cause we ought to pray diligently unto Christ, [b] *that he would thrust forth labourers into his harvest*: that the remnant of Gods elect may bee gathered, and so wee see an end of these miserable dayes wherein we live.

Secondly, in that Christ holdeth them in his right hand, we may gather that Christ giveth protection and defence unto his ministers, when they are faithfull and walke in their calling according to his will: which is a matter to be considered of all that are called into this office: For they have sundry occasions of discouragement; as the negligence and backwardnesse of their people: the slanders and mockings of the enemies: But this protection of Christ must comfort them against them all; seeing they are in Christs right hand, they must goe on with all godly boldnesse.

Thirdly, this sheweth the dignitie of this calling. Indeed it is despised and reputed base in the world; and hereby many are driven from it. But let the wicked judge what they will: Behold Christ honoureth it, for his faithfull ministers are not onely present before him, which were no small thing: but he holdeth them in his right hand, than which, what greater glorie can bee done unto them? This must be an inducement unto all those that are indued with gifts fit for this calling, to effect the same.

Lastly, every Minister of the Gospell must hereby learne to be faithfull in his calling, and holy in his conversation: for by vertue of his calling he is placed in Christs right hand. Now shall we thinke that Christ will long beare in his right hand any that are unfaithfull, or prophane? Nay he will take them out of his right hand, and put them under his feet of brasse, and there grind him to powder: For as they are honoured above others by their place, so shall their confusion be the greater, unlesse they bee faithfull. This we may see in *Nadab* and *Abihu*, Levit. 10. 1. and *Hophni* and *Phinees*, 1 Sam. 3. 13. And in the same respect ought all the people of God to bee carefull to their wayes: for by their calling of Christmanie they bee members of Christ. Now if they be not faithfull and answerable to their profession, he will surely deale with them, as with unfaithfull ministers, put them under his feet of brasse, and confound them for ever. They must therefore make conscience of all sinne, and become not hearers only, but doers of his will; so shal Christ protect them in this life, and save them eternally.

And out of his mouth went a sharpe two edged sword. This *sword* that came out of his mouth, is nothing else but the doctrine of the Law and the Gospell, uttered and propounded in the writings and ministerie of the Prophets and Apostles: Hebr. 4. 12. *The Word of God is lively, mightie in operation, and sharper than any two edged sword.* And it is thereto compared, because as a sword with a double edge entereth sharply into the flesh, and pierceth deeply into the bones, even to the very marrow: so the doctrine of the Law and the Gospell entereth sharply, and pierceth deeply into the very marrow of the heart of every man, to the dividing of the thought and the spirit. This two edged sword, the Word of God, hath a twofold operation: One upon the wicked: Another in the elect. It woundeth the wicked at the very heart with a deadly wound, and thereby brings them to eternall death: Isay 11. 4. *Christ shall slay the wicked with the breath of his lips*: that is, with his word, which is this two edged sword. Herewith shall he consume Antichrist, 2 Thes. 2. 8. visit *Leviathan*, and slay the dragon; that is, the greatest enemies of his Church, Isay 27. verse 1.

Here consider how the Word of God should kill an impenitent sinner. There bee three degrees of spirituall death: First in this life, where an impenitent sinner receiveth his deadly wound: The second at the end of this life, when the bodie is laid in the grave, but the soule goeth to the torments of the damned: The third at the end of the world, when both body and soule together goe to hell eternally. Now a sinner receiveth in this life his deadly wound after this manner; Christ in the giving thereof hath a threefold worke in the heart by the ministerie of his Word, which is the two edged sword. First, hereby he revealeth unto him his sinnes, as hypocrisie, pride, and rebellion of heart, with all other his horrible and damnable transgressions against the first and second table: 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. *When all prophesie, and there commeth in one unlearned, he is reproved of all:* the Prophets by the Word judge him, and thereby lay open unto him the secret sinnes of his heart, with the sinnes of his life. Secondly, *Christ* hereby revealeth unto him his indignation and wrath, which is the curse of the law due

a Eph. 4. 11, 12.

b Math. 9. 38.

A

B

C

D

due unto him. In which regard the law is called
a 2 Cor. 3. 6. a killing letter, shewing no mercie, but onely
thundering out the fierce wrath of God upon
transgressors. Thirdly, hereby Christ awaketh
his guiltie conscience, sharpeneth the sting
thereof, and terrifieth him at the hearing of his
Word. Thus wicked *Felix* trembled when hee
b Act. 24. 25. heard *Paul* preach b of repentance, righteous-
nesse, and the judgement to come. So when
c Dan. 5. 6. king c *Belshazzar* saw the palme of the hand,
writing things against him upon the wall, his
countenance was changed, his thoughts
troubled him, his joynts were loosed, and his
knees smote one against another. And all these
are wrought in the wicked without apprehen-
sion of mercie, or reformation of life. It may
please God to recover one that is thus wound-
ed; but while he is in this estate, he hath re-
ceived a deadly wound, and without unfeined
repentance, is already in the first step towards
eternall death: for these horrours of conscience,
severed from the apprehension of Gods mercy
in Christ, are no grace, but the flashes of hell
fire, and the beginning of eternall woe. And
thus wee see how Christ by his word woundeth
his enemies.

Hence we are to learne sundry duties. First,
how to carrie our selves towards them that af-
ter they have heard the Word preached unto
them, will rage and storme against it, and the
preachers thereof, because it touched them.
We must not despise or maligne them, but ra-
ther be moved with compassion towards
them. For this their behaviour is a token they
are wounded with the sword of Christ at the
very heart, and these their ragings are nothing
but struglings before death eternall, unlesse the
Lord in mercy recover them of this deadly
wound.

II. Hereby we are let to see and know the
lamentable state of the greatest number in
those congregations where the word hath long
been preached; for we shall finde by lamentable
experience, that in those places few come to
true knowledge, repentance, and obedience;
but most remaine ignorant and impenitent: now
this their condition is most fearefull. A terrible
judgement of God is upon them: for when
men have long heard Gods Word, and are not
thereby bettered, for knowledge in minde, and
obedience of life; they are thereby wounded
unto death.

This two edged sword hath alwayes his
worke: it either cureth unto life by working re-
pentance and other graces of salvation; or
woundeth unto death them that receive it not.

Wee must therefore lament the case of such
persons, as remaine ignorant and impenitent
under the ministerie of the Word, for they are
as yet dead men for ought we know, howsoe-
ver they may make a faire shew by their civill
honesty. If any man should come into a field, &
there behold many thousands slaughtered, and
gushing out bloud, some in the head, some in
the side, &c. this sight would make his heart to
bleed. Well, this is true in Gods Church,
though it be not seene with bodily eyes, the
most men are wounded with this sword of
Gods Word, and lie pitifully wallowing in the
bloud of their soules, which they continue in
ignorance, in security and want of repentance.

III. This must admonish us all to labour
earnestly to have further things wrought in us,
than a knowledge of our sinnes, an apprehen-
sion of wrath, or horrour of conscience, namely,
true faith and repentance, and found reforma-
tion of life: for without this, we have nothing
in us but the deadly wounds of *Christ* enemies.
And thus much for the worke of the Word up-
on the wicked.

The second worke of this two edged sword
is in Gods elect; in them it hath sundry works,
all which tend to their subjection. First, it
woundeth to the quicke the corruption of their
nature. This is one special cause why it is called
a two edged sword, because it entereth deeply
into the heart of Gods children, and giveth
their corruption such a deadly blow, as it shall
never recover againe: It killeth not the person,
as it doth in the wicked: but quickening the
soule, it woundeth his corruption. *Paul ministi-*
red the Gospel, a that the offerings up of the
Gentiles might be acceptable. Where resembling
Gods Church to a sacrifice, he giveth us to un-
derstand, that every true Christian must bee
slaine, though not in body and soule, yet in re-
gard of sinfull motions, corrupt affections, and
rebellious actions, by this two edged sword
of the spirit. And this is his conversion where-
by the root of corruption is stocked up.

a Rom. 15. 16.

Secondly, after conversion, this two edged
sword serveth to cut off and pare away the rem-
nants of unbeleefe, doubting, impietie, anger,
and other sins that be in the elect: *Every branch*
faith Christ, *that bringeth forth fruit in me, my*
Father the husbandman prayneth, to make it bring
forth more fruit.

Joh. 15.

Thirdly, it serveth to keepe Gods children
in awe and subjection unto him. In this vision,
Christ standeth in his Church, holding up the
sceptre of his kingdome, which he beareth in
his mouth for this end, that though his ene-
mies will not bee brought in subjection unto
him, yet his owne children might hereby be
kept in awe of him. He therefore that will not
at the lifting up of the two edged sword tremb-
le and feare before Christ, is but a rebellious
subject: If there be brawling in humane socie-
ties, let the Magistrate but shew himselfe with
the sword of justice, and straight way every one
is quiet; if any resist, he is taken for a rebell.
Now shall this be affected in civill policie, and
not be true in Christs spirituall government?
unlesse therefore we will shew our selves rebels
against Christ, let us cease from sin, and trem-
ble before him, seeing he holdeth out unto us
the sceptre of his Word.

Fourthly, this sword serveth notably for our

defence and victorie in all temptations. Eph. 6.
17. *The sword of the spirit, the Word of God*, is one
peece of the compleat armour of a Christian.
Herewith did *Christ* vanquish Sathan, Mat. 4.
And thus wee see how the Word of God is a
two edged sword, in regard of the elect.

Hence we are taught, that when wee have
the doctrine of the Law and of the Gospell
preached unto us, wee must with all reverence
heare and receive the same. Men will heare it
while it is taught generally, but if it once touch
their particular faults, then they cannot brooke
it. But wee must suffer it to ransacke our hearts,
and be glad thereof: for by this meanes our
corruption is wounded, and sinne slaine in us;
our soules are converted unto God, and shall be
saved. If any man were diseased with a Fistula,
or any other dangerous sore, he would wil-
lingly suffer the surgeon to search and pierce
into the same. Shall we doe this for our bodily
health, and shall we not suffer the word of God
to enter into our hearts to rip up our sinnes,
that they being wounded and subdued, wee
may be healed, and so our soules live for ever?
we cannot live unto God, till we die unto sin:
and we cannot die unto sinne, till the same bee
wounded in us by this two edged sword. A-
way therefore with all niceneſſe, in disliking
the word when it crosseth our humour; and if
wee love eternall life, let us then embrace it
most willingly.

Saint *John* saith further of this two edged
sword; that it came out of Christs mouth. O-
ther kings carrie their swords and scepters in
their hands; but Christ beareth his in his
mouth, to teach us this speciall point. That we
must receive no doctrine from any man, which
he hath not received from the mouth of *Christ*.
For first, God revealeth his will unto his sonne,
and *Christ* delivereth it unto his Prophets and
Apostles by the spirit, and to his Ministers in
their writings. They therefore must deliver no-
thing unto Gods people, but that which they
have from *Christ*: if they deliver ought else,
they hold not forth *Christs* sword: neither can
it have that powerfull effect, either in the god-
ly or in the wicked.

And his face shone as the Sunne shineth in his
brightnesse. Here is the last branch of this de-
scription of *Christ*; he is compared to the *shining*
of the Sunne, and that in *his strength*: because
Christ is unto his Church as the Sunne is to the
world. And looke what duties the Sunne per-
formeth unto the world, the same duties *Christ*
performes unto his Church in a more excellent
manner, as their resemblance will evidently
declare.

First, the Sunne in the world dispelleth night
and darknesse, and maketh the day by bringing
light: so *Christ* the *Sunne of righteousnesse*,
Malach. 4. 2. sendeth downe the bright beames
of knowledge and grace into his Church,
whereby blindnesse and ignorance is taken a-
way, 2 Cor. 4. 6. And hereby every one, of what
sort or place soever, is taught first, to labour
for knowledge in the will of God. A great
shame it is for any to be ignorant herein: when
the day commeth we set open our windowes,
to let in the light of the Sunne for our comfort:
behold *Christ* Jesus is ever a shining light in his
Church: Why then should wee not open our
hearts, that the beames of light and knowledge
which descend from him, may enter into us, and
give us light? Secondly, we must hereby learne
in our whole conversation among men, to
walke by this light. We are here but pilgrims
travelling towards heaven: and the way of this
miserable world is full of darknesse: yet *Christ*
Jesus is in the middest of his Church, shining
as the Sunne in his strength, to give the light of
knowledge, whereby we may see the right way
thither. Without him there is nothing but
darknesse and wandring: his Word is the
light, and hee is the way starre. We therefore
must attend to him in all our affaires of this
life: and in the particular duties of our lawfull
callings, take direction from the light which
shineth from his face.

Secondly, the Sunne serveth most excellent-
ly to comfort and revive cold and dead starved
bodies; as experience in the spring time tea-
cheth: So Christ Jesus by the worke of his
spirit, conveyeth spirituall life and heat into the
dead and frozen heart of man: he is of power
to *comfort them that mourne, to give life to the*
broken-hearted, and to revive the spirit of the
humble, Isay 57. 15. and for this most excellent
worke, may well be called the *Sunne of Righte-*
ousnesse. In regard whereof, we must labour a-
bove all things, to be partakers of this life and
joy which commeth from *Christ*. In Winter
time men use to stand in the Sunne, to comfort
and warme themselves with the heat thereof.
Behold, Christ Jesus is the Sunne of righteous-
nesse to his Church, which giveth heat and life
to all the true members thereof. We therefe re
must seeke above all things, to have his blessed
beams of grace to shine upon our cold and fro-
zen hearts, that by his spirituall heat wee may
be received unto everlasting life. In this world
nothing is so much regarded, as riches, ho-
nours, and pleasures; *Who will shew us any*
good, is the worldlings song. But with godly
David, we must say, Psal. 4. 4. *Lord, lift thou up*
the light of thy countenance upon us, quicken
thou us with thy spirituall life, and comfort us
with the beames of mercie. *Quest.* How may
I get gracious beames of grace and life, to
come from this Sunne of righteousnesse into
my heart? *Answ.* Before a man can live by
Christ, he must be killed in himselfe. Men doe
not kill those whom they would restore to
temporall life, but the Lord taketh that course.
Thou therefore must suffer his two edged
sword to enter into thee, yea, to be thrust up to
the hilts into thy heart, that to thy vile sinnes
and corruptions may bee ripped up, and the
wrath of God deserved thereby made knowne

unto thee, that in thy selfe thou mayest bee out of hope: and then, and not before art thou to receive comfort and life by *Christ*; as a man that is cold in bodie, is most fit to receive heat by cloaths and other meanes of warmenesse. Now being thus humbled in thy selfe, thou must use the meanes which God hath ordained, to wit, the hearing, reading, and meditating in his Word, with earnest prayer for grace and mercie; and then shalt thou perceive the joyfull beams of life shining into thy soule. If any man had all the world, and wanted this grace of life and comfort by *Christ*, it were but a curse unto him: but though a man want all things else, yet by this life of grace in *Christ* he is blessed for ever: and therefore above all other things men should labour for it.

Thirdly, the Sunne serveth to discover all things. In the night nothing is discerned, but all things appeare in one forme: but when the Sunne commeth forth, all things are made manifest, even the small motes in the aire. Even so Christ Jesus the Sunne of righteousnesse, hee seeth all things, and can discover the most hidden secrets of men: nothing is hid from the light of his countenance, so infinite is his divine wisdom and knowledge. In regard wherof wee must bee moved to looke unto all our wayes, both thoughts, words, and actions, that they bee such as *Christ* approveth; for though we may deceive the world by a false glosse, yet all that wee doe speake or thinke, is naked and bare before him; he knoweth the same, and can and will reveale it.

If this were beleeved and remembred, it would be a meanes to suppresse much fraud and injustice, and many grievous sinnes which are rife in the world. Men thinke if they can bleare the eyes of the world, all is well, they may doe what they will: but wee must thinke upon the shining face of Christ, which discerneth and discovereth all secrets; and labour thereupon to make conscience of all our wayes, yea, of our secret thoughts, that God may approve the same.

v. 17 *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: then hee laid his right hand on mee, saying, Feare not, I am the first and the last.*

v. 18 *And I am alive, but I was dead: And behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: And I have the keyes of hell and of death.*

A Here Saint *John* describeth *Christ* further by other arguments: namely, by sundry actions of his. The first whereof is a confirmation of *John* being sore afraid, set downe in this and the next verse. In which action note two things; First, the occasion thereof: Secondly, the means of his confirmatian. The occasion was *Johns exceeding feare*, set downe in these words: *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.* The meanes of confirmation, in the words following, *Then he laid his hand upon me, &c.*

For the occasion. *Johns* feare was exceeding great, and that of death, as appeareth by *Christ* his confirmation: wherein he telleth *John*, *That he liveth, and hath power over death.* In this his fear note sundry points: The cause, the effect,

B and the kinde of this feare. For the first; The cause was *Christ* his appearance in glorie and majestie unto *John*, set downe in these words, *When I saw him.* Where we learne, that sinnefull men since *Adams* fall cannot abide the presence of God. [a] *Adam* before his fall talked face to face with God without feare: but so soone as hee had sinned, [b] *hee fled away at the hearing of his voice, and hid himselfe among the trees of the garden.* This feare commeth by reason of mans guiltinesse before God. Hence *Manoah* said to his wife, [c] *We shall surely die, because we have seene God.*

[a] Gen. 1.
[b] Gen. 3. 8.
[c] Iudg. 13. 22.

Vse.

First, by this, that no sinfull man can abide the presence of God, wee are taught to labour to become new creatures, to have the image

C of sinne defaced in us, and the image of God restored in righteousnesse and true holinesse. True happinesse consisteth in fellowship with God: but wee can never have true fellowship with him while we live in our sinnes: 1 Joh. 1. 6. *If we say we have fellowship with him, and walke in darknesse, we lie.* We therefore must labour to be purged from our sinnes, and so his presence shall be our joy.

Secondly, this feare of *John* at *Christs* presence in glorie teacheth us, That the sight and presence of Gods majestie is a most excellent meanes to humble a man, and to make him know himselfe to be nothing in himselfe. When *Abraham* talked with God, the more hee beheld the majestie of God, the more he humbled himselfe, confessing at last, *that he was but dust*

D *and ashes*, Gen. 18. 27. And *Peter* by a great draught of fishes seeing but a glimmering of divine majestie in *Christ*, could not abide it, but cried out, *Depart from me, for I am a sinfull man*, Luke 5. 8. And so the holy Angels, when they stand before the Majestie of God, are said *to cover their faces and their feet with their wings*: to signifie that they are nothing in regard of the exceeding majestie of God, and in themselves unable to behold his glorie.

Thirdly, hereby we are taught to acknowledge Gods great goodnesse towards us in the Ministerie of the Word: wherein he vouchsafeth to speake unto us, not in his owne person, as he did in mount Sinai, which would be so terrible

ble that none could abide it: but favourably and familiarly by the ministery of men that are like unto our selves. Many abuse this mercy of God, and despise the Word because of the messenger: but we must learne by this bountie of God to receive the Word with all reverence as from the Lord.

Lastly, in this exceeding feare of *John*, who was an Apostle and a very godly and righteous man; we learne that the most holy man that is will be astonied even to death with the presence of Gods glorious majestie. And if no man, be hee never so holy, can stand before Gods presence, much lesse can the most righteous works of any man endure the triall of his judgement: if his person cannot abide his presence, his works will never beare his judgement. For the person must first bee approved, before the works be accepted. Therefore damnable is the doctrine of the Church of Rome, which teach that such as in themselves are sinfull men must stand before Gods judgement fear, bringing with them works of grace, as meanes of their justification, and part of satisfaction to Gods justice. It is a doctrine of desperation: for how cā our works be perfectly holy seeing our persons are but sanctified here in part? And who can think that the infinite justice of God can be satisfied by the imperfect righteousnes of man.

II. Point. The effect of this feare in his body; *He fell downe as dead at his feet.* This was no small feare, but exceeding great, astonishing his senses, and laying him downe as dead. Physitians say, and that truly, the minde followeth the temperature of the body. But hence we may as truly say, That the body followeth the disposition of the minde; for the affections of the soule wil worke upon the body like unto strong diseases. *Johns* feare casteth his body into a swoune: And so horrour of conscience when the heart is cold will make the body hot, & the intrals to roule in the body. The same may bee said of anger: 1 Reg. 21. 4. whē *Ahab* could not obtain *Naboths* vineyard: he laid him down on his bed in displeasure, & was almost dead: even so will other affections worke upon the body.

Hence we learne, that the bodies of men being diseased, must not alwaies be cured by bare Physicke, but sometimes by curing of the mind, and ordering of the affections: for when the distemper of the body ariseth from the disorder of the minde, then till the minde be well composed and settled, physicke will little availe.

III. Point. The kinde of this feare is insinuated in these words, *he fell at his feet*; whereby the holy Ghost giveth us to understand, that this was a *religious reverent feare*, which he bare to Christ. For this kind of prostrating the body betokeneth humilitie, and argueth a reverent estimation of the thing feared.

Hence wee are taught, when wee come into the presence of Christ to prostrate our selves as *John* did, and looke that wee bee stricken with a religious feare of his majestly. If any shall

A thinke that Christ is now ascended into heaven, and therefore we cannot now fall down at his feet as *John* did. I answer, though Christ bee now in heaven, yet hath he his feet upon earth, at which we must fall downe. In the old testament the mercy seat was the pledge of Gods presence: and therefore it is called Gods footstoole, Psal. 99. 5. before which the Jewes were to fall downe. Well, though the mercy seat be now taken away, yet some thing is in stead thereof: For whersoever Gods people assemble themselves in the name of God, there is his footstoole: and therefore in the assemblies of Gods Saints, we must cast downe our selves before Christ Jesus, and doe all duties unto him with all feare, awe, & reverence of his majesty.

B This feare of *John*, though it was holy, yet is it tainted with some sin and corruption: for it was immoderate feare of death which made him thus astonished and affright. Whence we learne that the most holy affections of righteous men are not perfectly holy, but mixed with imperfection according to the measure of their sanctification, which is alwayes in part in this life. Whereby it appeares that no man hath in him a filiall feare of God alone, but some servile feare, wherby we feare God for his judgments) is mixed therewith. And thus much for *Johns* feare, which is the occasion of his confirmation.

Now followeth the meanes of his confirmation in these words, *Then hee laid his right hand upon me, saying, Feare not, I am the first, and the*

C *last: and I am alive, but I was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: and I have the keys of hell and death.* Here note two things, first, the time when Christ used the meanes for *Johns* confirmation: secondly, the meanes themselves. The time is noted in this word, *then*; that is, after his presence had stroken a feare in my heart, which made me as dead, then the Lord used meanes to comfort me. The meanes of comfort and confirmation are then used when the partie is humbled. And thus the Lord dealeth with all his servants in the matter of their salvation: First, hee bruiseth their stonie hearts, and woundeth their sinfull soules, before hee powreth in the oyle of grace. First, a man must be a lost sheep, and then Christ findeth him and

D layeth him on his shoulders, and bringeth him home. And indeed they that would finde sound comfort by Christ, must first bee humbled in themselves. And the reason why men reape so little comfort either by the Word or Sacraments, is the want of true humiliation before they come, whereby the soule is fitted for grace and consolation.

II. Point. The meanes used by Christ to confirme *John*, and they are two. First, a sensible signe, *He laid his right hand upon me.* Secondly, comfortable words, *Feare not.*

Here first observe in generall, Christs gracious dealing with *John*: he useth not one meanes apart, but in great mercy, vse at he may thorowly confirme *John*, he giveth him both a signe and

and words. And ſo he hath alwayes dealt with his ſervants: When he called *Moſes* to be a deliverer of his people; Firſt, hee gave him his word, ſaying, *I will be with thee*: and then a ſigne, ſaying, *Upon this mountaine ſhall ye ſerve God*, Exod. 3. 12. So when hee would confirme the heart of *Moſes* againſt his enemies, hee firſt gives him a promiſe of deliverance, v. 7. then addeth him a ſecond ſigne, v. 11. And for this cauſe Chriſt in the publiſhing of his Goſpell, addeth ſignes and miracles unto his Word, that the truth thereof ſhould be fully confirmed. And ſo in the worke of our ſalvation, beſides his mercifull promiſes, which were ſufficient in reſpect of his fidelitie; he giveth us further ſignes and ſeales to ſupport our weakneſſe, and to confirme our faith in the aſſurance thereof, even the uſe of the holy Sacraments.

Exod. 3.

This teacheth us, that Chriſt hath a ſpeciall care over his Church and people, in that hee doth ſo condeſcend and abaſe himſelfe unto their weakneſſe, adding unto his Word, which of it ſelfe were ſufficient, ſignes and tokens, that by them he might more evidently give that aſſurance, which by one alone our weakneſſe would not ſo well conceive.

Againe, in this meanes of confirmation, note the order which Chriſt uſeth: Firſt, he giveth him the ſigne of his preſence; *Laying his hand upon him*, to aſſure him of protection from all danger of death. Then he giveth him his word, bidding him not to *feare*. Hence we may learn, that the aſſurance of Gods preſence and protection, is a ſoveraigne remedie againſt all feare. When *Moſes* feared the great calling hee was ſent about: to take away that feare, the Lord ſaith, *I will be with thee*. Hence *David* ſaith, *He will not feare though he walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, becauſe God is his ſtay and comfort*. Wherefore it concerneth us to labour to be aſſured not onely of Gods preſence, but of his providence and ſpeciall protection: And ſo in all dangers both of life and death we ſhall have ſtay and comfort for our ſoules.

Exod. 3. 12.
Pſal. 23. 4.

The Lord having uſed theſe two meanes to confirme *John*, both a ſigne and his Word; doth yet further condeſcend unto *John*s weakneſſe, and eſtabliſheth his own word by two reaſons: The firſt, in theſe words, *I am the firſt and the laſt*. Chriſt is the *firſt*, becauſe nothing was or could be before him: *The laſt*, becauſe nothing is or can be after him. Theſe two titles are given unto Chriſt, to expreſſe his Godhead and eternitie, as before we have heard, v. 8. Now here they are againe ſet downe, to give us to underſtand, that he hath in his owne power the beginning and end of all things; and therefore is able to protect his ſervants from all dangers, and from death and will make good unto them all his promiſes unto eternall life.

v. 18. *And am he that liveth, but I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen: And I have the keyes of hell, and of death.*

These words containe the ſecond reaſon to confirme *John*. And it may thus be framed by way of a diſtinction; *Although I was dead, yet I am he that liveth*, (for ſo the words are) *and behold I am alive for ever, Amen*; yea, I have power over death and hell. This diſtinction containeth three parts: Firſt, *Though I was once dead, yet I am he that liveth*. Secondly, *Though I was once dead, yet I live for evermore*. Thirdly, *Though I was once dead, yet I have the keyes of death and of hell*. Of theſe in order.

I. Part. *And am he that liveth, though I was dead.* Here *life* is aſcribed to Chriſt in a ſpeciall manner: For Chriſt liveth in a peculiar ſort different from the life of other creatures. For firſt, he hath ſufficient life in himſelfe, and from himſelfe: Secondly, he giveth life to others. For the firſt, that we may better conceive it, we muſt know that life is twofold, uncreated and created. Uncreated life is the life of God, whereby God liveth: This life is eternall and infinite in it ſelfe, and from it ſelfe. Now as Chriſt is God, he liveth this uncreated life; which is all one with the Godhead. Againe, created life is twofold: The firſt is naturall, preſerved by meanes of meat and drinke. The ſecond is ſpirituall, both begun and continued by meanes of the immediate operation of Gods Spirit, whereby we have fellowſhip with God. And this ſpirituall life is more perfect than the naturall. Now Chriſt liveth not the naturall life, but as he is God liveth the uncreated life: and as he is man he liveth the ſpirituall life, his body and ſoule having all their ſubſiſting, and ſuſtentation in the ſecond perſon in Trinitie: and therefore he hath in himſelfe moſt abſolute and perfect life, and ſo liveth of himſelfe.

Secondly, Chriſt is here ſaid to live, becauſe he *giveth life unto men*: & that two wayes: firſt, as he is God; and ſo he giveth life to all good & bad; For *in him every thing liveth, moveth and hath his being*. Act. 17. 28. Secondly, as he is mediatour, God and man; and ſo he giveth ſpirituall life unto his Church and people. Hence he ſaith to his Diſciples, *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo*, Joh. 14. 19. For looke as Chriſt died not for himſelfe, but for us, that we might not die eternally: ſo now he liveth in heaven the ſpirituall life, not for himſelfe alone, but for us, that we might live that ſpirituall life in and by him eternally. And therefore our life is ſaid, *To be hid with God in Chriſt*. And for this cauſe in the Sacrament, we do eat the body, and drinke the bloud of Chriſt really by the mouth of faith, that we might know that our life is to bee fetched from him. For as we receive grace from his grace; ſo we receive life from his life.

Hereby we are taught to ſeeke for this ſpiri-

tuall life at *Chriſts* hand: that we may ſay with *Paul*, *I live not now, but Chriſt liveth in mee*, Gal. 2. 21. and that *our life is hid in Chriſt*, as in a head and root. For hee liveth in heaven that wee might live by him: our care muſt not be ſo much for our temporall life, which is but a vapour, and like a fleeting ſhadow, as for this ſpirituall life which is eternall. But the practice of this duties is rare to be found, though the omiſſion of it bee a grievous ſinne. Mens whole care is for temporall life: few thinke on this, how to procure to themſelves this ſpirituall life by *Chriſt*; though hee have ſaid, *I live that you may live in mee*. This appeareth by their common practice: They will goe ten, twentie, yea an hundred miles to provide meanes for their bodily preſervation; and yet will ſcarce goe one or two miles to provide the meanes of their ſalvation for ever. The cauſe thereof is, the hardneſſe of mens hearts, which are not touched for their ſinnes, nor feele the ſmart and weight thereof. This we may ſee plainly in the woman of Samaria: For when *Chriſt* ſate at the Well of *Jacob* talking with her, and telling her that he *was the welleſpring of whoſe water whoſoever drankeſhould never thirſt*, ſhe did nothing but cavill with him: But when he laid to her heart her principall ſinnes, then ſhe leſe off cavilling, and in reverence, and ſome beginning of faith, *acknowledged him to be the Meſſiah*. Even ſo let the Miniſter ſay unto his people, hee can bring them to the water of life: they will nothing regard, but cavill at the doctrine of the Goſpell, till their ſinnes bee touched, and their ſoules humbled by the ſight thereof. Wherefore if we would have our hearts fit to receive ſpirituall life by *Chriſt*; we muſt firſt labour to have a ſenſe of our ſinnes, and to feare Gods wrath due unto us for the ſame. Hereby we ſhall be weaned from the dangerous love of earthly things: and our ſoules ſhall bee ravithed with deſire of *Chriſt Jeſus*. Hee is the Well of life: and if once we could feele a parching heat in our ſoules, by reaſon of our ſinnes, then would wee thirſt and never be at reſt till wee had drunke our fill, and dived our ſelves in his ſaving merits. This naturall life is but vaniſhing, and therefore wee muſt labour for this ſpirituall life by *Chriſt*, which is eternall. This will comfort us in all diſtreſſe: and take from us the feare of death, of hell, and all danger.

Joh. 4.

The ſecond part of the diſtinction: *Though I was dead, yet behold, I live for evermore. Amen.* This point is uttered and propounded by two notes to be obſerved: firſt, by a note of certaintie, *Amen*. Secondly, by a note of attention, *Behold*. The note of certaintie, (*Amen*) ſerveth to aſſure us, that this is an infallible truth which *Chriſt* affirmeth of himſelfe, ſaying, *I live for evermore*. The note of attention which is prefixed, *Behold*, ſerveth to ſtirre up *Johns* minde, and the minde of every one of us, to a ſerious conſideration of this which *Chriſt* ſaith, *I live for evermore*. And becauſe it pleaſeth *Chriſt* to propound this point in this manner, let us a little ſtand thereon, and herein conſider two points. Firſt, in reſpect of what nature *Chriſt* is ſaid to *live for ever*. Secondly, for what end he liveth for ever. For the firſt. No doubt as *Chriſt* is the Mediator of the Church, *he liveth for ever*: and therefore this muſt be underſtood of *Chriſt*, in regard of both his natures, Godhead and manhood. In reſpect of his Godhead, he is coeternall with the Father, and with the holy Ghoſt, living of himſelfe that uncreated and eternall life, which is all one with the Godhead, being eternall, without beginning or ending. Secondly, he liveth for ever as he is man: for after his death hee aſcended up to heaven, where in full glory he enjoyeth immediate fellowſhip with the Godhead: for in him dwelleth the fulneſſe of the Godhead bodily; his manhood being wholly & immediately ſuſtained by his godhead.

II. Point. The end for which *Chriſt* liveth for ever, is to give eternall life to his Church, and to every true member thereof. So S. *John* ſaith, *This is the teſtimony of God, even the Father, that hee hath given us life everlaſting, and this life is in his Sonne*. And here *Chriſt* muſt bee conſidered of us, as the head of his Church, as the root and ground of our ſalvation, and the fountaine of all our happineſſe. For as the root of a tree liveth not for it ſelfe, but for the body, and for all the branches: even ſo *Chriſt Jeſus* he hath eternall life in him, not for himſelfe alone, but that hee may convey the ſame to all his members. Yea, we muſt conſider *Chriſt* as the common treaſurie and ſtorehouſe of all true felicitie; wherein life eternall is laid up for all the members of his Church: for which cauſe hee ſaith, *He ſhall live for ever*: to give us to underſtand, that his man-hood hath quickning vertue in it: yet not of it ſelfe, or by it ſelfe, but as it is the man-hood of the Sonne of God. For from the Godhead it receiveth this quickning power; to give eternall life unto the Church. And here the meanes muſt bee conſidered, by which *Chriſt* giveth life unto his Church: namely, by vertue of that myſticall union which is betweene him and every member of his Church. Which union is thus cauſed: God the Father giveth *Chriſt* unto his Church, and to every one that is to be ſaved by *Chriſt*; and that really and truly, according to the tenour of the covenant, in which hee hath promiſed to give *Chriſt* with all his benefits to every one that believeth. The manner and order of this gift is this: Whole *Chriſt* God and man is given to every believer, even as hee is Mediatour. And yet the God-head of *Chriſt* is not given with the man-hood, but onely the vertue and operation of the Godhead to the manhood; by which the manhood is made able to merit for the beleever. But the man-hood of *Chriſt* is given both for ſubſtance, and in regard of all benefits that are conveyed to man by it, as juſtification and re-

Joh. 5. 11.

Joh. 6. 54. 55.

demption; as truly as lands and goods are given of man to man. And when God giveth Christ to any, he doth withall give unto the same party the spirit of Christ: for hee that hath part in Christ, hath part in his spirit, and this spirit creeteth in his heart the instrument of faith, by which *Christ* given of the father, is received and apprehended, both his body and bloud, and the efficacy and the benefits thereof. *Christ* is not received in imagination, as men receive things by conceit in the braine, but as hee is given of the Father, namely, in the word and Sacraments really and truly, though spiritually. And the same spirit that worketh this faith, doth knit the beleever unto *Christ* really, though mystically, making him one in *Christ*; so as *Christ* is the head, and the beleever a member. And thus is this mysticall conjunction wrought, from whence proceedeth this eternall life.

The benefits that come from this mysticall conjunction are these:

I. Hereby a beleever begins in this world to live eternall life: for by the worke of his spirit. *Christ* maketh that man that is thus united unto him, to begin to die unto all sinne, and to live unto him spiritually as himselfe liveth.

II. Hence commeth the resurrection of the bodie: for this conjunction being once begun, remaineth eternall, and is never wholly broken off, no not from the body, while it is consumed to dust and ashes. Looke as in the winter season the sap returneth to the root of the tree, and then all the branches seeme as they were dead: but when spring time commeth, by vertue of the sunne, the sap ascendeth, and maketh them fresh and greene againe: even so, the bodies of Gods children have their winter season while they lye dead and rotten: but yet by vertue of their union and conjunction with *Christ* at the last day, shal life be conveied from *Christ Jesus* unto them, whereby they shall bee raised to life.

III. Hence commeth eternall life to every beleever: that is, glory and blisse in bodie and soule in heaven for ever and ever (so being once begun (as it is in this world) it is never dissolved. And thus wee see how *Christ* conveyeth eternall life unto his members.

The words bearing this sense, doe containe in them the foundation of two maine Articles of our beleefe: namely, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting: for both these are effected to us, by vertue of our union with *Christ*; for he *liveth for ever to give life to us*. And this is the ground of all true joy: as wee may see in *Job*, who in the middest of his misery stayed himselfe on this, That he *knew his Redeemer lived, and that he should rise againe, and behold him with those same eyes wherewith he saw other creatures*. Job 19.25,26.

2. Againe, if *Christ* live in heaven to give unto us eternall life, then must wee learne to have our conversation in heaven with *Christ*; for where our life is, there should our conversation bee. Now that our conversation may bee with him, wee must often seriously consider with our selves of this everlasting life, which *Christ* there keepeth in store for us: and for this cause principally doth *Christ* here say, *Beheld, I live for ever*.

3. This also must move us to put all our affiance in him, and to place all our joy and rejoycing in him. Men have most regard to that part of their body, by which the whole bodie and every member liveth. Well, wee professe our selves to bee members of *Christ*, and in him is hid our spiritual life; wee therefore must set our hearts and affections on him especially.

The third part of the distinction is this: *Though I was dead, yet I have the keyes of death and of hell*. Here we must not imagine that hell is a bodily place kept with locke and key, and doores, as mens dwelling houses are: that cannot bee proved by any place of Gods word. Neither yet that the torments thereof are bodily, such as be inflicted in this world: but rather they are spiritual, being the apprehension and feeling of Gods wrath and vengeance, whose jealousie burnes like fire. But *Christ* in this phrase borroweth a comparison from stewards of great houses, who at their installing into their stewardships, have the keyes of all things given unto them. Which giving of the keyes is a token of regiment and authoritie bestowed upon them. And the meaning is this; That *Jesus Christ* though hee once died, yet by his death did vanquish hell and death, and hath obtained full power and dominion over them both for evermore.

Hence arise sundry instructions; first, that power and authority to forgive sinnes properly belongeth only unto *Christ*. No meere creature hath this power: for hee that can forgive sinnes, must bee able to take away the punishment of sinne, namely, hell and death; which none can doe but *Christ* alone, who hath the keyes thereof. And to say, that a man can properly forgive sinnes, is to say, that a man hath power in himselfe over hell and death. And therfore the Priesthood of the Church of Rome is full of blasphemy, who take upon them properly to pronounce unto men the pardon of their sinnes of themselves: and they deride the custome of reformed Churches, who from God pronounce the pardon of sinnes unto them that repent.

Secondly, hereby we are taught to reverence *Christ*, and to performe unto him all due honour and royall obedience. If wee never have done this heretofore, we must now begin; and if wee have done it, wee must indeavour to doe it more. For *Christ* hath the keyes of hell and death, he can open the gates thereof at his pleasure, and cast thither whom he will. Many deceive themselves through their false conceit of *Christ*: they thinke not of him as of a Judge, but as a Saviour onely: they make him all of mercy and pittie; and thereby they take occa-

occasion to goe on in sinne. But wee must consider, that Christ is likewise a righteous Judge, who hath the power of hell and death in his hands, and therefore wee must not flatter our selves in our evill wayes, but strive to please him continually with feare and trembling, least by our sinnes we stirre up his wrath against us, and cause him to cast us into hell, whence is no redemption.

Thirdly, this is a matter of great comfort unto all those in Gods Church, that in this life unfainedly cleave unto Christ: and especially in time of affliction and temptation, and at the houre of death; for Christ having the keyes of hell and death, is able to keepe them from hell, and from the sting of death. And this hee will do because they trust in him, for he hath promised it. If this were alwaies sounding in our eares, it would minister endlesse joy unto our soules against the servile feare of hell and death.

V. 19. *Write the things which thou hast seene, and the things which are, and the things which shall come hereafter.*

Here Saint *John* propoundeth a second action of Christ. For having confirmed *John* against his great feare, he giveth him a commandement to *write the things which he had seene, &c.* This Commandement was given to *John* in the eleventh verse, and is here againe repeated for these causes: First, that *John* might see the speciall care of Christ over his Church, that hee still continueth a provident head thereof, for their good estate after his ascension. Secondly, that Gods Church in all ages may understand, that it is necessary men should know the estate of the Church to bee subject unto troubles, that thereby they may better arme themselves against the evils to come. Thirdly, that *John* might bee fully assured of his calling, to write and publish this booke. Fourthly, that Gods Church in all ages might be out of doubt, that this booke is no device of man, but a booke of God, and part of holy Scripture revealed from Christ to *John* for the good of his Church. If it be said: though Christ did faithfully reveale his will, yet *John* might erre in publishing it. *Ans.* As Christ delivered this to *John*, so he received and published it faithfully, without all fault either in matter or manner; for wee must make a difference betweene the Prophets and Apostles and all other teachers. As the Prophets in former times, so the Apostles in the new Testament were called immediately by Christ, and had such speciall assistance of Gods spirit, that they could not erre, when they propounded by preaching or writing any doctrine of Christ unto the Church of God: this appeareth by the promises of Christ made unto them, Luk. 10.16 *He which heareth you, heareth me; and he which refuseth you, refuseth me; and he which refuseth me, refuseth him that sent me*. Againe, Mat. 10.20. *It is not you which speak, but the spirit of your Father speaking in you*. Joh. 14.26. he promiseth to send his spirit to bee their comforter, *which shall teach them all things: yea, to leade them into all truth*. John 16.13. Which promise some apply to all Gods Ministers; but if we marke the circumstances thereof, we shall see that properly it agreeth to the Apostles: for though in others the certainty hereof cannot bee affirmed, yet in them it may: for which cause, in the Councell at Jerusalem thus they write unto the Churches; *It seemeth good to the holy Ghost, and to us*; as being assured of the certaine direction of the holy Ghost: which no Ministers ever since could say, being subject to errour both in speaking and writing. This distinction must bee held for the certainty of our faith in the points of religion, and for our assurance of the faithfull penning and publishing of this booke. And thus much of the causes of this repetition. Act. 15.28.

In the words of this Commandement is contained the division of this whole booke, *Write the words which thou hast seen*: that is, set down what I have shewed thee in this vision. *And which are*; that is, all things which I reveale unto thee touching the present estate of the Church. *And which are to come hereafter*; that is, those things which concerne the future estate of the Church to the end of the world, as I will reveale unto thee. Thus then is the whole booke distinguished: I. It containeth things touching the present estate of the Church in *Johns* dayes. II. It intreateth of things which concerne the future estate thereof from *Johns* time, to the end of the world.

Hence observe the lawfulnesse of the art of Logicke: for divisions are lawfull, (else the holy Ghost would not here have used them) and so by proportion are other arguments of reasoning: and therefore that art which giveth rules of direction for the right use of these argaments, is lawfull and good. Those men then are farre deceived, who account the arts of Logicke and Rhetoricke to bee frivolous and unlawfull, and in so saying, they condemne the practice of the holy Ghost in this place.

V. 20. *The mystery of the seven starres which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks is this: The seven starres are the seven Angels of the Churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven Churches.*

This is the third action of Christ: namely, the interpretation of the Vision in the principall parts thereof; which hee expoundeth for these causes: First, *Iohn* in this businesse was to shew himselfe a Prophet of God, by declaring the present and future estate of Gods Church. Now the principall part of a Prophet, is to expound visions or dreames revealed either to himselfe, or to others; as we may see in *Daniel* and the rest of the Prophets. Secondly, that *Iohn* might be encouraged in the publishing of this booke, and of the things revealed unto him: For *Iohns* calling respected the Church of God. And when he should perceive these visions to concerne the Churches, this would stirre up his diligence, in observing and penning the things revealed.

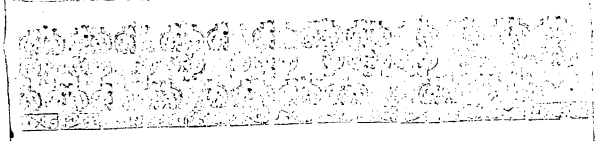
Now Christ expounded not the whole vision, but two principall things therein: namely, what was meant by the seven starres; to wit, *the seven Angels, or the seven Ministers of the Churches:* And what was meant by the seven golden candlesticks; namely, *The seven Churches themselves.* The reasons why both were so called, wee have shewed before, with the use thereof. Here onely I will observe these three points: First, why Christ in the interpretation of his vision doth not expound the whole, but onely two principall parts thereof. This hee doth for these causes: First, because he hath given unto his Church the gift of interpretation, which hee would have them to exercise about this vision: For if he had expounded every part himselfe, then hee had left herein no matter to his Church, whereabout shee might exercise her gift. Secondly, to provoke Gods Ministers especially, with other members of his Church, unto all diligence in studying this and other parts of Scripture. For if all things were easie and plaine, then men would grow careless in reading and searching out the knowledge of Gods word. Thirdly, to stirre up in every Reader of this booke an earnest and hearty desire to understand the same. Fourthly, to excite all his servants to prayer and invocation upon God for his grace, that they may with reading the Scripture understand the true meaning thereof.

II. Point. Note here, the Ministers of the Churches are called Angels. What these Angels are, appeareth in the Chapters following, to wit, the Pastors and Ministers of these seven Churches of Asia. So Matth. 11.10. *Iohn Baptist* is called Christs Angel or Messenger: wherby we have good light for the expounding of a place in *Paul*, 1 Corin. 11.10. saying, *That the woman ought to have power over her head*, that is, be covered, *because of the Angels.* Where, by Angels may well be understood the Preachers and Ministers of the Gospell. And the reason of that precept may be this: Among the Corinthians the covering of the head was not as it is with us, a token of prehemineance and superiority, but a signe of subjection. And therefore the Apostle would have the women of Corinth, when they came into the congregation, to have their heads covered according to the custome of their country in other assemblies, to signe their submission and reverence unto the ministery of the Gospell.

Whereas Ministers are the Lords Angels and Ambassidors: hence we gather that every Minister of the Gospell must carry himselfe as the Messenger of the Lord. Messengers have regard of two things; of the matter of their message, and of their manner of delivery, that they speake all which they are commanded, and in such order as their Lord and Master would have it spoken, or speake it himselfe if hee were present: and hee that faileth in either of these, may justly bee challenged of unfaithfulnesse. The Minister therfore being Christs Messenger, must deliver the whole will of Christ alone unto his people: as also in that manner which Christ approveth, and would himselfe observe if he were present. Now can wee once imagine, that Christ would deliver his will partly in English, partly in Latine, and other languages, or intermingle with the testimonies of the Prophets and Apostles the sentences of Fathers, of Philosophers, Poets, and other writers? Those therefore that in this sort dispense Christs Gospell, doe hereby bewray unfaithfulnesse in their deliverie. Indeed this is counted the learned kinde of preaching: But it is not that manner which Christ approveth. And besides, if this kinde of teaching may take place, it will bring in as great barbarisme, in regard of true Divinity, as was among the Schoolemen, when Gods word was wholly turned unto needlesse disputation, yea, it would shortly banish the Gospell out of this land.

III. Point. Note the phrase which the holy Ghost useth; hee saith not, The seven starres signifie the seven Angels, but are the seven Angels: and the seven candlesticks *are* the seven Churches; giving to the signe the name of the thing signified. Wherein we have a good warrant for our exposition of that phrase in the Sacrament, *This bread is my bodie: this cup is my blood:* Which the Papists understand properly of the very bodie and bloud of Christ by reall transmutation. But as these seven starres are said to be seven Ministers, because they did signifie the seven Ministers; so is the bread called the body of Christ, because it signifieth and representeth his body, and the cup his bloud. And as it is absurd to say, the seven Ministers were indeed seven stars, because they are so called: so it is absurd to hold the bread in the Sacrament to be really Christs bodie, or the wine his bloud, because it is so called. And thus much of the third action of Christ in the interpretation of this vision.

CHAP. 2.



CHAP. 2.

Vers. 1. *Vnto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven starres in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks.*

IN this chapter and the next, is contained the fourth action of foure, wherein hee giveth a particular commandement to *Iohn*, to write unto the seven churches of Asia, and to send unto them seven letters or Epistles. The first of which commandements is expressed in the beginning of this first verse, *Vnto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write:* Then after followeth the Epistle, *These things saith hee, &c.* continuing to the eighth verse. First, for the commandement: the parties to whom *Iohn* must write, to the *Angels* which word may be expounded two wayes: either to signifie the minister or pastor of the particular Church of Ephesus, and so it is commonly taken of the most: or else it may betoken the company of the Ministers, Teachers, and Governours of the Church of Ephesus: for therein were many Pastors and Governours, as appeareth, Acts 20.28. Where Paul calleth together the Bishops (as the Word signifieth) and giveth them charge over their particular flocks. Now in Scripture the name of one person is often collectively, oftentimes signifieth the whole multitude; as Exod. 4.22. *Israel is my sonne, even my first Borne.* Where the whole bodie of the people of Israel is called by the name of one man. And so though Antichrist be not one particular man, but a state and company of men in the succession of the Popes; yet is he called the estate noted by the speciall name of one man: *As that Antichrist, that man of sin, the sonne of perdition.* Thus we see how the word *Angel* may be taken: and whether we understand it of one man, or of the whole company of elders, it is not much materiall.

In this particular commandement, note two points: First, that Christ his intent is to write to the whole Church of Ephesus, as appeareth Chap. 1.11. where *Iohn* is commanded to write in a booke, and send to the Churches: as also by the conclusion of this Epistle, where it is said, *Let him that hath an eare to heare, heare what the Spirit saith unto the Churches:* and yet he directeth his epistle not to the whole church, but particularly to the Angel or pastor thereof. This doth serve to two ends: First, to intimate to us, that by his doing, which stood in receiving and keeping the contents of this Epistle, to the whole Church: and in becoming a patterne and example to them all, of doing the things herein required. Secondly, because there is much good or much evill comes to every particular Church by the Ministers meanes: such is the efficacie of his place and calling. If he be faithfull, he bringeth great good to the Church: if unfaithfull, exceeding great hurt: as may easily be proved by many examples in all ages. Now Christ writeth to the Angell of this Church, that he might be a means of much good unto them all, by exciting them to the practice of all good duties required in this Epistle.

II. Point. Among all the Churches of Asia, Christ writeth first to the Church of Ephesus: not for that this Church had authority over the rest (for they were all equall in Christ, and all in good) but because Ephesus was the more city farre exceeding the rest in riches and estimation. Whereby Christ giveth us to understand, that his will is, that those people, townes, and Cities which excell others in estimation and riches, should alwaies go before them in knowledge, obedience, and other graces of God, and in a reverendly fashion it be with particular persons: They which excell others for outward reputation and temporall blessings, ought to go before them in spirituall graces, as godlinesse and religion. Those which shall thus herein, and suffer others that are far their inferiours to goe before them in spirituall graces, shall finde it tone to their shame before men, but especially at the tribunall seat of Jesus Christ.

Thus much for the Commandement. Now followeth the Epistle itselfe, which contains three parts, (as all ordinary Epistles doe) A preface or proposition, and the conclusion. The preface in these words, *These things saith he that holdeth the seven starres in his right hand,*

and walketh in the middest of the seven golden Candlesticks. The proposition and conclusion, in the verses following. The preface is borrowed from the former chapter, vers. 16. and 13. where also it was handled. The intent of *Christ* herein, is to draw this Church to a reverent adoration of his person: and to cause in them a greater care to embrace and obey his admonition. This appeareth by that twofold action which hee avoucheth of himselfe, to wit, his holding the seven starres in his right hand, and his walking in the middest of the seven golden candlesticks: by the first whereof is signified his power in protecting and governing his Ministers: and by the second is noted his presence in the middest of his Church, guiding and blessing his Ministers with all the members thereof. As if he had said: If I be he that have power to protect and governe, that am present also to blesse and direct both Ministers and people; then my admonitions are to be reverenced and obeyed.

In this preface note two speciall points; first, that *Christ* here againe repeateth that which was before delivered, touching his presence in his Church, and his mighty power and providence over the same in protecting, guiding, and blessing both Minister and people. By which repetition he would give us to understand, the speciall weight and moment of this point, to wit, that it ought to bee ingraven in the hearts of every one in Gods Church. And indeed till we be perswaded thereof, we shall never learne religion soundly. The ground of true religion is this: To take the true God for our God: and *Christ Iesus* for our Redeemer: and it consisteth not in a swimming motion hereof in the brayne, but in the sure perswasion of the heart, which wee never have till wee bee resolved both of *Christs* presence with us, and of his providence over us, for our blessing and defence.

II. Point. In this preface also note, that the perswasion of *Christs* presence and speciall providence in his Church, is a notable meanes to draw us on to all good duties: for thereby *Christ* would perswade both the Ministers and people of Ephesus, to receive and embrace this his Epistle. And no doubt hee that is indeed perswaded hereof, cannot but bee moved to walke before God in all holinesse and obedience: as did *Enoch*, *Abraham*, and all the godly Patriarkes. Thus much for the preface.

V. 2. *I know thy workes, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not forbeare them which are evill, and hast examined them which say they are Apostles and are not, and hast found them lyers.*

A Here beginneth the second part of this Epistle, to wit, the propositon, containing the substance and matter of the whole Epistle. This proposition hath two points: First, a commendation of this Church, in the second and third verses. Secondly, a rebuke and reprehension, in the 4. verse. The commendation is first generall, in these words; *I know thy workes.* Then more particular, for speciall duties and actions, in the words following, *and thy labour and patience, &c.* For the first, *I know thy workes:* many doe expound this of workes of mercy and liberalitie: but that will not so well stand: for he saith to every Church, *I know thy workes*; and yet some of them are blamed for want of these good workes. By *workes* then is meant, the B *wayes*, that is, the practices and dealings of the whole Church, as well of Ministers as people, in all their affaires. Also by knowledge here wee must understand, a *knowledge* that goeth with approbation, as may appeare by comparing this with the fourth v. whither it hath relation: for thus they must go, *I know thy works, and approve of them: and yet I have something against thee.* So that his meaning is, *I know thy workes*, that is, *all thy wayes and dealings in thy life and conversation are manifest unto mee, and I doe generally approve of them.*

Here first in this testimony of his knowledge, *Christ* ministreth a remedy against secret sinnes and offences. The theeve, the murtherer, and adulterer wait for the night wherein to attempt their shamefull practices: The C tradesman in secret falsifieth his weights, and mingleth his wares: among most men, fraud, oppression, and injustice doe abound; and all because they thinke, that if men see not, all is well: as *David* saith, the wicked man saith, *God shall not see, he will not regard.* But if men could thinke and bee perswaded of this, that *Christ seeth and knoweth all their wayes*, it would cause them to make conscience not onely of grosse sinnes, but even of their hidden and secret offences.

Secondly, whereas this knowledge is joined with approbation, it may bee demanded, how this can stand with the justice of God, to approve of that which is not answerable to the D tenour of his law, as the best workes of the most righteous man are not, being stained with some corruption, Isa. 64. 6. *Ans.* The Gospell, which is another part of Gods will, revealeth more unto us than ever the Law could doe: namely, that if a man be in *Christ*, to him there is no condemnation; and that God will accept this true desire and endevour to please him, for the deed it selfe, 2 Cor. 8. 12. And thus according to the tenour of the Gospell, *Christ* approveth of their workes in this place, though they were not able to abide the rigour of his law. But a Papist will here reason thus: If a righteous mans workes bee approved of God, then they are no sinnes, (for God will not approve of any thing that is sinfull,) and if his

workes

workes bee no sinnes, then hee may fulfill the A Law; and so be justified by his workes. *Answ.* That which *Christ* approveth simply, hath no sinne in it: but here hee onely approveth of their workes in part, namely, so farre forth as they came from the worke of his spirit in them. But as they proceed from the will of the worker, which is in part corrupt, they are not free from the staine of sinne; and so hee approveth them not. Againe, workes of grace are approved of *Christ* with the pardon of sinne; for accepting of the person, hee remitteth the faults that bee in his good workes, and so onely approveth his owne worke in him. And so here wee must conceive of his approbation of their works, to wit, as proceeding from his spirit, and having the faults thereof remitted in his owne merit.

The speciall commendation of this Church is for particular actions: The first whereof is *diligent labour*, which is an excellent worke, especially in a Minister of Gods word to bee painfull in his particular calling, for the faithfull instruction and godly regiment of his particular charge. Hence *Paul* saith, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *He B that labouret in the word and doctrine, is principally worthy double honor.* And herein *Paul* matcheth, yea, preferreth himselfe before other Apostles, *that he laboureth more abundantly in the Vse. ministerry of the Gospell, than they all*, 1 Corin. 15. 10. Hence wee learne that the worke of the ministerie, if it bee done as it ought, is a worke full of great paines and labour; contrary to the common opinion of men, who thinke that the life of the Minister is full of ease, and his calling a matter of nothing, such as may be done with the turning of the hand: but here the judgment of *Christ* is otherwise, who useth not thus to approve a light or idle worke.

Secondly, this commendation of diligence in the Minister, must admonish all Christians that desire to bee approved of *Christ*, to give all diligence to learne and know the will of God, that they may doe the same. And here a common fault is to bee reproved: many will heare, but where is their labour to grow in knowledge and in grace? that is wanting: which is the cause of such fruitlesse hearing as is common in the world. For earthly things men refuse no paines; but Gods heavenly knowledge and graces are not regarded. What a shame is this that men should bestow their strength and wit about base and transitory things, and yet neglect the maine good which concernes their soules for ever?

Thirdly, the Ministers diligence in teaching must provoke conscience of obedience in the hearers; that is the end of his worke, without this hee spends his strength in vaine, and therefore with the Apostle, they must endevour in all things to keepe a good conscience before God and all men, Act. 24. 16.

The second thing which *Christ* here commends, is patience in bearing the crosse, which doth usually accompanie the Gospell of *Christ*. And this indeed is praise-worthy in the Angell of this Church; for herein hee goeth before sundry worthy Prophets: *Ieremie* was marvellous impatient, for the mocking of the people: Ier. 20. 14, 15. And though *Ionas* had beene schooled in the Whales belly, yet when all things went not according to his minde in the destruction of Ninive, he became exceeding discontent.

Here in must all the Ministers of the Gospell become followers of the Angel of this Church. Vse. While they labour in the Gospell of God, they must possesse their soules with patience, and make knowne to all men their meeke and mild spirit. Yea, every Christian in the profession of religion must learne to practise this duty: Luke 8. 16. The good ground receiveth the seed, B and bringeth forth fruit: but how? *with patience*: Neither can we possibly attaine to eternall life, unlesse wee arme our selves with patience to beare the crosse: for whosoever will live godly must suffer afflictions, 2 Tim. 3. 12. *Through many tribulations wee must enter into heaven*, Act. 14. 22.

II. Againe, here observe how *Christ* joyneth labour and patience together: this he doth for two causes: First, to let us see the fruit of sin which God hath set on the labour of man. Before the fall, the labour of mans calling was practised without all trouble or paines; but since mans fall, the best callings have their crosses and vexations, which are the punishments of mans transgression. Secondly, to C shew the malice of Satan against the good progresse of the Gospell. *Paul* saith to the Thessalonians, *He would have come to them, but* 1 Thess. 2. 18. *Satan did hinder him.* Hee seeketh the trouble and sorrow of the Minister, not onely by stirring up persecution, but by keeping his people from profiting by his ministerie: and therefore every Minister had need to take paine with patience in his calling.

And as *Christ* joyneth together labour and patience in the worke of the ministery: so should every Christian after this direction joyne patience with his paines in the duties of his particular calling, whether it be in Church, commonwealth, or family. For look what is the estate of the Minister in his place, such should bee the estate of every childe of God in his. This therfore they must doe: first seek to know the duties of their particular callings, and therein labour and take paines with all good conscience: Then considering the crosse doth accompany godly diligence, they must labour to joine patience with their diligence, for their continuance in welldoing even under the crosse. And for attaining of this patience, they must set before them the promises of Gods blessing and protection while they so continue; not suffering themselves to bee dismaied by any affliction. And if wee shall thus walke in the duties of our particular places painefully, and with patience, we shall have our commendati-

on of *Christ Iesus* and his blessed reward, which farre surpasseth the praise of men, and their rewards. But on the contrary, if we waxe in our callings negligently, or else forsake them because of afflictions; or bee impatient in labour, we shall lose our reward, and undergoe the rebuke of *Christ*, which is worse than all outward evils that can befall us.

The third speciall worke for which *Christ* commendeth this Church is, severitie shewed against wicked men; in these words, *I abhow thou canst not beare them which are evill.* By *evill men*, hee meaneth such as lived offensively, and maintained manifest errours and heresies. These shee could not beare, but judged them as burdens: and therefore sought to disburden her selfe of them.

The Vse.

Hence wee may gather, that it is a necessary thing for every Church to bee purged of evill men. The Church of God in all ages hath put in practice this worke. So soone as *Caine* had slaine his brother *Abel*, *God cast him out from his face*, as appeareth by his owne complaint, to wit, from that particular place where *Adam* and his family worshipped God. When false Prophets and Idolaters did rise among the Israelites, the Lord commandeth, *That they should bee killed and taken from among them.* And therefore hee saith to *Ieremie*, *If thou turne and repent, I will bring thee again, and if thou take away the precious from the vile, thou shalt bee according to my word.* 1 Corinth. 5. 4, 5. *Paul* commandeth in the name of *Christ*, that *the incestuous man bee delivered unto Satan*, the Church purged of that old leaven, and that wicked man be put from among them, vers. 13. Besides the evidence of these testimonies, some reasons may bee added to prove the necessitie of this separation. First, God will be worshipped in an holy manner; and they that worship God must bee purged and sanctified; but evill men defile Gods worship, and therefore they ought to be severed from the Church. Secondly, lest the whole Church be infected with the contagion of their doctrine, or the infection of their life: for as leaven soureth the whole lumpe, so will evill men defile the whole Church. Thirdly, they are burdens to the Church, and therefore must bee cast out. For the Church should bee eased of every burden.

Gen. 4. 14.

Deut. 13. 7, 8.

Ier. 15. 19.

This doctrine is the truth of God, and ought to be practised of Gods Church. Whereby we may see a common fault in the most congregations among us; wherein all that will are admitted not onely to the hearing of the Word, but also unto the Lords Table, hand over head without restraint, as though every man were a good and sound Christian: Whereas experience sheweth, that many bee ignorant, many contemners of the Gospell, many Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, and blasphemers, all which ought to be barred from the Sacraments: and in that respect severed frō the Church as burdens.

A Secondly, hence wee may gather, that *Christ* hath given to his Church a power Judiciall, to suspend evill men from the Sacraments, and to excommunicate them from the outward fellowship of the Church: for else hee would not have commended this minister with his church, for the execution of his power. The reasons alleaged to the contrary, are of no force. I. Say they, the parable, Matthew 13. 30. alloweth the growing together of tares and wheat till harvest; and therefore evill men must be suffered in the Church without separation. *Answ.* In that parable *Christ* speaketh not of any particular purging of the Church by Ecclesiastical jurisdiction; but of the universall purging of his whole Church by his holy Angels in the end of the world: for there the field doth not signifie any particular Church, but the whole world; and the servants are not men, but Angels, that must gather together all both good and bad in the end of the world, to the last judgement. Againe, they alleage, Luke 14. 23. *Compell them in the high wayes to come into the supper.* Here (say they) all must be brought in, but none must bee excluded the societie of the Church. *Answ. Christ* speaketh not of compelling men unto the Sacraments, but unto the Ministery of the Word, whereto men must bee caused to subject themselves; which hindereth nothing why the ungodly should not be debarred from the Sacraments, which are the seale of Gods mercy in *Christ*, ordained onely for such as repent and beleeve. *Quest.* Seeing this separation must be made, how farre forth may wee converse with those that are openly evill and offensive, either for life or doctrine? *Ans.* Evill men must be considered divers wayes: first, as they be members of some common-wealth, of some city, and incorporation: secondly, as they are members of some particular Church by toleration. In the first regard, it is lawfull for us to converse with them. I. for outward dealings and civill affaires, as bargaining, buying and selling, &c. II. we may maintaine outward civill peace with them; So *Paul* commandeth the Romanes *to have peace with all men as much as in them lay*: that is, so farre as it would stand with faith and good conscience. III. In this civill conversing with the wicked, wee must performe all duties of outward courtesie and love unto them, so farre forth as it doth not dishonour God, or hinder the good of the Church. And therefore *Paul* commandeth us to bee *soft and courteous, shewing all meekness unto all men*; even to evill men, as the reason following sheweth: *For we our selves were in time past unwise, disobedient, deceived, &c.* and then were we evill.

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D

Rom. 12. 18.

Tit. 3. 2.

vers. 3.

Secondly, consider them as dwellers in the Church, and members by permission: and so we may live with them in it: for we must not make a separation from the Church, because wicked men are permitted therein. *Christ* lived among the Jewes, though their teachers and rulers were

were both hereticks and hypocrits: and yet we must remember, that living among them, and beholding their wicked conversation, we must not approve of their ungodlinesse, but bee grieved for the same, as righteous *Lot* was for the abominations of Sodome, 2 Peter 2. 7. Further, if it fall out by the negligence of the Governours, that evill men be admitted to the Sacraments, we must not for their company refuse to communicate: for our Saviour Christ living among the Jewes, communicated with them in their Sacraments and service of the Temple, though many of them were notorious both for wicked life and false doctrine. The reason is, for that another mans evill conscience doth not defile our good conscience: but wee may keepe a good conscience in that action wherein the wicked is defiled. Now though wee may thus converse with evill men, yet these two caveats must be observed: I. To have no private company with know ne and open evill persons. This *Paul* expressly forbiddeth, saying, *I have written unto you, that you company not together*: that is, in private and familiar manner. II. We must not shew speciall familiaritie to evill persons. God will not take the wicked by the hand, Job 8. 20. and we should be followers of God. Therefore S. *John* saith, *If any man come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into house, neither bid him God speed*, 2 Joh. 10. which must be understood of speciall familiaritie: for thereby wee doe not onely performe outward duties to the person, but also give countenance to their sinnes: which in any case wee must not doe. And thus wee see how to converse with evill men.

1 Cor. 5. 10, 11.

Vse.

Hereby all those are justly blamed, which fit themselves for the humours and dispositions of all companies. This ought not to bee. If any be knowne to be openly wicked, either for life or opinions, wee must not keepe private company with them, or afford them our speciall familiarity; but by withdrawing our selves from them, ease us of such burdens.

Our Saviour Christ having commended this Church for her severity against the wicked, in that shee could not indure them, doth prove the same to bee true by two arguments. The first whereof is contained in these words, *And hast examined them, &c.* to the end of the third verse. The second, in the 6. verse. For the first, it is taken from the sharpe and round dealing of this Church against evill men; and it hath two parts. First, her discoverie of false Apostles, *And hast examined them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them lers.* Secondly, her opposing her selfe against them, being discovered, in the third verse, *Thou hast suffered, and hast patience, &c.*

In their discoverie of these false Apostles, note two speciall points: first, that God hath given to particular Churches the spirit of discerning. This appeareth by sundry testimonies of Scripture, 1 Corinth. 2. 15. *The spirituall man, that is, he which is endued with Gods holy Spirit, discerneth all things.* And *Paul* affirmeth, That the faithful Corinthians did discerne the Lords body, that is, see and put a great difference between the bread and wine in that Sacrament, and other common bread and wine: which none but with the spirit of God can doe. Againe, hee biddeth them *prove themselves whether they bee in the faith or not*: to give us to understand, that they had a gift of discerning, whereby they did know their owne estate, whether they were under the curse, or under grace. And Saint *John* biddeth the Church *try the spirits*: that is, those doctrines which men pretending the gifts of the Spirit, did teach. And in this place this Churches discovering of false Apostles, doctrineth plainly, that shee hath a gift to discerne who bee sent of God to teach by Christ, and who not. And hence the godly learned in the Church, are said to *have their senses exercised to discerne both good and evill*, Heb. 5. 14. And in this regard, the Churches of God differ from all other companies of men. For unlesse men bee of Christ's Church, they want this gift of discerning spirituall things that differ as true Apostles and false, good and bad, truth and falsehood, &c.

1 Cor. 11. 29.

2 Cor. 13. 5.

1 Joh. 5. 1.

Vse.

Hence wee may gather, that the Church of God hath a gift to discerne which is a true Church, and which is not: for the Church can discerne whether a man bee a true Apostle, or not, and by the same gift it may discerne the state of any particular Church. Whence also it followeth, that wee may easily see whether the Church of England bee a true Church, or not. It plaieth some re call it into question, as it now flourisheth, and they saith, There is no Church of God, that there are no true Ministers, no true preaching, or right administration of the Sacraments in it; and that these things with us are illusions of Satan, and our Church his synagogue. But that ours is a true Church of God, is thus proved. The Churches of Germany, France, Scotland, and Italy, that have received the Gospel, are the Churches of God: and they have the gift of discerning which is a true Church of God, and which is not. Now they give the right hands of fellowship unto us, and reverence our Church as the Church of God. To whose testimony wee must rather cleave, than to the opinion of a few private men; and so resolve our selves, that we are the true Church of God.

A

B

C

D

Secondly, hence wee may gather, that the Church of God hath a gift to discern Scripture from that which is no Scripture. The Papists say the Church indeed hath this gift: but it is by counsell and commission from the Church of Rome: which is a meere forgery. For the Church of Ephesus, which could discerne of false Apostles, could no doubt by the same gift discerne of the bookes of God, and that without counsell from the Church of Rome: for at this

this time when *Iohn* writ, it was a more famous Church than the Church of Rome, and therefore went not thither for counsell.

II. Point. In what things this discerning of false Apostles doth consist. It is a Judiciall action of the Church, consisting in two things here noted; First, in examination of false doctrine and false teachers; secondly, in condemnation afterward. The examination of them is set downe in these words; *And hast examined them that say they are Apostles, and are not.* Their condemning or sentence-giving, in the words following, *And hast found them lyers.*

For the first; examination is a gift of God to his Church, and was here used for the triall of false Apostles. *Quest.* How may any Church try a false teacher? *Ans.* This is a point of large discourse; but the heads of true examination are these.

First, that Church, or that man that would rightly examine a false Teacher, must prepare himselfe thereunto after this manner: hee must looke that he have a meeke spirit, and a humble heart; for God revealeth his will, not to the proud, but to the meeke and lowly; and as *Isay* saith, to them that are of a contrite spirit, Isay 57. 15. And in this humbling of himselfe, a man must renounce his owne naturall wit and reason, and become nothing in himselfe but even a foole, in respect of his owne conceit. Also he must unfainedly pray to God, that he would reveale unto him his truth. *Aske* (saith Christ) *and it shall be given you, even the holy Ghost, unto them that desire of the Father.* And S. *James* saith, *If any man lacke wisdome, let him aske of God, which giveth to all men liberally.*

Luke 11. 13.

Iam. 1. 5.

Secondly, after preparation hee must labour to know throughly what the false teachers are, and what be their opinions, with the grounds and foundations thereof; wherein they agree, and wherein they differ from the truth of God, maintained by the Church: for it is a foule oversight to misconceive the state of the adversaries question, by propounding it otherwise than they hold, as it falleth out with many in the handling of controversies.

Thirdly, due proofe must be made, whether the adversaries doctrine bee of men or of God. This is Gods Commandement, 1 John 4. 1. *Prove the spirits, whether they bee of God, or no.* And for triall hereof, we must have recourse unto the word of God; it must bee judge in this cause: Isa. 8. 20. *To the law, and to the testimony; if they speake not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* Joh. 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye look to have eternall life, and they are they which testifie of mee.* Who so fit to judge in the matters of God, as God himselfe? and so hee doth in his written Word, of all doctrine and opinions in religion. The Scriptures shew whether the doctrine examined bee directly gathered thence, and by just consequent or not.

A Fourthly, serious consideration must be had of the faith and lives of the teachers examined: for a false teacher by Gods just judgement is usually a wicked liver. And therefore Christ saith, *Ye shall know them by their fruits:* if they be throughly examined, such they will appeare, howsoever for a time they may blear the eies of men: as the histories of the Church in many famous heretikes doe plainly declare.

Matth. 7. 16.

The second branch of this discovery, is sentence-giving, in these words: *And hast found them lyers.* The Church here giveth out a sharpe and severe sentence against them, shee calleth them false Apostles, and lyers; and yet she sinneth not, for Christ commendeth her for it. Though to raile or taunt cannot beseem any, yet Magistrats and Ministers in their places may give out severe speeches against offenders, in token of detestation of their sinnes, and not offend. Thus *Iohn* called the Scribes and Pharisees a *generation of vipers*, Matth. 3. 7. and our Saviour Christ called *Herod a Fox*, Luke 13. 32. and *Paul* called the *Galatians fooles*, Gal. 3. 1. And in this place the Church calleth these false teachers lyers, which is very much: for therein she accuseth them of three things: First, of teaching that which was false indeed: Secondly, that they knew it to bee false, and so sinned of knowledge: Thirdly, that they did it of malice, with intent to blinde the eyes of the Church and to deceive the people.

B

Use.

C In this discovery, we may observe the just accomplishment of *Pauls* prophecie, Acts 20. 29, 30. namely, that there should rise up among the Ephesians grievous wolves, and men speaking perverse things; and such were these false Apostles, who after examination were found lyers.

Againe, seeing in the dayes of this Apostle *Iohn*, men durst presume to claime Apostolike authoritie, and call themselves Apostles, when they were not: no marvell if the Pope of Rome six hundred yeares after, did challenge to himselfe to bee *Peters* successour, and to have Apostolike authoritie: and that they dare now avouch some bookes to bee Scripture, which are not: as also bring in their traditions and unwritten verities, to bee received and obeyed equally with Gods word.

D

V. 3. *Thou hast suffered, and hast patience, and for my Names sake hast laboured.*

Here our Saviour Christ declareth how this Minister & Church of Ephesus opposed themselves against false teachers after their discovery. The manner wee shall see in handling the points particularly as they lie in order. *Thou hast suffred*, or, thou hast borne a burden: for the word signifieth to *be pressed down under a great burden*: this burdē was the troubles which false Apostles

stles brought upon them after they were discovered, partly by open affliction and persecution, partly by the spreading of their hereticall and schismaticall doctrine. These false teachers were *Sbion, Cerinthus, Marcion*, and such like, who in the daies of *Iohn* troubled this Church, as histories doe shew.

Here wee may observe, that it is Gods will, that the best Churches should bee troubled by wicked men, and hereticall teachers, who both by false doctrine, and persecution, become grievous burdens. This the Lord permits for weighty causes: I. That true beleevers may be excited more constantly to embrace the sincere doctrine of the Gospell: and therefore *Iude* most worthily exhorts the Christians in his time, to *fight for the common faith.* II. That professors may be tried whether they soundly hold the doctrine of the Gospell, or not: 1 Cor. 11. 19. *It is meet* (saith *Paul*) *that there should bee heresies in the Church, that they which are sound in the faith and approved, may bee knowne.* III. That God may execute his judgements upon wicked men and hypocrites, that have not loved his truth revealed unto them: 2. Thess. 2. 10, 11. *God gave them up to strange illusions to beleeve lies, because they have not loved his truth*: for many know the word that love it not.

Iude 3.

Use.

This must teach us to take heed of a common scandall in the world, which is to bee offended at religion, because there bee in the Church schismes and heresies: which come not from the Gospel, but from the malice of Satan, who soweth his tares among the Lords wheat. Wee must consider that it is the will of God there should bee such evils in his Church: and therefore should labour to bee so farre from offence, that hereby we be rather provoked with more cheerefulnesse and courage to love and embrace religion.

And hast patience, and for my name hast suffered, &c. Here is set downe the dealing of this Church against these false Apostles in all their persecutions. But first note the coherence of this vertue with the former: *Thou hast suffered trouble, and hast had patience. Quest.* How can these stand together? It is against mans nature, in trouble to bee patient: for troubles and afflictions make men discontent, and to fret against God and man. *Ans.* They stand not by nature, but by grace; Rom. 5. 4. *Tribulation bringeth forth patience*; namely, to all those that have received to beleeve in Christ; for to them God giveth the spirit of meeknesse in their troubles, shedding his love into their hearts, whereby they are inabled to suffer any thing for his name, even with joy.

And hast patience. This is the first meanes whereby this Church opposed her selfe against the false Apostles: they troubled her two waies, by persecution, and by false doctrine. Now by patience this Church opposeth her selfe against their persecutions. And indeed, that is the most

A excellent means for any man or any Church to oppose themselves against their enemies, and to vanquish them; for hereby they shall stop their mouthes, and if it be possible, win them to their faith and religion.

Use.

In this their practice we have an example for our direction, how to oppose our selves against wicked men, with whom wee live; or any enemy that shal trouble us, either by oppression, or hereticall doctrines. Wee must not render taunt for taunt, and abuse for abuse; but labour for patience, not in bearing with their sinnes (that may not bee) but in a meeke enduring of their injuries and wrongs wherby they trouble us. Thus shall we stop their mouths and soonest overcome them.

B *And for my names sake hast laboured.* Here Christ setteth downe the second meanes wherby this Church opposeth her selfe against the spreading of false doctrine by these false Apostles, which was the second way whereby they became a burden unto her. The meaning of the words is this; that they had taken much paines to maintaine the glory of God, and the true doctrine of Christ Jesus, labouring therein as much as the false Apostles did to broach their damnable heresies.

Here we are taught a second duty, how wee are to oppose our selves against all hereticall and schismaticall teachers; namely, as they labour to publish their false doctrine, so must we endevour to maintaine the glorie of God and his true religion. Hereunto a twofold labour is required, partly of the Minister, and partly of the people. The labour of the Minister stands in these things principally: I. He must endevour by reading and studie to furnish himselfe with the true knowledge of the foundation and substance of the Gospell and true religion, that hee may bee able soundly and plainly to teach the same. For this cause Saint *Iohn* is commanded to *eat the little booke*, Revel. 10. 9, 10. which was as it were by studie and meditation to have the same digested and settled in his heart. Hence *Malachie* saith, *The Priests lips should preserve wisdome, and thither should the people come for instruction.* And every Scribe taught of God, must have *store in the treasurie of his heart, like a good housholder*, Matth. 13. 52. Secondly, hee must deliver the whole will and counsell of God, concerning salvation, truly and distinctly unto his people, as it is propounded in the bookes of the Prophets and Apostles. This *Paul* commendeth by his owne example, Acts 20. 27. testifying unto this Church that *hee had taught them all the will of God, and kept backe nothing which hee was commanded to deliver unto them.* III. He must labour to discerne, and be able to discover false teachers unto the people; that he may not only know them himselfe, but also cause the Church to take notice of them: Tit. 1. 9. *Paul* requireth that the teacher in the Church, *Bee able to convince the gainsayers to his truth.* In this discoverie

C

Mal. 2. 7.

D

very he muſt doe two things. Firſt, detect the hereticall doctrines. Secondly, their wicked manners. Thus dealt our Saviour Chriſt in his owne perſon living in the Church of the Jewes, with the Scribes and Phariſies: he did detect unto the people their falſe interpretations of the law, Matth. 5. 21. to the end. And alſo their wicked lives and damnable hypocriſie, Matth. 23. 3, 4. &c. to the end. And S. *Paul* in all his Epiſtles, laboreth to diſcover the wicked lives, and to confute the hereticall opinions of the falſe Apoſtles. IV. Hee muſt endevour that the doctrine of the Gaſpell thus publiſhed, may edifie. This is the end of all teaching, as *Paul* ſheweth, 1 Corinth. 14. throughout the whole Chapter. Now it doth edifie, when it is ſo applyed to the hearers, that thereby they are won to Chriſt, ſuffering themſelves to bee reformed by it in heart and life, and ſo made fit for the kingdome of God. V. He muſt be careful in his owne perſon to become a patterne of the doctrine of the Gaſpell which he teacheth, that ſo the people may have a double light to follow. This is a notable meanes in the Miniſter to make men to love the Gaſpell, and the neglect thereof cauſeth many to contemne and deſpite the ſame. VI. Laſtly, hee muſt bee diligent in praying for his own and other particular churches of God, that they may know, believe, and obey the ſame doctrine which is taught them out of Gods word. Thus did *Paul*, as we may ſee in his particular Epiſtles. pray for every Church, that by the bleſſing of the ſpirit, they might embrace and obey the Gaſpel of Chriſt, Phil. 1. 4. 9, 10. Col. 1. 9, 10, 11.

The people alſo for the name of Chriſt and his religion, muſt undergoe a threefold labour. I. Every one muſt ſee that himſelfe know and beleeve the true and ſincere doctrine of the Gaſpell. This Chriſt injoineth to all, in this Commandement, *Repent, and beleeve*, which none can do unleſſe they firſt know and underſtand the doctrine thereof; and therefore every one muſt doe as *Mary* did, for which Chriſt ſo commends her; namely, lay aſide matters of leſſer moment, and give our ſelves to heare and learne the doctrine of Chriſt, Luke 10. 39. 42. II. Every one muſt inſe all good meanes, that knowledge of religion which himſelfe hath received, bee conveyed to others. And indeed, if wee truly beleeve, wee cannot containe our ſelves, but wee muſt needs teach others. For, as Chriſt ſaith, *He that drinke ſhe of the water of life, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of water of life* ſtreaming out for the good of others. *Queſt.* How ſhould private men conveyther knowledge unto others? *Anſ.* I. All maiſters and governours of families are bound in conſcience to teach thoſe that are under them, the maine points and grounds of true religion: his place requireth gifts, and God looks for increaſe. For every Chriſtian family ſhould be a little Church as it is ſaid of the houſe of *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, 1 Cor. 16. 19 II. Every man in his place muſt labour to convey that knowledge he hath unto his neighbour, yea to his enemies. *The Iewes would compaſſe ſea and land to make a man a proſelyte:* And Idolaters at this day will travell farre and neere to make a man of their profeſſion. Much more therefore muſt all true Chriſtians labour to convey their knowledge to others, ſo to winne them unto Chriſt. III. Every man is to edifie thoſe that be members of the ſame Church, in theſe three things; faith, hope, and love; as *Iude* notably exhorteth in the end of his Epiſtle, *Edifie one another in your moſt holy faith*, v. 20. *have compaſſion of ſome in putting difference. and others ſave with feare in pulling them out of the fire*, v. 22. 23. IV. Every private man muſt profeſſe and defend the true religion of Chriſt againſt all the enemies thereof: 1. Pet. 3. 15. *Be readie always to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you.* And this confeſſion muſt be, not only in word, but in deed. For by a blameleſſe and holy converſation everie Chriſtian holdeth forth the word of life, Philip. 2. 15. 16.

Seeing the maintenance of true religion is ſo excellent a worke, we muſt be admoniſhed every one in our place to take paines in all the duties that belong unto us, that by us Chriſts religion may be uthered. For Gods Church is not called the pillar of truth, onely becauſe the Miniſter thereof maintaineth Gods truth; but alſo becauſe every member of the Church is as a pillar in his place to maintain and profeſſe the true doctrine of Chriſt for his glorie. Beſides, this is a duties of the firſt Table, and therefore we muſt have more ſpeciall care for the performance thereof. And thus we ſee the two means whereby the Church of Epheſus oppoſed her ſelfe againſt falſe teachers.

And hath not fainted. Here Chriſt ſetteth downe in what manner this Church laboured to maintaine his true religion, and thereby his honour and glorie: namely, by conſtancie and perſeverance in labour. This is an excellent vertue, and a notable example for us to follow: for we through Gods goodneſſe have the true religion of Chriſt among us, and for many yeares ſundry among us have maintained the ſame againſt all enemies, though not without ſome trouble and danger. Now this which hath been done is nothing, unleſſe we hold on in our good courſe conſtantly, and labour unto death in the maintenance thereof. This exhortation is the more neceſſary, becauſe wee know not how long we ſhall enjoy the Gaſpel with peace; for uſually after long peace God trieth his by perſecution; neither know wee by what meanes of triall God will exerciſe us. Therefore as wee now profeſſe the Gaſpell, ſo let us continue conſtant therein, and not turne with time or ſtate: for then wee loſe our commendation at Chriſts hands. And thus much for the commendation of this Church for her vertues.

Matth. 23. 15.

Vſe.

Iohn 7. 38.

v. 4. *Nevertheleſſe I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love.*

Theſe words containe the ſecond part of the propoſition of this Epiſtle, to wit, a ſharpe and ſevere reproofe of this Church for decay in grace; as will appeare in the opening of the words. *Nevertheleſſe I have ſomewhat againſt thee:* Here Chriſt ſpeaketh as a Judge unto this Church, and to the Miniſter thereof, and laieth this action unto their charge; that they had left their firſt love, that is, that love which they bare to God and his religion, and to their brethren, at that time when they were firſt called unto the profeſſion of the Gaſpell. This love they are ſaid to *have left*, not as though they had quite loſt it, but onely becauſe they ſuffered it to decay, and to wax cold in good works. But ſome will ſay, they are before commended for their zeale and labour for Gods glorie, and for their ſeverity againſt falſe teachers; how then had they left their firſt love? *Anſ.* At this time when Chriſt doth thus reprove them, their love was commendable; but yet it was nothing in regard of that which they had at the firſt converſion.

Vſe.

If Chriſt have ſomething againſt this Church for leaving her firſt love; then no doubt he hath ſomething againſt the Church of England, and againſt us at this day: howſoever we may perſwade our ſelves that we be high in his favour, yet we are in the like, or a worſe eſtate than this Church now was: for a great part of the bodie of out Church hath left off their firſt love; and the greateſt part hath no love at all. That many have lett their firſt love is too too evident. For ſuch as in Queene *Maries* time were content to ſuffer for the Gaſpell, as the hiſtories of our Church doe ſhew, after they injoyed a little quietneſſe, became meere worldlings, as their lives have teſtified afterward. And in ſuch congregations where the Word hath long beene preached, this is too apparent, that men who for the ſpace of twentie, of ten, or ſeven yeares, have ſhewed fervent love to Chriſt and his Gaſpell, and to their brethren, doe now fall away, and ſhew none at all. Hee that hath but halfe an eye, may ſee many for a yeare or two very forward and zealous in religion, who ſoone after ſuffer pleaſures, profits, or preferments, to draw them quite away: ſome I confeſſe through the mercie of God are free from this decay. But there is yet a more grievous fault among us: for the greateſt part of our people have no love at all. Theſe are the dayes whereof Chriſt ſaid, *love ſhould wax cold:* and whereof *Paul* ſaid, Men ſhould bee lovers of themſelves: for take the moſt congregations where the Gaſpell hath beene long preached, yet you ſhall finde that the hearers are neither bettered for knowledge, nor for obedience, but remaine ſtill as ignorant and prophane as ever they were. This argueth that they have no love of God in their hearts, though they have a formall profeſſion of his name in their mouth; for where the love of God is, there muſt needs be increaſe in knowledge, in grace, and in obedience. Againe, ſee how men generally walke in their callings, and therein behold a meere defect of love. All the paines they take is for their private gaine and pleaſure; no regard is had of Gods glorie, of the maintenance of true religion, and of the good of their brethren: herein their owne conſciences ſhall be the witneſſes. So that generally this may be ſaid, We have no love at all. What an action ſhall we then thinke hath Chriſt againſt us? It muſt needs be grievous; and ſo our caſe fearefull and dangerous. If an earthly Prince and Potentate had an action againſt us, and his caſe were good, it would make us looke about us, yea to tremble and quake, and to be at our wits end. Behold, not a worldly Prince, but the King of heaven and earth hath a matter againſt us, juſt and grievous: oh how ſhould this move us to ſearch our ſelves, to trie our eſtate, and to humble our ſelves upon the knees of our hearts before his Majeſtie. We may not imagine that this charge of Chriſt doth not concerne us: the concluſion of this Epiſtle ſhews it belongs to all that have eares to heare. And therefore we ſhould labour to prevent Gods judgements, by judging our ſelves for our decay and want of love.

Againe, this rebuke of Chriſt for decay of love, ſhould teach us to labour for increaſe in love to God and to our brethren; adding grace to grace in our hearts, as we adde day unto day in our lives, that ſo our love may abound; read 1 Theſſ. 4. 9, 10. where *Paul* urgeth this dutie at large: hee confeſſeth they did love one another, and yet beſeecheth them to increaſe therein, Phil. 3. 13, 14. in *Pauls* perſon wee have a worthy preſident, which wee muſt follow, if we thinke to come whither he is gone before: though hee had gone farre in the love of God, yet hee laboured to perfection; and therefore conſidered not that which was paſt, as reſting in it, but rather how farre he was too ſhort, that ſo he might uſe meanes to increaſe in love, and in all other good graces, till hee come to perfection. A Chriſtian mans life is a way that leadeth to heaven, wherein wee once ſetting foot, muſt ever goe forward, and not ſtand ſtill or turne backe, leſt wee never come there. The ſtate of a Chriſtian is like unto a childe, which ſtill groweth till it come to a perfect ſtrength: and ſo muſt every child of God labour to grow in the graces of God, till they bee perfect men in Chriſt: For if they ſtand ſtill, Chriſt hath ſomething againſt them.

Matth. 24. 12. 22.

1 Tim. 3. 2.

The Rhemiſts in their annotations abuſe this place, to prove that a man may quite fall away from grace. Therefore to cleare this text, and to confirme our hearts in the truth of Gods word, this queſtion muſt be ſcanned, *Whether a*

many may quite fall away from grace? *Answ.* Grace in Scripture is taken two waies: first, for that favour of God, whereby he accepteth of some for his children in Christ. This is the first grace and the fountaine of all others: and taking grace in this sense, I say, that the signes of grace and the sense thereof in the heart, may be lost: but the favour of God it self cannot bee lost of them that truly beleeve. When an earthly father is displeased with his childe for some notorious crime, he will turne the signes of his favour into signes of displeasure, and shew the same partly by words, and partly by stripes; and yet he still continueth his Father, and holdeth him for his sonne, without any purpose to disinherit him: Even so God dealeth with his children; for their sinnes and corruptions, he will turne away his loving countenance from them, and change the signes of his favour into anger and displeasure; when as yet the good purpose of their adoption is not altered, but remaineth firme for ever: and God is still their father, though an angrie father through the provocation of their sinnes. Secondly, grace in Scripture is taken for *the gifts of grace wh ch are bestowed on them that beleeve in Christ.* These gifts of grace be of two sorts, some more principall, of *absolute necessitie unto salvation*, without which none can be saved, as faith, and also hope and love, which proceed from faith. There be others also lesse principall, which be very profitable and requisite, yet not absolutely needfull unto salvation: As the feeling of Gods favour, alacritie in prayer, and sense of joy, and comfort in the holy Ghost. These lesse principall graces also may be decayed, lessened, and covered in regard of operation, even in Gods children: but quite extinguished they cannot bee, for God upholdeth them by perseverance: where faith, hope, and love are once truly wrought by Gods spirit, they are never wholly or finally taken away, but only in part, and in sense and feeling for a time. This answer is agreeable to this text, for the Church of Ephesus is here blamed, not for quite losing her love, but because she had left her first love, suffering it to decay and wax lesse than it was at their first conversion.

And because this doctrine is oppugned earnestly, not only by the Church of Rome, but also by some churches & schooles of the Protestants: I will first shew the truth thereof out of Gods word, and then scan their chiefe reasons that are brought against it. *That grace cannot bee wholly and finally lost*, these reasons prove: I. Matth. 16. 18. The promise is made to *Peter*, and in him to all the faithfull; *That upon that faith which hee professed, Christ would build his Church, and the gates of hell should not prevaile against it.* Which last words must bee marked, for they intimate, that the devil with his threatens would shew much force and violence against the faith of the elect, but yet they should never get the victory or overcome it wholly. II. Mat. 24. 24. Christ foretelling that false Prophets should come, saith, *They should seduce, if it were possible, the very elect.* Where he taketh this for granted, that the elect, albeit they may be assaulted grievously, yet they can never be wholly or finally drawne away from their faith. III. Joh. 10. 27, 28. *My sheepe heare my voice* (saith Christ) *and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternall life, and they shall never perish.* To this they answer; It is true they shall never perish, so long as they remaine the sheepe of Christ. But that cavill is cut off in the next words, *Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand: my father which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my fathers hands:* And therefore neither the devill, nor the world, nor the flesh, can by any temptation draw the sheep of Christ from their faith, and make them no sheep. IV. *Reason.* Joh. 3. 36. *He that beleeveth in Christ, hath eternall life.* They say hee hath it in hope, and no otherwise. I answer: If they have it in hope, they shall never perish: *For hope maketh not ashamed.* V. *Reason.* Rom. 8. 30. *Whom he predestinated, them also he called: and whom he called, them also he justified: and whom he justified, them also he glorified.* Those which are elected, called, and justified by faith, must needs be glorified; and therefore cannot fall away finally: for such shall never be glorified. And in the end of the chapter, v. 38. he addeth, *That neither death, nor life, Angels, principalities, nor powers, nor any thing else can separate us*, viz. the faithfull, *from the love of God which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.* But if the faithfull might fall away finally, the they might be severed from the love of God. VI. *Reason.* Rom. 11. 29. *The gifts of Gods calling* (that is, the peculiar gifts that pertaine to salvation) *are without repentance.* They say it is true, God indeed never repenteth him of his gifts: but yet a man may perish and fall away, because he may refuse and reject Gods grace given unto him. This answer is frivolous, maintaining this absurditie; that the powerfull will of God should be brought under the silly will of the creature: if a man could repell Gods grace given unto him, then should mans will take place, and Gods will bee made frustrate and void. VII. *Reason.* 1 Joh. 3. 9. *Whosoever is borne of God sinneth not: because his seed remaineth in him; neither can he sinne, because hee is borne of God.* How is that true? for chap. 2. 10. *He that saith, he hath not sinned, maketh God a liar, and his word is not in him. Answ.* The place must bee understood thus; *He that is borne of God sinneth not*: that is, with full consent, and with all his heart. Sinne doth not reigne in him: for the regenerate man consisteth of two parts, flesh and spirit; he sinneth not as he is spirit, that is, regenerate; but as hee is flesh and sinfull. His will sinneth not as it is spirituall, but as it is carnall. The Papists say, indeed hee sinneth not,

Rom. 5. 5.

not, so long as hee continueth to bee borne of God. This shift is cut off by the word of the text, *Neither can hee sinne*, because the seed of grace, even the word of God abideth in him. This place plainly proveth, even in the judgement of the Papists, that the child of God cannot wholly or finally fall from grace. They say it is an hard place, and indeed they cannot answer to it. VIII. *Reason.* If a man may finally fall from grace, then may hee be wholly cut off from Christ: for grace is never wholly lost, till a man bee quite cut off from Christ. But it cannot bee, that a member of Christ can bee quite cut off: for then it should follow, that one and the same man must bee often joyned to Christ; namely, so often as hee falleth by sinne, if hee would bee saved. Whereupon this would also follow, that one and the same man must be often baptized: for Baptisme is the Sacrament of initiation, the meanes of admission into the Church, and the seale of our union with Christ. But Rebaptization may not bee admitted. The Church of God denieth it upon this ground, because a man is onely once borne of God. IX. *Reason.* Christ teacheth us to pray thus, *Leade us not into temptation*: that is, suffer not Satan and sinne wholly to vanquish us. This petition being taught by Christ, must needes bee lawfull and according to Gods will: and therefore hereunto, as to every lawfull petition, belong these two things: First, Gods Command to make it: Secondly, his promise to assure us it shall bee granted. Whereby this is evident, That there is in Gods word a promise assuring every child of God, that he shall never wholly be conquered of the devill; and therefore hee can never wholly or finally fall from grace; for if he might, then were hee wholly overcome in temptation.

The contrary arguments bee of three sorts; places of Scripture, Examples, and Reasons. For the first, Exod. 32. 32. when the Israelites had sinned that great sinne of Idolatry, *Moses* prayeth God to forgive them; *If not* (saith hee) *blot me out of thy booke.* Hence they gather, that a childe of God may bee blotted out of Gods booke of life, and so finally perish. *Ans.* That place must be understood with this condition, *If it be possible*: as in the like prayer it is expressed by Christ, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup passe from me.* This condition must needs be added: for else we must say, that *Moses* prayed for that which he knew was impossible; namely, that one private man should suffer eternall punishment for the sinnes of others; though in temporall punishment such a thing may be, yet in eternall it is impossible. Againe, *Moses* in this prayer doth principally shew his exceeding affection and zeale for Gods glorie, and for the safetie of his brethren, both which he preferred before his own life; as if he should say, Lord pardon them, and rather than thy name should lose glorie, blot me out of thy booke. The like affection was in *Paul*, when he said, *He could wish himself to be separate from Christ for the love of his brethren the Iews.* They further urge the Lords answer to *Moses*, v. 33. *Whosoever hath sinned against me, I will put his name out of my booke.* But as the Lord therein answereth to *Moses* prayer, so must it be understood, with the like exception.

Rom. 9. 3.

II. *Object.* Ezek. 18. 24. *If the righteous man turne away from his righteousnesse, and commit iniquitie, and doe according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? All his righteousnesse that he hath done shall not bee mentioned: but he shall die in his sinne.* Here (say they) it is plaine, that a man may fal from grace. *Answ.* Righteousnesse is twofold: of the outward action, and of the person. So *Paul* distinguisheth, when he *desireth to be found not in his owne righteousnesse, which is of the law*; that is, such as was in him while he was a Pharisie: *but in the righteousnesse of Christ.* The righteousnes of the action is, when a man for outward actions keepes the Law of God. The righteousnesse of the person is that, whereby a man is accepted righteous before God. And answerable hereunto, there be two kinds of righteous men; one that is outwardly righteous before men, though not indeed: the other, that is truly righteous before God. Now of the former of these two, must that place bee understood: for the Lord there pleadeth with such as did esteeme and avow themselves to be righteous, saying, *Their fathers had eaten sowre grapes*: that is, had sinned, and they were punished for their fathers offences, though they were righteous: And the holy Ghost speaking according to their owne conceit and opinion of themselves, calleth them righteous: and of such it is true they may turne from their righteousnesse.

Phil. 3. 9.

III. *Object.* Luk. 8. 13. *Some beleeve for a time, and in time of temptation goe away. Ans.* There be three kinds of faith; Historicall, Temporarie, and saving faith. In Historicall faith, is knowledge of the Word of God, with assent unto it. In temporary faith are 3. things; knowledge of the Word, Assent, and Approbation also, with some joy. In saving faith, there are foure things: Knowledge, Assent, Approbation, and Apprehension: that is, in applying of the promises of God unto a mans selfe; whence proceedeth joy. And answerably, there are three kinds of beleevers: I. such as know the word of God, but yet have no love thereof: II. such as know it, assent unto it, and rejoyce in it also for a time. The third are such as apprehend the promises, and apply them to themselves. Now the two first kinds of faith may be lost; and the two first kindes of beleevers may fall away, whereof Saint *Luke* speaketh: But hence it followeth not, that saving faith may be lost; for hee that is endued therewith can never fall away. But faith (say they) is only one: Eph. 4. 5. *There is but one faith, one God, one hope, and one Baptisme. Ans.* By *one faith* is there meant one reli-

religion, and doctrine of ſalvation: as elſwhere is uſually the name of Faith, 1 Timoth. 1. 19.

Their ſecond kind of arguments are *Examples*: which are chiefly two: one of *Adam*, the other of *David*. For *Adam*; they ſay hee was created righteous, and yet he fell wholly from grace: and therefore any beleever now, may much more fall away, who have far leſſe grace than he had. *Anſ.* This argument is not good: for though *Adam* had a greater meaſure of grace than we now have, yet our grace hath a greater privilege than his had: his grace came by creation; ours is by redemption and regeneration. *Adam* had the firſt grace, to be able to obey; but he wanted the ſecond to be ſure to perſevere: becauſe God would permit his fall, to make a way, both to manifeſt his juſtice and mercy in our redemption by *Chriſt*. But the child of God after his converſion, wherein he hath the firſt grace to repent and beleeve, hath alſo an infallible promiſe, That he ſhall receive the ſecond grace to abide in that faith. And therefore *Paul* ſaith, *I am perſwaded, that hee which hath begun this good worke in you will perfome it untill the day of the Lord Ieſus Chriſt.* And againe, *The Lord is faithfull, who will ſtablieſh you, and keepe you from evill.*

Phil. 1. 6.

2 Theſ. 3. 5.

Secondly, *David* (ſay they) by his two grievous ſinnes fell wholly from grace. *Anſ.* Hee fell indeed grievouſly, but not wholly: for after his fall he contemned not Gods Word, hee hated not God, nor deſpaired of mercie; which hee muſt have done, if hee had fallen wholly. And therefore he had remorſe for his ſinne, ſo ſoone as the Prophet *Nathan* came unto him. But (ſay they) he prayeth God to create a new heart in him, therefore he had then no grace: For creation is a making of that which hath no being. *Anſw. David* then ſpeaketh not as hee was before God, but as hee was in his owne ſenſe and feeling: for by his ſinnes Gods graces were ſore decayed. But (ſay they) he repented not for the ſpace of one whole yeare: Now, where there is no repentance, there is no faith, and conſequently no grace nor pardon. *Anſw.* In repentance there be two things: the gift of repentance, and the act and practice thereof. The gift of repentance was in the heart of *David* when hee yet lay in his ſinnes: but the act lay hid, and he wanted the renewing thereof all that time. Againe, *David* had the pardon of his ſinnes paſt, though he had not the pardon of thoſe two ſinnes, till he repented of them. Neither was his repentance loſt, but decayed onely; he wanted not the power of it ſimply, but the practice of it only in the act.

Their third kinde of arguments are drawne from equitie and reaſon.

I. He that is a member of an harlot, and of the Devill, ceaſeth wholly to be a member of *Chriſt*: but a childe of God truly beleeving, may become the member of an harlot, and of Satan, as *David* did. *Anſ.* There be three kinds of members; dead, decayed, and living members. A dead member is that which is onely in ſhew a member: as a legge of wood, or braſſe in a mans bodie. A decayed member is a true member, though weake, as is a legge or arme that is taken with a paſſie, or ſore wounded. But a lively member is that which doth move and doe all it functions perfectly. So in the Church there be ſome members dead, and only in ſhew; others feeble and weake, that by reaſon of ſome grievous ſinnes are not able to doe their duties. And there be lively members which ſerve God with an upright and perfect heart. Now, though a member of an harlot cannot bee a lively member of *Chriſt*, becauſe by his ſinnes he weakneth and woundeth the graces of God (for every adulterer and fornicator doth as much as in him lyeth cut himſelfe off from *Chriſt*) yet he may be a decayed member of *Chriſt*. And this may the rather ſtand, becauſe a man is made the member of *Chriſt* one way, namely, ſpiritually; and the member of an harlot another way, namely, bodily.

II. *Reaſon.* If a man cannot fall from grace, then preaching, prayer, the Sacraments, and all meanes of perſeverance are needleſſe. *Anſw.* Nothing leſſe: for they have all their good and neceſſarie uſe unto them which have grace; even to make them conſtant in grace. For where the Scripture teacheth the certaintie of ſalvation, it implyeth the uſe of the means of perſeverance. *Paul* in his journey to Rome was certaine they ſhould all come ſafe to Land by the promiſe of God: yet when the mariners would have gone out of the ſhip, *He telleth the Captaine, unleſſe they ſtay in, wee cannot bee ſaved*: becauſe they were the meanes to bring them to land. So when *Iſay* had told *Ezekias* from the Lord that he ſhould live fifteene yeares longer, he was thereby aſſured of recoverie, and yet he uſed *a bunch of figges* as a meanes thereof, as alſo food and raiment to preſerve his life afterward.

Act. 27. 24.

verſ. 31.

Iſa. 38. 21.

III. *Reaſon.* This doctrine of certaine perſeverance maintaineth men in ſecuritie. *Anſw.* Securitie is two fold, carnall, and ſpirituall: carnall, when a man regardeth not at all the means of his ſalvation, but giveth himſelfe wholly to the profits and pleaſures of this world. Spirituall, when a man relieth on God for his ſalvation, by believing his promiſes: and this ſecuritie it maintaineth, but not the carnall ſecuritie: For it teacheth the uſe of the meanes of perſeverance, as prayer, hearing, and reading of the Word, and receiving the Sacraments. And thus I conclude this queſtion, That the true child of God, who truly beleeveth when he ſinneth, doth neither wholly nor finally fall away, neither can doe.

Laſtly, if this were true of this famous Church of Epheſus, which was founded and preſerved by the Apoſtles, that ſhe ſuffered her firſt love to decay; then how can it be otherwiſe with us, but that we ſhould ſuffer our firſt love

love as well towards God as man, to leſſen and diminiſh? and that this is ſo, our conſciences will tell us, if we looke to that love and zeale we had at our firſt calling: and though we have not felt this decay, yet we muſt know we be in danger of it continually. And therefore wee muſt take heed, that wee ſuffer not our good affections in religion to diminiſh. Water that hath beene once hot, will afterward bee moſt cold, and freeze the hardeſt: even ſo, when our hearts have beene once heated with the fire of the Lords Altar, as true love and other graces of the ſpirit; if we ſuffer them to decay, we ſhall become more frozen in iniquitie than any others. The hawke while ſhe is quicke to take her prey, is ſet upon the hand of Kings and nobles, but if ſhe wax weake and die, ſhee is caſt off to the dunghill. Even ſo we while we are hot and cheerefull in love towards God and his Church, wee are carried as it were on Gods owne hand: but if we faint and decay in love, we ſhall be caſt lower than if we had never beene ſo exalted. This love of God in us is like a little flame of fire, for the maintaining whereof we muſt doe three things: Firſt, take heed of all manner of ſinne, which quencheth love and other graces of the ſpirit, as water quencheth fire. In the old teſtament the prieſts kept fire burning upon the altar day and night, to bee alwayes readie to ſacrifice unto the Lord: and ſo muſt wee keepe a flame of love and other graces continually burning in our hearts, that thence we may offer up acceptable ſacrifices of praiſe and thankſgiving unto the Lord. Secondly, wee muſt ſtir up the gifts of grace that are in us, as *Paul* ſaith to *Timothie*, 2 Tim. 1. 6. uſing a compariſon from the fire, which burneth more bright and cleare when it is ſtirred up. Laſtly, we muſt exerciſe our ſelves in the duties of pietie, as faith, repentance, love, and ſuch like: and ſo ſhall they not decay. And thus much for the ſinne of this Church.

V. 5 *Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe thy firſt works: or elſe I will come againſt thee ſhortly, and will remove thy candleſticke out of his place, except thou amend.*

Our Saviour *Chriſt* the faithfull Phyſician of our ſoules, having ſharply rebuked this Church, doth here preſcribe unto them a ſoveraigne remedy againſt their ſinne of decay in love. From whence we may learne, that the law whereby ſinne is reproved is to be taught, but with this qualification, that withall the doctrine of the Goſpell bee joyned thereunto, that the ſinnes which are ripped up by the law, may be cured by the Goſpell. This is *Chriſts* manner of preaching in this place, whoſe practice is a moſt worthy platforme for all his miniſters: for we have no warrant at this day to preach the law barely, which only maketh the wound, without the Goſpel which alone ſheweth the remedy.

The remedy here preſcribed is of ſpeciall uſe, and worthie our conſideration: generally by it we have direction to anſwer to two neceſſary queſtions of practice, which often fall out in the life of man. Firſt, a man is effectually called to profeſſe the Goſpell, and yet after his converſion, either through the corruption of his nature, or by the temptation of the Devill and the world, falleth into ſinne againe: what muſt this man doe for his recoverie? *Anſ. He muſt remember whence he is fallen, and repent of thoſe his ſins, and doe his firſt works.* The ſecond queſtion is this: A man that hath all his life long lived in ignorance and ſinne, is now touched in conſcience for his looſe life; how ſhall this man eſcape the wrath of God, and become reconciled unto him? *Anſw.* He muſt firſt remember whence he is fallen by *Adams* ſinne, and by his owne tranſgreſſions: Secondly, he muſt repent of his ſinne: Thirdly, endevour to doe the firſt workes, whereto he is bound by the law of creation; and ſo ſhall he eſcape the wrath of God, and bee received into his love and favour.

In particular, this remedie hath three parts: The firſt, *Remember whence thou art fallen:* The ſecond, *And repent:* The third, *And doe thy firſt workes.* Theſe words following, *Or elſe I will come againſt thee, &c.* are a reaſon of this remedie, to perſwade them to doe the duties preſcribed.

For the firſt, *Remember whence thou art fallen.* The words beare this ſenſe; Examine thy ſelfe thorowly, and ſee in thy ſelfe the decay of thy former love: and then ponder the ſame in thy heart ſeriouſly and thorowly. Here *Chriſt* injoyneth to his Church two duties. I. *Examination*, whereby ſhe muſt deſcend into her owne heart, and ſearch out her owne wants, eſpecially the want of her love to God, to his word, and to her brethren. II. *Conſideration*, whereby ſhee muſt often thinke of theſe her wants, and lay the ſame to her heart unfainedly.

This courſe which *Chriſt* taketh with this Church, teacheth us firſt that it is a dangerous thing for any perſon in Gods Church not to be acquainted thorowly with his owne eſtate, that ſo he may ſearch out his owne wants, and deeply conſider of the ſame. For this very thing *Jeremie* blamed the people in his time, that no man ſaid with himſelfe, *what have I done?* And *Chriſt* layeth this ſinne to the charge of the people of the old world, that they were ignorant of their eſtate; *They knew nothing till the flood came and tooke them all away.* And

Jer. 8. 6.

Matth. 24. 38, 39.

this is the common sinne of this age: no man almost doth examine himselfe and consider in his heart his owne estate, by reason of his sinnes and wants. Nay, men are growne to this, that they count it a meanes to breed melancholy, and therefore doe flie the practice of this dutie, and so muzzell themselves in their fearefull securitie.

Secondly, here we learne that it is a speciall dutie for them that live in Gods Church, to be thorowly acquainted with their owne estate, to examine and search out their owne sinnes, and often to consider seriously of their particular wants. *Zephanie* preaching the doctrine of repentance unto the people, beginneth thus, *Search yee, search your selves, o nation, not worthy to bee beloved.* Where the word translated *search*, signifieth such a search as a man would make for some small thing in a great heape of chaffe. This is the Lords counsell, Hag. 1. 7. Consider your owne wayes in your hearts: and it must be our practice if wee would bee saved. This dutie is the beginning and ground of true repentance, and therefore *Christ* here giveth it the first place; for no man can truly repent before he be acquainted with his own infirmities, and with his owne fearefull and damnable estate, by reason of his sins. And therefore *David* saith, *I first considered my wayes, and then I turned my feet into thy testimonies.* The cause why so few in the world doe truly repent, is want of consideration from whence they are fallen; and what be their sins, and the dreadfull judgements thereby deserved. For till the mind doe truly conceive her owne miserie, the heart can never rightly hunger after mercie. Sinne must be our greatest woe, before *Christ* become our chiefest joy. The second part of this remedie is *Repentance it selfe:* for after a mans well acquainted with his wants, and hath thorowly considered of his owne miserie, then he commeth to repent. In handling hereof five points are to be observed. I. What repentance is. II. How it is to bee practised. III. Who commandeth it. IV. To whom it is commanded. V. For what they must repent.

Chap. 2. 3.

Psal. 119. 59.

For the first, Repentance properly is in the minde, as the word in this place doth import: for it signifieth thus much, After some folly or overslip to be better advised. Repentance then in the minde is a change from evill to good, or a turning from sinne unto God: Act. 27. 20. *Repent and turne to God.* Which latter words expound the former, and plainly shew what repentance is. And this change in the minde standeth in this resolution, whereby a man by Gods grace purposeth to leave all his former sinnes, and to cleave unto God in holy obedience unto all his Commandements. And when this resolution is in the minde, therewith all followeth a turning of the whole man in will, in affections, and in all the actions of his life. This appeareth by that description of the practice of repentance, which *Paul* reduceth to

A seven heads. *viz. Care, clearing of themselves, indignation, feare, great desire, zeale, and revenge.* 2 Cor. 7. 11. whereof some are renewed affections, and some reformed actions.

Hereby appeareth, that their description of repentance is not so fit and proper, which say it standeth in these three; contrition, faith, and new obedience. For contrition is not a part of repentance, but a cause thereof, and so is faith, as *Christ* teacheth us in his well known sermon, *Repent, and beleeve the Gospell*; where they are plainly distinct. And indeed a man must first beleeve in *Christ*, and then followeth repentance, and for new obedience it is not a part of repentance, but a fruit thereof. Others make regeneration and repentance all one, but that cannot so well stand: for regeneration goeth before, and repentance followeth after as a fruit thereof: for godly sorrow which is a part of regeneration, causeth repentance. The minde therefore must first bee renewed, and then it turneth it selfe unto God, and withall turneth the whole man. And thus we see what true repentance is.

Mark. 1. 15.

B II. Point. How must repentance be practised? The practice of it standeth in two things: in true humiliation, and true reformation. In *humiliation* a man humbleth himselfe under the hand of God, making true confession of all his sinnes, from a sorrowfull heart, condemning himselfe for the same, and earnestly craving pardon for them, at the hands of God in *Christ*. *Reformation* is a change of all bad actions into good: and if case require, a making of satisfaction unto others for injuries done unto them. Example hereof we have in *David*; who having committed those two great sinnes of whoredome and murder, when he was reproved by *Nathan*, repented, confessing his sinnes, and made the one and fiftie Psalme, and (as it is thought) the 32. Psalme, therein notably shewing both his humiliation in heart, and reformation of life. So *Manasses*, when he was converted, *hee repented, humbling himselfe before God, and praying for the pardon of his sinnes, God heard him.* And thus came the prodigal child unto his Father, saying, *Father, I have sinned, gainst heaven, and before thee, I am not worthy to be called thy son, make me one of thine hired servants.* And so in all the Psalmes of repentance, we may see these duties of humiliation and reformation joyntly practised, as Psal. 6. and 38. and 77. and 130, 143.

C

2 Chron. 33. 12.

Luke. 15. 18.

D Here then consider the fearefull practice of the Church of Rome in their doctrine of repentance, received generally for many hundred yeares. Repentance with them standeth in three things: In contrition, in confession of all his sins to the Priests, and in satisfaction to God by good works. But all these things may a wicked man do. For *Iudas* was grieved for betraying his master; he confessed his sins, and also gave againe the money wherewith he was hired. A second abuse is, that they make contrition

on a part of the practice of repentance; by contrition we must understand remorse of conscience for sinne; which is no grace of it selfe, though it may be an occasion thereto in Gods elect. A third abuse is, that they prescribe a confession of all a mans sinnes unto men; which is a gibbet for any mans conscience; wherein they require more than God doth. A fourth abuse is, that they require satisfaction to Gods justice by mans good works; whereby they overthrow satisfaction by Christ, and exact that of men which none is able to performe. Wee therefore must reject their wicked doctrine, brought by the Devill into Gods Church, and imbrace that saving repentance which standeth in true humiliation and reformation.

III. Point. Who is it that commandeth repentance unto his Church? namely, Jesus Christ. Many, not onely Papists but Protestants, gather upon this and such like commandements, That God giveth to every man sufficient grace to repent if he will: For else (say they) he should but mocke them, in bidding them repent: considering that without his grace it is as impossible for any man to repent, as for a man to rise and walke that is fast bound hand and foot. *Answ.* This collection is unsound: For the manifestation whereof, I will first lay downe the grounds of the true answer; and then apply the same. First, this commandement to *Repent*, is not given to every man, but onely to the Church of God, or to that people which is to bee a Church: and God giveth it to them for this end, that hee may gather among them his elect. In Gods Church there bee two sorts of men; Elect, and Reprobate; both which are mingled in this life. Now when the commandement to *beleeve and repent*, is given out in Gods Church, it is directed properly to the elect; and to the other whom God hath refused onely by consequent, because they are mingled with the elect. Againe, these commandements bee given to the elect for two causes. I. To teach them, not what they are able to doe of themselves; but what they ought to doe. II. To be an outward meanes to bring them to repent and beleeve. For with the Commandement Christ is present by his spirit to worke in the elect grace to repent and beleeve: Phil. 2. 12. *Worke out your salvation in feare and trembling*: rendring this reason in the next words, *For God worketh in you both the will and the deed.* In the Church there be some reprobates, who have the same commandement given unto them; but for other uses: as I. To keep them in outward order. II. To teach them their owne impotencie. III. and principally, that God in his justice may make them void of all excuse at the last day. From hence I answer thus: This proposition is not true, to wit, *If God command men to repent, then hee giveth them grace to repent*, unlesse it be thus qualified; *That God command them to repent, for this end, that they may practise repentance.* For God giveth out his Commandements for divers ends: Some that they may be practised; and some to take from men all excuse in their disobedience. Thus he commanded *Pharaoh* to let the people goe; that by his disobedience his heart might be more hardened, and God more justly manifest his glorie in his destruction. So he commanded *Isay* to goe and preach unto the people: not for their conversion, but to *blind their eyes, and to harden their hearts.* And so hee commands the reprobate to repent: but neither directly as he doth his children, in whom hee intends the practice of repentance; but by consequent, because they live among his children: not yet with intent they should obey, but rather to harden them, and to make them inexcusable, because of their sinnes. And therefore in them his commandement cannot import any ability to obey.

A

B

Isa. 6. 9.

IV. Point. Who be commanded to repent? namely, *The Church of Ephesus*, that is, the Minister with the whole body of the Church. This may seeme strange, that hee should command them to repent, seeing they had alreadie repented at their conversion. Here therefore we must learne that there bee two degrees in the practice of repentance: First, the beginning of repentance: Secondly, the renewing of the same. And in these two consisteth the whole state of a Christian mans life. He must begin to repent when hee is received to mercie: hee must renew that repentance for his daily offences.

C If God therefore have given us grace to repent, we must not content our selves with that good beginning, but adde more repentance daily unto it. For no man liveth that hath received grace to repent, but he seeth in himselfe continuall cause of renewing the same, by reason of his daily falls and wants; for every sinne decayeth grace, which must hee repaired by a new practice of repentance. This dutie must needs bee practised. It is the most dangerous case that can be for any man to lie in sinne, for sin makes a man liable to all Gods judgements. And it is not so much the act of sinne, as the lying in sinne that bringeth damnation. For this cause *Paul* 2 Cor. 5. 20. speaking to those that were reconciled to God, doth still most earnestly *beseech them to bee reconciled unto him*, saying, *We beseech you in Christs stead, although God did beseech you through us, that ye be reconciled to God:* Intending thereby to provoke them to the daily renewing of their repentance, that thereby they might get a more full assurance of their reconciliation.

Vse.

D V. Point. For what must they repent? namely, *for the decay of their love*: not for the want thereof, but for that they suffered it to wax lesser, both towards God and his Word, and towards their brethren. The same thing is spoken to us daily in their ministerie of the word: that whereas our first love is gone, many having fallen from it, and moe having none at all,

we ſhould ſtrainedly repent, of this our decay and wanting that if we have had love, and now wax cold, wee may renew it; and if wee never had it, we may labour for it; that ſo wee may be anſwerable to his bleſſed deſire. And here obſerve, that Chriſt enjoyneth us a ſtrait repentance. It is not enough for men to repent them of groſſe ſinnes, as whoredome, theft, drunkenneſſe, and ſuch like; but they muſt repent them of their wants of grace, as of the knowledge, and feare, and love of God, & of brotherly love, and of decay in any grace, be it never ſo little. We have many juſticiaries in conceit, that bee Phariſaically minded, thinking too well of themſelves, that they need no repentance, becauſe they live civilly, and are not tainted with groſſe ſinnes: But theſe conſider little what God doth here require; even repentance for our ſecret wants and decayes. And great reaſon it ſhould be ſo, for elſe to what end ſhould we examine our ſelves of our ſecret wants, unleſſe wee ſhould repent us of them, having found them in us.

Againe, if this Church muſt repent for her wants; then what great cauſe have we to repent in this laſt age of Atheiſme, a groſſe and common ſinne: of outward pride in apparell, a ſinne ſtat againſt Gods word: and for contempt of the Goſpell, a ſinne that enlargeth it ſelfe more and more among us; and for cruelties and want of mercie and compaſſion, all which are riſe in our Church: and may more eaſily remove the candleſticke from us, than want of love could remove the candleſticke from this Church. And thus much for the ſecond part of this remedie.

The third part of this remedie, is, *to doe their firſt workes*: that is, ſhew the like zeale and fervencie of love to God, to his Word, and to their brethren, that they did at the firſt time of their converſion. This dutie Chriſt addeth to the former; becauſe true repentance never perſiſteth in the heart, but alwayes breaketh out into action in the life.

Here then is an excellent leſſon for us to learne and put in practice: we muſt ſearch out owne hearts, and ſee what good things have beene in us; what good motions and deſires, or good affections. We muſt alſo call to minde our former waies, and ſee what good things we have done: and if in heart or life we find decay, we muſt recover our loſſe, and ſeeke to doe our firſt workes, and ſtrive to continue ſo doing to our lives end, that ſo we may eſcape this heavy charge of decay in grace. Thus much of the parts of this remedie.

If not, I will come againſt thee ſhortly, and remove thy candleſticke out of his place, exceptſ thou amend.

In theſe words Chriſt layes downe a reaſon to perſwade the Church of Epheſus to the practice of the former remedie, eſpecially for repentance. This reaſon containeth three parts. I. A generall commination in theſe words, *If not, I will come againſt thee ſhortly.* II. A particular threatning of a particular judgement, *And remove thy Candleſticke out of his place.* III. The condition of them both: *except thou amend.*

I. Point. *If not, I will come againſt thee ſhortly:* that is, if thou doe not practiſe this remedie, and the duties therein preſcribed, eſpecially the dutie of repentance; then I will come againſt thee ſhortly. The words may as well be read thus, *If not, then will I come to thee ſhortly:* For ſo they are in the originall, and doe containe in them ſufficient and profitable inſtruction. God is faid to come to any people two ways, in mercy, and in judgement. In mercy, when hee teſtifieth his preſence by workes of mercie: As when Chriſt in ſpirit went unto the old world, and preached unto them in the perſon of *Noah* an hundred and twenty yeares before the flood, 1 Per. 3. 19, 20. Secondly, God commeth in judgement, when he teſtifieth his preſence by judgements. In the ſecond commandement God ſaith, *Hee will viſit the ſinnes of the fathers upon the children*, that is, he will make inquirie among the children for the fathers ſinnes, and if he finde them to live in the ſame ſinnes that their fathers did, then will he puniſh them; that is properly to viſit. So in this place, *If thou repent not, I will come unto thee*, and teſtifie my preſence, not in mercie, but in judgement.

In this generall threatning we may obſerve, that when a Church or people decay in love to God, to his word, or to their brethren; or elſe lie in any ſinne: then God prepareth himſelfe to come unto them in judgement: Amos 4. 12. *Becauſe I will doe thus and thus unto thee*, for thy ſinnes, *therefore prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael*; meaning, that becauſe they lay ſtill in their ſinnes, therefore hee would make knowne his preſence by more fearefull judgements: This doctrine according to Chriſts direction is to be applyed to us, and to our Church: for the ſinnes that were in the Church of Epheſus, are the ſinnes of our church and people. They decayed in love to God, to his Word, and to the brethren, ſo doe we. Nay generally there is no love at all in us, as hath beene ſhewed: and beſides theſe wants, there be many groſſe ſinnes wherein our church and people doe lie; as in Atheiſme both in judgement and practice; in contempt and neglect of Gods worſhip and true religion; in cruelties, oppreſſion, and want of mercie: and that which is more, though God ſummon men to repent by his daily judgements, yet few or none by true humilitie prepare to meet God, and to prevent his judgements. Security ſpreads it ſelfe over the whole body of our people. And this being our caſe and ſtate, it muſt needs be that God hath beene long ſince in comming to us by his judgements; and at this day he is ſtill comming, beauſe wee ſtill decay in our love and other graces, and more and more goe on in ſinne. So that if we thus continue, the truth is he

he will come ſhortly unto us, and that by moſt fearefull judgements. For this was written to the Church of Epheſus, to bee a direction not onely unto them, but to all Churches to the end of the world, that be in the like or worſe caſe. What ſhall we then doe?

Our duty is taught us in theſe words (*If not*;) that is, if thou repent not. Wee muſt prevent the Lords comming in judgement by unfained repentance: everie man and every family apart muſt repent privately, and the whole Church openly and publikely: no way elſe we have to ſtay the Lords comming againſt us by his fearfull judgements.

The ſecond part of this reaſon, is a more particular threatning than the former; *And will remove thy Candleſticke out of his place.* Where he ſheweth with what particular judgment hee will puniſh his Church: namely, by *removing away the candleſticke.* The meaning whereof may bee gathered out of the former chapter, where particular Churches were called candleſtickes; therefore here he threatneth to remove his Church from the citie of Epheſus: to take away the miniſterie of his Goſpell, and the profeſſion thereof, and in his juſt judgement to ſend among them, Ignorance, Apoſtaſie, and hereſie, in ſtead of the knowledge of his truth. This particular judgement muſt bee referred to the firſt words, *If not*; that is, if thou repent not, this will I doe; I will make thee to bee no Church, and take my Goſpell from thee.

In this particular threatning, three points are to be obſerved; one concerning the Miniſter; the ſecond concerning the whole body of the Church; the third concerning every private man. Touching the Miniſter note this; If hee ſhall decay in love to God, to his Word, or to his brethren, or if he lie in any one ſinne known to himſelfe, it is a meanes to deprive him either of his calling, or of Gods gifts beſtowed on him; for this threatning is here directed eſpecially unto the Angel of this Church of Epheſus. When *Ieremie* had beene wanting in delivering the Lords will unto the people, partly for feare, and partly through impatience; then the Lord becomes a Prophet unto him, ſaying, *If thou returne, I will bring thee againe, and thou ſhalt ſtand before mee.* Whereby he would give him to underſtand, that if he returned not he ſhould ceaſe to be a Prophet unto him. The ſame thing is true of all Gods Miniſters; if they decay in love, faile in their dutie, or lie in any ſinne, they muſt ſpeedily renew themſelves by repentance, or elſe God will deprive them either of their calling, or of the gifts thereof. True repentance and the renewing thereof is needfull unto all Chriſtians; but eſpecially to Gods Miniſters, if they would continue in his favour, and ſtand before him, becomming his mouth unto the people.

The ſecond point concerneth the whole body of a Church; to wit, if a Church or people decay in love to God, to religion, and to their brethren; or doe lie in any common ſin, they procure hereby the removing of the Goſpel from them, and the aboliſhing of true religion. *The Prophet is a foole* (ſaith the Lord) *and the man of the ſpirit is mad*: This was a great and fearefull judgement: but marke the cauſe; *All is for thine iniquitie*: that is, for the ſinne of the whole Church doth God ſend fooliſh Miniſters. If this be ſo, then we have juſt cauſe in our Church to feare the removing of the Goſpell from us, for there is a generall decay of love in many, and in the moſt no love at all. Many ſcorne and contemne true religion, and hate the profeſſors thereof. In regard whereof, wee may wonder at the great patience of God, that yet continueth his Goſpel among us: *For God giveth men up to ſtrong delu ſions, to believe a lyes, becauſe they love not the truth.* Wherefore being in this danger, our dutie is, to uſe all good meanes to prevent this judgement of God: which can no other way be done, than by true and unfeined repentance by the whole Church in generall, and by every man apart, and every family apart. For when God ſhall ſpeake ſuddenly againſt a nation or kingdome, to root it up, and to deſtroy it; if that people repent of their wickednеſſe, the Lord will repent of the plague and judgement which hee thought to bring upon them, Jer. 18. 7, 8.

The third point concerneth every private man, and it is this: If any man decay in love, or want love to God and to his brethren, or lie in any ſinne knowne to himſelfe: This is a meanes to remove the candleſticke from him; to deprive him of his knowledge and other graces of God. The affection of love in the heart is like the watch of the clocke: if the watch ſtand, the wheeles ſtand; as the watch goeth faſt or ſoftly, ſo goe the wheeles antwerably. And ſo it is in man: if his love to God and to his Goſpell doe increaſe, then doth his knowledge and other graces of God increaſe in his heart: but if this love decay, then other graces decay; and if love be gone, then farewell all pietie and true religion. If we would know the cauſe of ſuch palpable ignorance as is in many that have long heard the Goſpell preached, it is nothing but want of love. Hebr. 3. 12, 13. the holy Ghoſt ſheweth by what degrees men come to fall away from God. Firſt, ſinne deceives them, by drawing them to commit it: then their hearts are hardned by the cuſtome of ſinning. Thence followes unbeleefe in many points of religion: and ſo they make Apoſtaſie from God, and ſet themſelves againſt his truth. Take heed therefore of lying in any ſin, for that is the high way to finall Apoſtaſie: rather ſtrive to increaſe in love unto God and unto his Word, and ſo ſhall all his good graces increaſe in thine heart.

Out of this particular threatning ſome gather, that a man may be cut off from Chriſt, and fal away finally from true faith and repentance. For (ſay they) if a whole Church may be cut off

off from Christ, and become no Church: then A may any one member of the Church be cut off and become no member: but a whole Church may be cut off, as here we see, and therefore may any one man. *Ans.* This reason is not good: there is great difference betweene the state of a whole Church, and of one man that is a true member of Christ. For a particular Church is a mixt company of true professours and dissemblers: like unto a field wherein are good corne and tares; and like unto a barne floore, wherin is wheat and chaffe mingled together; and yet all are reputed beleevers, because they professe the Gospel outwardly. Now by reason of this mixture, it may come to passe, that a particular visible Church may fall away, and become no Church; either when the godly are taken away, and hypocrites and dissemblers made manifest; or else when true beleevers waxing few, are not able to maintaine the publike profession of the truth, against the might and multitude of the enemies, which may daily increase. But the case is not so with a particular member of Christ; he cannot finally fall away, as hath beene shewed at large, ver. 4. And thus much for the second part of this reason.

The third part of this reason, is the condition of both the former threatnings, in these words; *Except thou amend*, that is, I will come in judgement unto thee, and take my Gospell from thee, unlesse thou prevent my comming by true repentance.

Here note, that all the threatnings of the old and new Testament are conditionall; *Jonas* con meth to Ninive, and crieth, *yet forty dayes, and Ninive shall be destroyed.* He said no more; but yet that threatning must bee understood with this exception, *unlesse they repent.* Why (will some say) are the threatnings in Gods Word propounded conditionally? *Answ.* Gods whole will and pleasure is one alone in it selfe: and yet it may thus be distinguished, to be partly secret, and partly revealed. Gods secret will is touching those things which he hath not made manifest unto men. His revealed will is touching those things which are manifested in Scripture, or do fall out every day. Now Gods secret will is without condition; for as every thing commeth to passe, so God willed it: when good things come to passe, them he willeth simply: when evill things fall out, them he permitteth to be done. And to make Gods secret will conditionall, is to bring Gods will under the power of man, and to subject the Creator unto the creature. But Gods revealed will is conditionall; because it containeth the matter of mans salvation: and this manner of propounding it, is a most effectuall way to bring the same to passe: for it keepeth men more in awefull obedience, than if it were absolute.

In this condition note two things, that *Christ* repeateth it twice, both in the beginning of it in reason, *If not*; and in the end, *Except ye repent.* Hereby he would give us to understand, That when men commit sinne, and lie therein, or when they decay in any grace, then have they most necessary cause to repent, if they would escape Gods fearefull judgements. And seeing our estate is like to the state of this Church, or else worse by much (for wee lie in sinne, and thereby cause God to come to us in judgement, as we tender our owne good both in this life, and after death, let us turne from our sinnes and repent, every man apart, every family apart, and the whole Church publikely: for repentance is most needfull, else would not the Lord have doubled this condition.

v. 6. *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the workes of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*

These words are a second reason to prove that which was set downe in the second verse: namely, That *this Church could not abide them that were evill.* In the second verse this was made manifest, by their discoverie of the false Apostles; & here he proveth it by their affection of hatred, towards the workes of the Nicolaitans. These Nicolaitans were certaine heretickes in the primitive Church that held these two opinions: First, that adultere and fornication were no sinnes; Secondly, that men might communicate with the sacrifices of idolaters in their idoll temples; and according to their opinions were their practises. These heretickes (as it is thought) came of one *Nicholas*, one of the seven deacons mentioned Act. 6. who though for a while hee did faithfully discharge his duty outwardly, yet after fell away, and became head of this hereticall sect.

But this thou hast. This Particle, *But*, hath reference to the former verse. As if wee should say, Though this be thy fault, that thou failest in thy first love, yet for this I commend thee, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans.

This practice of Christ discovereth the common sinne of this age: which is, to set out in their colours mens faults and infirmities, to their greatest disgrace; and yet by silence and oblivion to burie all their vertues, which are praise-worthy. This ought not to be so: wee must follow Christs example, who with just reproofe adjoyneth due deserved praise. If our friend or our foe have a fault, when we are called thereunto, we may speake of it, and wee must reprove them: but yet withall wee must commend the good things that bee in them. Secondly, Christ here teacheth us, That it is not sufficient to any mans good estate before God, that he have good things in him; for that a man may have, and yet bee in danger to bee cut off from Christ. *Saul* had good things in him at the first entrance into his kingdome, but what was he afterward? *Jehu* was very zealous for Gods glorie, in killing all the Idolatrous

Use.

priests, but he would not depart from the sins of *Jeroboam*. And *Judas* no doubt had many good gifts while hee was with Christ, but his end was ost fearefull: And this Church had many good things in her: yet is shee in danger of being cut off from Christ: And so many among us have excellent gifts: some for knowledge, some for mercie and conceiving of prayer; and yet for all these they may bee cut off from Christ. Therefore wee must not content our selves with these, but labour for the principall, which is true, hearty, and unfained repentance, which we must daily renew for our continuall falls. And this will keepe us in Gods favour, and from his judgements.

More particularly Christ here commendeth this Church, for *having the errours of the Nicolaitans.* Whereby hee would teach us our duty if we be Christians; namely, to take knowledge of the sinnes and errours of our times, and to hate the same unfainedly. Yet note, hee commendeth them for hating *their workes, not their persons:* giving us direction how to temper our hatred in the world. We must set it against the sinne, not against the person of any man. Some will say, the Prophets prayed against the persons of the wicked. And *David* professed hatred of the men, Psal. 139. 21. Doe not I hate them that hate thee? *Ans.* *David* was an extraordinarie Prophet, and had no doubt this revealed unto him; that those his enemies were obstinate, and would not repent. Againe, imprecations of the Prophets in Scripture, must be understood as prophecies of Gods judgement to come upon those against whom they prayed. But we which want that extraordinarie spirit, must keepe our selves to our ordinarie rule: Hate the sinnes, and love the persons.

Further, observe the workes here hated: namely, Idolatry, and Adultery, which are joyned together in these Nicolaitans. Adulterie is the punishment of Idolatrie; and Idolatrie the punishment of Adulterie. Spirituall Adulterie is punished with bodily Adulterie. This was verified in the old Jewes; when they fell a whoring after strange gods, God gave them up to uncleane lust. And it is palpable in the Church of Rome: they being fallen to idolatrie, doe abound in all uncleannesse: for they tolerate Stewes for fornication: and adultery and Sodomie are common among them.

Againe, sundrie men may here bee well admonished, who will be of no religion, because there are many sects and schismes among the professors thereof. These men should consider, That in the best Churches planted by the Apostles, there were sects and heresies, even in the Apostles times, as here in Ephesus. And therefore no marvell, if there bee sects and schismes among us at this day. This offence should not move any to dislike the Gospell, but rather cause them more firmely to cleave unto the truth.

Which I also hate. This Christ addeth to encourage them to goe forward in the vertue for which he commended them, in hating evill workes: for what could more provoke them to zeale and constancie therein, than to know they did that which Christ himselfe did? And here wee see, that Christ would have everie member of his Church to be like minded, and like affected unto him, as he was man. We must love those things which Christ loveth, and hate those things which Christ hateth, rejoyce wherein Christ rejoyceth, and mourne for those things for which Christ mourned. And great reason it should be so: for wee professe our selves to bee members of Christ, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, for out of his bloud sprung the Church: and there must be consent and conformitie betweene the head and the members. *Quest.* If Christ hated these wicked men, why did he suffer them to live, and not cut them off from troubling his Church? *Ans.* Because hereby he would manifest his love to his Church, and his justice upon the wicked: for he can bring light out of darknesse, and good not only out of good, but out of evill.

v. 7. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches: To him that overcommeth, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the middest of the paradise of God.*

These words containe the conclusion of this Epistle: the scope whereof, is to excite this Church to the more carefull performance of the duties before prescribed. This conclusion hath two parts: a commandement, and a promise. The commandement in the beginning of the verse; *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches.* In this commandement note three points; I. who are commanded, *Those which have eares*; II. The dutie commanded, *They must heare*. III. What they must heare, namely, *What the spirit saith unto the Churches.*

I. Point. The parties commanded are thus set forth, *He which hath an eare*: who these be, Christ doth more fully expound, Matth. 13. 9. when hee saith, *Let him that hath an eare to heare, heare.* Where he maketh this distinction of hearers; that some are deafe hearers, some hearing hearers. The deafe hearers are those that bring with them to the ministerie of the word their outward eares onely, but their hearts are not affected with it: neither doe they care to learne to beleeve, or obey that which is taught them. The hearing hearers are such as beside their bodily eares, have eares pierced

ced in their hearts by the ſpirit of grace, whereby they do not only heare the word outwardly, but their hearts are alſo affected with it, and made pliable unto it; ſo as they beleeve it, and bring forth obedience unto it. This hearing eare is ſet forth by *David*, when he ſaith: *Sacrifice and burnt offerings thou wouldeſt not have: but mine eares haſt thou opened and prepared; and then I ſaid, Loe I come.* Hereof *Iſay* ſaith, *Thou openedſt mine eares, and I was not rebellious.* And this hearing eare *Lydia* had given her, when God opened *her heart, whereby ſhe became attentive to the word of God preached by Paul.*

Pſal. 40. 6.

Io. 50 5.

Act. 16. 14.

By this diſtinction of hearers which Chriſt maketh, we may learne, that Gods grace unto ſalvation is not univerſall, that is, God giveth not unto all menſuch meaſure of grace, whereby (if they will themſelves) they may beleeve, repent, and be ſaved: For in Chriſts time, and ever ſince, there have beene in the Church theſe two kinds of hearers; whereof the deafe hearer doth not receive nor beleeve the Goſpell unto ſalvation. Neither is it true, that God giveth grace ſufficient unto all, whereby they might be ſaved, if they by their malice and ſinne did not aboliſh the ſame. For though he admit all ſorts into his Church, yet not all, but ſome only have eares pierced by the ſpirit of grace that they can heare. And therefore when the Diſciples asked Chriſt, *Why he ſpake in parables?* he anſwered thus, *To you it is given to know the myſtery of God, and the ſecrets of his kingdome: but to others it is not given.* Shewing plainly that the gift of hearing to ſalvation is not given to all, and in ſome made void by their owne wilfulneſſe: but to ſome it is given, and they have hearing eares: and to ſome it is not given, and then eares are deafe.

Matth. 13.

verſ. 11.

Secondly, ſeeing this commandement is directed to the hearing hearers; we muſt hereby be admoniſhed to uſe all good meanes to become good hearers of Gods word; bringing with us not onely the bodily eares which wee have by creation, but the ſpirituall eares of the heart, which we have by regeneration. For it is not ſufficient to our ſalvation to receive the word into the outward bodily eares, unleſſe the inward eares of the heart be opened, that our ſoule may be affected with the word, and fitted to receive, to beleeve and obey the ſame. Thus did good king *Ioſias* heare the law read; the text ſaith, *His heart melted within him.* And thus did *David* heare when the Lord ſaid to the Church, *Seeke ye my face: his heart anſwered, I ſeeke thy face, O Lord.* And as wee muſt be careſull to get ſpirituall eares; ſo wee muſt take heed of deafe eares. Which is when a man commeth and heareth the word of God, but yet hath no care in his heart to learne, beleeve, or obey the ſame. This deafe eare is a careſull judgement of God, whereof we may read, *Iſay 6. 9.* where the Prophet is ſent, *To make their eares heavie, and their hearts fat, ſhut they might not heare, nor beleeve: leſt they ſhould turne and bee ſaved.* And this the rather we muſt looke unto, becauſe it is a judgement of God upon many among us at this day. The greateſt part of hearers are deafe hearers: which appeareth by this, that after long teaching they neither increaſe in knowledge, nor in faith, nor in obedience; but remaine the ſame for blindneſſe of minde, hardneſſe of heart, and profaneneſſe of life, that they were at the firſt hearing of the Word: theſe muſt know that Gods judgement is on them; and if they would bee ſaved, they muſt labour to come out of this eſtate, and endevour ſo to heare with their hearts, that they may be turned unto God both in minde, heart, and life.

1 Chr. 34. 27.

Pſal. 27. 8.

A

B

C

D

II. Point. The duty commanded: namely, *to heare.* Hearing in Scripture is not onely to liſten with the bodily eare: but to be attentive to that which is taught, and with attention to bring faith, converſion, and obedience every way. Eph. 4. 21, 22. the hearing of Chriſt is notably deſcribed: It is not ſo much to conceive the doctrin of Chriſt in our minds, and to be able to utter it, *as to die unto ſinne, and to the luſts of the fleſh, and to riſe to newneſſe of life.* And indeed, a man doth heare and learne no more of Gods Word, than he doth beleeve and practiſe. From whence we are againe to be admoniſhed, that we ſo heare with attention, that by hearing we ſuffer our ſelves to be changed, and that with our change we joyne care to beleeve, and conſcience to obey. This is that ſaving hearing which bringeth eternall life: all other hearing doth increaſe our ſinnes to our further condemnation. Whereby alſo appeareth the fearfull ſtate of many, who lend onely the outward bodily eare to heare the Word, but their hearts be not moved, nor their lives changed thereby.

III. Point. What is to be heard? namely, *That which the ſpirit ſaith unto the Churches.* Which words muſt be referred to that which went before, and not to that which followeth: for this commandement belongs to the matter of the Epiſtle which went before. The promiſe following rather concerns the perſons themſelves than the matter. The things then that are to be heard, are theſe; Chriſt his ſharp reproofe for ſinne: his threatnings of puniſhment: a remedy preſcribed, and motives to practiſe the ſame, eſpecially repentance: for of all theſe Chriſt ſpake before.

From this, that Chriſt bids them heare theſe things which concerned their eſtate in ſinnes, and amendment by repentance, we learne two things. Firſt, that it is a moſt neceſſarie thing for every Church of God, and every member thereof, to know and conſider their owne wants and ſinnes, and alſo the judgements of God that hang over them for the ſame. Secondly, that after any man, or any Church hath conſidered of their ſinnes, and of Gods judgements; it is a moſt neceſſarie thing, to turne unto God by true repentance, if they have not repented: and

Vſe.

and if they have repented, to renew the ſame daily, and doe it more: that ſo Gods judgments both private and common may be avoided. We therefore muſt hereby bee moved to ſearch into our owne wayes, to finde out our owne ſins, and to conſider of Gods judgements thereby deſerved, that by true repentance we may turne unto God, and ſo eſcape his fearefull judgements.

A

Further, theſe words, *What the ſpirit ſaith unto the Churches*, containe two reaſons to move every man to heare. I. Becauſe they are ſpoken by the ſpirit, that is, the holy Ghoſt. II. Becauſe they are not ſpoken to one man, or one Church alone, but to all Churches. For the firſt: It may be demanded ſeeing Chriſt ſpake theſe words, How can it bee ſaid that the ſpirit ſpeaketh them? *Anſ.* Both may ſtand: firſt, becauſe all the outward actions of any perſons in Trinitie are common to the reſt: but to teach the Church is an outward action of Chriſt, and therefore it agreeth to the Father, and to the holy Ghoſt. As when the Father created things in the beginning, the Sonne alſo created, and the holy Ghoſt created them. So here when the Sonne teacheth, the Father teacheth, and the holy Ghoſt teacheth: For as the three perſons are one in nature, ſo muſt they be joyned in all outward actions. Secondly, Chriſt ſaith the ſpirit ſpeaketh, becauſe hee now ſitting at the right hand of the Father, doth not teach his Church in bodily preſence, but by his Spirit, which after his aſcenſion hee ſent to bee their comforter and inſtructer.

B

Here then obſerve that the holy Ghoſt ſpeaketh to the Church in Scripture. The Church of Rome appoints a Judge to ſpeake unto men in matters of controverſie, which is the Church: becauſe (ſay they) a Judge muſt ſpeake: and Chriſt is abſent from his Church: and the word is a dumbe letter, and cannot ſpeake: Therefore the Church muſt needs be Judge. But they erre groſly: The Church cannot be Judge. It is but Chriſts Miniſter to put in execution that which hee commandeth. Chriſt therefore muſt bee Judge unto his Church by Scripture, which is not a dumbe Judge; for therein his ſpirit ſpeaketh plainly and ſufficiently for the reſolving of any poine in controverſie, that is needfull in Gods Church.

C

The ſecond reaſon to attention is, becauſe theſe things are ſpoken to all *Churches.* Where we ſee that things ſpoken to one Church agree to all. From whence we muſt learne this ſpeciall duties in reading and hearing Gods holy Word; namely, to read and heare with application. Wee muſt not reſt in a flouriſhing knowledge of the ſtory, but apply every precept and example unto our ſelves. If it be an example of vertue, we muſt apply it to our ſelves for imitation; if it be an example of vice, we muſt apply it to our ſelves to move us to eſchew and avoid the like. For God would have all to learne that which hee ſpeaketh unto one. And thus much of the Commandement.

D

To him that overcommeth I will give to eat of the Tree of life, which is in the middeſt of the Paradiſe of God. Theſe words containe the ſecond part of this concluſion, to wit, a moſt excellent promiſe: wherein conſider two points. Firſt, to whom it is made: Secondly, what is promiſed. For the firſt: The promiſe is made to *him that overcommeth*, that is, to him that in fighting prevaileth againſt all the ſpirituall enemies of his ſalvation, ſinne, Satan, hell, and condemnation. There bee three things requiſite to make a man able to overcome theſe enemies. Firſt, he muſt be borne anew in Chriſt, of water, and of the ſpirit, 1 John 5. 4 *Hee that is borne of God overcōmeth the world.* ſo by regeneration he is freed from the bondage of hell, death, ſinne, and Satan. Secondly, hee muſt have true faith, by vertue whereof he muſt deny and renounce himſelfe, and be whatſoever he is in the death, paſſion, and obedience of Chriſt. Therefore S. *Iohn* ſaith in the ſame place: *This is the victory which overcommeth the world, even your faith:* for when a man is in Chriſt, by faith he is made partaker of Chriſt his victory upon the croſſe, and by it receiveth power to ſubdue his owne corruptions, the world, and the devill. Thirdly, hee that would overcome muſt keepe faith, that is, true religion, and a good conſcience, ſtanding out in life and death againſt all adverſary power whatſoever.

A

B

In this, that life everlaſting is promiſed to them that overcome; Firſt, we obſerve, that the doctrine of univerſall grace, affirming that the promiſes of the Goſpell for life and ſalvation, belong to all and every man whatſoever, unleſſe hee will reject them, is a device of mans braine. For life eternall is not promiſed to every man as he is a man comming of *Adam*; but to a man as hee is in Chriſt by faith, and a new creature. The promiſes of the Goſpell be univerſall indeed to all that overcome: but that is a propertie which reſtraines them wholly to true beleevers. Secondly, hereby we are taught ſo to live, that we may ſay truly in the teſtimonie of a good conſcience, we have overcome all our ſpirituall enemies, and doe continually ſtand conquerours over them. This is a matter of endleſſe joy and comfort, which will cheere the ſoule in great diſtreſſe. But to live and lye in ſinne, is or will bee a hell to the conſcience. What availe the treaſures and honours of this world to any man, while his conſcience ſhall tell him hee is a vaſſall to ſinne and Satan? for while he continueth in that eſtate, hee is out of the favour of God, and hath no part or portion in the kingdome of heaven. Therefore it ſtandeth us upon, to labour to feele in our hearts the certaine evidence of the victorie over our ſpirituall enemies, by the ſure teſtimonie of the ſpirit of grace.

C

D

The ſecond point is the thing promiſed, to wit, life everlaſting, ſetted by this gift, *To eat of the Tree of life.* And it is ſet out two ways

two circumstances. First, by the cause of it: Secondly, by the place where it is to bee found. The cause is *Christ Iesus: I will give to him to eat of the Tree of life.* Where hee maketh an opposition betweene himselfe and the first *Adam.* The first *Adam* sinned; and thereby cast himselfe and all his posterite out of the earthly Paradise, and lost the benefit of the tree of life: But *Christ* the second *Adam*, commeth and suffereth for sinne: and thereby openeth the way to a better Paradise, than the first *Adam* lost: and to all that overcome he giveth libertie to enter in, and to eat of the tree of life. The Tree of life properly, was a tree placed in the middest of the earthly Paradise: and it was so called; first, because it was a pledge and Sacrament unto *Adam*, that he should live for ever, if he continued in obedience to God: secondly, because it had in it (as may bee proved) vertue and power, whereby it would have preserved him from death and old age for ever, if hee had stood in his innocencie.

The earthly Tree of life was a figure and signe of *Christ* our Saviour and Mediator; who liveth an eternall spirituall life, not onely as hee is God, but as hee is Mediator, and that not for himselfe alone, but for this end, that he may convey quickning spirituall life to all that beleeve in him: and for this cause hee teareth himselfe the tree of life. Further hee saith, *Hee will give thereof to eat: to eat*, sometime signifieth to beleeve, Joh. 6. 50. but it cannot here be so taken; For faith endeth with this life, and hath no use afterward. Therefore *to eat*, in this place signifieth to have immediate fellowship with *Christ* in Heaven: where *Christ* shall bee unto him a tree of life to make him live for ever.

In this promise note two points. I. In what things eternall life consisteth: namely, in immediate fellowship and communion with *Christ* in heaven. Secondly, that life eternall standeth not in outward meanes, as meat, drinke, clothing, physicke, recreation, sleepe, and such like: but in an immediate partaking with *Christ* in all his blessings. So that when *Christ* is all in all unto us immediately, then doe wee eat of the tree of life, and thereby shall live eternally.

II. *Circumst.* The place where eternall life is to bee had is in the Paradise of God. This Paradise of God is the third Heaven, a place wherein the Lord doth manifest himselfe in his glorious Majestie, and which he hath prepared for the glorie of all his Elect. Hereof *Christ* spake to the theefe on the crosse, saying, *This day shalt thou bee with mee in Paradise*, Luk. 23. 43. and hither was *Paul* rapt in vision, and *saw and heard things that it cannot be uttered:* and hee calleth it *the third heaven*, in respect of the heavens under it: for the place wherein we breath is the first heaven, the starrie firmament is the second heaven, and the Paradise of God is the third: which is therefore called Paradise, because it is a place of endlesse joy and pleasure. And the adding of the name of God, doth not only put a difference betweene it, and *Adams* earthly Paradise, but also sheweth it to be a great and most excellent place. So *Rahel* saith, *I have wrestled with my sister the wrestlings of God*, that is, strong wrestlings. And in the Psalmes, *The Mountaines of God*, doe signifie high and mighty Mountaines. And that this Paradise is such an excellent place, appeareth at large, Revel. 22. For therein must come none uncleane thing, but the Saints and Angels doe there enjoy the presence of God, and behold his glory so much as the creature is able to comprehend: There God communicateth himselfe to all the elect, and becommeth all things unto them immediately; so that this must needs be a place of all joy and comfort.

Gen. 30. 8.

The consideration whereof must admonish us to seeke the things that bee above, that wee may have a place in this heavenly paradise. For why should wee set our hearts upon the vaine glory of this world, which passeth away as a shadow and commeth to nothing, and in the end is but labour and sorrow, when wee have all that the world can afford? But the joies and glory of this paradise of God bee endlesse and unspeakable: let us therefore deny our selves, depend upon Christ, and in all things keepe faith and a good conscience unto the end. And thus much for the first Epistle.

V. 8. *And unto the Angel of the Church of the Smyrnians, write these things, saith hee that is the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.*

In this verse and the rest that follow to the twelfth, is laid downe the second letter or Epistle of *Christ* to another Church of Asia, called Smyrna. Before the Epistle *Christ* gives a second particular Commandement unto *Iohn* touching the writing hereof unto this Church, in these words, *and unto the Angel of the Church of the Smyrnians write*: Which is prefixed to this Epistle, that this Church and all other Churches of God might bee assured, that *Iohn* had sufficient warrant and calling for the writing hereof. Which thing is necessary to every penman of the holy Ghost, that the Church need not to doubt of the authority of Scripture, but receive the same as the pure word of God.

Use.

Hence we may gather, that all ordinary Ministers of the Gospell, must have warrant and calling for every doctrine which they teach in Gods Church; for the Apostles, that were extraordinary men, of more excellent gifts, might doe nothing without warrant. Of the parts of this commandement we spake in the first verse of this chapter.

The Epistle it selfe followeth, containing three parts, a Preface, a Proposition, and a Con-

Conclusion. The Preface containeth a preparation to the matter of the Epistle in these words; *These things saith he that is the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.* In this Preface hee sheweth in whose name this Epistle was written unto this Church, namely, in Christs name: which he setteth downe for two causes. First, to stir up the people in this Church to a religious attention, and a reverent care of receiving the things therein written, as the pure words of Christ Jesus. Secondly, because no Commandement in the matter of Gods worship and religion is to bee received from any creature, but from *Christ* alone. And therefore this Epistle concerning the true worship and religion of God, is propounded in his name alone. In this preface *Christ* is described by two notable Arguments: first, *To be the first and the last*: secondly, that hee was *dead, but is alive.* The meaning of them both was shewed in the 17. and 18. verses of the former Chapter, whence they are borrowed. By the first, *Christ* would signifie, that he is everliving God, without beginning or ending, before all creatures, and after them. By the second, that hee is true man, and assumed mans nature to suffer death for our sinnes, and rose againe to life for ever, and to give to man eternall life.

In this description two points of doctrine are expressed.

I. That *Christ* is a person, consisting of two natures, Godhead and Manhood: *He is the first and the last*, and therefore God: *Hee was dead, and is alive*, and therefore is true man. If any aske how one person can consist of two natures; *Answ.* As body and soule concurre to make one man, so the God-head and Man-hood of *Christ* concurre to make one *Christ*; and therefore are united.

II. *Doct.* Here is the foundation of all true comfort unto Gods Church and people, in any misery and affliction. Which standeth in two points: first, that *Christ* is able to helpe them in any misery; either by freeing them quite from it, or easing them in it, seeing he is *God, the first, and last.* Secondly, that as hee is able, so hee is willing and readie to helpe them, for he is man, who tooke on him our nature, dyed for us, and rose againe unto life, to give to us eternall life. This is the very scope and end for which *Christ* thus describeth himselfe to this Church that was in affliction. Here then we have direction, where and whence to seeke for true comfort in any tribulation of this life; namely, wee must have recourse to *Christ*, and in him consider both his abilitie and his willingnesse, to ease all his children in affliction. And by these wee must arme our selves against despaire, and against immoderate griefe and sorrow under the crosse.

V. 9. *I know thy workes, and tribulation, and povertie, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemie of them which say they are Iewes and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan.*

Here beginneth the Proposition of this Epistle, containing the matter and substance of the whole Epistle. This proposition hath two parts; a commendation of this Church, and counsell how to behave her selfe in the time to come. The commendation is in the 9. v. where withall are mingled some comforts unto this Church, being in affliction.

I know thy workes. These words were handled in the former Epistle. The meaning briefly is this: I know all thy dealings, and thy wayes, I know the whole tenour of thy life; and I doe withall well like and approve of them. Here *Christ* setteth downe an excellent property touching himselfe: namely, that he seeth and knoweth all things whatsoever, nothing is hid from him: and that this Church might bee resolved hereof, he repeateth this unto them; *I know thy workes.* Neither is it any vaine repetition, being indeed the ground of all true piety, and sincere obedience.

Wee therefore in all our affaires are here taught to labour to be fully resolved in our consciences, that *Christ* is with us, and seeth us, and knoweth the whole tenour of our wayes in thoughts, words, and deeds. *David* had learned this, when as hee said, Thou knowest my sitting and my rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my paths, and my lying downe, and art accustomed unto all my wayes: there is not a word in my tongue, but thou knowest it wholly. This persuasion is very necessary: for it will move a man to make conscience of every thought, word, and action, and of his whole behaviour; but where this persuasion is wanting, there is no religion in the heart, nor good behaviour in the life. When this takes place, Religion beginneth and increaseth with it; so doth good conscience and true obedience; for hee that hath the Lord alwaies before him, will not greatly fall. Psa. 11. 8.

Psal. 139. 23.

And tribulation. Marke here how workes, that is, a godly conversation, and tribulation goe together. Hence we learne, that God will have tribulations joyned with his grace; where he bestowes his graces, there also he layeth tribulation: and that for weighty causes; as to humble them for their sinnes past, to make triall of their faith and other graces, and to prevent in them sinnes to come. The consideration whereof must move all Gods children in this our Church to looke for some tribulation: for God hath bestowed among us plenie of his graces, with long peace, and many outward blessings: and his will is, that trouble and afflic-

affliction should accompany the same.

Further, *Christ* saying, *I know thy tribulation*, would hereby comfort this Church; as if he should say, True it is thou art in great trouble, but it commeth not by chance, but by the speciall providence of my Father: and I doe know and regard the same. Psalm. 113. 6, 7. the raising up of the poore and needy, is made a fruit of Gods beholding the things that are done upon the earth. This is an excellent comfort for any Church or people that be in affliction: for when they shall know, that beside the hand of God therein, *Christ Iesus* regardeth their sorrowes; this must needs arme them with long suffering and joyfulnesse. Wee in this Church (as hath beene shewed) may perswade our selves, that God will send tribulations among us; now when they come, what shal we do? shal we sink under them? No; but we must now forecast to use the means whereby we may stay our hearts under the smart and burthen of them; that is, by stilling our hearts in this perswasion, that Christ seeth our affliction, and withall hath speciall care to comfort or deliver us, as hee seeth most for his glory, and the good of our soules.

In the next words *Christ* setteth downe two kindes of tribulations in this Church, *Poverty*, and *Reproach*: By *Poverty* he meaneth want of temporall things to maintaine this naturall life. Where observe sundry things: I. That true religion and pietie will not free any from outward povertie. The religion of this Church was excellent, and yet they were in want: and therefore let no man thinke, because he is godly, hee shal be rich, or not fall into poverty. If it be said *Godlinesse hath the promise not onely of the life to come, but also of this life*, that is, of earthly blessings and riches: I answer, it is true; but yet with difference: Eternall blessings onely are promised absolutely; and temporall blessings with restraint, namely, if they serve for Gods glory, and the good of his children: otherwise they must want as this Church did. II. The Lord would comfort this Church in her povertie, by saying that hee knew it and regarded it. Where wee see a meanes to comfort all those that bee in want of outward blessings: They must consider, that *Christ* seeth and observeth their want whatsoever; and if they bee his servants, hee will free them from it, so it be for his glory and the good of their soules; or else arme them with patience to beare it, if they pray unto him. III. *Christ* here approveth of workes where he acknowledgeth poverty; so that good workes and poverty may stand together. And therefore good workes due not consist onely in large Almes, as the Church of Rome would have it; though these have due reward and praise in their place. But every worke of a mans lawfull calling, done in obedience to God, with an honest heart, from a good conscience, and for Gods glory, is a good worke, be the calling never so base. Thus may the shepheard praise God in his calling, as well as the Magistrate or Minister. For it is not the matter of the worke that commendeth it to God, but the manner of doing.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

But thou art rich. Here *Christ* intendeth both to praise and to comfort this Church: as if he should say, Notwithstanding thy outward poverty, yet thou art rich in God, as Luk. 12. 21. Men are rich in God in two respects: I. When they are reconciled to God in the merits of *Christ*. 2 Corinth. 8. 9. *Christ* became poore for our sakes, that wee through his povertie might be made rich; that is, that wee might have the pardon of sinne, and bee received into Gods favour. Hereupon *David* cals the Lord his portion and his cup. And *durable riches and righteousnesse are with wisdome*, Proverb. 8. 18. II. When they receive his grace, whereby they are enabled to bring forth good workes, both in duties to God and man. Of this *Paul* speaketh, when he exhorteth rich men to be *rich in good workes, and to lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come*, 1 Timoth. 6. 16.

In this commendation sundry duties are to be learned: I. Poore men are here taught, seeing God denieth unto them earthly riches and wealth, to labour to bee rich in God, to be reconciled unto him in *Christ*, and to get such grace, that they may doe good duties both unto God and man, in faith and with a good conscience. II. Rich men, on whom God bestoweth outward wealth, must hereby bee admonished to embrace *Pauls* charge, 1 Timoth. 6. 17, 18. Above all things seeke for true riches in the living God: and not suffer these outward blessings to puffe up their mindes; but use them as a meanes to make them rich in God, by getting Gods grace, doing good workes, and distributing to the poore. This admonition is most necessary, for though the promises of Gods grace be not denied unto the rich, yet sure it is, riches doe choake the seed of grace in the heart, and hinder the care men ought to have for spirituall riches. And hence it commeth, that more of the poore: fort receive and obey the Gospell than of the rich. III. Herein behold the madnesse of the world. For the most mens greatest labour and care is after worldly wealth and honour: never regarding the true treasures of Gods grace, which will commend them unto God, when the other must perish and the wicked owners thereof. Let us therefore judge as *Christ* doth of true riches, and accordingly labour to be rich in his sight.

The second part of their tribulation is the reproach and blasphemy of their enemies, in these words; *I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Iewes, and are not, &c.* that is, I know the grievous slanders and revilings which thine enemies fasten upon thee. For blasphemy signifieth not only speeches of disgrace against God, but against men: As *Naboth* was accused, 1 King. 21. 10. to *have blasphemed GOD and the King*. And of this *Paul* saith,

Verse 9.

saith, *When we are reviled, we blesse: when we are blasphemed, we pray*, 1 Cor. 4. 12, 13.

Hence we learne, that all Churches and men that desire truly to serve God, and to keepe good consciences, must looke for slanders and revilings: neither must this seeme strange unto them; for Christ hath said, it must bee so. Nay rather they might marvell, if they should suffer no reproaches for *Christs* sake, seeing hee hath said, *cursed are you when all men speak well of you*, Luk. 6. 26. It is indeed a grievous thing to bee so evill rewarded for well doing; but this must bee their comfort and ground of patience, That *Christ* heareth and knoweth every reproach, and will in his good time remedy the same.

The persons which blaspheme this Church are thus described; *Which say they be Iewes, and are not, but are of the Synagogue of Satan*. As in other famous cities, so in *Smyrna* dwelt some of the Jewes, who had their Synagogue, that is, such places of assemblies, where they served God after their manner: and thoughtheydenied *Christ*, yet they thought themselves to bee the onely true worshippers of God in all the world; and therefore did blaspheme and raile upon the Christians that beleeved in *Christ*. And of these *Christ* saith, though by birth they were Jewes, yet indeed they were not the Israel of God, nor his true worshippers, as they accounted themselves. Whereby in generall we may see, from whom come raylings and reproaches on Gods servants; namely, from those which say they are true worshippers of God, and are not: *For hee is not a Iew, that is one outward*, Rom. 2. 28. He therefore that slandereth the truth, and the professors thereof, is an enemie to *Christ*, as well as to his servants: for no friend of Christ can possibly speake evill of his Gospell and religion. This should bee considered for the comfort of the godly, because they that endevour to serve God in sincerite, are of all men most subject to reproach: *Hee that refraineth from evill, maketh himselfe a prey*, Esay 59. 15.

Touching these Jewes, two points are to bee considered: I. What they are in their owne opinion: II. What they are in the judgement of *Christ*. For the first, because they were Jewes, by birth descending from *Abraham, Isaac*, and *Iacob*, Gods ancient servants, therefore they thought themselves the onely true worshippers of God, as their forefathers were. And this is the manner of all wicked men; *To blesse themselves in their wickednesse*, and whatsoever they do, yet stil to say and think, God will blesse them. Take an heretike, who overthrowes the truth of God by his errours, and hee will say he teacheth that which in conscience hee is perswaded is the truth, for which hee will shed his bloud, and whereto he would have all men yeeld. So take a professed witch, man or woman, they will say, all that they doe is by the power of the good Angels, and by some speciall gifts given unto them above others; but they will not be brought to acknowledge that they doe any thing by vertue of their league with the Devill, from whence indeed commeth all they doe. And so the carnall Protestants of our time, they looke for Gods blessings in this life, and for eternall life by *Christ* after death, and yet walke in the broad way to destruction, in sinne and profanenesse. Thus they blesse themselves in their evill wayes, and make Christ a packe-horse for their iniquities. But in the example of these Jewes, wee must learne to lay downe all presumptuous thoughts of our owne goodnesse, and vaine perswasions of Gods favour, without his true grace; and rather looke unto our sinnes, and be humbled for them, that God may lift us up. II. Point. *Christs* judgement of them is this; *They are not Iewes, but a Synagogue of Satan*; that is, a companie of men that seemed to serve God after the Jewish manner, but did indeed worship the Devill. Herein are many things to bee considered. I. How this could be true of any company of the Jewes, who were the chosen people of God? *Answ.* Election is twofold: speciall, and generall. Gods speciall Election is, when in his eternall counsell hee chooseth a man to life eternall: and this befell not all the Jewes, but some onely: Gods generall Election is, when hee vouchsafeth any people to become his Visible Church, to have and carrie the outward signes and privileges of his covenant: and thus was the Nation of the Jewes Elect, and therefore were circumcised, and received the Passeover. From this generall Election, a Church and people may fall, as the Jews did, and so became the Synagogue of Satan; being indeed never within the particular calling, from which a man cannot fall away: for *Gods Election remaineth sure*, 2 Tim. 2. 19. *His calling is without repentance*, Rom. 11. 29.

Rom. 7.

II. Point. At what time did the Jewes begin to bee a Synagogue of Satan? *Answ.* Not at the crucifying of the Lord of life, (though that were a most heinous sinne) for though some therein sinned of malice, yet many did it of ignorance. This *Peter* confesseth, Act. 3. 17. and therefore in his first Sermon after *Christs* Ascension telleth them, *that the promise belonged to them and to their seed that were afarre off*, Acts 2. 39. But when the Apostles had a long time preached *Christ* unto them, and convinced their consciences out of the Old Testament, that hee was the true Messias, and yet they remained obstinate; rejecting and persecuting both them and their doctrine; then they ceased to bee a Church of God, and became a Synagogue of Satan: for this cause *Paul* and *Barnabas shooke off the dust of their feet against them, and turned to the Gentiles*. Whereby we see, when a Church of God becommeth no Church; namely, not so soone as they hold an heresie: for the Church of the Galathians held justification by workes, yet thereupon ceased not

Act. 13. 16, 17.

not to be a Church: but when they embrace an heresie against the foundation of religion, and bee convicted of it, not by private men, but by Apostolicall authoritie, or by publike judicial sentence of the Church from the authority of Gods Word.

Hence we may learne, first what wee are to thinke and judge of the Church of the Papists, of the Libertines, and Anabapists, family of Love, and such like; namely, that they are no Churches of God: for they hold heresies against the foundation, which the Church long agone condemned by Apostolical and judicial authoritie. Againe, here wee learne what to judge of this our Church of England: many there bee that say we have no Church among us, because some private men have reproved the same for some things that we amisse, and yet they are not reformed. But this is a fond and foolish reason: For first, the errour must be against the foundation: and yet that maketh not a Church to bee no Church, unlesse it be obstinately maintained after sufficient reproofe and judicall conviction by the word of God: But no such thing can be affirmed of us, and therefore we remaine the true Church of God.

III. Point. How became the Jewes a Synagogue of Satan? *Answ.* Through their unbeleefe: as it is plainly proved, Roman. 11. 20. *Obiect.* But they held the Word of God, and defended the bookes of the old Testament, for which wee are beholding unto them. *Answ.* Indeed they held the letter: But if wee regard the true meaning of the Prophets, and the subject of the old Testament, which is Jesus Christ, that they rejected and denied. And so though they held the letter, yet worshipping God out of Christ, they worshipped an Idoll, and not that God which would give unto them eternall life: for out of Christ there is no salvation. And so we may say of the Church of Rome: though they hold the bookes of the Old and New Testament, with the Creed of the Apostles (whereupon some say wee ought not to depart from them,) yet the truth is, that indeed they hold them not. The Christ of the Papists is but a fained Christ; for they take from him both his nature (especially his humanity) and his offices: and therefore we have just cause to separate from them.

This example of the Jewes, that were once a most famous people, but are now become the Synagogue of Satan, must be set before our eies continually. For when all the world were rejected, they stood high in Gods favour; but now for their unbeleefe they are cast off from God, and are become the Synagogue of the Devill. Which must admonish us, *Not to bee high minded, but to feare*, Roman. 11. 20. for if God spared not the naturall branches, them that were his first chosen people, he will not spare us that are but wilde olives graffed into the true vine. We must therefore take heed of unbeleefe, and labour for true faith, which we must testifie by obedience in our lives and conversations.

A

V. 10. *Feare none of those things which thou shalt suffer: Behold, it shall come to passe that the Devill shall cast some of you into prison that yee may bee tried, and yee shall have tribulation tenne dayes. Bee thou faithfull unto the death, and I will give thee the crowne of life.*

B

Here followeth the second part of the Proposition of this Epistle, to wit, that heavenly and spirituall counsell which Christ giveth to the Church of Smyrna: which I call *counsell*, because in the next chapter our Saviour Christ calleth such kind of instruction by the name of counsell. First, here note that Christ commendeth this Church, and giveth her counsell, but doth not at all rebuke her for her faults, as hee did the Church of Ephesus. Hence the Papists gather, that Gods Church, and so the members thereof, may live without sinne, and fulfill the law. But they are deceived: Christ therefore abstaineth from reproofe of this Church, not for that he had not any thing against them, but for these two causes especially. First, because this Church of Smyrna did truly repent and beleeve, and did not decay in grace as the Church of Ephesus did: and therefore had the pardon of her sinnes, and was in Gods love and favour. Secondly, this Church did indevour to obey Christ, and to testifie her faith and love thereby. Now God accepteth the desire and will of obedience in his children, as obedience it selfe: and therefore did not reprove them for any fault that was among them.

C

Seeing this Church being in affliction is so farre forth accepted, that Christ reproveth nothing in her; we are taught, it is profitable for Gods Church and people sometime to bee in affliction: for thereby are the gifts and graces of God preserved, as Faith and Repentance: and many grievous sinnes prevented, which otherwise Gods children might fall into.

D

The counsell it selfe containeth three parts. A precept. A prophecie. And a precept againe. The first precept is in these words, *Feare none of these things which thou shalt suffer*. This precept may seeme to bee against other places of Scripture; as Phil. 2. 12. *Worke out your salvation in feare and trembling*. And, Roman. 11. 20. *bee not high minded, but feare*. *Answ.* There bee three kindes of feare: I. Naturall feare. II. feare proceeding from grace. III. A distrustfull feare proceeding from unbeleefe. The naturall feare

feare is a declining and eschewing of death and these things that tend thereto: this feare is in all men, in as much as every thing desireth to preserve it selfe: this was in *Christ*, who in his agony feared death, as it was a separation of soule and bodie asunder: yet this was no sinne in him, but onely an infirmitie without sinne. The second kinde of feare, is that which commeth from grace. Malac. 1. 6. *If I bee a father, where is mine honour? If I be a master, where is my feare?* This feare is a reverent awe towards God in regard of his mercy and judgements: and this is a vertue and no sinne. The third is distrustfull *feare*, when men for affliction forsake religion and obedience to God, standing more in feare of men, then of God: and this is that feare which Christ in this place forbiddeth, being a sinne that draweth men from God unto perdition.

A

In this Commandement Christ doth two things. First, hee giveth them and us to understand, what is the sinne in which every man is conceived, and the seed whereof remaineth still in the children of God; namely, distrustfull unbeleefe, whereby men feare the authority of the creature, more than the glorious Majestie of the eternall God: which proceedeth from this, that men consider not of God as hee extendeth his providence over all things, and as hee is a mighty Judge taking revenge upon all sinne and wicke dnesse.

B

Secondly, here Christ describeth the meanes whereby Gods people may arme themselves against all perils and troubles whatsoever, to wit, *Christian fortitude*: which is a gift of God proceeding from true faith, enabling a man to lay aside all feare, and with courage to undergo all dangers whatsoever, that he may in life and death maintain faith, and a good conscience: this vertue God prescribed to the Prophets when they were to enter into their caling, and our Saviour Christ to his Apostles, & to his Church of Smyrna. And it were to bee wished, that all the Ministers of the Gospell might speake unto their people as Christ speaketh unto this Church, *Feare not*. But the truth is, if they deale faithfully, they must change their note, & say with *Ioel, waile and howle yee Priests and people, bring in sackcloth and ashes, because the day of the Lords vengeance is at hand*. For it is lamentable to see the state of the whole bodie of our people, of whom we may generally say with the *Prophet, There is no knowledge of God in the land*. And where knowledge is, there is little conscience to live thereafter. Consider a. so how the most are carnall minded, dead in sinne, they savour not the things that pertaine to Gods kingdome, but their hearts are wholly possessed with earthly desires and delights, and spirituall things affect them not. Yea, in all places we shall see, that as naturall sleep wrapeth up the senses of the body: so a spirituall slumber benumneth their mindes and hearts. For though God preach daily unto us by his judgments, yet like the old world wee know no thing of the evill day; wee never call to minde the judgement to come. And if hereunto wee joyne the common crying sinnes of this land, as swearing, cursing, oppression, sabbath-breaking, drunkenesse, whoredome, and all uncleanenesse, yea, Atheisme it selfe the ground of all; How can wee say with Christ, Feare not? yea, rather we must call men to repentance in sackcloth and ashes. For God is jealous for his glory, neither will hee alway bee chiding, nor winke at our iniquities, he hath whet his sword and bent his bow, and unlesse wee repent, the day of havocke will come shortly, wherein he will take vengeance upon all our iniquities. And although this bee the common state of the land, yet Christ hath his remnant among us, who doe mourne for the sinnes and abominations of the times, and doe endievour to keepe faith and a good conscience in all things: and to these it may be said, *Fearenot*, but take to your selves Christian courage, and arme your selves therewith; lay aside all distrustfull feare, and glorifie God in your hearts, strive to keepe the faith in a pure conscience unto the end, and so *shall Christ appeare to your joy, when the wicked shall bee ashamed*. And to move Gods children to this Christian fortitude, first let them consider what a judgement of God is due unto them that are distrustfully fearefull, when they should suffer any thing for the name of Christ: Revel. 21. 8. *they must have their reward in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone among the damned*. Secondly, let them observe the Lords presence and his gracious promise of protection in distresse, *He will cause his Angels to pitch their tents about them, that no peril shall hurt them*. 2. King. 6. when a mightie armie came against Elisha, his servant was sore afraid: but marke how hee comforted him, *Feare not* (saith he) *for they that bee with us are more than they that bee with them*: And so it is with Gods children. Thirdly, let them consider that it is a most honourable estate to suffer any thing for the name of Christ. And therefore the Apostles rejoyced exceedingly when they had beene beaten, *That they were counted worthie to suffer any thing for Christs sake*, Galat. 5. 14. *the crosse of Christ is Pauls whole rejoycing*. And if hee would boast of any thing, it should bee herein, 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. Thus were Gods servants affected: and therefore they that repent and beleeve, need not to feare what flesh can doe unto them.

C

D

Ioel. 1. 13, 15.

Hos. 4. 1.

Isa. 66. 5.

Psal. 34. 8.

verse 16.

Act. 5. 41.

The second part of Christs counsell is his prophecie: which is a prediction of that particular affliction which this Church of Smyrna should suffer; and first he prefixeth this note of attention, *behold*: then hee setteth downe the prophecie it selfe, *The devil shall cast some of you into prison. Behold*, hereby he would teach us an excellent lesson: that wee must often consider before hand of the day of our visitation, wherein God will trie us, lest we perish therein;

Luke 19.41. our Saviour Christ comming towards Jerusalem *wept over it*, and when hee came to it hee foretold the finall destruction of that citie: which therefore came upon them, because they considered not the day of their visitation, neither the things therein fore-told that did concerne their peace. And the like destruction will come upon us in this land, if wee consider not the dayes of our visitation: let us therefore now in the dayes of peace forecast what is to come, and prepare our selves against the day of the Lords triall; and so shall wee escape the fearefull and finall destruction that shall come upon the wicked. *It shall come to passe that the Devill shall cast some of you into prison, that yee may be tried, and yee shall have tribulation ten dayes.* These words containe Christs prophecie, wherin hee sheweth himselfe to be true God; for as *Esay* in many places sheweth, it is the property of God alone to fore-tell a particular affliction that is contingent. But some will say, others can foretel certaine things to come: as the Physitian, the sicke mans death; and the Astronomer the time of the eclyps; how then is this proper to God? *Answ.* The Physitian foretelleth the sicke mans death, onely by vertue of causes present, in which the future death is to him apparant: And the Astronomer foretelleth the eclyps, by the consideration of the naturall and ordinary course of the Heavens in present, and by that can come to foretell it in time to come. So that simply none can foretell a thing contingent, except hee see it present in the causes; but Christ foretelleth things to come simply of himselfe, though no caule be present, as appeareth in this place.

Esay 44.7.

In this prophecie Christ describeth this affliction by sundry arguments. First, by the cause thereof, which is the Devill. Secondly, by the parties that were to bee afflicted, *Some of you of the Church of Smyrna.* Thirdly, by the kinde of punishment, *Imprisonment*: fourthly, by the end thereof, *their triall.* And fifthly by the time of it continuance, *for ten dayes.*

I. *Argument.* The cause of their affliction is the devill. *Quest.* How can that bee, for being a spirit he cannot offer violence to mens bodies to cast them into prison? *Answ.* True, but hee is the God of the world that ruleth in the hearts of the wicked; hee inclineth their wils to hate Gods children, he stirreth them up to persecute, and maketh them his instruments to cast Gods servants into prison.

In this that the Devill causeth the afflictions of Gods Church, we may learne sundry points. I. What manner of men those bee that persecute the Church of God? namely, wicked men, such as are inspired by Satan, and wholly guided in minde, will, and in affection by him: this made *Paul* say, *Hee was the head of all sinners*: because in persecuting the Church of God hee was guided by the Devill, and made his minister: which must teach us to take heed how we persecute the Church of God, or any member thereof, either in word or deed: for he that doth so is the vassall of Satan in that action, and while he holdeth that course, he sheweth himselfe to bee no better than one that is wholly guided by the devill: for the devill is the principall agent in persecutions, and wicked men be his instruments.

1 Tim. 1.15.

II. Hereby we are taught to take pitty upon all persecutors, bee they Kings or Monarchs, or whatsoever: yea, we must pray for them though they be our enemies: because they are possessed and guided by the Devill, and in their persecutions doe his will, and become his servants and vassals.

III. Here we learne with what weapons we are to defend our selves in time of persecution: namely, with spirituall weapons of prayers, and invocation, wherein we must shew our faith in Christ, our repentance and true obedience; for our principall adversary is a spirit, and hereby we shall best defend our selves against him, and get the chiefest victory. *Elias* for his prayer is called, *The Chariot and horseman of Israel.* Nothing doth so much prevaile in troubles and persecutions, as prayer from a penitent and beleeving heart. And if God should send a forrain nation against us, howsoever the weapons of the souldier must bee used, yet our principall weapons must be praier and fasting: for thereby we shall soonest foyle our principall adversary Satan, who feareth not the speare nor sword, and yet will flie before these spirituall weapons.

2 Kings 2.12.

II. *Argument.* The parties that must bee afflicted, were some of the Church of Smyrna, not all.

III. *Argu.* The kind of their affliction was imprisonment.

IV. *Argu.* The end of their affliction, was the triall of their faith, hope, love, and patience, with other graces of God, and the manifestation of the same, first to their owne conscience, and then unto the world. In these three Arguments, note first a speciall point touching Gods providence, to wit, that it is the first cause of all, above all causes ruling and disposing them all. God in governing the world by his providence useth instruments of two sorts: good, or evill. The good instruments are good Angels, and regenerate men; by whom commeth no disorder, for God worketh both in them and by them. Wicked instruments are the Devill, and wicked men, and though God use them wel, yet from them is much disorder and sinne, for he worketh not in them, but only by them, permitting their sins and disorders, that thereby hee may shew forth his justice, mercie, and power: which herin do notably appear, in using these instruments which be evill in themselves, that notwithstanding their malice hee causeth wonderfull order: first by his providence he restraineth their fury and rage, so as they cannot shew it to the full as they desire. See this in the Devils persecution against this Church: hee can.

cannot kill the members thereof, but only cast them into prison: hee cannot imprison them all, but some onely: neither can he keepe them in prison always, but for a short time. Secondly, by his providence he turneth all that they doe, to the good of the Church: the devill afflicteth the Church for the destruction and damnation of their soules; but God turneth it unto their good, to make their faith manifest, and to prevent many sinnes in them. These things wee should often thinke of, and blesse Gods name for ever, that by his providence he doth master Satans power and malice; and so dispose of all actions of the wicked, that they tend to the good of his Church. This must also teach us to renounce our selves, and to put all our trust and confidence in Christ his providence, making that our comfort, our stay, and protection in all distresse.

Against, whereas the end of afflictions in Gods Church is the triall of faith, and other graces; hence we are taught many things. First, to labour to have in our hearts the power of godlinesse in true faith and unfained repentance; and not content our selves with the forme and shew thereof in a naked profession onely. For wee must bee cast into the fire triall of afflictions, to see what is in our hearts. In the day of triall, shewes will not serve the turne, nor stand us in stead. Trialls and afflictions will consume them, as the fire doth drosse and stubble. Secondly, to be joyfull and glad, when the Lords will is to call us to suffer for his sake: because this is a meanes to make knowne good graces in our hearts. James 1.2. *Brethren, count it exceeding great joy, when ye fal into divers afflictions, knowing that the triall of your faith bringeth forth patience.*

V. *Argument.* The time of their continuance in affliction is *for ten dayes.* By which some understand *a long time*: according unto that which *Iacob* saith to *Laban*; *Thou hast changed my wages ten times*, that is, often. And so the Israelites are said to sinne, *ten times against the Lord*: that is, many times: but this exposition will not so fitly stand in this place; for Christ intendeth to comfort this Church. But what comfort could this bee, to say they should bee so long in affliction? Others expound *ten dayes* to be *ten yeares.* And so the word *dayes* is sometime used to betoken yeares; for in the Scripture there bee yeares of dayes, as well as yeares of weekes. But though this exposition may well stand with the words, yet none can shew by true record, that this Church was afflicted onely for ten yeares, and no longer. Therefore a third exposition is this. That by *ten dayes* is meant some short space of time: and so I understand this place, because it is most fitable to all circumstances. For here Christ intendeth to comfort this Church, which is most fitly done, by fore-telling a short time of their affliction.

Gen. 31.41.

Numb. 14.22.

In this circumstance of time, Christ foreteth downe two things; First, that the afflictions of Gods Church and people are for a certaine time decreed of God, which cannot bee changed, lengthened, or shortned. Particular proofes hereof wee have in Scripture. So God foretold *Abraham*, That the afflictions of his people should be 430. *yeares*: which time they were afflicted, especially in Ægypt: but at the time night when those yeares were expired, they were led out of Egypt, and their afflictions ceased, Exod. 12. 40. And the 70. yeares captivitie were well knowne unto *Daniel* to be determined of the Lord: And therefore hee armed himselfe with patience during that time, and prayed not for deliverance, untill it should bee expired.

The consideration hereof must move us to arme our selves with patience when God shall send affliction, because wee cannot deliver our selves before the time which God hath appointed: for the continuance of our afflictions is set downe by God, and cannot be changed by us. Secondly, here Christ sheweth, that the afflictions of his Church are but for a short time: and therefore *Paul* calleth them *momentanea*, in regard of the eternall weight of glory which shall be revealed at the end of this life, and never have end. Which is a singular ground of comfort unto the childe of God in any distresse.

2 Cor. 4.17.

Thus wee see the parts of this prophecie; yet in the words there is a further thing intended; for every word containeth a reason to comfort this Church: as first, from the cause of their persecution, which is the Devill: and therefore they must not feare, for if hee cast them into prison, their cause is good: hee is Gods enemy, and so the Lord is on their side, who then can bee against them to doe them hurt? Secondly, not all your whole Church, but onely some (saith Christ) must bee afflicted. Thirdly, Satan cannot kill you, but onely cast you into prison. Fourthly, his imprisonment shall not tend to your damnation, but make for the triall of your grace. And lastly, it is but for a short time. In all which you may see the power of Gods providence overruling your enemie, and *turning his rage unto* your salvation; and therefore take comfort and courage unto your soules, lay aside all feare and all dread, and keepe faith, and good conscience to the end.

The third part of this counsell, is a most blessed precept, containing, most heavenly advice: *Be thou faithfull unto death, and I will give thee the crowne of life.* Gods servants are called faithfull, in regard of their fidelitie which they owe to God, and that is in two respects: I. Every member of Christ is baptized; wherein God for his part promileth Christ, with life everlasting: and the partie baptized promiseth unto God againe, that he will deny himselfe, and cast himselfe wholly upon God in life and death, and keepe faith and a good conscience. Which promise is called *the stipula-*

tion of a good conscience. 1 Peter 3. 21. And when a man keepeth this promise made to God, then is he faithfull, and when he breaketh it, hee is unfaithfull. II. God giveth unto his children many good gifts and graces, as knowledge, faith, repentance, and care to keepe a good conscience, which hee would have them in all things to keepe and preserve. And therefore *Paul* biddeth *Timothie, keepe that thing which is committed unto him of trust.* Now a man is faithfull unto God, when hee maketh good use of the gifts and graces of God, and still preserveth the same, using them for Gods glorie, and the good of his owne soule, and of his brethren: like as wee are counted faithfull with men, when wee keep that thing safe which is committed unto us of trust. The meaning then of Christ is this: Thou hast made a promise unto mee in baptisme, to renounce sinne and Satan, and to keepe faith and a good conscience unto death; therefore performe this thy promise: and for those gifts which I have committed of trust unto thee, see thou keepe them well, and use them to my glory in the good of thy brethren.

1 Tim. 6. 20.

Against this precept three sorts of men offend, and be unfaithfull unto God. I. Those that being baptized, dee yet live in ignorance and security, never seeking to know God, or to understand his will, no not so much as for their owne vow in baptisme; although none will brag more of fidelitie unto God, than these men doe. II. Those that have knowledge and understanding in Gods will, and yet make no conscience to live accordingly. III. Those that for a time shew forth many good things, as care to get knowledge, and to keepe faith and a good conscience, but after suffer themselves to be intangled and drawn away with the profits and pleasures of the world, or else to be driven back by trials and persecution. And of these three sorts bee most men generally; whose case is fearefull and dangerous, for they shall never have the crowne of life, if they continue thus unfaithfull.

To induce men to fidelitie, Christ addeth a most forcible reason, promising thereunto, *The crowne of eternall life.* Hence the Papists conclude, that Martyrs by suffering martyrdome, dee merit the kingdome of heaven; because it is called a Crowne, therefore say they it is a reward. Whereunto I answer two wayes: I. The kingdome of heaven is called a Crowne onely in resemblance, because as with men after the race is run, they receive the garland; even so after men have fought the good fight of faith, and kept a good conscience in this life, then in the life to come they receive the crown of glory. For the keeping of faith and a good conscience is not the cause, but the Antecedent of eternall life. Secondly, the reward is promised not to the martyrdome, but to the Martyr: and yet not for his sufferings, but because hee is a member of Christ, and by suffering death but received his faith in *Christ*, for whose merit alone he is so rewarded. And so must this, and all other promises of like sort bee understood: for the Papists dee foully erre when they apply the promises unto the workes, which are made unto the workers. By this promise, wee all that have made our vow to God in baptisme, must learne to become faithfull in keeping the same unto the end. It is a shame for a man to bee unfaithfull unto men, much more with God. And the more fearefull is this sinne, because onely the faithfull shall inherit eternall life. Secondly, all such as have made a shew of good things heretofore, and now doe suffer the same to decay, must call to minde from whence they are fallen, and become faithfull keepers of the graces of God, holding fast true religion and good conscience, and walke constantly in obedience: and then shall they have the crowne of life, though not for their deserts, but onely for the merits of Christ.

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V. 11. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the Spirit saith unto the Churches: he that overcommeth, shall not bee hurt of the second death.*

These words containe the last part of this Epistle: namely, the Conclusion. Wherein observe generally, as also in the two next verses, that Christ repeateth the same things which he spake before in this and the former chapter, yea in the very same words. This must bee considered, because it is done by Christ, who is the Doctor of his Church, whose example both for matter and manner of teaching must bee our rule and precept. The like did the Apostles; *It grieveth not Paul to write the same things*, Phil. 3. 1. And *Peter* saith unto the dispersed Church, *That hee will often put them in minde of the same things before his departing, wherein they had knowledge and were established.* Hereby all Ministers of the Gospell in their ministery have warrant, often to teach and repeat the same points of doctrine, even in the same words. Yea, Gods faithfull Minister may preach the same Sermon oftentimes, if hee doe it not for ease to himselfe, but for the benefit of the people. And therefore if any hearer of Gods word, shall at any time marke the Minister to deliver the same things often, he is not curiously to finde fault with his ministery, for by that reason they may finde fault with Christ, who seventimes repeateth the same things unto these Churches.

2 Pet. 1. 12.

This Conclusion hath two parts: a Commandement, and a Promise: The words of this Commandement have beene expounded in the seventh verse, with the doctrines and uses thereof; yet here is to bee observed what the Spirit commendeth thus seriously to our hearing. The things are three, which were handled

in the former verses. First, touching Gods providence, that he seeth and regardeth the tribulations of his Church. The second, touching triall, that Gods Church and people ought beforehand to consider of the day of visitation, and thereby arme themselves with courage against all afflictions, that they suffer not themselves to be overmuch dismayed with any feare. The third touching faithfulnesse: Gods people must consider what promises they have made to God in Baptisme, namely, to keepe faith, true Religion, and good conscience unto the end; and these they must performe unto death. These things being to carefully commended unto us by Christ, we must labour to have them engraven in our hearts, that wee may practise them in our lives. And to incite us hereunto, wee must marke the two reasons contained in the words. First, *because the Spirit of Christ speaketh unto us.* Secondly, because they *concerne all Churches*, (though principally they were spoken to the Church of Smyrna) and therefore none may seeke excuse to exempt himselfe from learning and obeying these things.

The promise, *He that overcometh, shall not bee hurt of the second death.* Of the meanes of overcoming, wee have spoken in the seventh verse. By second death, is meant the condemnation of the soule and body for ever and ever. For there be two kindes of death mentioned in Scripture: the first is the separation of bodie and soule asunder at the end of this life: The second is, when soule and body both are severed forever from Gods comfortable presence, Rev. 21. 8. The second death is expounded to bee *an abode in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.* The meaning therefore of the promise is this; that they which overcome, though they may suffer the first death, yet they shall never suffer damnation; their soule and body may bee severed one from the other for a time, but neither soule nor bodie shall ever bee severed from God, to goe into that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Which is a most gracious and happy promise.

Here first marke to whom this promise is made, namely, *To them that overcome.* Where learne, that it is not sufficient for a man to professe and approve, or to teach the doctrine of the Gospell; but withall he must joyne a fight against himselfe, against sinne, the world, the devill, and against all the enemies of his salvation, and not suffer them to reigne over him, but to fight, as by Gods grace hee may overcome; and then shall the second death never hurt him. It is nothing to professe, if we still live in sinne: and therefore wee must not content our selves with knowledge, but labour to feele in our hearts such power of grace, as will make us truly to say wee are conquerours over our spirituall enemies. This is that blessed state of all those, unto whom life everlasting belongeth, who shall never taste of the second death.

Secondly, here is answered a great question, which every mans conscience will move unto him; namely, *How may I escape the second death*, that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone? *Answ.* Thou must in this life truly turne unto God from all thine evill ways, renounce thy selfe, and put all thine affiance in Christ his death and passion: and evermore labour to keep true religion, faith, and good conscience unto death in all estates. This doe, and though thou taste of the first, yet the second death shall never touch thee.

Thirdly, hereby Christ giveth us to understand, that of the two deaths the second is the worser. The bodily death is terrible unto nature, but the second is the proper death indeed, the destruction of the creature in soule and body eternally. And yet behold the madnesse of man, who feareth greatly the first death, and regardeth nothing the burning lake: like unto little children that feare their owne shadowes, and yet are not afraid of fire and water, that will burn and drown them. This is mans miserable estate, through the blindnesse of his minde, and the hardnesse of his heart.

V. 12. *And to the Angell of the Church which is at Pergamus write, This saith hee that hath that sharp sword with two edges.*

Here is the third particular commandement which Christ gave to *Iohn*, whereof wee have spoken before in the first verse: shewing there what is meant by Angel, and why this particular commandement was given unto *Iohn*. This third Epistle of Christ, as the former, hath three parts: a Preface in this verse. The proposition of the Epistle, vers. 13. and so forward unto the 17. And the conclusion in the 17. verse.

I. Part. The Preface five verse, in whose name this Epistle is written, namely, in Christ's name. The causes whereof we have shewed before in the first verse. Christ is here set forth by an action of his Kingly office, borrowed from the former Chapter, verse 16. *These things saith he, that hath the sharpe two edged sword*: that is, He who is not onely Priest and Prophet of his Church, but the King thereof, to guide and governe the same. The sword which he hath in his hand, or in his mouth (as *Isa.* saith) is that two edged sword, yea, that sharpe two edged sword: thereby is signified the whole word of God, the Law and Gospell; which is so called by reason of the operation thereof, as it is Heb. 4. 12.

Christ is thus described to comfort this Church of Pergamus. For hereby three things are signified: First, his wonderfull power in slaying original sinne and corruption by his Word,

word, in all them that beleeve in him: so as there is no hope of recovery for sinne, after it is once wounded. Secondly, that he will strengthen and preserve his Church, and all the true members thereof by the same word, against all their enemies. This it doth after this manner: The whole word of God both law and Gospel must be knowne, and beleeved; then whensoever any temptation commeth, faith maketh the same word powerfull in us to repel the temptation, and to strengthen us in affliction: for it is that sword of the spirit, whereby wee wound all our enemies. But if it bee not beleeved, it is but as a sword in a sheath, and will nothing help us. Thirdly, hereby he signifieth that hee destroyeth all their enemies: this is the chiefe end why he so describeth himselfe in this place. How Christ woundeth his enemies here-with, we have shewed in the former chapter, and the sixteenth verse, with the ufes thereof.

A knew well that in *Abimelechs* court they would make no conscience of murther, because *they wanted this feare of God*: to feare God and keepe his Commandements, is the whole duties of man: and therefore wee should give all diligence hereunto. It is indeed a hard lesson for us to learne, and of our selves wee cannot learne it: but if we use the meanes, Gods blessing will be upon our endevour, and then shall wee have knowledge upon knowledge, and grace upon grace, with the comfort of a good conscience. Genes. 20. 11.

The particular commendation of this Church is, for her constancie in maintaining the doctrine of the Gospell, in these words, *I know where thou dwellest, even in a place where Satans throne is, and yet for all that thou keepest my name:* that is, thou holdest still my true religion and doctrine. The throne of Satan is any place where superstition, idolatry, or prophanenesse is B maintained without controlement, and from whence wickednesse is conveied to other places. For the devill is the God of the world, and he hath his thrones among men. Pergamus was a great city of the Gentiles which maintained Idolatrie, and persecuted the Gospell, from whence also iniquity was derived to other townes and places: therefore it is called the devils throne.

Herein wee may observe sundrie points of great importance. First, the exceeding policie of Satan: hee hath his kingdome in this world, and for the establishment thereof, he must have his thrones where wickednesse and Idolatrie is C maintained without controlement, and whence sinne is derived to other places. In all ages it hath beene thus, and will continue so to the end. In the old world hee had his thrones among *Caines* posteritie: In the Church of the Jewes, even in the dayes of the Kings of Israel, the high places and groves, where the people sacrificed to their idols, were the devils thrones: the oracles of the Gentiles where the Devils gave answer unto men, were his chiefe thrones: in the dayes of Popery, every Church and chappell were thrones of Satan, wherein were erected Images and holy roods for the worship of Saints, whither the people came to worship from countrey to countrey. In most schooles of D learning for many hundred yeates, the Devill had his thrones: for therin was nothing taught but errours, heresies, and most abominable idolatries. In these our dayes the devill hath his thrones among us, where any wizzard dwelleth or cunning person (as they are called) for thither whole countries doe flocke for helpe, and for counsell, and so yeeld homage to Satan. All dicing, and all brothell houses, wherein abhominable wickednesse is freely committed, are Satans thrones. Yea, all those families are the devils thrones, where men live without love or practice of religion, in blindnesse, and in ignorance, in blasphemie, drunkennesse, whoredome, injustice, or any such impieties.

And

Vers. 13. *I know thy workes, and where thou dwellest, even where Satans throne is: And thou keepest my Name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those dayes when Antipas my faithfull Martyr was slaine among you, where Satan dwelleth.*

Here beginneth the second part of this Epistle; to wit, the Propolition: which containeth two parts; A commendation of this Church in this verse, and a Reproofe, verse 14, 15. The commendation is twofold: First, general in these words, *I know thy workes*: then speciall in the words following, *I know where thou dwellest*, &c. Of the generall commendation we have spoken in the former Epistles, v. 2. and 9. This yet must be observed, that Christ herewith beginneth the matter of all his epistles: intending no doubt, hereby to settle the perswasion of his presence deeply in every one of our hearts: for it is indeed the ground of the holy feare of God, which is the beginning of all true religion and godlinesse. And here Christ giveth this president for his Ministers: namely, that the first thing they must teach their people, is to bee perswaded of this presence of Christ; wherefoever they are, Christ is with them, and whatsoever they doe he seeth them. This will cause them make conscience of all their waies, and it is impossible that any should ever have sound knowledge or good conscience, till hee bee perswaded hereof. *Abrahams*

Use.

And in reason it must needs be thus, for the Devill being a Prince of this world, will have his throne in some parts thereof.

Hereby wee see it is most needfull in every Christian kingdome, there should be thrones of Justice in civill courts, for the maintenance of equitie, the reward of vertue, and for the repressing of injustice and iniquitie. And also thrones of Ecclesiasticall jurisdiction for the reprehending and punishing of all those sinnes which the civill court reacheth not unto. And it is necessarie that in these thrones, justice should bee administred without partialitie, that Gods throne may be erected, which is opposite to the throne of Satan.

Againe, the Devils cunning appeares notably in the choice of the place where he setteth up his throne: it was no pettie towne or village, but a chiefe and famous citie, which had beene the seat of many Kings. This hath beene his practice in all ages, to choose the chiefest places for the seat of his throne. Great Babylon in Scripture is called, *A citie of iniquitie*, that is, a throne of the Devill. And Rome that was once a famous Church, is now, and hath been long that spirituall Babylon, the throne of the devil. Yea, in Jerusalem the citie of the great King, had the Devill got up his throne, when Christ called the temple a den of theeves. And in our dayes the people of great townes and cities are generallly more backward in embracing the Gospell, than in little villages. The cause hereof is, the malice of the Devill, who will have his throne in chiefest places, for the greater hinderance of religion: there he much prevalleth by choaking the word with pride, profit, and pleasures, causing them to content themselves with a forme of godlinesse, when as they want the power thereof. And thus he dealeth in greater townes, that thence impietie may bee derived to the country round about, as tradesmen doe their wares from place to place. And therefore the people of great towns especially, must labour not onely to know the Gospel, but to beleeve and obey the same. Every man must reforme himselfe, and every family themselves, that Gods throne may be established, and the Devils throne battered downe among them.

Secondly, whereas this Church dwelleth where the Devils throne is, wee may observe, whence the Church of God is gathered; namely, out of Satans kingdome. Gods Church is a company of men ordained to salvation, taken from under the power of the devill: though after their calling they be Gods peculiar flocke, yet they are by nature the children of wrath. Thus *Paul* speaketh of all the Gentiles, Act. 26. 18. And particularly of the Church of Colossa, Colossi. 1. 13. *That God delivered them from the power of darknesse, and translated them into the kingdome of his deare Sonne.*

Hence we learne, I. That no man is to stand upon his Gentilitie, or glorie in his parentage A for noblitie and great blood, but only rejoyce in this, that he is drawne out of the kingdome of darknesse, and from under the power of Satan, and placed by Christ Jesus in the kingdome of grace. For what will it profit a man to weare about his necke a chaine of gold, if so bee his heart, will, and affections, be chained to the devils service? and what avayleth in Princes to sit upon their stately thrones, if they themselves be in subjection unto Satan, and doe homage unto his throne? yea, what will all the creatures, honours, and pleasures of the world availe to him that is debarred from the riches of Gods love in Christ, and destitute of the treasures of his grace, and so led captive by Satan at his will and pleasure? Secondly, some doe think that a man may be saved by any religion; the Jew by his religion, the Turke by his, the Papist by his, &c. yea it is the common received opinion of our ignorant people, that every one shall be saved by his good meaning. But all these are meere dotages of mens braine: for a man may hold his good meaning, and yet serve the Devill at his throne. It is not sufficient to hold this or that religion, or to practise civill vertues, as justice, temperance, &c. unlesse a man be one of Gods Church, severed from the companie of them that serve Satan. Thirdly, here all Gods servants have a notable meanes of stay and comfort in afflictions. If they bee persecuted, and cast into most darke dungeons for the name of Christ, they must call to mind that they are taken out of the devils prison in the kingdome of darknesse, and placed in the glorious kingdome of Jesus Christ, and made members of his Church, and shall bee inheritours of his glorie. Fourthly, hence we learne, that the preaching of the Gospell hath in it a divine power: no creatures, except the good Angels, have power comparable to the devils; and yet the preaching of the Gospell is stronger than all the power of Satan: for it gatheredh a Church where the devill hath his throne, delivers them from under the power of Satan, and placeth them in the glorious liberty of the sonnes of God: although therefore it be preached by foolish man, yet it must bee reverenced as the power of God, and his owne arme to save his Flock. Fifthly, hence wee gather that God will have his people to dwell with wicked and ungodly men: for the Church of Pergamus dwelleth where Satans throne is. This he doth for good causes: I. That their faith, obedience, and repentance might bee exercised, and they preserved from many sinnes, which otherwise they should fall into. *Moses* telleth the Israelites, that the Canaanites must not be all cast out at the first entrance, but dwell among them, lest wilde beasts did grow up which would devoure them; and so the wicked must dwell among the godly to exercise Godsgraces in them, lest they fall into sinne and security. II. That they might shine forth as lights unto the

Ddd wicked,

wicked, by their godly conversation, Philip. 2. 15. *That yee may be blamelesse and pure, the sonnes of God without rebuke in the middest of a naughtie and crooked nation, and among whom yee shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.* And thus the godly must doe, that by their unblameable life, others might bee wonne to the faith: for godly example is a notable meanes to draw men to love and embrace faith and true religion, 1 Pet. 3. 1. III. That God may shew on the godly tokens of his speciall love and favour: which hee doth, when hee sendeth judgements upon the wicked, and spareth his children. Hence it was, that when the Lord would bring a common judgement upon the Jewes, he caused those that mourned for their owne sinnes, and for the abominations of the people, *To bee marked in the foreheads that they might bee spared.* So that if any godly person dwell among such as hate religion, and be prophane, he must content himselfe, knowing it is Gods will his Church should be vexed and troubled by the societies of the wicked and ungodly. Sixthly, hence it appeareth that Gods people may lawfully dwell among wicked and ungodly men, alwaies remembring that they communicate not with them in their sins and rebellions against God: For so *Lot* dwelt in Sodome, and this Church of Pergamus where the Devill had his throne. 1 Cor. 7. 1. this question is answered: a master is a heathen man, and his servant is converted to the faith; whereupon he thinketh he is free from serving his master: but *Paul* telleth him he must doe externall service still, so farre forth as he keepe good conscience, and bee not constrained to renounce true religion. Lastly, hence we have direction to answer a question much urged against us by the Papists, to wit; Where our Church was fourescore yeares ago, when *Luther* first began to preach: they intend hereby to prove our Church to be but of fourescore yeares continuance, and so our religion to bee new. We answer by the like; Where was the Church of Pergamus, when the Devils throne was in that citie? Surely it was there where the Devill had his throne. And so when Antichrist that man of sinne, had spread Poperie over all Europe, at that very time was Gods Church in Europe where Poperie was professed, mingled with the Papists: which to bee thus appeareth by this, that in all ages there have beene some, who openly have oppugned Poperie, more or lesse, partly by writing, and partly by speaking, as the records of all ages doe testifie and make manifest: so that though iniquity had the upper hand, yet our Church had his being in the midst of poperie.

Ezek. 9. 4.

And thou keepest my name; That is, though thou dwell in a place where the devill hath his throne, yet thou holdest fast my name, so as neither force nor fraud of the adversarie can take my name from thee; so much the words import. By *Christs name*, we must understand the doctrine of the Gospel: so *Paul* is said to be *A chosen vessell to carrie Christs name among the Gentiles*: that is, to publish among them the doctrine of the Gospell.

Here this Church of Pergamus is particularly commended for her constancie, in holding fast true religion against all adversarie-power whatsoever. Hence we learne that it is not sufficient to teach, or know and beleeve the doctrine of the Gospell in time of peace; but wee must bee constant in holding it fast against all gainsayers, and not be turned about with every wind of doctrine; but in life and death keepe sure the truth, that neither fraud nor force of any adversarie-power draw it from us, or us from it. Matth. 13. *The kingdome of heaven is compared to a treasure hid in the field, which when a man findeth, hee goeth and selleth all he hath to buy the field.* The scope of that parable is this: If any man should come into any of our fields, and by searching finde a gold mine, he would not make it knowne to any, but cover it close, and goe his way, and sell all that he had to buy that field, that therby he might inrich himselfe: even so having found this, that the Gospell revealeth the way to life everlasting, though we must not conceale the same from others, yet we must bee like this man herein, that wee could be content to part with all that wee have, that so we might make the Gospell ours. 1 Tim. 3. 9. Deacons must have this propertie, *To have the ministerie of faith in a pure conscience.* There a good conscience is compared to a sure treasure-house, which cannot bee robbed by any adversarie-power: and faith, that is, true religion is the treasure there safely laid up: such a storehouse must we get for the preservation of the faith. Any thing else we may lose, but if we part with true religion, salvation is gone, and all is lost. And therefore in life and death we must keepe fast faith.

Further, Christ amplifieth the praise of their constancie by two arguments: First, that they held Christs name without deniall: Secondly, that they kept the faith in the time of bloudie persecution. For the first in these words, *And hast not denied my faith.* This is an excellent commendation; for many will hold the doctrin of the Gospel for a time, and yet after denie the same by apostasie: but this church held fast true religion, without any revolt at all. Their practice must we follow, and so hold fast true religion, that therin wee never make revolt: for if we shall once denie religion, we know not whether God will give us the grace of repentance, that we may professe it againe; which if he doe not, we perish eternally. Consider *Esaus* example, who sold his birthright for a messe of red broath, and after lost the blessing; which when hee would have recovered, hee was rejected, *and found no place to repentance, though hee sought it with teares.* Therefore to prevent the fearefull danger of not repenting after revolt, wee must still hold fast true religion

Heb. 12. 17.

religion without deniall.

Here in this place *the faith of Christ*, is all one with *Christs name*: that is, with the true doctrine of the Gospell. And it is called Christs faith: First, because Christ with the Father and the Spirit, is the author thereof: Secondly, because Christ revealeth the same from the bosome of his Father: for God revealeth his Gospel unto men by his Sonne Christ Jesus: Thirdly, because Christ is the substance and matter of the Gospell: for indeed, Christ Jesus is the principall subject of the whole Bible, being the end of the Law, and the substance of the Gospell.

The second argument of their praise for constancie, is taken from the circumstance of time; they held fast true religion in the time of bloudy persecution: *Even in those dayes* (saith Christ) *when Antipas my faithfull martyr was slaine, among you where Satan dwelleth.* Who this *Antipas* was, is not knowne, neither certainly recorded in any historie: it is thought he was the Minister of the Church, who opposed himselfe against Idolatry and Gentilisme in this citie of Pergamus.

In this argument note two points. I. That Christ commends *Antipas*, calling him his faithfull martyr. Whereby we see, that in Gods Church, it is lawfull to honour Saints and Martyrs. For that which Christ doth, his Church may doe. This their honour must stand in two things: In due deserved praise and commendation, and in a carefull imitation of their good vertues and godly lives: and for this end doth Christ commend *Antipas* unto his Church, that they might follow his good conversation: but as for Popish honour of invocation and adoration, it hath no ground in Gods Word. Againe, in calling him faithfull Martyr, he commendeth more the cause of his death, than the death; to shew that the cause maketh a martyr, not the death: For an hereticke may be put to death for his damnable opinions. Therefore *Antipas* is a martyr, not because he was slaine, but because he was faithfull unto death for the maintenance of Christs true religion.

II. Point. In the end of the verse Christ sheweth who were the authors of *Antipas* his death; namely, such among them in whom Satan ruled: for he was slaine (saith Christ) *among you, where Satan dwelleth.* Which words he repeateth, to give us to understand, that all persecuters, let them carrie what face they will, are in truth such, in whom the Devill ruleth, where he hath his hold, and keepes possession. *Quest.* Why did Satan more dwell there than in other places? *Ans.* Because many in this place were gentiles, who contemned and mocked the Gospel, & maintained Idolatrie, whereby they became the holds of Satan. And by proportion we may gather, that all contemners of religion, and all that walke in their owne wicked wayes, are indeed the stables and holds of the Devill, though they should be the Temples of the holy Ghost. And so many families as there are, where religion is mocked, Gods name blasphemed, injustice and impiety practised: so many holds of Satan there are where the devill ruleth: and such they continue till they reform themselves of their impieties, and embrace the Gospell sincerely. And therefore all masters of families especially should love the Gospell, and see that in their families religion be taught, embraced, and obeyed, that so the devill may have no hold in their families. *Quest.* Whether might not *Antipas* being Pastor of this Church, have fled for the safety of his life? *Ans.* There be two kinds of persecution, one that is directly intended against the Pastor principally: the other against the whole Church equally. In the persecution directed against the Pastor, this must be considered; Whether God gave him opportunitie and libertie to flie, or not: if God gave him libertie and opportunitie, he may flie, and the Church is to assist him, and to use means for his preservation: but if God denie him meanes to escape, then he must judge himselfe to be called of God to suffer death for his name, and so he may not flie. And such was the cause of *Antipas* in this Church. But if the persecution bee directed against the whole Church equally, then the Pastor may not flie, but take part in their sufferings, that he may be a means to stay and comfort his brethren.

V. 14. *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that maintaine the doctrine of Balaam, which taught Balac to put a stumbling blocke before the children of Israel, that they should eat of things sacrificed unto Idols, and commit fornication.*

Here followeth the reproofe of this Church of Pergamus, which is first generally propounded in these words, *I have a few things against thee*: Secondly, in particular, for want of zeale, *in suffering among them such as maintaine the doctrine of Balaam.* Thirdly, he setteth downe a reason or confirmation thereof in the end of the 14. vers. and in the 15.

The generall reproofe is the same which was given out against the Church of Ephesus, vers. 4. Whereby he would teach us a speciall duty: namely, that every man must seriously consider with himselfe, what sinnes he hath in him, which Christ may have to lay unto his charge. For this very cause doth Christ teach it unto this Church. And therefore wee must

call our selves to reckoning, and examine our selves not by our owne wits, but by the rule of Gods Word, and search out all our thoughts, words, and actions; and see how many things Christ may take against us, that so making a forehand reckoning, and seeking to be cleared by true repentance, we may not be condemned for them at the last day: for if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged. This is a necessarie duties, and the practice of it is the ground of all grace, and conscionable obedience: as on the other side, the want hereof is the cause why many that live in the Church doe perish eternally. For a day of accounts will come, wherein we shall never escape, unlesse by a forehand reckoning in the practice of true repentance from dead workes, and by faith in Christ Jesus we prevent the same. Lamentable and fearefull is the state of all those, that never call themselves to this account: it causeth them to goe on in sinne without remorse, Hos. 7. 2. Hereof *Jeremie* complained, *That no man said, what have I done.* And for that cause he denounceth fearefull judgement against the people. This was the sinne of the old world: *men knew nothing till the flood came, and destroyed them all.* This securitie bringeth mens soules to hell, before they wot where they are: and therefore *David* crieth out, Psal. 50. 22. *Oh consider this* (meaning the account that God will take with them) *lest God teare them in peeces, and there be none to deliver them.* The end of preaching and hearing Gods Word, is to bring the soule to eternall life and salvation: but the want of this account, maketh the holy ordinance of God to be of none effect to many a one. For how should men embrace with comfort the word of reconciliation, till they feele in themselves their enmitie with God, and desert of condemnation.

Jer. 8. 6.

Matth. 24.

II. Point. *Because thou hast them that maintaine the doctrine of Balaam, &c.* Here is the particular reproofe of this Church for want of zeale, in that they entertained and suffred heretical Ministers to live among them, which maintained the doctrine of *Balaam*. This shewed, that though they loved the Gospell, and embraced it, yet it was very coldly, and without that fervent zeale which they ought to have shewed against such heretickes.

Vse.

Here first, Christ teacheth this Church to shew forth zeale in excommunicating and casting out such heretiks, as by damnable doctrin did trouble them. This place is a sufficient ground for the practice of that Ecclesiasticall censure. When men hold heresticall opinions, the Church after two or three admonitions is to excommunicate them and cast them out. So did *Paul* to *Hymenens* and *Alexander*, 1 Tim. 1. 20. Secondly, Christ reproving this Church for entertaining such heretickes and wicked men, doth give us to understand, that every member of Gods Church should have a great dislike of all persons, that hold not the doctrine of Christ in truth, but maintaine errours against the tenour of Scripture, and the profession of the Church. For this cause *Paul* chargeth *Timothie to separate himselfe from such as teach otherwise than hee had given direction, and consent not unto the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godlinesse, being puffed up and knowing nothing.* This then must bee our carefull practice: we have by Gods mercie true religion among us, which we must maintain with zeale: and if any bring in other doctrine, we must reject it, and shew forth detestation to him that bringeth it, not bidding him God speed, 2. Joh. 10. Wee must rather lose our lives, than suffer the truth of God to be defaced. Thirdly, that which Christ layeth to the charge of this Church, may in sundry respects be charged upon our Churches and congregations at this day: namely, *want of zeale against sinne, and severitie against sinners*: for though the governours of our Church repel the heresies of Poperie, Anabaptists, and family of Love, and suppresse all doctrines that raze the foundation, which are commendable things; yet in the middest of our congregations be abundance of Atheists, who by deed and conversation deny Christ Jesus: for many know nothing in the matters of religion, and moe be prophane: who both thinke and speake most basely of religion, and of the teachers and professors thereof. Yea, we have flat Epicures permitted to live in our Church, such as make their belly their God; who give themselves wholly to eating, drinking, sports, and delights; without all regard either of the generall duties of Christianity, or the particular duties of their calling. Wee have also among us many cruell & mercilesse persons, that in their affairs abound in the practices of fraud, wrong, usurie, and oppression, *whose treading is upon the poore*, in the pride of their covetousnes, whereby also they *eat the flesh of Gods people, and flea off their skin from them, and breake their bones, and chop them in peeces as for the pot, and as flesh within the cauldron*, Mich. 3. 6. And yet all these because they submit themselves to the civil authoritie, are permitted without controulement to bee partakers of the privileges of Gods Church, even to the receiving of the seales of Gods covenant, being themselves flat enemies to the grace of God. Yea, many of these are greatly countenanced and graced for wisdome and reputation; when as such as feare God and make conscience of their wayes, are counted vile. All which, as it argueth exceeding want of zeale in severity against sinne; so it cannot chuse but provoke the Lord to come against us in judgement, as he did against this Church. The meanes whereby this evill is to be reformed, doth follow afterward.

1 Tim. 5. 24.

2. Joh. 10.

Amos 5. 11.

III. Point. The reason or confirmation of the former reproofe, whereby the Lord would move his Church to detest these false teachers, is taken from the effect of their doctrine, and

and it is layd downe in this similitude: As *Balaam* the false Prophet taught *Balac* to put a stumbling blocke before the children of Israel, to cause them to eat of things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit fornication; so this Church maintained among them Nicolaitans, who taught, it was lawfull to eat things sacrificed at Idol feasts, and to commit fornication. The first part of this similitude is in the end of this 14. verse: *Which taught Balac to put a stumbling blocke, &c.* The second part is in the 15. verse.

Touching the doctrine of *Balaam* we are to observe three points: First, what a stumbling blocke, or an offence is. Secondly, what it is to cast a stumbling block. Thirdly, by what means king *Balac* did cast a stumbling blocke before the children of Israel. For the first, a stumbling block is properly any thing, as wood, or stone, or such like, that is cast in a mans way, to hinder him in his gate, and to cause him to trip or fall: And by resemblance in this place, an offence is any thing that causeth a man to sinne against God, and so to slip or fall, or to goe out of his way that leadeth to life. Further, an offence is twofold; either given, or taken. An offence given, is any speech or deed, whereby a man is provoked to sinne: and so was *Peter* an offence unto Christ, though he rooke it not, Matth. 16. 23. An offence taken, is when any man taketh occasion to fall and sinne, by that which is well done by others: so were the Pharisees offended at the sacred preaching of our Saviour Christ. II. Point. The casting or putting of a stumbling blocke, or giving an offence, is the doing or saying of any thing, whereby a man is occasioned to sinne: and this is done, either about things evill in themselves, or in things indifferent. Things evill are such as Gods word forbidde: and they are twofold, either perswasions, or examples. Bad perswasions, are false doctrine, and evill counsell. Bad example, is also giving of offence, because it doth embolden evill men in their sinne, and draw the godly to evill. Again, in things indifferent, as meat, drinke, apparell, &c. may offence bee given, when as they are used unseasonably, not in fit time and place, and before fit persons. And of this *Paul* speaketh, saying; *If I knew my eating did offend my brother, I would not eat flesh while the world standeth.* The offence here spoken of was an offence given in evill things, for it was an evill act done by *Balaam*, and accordingly received and taken of the Israelites: for hee used outward provocations to allure them unto sinne. III. Point. The meanes whereby king *Balac* did cast a stumbling blocke before the children of Israel, is set downe in the end of the verse, *by provoking them to eat of things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit fornication.* That we may understand this fully, read Numb. 25. The summe of the historie is this: When *Balaam* had assayed sundry wayes to curse the children of Israel, and could not, he gave *Balac* counsell to use meanes to cause them to sinne. At his counsell *Balac* sent forth the most beautifull women in his kingdome into the campe of Israel, to intice them to the service of their Idols, and to banquet with them at their Idoll feasts, that so they might draw them to fornication; whereunto the Israelites condescended, and so sinned against God. Thus much of the meaning of the words.

Vse.

First, here observe a speciall propertie of false teachers, namely, to cast offences before men, to cause them to fall in the way that leadeth to salvation. By this Christ intendeth to make known unto this Church the false doctrin of *Balaam*. *Paul* in his Epistles calleth the doctrine of the Gospell, *a truth according to godlinesse*: because the intent of the Gospell is, *to lead men to true godlinesse*. On the contrarie, the doctrine of Antichrist is called *the mystery of iniquitie*; because the scope thereof is to draw men to all iniquitie and abomination. Here then we have a rule, whereby wee may judge betweene true doctrine and false, even by looking into the end and scope thereof: if it ayme at true piety and inward obedience, wee may judge it to be good; but if it tend to draw men to idolatrie and sinne, then it is a false doctrine. Thus we might scan all false religions, as the religion of the Turke and Jew at this day. But because wee are more troubled with the doctrine of Poperie among our common people, who call it *The old religion*, therefore let us a little examine the same by this rule.

1 Tim. 6. 3. Tit. 1. 1.

2 Thess. 2.

The end of Poperie is to pull downe the kingdome of Christ, and to disanull his lawes; as will appeare by a short view in every commandement: and therefore it cannot bee the true religion. The first commandement teacheth us, *To christe and acknowledge the true God for our God alone.* But the Church of Rome teacheth to make more gods than one, and to acknowledge the creature to bee God; for by their doctrine men are to pray unto Saints, whereby they make them gods in giving this divine propertie unto them to know the heart. Their doctrine also ascribeth unto Saints, *power to merit*; which is a property of God: for none can merit but he that is God. The humane nature of Christ could not have merited any thing, unles it had been joyned to the Godhead. Yea, they make the wood of the crosse to bee god: for in their masse-booke at this day, they call (not Christ crucified on the crosse, but) the verie crosse it selfe, our *only hope*: yea, the Virgine *Mary*, who is not a creature, they place as Queene in heaven, giving her power over Christ to command him in the matter of salvation, and so they disanull the first commandement. The second commandement they revoke, in teaching it to bee lawfull to make images of the Trinitie, according as they shewed themselves in the old and new Testament: the Father like an old man, the Sonne as

he lived, and the holy Ghoſt like a dove: and therein to worſhip them. Againe, they teach that men may adore the Images of Saints, which is flat againſt that commandement. The third commandement they diſanull, in teaching it to be lawfull to ſweare by Saints, and not by God only. The fourth they diſanull, by making the feſtivall dayes of Saints, equall with the Lords Sabbath, and to be kept holy unto God as ſolemnly as the Lords day. Whereby alſo they take away the liberty of the Church in the lawfull uſe of ſix dayes, for honeſt labour in a mans calling. The fifth they diſanull, in giving freedome and immunity to their clergie from ſubjection to civill authoritie, and in diſpenſing with ſubjects for their loyaltie and allegeance to their lawfull Princes: and with children and ſervants from yeelding due helpe, ſervice, and obedience, to their Parents and Maſters. The ſixth, by their houſes of refuge which they call *Sanctuaries*, wherein murderers may be in ſafety; and by maintaining ignorance in religion, through which they murder many a ſimple ſoule. The ſeventh, by tolerating of ſtewes, and allowing of incett; for by their law it is lawfull for the great uncle to marrie his neece, deſcending from his brother or ſiſter, to it be without the fourth degree, which is againſt nature. The eighth, by making ſale of all things, of heaven, hell, of earth, of pardons, and delivering men from purgatorie: which is flat robberie, and moſt groſſe deceit and couzenage. The ninth they diſanull, by falſifying the canon of Scripture, for they make that canonical which is no Scripture: and beſides in their doctrine practicall they defend a lie, for when a man hath confeſſed his ſins to the Prieſt, if the Magiſtrate aske the Prieſt what ſins the man confeſſed, they teach the Prieſt to ſay, *I know not*, that is (ſay they) *to tell it to thee*: which is a flat lie. And whereas they would defend this by an expoſition of Chriſts words when he ſaith, *The day of judgement is not known to the Sonne of man*: that is, (ſay they) to reveale it unto others; they doe but deceive the ſimple by an expoſition which is not fit. The laſt commandement they diſanull, by holding concupiſcence before conſent to be no ſinne, when as we know by Gods Word, that the firſt evill motions in us be ſinnes. So that hereby we may ſee, that Poperie is but a falſe religion, though it have falſely among our common people the name of *The old religion*, and therefore we muſt abhorre the ſame as ungodly.

Matth. 24. Mark. 13. 32.

Now whereas ſome doe charge the doctrine of our religion to be ſundry wayes ſcandalous, they may be eaſily anſwered: Firſt, they ſay, it is a doctrine of deſperation, becauſe it imports, that God created men ſo, as he will ſave but a few, making them for this end, to caſt the greateſt number to hell. To this I anſwer two things: Firſt, touching the number of them that are to be ſaved: of which little is ſaid in Scripture, and therefore I will not ſay much: yet this may be averred, The number of the elect in it ſelfe is *a great companie*, but being compared with them that ſhall be damned, it is but ſmall. II. Touching the end of mans creation, our doctrine is not, that God created men for this end, to caſt them to hell: but this wee teach, that God created all men to manifeſt his glorie in them: in ſome, by their juſt and deſerved damnation for ſin. We teach not that men are otherwaies condemned than for their ſins, and therefore he that is condemned hath his juſt reward. II. *Charge*. They ſay further, our doctrine is a doctrine of blaſphemie; for that we teach God to have decreed the fall of man, and ſo make God the author of mans ſin. *Anſ.* We teach indeed that God decreed *Adams* fall, but thence it followeth not, that he is the author of mans ſinne. For Gods will is two fold, generall, and ſpeciall. Gods generall will is, to permit that which is evill, not ſimply, but becauſe with God evil hath ſome reſpect of good, and in this reſpect we ſay God decreed *Adams* fall. Gods ſpeciall will, is his approving will; whereby he taketh pleaſure and delight in that which is good: and in this regard God willed *Adams* fall, and mans ſinnes: And yet in ſome reſpect he may be ſaid to will them. A Magiſtrate, though he take no comfort or delight in the death and execution of a malefactor, yet he decreeth and appointeth it, and ſo may he ſaid to will it. Even ſo God who out of darkneſſe can bring light, permitteth evill, becauſe with him it hath ſome reſpect of good, and ſo may be ſaid to will it. III. *Charge*. They ſay alſo that the doctrin of our church is a doctrine of ſecuritie, becauſe we teach that a man may be certaine of his ſalvation, and of perſeverance in the faith unto the end. *Anſ.* This is not a doctrine of carnall ſecurity; becauſe we doe impoſe neceſſarily the uſe of meanes to them that would be certaine of their ſalvation, and perſevere unto the end; as namely deniall of themſelves, and humbling themſelves in continuall prayer, with hearing and meditating in the word of God, and receiving the Sacraments for the increaſe of faith, and renewing of their repentance: All which will rather make a man fearefull and carefull than ſecure. For with the meanes, is certaintie of ſalvation, both attained and preſerved: ſo that our doctrine is not a doctrine of offences, but a true doctrine that beateth out the plaine way that leadeth unto life.

Matth. 7. 13.

Secondly, Chriſt his deteſtation of this doctrine of *Balaam*, muſt admoniſh us to bee ſo carefull of our behaviour everie way, that we give no offence unto any; for if we doe, we are *Balaams* ſchollers. This is a point of ſpeciall obſervation; we muſt looke to our communication, that it be void of railing and bad ſpeeches; and to our converſation, that it be holy and unblameable. In every thing wee muſt have care not to hinder others in the way of life. *Woe be to them* (ſaith Chriſt) *that give offences: it were better that a huge millſtone* (ſuch as an aſſe can but

Matth. 18. 6, 7.

but turne about, as the word imports) *were tied about his necke, and that he were caſt into the ſea*. The reaſon is, becauſe when a man by any means giveth his brother offence, he doth as much as in him lyeth, to plunge his brothers ſoule into the pit of deſtruction, and therfore we muſt flie offences as hell it ſelfe; yea, rather on the contrarie, we muſt helpe our brethren forward in the way of ſalvation, and remove from them all ſtumbling blockes that cauſe them to fall. If this dutie were practiſed, our Church would abound with graces and godlineſſe: but this dutie is wanting, and hence it comes that we have ſo ſmall increaſe after long labour in preaching: for example and evill counſell doe quench the graces of the ſpirit in mens hearts.

Thirdly, hereby we muſt learne to have ſpeciall care againſt offences given by evill counſell or bad example. For if it bee the property of a falſe Prophet to caſt ſtumbling blocks before others, then it is a dangerous thing to fall upon them when they are laid before us. While we live in this world we ſhall ſee many offences given: but we muſt take heed wee take them not. And therefore Chriſt biddeth us, *If thy foot offend thee, or thine hand, cut it off, or thine eye, pluck it out*: Teaching us to forgoe the deareſt thing that can be unto us, if it would cauſe us to ſinne againſt God. And to move us hereto, make the Iſraelites example in the wilderneſſe: while they kept a good conſcience, and obſerved the true worſhip of God, all *Balaams* curſes were turned into bleſſings; but when they fell to Idolatrie and fornication with the Moabitiſh women, then was Gods wrath kindled againſt them, and his plague ſeized upon them. Even ſo, if our Church bee carefull to keepe it ſelfe to the true religion, which by Gods mercy we enjoy, and withall have care to keep a good conſcience in becomming a penitent and obedient people unto God; then may *Balaam* curſe, and all our enemies ſpit their venome, yet we ſhall be ſafe. But if we let goe true religion and good conſcience, and fall to ſinne, then we muſt looke for Gods heavie iudgements to fall upon us in his wrath, as they did upon his own people. Fourthly, when *Balaams* curſing would not prevaile, then did faire women, and banqueting draw them to idolatry and fornication. Hence we learne, that temptations on the right hand, that is, taken from profits, pleaſures, and preferments, are moſt dangerous, and ſooneſt prevaile to draw men from God. The ſtate of a Chriſtian is like a beſieged citie; when a huge armie cannot ſack it, then ſilver and gold will open the gates therof: even ſo, when adverſity cannot make a man to forſake religion and good conſcience, then by proſperitie, eaſe, and pleaſure, hath the devill ſtolen away his heart. Thoſe therefore that have eaſe, pleaſure, and outward bleſſings at will, are in a far more dangerous caſe in reſpect of ſinne than others; unleſſe God vouchſafe unto them ſpeciall grace to watch againſt these pleaſing temptations. This made godly *Iob, To ſanctifie his children every day when they feaſted each other at their houſe, leſt any one then ſhould have blaſphemed God in his heart*. Becauſe he knew the devill by pleaſures would ſooneſt winde himſelfe into their hearts.

Iob. 1. 5.

Laſtly, note the order of theſe ſinnes: Firſt, they are drawne to ſit at Idol feaſts, and then to commit adultery: where we ſee that theſe two goe together; Spirituall adultery, that is, Idolatrie; and bodily adultery: one is the plague and puniſhment of the other; that people which give themſelves to Idolatry, will God give up to bodily adultery. As this was true in theſe Iſraelites, ſo it is to be ſeene among the Turkes; and with the Papiſts at this day, who maintaine fornication in tolerating ſtewes, and further it much by their vow of ſingle life, wherewith they bind the conſcience, though the partie want the gift of continencie.

verſ. 15. *Even ſo haſt thou them that maintaine the doctrine of the Nicholaitans, which thing I hate.*

Here followeth the ſecond part of the comparison, where Chriſt ſetteth down two things: firſt, what the Nicholaitans were: Secondly, how hee was affected towards them. What they were is expreſſed in the firſt word, *Even ſo*; which is a note of reſemblance or comparison, having reference to the words going before. They may be thus deſcribed: The Nicholaitans were a ſect in the Church of Pergamus, that maintained two damnable opinions according to the doctrine of *Balaam*. I. That it was lawfull to eat things offered to idols in the honour of idols, ſitting in the idols temple. II. That fornication was no ſinne, but that a man might lawfully commit it. It may ſeeme ſtrange, that in the daies of the Apoſtles there ſhould be men profeſſing the name of Chriſt, and yet hold ſuch damnable opinions; but the truth is hereby evident, that there were ſuch in this Church. And that we doe not conceive a liking of their wicked opinions, let us examine their reaſons, whereupon they might ſeeme to be grounded.

For the eating of things ſacrificed to Idols, they would plead thus: I. From the doctrine of Chriſtian libertie, *Things indifferent may bee lawfully uſed: Things offered to Idols are things indifferent, as meats, and drinkes; and therefore may lawfully be uſed. Anſ.* Meats and drinks, if they be conſidered in themſelves, are things indifferent, and may lawfully be uſed: yea after they have beene offered to idols, if they be ſold in the market, they may be lawfully bought and eaten in private houſes, if it be done without offence of the weake, as *Paul* teacheth at large, 1 Cor. 10. 25, 29. But if theſe meats be conſidered as they are offered to Idols, and eaten in the Idols temple in the honour of Idols,

Idols, they be unlawfull. And yet the Nicholaitans held this to be lawfull.

II. *Reason.* An Idoll is nothing, 1 Cor. 8. 4. and therefore we sinne not in eating meats offered unto them. *Ans.* An Idoll is nothing, that is, in nature subsisting; nothing created or ordained of God; yet hath no property of the Godhead: but yet an Idoll is something in mans imagination, which giveth to it the honour of God, and reputeth it as God, making it a God unto himselfe.

III. *Reason. Naaman* the Syrian went into the Temple of the god Rimmon, and there kneeled downe; Even so may Christians eat in Idols temples. *Ans.* When *Naaman* went in thither, he did not kneele down to the Idol, but to the king, performing a civill duty unto his Prince; who used to leane on *Naamans* shoulder, & worship his false god. And though *Naaman* were present at Idol-worship and service, yet it was with protestation against it for being cured of his leprosie, he promised to worship no god but the God of Israel; and thereupon he laded two mules with the earth of the Land of Israel, in token of his publike profession of thankfulnesse to the true God for his cleansing. If these in Pergamus whom Christ disliketh, had gone as *Naaman* did into Idols temples, they had not sinned as they did. And at this day, if men protest against the Idolatrie of the masse, they may enter into those congregations where masse is said: for this protestation is a flat condemning of their false worship.

The second opinion of these Nicolaitans was, that men might lawfully commit fornication. This opinion they would thus justifie: First, from the practice of *Lot. We read to the sons of God, he his daughters, when they called for the strangers that were come into his house.* Which thing (say they) *Lot* would never have done, if fornication had beene a sinne. *Ans.* It seemeth that *Lot* cannot bee excused in that action, though his purpose was by a lesser evill to prevent a greater; but God hath plainly taught, *That no man may use the least evill, for the procuring of the greatest good that can be,* Rom. 3. 8.

II. *Reason.* The Lord (say they) commanded *Hosea, to take a wife of fornication, and children of fornication,* Hos. 1. 2. It is not therefore unlawfull. *Ans.* There be divers interpretations of that place. Some say, that was only in vision, and not a fact done. Others say, it was in speech only, because he prophesied unto the people that he himselfe was a man of fornication unto them. These expositions may well stand. Yet others hold that the Lord commanding him this, it was to be done, and was done indeed. And sundry circumstances seeme to prove that it was a fact done: for the womans name is set downe to *be Gomer, and her Fathers name Diblaim.* Secondly, a thing in vision or in speech onely, doth not so much prevaile with wicked people, as that which is done indeed. Thirdly, the ancient opinion of best Divines that lived neerest to the Apostles times avouch, it was a fact done. *Object.* But this maintaineth fornication, against good manners and the expresse law of God. *Ans.* It were so indeed if the Prophet had done it on his owne head, but he did it by Gods speciall appointment, who is Lord of his owne law, and may dispense with it at his pleasure. God in his law forbiddeth to kill; yet *Abraham is commanded to kill his sonne:* which if he had done, he had not sinned, because he had a speciall commandement for it; which a man must obey, though it be against a morall precept. Againe, *Hosea* tooke a wife of fornication, not to maintaine her in her sin, but to make her a chaste woman. And whereas he was also commanded to take unto him children of fornication, it must not be understood of children begotten by him, but borne of her in fornication. As if he should say, Take a wife with her children, which shee brought forth in fornication. So that this place which way soever wee take it, doth nothing maintaine their wicked errours.

III. *Reason.* Acts 15. The Apostles charge the Churches, *To abstaine from that which is strangled, from blood, and from fornication:* There (say they) fornication is reckoned among things indifferent, and therefore may be used lawfully. *Ans.* It is there reckoned among things indifferent: First, because it was so accounted of among the Gentiles: Secondly, because the Gentiles did joyntly by these three things offend the Churches of the Jewes. But hence it followeth not that it is indeed a thing indifferent.

II. Point. The affection of Christ towards these men, is noted in these words: *Which thing I hate.* This hatred must be referred not to the persons of the Nicolaitans, but to their opinions, lives, and practices.

Hereby Christ would instruct us in sundry needfull duties. First, if wee will follow him, we must hate all honour and approbation that may bee given to idols, bee it never so little. These Nicholaitans might say, they abhorred Idols, and worshipped them not; onely they went with their friends into their Temples, and sate downe to eat meat before them: now even this dealing Christ hateth. Wherein he doth notably condemne the practice of the Romish church, which say, they worship not Idols, but the true God: and yet they doe that which Christ hateth; for they kneele downe before them, and adore them, and light candles unto them, and offer unto them rich Jewels, and much sumptuous attire; which is a great deale more than the Nicolaitans did: And therefore they are much more to be condemned, and their practice also hated of us. Secondly, Christs hatred of the least honour of Idols, doth afford a speciall cave at to such men as give themselves to a travelling life; as into Italy, Spaine, and other Idolatrous places: they should content themselves within the precincts of the Church, and

and not proceed further without warrant of a speciall calling, whereby they may assure themselves of Gods gracious protection. For hereby they give occasion to themselves to doe that which Christ hateth, though they say they hate idolatrie: For if a man escape to be present at their abominable service, yet he cannot avoid the going to their Temples, where he is to offer some gifts, or performe some ceremonie after the custome of the countrie; whereby he shall give some approbation at the least of their idolatry: whereas he ought to hate the least appearance thereof, even the garment spotted with the flesh. Thirdly, by this his affection Christ would teach us to grow to an hatred of all familiar societie with idolaters: for though we may have societie of concord with them, yet societie of amitie, which is a speciall liking betweene man and man, we must not maintaine with them.

Fourthly, Christ hateth not only their idolatry, but their fornication also. Hereby teaching us to grow to a hatred of fornication, which the rather must be detested, because *the bodies of every man and woman bee not their owne, but Christs:* and therefore ought not to bee imployed in the honour or service of the Devill, but of Christ. Againe, the bodies of every Christian man and woman are the members of Christ; now it is an unseemly thing to take the member of Christ, and make it the member of an harlot. Thirdly, their bodies are temples and dwelling places; not for earthly Princes, but for the holy Ghost: and therefore must be furnished with Gods graces, and adorned with charity and other gifts of Gods Spirit, that they may bee fit mansion places for so worthie a guest. But by fornication they are made the sties and stables of the Prince of darknesse.

vers. 16. *Repent thy selfe, or else I come unto thee shortly: and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth.*

Christ having laid downe the sinnes of this Church, and the errours of the Nicholaitans, doth here propound unto this Church; First, a remedie for her recoverie: Secondly, a reason to inforce the practice of the remedie. The remedie is in these words, *Repent thy selfe.* In it consider these points: First, what it is to repent: Secondly, why Christ so often urgeth thereunto: Thirdly, to whom Christ prescribeth this remedie. Of the first, we have spoken in the first verse of this chapter: Briefly therefore: Repentance is a change of the minde from evill to good, and a turning from sinne unto God. Here repentance must be taken more largely, for all the duties that accompany repentance in the practice thereof; as I. *Humiliation* of a man by confessing of his sinnes unto God, and condemning of himselfe for the same. II. *Prayer,* whereby a man doth earnestly intreate the Lord for the pardon of the same sinnes. III. *Reformation,* whereby a man in heart purposeth, and in life endeavoureth to leave all his former sins, and for ever after to doe all things in obedience unto God: unto all these doth the holy Ghost exhort them in this place.

II. Point. Why doth Christ so often prescribe this duties of repentance, and so much urge it? *Ans.* Not for that it is a cause or a meritorious meanes to procure remission of sinnes and life everlasting, as the Papists doe foolily and dammably teach; for that nothing can doe but the obedience and passion of Christ: but first because it is a token of Gods favour procured, and a most excellent fruit of faith, such as maketh a man ready to doe evill, and moveth him to doe good; II. because it is a way wherein we must walke unto the end, that we would have remission of sinnes, and life eternall.

III. Point. To whom is this remedie prescribed? *Ans.* First, to the Church of Pergamus, and then to the Nicholaitans in that Church, though they were most wicked. Touching the Church of Pergamus: they were best commended for most worthy graces, for they had repentance: and yet note, Christ saith still unto them, *Repent thy selfe.* Herein teaching us a most worthy lesson, which every one ought to learne and practise; namely, that the life of a Christian is a continuall practice of repentance. When a man hath once repented, that is not sufficient; but every new day must have a new repentance for his daily slips. *We are Gods Embassadours (saith Paul) for Christ: beseeching you in Christs stead, that you would bee reconciled unto God.* Now they were reconciled to God before, for they are called *The Temple of the living God.* His meaning therefore is, that they should strive more and more after reconciliation with God; both in regard of their further assurance, and also for their particular sinnes wherein they daily offended. Every Christian must daily wrestle with his owne corruptions, which he feeleth in himselfe, that the longer he liveth, the more he may grow in dislike with himselfe. And in this distaste of himself he must daily proceed, that he may every day more and more grow up in Christ. And least any should thinke, that this was spoken to this Church alone, and not to us; consider, that we are in the same case with them; their sinnes are our sins, as we have proved: We want zeale and severitie against sinne and sinners. Now being in the same taste with them, wee must therefore practise the same remedie, and renew our repentance, though we have repented heretofore.

Secondly, he prescribes this duties to the Nicolaitans: they held two damnable errours, and no doubt lived accordingly in the sins: and yet Christ barres them not from his kingdome, but bids them repent. Where note that great

and

and grievous ſinners are not barred from Gods
Pſal. 130.7. mercie, if they will repent. Excellent is that
ſaying of *Iſai*, *Gods mercie mu ch in ſparing*: and that
of *David* alſo, *With God is plentifull redemption*.
This point is ſeriouſly to be conſidered: for
we have in our congregations many that are
well ſpoken of in the world: and yet for know-
ledge of God, and practice of life, are flat
Atheiſts. We have alſo among us Epicures, blaſ-
phemers, murtherers, and fornicators, with
theſe Nicolaitans. Now to all theſe and ſuch
like, this doctrine appertaines, not to embol-
den them in ſinne, but to aſſure them there is
mercy in ſtore for them with God, if they will
truly repent. They muſt not turne the grace of
God into wantonneſſe, and make his mercy a
bolſter to their iniquity; for this is deſpiſing of
Gods bounty, whereby they heape up unto
themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath: but
if with *Iob* they humble themſelves in duſt and
aſhes, and crie to heaven for mercie from a bro-
ken heart, that carrieth a reſolute purpoſe to
leave all ſinne; then, though their ſinnes were
never ſo many, they ſhall all be drowned in the
bottomleſſe ſea of Gods mercy: though they
were as crimſon and ſcarlet, which will take no
other die, yet in Chriſts bloud they ſhall bee
made as white as wooll and ſnow: yea, though
they have fallen often into the ſame ſinnes,
which is moſt fearefull and dangerous, yet upon
this unfained repentance they ſhall be reſtored
to mercie: for the fountaine thereof cannot
be dried up: but ſee they doe repent; for who-
ſoever looketh for Chriſts merits, muſt know
that he looketh for true repentance. Thus much
for the remedy.

I I. Point. The reaſon whereby Chriſt would
ſet an edge upon the former remedy, containeth
a twofold threatning or commination: the
firſt, againſt the whole Church, in theſe words,
If not, I come unto thee ſhortly. The ſecond a-
gainſt the Nicolaitans in theſe words, *And will
fight againſt them with the ſword of my mouth*.
For the firſt, *If not, I will come unto thee ſhortly*,
theſe words were expounded in the fifth verſe.
The meaning is this: If thou repent not, I will
come unto thee, and teſtifie my preſence by ta-
king puniſhment upon thee, for thy want of
zeale, and ſeverite againſt ſinne and ſinners. To
this effect the Prophet *Iſai* ſaith, Chap. 30. 27.
*The name of the Lord ſhall come from farre to
take puniſhment upon the Aſſyrians*.

In this threatning the phrate is to be noted:
Chriſt ſaith; *If not, I come unto thee*: expreſſing
a thing to come, by a word of the time preſent.
To give them to underſtand, that his comming
unto them by judgements was as certaine, as if
it were preſent, unleſſe they did repent. Where
this general rule is to be obſerved of all: name-
ly, that when a Church or people doe not re-
pent, the Lord will come unto them to execute
his judgements upon them. Yea, though they
have before repented, if for particular ſinnes
and wants they doe not renew their repentance,
he will ſurely come to puniſh them. This might
be proved at large by teſtimonies of the Pro-
phets and Apoſtles: but it is ſo evident in this
text, that I omit all further proofe; only I will
apply it to this our Church, of which this may
bee truly ſaid; Thou doeſt not repente, nor re-
new thy repentance for thy daily ſinnes. For
albeit there be ſome among us, that by Gods
grace repent, and ſet themſelves daily to the
exerciſe thereof, yet take the greater part of our
congregations, and they are ſo farre from re-
newing their repentance, that they doe not re-
pent at all; for either they have no knowledge
of Gods will, or if they have knowledge, yet
they want care and conſcience to put the ſame
in practice. This being our caſe and condition,
what man may not bee a Prophet againſt our
Churches and congregations, being thus dire-
cted by this portion of Scripture, to ſay and
that truly, *That God will come unto us in judge-
ments to plague and puniſh us for our ſinnes and
iniquities?* We may ſooth our ſelves in hope of
mercy ſtill, but the ſtate of our Church contin-
uing as it is, nothing can bee expected but
judgements from the Lord. This then muſt be
a motive to perſwade us to repent, every per-
ſon apart, and every family and congregation
apart; we muſt humble our ſelves in duſt and
aſhes for our ſinnes paſt, intreating the Lord to
be reconciled unto us, and purpoſe fully in our
hearts, and ſtrive in our lives to obey God in
all his commandements: yea though we can ſay
we have repented, yet for our daily wants and
ſinnes wee muſt renew our repentance. Thus
doing, we ſhall ſtay the Lord when he is com-
ming againſt us. But if we goe on in blindneſſe,
ignorance, and rebellion, following the luſts
of our owne hearts, then nothing but venge-
ance and judgements are to be expected; for
this conclution muſt ſtand with all Churches
and people: *If they repent not, God will come in
judgement againſt them*.

The ſecond threatning or commination is
directed unto the Nicolaitans, in theſe words:
*And will fight againſt them with the ſword of
my mouth*; That is, I will bear enmitie with
them, and teſtifie the ſame by waging battell
againſt thoſe among you that maintaine the
lawfulneſſe of eating things ſacrificed to Idols,
and of fornication. Thus I ſay will I fight a-
gainſt them with the ſword of my mouth; that
is, with the preaching of my word, the law, and
the Goſpell.

In this commination Chriſt alludeth ſtill to
the ſtorie of *Balaam*; for when he was ſent for
by *Balac* to curſe the people of God, the Lord
ſtood againſt him in the way with a naked
ſword, to keepe him from going: and when his
eies were opened, that he ſaw the Angel of the
Lord withſtand him in that ſort, he fell downe
and adored the Angell, for it was the Lord: yet
becauſe he ceaſed not from his wicked cove-
touſneſſe, but gave bad counſell againſt the
Iſraelites, when he could not curſe them to cauſe
them

Numb. 31.8. them to ſin: therefore he was ſlaine with the
edge of the ſword among the Midianites by
the children of Iſrael. Even ſo Chriſt dealeth
with the Nicholaitans, becauſe they goe on in
their bad counſell, perſwading the lawfulneſſe
of eating things ſacrificed to Idols, and alſo of
fornication; therefore firſt he will fight againſt
them with the ſword of his mouth, the miniſte-
rie of his Word, thereby to reclaime them from
their wicked waies, if it be poſſible; but if that
will not ſerve, he will ſtill fight againſt them,
and with the ſame ſword deſtroy them for ever.

Vſe. Firſt, here marke, Chriſt ſaith not, I will kill
them, but fight againſt them; for he intended
not at the firſt to deſtroy theſe Nicolaitans, but
his purpoſe was to withdraw them from their
wicked waies: yet lo, as afterward if they would
not be reclaimed by his word, he would there-
with deſtroy them. Wherin wee may behold
the exceeding patience of Chriſt Jeſus toward
lewd and grievous ſinners, that maintained the
lawfulneſſe of idolatrie and fornication, and
Gen. 6. 3. gave themſelves thereunto. *So the Lord in ſpirit
ſtrove with the old world, and ſpared them 120.
years, to withdraw them from their wickedneſſe
Gen. 15. 16. by the preaching of Noe*. So likewiſe he ſpared
the Amorites *till their ſinnes were come to the
full*; and the Egyptians alſo for many 100.
years though they were moſt cruell perſecutors
of his owne people. And though the Jewes
moſt maliciouſly crucified the Lord of life; yet
he ſpared them fifty yeares, before he cut them
off from being a people. Yea, daily experience
teacheth us this his long ſuffering: wee may
heare moſt bloudy and bitter oathes from blaſ-
phemers, whereby they daily crucifie Chriſt
with their tongues. The like may be ſaid of the
adulterers and all cruell perſons, and yet he for-
beares the ſame; yea, in our owne ſelves we dai-
ly taſte of this his patience; for ſo ſoone as we
were borne, we deſerved to be caſt into hell,
and yet in mercy he vouchſafeth unto us, to
ſome twentie, to ſome thirty, and to ſome moe
yeares, for a time of repentance; when as every
day hee might in juſtice condemne us. This
therefore muſt admoniſh us in the feare of God,
not to abuſe this his long ſuffering any longer,
but now while the day of mercy laſteth, to
humble our ſelves and turne unto him by
true repentance. Theſe are the dayes of grace,
but how long they will laſt, God only know-
eth: for when death once comes, he ſhewes no
more mercy. The old world becauſe they abuſed
the long ſuffering of God, *were deſtroyed, and are
now in hell in priſon for it*, as *Peter* teacheth: and
1 Pet. 3. 19. 20. undoubtedly the ſame priſon will be our por-
tion, if we take the ſame courſe that they did.

Secondly, in this threatning we may obſerve,
that all irrepentant ſinners have God for their
enemy, to fight againſt them with a drawne
ſword. For this cauſe ſinne in Scripture is called
rebellion, and every ſinner is a rebell againſt
God. A fearefull thing it is to have God for an
enemy: and yet this is the condition, not only
of ſuch as did never repent, but of all thoſe that
hold the name of Chriſt in profeſſion, and yet
continue in any one ſinne, without renewing
their repentance. This alſo muſt ſerve to induce
every man that hath not repented, now to be-
gin: and if they have begun, to repent more,
daily renewing the ſame for their daily ſlips,
and ſo ſhall they be the friends of Chriſt, as
Abraham was, and as his diſciples were.

Thirdly, in theſe two threatnings Chriſt
Iam. 2. 23. Joh. 15. 15. ſhewes himſelfe to be the true Doctor of his
Church: for he will fight againſt theſe Nicho-
laitans, when as hee will onely come unto his
Church. Where we ſee he divideth his word
aright; wherein conſiſteth the principall wiſ-
dome of a true Prophet, giving comforts to
whom comfort belongeth, and threatning
judgements to whom judgement is due; and
making difference of judgements according to
the ſtate of the perſons againſt whom they are
threatned. For the heavy judgements of God
muſt not be threatned againſt all perſons, but
againſt the unpenitent. And becauſe there be
degrees of judgements temporall, and eternall;
therefore temporall judgements muſt be threat-
ned to thoſe to whom they belong, and eternall
judgements denounced againſt thoſe to whom
they belong, obſerving the circumſtances of
time, place, and perſons, according to Chriſts
example in this place and elſewhere. So like-
wiſe the benefits of the Goſpell are not to bee
propounded to every perſon hand over head
without difference, but with reſtraint to ſome
only, as Gods Prophets have done. It is oft a
great offence in the Church, when the benefits
of the Goſpell are propounded to all, and the
threatning of the law denounced againſt all,
without limitation or reſtraint. The conditions
therefore of repentance, and impenitencie, of
faith and unbeleeſe, and alſo the degrees of
the mall, muſt carefully bee obſerved in the
diſpenſation of the law and Goſpell.

Fourthly, the end of Chriſts fighting muſt be
conſidered: for the firſt, he intends to reclaime
them from their evill ways, but if they will
not be reclaimed, then to cauſe the ſame word
to bee an occaſion of their deeper condemna-
tion. This muſt be deeply weighed of us all,
who have had by Godsgrace for many yeares
the plentifull preaching of the Goſpell, by
which God hath continually rebuked and
checked the ſinnes that be among us, as igno-
rance, blaſphemy, and fulthineſſe, cruelty and
all iniquities whatſoever, and the ſame thing
the Lord yet continues to do unto us. We ther-
fore muſt thinke, that all this while the Lord is
fighting againſt us: when ignorance is repro-
ved in the miniſtery of the Word, the ignorant
perſon muſt thinke the Lord is fighting againſt
him, and ſo all Atheiſts, blaſphemers, adulte-
rers, oppreſſors, and cruell perſons, when their
ſinnes are reproved, they muſt know that the
Lord ſtands face to face againſt them with the
ſword of his mouth, ſeeking to reclaime them
from

from these iniquities, as he did to *Balaam* in his way. And when any man sinnes he thus touched, he must not relent, but humble himselfe, as *Balaam* fell before the Angel: considering it is the Lord that weareth battell against him. When wee heare that forren nations shake their swords against us, how are wee moved, both high and low? Shall we feare the sword of mortall man, and shall we not tremble when we heare that the sword of the everliving God is shaken against us? Those therefore whose hearts are guilty of any one sinne, must humble themselves by true and speedie repentance; there is no withstanding of the Lord: if his sword doe not cure us, it will cut us in peeces: if his word doe not convert us from our sinnes, it will be an occasion to cast our soules deeper into hell. Thus he deale with *Balaam*, when he would not be restrained from giving bad counsell; he was slaine among the Midianites. Few thinke on these things: from whence commeth such great contempt of Gods ordinance in the ministerie of the Word, as wee see this day: but they must know, that either death or life come by the stroke of this sword, and therefore they must repent.

Fifthly, note the title given to Gods Word: it is called, *The sword of Christ's mouth*: not only because it was once delivered by himselfe, from his owne mouth, but because it doth daily proceed from his mouth: for the Ministers of the Gospell, which bee truly called, are the very mouth of Christ, from which Gods people receive his word. *If thou shalt returne* (saith the Lord to *Jeremie*) *and shalt separate the precious from the vile, then shalt thou stand before me, and bee according to my word.* 2 Cor. 5. 19. We are the embassadours of Christ, beseeching you in his stead: which is an high and wonderfull honour. The consideration whereof is a ground of sundrie duties.

First, all students that are in the way of preparation to higher callings, must hereby learne to conceive a good opinion of the ministery of the Gospell, and to affect the same above other callings. For though the blind world count it a base calling, yet Christ we see maketh the minister his owne mouth: which honour is not given either to the Lawyer or to the Physitian.

Secondly, hereby every Minister of the Gospell is taught to deliver nothing in his publike ministery, but the pure Word of God, to serve for loves Christ shall enable him, and that also in such a manner, as is the persuasion of his own conscience he thinks Christ would speake, if he were there present: like unto faithfull embassadours, who speake only the will of their Lord and Prince, and in that manner which their Lord and Prince doth best approve. If this were weighed, we should not have such preachings as is commonly used, consisting of a mixture of testimonies: partly divine, and partly humane, considering that neither Christ nor his Apostles so preached.

Thirdly, the people also are heere taught their duty: when they heare a sinfull man like unto themselves speake unto them in the ministery of the Word, they must not despise Gods ordinance, because it is delivered by man, but receive the same, as from the mouth of Christ, and as the pure Word of God, so farre forth as it consenteth with holy Scripture. In this behalfe *Paul* blessed God for the Thessalonians, *That they received the word from him, not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God,* 1 Thess. 2. 13.

Sixthly, where Christ saith, *I will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth*; Wee may observe, that the kingdome of Christ is spirituall, and not of this world: for if it were worldly, then a civill sword wielded by the hand of man should belong unto him. But he hath no such sword, he governes his Church and people by the sword of his mouth, his holy word. Whereby appeareth, that the primacie of the sea of Rome is from hell, not from heaven: for the Pope saith he is Christs Vicar, and yet he will bee armed with both swords: when as Christ dealeth not with the civill sword, but onely useth the sword of his mouth.

verse. 17. *Let him that hath an eare heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches: To him that overcommeth will I give to eat of the Manna which is hid, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it.*

These words are the conclusion of this Epistle, which containe two parts; a commandement, and a promise. The commandement in these words, *Let him that hath an eare heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches.* The promise in the words following, *To him that overcommeth, &c.* The commandement serveth to stir up Gods Church to attention, in marking that which *Christ* delivereth unto them, as hath beene shewed before, vers. 7.

In this commandement of Christ note two things: First, that all men in Gods Church are bound in conscience to frequent Sermons, whereby they may come to the knowledge of those things that God prescribeth unto them. At the Nativitie, Easter, and such good times, as they are called, ignorant people will come to the Church: but it may be not once more of a moth after, or a quarter of a yere. But Christ saith, *my sheepe heare my voice.* So that he that

that will not come to heare the voice of Christ, is none of his sheepe. Matth. 16. 19. Christ saith to *Peter, I will give thee the keys of the kingdome of heaven.* There the preaching of the Gospell, is the key of the kingdome of heaven: So that looke how necessary it is for a man to have his soule saved and to enter into Heaven, so behoovefull it is for him to heare Sermons: For that is the turning of the key whereby wee enter into this kingdome, 2 Corinth. 5. 12. the preaching of the Gospell is the doctrine of reconciliation: and therefore looke how necessary it is for a man to bee reconciled to God; so needfull it is for him to heare the Word preached. *He that is of God, heareth Gods word: and hee that heareth it not, is not of God,* 1 John 4. 6. But men have many excuses to exempt themselves from hearing Sermons. Some say, if God himselfe would preach, or Christ, or an Angell from heaven, then they would heare; but so long as sinfull man preacheth, it is no great matter, though they absent themselves. *Answ.* This is a presumptuous reason; for the preaching of the Gospel by man, is Gods owne ordinance; and that for these causes: First, since *Adams fall* man cannot abide the voice of God: so as if man should heare God speake, hee would cry out with the Jewes, Exod. 20. 19. *Let not God talke with us, lest wee die.* And with *Peter, Depart from mee, I am a miserable sinner.* Luke 5. 8. Secondly, God speaketh by man to try the obedience and humilitie of men; to see whether they would bee content to receive and beleeve his Word, being propounded by sinfull man that is like unto themselves. And thirdly, to maintaine love betweene man and man, by mutuall conversing in this holy ordinance. Others doe say, they may well enough keene themselves in their families, for there they have their Bible wherein be the Sermons of Christ, and of his Prophets and Apostles, than which no Minister can preach better. *Ans.* It is Gods ordinance that these Sermons of Christ, of the Prophets and Apostles, should be agine handled, preached, and expounded in his Church: and therefore every man is bound in conscience to come into the congregations, and there to heare with reverence Gods holy word. Others will not come to the Church, for (they thanke God) they can serve God with as good a heart on horse-backe, or on their journeies, as those that come unto the Sermons. *Answ.* These persons are blinde and ignorant, a seduced heart beguileth them, and therefore they despise the ordinance of God; but let them heare what *Salomon* saith, *He that turneth away his eare from hearing the Law,* that is, *the doctrine of God, even his prayer shall bee abominable.* God speaketh to us in the ministery of his word, and if we refuse to heare him there, shall we thinke he will heare us when we pray? Know therefore if thou refuse his word, he will refuse thy prayer: neither indeed can any without the word pray aright. Such people deceive themselves, their prayers in their needlesse journeys shall bee their judges to condemne them; for therein they confesse God is to bee worshipped, and yet in practice they reject his direction for the same. Lastly, others say they have knowledge enough, the Ministers can teach them no more than they know: and therefore they need not goe heare so much preaching. *Ans.* These that pretend such perfect knowledge, are commonly the most ignorant, not knowing the end of this ordinance of God; for preaching serveth not onely to teach men to know God, and his will, but also to increase in knowledge, and to yeeld obedience to that which they know. If therefore thou hast knowledge, it is well: but that is not enough; if thou wouldest be blessed, thou must doe that which thou knowest, Joh. 13. 17. And for this cause the most learned man that is, must still frequent the hearing of Sermons, to further himselfe in obedience: because a man may know much, and yet want conscience to obey.

Secondly, in this Commandement men are injoyned the reading of the word, and hearing of it read, not only publikely, but also privately in their families: that thereby also they may come to the knowledge of that thing which Christ propoundeth unto them. Luke. 10. 26. *Christ saith to one of the Scribes, what is written? how readest thou?* taking it for granted, that men must read the Scriptures privately. And the Lord saith, *My people goe into captivity, because they have no knowledge:* yea, they perish, Hosea. 6. But wofull is the defect of this duty; for many have not the Bible in their houses for their private exercise in the word: and in many families it is set up for a show, or hath covered with dust, when as cards and tables are worne with use. It is not amisse for men to get statutes of the Land into their houses, and to read therein, for the knowledge of mens lives; but yet herein they are blame-worthy, that either they have not, or els regard not the book of God, whereby they might be acquainted with the statutes of the Lord, for the better guiding of their unruly affections. Other things in this commandement have beene observed before.

The second part of this conclusion, is an excellent promise made to him that overcometh, which for substance hath beene handled in the conclution of the former Epistle. Here onely some speciall blessings are particularly promised: In the handling whereof two points are to bee considered: First, the persons to whom the promise is made, *To him that overcometh*: whereof an exercise was made before, vers. 7. Secondly, the blessings promised, comprised in this three fold gift of God: First, *To eat of the Manna which is hid*: Secondly, *To receive a white stone*: Thirdly, *A new name written in the stone.* All which three signifie in effect, *The election, vocation, justification, and glorification of God's people.* But I will handle them in particular. The Elect first, *beginning f*

the hidden Manna to eat. Manna properly ſignifieth that food which God gave from the clouds to the people of Iſrael, which for the excellency of it, is called, *The wheat of Heaven, The food of the ſtrong, or the food of Angels.* In forme it was *like Coriander ſeed, and in colour white, in taſte it was pleaſant and ſweet.* Herewith God fed his people in the wilderneſſe 40. yeares: to teach them, *That man liveth not by bread onely, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* This is thought to bee the ſame white Manna which is uſed in ſhops at this day; but I will not diſpute thereof, ſeeing it is doubtfull. That Manna did repreſent a more excellent food: and therefore *Paul* calleth it, *A ſpirituall meat*, becauſe it repreſented unto them the ſpirituall food of the ſoule, Chriſt Jeſus the true Manna, *The living bread that came downe from heaven*: as we may ſee at large, John 6. And ſo in this place by Manna, we muſt not underſtand the Manna of the people of Iſrael; but Chriſt himſelfe the true food of life eternall. How Chriſt doth become unto us our ſpirituall Manna, and the true food of life, I will ſhew by theſe concluſions. I. Hee is this food, not in regard of his doctrine, or of his miracles, nor yet only in regard of the bleſſings of his death and paſſion: But Chriſt himſelfe God and man is true food of life, as is ſhewed at large, John 6. And in Chriſt himſelfe are his death and paſſion, and the benefits thereof, food unto the ſoule. II. *Concluſ.* Chriſt is this food, not as he lay in the manger, or as hee now ſitteth in heaven at the right hand of his Father; but as he ſuffered the wrath of God and pangs of hel upon the croſſe, and as he died and was buried: for our life commeth out of Chriſts death. III. *Concluſ.* He is this Food not in regard of his God-head: for that no creature can receive or apply to his juſtification, or ſanctification: but in regard of his Manhood, ſubſiſting in the perſon of the ſonne of God. Chriſts fleſh profiteth nothing, ſevered from the godhead: but yet his body and bloud have this vertue, to be true ſpiritual food, becauſe they are the fleſh and bloud of that perſon which is God. IV. *Concl.* Chriſt is not a bodily food to bee received with the hand, eaten with the mouth, and digeſted in the ſtomacke; but hee is a ſpirituall food, to bee received, applyed, and digeſted by faith: And being ſo received, he doth preſerve the ſoule unto eternall life. This faith is that whereby a man is enabled to beleeve that Chriſt crucified is his Chriſt. And thus doth he become our ſpirituall Manna, when by true faith we aſſure our ſelves that hee ſuffered for our ſin, and role againe for our righteouſneſſe.

Vſe. Is Chriſt crucified, the true bread of life, and our ſpirituall Manna? then ſhould we long after him, with a true ſpirituall hunger in our very hearts, as truly as any man longeth after meat and drinke. When a man is famiſhed, for the ſtaying of his hunger hee will pull his owne fleſh from his bones, and eat it; Even ſo, for the ſatisfying of our hungry ſoules with Chriſt Jeſus this food of life, we muſt forſake the deareſt thing in all the world, though it bee our owne fleſh; for that which we will doe for our bodies, we muſt doe much more for our ſoules. *Queſt.* How ſhal we attaine to this true ſpirituall hunger? *Anſw.* It is with the hunger of the ſoule, as it is with the hunger of the bodie. In bodily hunger bee two things: A great paine in the ſtomack for want of nouriſhment: And a ſtrong and earneſt appetite, which continueth till the ſtomacke be filled. Even ſo wee ſhould feele a paine in our hearts, riſing from a feare of the wrath of God for our ſinnes; And then we muſt labour to have a greedy appetite, and earneſt deſire to be filled with Chriſt crucified; and never be at reſt till we be ſatiate with the merit of his paſſion, which only can free us from Gods wrath and fill us with true joy. But woefull be theſe times: for there is in moſt mens hearts a deadneſſe of ſpirit, whereby they are made inſenſible of inward wants and miſeries: They are like unto full men that feele no paine for want of food. There is indeed an hunger, nay, a greedy worme in many after the profits, pleaſures, and honours of this world: but few or none doe hunger after Chriſt. But if wee would have a part *in the feaſt of the Lambe*, wee muſt labour to have this longing appetite after Chriſt: If we be full ſtomacked, wee ſhall have no refreſhing from his merits. *Mary* ſaith truly in her ſong, *God filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich and full goe away empty.* Which is a moſt fearfull curſe, when the ſoule is debarred from the food of life: But *bleſſed are wee if wee hunger after Chriſt and his righteouſneſſe*, for then wee ſhall bee ſatisfied: Chriſt will give unto us our fill of the water of life freely, Rev. 21. 6.

Secondly, here wee may take a view of the profane madneſſe of the world: for though this bread of life Chriſt Jeſus, be the moſt excellent food of all, farre ſurpaſſing the Iſraelites Manna, the food of Angels; yet it is nothing or little deſired. Men are like the fooliſh Iſraelites that had more regard to *leeks and onyons, and to the fleſh pots of Egypt, than to the Angels food which God gave them from heaven.* They ſpend their wits, and their ſtrength, by day and by night, that they may ſatiate themſelves with the trafle riches and vaine pleaſures of the world: And yet theſe men have the name to bee the onely men; whereas indeed they are prophane *Eſaus*, and wicked Iſraelites. As therefore this practice is damnable: ſo muſt wee learne to deteſt it. And on the contrary, ſeeing Chriſt Jeſus is the true Manna, our principall care and deſire muſt be to be fed therwith. Wee muſt thinke it is a great diſgrace to Chriſt Jeſus, which hee cannot indure without revenge, that we ſhould haveleſſe regard to him the true bread of life, than to earthly food which periſheth.

Thirdly

Thirdly, here we may ſee that which is uſuall in the Scripture intreating of the Sacraments, to wit, the name of the ſigne given to the thing ſignified: for Chriſt here promiſeth them Manna, meaning thereby not the Iſraelites food, but himſelfe, whereof their Manna was a ſigne, a ſeale, a pledge: as appeareth plain, becauſe *Paul* calleth it *ſpirituall meat.* 1 Corin. 10. 2.

Further, Chriſt is not onely called *Manna*, but *hidden Manna*, to put a difference betwen himſelfe and the Manna of the Iſraelites, which was viſible that every man might ſee it. And Chriſt is called hidden Manna for two cauſes: firſt, becauſe no man by nature knoweth this food, or deſireth it: Secondly, becauſe God doth not reveale this food to all men effectually; as may appeare, Matth. 11. 25. *I give thee thankes (O Father) that thou haſt hidden theſe things*, that is, the doctrine of the Goſpell, and the myſteries of the kingdome of heaven) *from the great and wiſe men of the world, and haſt opened them unto babes.*

Vſe. Is Chriſt hidden Manna? then firſt here learne to take knowledge of the ſtate of men in the world: They know not Chriſt, neither doe they feele in themſelves any want of this food, and therefore they know not what it meaneth: for meat and drinke is never-knowne, till a man bee hungry. Yea, to many that live in the Church this Manna is hidden; for though men heare the doctrine of Chriſt, yet not one of an hundred feele in themſelves any want of Chriſt: let the conſcience ſpeake, and this will prove true. Ignorant people bleſſe themſelves, and ſay all is well, Chriſt is a Saviour: when as indeed to them Chriſt is hidden. Nay, which is yet more lamentable, to many which teach and preach Chriſt, Chriſt is hidden Manna: for many of them never felt in their hearts and conſcience, that they had need of Chriſt for the pardon of their ſins, and the ſalvation of their ſoules. It is not the knowledge in the braine that maketh Chriſt knowne to man; but knowledge in the conſcience, when a man feeles in his heart and ſoule, that hee ſtands in need of the bloud of Chriſt, and all the benefits of his paſſion for his redemption and ſalvation. And ſeeing this is the condition of the world, we on the contrary muſt labour to feele in our ſelves, that wee ſtand in need of Chriſt, and of all the benefits of his paſſion, to free our ſoules from the gulfe of hell, and the wrath of God. Away with bare mentall knowledge: for till wee have this true ſenſe of our owne wants, wee can never get into our hearts any ſound grace.

Secondly, is Chriſt hidden bread not reveaſed to all? Then calling effectuall to ſalvation (ſo as if he will, every man may be ſaved) is not univerſall: for then ſhould Chriſt not bee hidden, but reveaſed to all: which is not ſo. Election therefore and effectuall vocation is definite and particular. And thus much of the firſt branch of this gift.

The ſecond gift is a white ſtone. Here Chriſt borrowetb a compariſon from the cuſtome and manner of the Gentiles, to whom the Epiſtles are directed. A white ſtone was of great uſe among them: For firſt, the Judge in giving ſentence, uſed white ſtones, and blacke ſtones: the giving of a white ſtone, was a token of abſolution; the giving of a blacke ſtone, a figure of condemnation. Here then the giving of a white ſtone, may ſignifie *abſolution from Chriſt of all our ſinnes and tranſgreſſes.* Againe, when the Gentiles would know, which were lucky dayes (as they ſpeake) and which were unlucky; they uſed to caſt lots with white and blacke ſtones, and that day which light on a white ſtone, was judged to be a lucky day, that which light on a blacke ſtone was judged to bee unlucky. This practice they uſed as might bee ſhewed by ſufficient records. And though this practice have no warrant, yet may Chriſt alludo unto it, to ſignifie unto them that hee will give them good ſucceſſe in all their actions: yea, happie dayes, and a bleſſed life full of all joyes and pleaſures. Others doe expound it of giving victory, whereof the giving of a white ſtone was a ſigne: but this is not ſo fit, neither can it bee ſhewed by true record that they had ſuch a practice. I rather take it Chriſt alludeth to the firſt, and here promiſeth to him that overcommeth, the true remiſſion of all his ſins and full abſolution; not in regard of civill puniſhment, but in reſpect of guilt and puniſhment before God, which is eternall damnation.

Here note one infallible token of the pardon of ſinne; namely, to overcome, that is, to renounce our ſelves, and by faith relie wholly on Chriſt, teſtifying this faith by maintaining good conſcience, and true religion unto the end: And therefore if any deſire to know whether God have abſolved him of his ſinnes, let him labour thus to overcome, and then ſhall this aſſurance be ſealed up unto him.

The third gift, is a new *name written in the ſtone.* What this new name ſhould bee S. *John* expreſſeth in his firſt epiſtle, chap. 3. ver. 1. ſaying, *Behold, what love the Father hath ſhewed to us, that we ſhould bee called the ſonnes of God.* This new name therefore is to bee *the ſonne and heire of God in Chriſt.* And becauſe it is given of God himſelfe, therefore wee muſt not thinke it is an idle name, or a bare title onely: but withall God giveth him a new condition, whereof this name is a token and title. Gen. 17. God changed *Abrams* name, and called him *Abraham*: but it was when he had changed his eſtate, and made him the Father of the faithfull. And there was a change in *Jacob*, when God called him *Iſrael.* This new name then ſignifieth the giving of a new eſtate to a man or woman, which they had not before: namely, their regeneration, whereby they are made to die unto ſinne, and to live unto God: for therewith goeth

the bleſſing of Adoption, wherby they become the Sonnes of God, and heires with Chriſt, and ſo have heaven and earth for their poſſeſſion: and all miſeries and croſſes, yea, ſinne it ſelfe turning to their good; they have alſo the protection of Gods holy Angels in this life, and at the laſt gaſpe death to be no death, but a ſtrait paſſage to eternall life.

Further, this new name is ſaid to bee *written in the white ſtone*: that is, in the pledge of abſolution; which ſheweth the union of theſe two: Abſolution, and Regeneration. So that whom the Lord of his mercie abſolves from their ſinnes, them in his bounty hee brings to a new eſtate and condition. Hee that is in Chriſt is a new creature, 2 Corin. 5. 17. A point to bee obſerved, as yeelding ſpecial advice to reforme the groſſe and common abuſe of Chriſt. Men perſwade themſelves, that Chriſt is their Saviour and will pardon their ſinnes, for he is merciffull: and thereupon they take occaſion to live as they liſt. But let no man here with deceive himſelfe: for they that have abſolution, have regeneration alſo: A new condition of life goes with the fruition of Gods mercy in Chriſt: they that goe on in ſinne, have not the pardon of ſinne: the corruption of ſinne muſt be aboliſhed where the guilt of ſinne is abſolved; and their lives are reformed that have their ſinnes remitted. Here ſome man may ſay, why are not thoſe called by this new name, to whom Chriſt gives it, for uſually men are called after their names? The anſwer is made in the end of the verſe: *Becauſe no man knoweth that name but hee that receiveth it*: that is, in that manner and certaintie as hee that receiveth it. And therefore the children of God muſt not bee much offended when they are reviled for their profeſſion, becauſe the world knowes not their eſtate.

Here wee may obſerve divers points: Firſt, that hee which is the childe of God, and hath this new name given him, knowes that hee is Gods childe, juſtified and ſanctified. Neither is this knowledge by probable conjecture onely, and good hope, as the Papiſts would have it; but certain and infallible: for elſe others ſhould know it as well as he that receiveth it: which is here denied. Each one is bound in charitie to bee perſwaded, that godly profeſſors are the Sonnes and Daughters of God: But the man himſelfe that hath received this new name and new eſtate, he knowes it otherwiſe, and therefore certainly and infallibly.

Secondly, if no man know this name but hee that receiveth it, then can none beſide God and the conſcience, know from within the man, his particular faith and Adoption. And hereby wee are to bee admoniſhed, to beware of charging the evill and hard cenſure of hypocriſie upon any that live in the Church; in ſo doing we overſhoot our ſelves: this judgment belongs to God, not to man, ſave onely to the man himſelfe: for wee cannot diſcerne the good within the man properly, but by effects. *Queſt.* How farre forth may a man judge of another mans Election? *Anſ.* There be two degrees of judgement: judgement of certaintie, and judgement of charitie. Judgement of certaintie, is when a man can ſet downe certainly, ſuch a man ſhall bee ſaved: This is a peremptory judgement belonging unto God, and to ſome men onely, ſo farre forth as the Lord revealeth it unto them: as hee did the eſtate of ſome men, to *David* and to ſome Prophets. Whereupon *David* ſometimes prayes for the ſinall deſtruction of his enemies; but this is not given ordinarily, no not to Gods Miniſters. The judgement of charitie is that, which bindes a man to judge the beſt of another: and herein be two degrees. Firſt, touching the unregenerate; charity bindes us, not to deſpaire of ſuch as yet live profanely; but to hope that God will in good time call them. And touching the regenerate, who have given good teſtimonies of their vocation, charitie bindes us to be perſwaded without doubt that they be the children of God. And this we may doe without repugnance to this place; for though wee cannot from within the man know his eſtate, yet by the fruits wee may; which is the higheſt degree of judgement that charitie can exerciſe.

Thirdly, here we ſee the Church of Rome is deceived, who makes *Viſibilitie* the marke of Gods Church: for Gods Church is a companie of men which believe: The ground of the Church is Gods election and adoption, & mans faith, which none other can ſee but the parties that have them. The ſignes thereof may be ſeen, but properly the Church cannot bee ſeene. It comes to bee viſible by the fruits of Election, and by the outward works of love, which proceed from faith. Wee therefore hold farre better, that we beleeve there is a Church, and not that we ſee the Church.

Laſtly, if others know not the name of Gods children, then what marvell is it, if the wicked miſcall them? 1 Joh. 3. 2. *The world knowes them not.* Gods children therefore muſt not be daunted at the reproaches of the wicked. but pray with Chriſt, *Father forgive them, they know not what they doe*, Luke 23. 34.

V. 18. *And unto the Angel which is at Thyatira write, Theſe things ſaith the Sonne of God, which hath his eyes like to a flame of fire, and his feet like fine braſſe.*

Here followeth the fourth particular commandement of Chriſt unto *John*, as alſo the fourth particular Epiſtle. The Commandement in theſe words, *To the Angell which is at Thyatira write*: of the ſubſtance of this Commandement I have ſpoken before; onely remember the end

end thereof, which is to certifie this Church of Thyatira, that *John* had a calling and commandement from God to write this Epiſtle unto them: and further to certifie the whole Church of God, to the end of the world, of his calling to write this booke of the Revelation.

The Epiſtle it ſelfe containeth three parts: a Preface, a Propoſition, and a Concluſion. The Preface in theſe words, *Theſe things ſaith the Sonne of God, which hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like fine braſſe*: all which things almoſt have beene handled in the beginning of this Chapter, and in the former from whence they are borrowed. In the Preface, firſt is ſet downe in whoſe name the Epiſtle is written, to wit, in Chriſts name: the cauſes thereof wee have ſhewed before. Then Chriſt is deſcribed by three arguments: Firſt, *To be the Sonne of God*: Secondly, *To have eyes like a flame of fire*: Thirdly, *To have feet like fine braſſe*. For the firſt, in the former Chapter hee was called *the ſon of man*; but here he is called the *ſon of God*: where by *God*, wee muſt not abſolutely underſtand the God-head of the whole Trinitie, but the perſon of the father, who being oppoſed either to the Sonne, or to the holy Ghoſt, is uſually called God: not that hee is God more than the Sonne, or than the holy Ghoſt; but becauſe hee is the firſt in order, and becauſe he is that perſon from whom the God-head is communicated to the Son and to the holy Ghoſt. So that here Chriſt is called the ſon of the Father: which myſtery wee cannot fully underſtand, for the Word hath not revealed the ſame; neither can we find it elſwhere out of the Word. But yet for the better conceiving thereof, remember theſe two rules. I. That Chriſt is the Sonne of the Father, not in reſpect of his God-head, but in reſpect of his perſon. For the God-head of the Sonne is the ſame with the Godhead of the Father: the Godhead of the Father doth not beget, neither is the God-head of the Sonne begotten. II. *Rule.* Chriſt is the Sonne of the Father, not by creation, as the Angels and *Adam* were; nor by adoption, as every beleever is; but by nature, in that hee is begotten of the ſubſtance of his Father before all the world; for the father communicates from himſelfe the whole god-head that is in himſelfe unto his ſonne.

Vſe. Chriſt is here called the Sonne of God, to ſtirre up reverence, attention, and care in this Church, in marking and obeying the things that follow in this particular Epiſtle. And in their Example Chriſt alſo teacheth us, that when wee heare the word of God preached or read unto us, wee ſhould receive with feare and trembling, and reverence: becauſe he that ſpeaketh unto us out of his word, *is the ſonne of God*. When *Pilat* was about to condemne our Saviour Chriſt, hee heard it ſaid that *Chriſt was the Sonne of God*: and thereupon hee trembled, and was the more afraid, Joh. 19. 8. Shall a filly heathen man that knowes not Chriſt tremble towards him when he heares his name, and yet wee that profeſſe our ſelves to beleeve in him, bee nothing moved with reverence towards him, when hee ſpeakes unto us in his Word? At his preſence the hils melt, and at his voice the rocks cleave in ſunder: and therefore if our heart ſhall not melt and cleave a ſunder with a reverent feare when he ſhall ſpeake unto us, wee are worſer than theſe ſenſleſſe creatures.

Secondly, Chriſt is ſaid, *To have eyes like a flame of fire*: which we muſt not conceive literally. The words are borrowed from the former chapter, verſ. 14. where Chriſt is deſcribed not as hee is in truth, but as hee appeared to *John* in Viſion. We have ſhewed before what is ſignified by theſe fiirie eyes: namely, Chriſts infinite wiſdome in himſelfe, and vigilant zeale over his Church. The end wherefore he ſo deſcribed himſelfe to this Church, is to give them to underſtand, that hee can ſee and diſcerne their very ſecret ſinnes; for ſundry among them were given to private offences, as to fornication and idolatry, as wee ſhall ſee afterward.

Here then wee have an excellent remedie againſt ſecret ſinnes: ſhame and feare of puniſhment reſtraine ſome from open ſinnes, but yet the ſame men when they are in ſecret, doe without feare commit privie ſinnes againſt the firſt and ſecond table. But theſe men muſt remember, that being with-drawne from the preſence of men, they are yet in the preſence of Chriſt; for hee hath *fiirie eyes*, wherewith hee ſeeth theſe moſt ſecret ſinnes, which they hide from the world. For though we may make faire weather with men, yet we can never bleare the eyes of Chriſt. If fornicators, wantons, uſurers and blaſphemers, would remember this, by Gods grace it would bee a notable meanes at leaſt to reſtraine them from their ſecret ſinnes, if not, to move them unto the practice of true repentance.

Thirdly, Chriſt is ſaid to have *feet like fine braſſe*. Whereby is ſignified (as hath beene ſhewed) his infinite power and ſtrength, whereby hee doth ſubdue ſinne, Satan, and all his enemies, firſt unto himſelfe, and then unto his members. And Chriſt is thus deſcribed unto this Church, to terrifie certaine wicked men among them, that gave themſelves to fornication, idolatry, and other ſins: as alſo to affright this whole Church, who by their wicked companie were almoſt drawne away to the ſame ſinne.

Vſe. Here wee have a notable remedy againſt looſeneſſe of life; namely, to conſider that Chriſt, whom we call our Saviour, walketh continually in his Church with feet of braſſe, to tread Satan and all his enemies under his feet: and ſuch are all that will not ſubmit themſelves to the regiment of his word, Luk. 19. 27. If the blaſphemer could conſider this, it would ſtop his mouth; and when the adulterer, the

these, or any sinner goeth about his wicked devices, this by Gods grace would bee a notable meanes to make him breake off his wicked purpose. When *Benhadad* heard, that the King of Israel would come against him in battell, *He sent his men with ropes about their neckes to crave peace*, and in them humbled himselfe. Shal men be thus afraid of the fury of man, and shall we not tremble and feare at the fury of Christ, who hath these fet or brasse to trample in peeces all his enemies? The want of this consideration is one maine cause why sin doth abound.

1 Kings. 20. 31.

A

V. 19. *I know thy workes, and thy love and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy deeds, which are moe at the last than at the first.*

B

Here begins the second part of this Epistle, to wit, the Proposition, which containeth the substance and matter thereof: and it hath two parts; a commendation of this Church, and a rebuke thereof. The commendation in the 19. verse; the rebuke or dispraise in the 20. verse, and those that follow, almost to the end of the chapter. The commendation is twofold; generall in these words, *I know thy workes*. This hath beene handled before verse 2. The particular commendation standeth in five notable works: to wit, *Love, Service, Faith, Patience, and Increase in godlinesse*.

C

For the first, by *Love*, wee must understand *Love to men*: for afterward they are commended in duties to God, in faith and patience, but love and service are duties of man to man. Touching love, note three points: What this love is; What is the property of this love; and how it is to bee practised. First, *Love to man is a gift of the spirit of God, whereby a man is wellaffected to his neighbour for Gods sake*. That love is a *gift of the spirit*, is plaine, Galat. 5. 22. where it is reckoned among the gifts of the Spirit. Next I adde, *That hereby a man is well affected to his neighbour*. To be well affected to another, is to rejoyce at his good, and to desire and seeke the same; and withall to be grieved at his misery, and to beare the bowels of compassion toward him, being readie to receive and helpe him to our uttermost: By *Neighbour*, wee must not understand onely those that are neere unto us in habitation, but even all those that are of the same nature with us, even any of mankind. He is thy neighbour, that is a man as thou art, and to bearing the Image of God as thou doest, be he friend or foe, neere or strange unto thee; and to him must thou bee well affected. Lastly, I say, *For Gods sake*: For God is first and principally to be loved for himselfe, and man in God and for God, because he is the creature of God, and beareth his image. The love we beare to man, is a fruit of our love unto God; for this Commandement wee have of him, That he that loveth God, should love his brother also, 1 Joh. 4. 21.

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II. Point. The propertie of this love is, *To be fervent*; and that for two causes: first, if need require, every man is bound within his calling to relieve his love *by giving his life for his neighbour*, though hee bee our enemie or a stranger: which we shall never doe unlesse our love bee fervent. Secondly, there is much ingratitude, hatred, emulation, and many injuries in the world: now the persons from whom these come must be loved: the unworthinesse of the partie must not quench our love, but it must burne when the waters of mens injuries and malice would quench the same.

1 Joh. 3. 17.

III. Point. The practice of our love must bee squared by this rule, *The love of our selves*: as wee wish our owne good heartily, so wee must wish our neighbours good. This is the law of Nature, *To doe as a man would bee done unto*: And it is the law of God, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy selfe*. Example: A man of some trade is to make a bargaine, and if hee will lie, or use false weights and measures, hee may advantage himselfe. This the Devil and his owne corruption will suggest unto him, while hee is about the bargaine: hee therefore must call to minde this rule of love, and examine his owne heart, whether hee would have another man to deceive him by lying, by false weights, &c. The same thing must men doe, when they are tempted to oppression or cruelties; let them thinke whether they would have others to wrong or oppresse them, and so shew forth love by this rule, doing as they would be done unto. It were to bee wished, that our Church might have the deserved praise of this vertue of love: But *Christ* foretold of these out dayes, *That love should wax cold*, Matthew 24. 12. *And that men should bee lovers of themselves*. And so it is, for every man now is for himselfe, no man seekes anothers good. Goe thorow townes, markets, and faires, and rare it is to finde a man that in his affaires seeketh the common good, as well as his owne. For this is the common rule, *May I not make of mine owne what I will?* But hee that hath the grace of love, *Seeketh not his owne onely, but the good of others also*, 1 Corinth. 13. vers. 5.

D

2 Tim. 3. 2.

Here then wee must learne to practise this vertue, that wee may have Christs commendation with this Church: every man in the generall calling of a Christian will make great shew of love; as when he comes to the Lords table, and in prayer: But in their particular affaires few shew forth true love, nay, many by lying, oppression, cruelty, *Flea the skinne from the flesh, and the flesh from the bone of the poore, and breake the bones within the flesh, and chop them as for the pot*, as the Prophet speaketh. These little consider this rule, or that account which the Lord will take of them, who hath sworne, never

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Mich. 3. 23.

never to forget these workes, Amos 8. 7. Learne therefore in thy particular calling to shew forth love: and imploy thy commodities, not for thy selfe alone, but for the good of those with whom thou livest: herein is love, and hereby shalt thou be known to be those *servant of Christ*, John 13. 35. and the childe of God, *Translated from death to life*, 1 Ioh. 3. 14.

The second thing for which this Church is commended, is *service*. To name the divers significations of the Word, here it betokeneth a worke of love, whereby a man within the compasse of his calling becomes a servant unto every man for that mans good. Reade Heb. 6. 10. where this is both commended and described. Gal. 5. 13. *Doe service one to another in love*. 1 Corinth. 13. 5. *Love seeketh not her owne, but maketh her selfe servant unto all, to doe them good*. And Christs commandement is, *Let him that would be as the chiefe among you, be as the servant*, Luk. 22. 26. Now the principall part of this service is, when a man is readie with his goods, according to his abilitie, to helpe the poore, especially those that bee godly. This is a fruit of love, and therefore it is here set after it, as also in the places aforenamed, Hebr. 6. 10. Gal. 5. 13.

B

Vse.

It were to bee wished that our Church and people might have the like praise for this vertue. But the richer sort spend their substance and wealth upon haukes and hounds, buls and beares, upon costly attire, and banqueting: so is when the poore that are in need come for releefe, they have nothing to spare; and if any thing be given, it is drawn as hardly from them as a rible out of their side: Men wil give frankly, to delight themselves with playes and pastimes, and such like vanities: but the poore that bee their owne flesh, may die in the streets for want of that which men give to their dogs. But if we respect the commendation of Christ Iesus, let us abandon these vanities which hinder us in the practice of this vertue of *service* for the good of our brethren. And to induce all men hereto, let them consider, I. How the Church of the old Testament was charged with giving the first fruits of their wine, corne, and oyle; and likewise with many sacrifices and ceremonies which belonged to the Temple: These things indeed bee ceased, and yet wee may not mispend these goods which hereby are spared; for in the new Testament the poore are in stead of the altar, and they must have that which the Altar had among the Iewes. Againe, Isay 58. 18. *If thou powreth forth his soule to the hungry*, that is, hee that seeing the poore in miserie, hath the bowels of compassion moved towards him, and from his pitifull heart releeveth the wants, according to his abilitie, his light shall never be put out, but shall spring out of the darknesse, and his darknesse shal be as the noone day. This is pure religion and undefiled before God, to visit the fatherless, and the widow in their adversity. Remember this, *He that hath mercy upon the poore, lendeth unto the Lord*, Prov. 19. 17. So that when the poore come for releeve, God commeth to borrow of us some of that which he hath given us. The poore are the Lords collectors; now when the Lord would borrow of us, shall wee make denial, and send him empty away? Thirdly, consider that Christ himselfe comes in the person of the poore that is hungry, sicke, naked, or in any want: and therefore if wee would escape the fearefull sentence of condemnation at the last day, *Away from me ye cursed into everlasting fire: for I was an hungrie, and ye gave mee no meat, &c.* Then wee must have regard unto the poore, and shew our bounty in their releeve, who are our owne flesh: so shall we make God our debtor, and be commended with this Church by Christ himselfe in this world, and at the day of judgement heare that blessed voyce of his appropriation, *Come ye blessed*, Mat. 25. 34.

Iam. 1. 27.

C

D

The third vertue for which this Church is commended, is their *faith*. By *faith* here wee are to understand *fidelitie*; which is a vertue whereby a man is faithfull to God in keeping that vow and promise which hee made to him in his baptisme: which was to renounce and deny himselfe, and wholly to give up himselfe to acknowledge one God in three persons; and accordingly to beleeve in, to worship and obey the same God all his life long. In this sense is faith taken of *Paul*, when hee saith, *That younger widowes have damnation, because they have forsaken their first faith*: and in the former Epistles of Christ unto these Churches, where he commands them *to be faithfull*.

1 Tim. 5. 12.

It were to be wished that our Churches and congregations might in like manner bee commended for their fidelitie to God; but that cannot truly bee done of his generally. It is a common thing for men to sweare by their faith; but it is a rare thing to finde a man to keepe his faith; as will appeare by this short survey of our people: For first, the greatest part in all places are ignorant of God, of his word, and of their vow in baptisme; and also voyd of care to attaine hereto. Now all these are unfaithfull unto God. Others, though they have knowledge, yet they have no love, nor care of good things, which concerne the Kingdome of heaven, but all their delight is in eating, drinking, gaming, and in pastimes and pleasures: Herein they spend their time and strength; and these also have denied their first faith, and their case is dangerous: for as yet their belly and their pleasure is their God, and their end will bee damnation. A third sort are learned wise men of the world: but if wee regard their fidelity to God, there is nothing in them; they are worldly persons and earthly minded, such as spend both wit and strength to get wealth; like unto the mole, who is alwayes in the earth. These also are unfaithfull unto God, in regard of their vow in baptisme. For as they account

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gaine

gaine godlinesse, so gold is their God, and they say to the wedge of gold, Thou art my confidence. Seeing then all these be unfaithfull unto God, wee must bee admonished to remember what wee have promised in our baptisme: And withall have care to performe the same as wee tender the salvation of our soules. For if we be unfaithfull, as *Paul* said of the younger widdowes, damnation belongs unto us.

The fourth vertue for which this Church is commended, is *patience*. Of this I have spoken before, vers. 2. Here onely note, that it is joyned with *love to men*, with *fidelitie to God*, and with *service both to God and men in the duty of love*. Whereby Christ would signifie, that no good thing can bee done by any man, without patience. Love is no love without patience: neither is faith any faith without patience: for when a man loveth another, for his love he shall sometime receive hatred. Now unlesse he have patience to beare that hatred, his love will surcease. And so if a man have care to bee faithfull unto God in the world he shal be sure to have much contempt: so that unlesse hee have patience to beare the same, his faithfulnesse will faile; *Patience bringeth forth experience, and experience hope*, Ro. 5.4. and 15.4. no comfort of the Scriptures, nor hope without patience. And therefore in the Parable of the Sower, *The good ground bringeth forth fruit with patience*: though a man
Luke 8.15. have never so good gifts, yet without patience hee cannot put them in practice. This therefore wee must joyne with all the good graces wee have: as *Peter* counselleth us, 2 Peter 1. 6. When a man is in temptation, and apprehendeth the wrath of God, which is the forest thing that can be, without patience hee will despaire: Without patience a man will bee weary of wel-doing, both in duties to God and man, and to his owne soule. Hence the Apostle saith, *ye have need of patience*, Heb. 10.39.

And thy workes. Here Christ repeateth his generall commendation of this Church, which wee must not thinke to bee done in vaine, but hereby he would let us see, how exceeding well he did approve of their workes. The cause why hee liked them so well, was their increase in wel-doing: whereof we shall intreat afterward.

Vse. Christ repeateth his approbation of their workes after some worthy vertues, to shew unto us, what things are required in the doing of any worke that shall bee acceptable to God; Namely, these foure things, faith, love, service, and patience. Faith is necessary, because in wel-doing a man must testifie his fidelitie to God, which hee shall best doe, if first he learne out of the Word, whether God have commanded that worke to bee done or not, that so hee may bee sure to doe, or not to doe that which God will have him: for it is not sufficient to have a good intent in the doing of our workes, as is commonly thought, though falsly; but our workes must bee done in faith, that is, in a sure

A persuasion out of Gods word, that the things wee doe are approved of God; for *whatsoever is not of faith, is sinne*. Secondly, love is necessary in every good worke wee goe about, *For faith worketh by love*, Gal. 5.6. Hence the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 13.3. *If a man should give his bodie to bee burned, and bestow all his goods in Almes upon the poore: yet if hee did not these in love, it would not please God.* Thirdly, service to man is required in our good workes. This must bee carefully marked: for the end of mans life is in his calling to serve man, and by that to serve God. Col. 3.24. Servants must obey their Masters, and in their persons doe service unto Christ. And that which is there spoken of servants, must bee referred to the workes of every
B man in his calling: they must bee done for the good of men, so as God may be served in them. This overthrows the foolish conceit of the Papists, which think that the most excellent works of all are fasting, pilgrimage, wearing of rough attire, and whipping of their bodies: For good workes must bee done in faith and love, to benefit men, either in soule or body: but these workes of theirs are not done in faith, neither doe they profit the doers or any others: Fasting hath it place, yet it is no good worke, but a thing indifferent in it selfe. Lastly, patience is necessary in every good worke, that men faint not in doing that which is good: for they that doe any good thing, shall be sure of many crosses, partly from men, and partly from Satan,
C as also by Gods providence. Now when these befall a man in wel-doing, without patience they will stay his proceeding: And therfore it is truly said, *That the good ground bringeth forth fruit with patience.*

These being the vertues that make a worke acceptable to God: wee must labour in every action of our lawfull calling whatsoever it bee, to practise the same in faith, love, service, and patience. Wee must not tie good workes to Church matters only, as hearing the Word, and giving almes; but the practice of any worke of a mans lawfull calling, be it never so base, with these vertues is a good worke, and approved of God in it kinde, as well as the best worke that is, not for the worke it selfe, but because therein doth appeare faith, love, service, and
D patience: and because this Church so performed their workes, therefore doth God double his approbation.

The last vertue for which this Church is commended, is increase in godlines, in these words, *And that they are moe at the last than at the first.* The Chuch of Ephesus was before reproved for decay and losse of the graces of God: but this Church did grow and increase in graces, and therefore are her workes more approved, than the workes of any other Church.

It were to bee wished, that our congregations might bee commended for their increase in godlinesse, in faith, obedience, and other good workes; but that cannot justly bee done, for the

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the number of our people is increased, but their growth in grace doth not appeare. Many live in ignorance, and though they heare much, yet they profit little; so as it might bee said of them, as the Author to the Hebrewes saith,
Heb. 5.12. *Whereas concerning the time yee ought to bee teachers, you have need againe that we teach you the first principles of the Word of God.* And as *Paul* saith of certaine women, *They are al-*
2 Tim. 3.7. *ways learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth.* Others also, though they know something, yet they practise lesse than they which know nothing. And which is worst of all, many that heretofore have had good beginning in them, by their bad conversation, and the greedie cares of the world, have lost the same grace, and goe backward in knowledge, in obedience, in faith, and love. Rare it is to finde those that are like to this Church of Thyatira, whose workes are better at the last than at the first. A fearefull case it is, to bee ignorant of Gods will, and a great judgement of God, to decay in love, and other graces: and therefore that wee may prevent Gods judgements, wee must have care to get knowledge, and to increase therein, and with knowledge to joyne obedience in all good duties to God and man. Some plead for themselves by reason of age, want of memory, and capacity: but these must learne to shew forth better affections, and more sincere obedience.

The younger sort also must imploy their wit and strength to get knowledge, and with knowledge joyne obedience, that they may increase in grace as they grow in dayes. Yea, every one that hath any good beginning, must endevour to make it more: For to him that hath, shall more be given, and hee shall have abundance; but from him that hideth his gift, or abuseth the same, shall bee taken away that which hee seemeth to have, Luk. 8.18.

V. 20. ***Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, that thou suffrest that woman Jesabel, which calleth her selfe a Prophetesse, to teach and deceive my Servants, to make them to commit fornication, and to eat meat sacrificed to Idols.***

Here is Christs reproofe of this Church of Thyatira, and it is twofold: First, of the whole Church, in this 20. verse. Secondly, of a woman in that Church, verse 21. In the reproofe of the whole Church note two things: The reproofe it selfe; And the reason thereof. The reproofe it selfe is contained in these words,

A *Notwithstanding I have something against thee.* that is, though I have praised thee for many worthy works, yet there be some things which I doe not approve. This reproofe hath beene handled in the former Epistles. The reason of the reproofe followeth in these words, *That thou suffrest the woman Iesabel, who calleth her selfe a Prophetesse, to teach and seduce my Servants.*

This reason of her reproofe containeth sundry points worthy our consideration. 1. From the phrase and forme of the words, wee may consider the large power that God gave to his Church: which was, besides the power to preach the Word, and administer the Sacraments, a further power to appoint who should
B preach among them, and who should not preach: and also a power to represse evill men and evill women, and to keepe them in order. The like power was given to the Church of Ephesus, as wee have seene in the Epistle to that Church: they had power to discerne false Prophets, and Apostles, and to restraine the same. The like power did God give to all Churches, as wee shall see if wee reade the histories of the Church; and great cause there is hereof: for without this authority, no Church could long stand and be a Church.

II. Here note that it is not sufficient for a Church to have the preaching of the Word, but it must have severitie and sharpe government, whereby wicked people may be restrained: this Church is therefore discommended, for that
C shee used not that severe authoritie, which God had given her in suppressing of sinne. And in our congregations the like fault is to bee found, where much preaching is, yet sinne abounds, adulterie, blasphemie, theftie, and cruelnie; and the cause is, for that this severe execution of government in restraining sinnes, is not so straitly put in practice as it ought to bee.

Againe, in this reason of this reproofe Christ doth charge them with two faults: First, for suffering a woman to teach: Secondly, for suffering a woman to seduce his people. For the first, the word translated *teach*, is in the new Testament commonly put for publike teaching in the Ministerie. Their fault then was this, that
D they suffered a woman to teach openly: and it is against the word of God, 1 Tim. 2. 12. *I permit not a woman to teach.* And, 1 Corinth. 14. 34, 35. *Women ought to keepe silence in the congregation, and bee subject to their husbands, and learne of them at home. Object.* But *Deborah* was a Prophetesse, Jud. 4.4. And *Hulda* prophesied, 2 King. 22.4. For *Iosiah* sent to her for counsell, 2 Chron. 3.4. And therefore women may prophesie. *Answ.* These women had extraordinary gifts and calling: and therefore upon their example wee may not make an ordinary rule. II. *Object.* But it may seeme *Paul* alloweth it, when he saith, *A woman praying, or prophesying uncovered, dishonoureth her head,*

1 Cor.

1 Corin. 11. 5. *Answer.* Hereto some doe answer thus, that in the infancy of the Church some women were extraordinarily indued with that gift, and did indeed prophecie. Others judge it to have beene a fault in that Church, and therefore say, in the 14. chapter, the Apostle reproveth it; commanding women to keepe silence in the Churches. Thirdly, a woman may be said to pray, when shee giveth her assent to the prayer of the Minister, by saying, *Amen*: And shee may be said to prophecie, when shee *singeth Psalmes*, or *readeth the Scriptures*: For so the Word is used in Scripture, 1 Chron. 25. 1. *Asaph and his company prophesied with harps and vials*: that is, (as it is translated) they sung prophesies, and plaid thereunto upon their instruments.

From the rebuke of Christ against this church, wee gather that it is not warrantable by Gods word for a woman to administer the Sacrament of baptisme. For baptisme is a seale of the covenant in the publike ministery, and so a part thereof, and must goe with the preaching of the Word, and may not be administred by women, who are not allowed to preach; no not in the time and case of necessitie when men are wanting. And although they may not teach publikely, yet they may teach at home; and in the absence of the husband it is her duties to teach her children. Prov. 31. *Lemuel*, that is, *Salomon* is taught many worthy things of his mother. And *Timothy was brought up a child in the Scriptures by his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice*, 2 Tim. 1. 5.

Hence some would gather, that as a woman may not teach publikely, so shee may not publikely governe in a Common-wealth. But this consequence is not good: For publike teaching is strictly forbidden to a woman, so is not publike civil regiment. There is a special reason why shee may not publikely teach; for it is the will of God, that as Christ was a man, so they that stand in his roome and stead in the publike ministery, should also bee men. But the regiment of a kingdome is a civill thing, and so may lawfully bee administred by a woman when shee commeth unto it by lawfull succession to her father, whose whole patrimonie in the want of sonnes shee may rightly enjoy. *Object.* But the woman must bee in subjection unto the man. 1. Cor. 14. 34. *Ans.* So she may, and yet have soveraignty in the kingdome. *Object.* But the man is the head of the woman. 1 Corin. 11. 3. *Ans.* That is, the man in that hee is a man is a person more excellent than the woman as she is a woman: Yet the person that in regard of sex is inferiour, may have more excellent gifts, and so likewise may exercise authority and rule: and wee finde by good experience, that the government of a woman is a happie government; no records of time can shew a more happy regiment for blessings temporall and spirituall under any man, than we have long enjoied under our noble Queene.

A The second fault of this Church is, that they suffered a woman *to seduce and teach false doctrine*, and thereby to seduce Gods people. That this is a fault, Christs reproofe sheweth evidently, and therefore I will not stand to proveir.

Hence wee may gather, that every man is not to bee left to his owne conscience, to teach and hold what doctrine hee will: but all such men or women as teach erroneous doctrines, by the governours of the Church are to bee restrained. It is a grievous fault in any Church not to restraine the authors and maintainers of sects and false doctrines, and of opinions which stand not with the truth of Gods word: and on the contrary, it is a vertue and a good gift in
B any Church, when they restraine the authors & favourers of sects and false doctrine. And in this regard our Church is to bee commended and approved, and the Common-wealth likewise, for making lawes to restraine both Popish recusants, and some Protestants, who depart from this our Church, as being no Church of God, but a member of Antichrist and of Babylon.

Now that Christ might aggravate these their offences; hee describeth the woman, first, by her propertie, in this name *Iezabel*, that is, one like *Iezabel*: secondly, by her action, *which calleth her selfe a Prophetesse*: her teaching is described in the end of the verse. Touching her property, Christ calleth her *Iezabel* for two causes: First, for that she was like to *Iezabel*, and in her person revived the manners and opinions of *Iezabel*. For as *Iezabel* brought
C among the Israelites the false worship of the idell *Baal*; so this woman laboured to bring into this Church of Thyatira, Idolatry, and other sinnes.

Against, *Iezabel* was given to fornication, as the Scripture recorideth of her by the mouth of *Iehu*, 2 King. 9. 22. and so was this woman given to fornication. Thirdly, *Iezabel* was a woman of authority, and by her place and dignity did countenance and maintaine idolatry, and other wicked sinnes: so it is like, that this woman was of some place and authority, and did thereby countenance her wicked opinions and damnable sinnes.

In this reason of her name, note first a notable practice of Satan for the furtherance of his kingdome, which is this: In succeeding ages he
D labourth to revive the erroneous opinions and wicked vices of ungodly persons of former times. This we see plaine in this place: for long after *Iezabels* death (the wife of *Ahab*, a wicked woman) even in the Apostles time, he raised up another woman like to *Iezabel* both for wicke life and doctrine. And the like practice he useth at this day. In all such as follow the rules and counsell of *Ahithuel*, is revived the craft of *Achitophels*: in the Papists are revived the opinions and manners of the wicked Scribes and Pharises; in the recusant-Protestants is revived the sect of the Donatists, and the

the sect called Audiani. The family of Love revives the opinions and manners of the Valentinians and the Montanists, and many other damnable errours. Now this the Devill doth because he knows by experience the great hurt that these opinions and sins have formerly done unto Gods Church.

Secondly, Christ calleth this woman *Iezabel*, that hee may provoke this Church to a greater detestation of her in regard of her damnable wayes: and that shee might bee in as great disgrace with them, as was *Iezabel* in the Old Testament to the people of God, that so they might better eschew her wicked seducement. And herein wee have a good direction for our profitable reading of the bookes of the Old and New Testament: namely, that when we meet with examples of wicked men and wicked women, wee must thereby take occasion to bee unlike them. And if we find our selves like them any way, either in wicked opinion, or in practice, we must thereupon grow to a dislike with our selves. Against, finding the examples of good men or good women, wee must labour to conforme our selves thereto, and become like them: and in this regard approve our selves, when wee see our selves conformable unto the godly in any vertue and grace.

The second Argument whereby Christ describeth this woman, is her action: *Shee calleth her selfe a Prophetesse*; that is, shee challengeth her selfe to bee one that doth teach Gods will by the instinct of his spirit. And herein she became a notable patron of the damnable sect of the Nicolaitans: for she held the lawfulnesse of fornication, and of eating things sacrificed to Idols. And for the maintenance hereof, shee saith she is a prophetesse, one that speaketh nothing but as shee is taught by Gods spirit. This is the practice of heretickes, under pretence of the spirit to maintaine their damnable devices, as might easily be proved by induction of particular heretikes, in former ages.

First, hence then wee are taught to labour to have the spirit of discerning, whereby wee may try the spirits whether they bee of God or not. Many will be of no religion, because there bee so many false Teachers, and such diversitie of opinions in religion. But herein they bewray their profanenesse; they ought the rather to labour for this gift of discerning, whereby to know what is from God, and what is not.

Secondly, hence wee are taught, that when wee are unjustly slandered, disgraced, or injured, we ought not to fret and fume, but by patience to content our selves: for wee see that wicked men to maintaine their wicked opinions and manners, will not sticke to abuse God himselfe, and make his blessed spirit the Author and patron of their errours and sinnes. Wee by our sins deserve disgrace and reproach; but the spirit of God hath done nothing amisse. And therefore wee must bee patient, being in the same condemnation, as Luke 23. 40, 41. and
A rather rejoyce, in as much as wee are partakers of the sufferings of the spirit, 1 Pet. 4. 3.

Against, here observe how shee approved her selfe to bee a Prophetesse, namely, by her owne testimonie onely; *She calleth her selfe so.* Where we may see the note and mark of a false Prophet; to wit, their owne bare word and testimony. A true Prophet or Prophetesse hath sundry testimonies, besides their owne word, to prove the lawfulnesse of their callings: as in the Primitive Church, they had the gift of speaking divers languages without study, and of working miracles: they had also puritie of doctrine, joyned with integritie of life: and lastly, many excellent gifts of God, as
B zeale, courage, and constancie to maintaine the same.

Christ having described this woman for her further disgrace, as also to aggravate the fault of this Church in suffering her, proceedeth to describe her doctrine. And first he sheweth the end and scope thereof, namely, to seduce and to deceive. Wherein he giveth us a further note of a false Prophet or Prophetesse; to wit, to teach such doctrine as drawes men to sinne against the first or second Table. True doctrine is according to godlinesse, and leadeth men thereto; but the end of false doctrine is impietie against God and man: as was shewed by the doctrine of *Balaam*, vers. 14. and such was the doctrine of this woman.

Sundry students now adayes are marvellously affected with the Sermons, Commentaries, and postils of Monks and Friers. These they prefer before the writings of other godly and
C sound Divines, which is a lamentable case: for they are in their kind *Iezabels*: the scope of their doctrine is to draw men to errours and transgressions against the law of God; yea, to bring men from Heaven to Hell. And therefore this exceeding approbation of them is no small offence: being in truth the right way to bring in againe, Errours, Atheisme, and Poperie. For turne a Papist from a morall point (wherein he often erreth) and his doctrine and Sermons are nothing but false and erroneous: and therefore as Christ would have this Church to hate the doctrine of this woman, because it did deceive; so must wee labour to grow to dislike with the commentaries and postils of Monks and Friers which tend to that end.

Secondly, Christ setteth forth the end of her doctrine, by two arguments; First, by the persons deceived, *his servants*: secondly, by the meanes whereby they are deceived, to wit, *by causing them to commit fornication, and to eat meats sacrificed unto idols.*

Touching the persons. Whereas shee deceived not all men, but the servants of God, (for here is a plaine distinction of men) this increaseth her fault, because they belonged unto God. But here two questions may bee moved: First, why some men are the servants of God, and some are not. Secondly, whether the ser-
vants

vants of God may bee ſeduced by falſe teachers. To the firſt, ſome anſwer, that God would have all men to be his ſervants, and for his part doth all things needfull unto all men, to make them his ſervants; redeeming them, and giving them ſufficient grace hereunto; yet ſome are not his ſervants, becauſe they themſelves will not, but wilfully reject his grace that is offered unto them. But this doctrine is againſt common reaſon, and doth much derogate from the glory of God: for hereby they make every man an Emperour, and God an underling ſubject unto man; they make Gods good pleaſure to depend upon mans pleaſure, and the accepting of his grace to depend on mans will. But God is the firſt cauſe of all things, his will overruleth mans will: and therefore it is abſurd to ſay ſome men are not Gods ſervants, becauſe they themſelves will not. The true cauſe hereof is Gods good pleaſure, electing ſome; and they alone become his ſervants, becauſe hee hath choſen them. But God did never chuſe all men firſt to grace, and then to glory: and therefore as *Luke* ſaith, *ſo many as were ordained to everlaſting life, beleeved*: So wee may ſay: ſo many as are elected of God to grace and ſalvation, they become his ſervants.

Act. 13. 48.

The ſecond queſtion. Whether may Gods ſervants be ſeduced by falſe Prophets? *Anſw.* There be two ſorts of ſervants of God: ſervants in appearance, and ſervants in truth. Servants in appearance, are ſuch as outwardly only embrace the word, and receive the ſeales of Gods covenant: and the greateſt part of particular Churches are ſuch ſervants. Now theſe may fall away, and that wholly: and hence it commeth that whole particular Churches may fall away, as did the Church of Galatia, and many other: and theſe are called ſervants, becauſe wee muſt in charitie judge, that all which make profeſſion of true religion in Gods Church, are the ſervants of God. But the true ſervants of God, though they may be ſeduced in part, and for a time, yet they can neither wholly nor finally fall away: for the promiſe of Chriſt is to the contrary, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rocke*, that is, the faith which thou profeſſeſt, *will I build my Church: and the gates of hell ſhall not prevaile againſt it.* Which laſt word *(prevaile)* inſinuateth, that the Devill ſhall ſhew great malice and ſtrength to vanquiſh their faith, but yet ſhall never wholly overcome it. And Mat. 6. 13. wee are taught to pray, *Lead us not into temptation.* To leade into temptation, is wholly to bee overcome in temptation; which being a lawfull petition, muſt needs have Gods promiſe to grant the ſame belonging unto it. And therefore though Satan may aſſay to overcome the childe of God, yet he ſhall never get finall victory over him: for true faith purifieth the heart, and cannot ſtand with a purpoſe to continue in any one ſinne: theſe two baniſh each other. ſinne brings the childe of God upon his knees, but true faith doth raiſe him up againe.

Matth. 16. 18.

A II. Point. The meanes whereby ſhee ſought to ſeduce them, was *by drawing them unto covetoufornication, and to eat things ſacrificed to Idols.* Whereby it is plaine, ſhe was a favourer of the ſect of the Nicholaitans; whereof mentioncatie was made in the fourteenth verſe. And thus much for the reproofe of the Church.

V. 21. *And I gave her ſpace to repent her of her fornication, and ſhee repented not.*

Here Chriſt reproveth this woman for her obſtinacy and hardneſſe of heart, whereby ſhe went on in ſinne without repentance. By *ſpace to repent*, wee are to underſtand liberty to live: for though by her ſinnes ſhee deſerved preſent death, temporall and eternall: yet God of his mercy gave her liberty to live, that ſhee might repent.

B

Vſe.

In her example we are taught what to judge of that ſpace of time which God giveth us to live in this world: namely, that it is a time of repentance: for before a man be borne, and after this life, can none repent: but the time wee now live, or have lived, or ſhall live, is the only time alloted for repentance. This point ought ſeriouſly to bee conſidered of all eſtates: for it doth plainly rebuke the ſhamefull practice of many at this day, who leade not their life as a time of repentance, but ſpend it wholly in another courſe: ſome in following their vaine pleaſures, as carding, dicing, &c. ſome in heaping up riches, ſeeking nothing but temporall profits: others in good fellowſhip, (as they call it) that is, in company keeping, in eating and drinking. God in juſtice might have cut off theſe men ſo ſoone as they were borne, and yet in mercy he gives them time to repent, to ſome twenty, to others thirty, forte, or fifty yeares: but they abuſe this mercy of God, and in ſtead of repenting imploy themſelves in ſuch workes as are contrary thereunto. Their caſe is moſt fearefull, they treaſure up to themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, and declaration of the juſt judgement of God: like unto a man that every day for ſome certaine time, carrieth a faggot for his owne burning in the end.

C

D

Secondly, from this end of life, all that have not repented, muſt learne not to deferre their repentance, but now beginne while it is called to day, and in the exercise thereof ſpend the whole time of their life. The end of all our endevours while wee live, ſhould bee this, to get a roome in the kingdome of God, which we can never have without repentance.

Next conſider, who it is that gives this time of repentance: neither man nor Angell hath this time in his hands, but the power of appointing it belongs unto Chriſt alone.

Hereby then all perſons whatſoever are to be admoniſhed, without delay to repent. The young

youngman will take his pleaſure in his youth, and repent when he is old: but hereby he robbeth Chriſt of his honour, who onely hath power to point out the time of repentance. Vſe therefore the time preſent while thou haſt it, and deferre not repentance: for how knoweſt thou that thou ſhalt live to be old? And though thou doeſt, yet how canſt thou tell whether God will give thee repentance, conſidering thou didſt refuſe, while he called for it? Men thinke, that if they die quietly and peaceably, all is well, they go to Heaven ſtraight: but herewith many are deceived; for unleſſe they have truly repented, they goe ſtraight to the Devill, let their manner of dying be what it will. A quiet death is a comfortable thing, but no ſure ſigne of grace, becauſe it may come by reaſon of ſome eaſie lingering ſickneſſe. Conſidering therefore wee have no title unto this grace of repentance, to claime it at our pleaſure, it being the rare gift of God; nor any leaſe of our life, but be meere tenants at will; let us ſeeke to turne unto God with full praiſe of heart, while it is called to day: and if we have begun, let us daily renew this grace to the end of our life.

A

Thirdly, conſider to whom God gives ſpace of repentance: namely, to a *wicked woman*, as wicked as *Iezabel*. Wherein behold the endleſſe mercie of God, that unto ſuch a wicked perſon, who blaſphemed God, in fathering her ſinnes upon the ſpirit of grace, and diſhonoured God by ſeducing his ſervants, doth yet vouchſafe a time of repentance. This hath beene, and is the dealing of God with moſt grievous ſinners. *Manaſſes* was one that ſold himſelfe to worke wickedneſſe, giving himſelfe to Sorcerie and Idolatrie: and yet upon his heartie repentance, God received him to mercy. And *Salomon* fell moſt fearefully, but yet before his death, wee may perſwade our ſelves he repented and was received to mercy; for he was a pen-man of Scripture, all which were holy men of God, as *Peter* ſaith, 2 Pet. 1. 20. The Iſraelites were *a people of Sodome, and Gomorrha*, as bad as thoſe who are condemned in hell, and yet mercie is offered unto them upon their true repentance and converſion.

B

C

Rev. 2. 20.

Vſe.

Hereby no man muſt take occaſion to live in his ſinnes: but thoſe that feele themſelves laden with the huge burden of their tranſgreſſions, have here a comfort to keepe them from deſpaire: for if they can humble themſelves, and turne unto Chriſt, and pray for the pardon of their ſinnes, there is yet with the Lord mercy in ſtore that they may be ſaved.

Laſtly, Chriſt ſaith, *He gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication.* No doubt ſhee had many other ſinnes whereof ſhe was to repent, for no ſinne goeth alone, but every capitall ſinne draweth many with it: Chriſt his meaning therefore is not that ſhe ſhould let paſſe other ſinnes without repentance; but he nameth that one ſinne of fornication, becauſe it was a principall ſinne in her: for ſhee both practiſed it in her owne body, and ſo made her ſelfe the ſtable of the Devill, who ſhould have beene the Temple of Gods holy Spirit: and alſo maintained this ſinne, and ſo drew others thereto. Now ſpeciall and principall repentance muſt be of principall ſinnes.

D

Here then is a patterne for all ſinners how to practiſe repentance. They muſt begin with their capitall ſinnes, which burthen their conſcience, and whereto they are moſt addicted, and repent of them. For the man that truly repenteth of one ſinne, repenteth of all: for true repentance maketh the heart alike affected to all ſinnes: And that heart which is brought to hate his ſpeciall ſinnes, will never approve of pettie ſinnes. This leſſon ought carefully to be learned and put in practice: For the repentance of moſt men is only in generall; to ſay, wee are all ſinners, Lord have mercy upon me, or God forgive me. But this confuſed repentance is not good, it ſtands with a purpoſe to ſinne againe. In particular therefore we muſt ſearch our conſciences, and ſee wherein wee have moſt diſhonoured God, and what ſinne hath neereſt plunged our ſoules to the pit of hell; and with that wee muſt begin to bring our ſoule to heaven, by repenting truly for the ſame, and turning from it with all our hearts.

Vſe.

Hence the Papiſts gather, that man hath free will to doe that which is truly good before God, as namely to repent: for, ſay they, *God gave Iezabel ſpace of time to repent*, and therefore ſhe had power to repent, or elſe the giving of that time unto her had beene in vaine. *Anſw.* The reaſon is naught: it followeth not becauſe God gave her time to repent, therefore ſhe had power of her ſelfe to repent: as will eaſily appeare, if we conſider the ends for which God gives men ſpace and time of repentance, and commandement ſo to doe. The ends are two. I. That in that time of repentance which he allotteth to men, he may give his children grace, whereby they may be enabled to obey his commandement and to repent: for the Lord uſeth the commandements and threatnings of the Law, and the promiſes of the Goſpell, as outward meanes of giving grace unto men by the worke of his ſpirit. II. He giveth commandement and time to repent, that men may ſee what they ſhould doe, not what they can doe: and that the wicked may be without excuſe at the day of judgement, and bee aſhamed of their ſlaverie, and bondage unto ſinne in this life.

C

And ſhee repented not. Here the ſinne of *Iezabel* is expreſſed, namely, her *impenitencie and hardneſſe of heart*, whereby without remorſe ſhee lived in her fornication and idolatrie. For the underſtanding of this her ſinne, two points are to be handled. I. Where this ſinne of impenitencie is forbidden in Gods Word. II.

[illegible] the greatnesse of this sinne. For the
[illegible] there are two parts of Gods Word, the law,
and the Gospell, which must not be confounded, but distinguished, or else wee shall overturne many points of Christian religion. The
Law gives commandments touching things
that were by nature in *Adam* before his fall,
forbidding those things which are contrary to
those vertues, which were in his perfect nature.
But the Gospell commands, and forbids things
that are above nature, and in that part of Gods
Word is the sinne of impenitencie forbidden;
for the Law condemnes no more than it reveaLuke 2.
leth, but is never revealed repentance, and therfore it doth not forbid or condemne the want
thereof. Secondly, for the greatnesse of this
sinne, it may appeare, because hereby men heap
sinne upon sinne, and *wrath unto themselves against the day of wrath.* Some to aggravate the
grievousnesse of this sin, say that impenitencie
is the sin against the holy Ghost: and that opinion is ancient, but yet false and erroneous; for
the sinne against the holy Ghost is a *blasphemie*, Matth. 12. 31. but this is not a blasphemie.
Against the sinne against the holy Ghost is in
this life, but finall impenitencie is never before
the end of this life.

Rom. 2. Hence also the Papists gather free will to good by nature: shee did not repent, therefore shee had free will and power to repent if shee would. *Ans.* This reason is not good: thus much may hence be gathered, that shee had free will not to repent and to sinne: for every man sinneth freely, but yet is followeth not, that they have the same power to cease from sinne, or to repent without Gods speciall grace, without which no man can will or doe that which is truly good before God.

Against the same sinne which is reproved in this wicked woman, may bee laid to the charge of the greatest number in our Churches and congregations. God hath given unto men a long time of repentance, to some ten, to some twenie yeares, but they repent not, as their lives doe plainly testifie: for some live in irreligion and prophanenesse, some in Sabbath-breaking, some in fornication and adultery, some in idlenesse, some in covetousnesse and extortion giving themselves wholly, and spending all their time in seeking the things of this life, never regarding with reverence the things of God.

v. 22. *Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit fornication with her into great affliction, except they repent them of their workes.*

Christ having reproved this Church and this woman for their sewe all faults, doth here give speciall counsell and direction unto them both, whereby they may avoid and escape the grievous judgements due unto them for their sinnes, both in this life, and in the life to come. This counsell of Christ hath two parts: First, to *Iezabel* and her company, v. 22. The second to the Church of Thyatira, v. 24, 25. The summe of Christs counsell to *Iezabel* is, *to repent*: which is not expressed, but in stead thereof the reason to move her to repentance is propounded. And it may be framed thus, *If thou repent not, I will punish thee with sundry judgements*: But thou wouldest not be so punished: and therefore repent.

B This reason hath two parts: A threatning; and an exposition thereof. The threatning in these words, *I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit fornication with her into great affliction.* And before this threatning, Christ prefixeth a word of attention (*Behold:*) whereby he would teach them and us, that wee ought seriously to consider of the threatnings that are propounded in Gods word against sinne and sinners. When *Iosias* heard the booke of the Law read, *his heart melted*; which it could never have done, unlesse it had first trembled at the judgements therein denounced. And the pricking that was wrought in the hearts of the Iewes by *Peters* first Sermon, was nothing C else but a compunction wrought in them, upon consideration of the judgements and condemnation due unto them for crucifying the Lord of life. The cause why sinne is so rife in everie estate and condition of men at this day is, for that men set light by the threatnings of Gods Word. If men would tremble when they heare of Gods judgements, it would make them cry out, *Men and brethren, what shall we doe?* but because God is merciful, therefore men feare him not, Isa. 57. 11.

2 King. 22. 19.

Act. 2. 37.

This threatning hath three severall parts, according to the three severall sorts of persons whom it concerneth. The first is against *Iezabel* her selfe, who was the chiefe of them all, in these words, *I will cast her into a bed.* The meaning whereof may be gathered out of the like words of *Ionadab* to *Ammon*, bidding him *lie downe on his bed, and make himselfe sicke.* So that Christs meaning is, that he will strike her with some grievous sicknesse: the place for the sicke person being put for the sicknesse it selfe: As if he should say, *Iezabel* takes her pleasure in fornication, and thereto abuseth the bed; I will therefore send on her some great sicknesse which shall cast her into her bed.

D 2 Sam. 13. 5.

Here note Gods dealing with sinners: In those things which they abuse for the furtherance of their sinnes, will the Lord plague and punish them. *Iezabel* abused her bed with fornication, and thither shee must be cast with sicknesse: *Dives* in his life time abused his tongue and taste by gluttonie, and therefore is he now in hell therein most of all plagued and

Vse.

Luke 16. 24. tormented, as his crying *for a droppe of water to coole his tongue*, doth import: gamesters take their pleasures in carding & dicing, which many times God turneth to their woe: for thereby they are usually brought to extreme want and miserie. *Ahab* shed *Naboths* blood to get his vineyard, and for that sinne must *his blood, the blood of Iezabel, and his children, bee shed.* And now in these dayes the covetous for their gaine doe sucke the blood of the poore, but that blood will have blood from them againe; *The Lord will spoyle the soule of him that spoyleth the poore*, Prov. 22. 23. This must make us to beware how wee abuse any creature of God to serve us for any sinne: for the Lord will cause that to be a meanes of woe and punishment unto us, which we misuse unto our lusts.

1 King. 21. 23, 24.

Againe, note here who is the author of grievous sicknesses, namely, Christ himselfe: For he saith, *I will cast her into a bed.* Sicknesses come not by chance or fortune, but from the hand of God. This we must learne to beleeve, and it will cause us to make better use of sicknesses than usually we doe: If men did beleeve this, it would make the hardest heart to repent in time of sicknesse: for this they would say, Hath God cast me downe with sicknesse? no doubt it is to humble me for some of my sinnes, to make mee know them, to leave them, and to turne unto him. This use the servants of God have made hereof: when the Prophet came to *Hezekias, and told him he should die, he turned his face to the wall and wept*, as for other things, so for his sinnes especially. And *Iacob* being to die, *leaned on his staffe, and by faith worshipped towards the beds head*: lifting up his body to doe reverence unto God, thereby testifying his humilitie, faith, and hope. And the like ought we to doe; which if we could, we should finde our sicknesse would become a blessing unto us.

Isa. 38. 2.

Heb. 11. 21.

The second part of Christs threatning is the punishment of her followers, which received her doctrine, and committed fornication with her; *They must be cast into great affliction.*

Vse. First, this must teach all persons, that it is a devillish speech to thinke and say, that fornication is but a *tricke and slip of youth*: for great affliction is the punishment of this sinne, which notably argueth the heinousnesse thereof.

Secondly, hence we may gather some of the causes, why towns and kingdomes are afflicted with grievous warres, famine, and pestilence: among the rest these are two, fornication, and embracing of errours and superstition. Sodome for fornication and other sinnes was burnt with fire and brimstone from heaven: the Israelites for this sinne suffered most grievous afflictions. And among the Corinthians, for comming to the Lords table in this sinne, among others *many were sicke, many weake, and many slept.* And this land of ours hath beene afflicted with famine, and pestilence, as for other sinnes, so for fornication; which in time peace is multiplied; and so will continue til it draw upon us bloudshed also and great afflictions: For that which is said of the followers of *Iezabel*, must be verified of all that live in the like sinnes.

Num. 25. 9.

1 Cor. 11. 30. with cap. 6. 18. and 10. 8.

The second part of the reason is, the exception of these comminations: *except they repent them of their workes.* Where we may see: First, that all the threatnings of Gods judgements and of eternall destruction, must be understood with the exception of repentance. Whence also this followeth, that men of yeares living in the Church, are not so much condemned for other particular sinnes, as for living in their sinnes without repentance: every sinne makes a man subject to damnation; but it is this impenitencie that brings upon them actuall damnation. Want of repentance for sinne, is more dangerous than the sinne it selfe. The consideration whereof, must teach us not to lie in sinne, though wee have committed it, but turne to God by speedie repentance; for it is the continuance in sinne without repentance that casteth the soule to hell. When thou shalt turne from thy sinne by true repentance, thou art free from the threatning and the curse of sinne: For they admit the exception of true repentance, Jerem. 18. 8.

Further observe, how this exception of repentance is placed betweene two threatnings of judgements, which sheweth how God mingleth his judgements with mercie: he sheweth not wholly either justice or mercy, but temperetb them together in all the workes that concerne mans salvation.

Thirdly, here note that repentance prevents not onely eternall damnation, but also temporall judgements, as grievous sicknesses, and other plagues and afflictions. This point may have speciall use among us: We have by Gods mercy enjoyed his Gospel with long peace, but for our abuse thereof we may justly feare it shall be taken from us; and if we would escape that judgement, we must repent both high and low.

Of their workes. That is, of their idolatrie and fornication: where hee sheweth of what things true repentance must be, namely, of bad workes in particular, whereto men give themselves: every man that would truly repent, must consider of his particular faults: The drunkard in particular of his drunkennesse, and the covetous man of his covetousnesse: and in stead of injuries and hard dealing shew mercy to the poore. The common repentance of the world that is done in generall, is nothing but a vizard of repentance, and yet it is all that is used of the greatest part of our people: for they will come to heare the Word, and to receive the Sacraments, and in generall confesse themselves to be sinners; and then they thinke they have done enough: But true repentance is of particular sinnes: As *David* Psalm. 51. cried out of bloud-guiltinesse.

v. 23. *And I will kill her*

children with death, and all the Churches ſhall know that I am hee which ſearcheth the reines and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to his workes.

Here is the third part of Chriſts threatning againſt *Iezabels* children: by children we are to underſtand properly thoſe which are borne of her, and were of her houſhold, and not her followers, for they were threatned with grievous afflictions in the former verſe. It had been ſufficient to have ſaid, I will kill her children. But to note the certaintie and grievouſneſſe of this puniſhment, he ſaith, I will kill them (with death.) *Queſt.* How can this ſtand with the juſtice of God, to puniſh the offences of the parents in the perſon of the children? *Anſ.* God dealeth ſo for temporall puniſhments, not for eternall.

And though we could not perceive the juſtice of God in ſo doing, yet we muſt reverence the ſame, blaming our owne ignorance. Albeit, even in reaſon we may conceive of the equity of this courſe: for ſocieties, as church, commonwealth, and families, are Gods ordinance, and the parties in them muſt bee conſidered, as members of thoſe ſocieties: ſo God conceiveth of them when he inflicteth the puniſhment deſerved by one upon another, as of the Prince upon the people, of the parents upon the children. This he may juſtly doe by reaſon of that neere bond which is betweene the members of the ſame ſocietie: like as in the naturall bodie when the ſtomacke is diſtempered, the head aketh: and when the heart is wounded, the ſtomacke is ſicke, and the body may be ſmitten for the errors of the tongue. Thus when *David* ſinned, the child died, and when he numbred the Iſraelites, the people were plagued. And thus is the child ſtained in bloud for the fathers treaſon againſt earthly Princes, and ſo God puniſhed this woman in her children: that ſhe might know the greatneſſe of her ſinnes, he ſmote her children with death.

Vſe. Hence parents are taught to make conſcience of every ſin: for thereby they may bring judgements upon their children and family, even to death. Now what bloudy hearted parents are thoſe that will make no conſcience of doing that whereby they bring vengeance upon their owne children? And by the ſame reaſon muſt every man that lives in any ſocietie be admoniſhed to take heed of ſinne: becauſe thereby a man (eſpecially if he be a principall member of a ſocietie) may bring deſtruction upon many: As *David* did by numbring the people: And *Achan* by his covetous ſtealth, Joſu. 7. And *Ahab* upon his poſterity. So that impenitent perſons which will not be reformed, but goe on in ſinne, ought to be baniſhed both Church and common-wealth, as hurtfull members, yea enemies to all good ſocieties.

That theſe threatnings might take place in the hearts of *Iezabel* and her followers, Chriſt removeth two carnall conceits, whereby they might thinke to delude or eſcape theſe judgements threatned. The firſt is this, *Iezabel* and her company might thinke that their practices were ſecret, not known to the world, and therefore they were not in danger of Gods judgements. This is a wicked imagination that comes into the minde of all ſinners; but this Chriſt cuts off, ſaying, *And all the Churches ſhall know that I am hee which ſearch the reines and the hearts:* As if he ſhould ſay to *Iezabel* and her company: You may perſwade your ſelves that becauſe your ſinnes are ſecret, therefore my judgements ſhall not befall you: But know, that I will diſcover your ſecret ſinnes and practices in ſuch ſort, as all Churches ſhal know by experience in your perſons, that I do ſee and diſcerne the moſt hidden thoughts of mans heart.

First, here obſerve to whom Chriſt will diſcover their ſinnes; not to all the world, but to the Church of God; *All Churches ſhall know.* This Chriſt doth to terrifie *Iezabel* and her company: For as it is an excellent honour to be well eſteemed of with the Churches of God, ſo it is a moſt ſhamefull diſhonour to be in diſgrace with the Churches of God: For *whatſoever is bound or looſed by the Churches on earth, the ſame is bound or looſed in heaven.* And therefore by true proportion it followeth, that they which are in diſgrace with Gods Churches on earth, are alſo in diſgrace with God himſelfe in heaven. Matth. 18.

Hence wee are taught that howſoever wee muſt (ſo much as in us lieth) endevour to approve our ſelves to the whole world, yet eſpecially wee muſt labour to be in good account with the Churches of God, and the members thereof: And on the contrary we muſt continually avoid the doing of all ſuch things as may juſtly bring us into diſgrace with the Church of God. Rom. 16. 16. *The Churches of Chriſt ſalute you.* And, 1 Cor. 16. 19. *All the Churches of Aſia ſalute you.* Where the Apoſtle meaneth not, that they did by word of mouth ſend greetings unto them: But hereby he would ſignifie that all Churches did approve of them, which he ſaith for their great comfort. *Paul* received *Timothy* into the company, *becauſe the Churches gave him a good report.* Act. 16. 2, 3. Vſe.

But what is the thing that all Churches ſhould know by experience in the perſons of *Iezabel* and her company; namely, that Chriſt is hee which doth indeed ſearch the reines and the hearts: where, by *Reines and hearts*, we muſt underſtand the ſame things, namely, the thoughts and affections of men; for in that ſenſe thoſe words are often uſed in the old Teſtament. *Qu.* How can reines ſignifie the thoughts and

and affections, ſeeing the thoughts are ſeated in the braine, and the affections in the heart? *Anſw.* The reynes are put for the thoughts and affections, not becauſe they are ſeated therein, but for that reſemblance and analogie that is betwene them; for as the reynes are ſeated in the moſt ſecret part of the body, ſo the thoughts and affections are ſeated in the moſt ſecret place of the ſoule: and the heart is put for the thoughts and affections, firſt, becauſe the affections are there ſeated; Secondly, becauſe the thoughts, though they bee ſeated in the braine, yet they have their operation in the heart, for joyfull thoughts make a merry heart, and fearefull thoughts an heavy heart. Againe, the word (*Search*) ſignifieth a moſt narrow ſearch, and ſuch an one as goeth with finding; thereby ſhewing, that nothing is ſo ſecret in man, but the Lord both can and doth ſee and diſcerne the ſame.

Vſe. Hence we learne firſt, that Chriſt our Saviour is not onely man, but very God, one perſon ſtanding of two natures. That Chriſt is man, hereticks deny not: but whether he be God or not, there is the queſtion. Which yet is here evidently proved: for he that hath in him the particular properties of God, muſt needs be God: But Chriſt hath in him the true properties of God; he can ſearch and diſcerne all the thoughts, and all the affections of the hearts of all men, which none can doe but God only: Jer. 17. 9, 10. *The heart is deceitfull and wicked above all things: who can know it? I the Lord ſearch the heart, and try the reynes.* And therefore Chriſt is true and very God.

Secondly, hereby we are taught to beware and take heed of hypocriſie in all things, but eſpecially in the matter of religion. Hypocriſie is, when a man ſeemes outwardly to be that which he is not inwardly. But wee muſt have care to bee truly in heart that which we appeare to be in life and profeſſion: we muſt come as neere Chriſt in thought and affection, as in our outward action: for Chriſt knowes as well the whole ſtate of every mans reynes and heart, as he doth their ſpeeches and their deeds.

Thirdly, hereby wee muſt learne to ſuſpect our ſelves of our unknowne ſins, as of our unbeleefe and preſumption: not contenting our ſelves with an acknowledgement of our knowne ſins, for we can never diſcerne the depth of our corrupt heart, and yet God knoweth them. This was *Davids* practice, after due examination of himſelfe he yet cried, *Lord cleanſe me from my ſecret ſinnes:* As if he ſhould ſay, I have O Lord ſearched my heart, but I cannot ſufficiently know my owne corruptions, therefore do thou O Lord help to cleanſe me from them. Pſal. 19. 12. If this were practiſed, true religion would flouriſh: for many juſtifie themſelves, when as they know not what is in their hearts, little conſidering what Chriſt ſaith unto the Phariſies, *You are thoſe* which juſtifie your ſelves before men, but Chriſt knoweth your hearts. Luke 16. 15.

And I will give to every one of you according to your workes. Here Chriſt proceedeth to remove a ſecond wicked conceit, whereby they might ſeeme to illude God, judgement to eſcaped. For they might ſay, Let the Lord ſend judgements and plagues upon us, yet we ſhall eſcape them; as *Iſay* ſaid of the wicked in his time, That *they made a league with death and hell, and ſaid the judgements of God ſhall paſſe over them,* Iſay 28. 15. But to cut off this vaine conceit, Chriſt threatneth a juſt reward to every one according to his workes. As if hee ſhould ſay; You may ſooth up your ſelves, and falſly thinke, that you ſhall eſcape my judgements: but know it, that I will reward every one of you partly in this life, and principally at the day of judgement, according to your workes, bee they good or bad. For theſe words muſt eſpecially be underſtood of the day of judgement, as they are uſed, Rom. 2. 6. Rev. 20. 12.

Hence the Papiſts gather, that men are ſaved not onely by faith in Chriſt, but alſo by workes; for thus they reaſon: By that whereby we muſt be judged, muſt we be juſtified and ſaved; but by workes we muſt be judged, and therefore ſaved. *Anſ.* The propoſition is falſe: There is great difference betweene juſtifying and judging: for judging is only the declaration of a man to be juſt, but juſtification is the making of a man juſt. And becauſe the declaration of a man to be juſt, is by workes, therefore is judgement by workes. Againe, it is not ſaid, I will give to you for your workes, but *according to your workes.* If he had ſaid, I will give to every one of you for your workes, then it might have ſeemed they had bee juſtified by them: But here Chriſt doth only make workes an outward ſigne or rule, whereto he will conformes and ſquare the laſt judgement. Vſe.

Secondly, whereas every man muſt be judged, that is, ſaved or condemned according to his workes; hence wee may gather, that good workes are neceſſary to ſalvation, yet not as cauſes thereof, either efficient, or helping any way, but only as a way or meanes to come into ſalvation: For faith is neceſſary, and good workes are the tokens and fruits of faith, and ſo are neceſſary.

Thirdly, here we muſt be admoniſhed to be carefull to abound in good workes; not to win heaven by them, but to get aſſurance of ſalvation in our ſelves. And theſe good workes are the doing of the duties of piety unto God, and of charitie unto our brethren, even the duties of the Moraill law; or more plainly, the doing of the generall duties of a Chriſtian, and the particular duties of a mans calling: For all this be done in obedience to God and to his glory, proceeding from faith and love unto our brethren, though the calling bee never ſo low, they are good workes. And on the contrary, this muſt admoniſh us to make conſcience of every evill way, for ſinne bee the marke of

condemnation; and so many wicked workes as we commit, so many markes and brands doe we set upon our selves of our just and deserved condemnation, unlesse we repent.

Lastly, hence we may gather, that there be degrees of joy in heaven, and of torments in hell. For judgements and rewards goe according to mens workes. And therefore they that testifie their faith by grace and many good workes, shall have great reward: they that testifie their faith by lesser and fewer works, shall have lesser reward: and so for sinnes, the more heinous they bee, the deeper condemnation they doe procure.

V. 24. *And to you, I say, the rest of them of Thyatira, As many as have not this learning, neither have knowne the deepnesse of Satan (as they speake) I will put upon you none other burden.*

25. *But that which you have alreadie, hold fast till I come.*

Here Christ commeth to a second part of his counsell, which concernes the Angell, and the better part of this Church of Thyatira: and first hee beginneth with the preface of this counsell: wherein we may observe two points: First, who speaketh: Secondly, to whom he speaketh. For the first, hee that speaketh is Christ. *I say,* hereby Christ challengeth unto himselfe the absolute and all-sufficient authority of the supreme Doctor of his Church, in that he speaketh in his owne name. Whereby hee putteth a plaine difference betweene himselfe and all other his Ministers, either Prophets, Apostles, or ordinary Teachers; for they must not propound any thing unto Gods people in their owne names, but in the name of Christ. But Christ teacheth in his owne name; being the fountaine of all divine knowledge and understanding that is revealed in the Word of God. And thus Christ himselfe speaketh in his owne name, to strike the heart of the Angell of this Church, and the better part thereof, with reverence, and to move them to receive and obey the counsell fellowing, considering it comes immediately from Christ, the Doctor of the Church.

II. Point. The parties to whom he speaketh, *I say*: that is, the Angell and the better part of his Church: for so Christ expounds it in these words following, though first hee say in generall, *To you*: that is, *The rest of them of Thyatira.*

When as Christ will behave himselfe as the Doctor and chiefe Angell of this Church, note that hee maketh a distinction of the persons in the Church, and also divideth his counsell, giving one doctrine and one judgement to one part, and a divers doctrine and judgement to another.

Vse. This giveth us good direction for sundry actions: for some may aske, how must doctrine be delivered in a mixt congregation, where some are Papists, some Protestants, some are hardned, others despaire? *Ans.* The persons must bee distinguished after the example of Christ, and fitable doctrines divided for them, that every one may have his due. Impenitent sinners must bee terrified, and threatnings delivered against them, with exception of them that repent; Comforts must bee propounded and applied to them that despaire, with restaint from all impenitent persons that goe on in sinne.

If any demand more particularly who these be whom Christ calleth, *The rest of them of Thyatira*; Christ answers directly (as the words import) *To as many as have not this learning, neither have knowne the deepnesse of Satan.* Where Christ giveth two notes whereby to discerne who bee the rest of them of Thyatira: The first is, the not receiving or maintaining of the false doctrine of *Iezabel*, whereof entreaty hath beene formerly made: The second note is, ignorance in the deepnesse of Satan: *neither have knowne the deepnesse of Satan*: that is, neither have acknowledged nor approved the doctrine of *Iezabel*, which is the deep and profound learning, as themselves doe judge.

In this observe a most wicked practice of *Iezabel* and her followers: they esteemed highly of their owne opinions, calling them profound and deepe learning: but for the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles in the old and new Testaments, in it there was no such matter. This in all ages hath beene the practice of wicked persons, highly to esteeme their owne conceits, and basely to neglect the word of God. The teachers of the Jewes doe hold to this day, that the Lord gave to *Moses* a most plaine and easie law which hee delivered to his people; but the most secret and profound doctrine was unwritten, shewed to *Moses* by revelation, and by him delivered to the Priests and Levites, which they keepe still in their Cabbala. And of the like judgement touching Scriptures are the Popish Churches: The word written is but an inkie word, a dead letter, or a nose of wax; but the most perfect Scripture is unwritten, which is, the consent of faith and of doctrine in the hearts of all Catholikes. And by such great termes, the Anabaptists, Libertines, and Arians, maintaine their doctrine, and abuse Scripture; calling the written word milke for every novice, but the consent of heart among themselves with Revelations, that is the strong meats. Yea, this opinion hath crept in among

us in part: men thinke basely of Scripture, and preferre other mens writings before it. For let a man preach plainly the bare word of God, and deliver doctrines and exhortations out of the same, this is but plaine preaching: But let another come and utter his minde partly in Latine, and partly in Greeke, and other languages, alleaging withall the testimonies of Fathers, Councels, and other writers: that is the learned preaching. And thus doe most men abuse Scripture, and exalt the writings of men above it. But seeing this is the practice of *Iezabel* and wicked men, let us on the contrary learne to reverence the written word, and give place thereto above all the testimonies and sayings of men whatsoever.

The deepnesse of Satan. As if he should say: They count it deep learning; but it is the learning of the Devill, wherein you may see his profound craft and policie. Where note, that when Christ will allege the speech of *Iezabel* and her followers, he doth it with disgrace unto them: for they counted their doctrine deepe learning; but Christ repeating their opinion, calleth it the *deepnesse of Satan.*

Vse. Hence I gather, that Christians cannot safely act and play the Comedies of heathen men: for they are full of many blasphemous speeches and oaths flat against the word of God: which they ought not to repeat, but with disgrace unto them. For Christs practice must be a patterne for our imitation: he would not repeat so much as one word of a wicked woman, without some note of disgrace. If it be said: they repeat these speeches with disgrace and dislike: I answer, it is not so: for if they did, that would take away the whole Comedie, being full of such bad speeches. And this I take to be the equity of Gods Word, thus to reason from Christs example.

As they speake. These words Christ addeth: First, to shew that the words going before were not his owne, but the words of *Iezabels* followers touching her doctrine. Secondly, to shew the proud and presumptuous minded of heretickes, in maintaining their wicked opinions. Thus have false teachers upheld their errours, *by proud and swelling words*, as *Iude* the 16. and 2 Pet. 2. 18. The pure Word of God is not so maintained; but in the humility and lowlinesse of spirit, and in the practice of piety from an humble heart: for God teacheth the lowly his wayes, and giveth grace to the humble, Psal. 25. 14. And therefore this is a note of false doctrine, by swelling words to maintaine the same.

Hitherto we have spoken of the Preface before Christs counsell: now followeth the counsell it selfe in this sentence, *Though I lay no other burden upon you, yet I would have you to hold fast that which you have already, till I come.* This sentence is a distinction, containing two parts: First, in these words, *I will lay no other burden upon you, than that which you have already*: that is, howsoever I threaten my iudgements unto *Iezabel* and her followers, yet I will lay none other punishment upon you but my reproofe only, for suffering *Iezabel* among you with her false doctrine and followers.

This branch of this distinction containeth a most comfortable instruction, namely, that all those that give themselves to maintaine purity of doctrine, and sincerity of life, shall be safely preserved in the time of common judgements, under the blessed protection of God, so farre forth as it is for Gods glory and their good. And considering this mercy is offered to the godly, we must hereby learne to become followers of this Church of Thyatira: that is, wee must endevour to maintaine the pure truth of Gods holy Word, and withall have care to shew forth sincerity of manners: in making conscience of every sinne, and endeavouring our selves to walke in all the wayes of Gods commandements with cheerefulnesse. Hereby wee shall get protection from common judgements, when they are laid upon the wicked: but if we partake with the wicked in their sinnes, wee shall receive part in their plagues.

The second part of this distinction is in these words, *But that which you have alreadie, hold fast till I come*: that is, mine Apostles have delivered unto you the pure and sound doctrine of salvation; now I charge you that you hold that fast, and maintain it untill I come to judgement. Here is a plaine and most excellent commandement, containing speciall instructions meet for this Church of Thyatira, and all Churches. Before our Saviour Christ had commended this Church for not approving the doctrine of *Iezabel* and her company; but here hee giveth them another commandement, To hold fast the true doctrine of Christ, taught them by his Apostles: Whereby he would teach them, and in them all Churches to content themselves with the pure doctrine of the Apostles, and not to affect or approve any other doctrine besides, whatsoever: According as *Paul* biddeth the Galatians, *though wee, or an Angell from heaven, preach unto you any other doctrine than that which wee have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* Gal. 1. 8.

Vse. By the light of this commandement we are directed in sundry duties. First, not to regard unwritten traditions, which the Church of Rome doth so highly magnifie, for it cannot be proved that the Apostles ever taught them.

Secondly, not to regard the doctrines of men, which some bring unto us under colour of Revelation from God since the Apostles times.

Thirdly, hereby we learne what to think and judge of the three great religions of the Turkes, the Jewes, and Papists at this day. The Turkish religion is not to be regarded: for it had beginning six hundred yeares after the Apostles time, with whose doctrine onely we

wee must content our selves. Also the Jewish religion we must not regard, for they reject the doctrine of the Apostles. And the religion of the Papists we must renounce, because it is not of the Apostles teaching, but had it beginning by little and little long after their times. If this commandement were safely kept, which is laid on this Church, men would not be of so many religions: but all would be of one religion, cleaving fast to the doctrine of the Apostles, and contenting themselves with it; which is the true rule for reformation of life, and the right way to attaine salvation.

Lastly, here is a rule and direction for those which will be of no religion, because of the diversitie of opinions touching the same. They must have recourse to the doctrine of the Apostles, and content themselves therewith, nothing regarding new doctrines, be they never so glorious.

Till I come. Here Christ sheweth how long the doctrine of the Apostles must be held fast: namely, not for a short time, but till his second comming to judgement: whereby we learne, that it is the duty of Gods Church to preserve and maintaine the puritie of true religion unto the end of the world. This is no small matter, but a most needfull duty enjoyned unto us by speciall commandement, and withall a matter of great consequence: for the puritie of religion is the foundation and marke of the Church, and the right way to direct mens soules to eternall life. For this cause *Paul* chargeth *Timothy, To keepe the true patterne of wholesome words, and to continue in the things which hee had learned.* And in regard of this duty, the Church is called, *The pillar and ground of truth.* And Christ for this cause gave to his Church both Pastors and Teachers; Pastors to instruct in righteousnesse, for the maintenance of puritie in manners: and Teachers to maintaine the purity of doctrine, in soundnesse of judgement. This therefore must admonish us, that we have care not onely to learne religion in our owne persons, but also to convey the same to ages following, that the purity thereof may be preserved to the comming of Christ. This duty especially concernes the Preachers of the Gospell, they should teach the truth, and confute errour, and bear downe false doctrines, which poysoned the truth of God. If in the night season a man set up a false light in the haven, all the ships that are comming to land are in danger of shipwracke: So in Gods Church, if the bright light of pure religion bee not set up and advanced, the soules of men are cast into the gulfe of hell. The want of care in performing this duty, is the cause why God sends heresies and Apostasies into his Church. Thus came in the Apostasie of Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11. *Because men loved not the truth.* And so no doubt will the Lord deale with us if we have not care to maintaine the purity of Apostolicall doctrine.

Tim. 1. 13. 2. 3. 14.

1 Tim. 3. 15.

Eph. 4. 11.

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v. 26. For he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over nations.

27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shall they bee broken.

28. Even as I received of my Father, so will I give him the morning starre.

29. Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches.

Here is the conclusion of this Epistle, which containeth two parts: First, a promise, vers. 26, 27, 28. Secondly, a commandement, vers. 29. In the promise, note two things: the parties to whom it is made; and the benefit promised. The parties to whom, *are every one that overcommeth*; whom Christ describeth by a property of sincere obedience, *To keepe his workes unto the end.*

Here then we have a description of true obedience. First, the forme thereof consisteth *in observing the workes of Christ*: which wee must not understand, of doing them according to the rigor of the law, but of a purpose and endevour to keepe them. For this is a privilege belonging to all that are in Christ, that God accepteth their wils and endevours of obedience, for perfect obedience it selfe. This wee must know and hold for truth: for many have but little knowledge, and thereupon are driven to despaire: yet they must know for their comfort, that if they have care to get more knowledge, and make conscience to obey that which they know, then they are keepers of the workes of Christ, and shall have the reward promised.

Secondly, obedience is here described by the object or matter thereof; to wit, *the workes of Christ*: that is, all such workes as Christ hath ordained in his word, and those whereof he is the author by his spirit in his members.

Hereby we learne: first, that hee that will obey God in Christ Jesus, must not thinke his owne thoughts, speake his owne words, nor doe his owne deeds; but he must think, speake, and doe that which Christ would have him. Secondly, that no worke is or can be acceptable to Christ, but that which is ordained by him. *Isay* complaineth of them that *would teach the feare of God by mens commandements*: so that

Vse.

Isa. 29. 13.

that there is no true feare of God, but that which is taught by Gods commandements, and the like may be said of all other our obedience. This rule overthroweth all other religions besides the true religion, as of the Jewes, Turkes, and Papists: For almost all their works are of mens inventing, and were never ordained by Christ: such are most points in Popery, as saying of Masse, going on pilgrimage, fastings, vowing, and praying to Saints, &c.

Thirdly, whereas he saith, *my workes*, meaning not one or two, but all his workes; we learne that true obedience consisteth in doing all the works of Christ: For Christ and the devill will never part stakes: God must either have all our workes or none. And therefore *David* saith, *I shall not bee confounded, because I have respect unto all thy commandements.* And good king *Iosiah* is commended, *For that hee turned to the Lord according to all the Law of Moses.* This point must bee learned of all: For many thinke if they doe many good things with *Herod*, all is well; and for this cause many a man abhors covetousnesse, and pride, and yet is a contemner of the Gospell: But true obedience must be in all things.

Psal. 119. 6.

2 King. 23. 25.

Matth. 6. 20.

Unto the end. Here is the fourth branch of true obedience; it is constant. That obedience which Christ will reward must not be for a day or a yeare, but from time to time thorow the whole course of our life to the end of our daies. And thus we must judge of obedience, not by some particular actions, but by the whole renour of a mans life. Put case a man hath made conscience of all his wayes, thorow the whole course of his life, and yet in sicknesse by reason of the extremity thereof is distracted and raveth, blaspheming God, and so dyeth; What must we judge of this man? Surely wee must not censure him by his behaviour in his sicknesse, but consider what hath beene the tenour of his life: if that have been upright, then his obedience was good, and shall be rewarded.

Vers. 27. II. Point. The benefits promised: and they are two. The first is, power to rule, vers. 27. *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: And as the vessels of a potter shall they bee broken: even as I received of my Father.* The second is the morning starre, vers. 28. where note by the way, that these words, *Even as I have received of my Father*, are referred amisse in our English translation, to the giving of the morning star, when as they properly belong to the former words in this sense; As I have received power over nations of my Father, so will I give to him that overcometh power to rule with the rod of Iron, &c. Now come to the benefits.

First, here is promised by Christ, *A power to rule over nations*: Christs power as he is mediator is very great; and here is set forth by three arguments, borrowed from the second Psalme verse 8, 9. First, by the largenesse of it; it reacheth not to one countrie alone, but to all countries, and to all men, in all nations. Secondly, by the Soveraignty of it: Christs power is absolute in ruling and overruling. And this his Soveraignetie consisteth in two things: First, in making lawes unto the consciences of men; so as if they be not kept, hee may justly condemne them: and in overruling the wils of all men, conforming them to his will, will they nill they: which is signified by this, *Hee shall rule them with a rod of iron.* Secondly, in that he hath this absolute power in himselfe to save and to destroy, and therefore is said to have *The keyes of Heaven and Hell.* Which is signified in the next words, *And as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken.* Thirdly, by the fountaine of it; Christ receiveth this power from his Father. Indeed as Christ is God he is equall with his Father, and hath this power of himselfe: But as he is Mediator, his power is given him of his Father, Matth. 28. 18.

Rev. 1. 18.

For the better understanding of this place, two questions must be handled: First, how far forth doth Christ give this his power unto men? *Answ.* Christs Soveraigne and generall power over the whole world is not indeed given to any creature, nay it is incommunicable, and cannot bee conveyed to the person of any creature man or Angell: This truth wee must hold of all Christs offices, they are only in the person of Christ, and cannot passe from him to any other. II. *Quest.* How then doth Christ say truly, that he will give him that overcometh power over nations? *Answ.* Not that his Soveraigne power is actually given to the creature; but because the creature being in Christ, hath the fruit and benefit of this power in his salvation. And this power is in them two waies: First, hereby Christ makes all his servants (being his members) partakers of his glorie in heaven, whereas the whole world besides is condemned in hell; and therefore we are said *to be raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* And againe, he saith, *The Saints shall judge the world*, not in giving sentence upon them; but as witnesses and approvers of Christ his sentence: For the elect shall first receive the sentence of absolution; and then being taken up into the clouds shall sit with Christ, and there approve of the just condemnation of all the wicked. Secondly, by this power he enableth those that be his, in their owne person to overcome all the enemies of their salvation. His meaning then is this, as if he had said, Howsoever my Soveraigne power over all creatures in my selfe cannot be derived to any other, yet by vertue of this my power, I will exalt them that overcome, to partake of my glorie; and will give them power in themselves over their sinnes, over death, hell, the world, and all the enemies of their salvation.

Eph. 2. 6.

1 Cor. 6. 2.

Here then behold unto what exceeding dignity every true servant of God is advanced, not in himselfe, but in Christ: He hath rule over nations,

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nations, and victorie over all the enemies of his ſalvation, yea hee is made partaker of Chriſts glory.

Hence we are taught to make conſcience of every ſinne whatſoever; for the privilege of every Chriſtian is to have power to judge the wicked world: Now as it is a ſhame for a Judge that ſitteth and condemneth a murtherer or a theefe, to be a theefe or a murtherer himſelfe; ſo it is for any Chriſtian to live in any one ſin, ſeeing hee himſelfe muſt condemne the world of thoſe ſinnes. Neither can wee thinke that Chriſt will ever advance him that lives in ſinne, to condemne the ſame in others, unleſſe he firſt reforme it in himſelfe.

Secondly, the conſideration of this privilege of a Chriſtian, muſt be hid in our minds againſt the time of adverſity and affliction, and of the pangs of death. For he that hath kept faith and a good conſcience all his life, is a Prince in Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhall rule over all his enemies. And therefore though now hee bee afflicted and wronged by them, yet in Chriſt hee is their Judge, and ſhall one day condemne them that doe him wrong. And as for death it is ſubdued in Chriſt, and ſhall bee no death unto him, 1 Cor. 15. 54.

Againe, the words in the originall are thus; *Hee ſhall feed and rule the nations, as a ſhepherd ruleth and feedeth his lambs with his hooke.* The Papiſts upon the words of Chriſt to *Peter*, Joh. 21. 16. *Feed my ſheepe*, that is, feed and rule my ſheepe, would gather *Peters* ſupremacie over the Church in all the world. But their groſſe abuſe of that place will appeare, by comparing it with this promiſe of Chriſt, to every one that overcommeth: for if their collection be good, then hence will follow, that every Chriſtian man ſhould have the like ſupremacie, and be a Pope: which how abſurd it is, every man may judge. Therefore that place of *John* muſt not be underſtood of any ſupremacie: for there Chriſt teacheth *Peter* the faithfull diſcharge of his office and dutie. From this firſt gift of Chriſt, the Papiſts gather two things. 1. That the ſeverall Saints in heaven are patrons of countries and kingdomes, as Saint *George* for England, Saint *Denis* for France, Saint *Patricke* for Ireland, &c. Secondly, that wee may pray unto Saints, for the Saints rule the Nations, and therefore know all Nations; and if they know them, then they muſt be prayed unto. But they ſwarve from the meaning of this text: for firſt, it is not ſaid, that the Saints ſhall have power, one over one countrie, and another over another; but every Saint hath power over all Nations: Secondly, they have power over all nations, not becauſe they rule them actually, but becauſe they have the fruit and benefit of Chriſts power, whereby they are ruled. And for their ſecond collection: we muſt by nations underſtand not all Churches, but unbeleevers: for the wicked are they that muſt be broken like porters veſſels. Now the faithfull have no power over the Churches, but over infidels: and therefore both their collections are abſurd.

I will give him the morning ſtarre. Here is the ſecond benefit promiſed by Chriſt to him that overcommeth. The morning ſtarre properly ſignifieth, that bright ſtarre which riſeth a little before the Sun, ſome time of the yeare, which the Heathen call Venus. And hereby is meant Chriſt himſelfe, as Rev. 22. 16. *I am the bright morning ſtarre.* Chriſt is called a ſtarre: Firſt, becauſe he illuminateth all men with the light of underſtanding, and his Church with the knowledge of the will of his Father, and that ſufficiently in all matters that concerne ſalvation. Secondly, to ſhew that the Prophecie by *Balaam* touching Chriſt, whom he calleth the *ſtarre of Iacob*, is now fulfilled, when as Chriſt by his Apoſtles hath plentifully revealed himſelfe to all nations.

Further, hee is called a *morning* ſtarre, for that ſpeciall reſemblance which is betweene him and it; for the morning ſtarre riſeth not in the beginning or middle of the night, but in the end of the night towards the beginning of the day when the ſunne is about to riſe, and then it ſhineth brighter than all other ſtarres. Even ſo Chriſt, he came not in the beginning or middle of the darke time under the law, but in the laſt age of the world, wherein after his incarnation he did ſhine moſt fully to all nations; ſo as there was no ſuch light or knowledge before his comming as hath beene ſince. This *Peter* veriſieth when he ſaith, *We have a moſt ſure word of the Prophets, to which yee doe well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a darke place, untill the day dawne, and the day ſtar ariſe in your hearts.* Where the time of the Law and Prophets is called a time of darkneſſe: and their preaching then, as a candle light: but the preaching of Chriſt under the Goſpell, is as the day ſtarre which ſhineth moſt brightly; he is not called the morning ſtar, becauſe he ſhineth to all the world in all times as the morning ſtar doth, but becauſe he ſhineth unto men in the laſt age of the world.

It is further ſaid, *I will give him it.* Where is promiſed fellowſhip and participation with Chriſt, as he is the day ſtarre. And herein are two benefits compriſed: Firſt, perfect illumination, whereby ignorance ſhall be wholly taken away after this life, when as men ſhall know God fully, ſo farre forth as a creature can know the Creator. Secondly, the light of perfect glory: for by fellowſhip with Chriſt we ſhall bee made *to ſhine as the ſtarres*, as *Daniel* ſpeaketh: yea, we ſhall become *Saints in light*, as the Apoſtle ſaith.

Whereas Chriſt compares himſelfe to the morning ſtar: Firſt, we ſee the groſſe errour of many among us, who live in blindnes of minde and ignorance; walking in their wicked luſts and pleaſures, without care of keeping faith or good conſcience, and yet perſwade themſelves

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B Numb. 24. 17.
C 2 Pet. 1. 19.
D Dan. 12. 3. Col. 1. 12.

Verſ. 28.

Vſe.

ſelves that they have part in Chriſt, and ſhall be partakers of his light and glory. But they are deceived: for all ſuch as live in blinde ignorance, and in ſinne, are meere darkneſſe, and ſo can have no fellowſhip with Chriſt, who is that bright morning ſtar: for what fellowſhip can bee betweene light and darkneſſe? This bright morning ſtarre ſerveth onely for them that receive the light thereof, and walke by it: but thoſe that walke in the darkneſſe of their ſinnes have no benefit by it.

Secondly, ſeeing Chriſt is this morning ſtar, we muſt have care to learne *Peters* inſtruction: namely, *Labour that this bright ſtar may riſe and ſhine in our hearts.* This we ſhall feele, when we uſe thoſe means whereby the beames of this ſtarre may ſhine upon us, not onely for the enlightning of our minides, but alſo for the heating and reviving of our frozen and dead hearts. For as the Sunne in the Spring time quickneth by it warme beams ſome things that lie dead all winter; ſo Chriſt Jeſus this morning ſtarre by the beams of his grace doth enlighten our minides, and revive our dead and frozen hearts. And till ſuch time as wee feele theſe things wrought in us, wee cannot ſay, that this *morning ſtarre* is riſen unto us, or hath ſhone into our hearts.

Thirdly, whereas Chriſt appeareth in the morning, when darkneſſe is paſt, we are hereby taught to lead our lives in godlineſſe, tightneſſe, ſobrietie, and in all manner of upright and godly converſation: *For the night is paſt, and the day is come*, wherein wee may ſee to walke uprightly; *And therefore we muſt caſt off the unprofitable workes of darkneſſe*, as the Apoſtle exhorteth us, Rom. 13. 12. And know this, That thoſe who in this light doe not walke accordingly, but delight in ſins the works of darkneſſe, ſhall one day have their fill: He that loveth the darke, *for the hiding of his talent*, muſt be caſt for his reward *into outer darkneſſe.*

Let him that hath an eare to heare, heare what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches. Here is Chriſts commandement, the ſecond part of this concluſion: But hereof we have ſpoken before.

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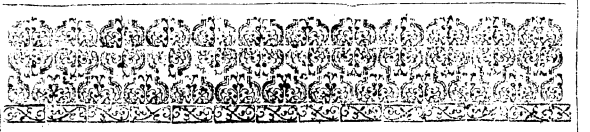
B Mat. 25. 25. 30.
Verſ. 29.



Chap. 3.

Verſ. 1. *And write unto the Angel of the Church that is at Sardis, Theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven Spirits of God, and the ſeven Starres; I know thy workes, for thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, but thou art dead.*

THeſe words containe the fifth particular commandement of our Saviour Chriſt unto *John*, wherin he is injoyned to write and ſend a ſpeciall Epiſtle to the Church of God in Sardis: of this commandement we have ſpoken before. The Epiſtle it ſelfe is contained in the ſix firſt verſes, and hath three parts: A Preface, the matter of the Epiſtle, and the Concluſion. The Preface in theſe words, *Theſe things ſaith he which hath the ſeven Spirits of God, and the ſeven ſtarres.* In this Preface, firſt is ſet downe in whoſe name this Epiſtle is written, to procure authoritie unto it: it is in Chriſts name, whoſe ſoveraignetie is deſcribed by two royalties, that is, by two prerogatives or privileges belonging unto him as hee is ſoveraigne king of his Church: the firſt is, The *having of the ſeven Spirits of God.* The ſecond, his *having of the ſeven ſtarres.* For the firſt royaltie: In the firſt Chap. verſ. 4. I ſhewed that by *ſeven ſpirits*, were meant the *holy Ghoſt*; from whom proceed all the gifts and graces that any men enjoy: and therefore whereas Chriſt is ſaid to have the *ſeven Spirits of God*, the meaning is, that hee hath the holy Ghoſt. And this is a royaltie of Chriſt, as he is the King and head of his Church. If it be ſaid, that other ſervants of God, as *David*, *Peter*, and *Paul*, had the holy Ghoſt: *Anſ.* It is true, but not in the ſame manner with Chriſt; for he hath the holy Ghoſt two wayes: in regard of his divine nature, and of his manhood: as Chriſt is God, he is the beginning of the holy Ghoſt: for the holy Ghoſt is a perſon in the Trinitie, proceeding from the Sonne as well as from the Father; in regard of which proceeding, Chriſt is ſaid to *ſend the holy Ghoſt*, and to doe whatſoever he doth by the holy Ghoſt; as to overcome death by the eternall ſpirit, and to riſe from death to life.

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Secondly,

Secondly, as Christ is man, he hath the holy Ghost, because the holy Ghost powred into him the perfection of all graces and gifts whatsoever. And for this cause hee is said to bee *anointed with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellowes*, and to be inriched with the perfection of all graces, and that two waies: both for number and degrees. For number: with men, some have some graces, and some men others; but Christ, he hath the graces of all men, and all Angels: more graces in number, than all men and all Angels have. And as they are in number perfect, so they are perfect in degree: for in measure, they exceed the graces of all creatures, men or Angels: and therefore the Father is said to have *given the Spirit unto his Sonne without measure*: and thus much is meant by the first royaltie of Christ. Now the end why Christ is said to have the holy Ghost, is to shew that he is a most lively head of his Church, who is filled with plentie of all store of graces, whereby he is able to enrich his Church, and to revive the members thereof, who are dead in their sinnes; and such indeed was the speciall estate of this Church.

Psal. 45. 7.

John 3. 34.

First, hence we learne, no man can have true fellowship with the holy Ghost but by Christ. It is manifest, that none can have fellowship with the Father, but by Christ: and here the same is yet verified touching fellowship with the holy Ghost, especially for the obtaining of those graces that concerne eternall life. This serveth for our speciall instruction: for among the Papists there are many that have worthy and excellent gifts of God, as knowledge, memorie, &c. and yet in them bee wanting the speciall gifts of the spirit; as, faith which justifieth, and regeneration: for touching assurance of their in themselves, they professe themselves to be ignorant. And whence commeth this, but onely from their want of Christ: for the Christ of the Papists, as they teach him, is an Idol-Christ; and therefore wee are not to marvell though we see the most learned among them to scoffe and mocke at our doctrine of assurance of faith, and certainty of election. 11. We have many among us that will say, they looke to be saved by Christ, and to have their sinnes pardoned by him; and yet you shall perceive in them no grace of knowledge, or conscience of true obedience. But these things cannot stand together, to wit, loosenesse of life, and forgivenesse of sinnes: and therefore these men deceive themselves: for if they had Christ, they should have his spirit, and the graces thereof purging their hearts: for Christ and his spirit are never severed: he that hath the spirit of Christ working in him faith and good conscience, hath an infallible token that Jesus Christ is his. This must admonish us to labour for true union with Christ Jesus our head, to become flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; that in him we may have fellowship with the Father, and with the holy Ghost: for till wee bee united unto Christ, we shall never have the graces of salvation wrought effectually in our hearts.

1 Joh. 1. 3.

The second royaltie of Christ is, that he *hath the seven starres*: that is, the seven Pastors of the seven Churches of Asia: they are called *starres*, because in their ministery they mighten men in the way that leadeth unto life. And Christ is said to have them because he is a soveraigne Lord over them, and they be his servants. For he appointeth that person that shall be his Minister among men; he giveth him gifts meet for his calling, he prescribeth also unto him his office and duties. But the Pastors of Churches (will some say) are made by the Church. *Ans.* The right of ordaining Pastors belongeth to Christ, as his royaltie: the office of the Church is to testifie, ratifie, and according to the Word of God to approve of them, whom Christ maketh and endueth with gifts: and for that cause is the Church said to call and ordaine Ministers.

The end why Christ is said to have soveraignitie over the Ministers, is to strike the heart of the Minister of this Church of Sardis, with conscience of his former negligence; and to stirre him up to diligence and carefulnesse in his place. And indeed the consideration of Christs soveraignty over them, is an excellent motive to stirre up all Ministers to be diligent in their place, and so likewise all Christians. For considering that they are Christs, and the gifts they have come from him; this must move them to make conscience of all good duties; for being Christs, they must give themselves wholly to doe the will of Christ, whose they are. If hee would have us live, we must be thankfull, because he is the Lord of life: if our death will glorifie him, we must be content, because wee are his. Thus much of the Preface.

The matter of this Epistle containeth two parts: A reproofe of a vice, with the remedie thereof, vers. 1, 2, 3. And a praise or commendation, vers. 4. The reproofe in these words, *I know thy works*; that is, *I know all thy works, they are all manifest unto mee: and I mislike them.* So must these words bee understood in this place, as may appeare by the reason of this reproofe in the words following, *Thou hast a name that thou livest, but thou art dead.* Wherein is set downe the fault of this Church, namely, *Hipocrisie*; for that they pretended Christian religion in outward profession, but yet wanted the life of Christianitie, and the power of godlinesse: for the meaning of the reason is this; *Thou hast a name that thou livest*: that is, Churches sound about thee judge and speake of thee, as of a Church that is borne anew in Christ, and is guided by his spirit (for by life we must understand *spirituall life*, not corporall) but yet for all this thou art *dead*: that is, thou wantest true spirituall life by regeneration, and art indeed dead in thy sinnes: this is a great and a sharpe reproofe.

That which is here said of this Church of Sardis, may be truly verified of divers Churches

ches in this age. As first, of the great Church of Rome, who are guided by the Pope as by their head. That Church hath a name to be alive, and in their own pretence it is the only true Church of God in the world; but in truth and before God it is dead. Some say, it is as a body full of diseases, and whole throat is cut: but yet the heart panteth, and life remaineth therein. But we may say, it hath no manner of spirituall life, but lieth stark dead as a carkas in the grave. The reasons that some alleage for it are of small moment: first, say they, it hath the Sacrament of Baptisme, which is a note of a true Church: and therefore it hath some life. *Answ.* First, baptisme is not alwaies a note of a true Church: for circumcision in whose stead commeth baptisme, was a Sacrament used of the Samaritans when they were no people of God; and so no Church of God. Against, baptisme without the true preaching of the Gospell, is no infallible signe of a Church: it is but a seale pulled from the writing, or set to a bare paper to no use: and further, outward baptisme, without inward baptisme, is no note of a Church: but such is baptisme in the Church of Rome, it hath not inward baptisme joined unto it, neither the true preaching of the word, for the doctrine which they teach is a quite overturning of Christ and his Gospell: and therefore outward baptisme may bee where there is no Church. Secondly, I answer, that baptisme in the Church of Rome, is a Sacrament not to their Synagogue, but to the hidden Church of God among them. For God had his Church among them even in the middest of Poperie. There were always some among them that renounced their Religion, whom God called home unto himselfe by the means which were among them; as the use of this Sacrament, the Apostles Creed, and of other bookes of holy Scripture. For as God said to *Elias* in *Ahabs* time, *I have reserved seven thousand that never bowed the knee to Baal*; so it may bee said of many among the Papists: God hath there his secret Church, who never yeelded to the Popes government and doctrine.

Hosa. 9.

1 Kin. 19. 18.

Second reason. Antichrist (say they) *sitteth in the Temple of God.* Now the Temple of God, is Gods Church; and therefore the Church of Rome is Gods Church. *Answ.* He sitteth there, not as a member thereof, but as an usurper and deceiver. For in the Church of Poperie is the hidden Church of God: they are therein mingled, as a little wheat like much chaffe, and as little gold with much drosse. So that though the Church of God bee where Antichrist sitteth, yet the Church whereof hee is head, is no Church of God; for whether wee regard their doctrine or worship of God, there is no meanes to beget or preserve spirituall life in their Church. Further, this which Christ saith of Sardis, may be said not only of the Papists, but of the Churches of the Protestants, as of this our Church of England, and of the most congregations in the great townes thereof, though not for doctrine, yet in regard of mens conversations: for the bodie of our people seeme to bee alive by their outward profession, but indeed they are dead in respect of the power of godlinesse: for by occasion of outward peace these sins abound; fulnesse of bread, pride, both inward in heart, and outward in attire: also cruelty, covetousnesse, and carnall security; like as it was in *Noahs* time. Now where these sinnes reigne, there the power of godlinesse is wanting: men content themselves with an outward profession, but the spirituall life of grace is not to bee seene. And yet this doth not prejudice the state of our Church to nullifie it from being the Church of God: for God hath his chosen among us in all places, who live indeed a spirituall life: though the body of our people be dead in sin, and so will continue while peace abideth: the threatnings of the Ministers will not awake men out of the sleepe of sinne; it must be the rod of correction that must put into them the power of Religion. Men are like to little Children, who besides admonition, must feele the smart of the rod to bring them to their dutie.

2 Thess. 2. 4.

Further, in this Church of Sardis, whom Christ calleth dead, though they had a name to live; note the state of the Church of God: for this was a true Church of God, who among the rest was washed in the bloud of Christ, c. 1. 5. and yet Christ saith, it *is dead in sinne*: that is, in part, not wholly. And therefore a Church that is in a very corrupt state both in regard of outward conversation, and of sundry erroneous opinions, may yet remaine the true Church of Christ, if so be they erre not in the foundation. Which serveth for answer to them, that thinke our Church to be no Church; because it maintaineth not that outward order which they think should be in it. And therefore though we must preferre Church before Church, yet wee must not condemne a Church to be no Church for some corruptions that be therein: A true body may have some blemish; and a true Church some wants.

Against, the Churches of God say, this is a Church; yet Christ saith, they are dead. How can these two stand? *Ans.* The Churches about Sardis judged this to be alive, according to the rule of charitie, because of their outward profession of true religion; for as infants are not indeed all holy, as experience sheweth; yet till we see the same made manifest, we are in charitie to judge them to be holy, that are borne of faithfull parents: even so ought the Minister and every one in Gods Church, to thinke the best of every one in Gods Church, till God make manifest what hee is. *Paul* following this rule, calleth whole Churches elect.

But thou art dead. Here are two judgements: one of neighbour Churches, the other of Christ: and Christs judgement is preferred. We must therefore regard specially the judgement of

of Christ, and labour to approve our selves and our conversations unto Christ, rather than to men: for let men say what they will of us, it is Christ that must save and condemne: this made *Paul* to say, *I passe little to be judged of you or of mans judgement: why so? for he that judgeth me is the Lord.*

Cor 3.3.4.

And indeed, without Christs commendation, the judgement of men is nothing: for Christ may condemne us, when men thinke well and speake well of us: therefore he saith, *Woe bee to you when all men speake well of you.* Luk.6.26.

V. 2. *Bee watchfull, and strengthen the things that remaine, that are readie to die: for I have not found thy workes perfect before God.*

Therebee two degrees of hypocrisie: First, when men professe that which is not in their heart at all. The second, when men make profession of more than is in their heart. This second kind of hypocrisie oft befalleth the children of God: and it is that which Christ reproveth in this Church of Sardis in the former verse. After which reproofe, here hee propoundeth remedie to their vice, and a reason to move them to use the same. The remedie is in the beginning of the verse, where are two duties prescribed: *To be watchfull*, and to *strengthen or confirme the decayed graces of God in them.* For the first, *Be watchfull*: To be *watchfull*, here is a most worthy and excellent dutie, it is not bodily but spirituall: and it is practised when any man hath a circumspect care and diligent heed in respect of the salvation of his soule. This dutie of watchfulnesse concerneth two things; sinne, and death. Watchfulnesse against sinne, stands in two duties. First, a man must daily and continually berhinke himselfe before-hand of all sinnes and vices into which hee may haply fall: and for the doing of this, he must consider in himselfe two things: his Nature, and his Calling. Touching his Nature, he must consider, that in him remaines the seed and roote of all sinne, and therefore that he may fall into any sinne whatsoever. Againe, a man considering his nature, shall find himselfe more inclined to some sinnes, than to others; and those he must especially marke and observe. Secondly, for his calling a man must mark the sins thereof; for since the fall of man, every calling hath his especiall sinnes, whereto men that walk therein are more incident. The Magistrate hath his sinnes, the Minister his, the Lawyer his, the Physitian his, and the Trades-man his. And touching these, a man must consider unto what vices and abuses men are most subject, that walke in that calling wherein hee liveth, and so shall have a fore-sight of the sinnes that hee

A may fall into. Secondly, after this fore-sight of sin, hee must watch his heart with all diligence, that though it be tempted and assaulted, yet it be not tainted with any one sinne; as the wise-man counselleth, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, that is the fountaine of all thy actions may be kept holy and pure. The second part of this watchfulnesse respecteth death, or the second comming of Christ. In this two things must bee practised: first, a man must every day berhinke himselfe of his end, and of the comming of Christ, either in generall to all the world, or particularly unto him by death: and in this consideration he must esteeme and judge of every day as of the day of his death, or the day of judgement. Secondly, hee must prepare himselfe against death, and against the day of judgement, every day, even this present day, as though hee should now die, or meet Christ in judgement; and the next day doe the like, and so goe on continually to the day of his death. And for our furtherance in this Christian watch we must be mindfull of temperance and sobrietie, that wee keepe mediocritie in the use of the creatures of God, and of the things of this life. For when men plunge themselves, either in the cares of this world, or in earthly delights, they quite forget both sinne and death, and the day of judgment: and thus we see what Christ meaneth by watchfulnesse.

Ezra 8.23.

B

Use.

As Christ prescribeth this dutie unto this Church, so are wee in the name of Christ to bee enjoyned the same Christian watchfulnesse, both against sinne and death, and the day of judgement. And to move us hereto, consider these reasons: First, wee are watchfull for the preservation of the things of this life: as if a towne bee in danger of sacking or burning, there is watch and ward kept continually: and if a mans house be in danger of robbing, he will sit up night and day to save his goods: yea every man is very painfull and watchfull to heape up to himselfe the things of this world: Now, what a shame is it, that men should bee watchfull in temporall things, and yet have no care of their soule that must live for ever? Againe, want of watchfulnesse is the fore-runner of death, and eternall destruction. 1 Thess. 5. 3. *When men say peace and safety, then shall come upon them sudden destruction.* When the rich man had enlarged his barnes upon the increase of his substance, he promised to himselfe ease and security, saying, *Soule, soule, take thy rest, &c.* but it was said unto him. *O foole, this night shall thy soule be taken from thee.* And the *old world knew nothing, till the flood came and destroyed them all.* Now, if the want of watchfulnesse be the fore-runner of destruction, how great a cause have we to watch?

C

D

Luke 12.19.20.

Matth.24.35.

The second dutie injoyned, is to confirme the graces of God decayed in them: *Strengthen the things which remaine that are readie to die*: as if hee should say, Sundrie bee the graces which I have bestowed on you; but many are

are lost and gone: and those which remaine are about to perish, unlesse you confirme them; therefore see now you strengthen and repaire the same.

A

In this dutie, Christ teacheth this Church and us an excellent lesson; that whosoever hath received any gift of God, must have care to preserve it, and to make the same gift strong in him by continuall increase. If a man have received knowledge, faith, and repentance, or any other gift of grace, hee must not suffer the same to lye dead in him, but stir up, increase, and confirme it daily, that he may be a perfect man in Christ. For the gifts which men have are not their owne, but Gods also, who looketh to receive his owne with advantage. And therefore men like good Stewards must so use the gifts received, that they may returne them to God with increase. Thus *Paul* perswadeth *Timothy*, *Stirre up the gift of God which is in thee*: for else the receiver is an unfaithfull servant, and so shall be rewarded. And for the better performance of this duty, we must often read the word of God and meditate therein: wee must heare it often preached, and with due reverence and preparation receive the Sacrament, and pray continually, striving earnestly against the corruptions that be in us; and daily stir up our hearts to all good duties. Thus did *David* check the corruption and deadnesse of his heart; *Why art thou so cast downe O my soule?* and also stirre up the same unto all good duties, saying, *I have applyed my heart to fulfill thy statutes alway even to the end*, Psal. 119. 112.

2 Tim. 1.6.

B

Phil. 42. 11.

Use.

Hereby are reproved the common sort of professors and hearers of the word; who stand at a stay, and goe not forward in grace. This is a great fault: for as wee have received grace, so wee ought to stirre up the same, that wee may confirme and increase it daily.

C

Further, Christ addeth, *which are about to die*: where hee answereth to a question that is moved by sundry at this day, namely, whether graces that concern salvatiõ may be utterly lost or no? Christ answereth by a distinction, that some graces that pertain to salvatiõ, may be lost quite: and others may be decayed, so as they are about to die. For the graces of God that pertaine to salvation, be of two sorts: some be absolutely necessarie, so as without them a man of yeares cannot be saved; and such are *faith* and *regeneration*. Others bee lesse necessary, which sometime goe with faith, but not always: such are, *A plentifull feeling of the favours of God, joy in the holy Ghost, and boldnesse in prayer*; these may be lost wholly for a time in the servants of God. Yea, faith and regeneration themselves, may decay grievously, and be ready to die, as this text saith. Secondly, consider faith and regeneration in themselves, and they may bee wholly lost: for nothing in it selfe is unchangeable, but God. The state of the Elect Angels by nature is changeable, for they stand by the power of God. Thirdly, these graces

D

Matth. 16. 18.

Use.

Phil. 2. 13.

A may perish and decay finally, unlesse they bee confirmed. *Quest.* Why then doe not the Elect finally fall away after their callings? *Ans.* Their standing commeth not from the constancy of grace or faith, but from the promise of God made unto them, and to their faith: so Christ saith to *Peter*, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rocke*, that is, upon the faith which thou hast professed, *will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevaile against it*: that is, though they may assault it, and grievously weaken it, yet they shall never be able finally to overcome it.

Seeing sundry graces of God may bee lost, & the most necessary graces greatly decay, yea, of themselves quite die: we that have received from God any grace, either of faith or repentance, are hereby taught not to bee presumptous; or over-confident in our selves, but with feare and trembling worke out our salvation.

The reason to enforce the former remedy, is this, *For I have not found thy workes perfect before God*: And therefore watch, and confirme the decayed graces of God that bee in thee. In this reason, Christ giveth them and us to understand, that he maketh a search in his Church of all the workes that men doe in the same, that he may accordingly reward them: for not finding doth presuppose a search. And so the Scripture speaketh of God usually. Before the old world was destroyed, it is said; *The Lord saw that the wickednesse of man was great upon the earth*; as if he had looked from heaven upon the earth, and beheld that it was corrupt; speaking after the manner of men, to signifie that search which hee maketh into mens actions. And so he is said to come downe from heaven, at the building of Babel, Genes. 11. and before hee destroyed Sodome and Gomorrah, *hee came downe to see whether they had done according to their crie, which was come up to him.* And so before the Lord punished the wickednesse of the Israelites, *Hee made a search into their wayes*: And the second Commandement is this, *God will visit the sinnes of the Fathers upon the children*: that is, hee will make a search, whether the sinnes of the Fathers bee among the children, and if they be, hee will punish them.

Gen. 6. 5.

Gen. 18. 21.

Exo. 8. 12.

B

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Seeing Christ makes this search into all mens actions, wee are taught in all things to have care to conforme our selves to the wil of Christ; and so set our selves to the doing of all good duties, according to his Word: If wee knew a Magistrate would come to make search in our house, we would be sure to set all things in order against he came: Shall wee be thus circumspect to prepare for the comming of an earthly man? and shall we not much more prepare our selves against the search of our Saviour Christ the everliving God, from whom nothing can be hid?

I have not found thy workes perfect. Workes are perfect two waies: by the law, or by the Go-

spell. By the Law, when in our works we doe all that the law requireth: and thus are no mans workes perfect in this life. By the Gospell, our workes are perfect, when they proceed from a beleeeving heart, that hath a care to please God in all things: and these workes are perfect not in themselves, but in the acceptation of Christ. Here by *perfect workes*, Christ meaneth not the perfection of the law, but of the Gospel: as if he had said, I have searched into your wayes: you doe many workes in shew, but they proceed not from sincere faith, nor from a heart that hath care to please God in all his Commandements, and a full purpose not to sinne against him: you have a shew of godlinesse, but you want the power thereof.

Here observe, that Christ condemneth this Church, not because their works were not outwardly conformable to the will of God, but because they proceeded not from a beleeving heart, that had a full purpose to forsake all sin, and to please God in all things

Vse. Wee therefore must take heed of all hypocrisie, by the example of this Church: and labour to bee of *Davids* minde; and pray with him, *that our harts may be upright in the statutes of the Lord*. That we may say with *Hezekias*, *Behold Lord how I have walked before thee with an upright minde*: for this is a notable token of grace, and an infallible badge of him that is the childe of God.

Psal.119.80. Isa.38.3.

Before God. Some may say, Christ here distinguisheth himselfe from God, and therefore he is not God. *Ans.* By (*God*) in this place wee must understand, not God simply, but God the Father. For Christ here speaketh of himselfe, not as hee is God, but as hee is Mediator, God and man: in which respect, even as hee is now glorified, he is inferiour to his Father.

Where note, that Christ being now glorified in Heaven, carreth himselfe as Mediator: whence wee gather, that wee may lawfully and without presumption pray unto Christ, without the meanes or intercession of Saints or Angels. The Church of Rome deny this; and say, because Christ is now in full glory in Heaven, therefore wee must use unto him the mediation of Saints: but Christ being now in heaven, marks our works in particular: and therefore we may without presumption come unto him by praier.

v. 3. *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard: and hold fast, and repent: If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a theefe, and thou shalt not know what houre I will come upon thee.*

A When Christ hath reproved them for their sinne of hypocrisie, and prescribed them a remedy with a reason thereof; he doth as a good Physitian and Pastor, shew them the way how they may practise that remedie. For they might say; we are commanded to watch, and to renew our decaied graces; but how shall we doe this? Christ answereth, by doing three things: I. by remembring that which thou hast received by heating: II. by holding fast: III. by repenting of thy sinnes.

For the first, *Remember therefore*: that is, call to minde the doctrine of salvation which thou hast beene taught by mine Apostles. This remembrance is a most excellent meanes to move a man to subjection to Gods will, to repent, and to practise all good graces. *When David saw the prosperitie of the wicked, his feet had almost slipt*: But his remedy against that temptation, was his going *to Gods Sanctuary, and there calling to minde the end of those men.* Again, *I have remembred thy name. O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy Law.* *Peter* denied his master, when he forgot his word: but when hee was put in minde thereof by the looke of Christ, and the crowning of a cocke, *he then repented, and wept bitterly*, Luk.22.61,62. Sinnes committed by men of ignorance, are many and grievous: and therefore all sinnes are called *ignorances*, Heb.9.7. but if men would by faith keepe in minde the word of God, it would bee a notable meanes to keepe them from sinning.

B Psal.73.17.

Psal.119.55.

C Here then wee have a soveraigne remedie against sinne: namely, wheresoever we are, or whatsoever we doe, wee must call to minde the Word of God, and the promises of God: and those will be a lanthorne unto our steps, and a light unto our pathes. The Devill laboureth above all things, to bring us to forget the word: for then hee knowes he can easily draw us into any sinne. *Quest.* How shall we keepe in minde the word and promises of God? *Answ.* That is a grace of God; and for the attaining unto it, wee must first labour to have our hearts affected with the love of Gods word and promises: for a man can never keepe in minde that, whereof he hath no liking. Secondly, we must labour to beleeve the word of God: for faith gives it rooting in our hearts, Colos.2.7. The cause why there is so little remembring of that which is taught, is, for that it is not mixed with faith in those that heare it.

D Againe, the thing to be remembred is, *How thou hast received and heard*: that is, looke what doctrine thou hast received by hearing, and that remember: where wee see Christ joyneth receiving and hearing together. Whence wee may gather, that teaching and receiving of the word of God by hearing, is the prescribed general meanes, whereby God reveaseth his will, counsell, and purpose touching the salvation of mankind; neither is there any other meanes appointed hereunto in the word of God.

This sheweth, that their opinion is false, who teach

Vse.

teach that God calleth all the world effectually unto salvation: for how can they be called, that never heard of the word of God? but all in all ages never heard of the word of God; albeit since the comming of Christ, their sound hath gone forth into all nations. Secondly, this sheweth the sondnesse of their opinion, who defend the doctrine of universall grace: that God should give grace pertaining to salvation, to every man in the world, so as hee may be saved if hee will: for the meanes to receive grace is the hearing of the word: which all men in all ages never had vouchsafed unto them.

The second dutie prescribed, is the *holding fast of this doctrine*. To hold fast, here signifieth two things; first, to maintaine the doctrine of the gospel received and taught by the Apostles. Secondly, to put the same in practice in a godly life; of these wee have spoken before, Cap.2.25.

The third dutie is to *repent*: where by repentance is not meant the beginning of repentance, but the renewing and *restoring of the same*, for their hardnesse and deadnesse of heart, whereby they did slackly and coldly practise the good duties which they did professe.

Vse. Hereby wee are taught, not to content our selves with the beginning of repentance, but wee must renew the same continually, and that not for grosse sinnes onely, but even for the wants that bee in us; as for our dulnesse and deadnesse of heart, and for our hypocrisie, and decay in Gods graces.

And because this Church was very dead and dull of heart; therefore Christ addeth a reason to move them to the practice of this dutie: which is a most terrible threatning, in these words, *If thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a theefe, and thou shalt not know what houre I will come upon thee.*

Vse.

Here marke Christs order and dealing: having prescribed a remedy for the fault, hee giveth them a direction to practise the same; and after addeth a most terrible threatning to drive them thereunto: as if hee should say, If thou wilt not watch against sinne, and against death, and for that end remember my Word, hold fast the same, and repent: then looke as a theefe comes upon a man on a sudden, and spoiles his goods, and cuts the throats of his children; so will I come on thee on a sudden, and powre upon thee my wrath, whereby I will even cut the throat of thy soule, and thou shalt have no meanes to escape my punishment.

Here Christ threatneth suddaine and speedy destruction: but yet with condition and limitation of repentance. Now because wee be like this Church (as hath beene shewed) by reason of the long peace which wee enjoy; wee may also use the same reason and threatning at this day, to stir up our dead hearts. We must watch against all sinne, and against death: and for this end must have in memory the word of God, and hold fast the faith unto the end, and repent

A continually of all wants: but if we doe not this, then are the vengeances, and eternall punishments of God, to be powred upon us without measure, and that suddenly, when wee cannot prevent them. If a man have but a sparke of grace, the consideration hereof will move him to repentance, and to watchfulnesse: but if this will not awake a man out of his sinnes, then nothing remaineth but a fearefull expectation of the wrath of God, which shall be unavoidable, and endure for ever. Indeed if a man had some thousand yeares allotted for the punishment of his sinnes, there were some cause why hee might continue in them: but seeing this punishment is eternall, and when many thousand yeares are expired, they are as far from the end of their woe as ever they were: therefore it must stir up all dead and drowzy hearts unto repentance, and cause them to shake off security, ignorance, and coldnesse in religion; and to break off the course of every sinne.

B

v. 4. *Notwithstanding thou hast a few names yet in Sardie, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walke with mee in white: for they are worthy.*

C Here beginneth the second part of the matter of this Epistle, namely, *the praise and commendation* of some part of this Church. The words doe thus depend upon those which went before, whereas Christ had said, that this Church was dead in sinne, and had only a name to live; some man might aske, how it could bee a true Church. To this Christ answereth in the beginning of this verse; That though the greatest part in this Church were dead in their sins, yet some few there were among them that were alive in Christ, and did testifie the same by true and sincere obedience.

In this coherence wee may observe two instructions. I. that a particular congregation on earth is made a Church of God, and so called in regard of Gods Elect therein, who doe truly beleeve. For the privileges of a Church belong unto particular congregations, onely by reason of the faith of the Elect among them. The Catholike Church is the whole company of the Elect truly beleeving in Christ, and particular congregations are members of it, so far forth as they doe truly beleeve: the rest that doe not truly beleeve, are not members of the Church before God, but onely in the judgement of men: like unto superfluous humours which are in the body, but no parts thereof. This confuteth the doctrine of the Church of Rome, who teach that wicked men that are rejected in Gods decree, may yet bee true members of the Church of God.

D

Secondly, in this coherence Chriſt intimateth unto us a diſtinction betweene man and man in this Church: For all that were in this Church, were men called, profeſſing Chriſt and his Goſpell: and yet of them, ſome were dead in their ſinnes, and others were alive in Chriſt. Touching this diſtinction of men, wee muſt ſearch the cauſe thereof. It muſt not bee aſcribed to any power or will in man, but to the good pleaſure of God, as the Scripture teacheth; for when the body of the Iſraelites had given themſelves to Idolatry, there were yet *ſeven thouſand that never bowed the knee to Baal.* What was the cauſe why they did not live like to the other Iſraelites? Surely nothing in the will of man (though the Idolatry of the other was to be aſcribed to themſelves) but the text is cleare it was the good pleaſure of God, who had preſerved and kept them.

Rom. 11. 4.

Vſe. By this wee ſee how erroneous and falſe the Divinitie of ſome Proteſtants is, which aſcribe the cauſe of this diſtinction betweene man and man, to the libertie of mens will being renewed by grace, ſaying, That God gives to everie man ſaving grace, by vertue whereof, hee may repent and believe if he will: but yet becauſe the will of man doth ſtill remaine ſinfull, hence it commeth, that hee hath liberty to obey, or not to obey. And therefore the cauſe why ſome men lie dead in ſinne is, becauſe they ſet their will to refuſe the grace of God; and the cauſe why ſome men live in Chriſt is, becauſe they incline their will to embrace the grace of God. But this doctrine doth greatly diminiſh the grace of God, in that it maketh the acceptance thereof to lie and depend on the pleaſure and will of man: when as the power of almighty God joyned with his will, is the true cauſe thereof, leaving ſome to themſelves, who doe fall, and enabling others to ſtand by his grace.

Now follow the words of this commendation: *Notwithſtanding thou haſt a few names yet in Sardis:* that is, There be yet in this Church a few perſons knowne to me by their names: (for by *names*, we muſt underſtand perſons named) *which have not defiled their garments.* Here (to omit many expoſitions) is an alluſion to the Ceremoniall Law, wherein God ſet downe a diſtinction betweene things cleane and uncleane, not in themſelves, but by his appointment: and among the Jewes, if any man had but touched an uncleane thing with his hand, or with his garment, therby he was defiled and his garment defiled legally; and ſo hee or his garment were reputed uncleane: whereupon they had a ſpeciall care not to touch the things that were defiled, no not with their garments. Now this ſignified another thing unto them, namely, That they ought to abſtaine, not onely from the outward ſinnes of the morall Law, but even from all occations, intentions, ſhews, and appearances of evill. And in this place, this is meant hereby; that ſome in this Church of Sardis, had ſo farre made conſcience of ſin, that they would not meddle with very occaſions and appearances of evill.

Hereby wee ſee, that the ſervants of God are but few in number: for the bodie of this people were dead in ſinne, and a few onely in this great place lived in Chriſt: ſo Chriſt ſaith to his Diſciples, *The flocke to whom the Father will give the kingdome of Heaven, is but a little flocke.* The Prophet *Iſaiah* is ſent, *To harden the hearts of the bodie of the people for their iniquities:* and, *the tenth part onely muſt bee ſaved:* and in the Goſpell it is ſaid, *The way to hell is broad, and many there be that walke therein: but the way to heaven is ſtraite, and few there bee that enter into it.*

Luke 12. 32.
Iſa. 6. 9.
verſe 13.
Matt. 7. 13, 14.

Hereby then wee are taught not to follow the example of the multitude, but of the ſewer and better ſort. It is a foule ſinne that keepes many from religion, and brings them to deſtruction, when they will live after the manner of the world, and as their fore-fathers have done. This is a falſe rule, and a dangerous courſe.

Vſe.

Thou haſt a few names: That is, perſons whoſe names I know, and have recorded. They are called names, becauſe Chriſt obſerves and knowes them by their names. Where note, that thoſe that are the true ſervants of God, are particularly knowne unto Chriſt: *The haires of your head are numbred* (ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples) much more were their names knowne. Againe, hee biddeth them *rejoyce that their names were written in heaven.* And Chriſt the good *Shepherd knowes his ſheepe, and calls them by their names,* John 10. verſe 3.

Luke 21. 7.
Luke 10. 2.

This is a matter of endleſſe comfort unto the people of God: for what can cauſe a man more to rejoyce, than to know that his name particularly is knowne to the King of Kings, and that accordingly hee hath ſpeciall regard unto him? When the Lord would comfort *Moſes*, and put courage into him in doing the duties of his calling, hee telleth him, *Thou hee was knowne unto him by name.* Yea, this is the foundation of mans ſalvation, *The Lord knoweth who are his.*

Exod. 33. 17. 12. 34. and 17.
2 Tim. 2. 19.

Which have not defiled their garments: Here they are commended for uprightneſſe and ſincerite of life and converſation, in that they kept themſelves from the very ſhewes and appearance of evil; when as the reſt of this Church was dead in ſinne.

In their example Chriſt preſcribeth unto us a patterne of true pietie, how we ought to carry our ſelves in the Church of God on earth: wee muſt not content our ſelves with a bare profeſſion of Religion, and keepe our ſelves from groſſe ſinnes onely, but abſtaine from the very ſhewes of evill. Yea, more particularly, here are three things taught us, touching ſin: Firſt, that wee ought to make conſcience of every ſinne in

in our owne perſon. Secondly, that wee ought to keepe our ſelves from the contagion of ſinne in others, either by giving conſent unto them, or furthering and allowing them any way therein. Thirdly, that wee ought to abſtaine from the very occaſions, and ſhewes, and appearances of ſinnes: So *Paul* teacheth us *to abſtaine from all appearances of evill,* Eph. 5. 3. hee will not have ſundry ſinnes, as fornication, uncleaneneſſe, &c. ſo much as once named, thereby to give the leaſt approbation unto them. We muſt therefore looke on this example, lay it to our hearts, and conforme our lives unto it: ſo ſhall we be good ſervants of God, and have the ſame commendation with theſe few: for true religion ſtands not in knowledge, but in obedience; and this is true obedience, to make conſcience of every ſinne in our owne perſons; to take heed of the infection of ſinne in others, and to abſtaine from the appearance of evill. A happy Church ſhould wee have, if theſe things were practiſed: but this is the ſhame and reproach of our profeſſion, that wee have no care of true obedience in our ſelves and others, wherby we ſhould glorifie God, and grace our holy religion.

1 Theſ. 5. 22.

The Church of Rome hence gather, that a man after baptiſme may live without mortall ſinne. For theſe few perſons in this Church in their baptiſme put on Chriſt, and after kept themſelves from all occaſions of ſinnes, ſo as they had not committed any mortall ſinne. But their collection is unſound: For firſt, though they had to this time abſtained from all mortall ſinne, yet how can they prove that they ſinned not afterward? Secondly, they are ſaid not to *have defiled their garments*, not for that they had not committed any ſinne, but becauſe they endevoured to keepe themſelves from the appearance of all ſinne; and ſo muſt the obedience which is aſcribed to Gods children in Scripture bee underſtood, namely, of their ſincere purpoſe and endevour to obey: and ſo among us, thoſe that have a ſetled purpoſe and reſolution to make conſcience of every ſinne, and in all things to doe the will of God, they are reputed for the keepers of the law. For God in his children accepts the will for the deed. *And they ſhall walke with me in white*] After the commendation of theſe few, Chriſt addeth a promiſe of living with him in glory. For ſo white garments have alwayes beene uſed to ſignifie *joy, happineſſe, life, and glory:* Eccl. 9. 8. *At all times let thy garments be white,* that is, take thy delight and pleaſure in uſing the creatures of God. So that here theſe few have a promiſe to bee freed from all want, and to live with Chriſt in all glory, joy, and pleaſure.

This benefit hath beene in effect further urged in the former Chapter: here onely I will note one doctrine: namely, That they which live in the world among the wicked, and do not communicate with their ſinnes, ſhall not partake with them in their puniſhments; for the body of this Church muſt have Chriſt to come amongſt them as a Theeſe; but the godlly muſt walke with Chriſt in white, in glory. *Lot* was freed from the deſtruction of the Sodomites, becauſe hee partaked not with them in their ſinnes: and among the Iſraelites, *Thoſe that mourned for the ſinnes of the people, are marked in the fore-head, that when judgements come upon the wicked, they might be ſpared.*

Gen. 19.
Ezek. 9. 6.

This point muſt be remembred for by reaſon of long peace and proſperity among us, many ſinnes abound, as ignorance, Atheiſme, contempt of Religion, and prophaning of the Lords Sabbath, with innumerable ſinnes of the ſecond Table. All which call for judgements from Heaven, and no doubt they will be puniſhed, partly in this life, and partly in the life to come, unleſſe our people doe repent. Thoſe therefore that would not partake of the common Judgements that are to come, muſt now beware that they communicate not with the common ſinnes that doe abound, and ſee that they keepe faith and a good conſcience, having their righteous and zealous hearts grieved, for the abhominations among which they live.

Pſal. 94. 16.

After the promiſe is adjoined the reaſon thereof, *For they are worthy.* Hence the Church of Rome doth conclude, that a man by his works may merit Heaven, becauſe they bee worthy of reward. A moſt blaſphemous concluſion, and a manifeſt abuſe of the word of God. Gods children indeed *are worthy of life everlaſting*; but not by the merit of their workes, for then they ſhould be done according to the rigour of the Law; but for the worthineſſe of their perſon, when as they ſtand righteous before God in Chriſt: for when God will ſave any man, he gives Chriſt unto that man truly and really; ſo as he may ſay, Chriſt is mine. And with Chriſt God gives his ſpirit which worketh in his heart true faving faith, whereby hee doth receive Chriſt: and ſo Chriſt and his righteouſneſſe belongs unto that man really; and by vertue thereof hee is worthy of life everlaſting: and this is the worthineſſe which Chriſt meaneth in this place, and not any worthineſſe of their workes; ſo that this doth helpe them nothing at all, and yet it is the moſt probable place of Scripture, to prove and juſtifie the Doctrine of mans merits.

Two kindes of worthineſſe.

V. 5. *He that overcommeth ſhall bee cloathed in white aray, and I will not put out his name out of the Booke of life: but I will confeſſe his name before my Father, and before his Angels.*

v. 6. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches.*

Here is the conclusion of this Epistle: and it containeth two parts: a promise, and a commandement. The promise in the fifth verse, and the commandement in the sixth. In the promise note two things: first, the parties to whom it is made, *To him that overcommeth*; whereof wee have spoken before. Secondly, the thing promised, to wit, glory and eternall happinesse; which is expressed three wayes: First thus, *Hee shall be cloathed in white aray*: that is, she shall have everlasting life and happiness: so much is signified by white rayment, as we have already shewed.

Vse. Hence the Church of Rome conclude, that a man may doe good workes respecting a reward. *Answ.* In some sort it is true; for so it is recorded of *Moses*, Hebr. 11. 26. *Hee had respect to the recompence of reward*. But yet the recompence of reward must not be the principall end of our good workes: for chiefly wee must thereby intend to testifie our faith, and our obedience unto God; and with that wee may have respect to everlasting life.

The second thing promised; *And I will not put out his name out of the booke of life*. For the understanding of this, two questions must bee scanned: First, what this booke of life is: Secondly, whether a man may bee blotted out of this Booke. For the first; this booke of life is nothing else, but Gods predestination or eternall decree of Election, whereby hee hath chosen some men unto salvation upon his good pleasure. And this is called a *Booke*, because it is like unto a booke. For as the Generall in a Campe, hath the name of all his souldiers that fight under him, in a Booke; and as the Magistrate of a towne hath the name of every free man and denizon inrolled; so God in the booke of his Election, hath the names of all that shall be saved.

For the second Question. A man may bee written in the booke of life two wayes: either truly before God, or in the judgement of men onely. Those whose names are truly before God written in this booke, cannot bee blotted out: For Gods counsell touching the eternall state of every man, is unchangeable. This the golden Chaine of Gods decree, doth plainely shew: *For whom hee hath predestinated, them hee hath called; and whom he called, them also he justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified*. Others there bee that have their names written in this Booke, onely in the judgement of men: and thus are all men written in the Booke of life, that professe the Gospel of Christ in his Church: for so charitie binds us to judge of them: And these may have their names blotted out. In this sense doth the Scripture often speake; as when the Prophet witheth, *That*

Rom. 2. 30.

A *God would blot his enemies out of the Booke of life* (meaning *Iudas* principally) his meaning is, that it might bee made manifest, his name was never written therein. This then is the meaning of this promise; that they who doe avoid the occasions of sinne, and have care to keepe faith and good conscience unto the end, have their names written in the booke of life, and they shall never be blotted out. Psal. 69. 28.

Hence I gather two things: First, that the number of the Elect, in respect of God, is certaine: for the names of those which are to bee saved, be as it were written in a booke; and being once written in, they remaine there for ever. Some doe teach, that all may be saved, if they will: but this is a meere fancy of man: for what should there need any booke of life, if that were so? Secondly, hence I gather, that this number can neither increase, nor be diminished, let men doe what they can: *If they had beene of us, they would have continued with us*, 1 John 2. 19. *All that thou hast given me have I kept, and none of them is lost*, Joh. 17. 12.

B Whereas a man may be written in the booke of life, to wit, in the judgement of men, and yet be blotted out: hereby we are to be admonished, to looke unto our selves, and to make conscience of every sinne, and to avoid and shun the very occasions thereof. For so long as we professe the Gospel and obey the same, our names be in the book of life: but when we commit any be sin, we doe as much as in us lieth, make a pen, and reach it up to heaven to blot our names out of that booke: and they that keepe a course in sinning, doe plainly shew that they were never truly written therein.

Vse.

C Secondly, considering that the number of the Elect is certaine, it must bee a motive to cause us to labour for some assurance of Election, that wee may truly say, we have our names written in Gods booke. But here some bad person will say, seeing the number of the Elect is unchangeable; I will live as I list: for if my name be in the booke of God, it shall never bee blotted out; and if it be not in, it can never bee added. *Answ.* These men deceive their owne soules: for they that have their names written in the booke of life, shall live as these few did in this Church of Sardis, in true faith and holy obedience. For he that is ordained for glorification, is ordained to justification and sanctification: and it is impossible for him that shall bee saved, to live alway in sinne: and therefore these men must rather labour to repent and beleeve, and to get some signes of their election, that they may know that their names are written in the booke of life.

D The third benefit is this: *I will confesse his name before my Father, and before his Angels*. That is, in the day of judgement I will acknowledge and professe him to be mine; one of my elect, that keepeth faith and good conscience unto the end. I will take him from the company of the wicked world, and set him on my

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right hand, and advance him to glory, pronouncing upon him the blessed voyce of absolution, *Come, thou blessed of my Father*, Matth. 25. 34. The end why this benefit is thus propounded, is to draw this Church to professe the name of Christ in this world: for if they would professe Christ before men, hee will acknowlege them for his owne at the last day.

Vse. This same reason here propounded, must induce us to make a true confession of Christ, against the world and all Christs enemies: which to doe is a very hard matter. A man of himselfe cannot stand out; but yet the consideration of this, that Christ will confesse him at the last day, will bee a notable motive and meanes to inable him thereto. If any earthly Prince should come to a man among a great companie, and cal him by his name speaking kindly unto him, hee would esteeme it a great honour unto him: and for that hee would not sticke to die in the Princes cause. O then, what honour is this, that Christ Jesus will in the last day vouchsafe to all those that in this life doe sincerely confesse him, and overcome. He will confesse them to bee his, and receive them to his owne glory. But on the contrary, those that will not confesse him here, but disgrace him, either by false doctrine, or prophanenesse of life, will Christ at the day of judgement utterly disgrace, by denying them to bee his, and there pronounce upon them the fearefull sentence of condemnation, *Goe ye cursed, &c.* Which if we would then escape, and also procure unto us the joyfull voice of absolution, wee must here labour to hold the truth of Christs doctrine, and also keep a good conscience unto the end. But if we onely professe him in judgment, and not in the practice of an holy life, surely Christ will professe that he knows us not, and then give us our portion with the devill and his Angels.

The Commandement followeth: verse 6. *Let him that hath an eare, heare, &c.* Of which we have spoken.

v. 7. *And unto the Angell of the Church which is of Philadelphia, write: These things saith hee, which is holy and true: which hath the key of David, which openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.*

Here beginneth **the sixth** particular Epistle of our Saviour Christ, from this vers. to the 14. And before (as to the rest) is prefixed a speciall Commandement unto *Iohn*, whereby hee is injoined to write this Epistle unto the Church of Philadelphia; the end of which Commande-

A ment, is to warrant the calling of *Iohn* to write this Epistle: but of this wee have spoken before.

The Epistle it selfe containeth three parts: a Preface, the matter of the Epistle, and the Conclusion. The Preface in this verse, *These things saith hee, &c.* Wherein is set downe, in whose name this Epistle is sent; namely, *in Christs*: where (as in the former Epistles) hee is excellently described, for the winning of more credit unto this Epistle; and that, first by his properties, *Holinesse and truth*; secondly, by his Kingly office, in the words following.

For his properties. First, Christ is said *to bee holy. Quest.* How can Christ be said to be holy as hee is man, considering hee descended from *Adam*, who conveyed his sinne and the guilt thereof, to all his posteritie? The common answer is this: That indeed Christ descended from *Adam*, as he is man; but his substance was sanctified by the holy Ghost in the wombe of the Virgin, and thereby hee was freed from *Adams* sinne. This answer is true, but not sufficient: for men, besides the corruption originall, take from *Adams* the guiltinesse of that sinne which *Adam* committed. Now sanctification taketh away the corruption of sinne, but not the guilt thereof. Therefore a more full answer is this; that all which come of *Adam* by naturall generation, doe receive by that order which God set in nature at the creation, saying *increase and multiply*, both the nature of *Adam*, and the sinne and guilt thereof. But God for the preventing of this in the Incarnation of Christ, ordained that Christ should not come of *Adam* by naturall generation, but by a miraculous conception of the holy Ghost: wherebyhee tooke the nature of man, with the infirmities thereof, without the sinne of mans nature, or the guiltinesse thereof. And thus is Christ free from sinne as he is man.

B

C

Further, Christ is holy two wayes. In himselfe; and in regard of his Church. In himselfe, he is holy sundry wayes: First, in regard of his God-head, for his divine nature is holinesse it selfe. Secondly, as he is man; for his manhood was not onely free from all manner of sinne, by reason of his miraculous conception, but it was also inriched and filled with holinesse, and that in greater measure than all men and Angels: for hee receeved the gifts of the holy Ghost without measure. And againe, as hee is man, Christ is holy in regard of his obedience and actions; for living on earth hee did actually as our surete fulfill the law for us. Secondly, Christ is holy in regard of his Church. First, because hee is the Author of that holinesse, which is in every member of his Church. Yea, hee is holy in regard of men in a further respect; namely, as the root of all mens holinesse, as hee is Mediator. For looke as from *Adam* is actually conveyed originall sinne, to every one of his posteritie that cometh by naturall generation; so from Christ is righteousnesse

D

nesse

neſſe and holineſſe conveyed to all that be-
1. Cor. 1. 30. leeve in him: and for this cauſe hee is called our
righteouſneſſe and ſanctification: and in this
ſenſe eſpecially is Chriſt ſaid to bee holy in this
place.

Vſe. Whereas Chriſt is ſaid to be holy not only in
himſelfe, but for us: here we muſt marke what
is the principall thing in Chriſtian Religi-
on: namely, to have care to bee ingraffed into
Chriſt, that from him we may receive grace to
become new creatures, and feele in us his pow-
er to kill our corruptions, and daily to renew
his owne image in us, in righteouſneſſe and true
holineſſe; and that as truly, as wee feele in us
Adams corruption. It is not ſufficient for us to
plead, that Chriſt will be our Saviour, and will
free us from all ſinnes; but wee muſt labour to
have Chriſt convey holineſſe into us, and that
as ſenſibly as we feel the root convey ſappe into
the branches: and this holineſſe we muſt make
to appeare in our lives, as the branches by their
fruit and leaves, do ſhew they receive ſap from
the root.

Secondly, here note, Chriſt propounds him-
ſelfe unto us and to all Churches, as a notable
patterne to bee followed; giving us to under-
ſtand, that all that beleeve in him, and looke to
bee ſaved by him, muſt bee holy as he is holy,
making conſcience of every evill way; for
Chriſt is holy to make us holy. Let us therefore
behold Chriſt, and ſee wherein hee expreſſeth
himſelfe to bee holy; and therein let us follow
him. So *John* ſaith: *He that hath this hope, puri-*
fieth himſelfe as he is holy: that is, uſeth all good
meanes to conforme himſelfe to Chriſts holi-
neſſe.

Thirdly, hereby wee learne, that the com-
mon title given to the Pope, whereby he is cal-
led (Holineſſe) is a blaſphemous title: for to
be holy, is here made a propertie of Chriſt. And
yet more is given to the Pope, than to Chriſt in
this place: for hee is called holineſſe, which is a
title of God alone.

The ſecond propertie, whereby Chriſt is
deſcribed, is *Truth*: Chriſt is ſaid to be *true*, in
three regards: Firſt, becauſe hee is without all
errour or ignorance, knowing every thing as
it is. Truth is in Chriſt properly, and in the
creatures onely by meanes of him. Secondly,
becauſe whatſoever he willeth and decreeth, he
doth it ſeriouſly, without fraud, deceit, change,
or contradiction, as the whole tenure of Scrip-
tures doe ſhew, wherein every part is ſuitable
and agreeable to another. Thirdly, becauſe hee
maketh good every promiſe made in the word:
for in him all the promiſes of God are *yea, and*
Amen, 2 Cor. 1. 20.

Vſe. Whereas Chriſt is ſaid to be *true*, yea, *truth*
itſelfe: Firſt, we learne a full difference between
him, and all falſe wicked ſpirits; for they are
ſpirits of errour and falſhood, for the devill is
the father of lies, and the author thereof.

Again, whereas Chriſt is *true in all his*
wayes: wee ought without all doubting to be-
leeve his word, and all promiſes made therein,
that concerne our ſalvation. If Chriſt could erre
or lye, and men bee deceived by him, then they
might juſtly doubt of the truth of his Word:
but ſeeing he is true in all his promiſes, we muſt
beleeve in him: and in all our diſtreſſes either
of bodie or minde, depend upon him: for hee
hath made a promiſe to helpe, and he will never
faile them that reſt on him.

Thirdly, in this propertie, hee propounds
himſelfe an example, to bee followed of his
Church and of us; that as Chriſt is ſerious in
his decrees, and conſtant in his promiſes; ſo
muſt wee purpoſe every good thing ſeriouſly,
and alſo make good whatſoever good thing we
promiſe. For, *Lyers muſt bee deſtroyed*, Pſal. 5.
6. *They that love, or make lyes, muſt never come*
into heaven, but bee ſent out thence, and caſt into
the burning lake of fire and brimſtone, Rev. 22. 15.
But it is a note of a man, that is a good member
of Gods Church in this world, and that ſhall
be inheritor of Chriſts kingdome in heaven, to
ſpeake the truth from his heart, Pſal. 15. 22. And
lying is a note of the childe of the devill, Joh. 8.
44.

Secondly, Chriſt is deſcribed by his Kingly
office, *which hath the keys of David, which ope-*
neth and no man ſhutteth, and ſhutteth and no man
openeth. Where firſt, let us ſee the meaning of
the words: for which purpoſe we muſt have re-
courſe to Iſay 22. 22. whence theſe words are
borrowed, being there ſaid of *Eliachim*. The
circumſtances of the text will eaſily ſhew the
meaning of the words in this place: *Shebna*,
who had beene an ancient Steward to many of
the Kings of Iſrael, was Treaſurer alſo unto
King *Hezekias*. And becauſe hee was an hinde-
rer of reformation intended by *Hezekias*, the
Lord threatned to caſt him out of his office:
and further, the Lord ſignifieth that *Eliachim*
ſhall come in his roome and have the ſame of-
fice: now to expreſſe this thing, the Lord ſaith,
The keyes of the houſe of David ſhall bee laid up-
on his ſhoulders: That is, *Eliachim* ſhall be made
a Steward of the houſe of *David*, even of the
Kingdome of *David*, whereof *Hezekias* was
Governour: (for ſo the houſe of Juda, and the
houſe of Iſrael, are often put for the whole
kingdome of Juda and Iſrael.) And the giving
of a key was an ancient token of placing and
inveſting men in chiefe rule and authoritie; ſo
that the meaning of this place, is this; that
God hath given unto Chriſt ſoveraigne power
and authoritie of governing his Church. *Queſt.*
But why is Chriſt ſaid to have the key of *Da-*
vid? for *Davids* kingdom was a temporal king-
dome, but Chriſts kingdome is not of this
world, John 18. 36. And yet it is ſaid, *The*
Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his
Father David: and he ſhall reigne over the houſe
of Iacob: Luke 1. 32, 33. *Anſw.* Chriſt may
be ſaid to have the keyes of *David* two wayes:
First, properly; for when hee was borne of the
bleſſed virgin *Mary*, he was borne King of the
Jewes,

Jewes, by right diſcent from his father *David*,
as his Genealogie plainely ſheweth, Luke 3.
And alſo the queſtion of the wiſe-men at Jeru-
ſalem, ſaying, *Where is the King of the Jewes,*
that is borne? Matth. 2. 2. And therefore when
the Publicans asked tribute of him, he pleaded
the privilege of a Kings ſonne; albeit, to avoid
offence, hee was content to yeeld of his right,
and to pay tribute; Thereby ſhewing, that hee
had right to the kingdome of Iſrael, though he
would not take it upon him; and therefore
came in ſuch a time when the Kingdome was
taken of the Romane Emperour. Secondly, hee
may bee ſaid to have the key of *Davids* king-
dome typically: for *Davids* kingdome was a fi-
gure of Chriſts kingdome, and *David* him-
ſelfe a type of Chriſt: as it is moſt excellently
deciphered in the Prophets, Jeremie 23. 5, 6.
Hoſea 3. 5. where Chriſt is plainely called *Da-*
vid, by the name of him that was his type,
figure, and figure. *Queſt.* Why were not as well
the kingdomes of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Pha-*
raoh, types of Chriſts kingdome, as *Davids?*
Anſw. Becauſe *Davids* kingdome was a king-
dome of light and peace; but theirs were king-
domes of ſinne and iniquitie. And hee is ſaid to
have the key of *Davids* kingdome, becauſe his
kingdome and the righteouſneſſe thereof was
figured by the piety in *Davids* Kingdome. And
this kinde of ſpeaking is juſtifiable by Gods
word. So Mat. 2. 23. Chriſt is called a Nazarite:
which place hath relation to that which is ſaid
Iudg. 13. properly of *Sampſon*, who was a moſt excellent
figure of Chriſt, and did moſt notably repreſent
him in his death, wherein hee killed more than
in his life. Now Chriſt is called a Nazarite, not
becauſe he obſerved their rites and orders, for
that he did not: he dranke wine, ſo did not the
Nazarites: but becauſe hee was the truth and
ſubſtance of that order; for in him was fully
accomplished that holineſſe, which was figu-
red by that order; for he was perfectly ſevered
from all ſinne and pollution. And ſo here hee is
ſaid to have the key of *David*, becauſe hee had
the ſoveraigntie which was figured by *Davids*
Kingdome.

Which ſhutteth, and no man openeth, and openeth
and no man ſhutteth: Here Chriſts kingdome is
compared to a houſe, which can bee opened
and ſhut by none but Chriſt; whereby is ſig-
nified, that none hath power above Chriſt in
his kingdome; and that his power therein is
ſoveraigne and abſolute. So that hereby is
meant, that Chriſt Jeſus ſitting in heaven, hath
ſoveraigne power & authority over the whole
Church of God, to governe the ſame. That
wee may the better underſtand this ſoveraigne
power of Chriſt, wee muſt know, it hath three
parts. I. To preſcribe. II. To judge. III. To
ſave, or deſtroy. In preſcribing, Chriſt hath
abſolute power, and that in ſundry things: as
firſt, in preſcribing doctrines of faith, and
religion unto his Church, to bee beleeved and
obeyed, and that on paine of damnation. This
power he puts in execution, when in bookes of
the Old and New Teſtament, hee preſcribeth
the doctrine of the Law and the Goſpel, to bee
obeyed and beleeved. And none but hee can
make an Article of faith, or a law to binde the
conſcience: and therefore *Paul* ſaith, *Whoſoever*
ſhall teach any other doctrine, then that which we
have received of us, let him bee accurſed, Gal.
1. 8. Secondly, for regiment: hee hath abſolute
power to preſcribe how hee will have his
Church governed, and by whom: and therefore
Moſes when hee was to make the Tabernacle,
did all things according to the patterne that the
Lord gave unto him. So *David gave to Salomon*
patternes of all things that were in him by the ſpi-
rit, touching the building of the houſe of God, 1
Chron. 28. 12. Thirdly, hee hath abſolute pow-
er to appoint the time of keeping his Sabbath:
for as the ordaining of a Sabbath belongs to
Chriſt, ſo doth the changing thereof; hee that
preſcribeth worſhip, muſt preſcribe the or-
dinary ſet time thereunto, which is to conti-
nue to the end. And therefore it is but an
opinion of men, to hold that the Church may
make two or moe Sabbath dayes in a weeke, if
they will. Fourthly, In *preſcribing the Sacra-*
ments: and therefore *Paul* ſaith, *What I have*
received of the Lord, that deliver I unto you: ſpea-
king of the Lords Supper. For hee that gives
grace, muſt alſo appoint the ſignes and ſeales of
grace.

The ſecond part of Chriſts ſoveraigne pow-
er, is *power of judgement*. Which is a ſoveraigne
power to determine of his owne will, without
the conſent of others, or ſubmiſſion to men or
Angels. And in determining, Chriſt hath two
privileges. First, to expound Scripture: the ab-
ſolute power of expounding the law, belongeth
to the Law-giver; and his expoſition is authen-
ticall. Secondly, to determine of all queſtions,
and controverſies in Scripture. And therefore it
is a wicked opinion of the Church of Rome,
which hold, that the principall Judge of inter-
preting Scripture, and deciding controverſies,
is the Church.

The third part of Chriſts ſoveraigne power,
is to *ſave, and deſtroy*. This is expreſſed in theſe
words, *Hee openeth and no man ſhutteth, and*
ſhutteth and no man openeth: and for this cauſe
hee is ſaid *to have the keyes of hell and of death*. Rev. 1. 18.
Whereby is ſignified; firſt, that he hath power
to forgive ſinnes; for that hee procureth at his
Fathers hands. Secondly, that hee hath power
to condemne: for when men beleeve not his
word, he hath power to hold them in their ſins,
for which he can caſt them into hell. The ground
of this threefold power of Chriſt is this, be-
cauſe he is ſoveraign Lord over his Church, and
the members thereof.

The Church of Rome ſay, that this key of
David hath more in it than ſoveraigntie over
his Church: to wit, a power to make and depoſe
Kings that bee in his Church. This they teach,
that they might prove the Pope to have title
in

in ordaining and depoſing of Kings by vertue of the keyes. But they erre groſſely: for though Chriſt as hee is Mediator, bee above all Kings, yet in that regard he neither maketh nor depoſeth any Kings: and therefore hee ſaith plainly, *My kingdome is not of this world.* This cauſed him to refuſe to take upon him the office of an earthly Judge or Prince, *To divide an inheritance betweene two brethren.* Hence it was, *that hee refuſed to give ſentence of the adulterous woman.* And yet as Chriſt is God, hee maketh or depoſeth earthly Kings: ſo the wiſeman ſpeaketh of him in the perſon of wiſdome, *By mee Kings raigne.*

Joh. 18. 36.

Luke 12. 14.

Joh. 8. 11.

Prov. 8. 15.

The power of the keyes.

For the further clearing of this, wee muſt handle another point, which is delivered heere concerning the power of *the keyes*: which is a power whereby the power of the keyes of *David* is put in execution. This *power of the keyes* is mentioned, Matth. 16. 19. when Chriſt ſaith unto *Peter, I will give unto thee the keyes of the kingdome of heaven, and whatſoever thou ſhalt binde upon earth, ſhall bee bound in heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt loſe on earth, ſhall be loſed in heaven.* This *power of the keyes is a Miniſtery granted to Gods Church, to open and ſhut the kingdome of heaven.* Firſt, I call it a *miniſterie*: that is, a ſervice, becauſe whatſoever the Church doth in Chriſts name, is nothing but the dutie of ſervants unto their Lord: from whence it is, that the moſt worthy members and officers that ever were in the Church, as the Prophets and Apoſtles, were but the Miniſters of Chriſt. That this is a ſervice, I ſhew more plainely thus: When *Adam* fell, in his ſinne all mankinde fell with him, and thereby were all barred from the kingdome of heaven. Now ſince that fall, Chriſt became man, and in his man-hood ſatisfied the juſtice of God for mans ſinnes. And this ſatisfaction of Chriſt, is properly that key whereby heaven is opened, being oppoſite to mans ſinne whereby it was ſhut. And Gods Church and Miniſters cannot properly open heaven by any power they have, but onely reveale unto men what Chriſt hath done for them; and withall apply unto them, the doctrine of Chriſts ſatisfaction which is revealed. And in this regard they are ſaid to open and ſhut the kingdome of heaven; not as Lords but as Miniſters and ſervants.

Next I adde, that this power *is given to the Church*: that is, to the company of true beleevers called to ſalvation by Chriſt, and to none other: and therefore it is ſaid of them, *Whatſoever ye bind on earth ſhall be bound in heaven, &c.*

Matt. 18. 18.

Thirdly, I adde the end of this power of the keyes, *To open and to ſhut heaven.* How the Church doth this, Chriſt that gave this power knoweth beſt, and hee hath ſet it downe, John 20. 23. *Whoſoevers ſinnes yee remit, they are remitted: and whoſoevers ſinnes yee retaine, they are retained.* The Church therefore opens heaven, when it pardons mens ſinnes: and it ſhuts the ſame, when it lawfully retaines their ſinnes and holdeth them unpardoned: beſides this, there is no opening and ſhutting of heaven, committed to the Church. *Queſt.* Can the church pardon ſinne or retaine the ſame? *Anſw.* Yes, for theſe are the words of Chriſt: but let us ſee how. It is one thing to give ſentence of the pardon of ſin, and another to pronounce the ſame ſentence given. To give the ſentence of the pardon of ſinne, is onely proper to Chriſt the head of the Church; no Saint, nor Angell, hath that privilege: but yet the Church pronounceth the ſentence of pardon given by Chriſt. If wee ſhould ſay, the Church ſhould pardon ſin, we ſhould rob Chriſt of his honour: for that is a privilege of his God-head. Thus we ſee what the power of the keyes is.

A

B

C

D

The right uſe of this power, is when the Church doth uſe the ſame for the opening and ſhutting of heaven: Firſt, in the name of Chriſt alone, as a ſervant: Secondly, according to the rule of Gods Word, not after mens affections or inventions: Thirdly, for this end, to bring ſinners to repentance, and to continue them therein that they may bee ſaved: and to the Church thus uſing this power, Chriſt hath promiſed, that *Whatſoever they bind in earth ſhall be bound in heaven, and whatſoever they loſe in earth ſhall be loſed in heaven,* Matth. 18. 18.

Further, this power of the keyes, hath two parts: the miniſtery of the word, and ſpirituall juriſdiction. The key of the miniſtery of the word, is ſet downe and eſtabliſhed by Chriſt, Mat. 16. 19. *I will give unto thee the keyes of the kingdome of heaven, &c.* This miniſtery of the word is a key, becauſe it opens and ſhuts heaven: this it doth two wayes. Firſt, by teaching and explaining the ſubſtance of religion, the doctrine of ſalvation, whereby men muſt come to heaven; and in that regard, is called *the key of knowledge,* Luke 11. 52. Secondly by applying the promiſes of the Goſpell, and the threatning of the Law: For when in the miniſtery of the Word, the promiſes of remiſſion of ſins and life everlaſting, are applyed to beleevers that repent, then the kingdome of heaven is opened: and when as in the ſame miniſterie of the Word, the curſes of the Law are denounced againſt impenitent ſinners, then is the kingdome of heaven ſhut. Yet touching the miniſterie of the Word, this diſtinction muſt be remembred that otherwhiles the Church is certaine of the faith and repentance of ſome men, or ſome congregation; and then they may pronounce remiſſion of ſins abſolutely: but otherwhiles they are uncertaine of their faith and repentance, or of their impenitency: and then they muſt accordingly remit or retaine mens ſinnes, that is, conditionally; pronouncing the remiſſion of ſinnes to all that repent, and denouncing damnation to all that repent not. And thus is the Word to bee publikely handled in GODS Church at this day, becauſe our congregations are mixt companies, conſiſting of ſome that repent and beleeve

beleeve, and of others that doe not truly repent nor beleeve.

The ſecond part of this power of the keyes, is *ſpirituall juriſdiction*: I call it *ſpirituall*, to diſtinguiſh it from that outward juriſdiction whereby the commonwealth is governed. That this ſpirituall juriſdiction is a *key*, may appeare, Matth. 18. 16, 17. 18. *If thy brother offend thee* (ſaith Chriſt) *admoniſh him priv ately: if he heare thee not, yet take with thee two or three: and if he heare not them, tell it to the Church; and if he refuſe to heare the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and as a Publican.* Then followeth the promiſe, *Verily, I ſay unto you, Whatſoever you bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven, & whatſoever ye loſe, ſhall be loſed in heaven.*

A

B

This ſpirituall juriſdiction, is a power whereby the Church pronounceth ſentence upon the obſtinate offenders in the Church, and puts the ſame in execution. And it hath two parts: Excommunication, and Abſolution. Excommunication, is an action of the *Church in Chriſts name, excluding an obſtinate offender that is a profeſſor of the Goſpell, from all the privileges of the Church, and from the kingdome of heaven.* So *Paul* commandeth the inceſtuous man to *be committed to Satan*: that is, not onely put out of the Kingdome of Chriſt, but alſo after a ſort made ſubject unto Satan, to be outwardly afflicted by him. And therefore Chriſt ſaith, *If he heare not the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man*: that is, as one that hath no title to the kingdome of heaven. Here may ſome ſay, Can the Church thruſt any man out of the kingdome of heaven? *Anſw.* It is Chriſt onely that receiveth men thither, and it is he alone that muſt thruſt them out: the Church doth not properly either receive men in, or put them out; but onely pronounce and declare what Chriſt doth in this behalfe. As if a man that lives in the Church, be a common drunkard; the Church finding in Gods word, that *no drunkard can inherit the kingdome of heaven,* which is the ſentence of Chriſt, may pronounce the ſame againſt him, and ſo exclude him from the kingdome of heaven. *Object.* The true childe of God may be excommunicated, but he can never be excluded from the kingdome of heaven. *Anſ.* The true childe of God may for a time, and in part be excluded the kingdome of heaven. In part, as a man that hath freedome in any incorporation, may lie in priſon for ſome treſpaſſes, and ſo want the uſe of his freedome, though he be a freeman: ſo the childe of God for committing ſinne, may want the uſe of this liberty and freedome which he hath in Gods kingdome; and for a time, while he liveth in ſinne without repentance; yet wholly and for ever he cannot: but ſo ſoone as he repents, hee ſhall be received certainly againe: for no man is to be barred either from heaven or the Church, any longer than he remaineth impenitent.

1 Cor. 5. 5.

Mat. 18. 18.

C

1 Cor. 6. 10.

D

Whereas this cenſure is ſuch, as doth exclude a man both from the kingdome of heaven, and the liberties of the Church till he repent: wee may here ſee, that this cenſure ought to be uſed with great reverence, feare, and conſideration: even ſuch or greater, as we would uſe in cutting off a member from the body. The abuſing therefore of this ſentence in ſmall matters, cannot but be a grievous ſinne, and a breach of the third commandement, wherein one of Gods moſt weighty ordinances is taken in vaine.

Uſe.

Further, one ſpeciall degree of Excommunication, is *Anathema*: which is, when one is pronounced to be condemned, whereof *Paul* ſpeaketh, 1 Cor. 16. 22. But this is not pronounced upon any, but on thoſe that ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt; and therefore it is ſeldome uſed, becauſe that ſin is hardly diſcerned: conſiſting not ſo much in the ſpeech, as in the malice of the heart againſt Chriſt.

The ſecond part of this ſpirituall juriſdiction, is Abſolution: which is, when a malefactor upon his ſufficient repentance, is approved to be a member of the Church; and is admitted to the kingdome of heaven. And yet here the Church receives him not into the kingdome of Chriſt, but only declareth upon his repentance what Chriſt doth. And thus we ſee wherein Eccleſiaſticall juriſdiction conſiſteth: and what be the parts of the power of the keyes.

For the better diſcerning of this power of the keyes, wee muſt remember foure ſpeciall abuſes hereof that have taken place in Gods Church for many hundred yeares. The firſt is this: that in former ages the Church hath given this power of the keyes to *Peter* alone, debarring the ſame from all other, even from the reſt of the Apoſtles; as though they had onely the uſe, not the right of this power. But the caſe is plaine, this power belongs to every Miniſter of the Goſpell, though they be not Apoſtles, as well as it did to *Peter*; for in the promulgation of this power, Matth. 16. 19. though Chriſt direct his ſpeech to *Peter*, yet he ſpeaketh unto all, as the circumſtances of the place doe plainly ſhew: for Chriſts queſtion (*Whom ſay ye that I am.*) was made to all: now becauſe it would have beene great diſorder in this holy company, for all of them to have ſpoken; therefore *Peter* being both more ancient and bold of ſpeech, ſpeaketh for all, and the reſt anſwered in his perſon: and ſo accordingly, Chriſt ſpeaking to *Peter*, doth make a grant of this power unto all his diſciples in his perſon. And therefore, Joh. 20. 22. hee gives this power to all, ſaying plainly, *Whoſoevers ſinnes ye retaine, they are retained, &c.* So that the word of God is plaine in this point, to ſatisfie the conſience of any that is not willfully addicted to the Popiſh religion. *Queſt.* Whence have the Miniſters of the Goſpell this power? *Anſ.* By ſucceſſion from the Apoſtles: for Chriſt ſaith, Matth. 28. 19, 20. *Goe and preach, I will be with you to the end of the world.* Where he cannot meane the Apoſtles onely; but with them all Miniſters that did preach and bap-

tize, after them, making this promiſe to the Apoſtles, not as they were Apoſtles, but as they were Miniſters and Preachers of his Goſpell.

The ſecond abuſe is, that the Church of Rome hath turned the power of the keyes into a ſupremacie over the Church, making it to bee a ſoveraigne authority, whereby *Peter*, and his ſucceſſors the Popes, have liberty to make lawes, canons, and conſtitutions, which binde the conſcience: as alſo to make kings, and to depoſe the ſame. A moſt notorious abuſe of this power, which is no ſuperiority, but a miniſtery: the chiefe power whereof conſiſteth in the diſpenſation of the word and will of Chriſt: For Chriſt ſaid not to *Peter*, I will give thee the keyes of the kingdomes of men, but *of the kingdome of heaven*. The third abuſe hereof is, that the Church of Rome hath thereby for a 1000. yeares almoſt, barred Kings, Queenes, and Emperours from being Governours over the Churches of God; an errour ſtat againſt Scripture: for when as good King *Ioſias* intended the reformation of religion, and the abandoning of Idolatry, hee made a covenant with the Lord for the accompliſhment of the ſame: and is ſaid to *have cauſed all that were in Ieruſalem, and Benjamin to ſtand to the covenant which he made*. Now ſhall we ſay, *Ioſiah* did evill in cauſing them to do? God forbid: It is recorded of him by the holy Ghoſt for his commendation. *Object.* But Gods Paſtors and Teachers have the power of the keyes, and Princes have not? *Anſ.* True, but yet they have a civill power, whereby they rule over Gods Church: for there is a civill power, and a ſpirituall power. Princes rule not by any ſpirituall power, but civilly; and thereby they have power to compell all their ſubjects to the outward meanes of Gods worſhip, and to forſake Idolatry, and may alſo puniſh them that obey them not. *Object.* By this power of the keyes, Kings and Queenes are brought under Paſtors. *Anſ.* In Paſtors and Miniſters we muſt conſider their perſons and goods, and their office and word which they bring: Princes are over their perſons and goods, and yet may be under their word and miniſtery; becauſe therein they ſtand in Chriſts ſtead. Yet all this ſheweth nothing why Princes in Gods church ſhould be ſo robbed of their right, as the church of Rome doth.

2 Chron. 34. 32.

The fourth abuſe is, that the Church of Rome for ſome 800. yeares, hath turned the power of the keyes unto the Prieſts in their Sacrament of Penance: for whereas by Gods word, the Miniſters power is onely to pronounce the abſolution of Chriſt: with them every Prieſt ſits as a Judge, and the people come unto him as to a Judge, making knowne unto him all their thoughts, words, and deeds, (as neare as they can) wherin they have broken any commandement: which done, the Prieſt injoyns him to bewaile his ſins; and after contrition, doth properly give ſentence of pardon, even as Chriſt himſelfe doth: and then after appoints him works of ſatisfaction, to be done for the temporall puniſhment of his ſins: which done his ſinnes are pardoned in heaven. Where behold a moſt devilliſh practice, as may appear by the manifold errours contained therein. As firſt, the confeſſion of all a mans ſinnes; which hath no warrant in Gods word. Secondly, that the Prieſt ſhould give ſentence of pardon is a moſt notorious practice, whereby Chriſt is robbed of his honour: for the Phariſees could ſay, *None can forgive ſinnes but God*, that is, properly, Mark. 2. 7. Which Chriſt approveth, and it is moſt true; for he that can forgive ſinnes properly, muſt make ſatisfaction for ſinnes. Thirdly, they abſolve from the fault, but they will not forgive the puniſhment: and thereby they rob others, to enrich themſelves. Fourthly, they enjoyne ſatisfaction to God by men for their ſinnes: whereby they doe nothing elſe but overturne the all-ſufficient ſatisfaction of Chriſt, and enjoyne that to man which is impoſſible. All theſe are moſt horrible abuſes of this power, which ought to bee knowne and conſidered, being a ſufficient warrant unto us, that the Church of Rome is no true Church of God: for though the Pope carry in his armes the *keyes*, yet they are not *the keyes of heaven, but of hell*. For he hath made moe places of reſt and woe, than ever God did: as *Limbus Patrum*, and *Purgatory*; and therefore muſt needs make moe doores thicker, and ſo moe locks and keyes.

By this doctrine, touching the *keyes of David* given to Chriſt, and the power of the keyes in the Church derived thence, we may learne ſundry things. Firſt, that Chriſt, who hath the keyes of *David* to open and ſhut, doth not open to all, but to ſome onely. The reaſon hereof is this: *Adam* being created in integrity, was in the favour of God: but by his ſinne he loſt the favour of God, and ſo barred himſelfe both out of the earthly & heavenly paradiſe: and all his poſteritie by the ſame ſinne, and by their owne actuall ſinnes are likewiſe debarred: *for ſin is a partition wall betweene us and God: and a cloud betweene our prayers and God himſelfe*, as *Ieremie* ſpeaketh; ſo that ſinne is the cauſe of this excluſion: and ſo many ſinnes as a man committeth, ſo many bolts and barres he maketh to exclude himſelfe from the kingdome of heaven. The conſideration whereof ſhould move every one to take a narrow view of his miſerable eſtate in himſelfe, through *Adam*: for by original ſinne wherein we were borne, and by our actuall tranſgreſſions wherein we live, we barre our ſelves from the kingdome of heaven. It is lamentable to ſee how the whole world lieth in ſinne, and how the devill bewitcheth men to conceale or diminiſh their ſins, making great ſins ſmall, and little ſins none at all; when as the leaſt ſinne which they commit (without repentance) is ſufficient to barre them for ever out of the kingdome of heaven. Againe, ſeeing every ſin doth barre us out

Vſe.

Iſa. 59. 2.

our of heaven, this muſt be a motive to induce every one of us, to repent of all our ſinnes, to bewaile the ſame, and to pray earneſtly for the pardon of them in the death of Chriſt; and continually to labour to turne unto God from all ſinne, becauſe, if wee live but in one ſinne, it will be a mighty barre, ſufficient to exclude us the kingdome of heaven eternally. Thirdly, ſeeing Chriſt keepes the keyes of heaven; hereby we are taught to come unto Chriſt, and to ſeeke by him to enter into the kingdome of heaven. For Chriſt by his death hath opened heaven: as he ſaid unto *Nathaniel* and *Philip*, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, hereafter ſhall yee ſee heaven open*: meaning, by the miniſtery of the Goſpell: and ſeeing it is open, wee muſt ſtrive to enter into it, as the men in *Iohn Baptiſts* time did, Matth. 11. 12. This wee doe by endevouring to become good members of Gods Church on earth: for that is the doore and ſuburbs of the kingdome of heaven, which every one muſt enter into that would come to heaven it ſelfe; even as a man that would come into an houſe muſt needs come to the doore. Now, in the Church there is the true doore which is Chriſt himſelfe, and the key thereof which is his word, and the miniſtery of the word, which doth locke and unlocke the ſame. *Queſt.* What ſhall wee doe to become true members of the Church? *Anſ.* We muſt doe two things; Firſt, humble our ſelves for all our ſinnes, praying unto God for the pardon of them, and believing the ſame through Chriſt. Secondly, endevour and purpoſe by Gods grace every day to leave the ſame ſinnes. This doing, we are at the doore of heaven; and if wee would have our ſoules enter into heaven when wee die, this wee muſt doe while we live. But if wee enter not into the doore of grace, by the key of knowledge, in the miniſtery of the word while wee live, we ſhall never come to the gate of glory after death.

Iohn 1. 51.

v. 8. *I know thy workes: behold, I have ſet before thee an open doore, and no man can ſhut it, for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name.*

In this verſe, and ſo forward to the twelfth, is contained the matter of this Epiſtle, which may be reduced to three heads; a Praiſe, a Promiſe, and a Commandement. The Praiſe in this eighth verſe. The Promiſe in the ninth and tenth. The Commandement in the eleventh. For the firſt, the praiſe of this Church is firſt ſummarily propounded; *I know thy workes*; which hath beene expounded, and the end thereof, with the uſes in the former Epiſtles. Then he addeth the reaſon of his commendation, wherein are two things to be obſerved. I. The ſigne of Chriſts approbation, in theſe words, *I have ſet before thee an open doore*. II. Their converſation, or the workes which Chriſt approved in the words following, *Thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name*. Both theſe may be underſtood, either of the Angell or Miniſter of this Church, or of the whole Church alſo. I take it to be meant of both. Being ſpoken of the Miniſter of this Church, the words bearе this ſenſe; *Behold I have ſet before thee an open doore, &c.* that is, behold and conſider, I have vouchſafed unto thee opportunity and liberty to preach the Goſpell, and thereby to convert men unto me. So much S. *Paul* meaneth by the *doore of utterance*, 1 Cor. 16. 9. *For thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name*: That is, though thou be indued but with ſmall meaſure of gifts, pertaining to thy calling, yet thou haſt maintained my Goſpell, and haſt not denied my name.

These words being thus expounded, doe afford us theſe inſtructions. Firſt, from the ſigne of his approbation, we learne, that it is a great privilege for a Miniſter to have liberty to preach the Goſpell, and thereby to convert men unto Chriſt: ſo much the word of attention *behold*, importeth: which may alſo further appeare by this, that the moſt famous and worthy Prophets of God, were not always vouchſafed this favour, as *Iſay* and *Ezekiel*, who were ſent ſometime to harden *the people*. And Chriſt himſelfe complaineth of the want of this privilege, ſaying, *I have ſpent my ſtrength in vaine*: and in regard of this privilege, the Miniſters of the Goſpell are called *Saviours*. And by reaſon of this liberty they have title to the promiſe *of ſhining as ſtarres in glory*, Dan. 12. 3. This therefore is an unſpeakable mercy, and ſo ought to be eſteemed of all Miniſters which have the ſame vouchſafed unto them; they ought highly to magnifie the name of God for it, and to value it more worth than all earthly bleſſings whatſoever.

Secondly, from the works which Chriſt approveth in the Angell of this Church, we may obſerve, that Miniſters endued with ſmall meaſure of gifts, may bee able to doe great ſervice unto God in his Church: this thing is plaine in the Miniſter of this Church; and might alſo bee ſhewed by manifold examples of ſuch men in all ages: but to come to our times. In the dayes of Queene *Mary*, when Religion was in baniſhing, this our famous Schoole of the Prophets, had many learned men in it; yet not one of them ſtood out for the defence of the Goſpell: when as a poore ſecular Prieſt not three miles off, who was ſtarve behind them

Iſa. 66.

Iſa. 49. 4.

Obad. 21. 1 Tim. 4. 16.

Cambridge.

in gifts of learning and knowledge, yet having the truth revealed unto him, did ſtand out for the maintenance of the ſame, even to the ſealing of it with his bloud. And at this day many men of ſmaller gifts in the miniſterie, doe more further the Goſpell, by the increaſe of the knowledge of Chriſt crucified and true obedience, than thoſe that are inriched with farre greater gifts of knowledge both in tongues and Arts: ſo as though they be many hundred degrees ſhort in regard of Schoole-learning, yet they goe as farre before them in benefiting Gods Church.

If this be ſo (will ſome ſay) then it is needleſſe for men to be brought up ſo much in the Schooles of learning. *Anſ.* Not ſo, for as much as may be, Gods Miniſters ought to have knowledge of Schoole-learning, both in Arts & tongues. And yet for all this, it oft commeth to paſſe by Gods providence, that the greateſt Clerks for learning, are leſſe profitable to the Church than men of ſmaller gifts. This God doth to humble the learned, that they be not proud in themſelves; and to magnifie the work of his Spirit in the weaker inſtruments.

Further, theſe words muſt alſo be underſtood of the whole Church: and then they beare this ſenſe; *I have ſet before thee an open doore*: that is, I have vouchſafed unto thee a ſpeciall privilege, even libertie to enter into the kingdome of heaven. From whence wee obſerve, *That libertie to life everlaſting, is a ſpeciall privilege belonging not to all men, but only to the Church of God, & the true members of Chriſt.*

This point hath ſundry uſes.

I. To confute this erroneous opinion; That Chriſt did effectually redeeme all and every man. Which is flat againſt Gods word, and this text: for thoſe that are effectually redeemed, have libertie to enter into the kingdome of heaven: but all men have not that libertie, for then it were no privilege of Gods Church alone to have heaven opened unto them.

II. Seeing this is a privilege which God vouchſafeth unto his Church, to have heaven gate opened unto them; hereby wee are taught to take the benefit of this libertie while the doore is open; and in time to ſtrive to enter therein. For as Chriſt telleth *Nathaniel*, the Church of the new Teſtament *ſhall by faith ſee heaven open.* Wee muſt not therefore neglect this opportunitie. But it is our common ſhame, that wee be ſlacke in ſeeking the kingdome of God, and the righteouſneſſe thereof, ſuffering our ſelves to be clogged with heapes of ſinne, and worldly luſts, that we can neither walke in the ſtrait way, nor enter into that doore that leadeth unto life; for ſinne is an heavie burden, like a great packe that will not ſuffer a man to enter into ſo ſtrait a doore. We muſt therefore caſt off all ſinne, that we may ſo enter in, and walke in the way of life.

John 1. 51.

And no man can ſhut it. Here is the continuance of the former benefit, againſt all adverſarie power whatſoever. And this againe conſiſteth another opinion of the ſame kinde with the former; to wit, That Chriſt died for every man, but yet ſome are not ſaved becauſe they will not; they ſhut heaven doore againſt themſelves. But this opinion cannot ſtand: *for none can ſhut heaven doore againſt them*, to whom Chriſt hath ſet it open effectually, neither ſin, Satan, nor the world, no not man himſelfe, nor all their power together. For herein is the will of man ruled by the will of God: and looke whom God will have to enter into heaven, them doth he incline to will their owne ſalvation: and alſo make unwilling ever to ſhut this doore againſt themſelves. *For thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, &c.* that is, thou art endued with ſome meaſure of grace; as of faith, hope, and righteouſneſſe: and according to that meaſure thou haſt maintained my word, and not denied my name.

Hence we learne, that a man endued with a ſmall meaſure of Gods grace, may doe works pleaſing unto God, and by the ſame grace come to life everlaſting. Chriſt ſaith to his Diſciples, *If your faith were as much as a graine of muſtard ſeed, by it ſhould you be able to remove mountaines.* Now, that which is here ſaid of the faith of miracles, may in like ſort be ſaid of all faith, and ſo of juſtifying faith; if a man have never ſo ſmall a meaſure thereof, yet thereby he ſhal doe works acceptable to God: for as *Paul* teacheth, *Gods children* receive not the tenth, but *the firſt fruits of the ſpirit*; that is, a ſmall meaſure of grace in this life, which is only a pledge of that which they ſhall fully receive in the world to come: for this cauſe is *Rahab* commended for her faith, although it were but ſmall and weake, as we ſhall ſee if we reade the whole hiſtorie, *Ioſh.* 2. For God accepteth of man, according to that he hath received. It is not ſo much the meaſure of grace that ſaveth a man, as the truth of grace before God.

Matth 17. 20.

Rom. 8. 23.

Heb. 11. 31.

Vſe.

This ſerveth notably for the comfort of thoſe that have care to keepe faith and good conſcience. Such are moſt diſmayed by reaſon of their wants and corruptions: but they muſt know that God approveth of their grace, though it be but ſmall, if ſo be they have care to increaſe in grace, and deſtrive to pleaſe God in all things, according to the meaſure of grace received. II. Hereby every one muſt be encouraged to embrace and obey true Religion. Many be diſmayed herein, by reaſon of the great meaſure of obedience which they thinke God requireth; and therefore they leave off all obedience. But this ought not to be ſo: for God approveth of a man in Chriſt, according to that grace which he hath, be it more or leſſe; and not according to that which by the law he ought to have. And yet none of all this muſt make us ſlacke and negligent in uſing thoſe means which God hath vouchſafed unto us for the increaſe of grace, that ſo wee may alſo increaſe in true obedience.

And

And haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name. Here he ſetteth downe two works for the which he commendeth this Church. Firſt, their faithfull keeping of the Word of Chriſt. Secondly, the profeſſion of his name in the time of perſecution. This behaviour of this Church muſt be a patterne and a looking glaſſe for us to ſquare our converſation by. For theſe words, *Thou haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name*, though the words be few, they containe much in them; ſignifying, that this Church hath ſpeciall care of keeping Gods word in every Commandement, both legall and evangelicall. Happy were our Church if the ſame might truly be ſaid of us, that we had care of obedience unto God, and of the true profeſſion of his name. But generally wee faile in practice, though in outward profeſſion wee make ſome ſhew thereof. Thus much of the praiſe of this Church.

v. 9. *Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which call themſelves Jews, and are not, but doe lie: behold, I will make them that they ſhall come and worſhip before thy feet, and ſhall know that I have loved thee.*

Here followes the ſecond part of this Epiſtle; namely, the promiſes of Chriſt, which are two: Firſt, concerning the converſion of certaine Jewes, verſe 6. Secondly, concerning the deliverance of theſe *Philadelphians* in the time of temptation, verſe 10. For the firſt of theſe promiſes: In all likelihood, there was in this Citie of *Philadelphia*, a Synagogue of the Jewes, which bare an outward ſhew, that they were the true worſhippers of God: albeit they denied the name of Chriſt, and perſecuted his Church. Yet Chriſt here promiſeth, that he will convert them, and make them members of his Church, and cauſe them to worſhip him in the congregation before this Church of *Philadelphia*.

In this promiſe, note three points touching the converſion of theſe Jewes. The Author thereof; The partie converted; And the fruit of their converſion. For the firſt. (ſaith Chriſt) *Behold, I will make them.* The words are very ſignificant, being doubled; and they make Chriſt the whole and ſole Author of their converſion.

Hence we learne, that in the converſion of a ſinner, God hath the whole and ſole worke: true it is, that a man willeth his converſion in the act thereof, but yet it is God that worketh that will in him; it is not of himſelfe. This confuteth the erroneous Doctrine of free will in the Church of Rome, whereby they teach, that a man can diſpoſe himſelfe to worke out his ſalvation, being only helped by Gods grace. Like unto a ſick man, who though he be weak, yet being holden up by another, can goe of himſelfe. *Anſw.* But Saint *Paul* teacheth us, That a man by nature is not ſicke, or weak with ſinne, but ſtarke *dead in ſinne*: and can no more move himſelfe in the worke of his converſion, than a dead man in the grave, in the worke of his reſurrection. But they ſay, by this we make a man like unto a block. *Anſ.* Not ſo: for though he cannot turne himſelfe unto God, yet he hath his will and underſtanding free to uſe in civill and outward actions: and beſides, there is a poſſibilitie in his nature to bee converted by grace, which is not in a blocke.

Ephe. 2. 1.

Againe, whereas Chriſt ſaith, *I will make them come, and they ſhall come*; Here is plainly confuted the Doctrine and opinion of ſome, which hold, That a man being effectually called, may come unto Chriſt or not come at his pleaſure; when God hath given grace, man may receive it, or refuſe it, if he will. This is flat againſt this text: for *God will make them come*, and mans will muſt be pliable to Gods will in this matter.

But they alleage, Matthew 23. 37. *O Ieruſalem, Ieruſalem, how oft would I have gathered thee, as an hen, &c. but thou wouldeſt not.* *Anſ.* Chriſt there ſpeaketh not of the will of his good pleaſure, for that cannot bee reſiſted, but of his ſignified will in the miniſtery of his Prophets, and himſelfe as hee was a Prophet, and the Miniſter of circumciſion unto the Jewes; for ſo he might will their converſion, and yet they will it not. *Object.* 2. Act. 7. 51. *Ye ſtiffe-necked Jews, ye have alwayes reſiſted the holy Ghoſt.* *Anſ.* That muſt be underſtood of the Miniſtery of the Prophets and Apoſtles, who ſpake by the Spirit of God, and not of the Spirit himſelfe.

II. Point. The parties converted, namely, *Them of the Synagogue of Satan: Such as called themſelves the only true worſhippers of God, and yet indeed and in truth, were no better than the ſlaves of Satan.*

This is to be obſerved: for hereby wee may ſee, that not onely ſinners which commit ſmall ſinnes, are converted unto God, but even grievous and ancient ſinners; ſuch as have long continued the ſlaves of Satan. Chriſt died not for painted ſinners, but for grievous ſinners: and therefore *Paul* chargeth *Timothy* and the Miniſters with them, *to wait for the converſion and repentance of them that were taken in the ſnare of the Devill, and that according to the Devils owne will.* Roman. 1. 18. *Paul* ſpeaketh of ſome Gentiles that *were given up to a reprobate ſenſe*; which was a fearefull caſe: and yet no doubt, many of them were after turned to beleeve the Goſpel: for ſuch are they that are

1 Tim. 2. 26.

taken in the ſnare of the Devill, and yet there is repentance to be waited for of them.

Vſe. This doctrine muſt not be abuſed to liberty in ſinning: for that is the right way to caſt our ſoules into the pit of deſtruction. But yet ſeeing Chriſt will bring home into his kingdome moſt grievous ſinners, we muſt hereby take occaſion not to bee diſcouraged, either by the greatneſſe or multitude of our ſins, from comming unto Chriſt. For marke, Chriſt onely raiſed three that were dead to life: *Iairus* daughter that was new dead, the widdowes ſonne that lay on the hearſe, and *Lazarus* that lay ſtinking in the grave. This is a notable figure of converſion of ſinners: he will not only call to repentance ſmall and young ſinners, but even great and old ſinners that lie rotting and ſtinking in the grave of ſinne, as *Lazarus* did in the grave of death. He came to call ſinners to repentance, and to ſave the loſt ſheepe, which are ready to be devoured by Wolves and wild beaſts. Wee muſt all bleſſe the name of Chriſt for his large mercy, and in time lay hold upon it, and repent.

III. Point. The fruit of their converſion in theſe words, *They ſhall come and worſhip before thy feet, and ſhall know that I have loved thee.* Theſe words may be fitly expounded by another place of Scripture, 1 Corinth. 14. 24, 25. *If all propheſie, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, hee is rebuked of all men, and judged of all, ſo as the ſecrets of his heart are diſcloſed, and hee will fall downe on his face, and worſhip God, and ſay plainely, God is in you indeed.* So that the meaning of theſe words is this; I will cauſe them to come to the congregation of Gods people, and at their feet to fall downe and worſhip the true God.

Here are ſet downe two notable fruits of the converſion of a ſinner. First, concerning God: The ſecond, concerning the Church. The fruit of converſion that reſpecteth God is, *The true worſhip of God*, noted in theſe words; *I will make them come and worſhip*; that is, *In ſpirit and truth, with body and ſoule, to adore the true God.* This truth no man can bring forth til he be converted: *For the wicked and naturall man calls not upon God.* True it is, they will acknowledge there is a God, and that the ſame God is to be worſhipped, and therefore they will come outwardly, and heare the word, and receive the elements of the Sacraments: but the true worſhip of God, is in ſpirit and truth from the heart, which a naturall man cannot performe unto God. This is the fruit of true converſion, which when a man receiveth, he doth heare the word of God with reverence, tremble at Gods judgements, and mingle the Doctrine of the Goſpell with faith in his heart: and in calling upon God he feeles his ſinnes, and therefore by praier doth earneſtly deſire the ſupply of grace and the remiſſion of his ſinnes; having his heart alſo believing that hee ſhall receive mercy: And in thankſgiving his heare is filled with joy, and the grace of thankfulneſſe; ſo as being converted, all his worſhip unto God is in ſpirit and truth.

In the worſhip of theſe Jewes, are noted three properties required in Gods ſervice. First, it muſt bee willing and cheerefull; ſo did theſe Jewes worſhip God: For they are ſaid, not only to worſhip *God*, but *to come and worſhip God*: thus doe all Gods children worſhip him. Iſay 56. 7. Thoſe whom God bringeth to his mountaine, hee maketh *joyfull* in his houſe of prayer: Pſalm. 110. 3. *They ſhall come willingly in the day of aſſemblies.* By this properie, wee may ſee a great number at this day every where come farre ſhort in the true worſhip of God: for moſt men never regard the preaching of the Word, but content themſelves with morning and evening prayer; which they frequent to avoid the penalty of the laws of the Magiſtrate, and the ſhame of the world. But theſe are miſerable worſhippers of God: his worſhip ought to be free and willing.

The ſecond property: the worſhip of God muſt be expreſſed with ſeemely, meet, and convenient geſture. The word tranſlated *Worſhip*, ſignifieth *doing of reverence, with bowing of the body and knees*: And therefore it is not an indifferent thing, but neceſſary, to uſe convenient geſture in Gods worſhip, that thereby the grace and humilitie of the heart may bee expreſſed. The *Angels that ſtand before the throne of God, have two wings to cover their feet, and two to cover their face*: thereby teſtifying their reverence to Gods Majeſtie. In this point alſo many come ſhort; for as the common complaint is, the manner is to lie ſnorting and ſleeping upon mens elbowes at ſermons, and in the time of prayer to ſit unreverently with their heads covered. Theſe things ought not to bee: for God is Lord of body and ſoule, and ought to be worſhipped with both.

The third property: All that will truly worſhip God, muſt firſt be humbled for their ſins, and have the pride of their hearts brought downe, and bee ſtricken with a feare of Gods glorious Majeſtie: So theſe Jewes *did proſtrate their bodies at the feet of the congregation, when they came to worſhip God.* The Jaylor that impriſoned *Saul* and *Silas* over-night, and put their feet in the ſtockes, would then have very little regarded *Pauls* doctrine, being ſo cruell and rigorous to their perſons: Yet when hee was about to have killed himſelfe with his ſword, (ſuppoſing the priſoners had beene gone because he ſaw the doors open) he was glad and joyfull to heare the voyce of *Paul*, who called unto him, that he ſhould do himſelfe no harme, for they were all there: then being humbled by that ſtrange and wonderfull worke of God, hee comes in unto them, humbles himſelfe, and falls downe before them, craving them to tell him what he muſt doe to be ſaved. In like manner, ſo long as men have not their proud hearts beaten

Pſal. 14. 5.

Pſal. 16. 2.

Act. 16. 29.

beaten downe, they will never worſhip God in ſpirit and truth. Would wee therefore know why the moſt part worſhip God formally? ſurely it is becauſe they have not beene humbled with a feare of Gods Majeſty, and a terrour of hell: Neither can it be hoped, that we ſhal ever worſhip God ſincerely, till our hearts bee thus broken within us, and we touched with a feare of Gods judgements. The want hereof is the cauſe why men and women content themſelves with a bare mumbling over of the words of the *Lords prayer*, the *Creed*, and *ten Commandements*, never ſeeking in the ſinceritie of their hearts cheerefully, and willingly, both with ſoule and bodie to doe worſhip unto God.

The ſecond fruit of true converſion concerneth man, and that is, *A reverence of the true worſhippers of God*, noted in theſe words, *Before thy feet.* Theſe Jewes when they were converted, did not thinke themſelves worthy to bee members of this congregation, but ſubmitted themſelves to bee foot-ſtooles unto them. This reverence ſhewes it ſelfe in this one thing which is the ground thereof; namely, a baſe opinion which every true converted perſon hath of himſelfe, by reaſon of his owne unworthineſſe: This was in *Paul*, cauſing him to call himſelfe *the chieffe of all ſinners*. And the ſame ought to bee in every one of us; for this is true grace, and a note of true repentance, when a man or woman can truly abaſe themſelves beneath all Gods people; ſo as if the queſtion were, who is the vileſt perſon in the Church? the conſcience of every man ſhould anſwer, *I my ſelfe*. The proud and Phariſaicall heart is far from true converſion; but the humble heart is pleaſing to God.

And ſhall know that I have loved thee: Theſe words containe a reaſon of the former ſubmiſſe behaviour of the Jewes: for it might be asked, why ſhall theſe Jewes come to ſo low themſelves with Gods people, and bee content to make themſelves foot-ſtooles unto them? The anſwer is, becauſe *Chriſt will make them know, that he hath loved his Church.*

Here marke and ſee the ground of all true reverence, *Gods love and favour.* Sundry perſons both in Church and Common-wealth have reverence due unto them, as Maſters from their ſervants; Parents from their children; and all ſuperiours from their inferiours. Now if theſe men would attaine to true reverence indeed, firſt, they muſt ſeeke to bee in the love and favour of God, and of his children, and ſo they ſhall procure unto themſelves true reverence; for when men ſee their hearts to feare God, then will God turne the hearts of men to reverence them. This ought to bee thought upon of thoſe that bee great in birth and wealth; They muſt not ſtand on theſe things, but looke to the foundation of true reverence; namely, the favour of God, which they muſt ſeeke for: and getting that, God will get them reverence, even of wicked men. The cauſe why many in high place, as Magiſtrates, Maſters, &c. want our reverence, is for that they care not for the favour of God, the ground thereof.

1 Tim. 1. 15.

V. 10. *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, therefore will I deliver thee from the houre of temptation, which will come upon all the world, to trie them that dwell upon the earth.*

Theſe words containe the ſecond promiſe of Chriſt unto this Church, concerning their preſervation in time of moſt bloody perſecution: for this Epiſtle unto this Church, as alſo this booke, was written by *Iohn*, after the aſcenſion of Chriſt in the dayes of *Domitian* the Emperour of Rome; after whom ſucceeded *Trajanus*, who when hee was ſeated in his Empire, raiſed up grievous perſecution againſt Gods Church, in all places of his Dominion, wherein hee put to death innumerable thouſands of Chriſtians for the ſpace of fourteene years. Of this perſecution our Saviour Chriſt foretels this Church, calling it, *The houre of temptation*, and withall he promiſeth to preſerve this Church in the time of this bloody perſecution: adding a reaſon thereof, *Becauſe thou had carefully and ſincerely profeſſed his Goſpell.*

In this promiſe of preſervation, note ſundry points. I. The occaſion thereof, *The keeping of the word of his patience.* II. The thing promiſed, *deliverance under Trajanus.* III. A prediction of this perſecution, *That it ſhall come unto the world for this end*, to try them.

I. Point. *The word of Chriſts patience* ſome expound to be Chriſts Commandement of patience; but that expoſition is too ſtrait; here it ſignifieth the whole Doctrine of ſalvation by Chriſt; which is called the word of patience, firſt, becauſe it teacheth patience: Secondly, becauſe it is the inſtrument of patience; for when a man knowes ſalvation by Chriſt, and alſo believes the ſame to belong to him, that will make him patient in all the miſeries of this life; thirdly, becauſe it cannot be profeſſed and holden unto death without patience; but as it is ſaid of the good ground, *it bringeth forth fruit with patience*; ſo muſt every one doe that profeſſeth this Goſpell.

In this occaſion of Gods promiſe obſerve, that Gods grace well uſed, is rewarded with increaſe. Thoſe which have received but ſmall meaſure of grace at the firſt, by becoming faithfull therein, have received increaſe: which ſerves to move us to bee faithfull in the uſe of thoſe talents which wee have received: For hereby we ſhall receive increaſe, when as thoſe which

Which having received good gifts from God, as knowledge, and such like, because they have not been faithfull in the use thereof, have beene deprived of the same. Wherefore whosoever hath begun to know the will of God, to beleeve, and to repent; let the same parties proceed to use those gifts still to Gods glory, and the good of his Church and people, among whom they live: and they shal see the Lord will double and treble, and greatly increase the same unto them.

A

Againe, note the doctrine of the Gospell is a *Doctrine of Patience*. This sheweth how good and meet it is for every one to learne the Gospell in the dayes of peace: for every one in times of triall, would wish for strength and patience: and we know not how long these daies of peace will last. Againe, each man in his calling is subject to many crosses and miseries; for *in the sweat of our face must wee eat our bread*. And who is free from paines and diseases, yea, who can scape death it selfe? Now in all these and in all other troubles, wee have need of patience. And therefore in the time of health and ease, let us hide in our hearts the seedes of this grace, to wit, the Doctrine of the Gospell, and then in due time wee shall reape the fruit of patience, which will make us contented in all distresses both of life and death. And if we would know why most men are so impatient in afflictions: it is because they have so little knowledge and faith in the Gospell of his grace.

B

Secondly, seeing the Gospell is the word of patience; hereby all persons that looke to bee saved by the Gospell, must learne to put on patience, keeping a moderation in all their thoughts, wils, and affections: for when wee be impatient any way, wee are not sutable to the Doctrine of our salvation.

Thirdly, this word of patience is called Christs (*The word of my patience*) because Christ is the author of it. This is added to beat downe the pride of this Church; for when God doth praise them for their obedience, their hearts might have beene puffed up with pride. But to prevent this evill in this Church, whom he now praised, he calleth it *his patience*, that they might not thinke this good thing was of themselves. And the same consideration must checke the proud thoughts that rise in our harts; namely, to remember that no good thing we have is our owne, but Christs. What hast thou which thou hast not received? why then shouldest thou boast? 1 Cor. 4. 7.

II. Point. The thing promised, is *preservation and deliverance in the bloodie persecution under Trajanus*: In which for the space of foureteene yeares innumerable Christians were put to death; *I will deliver thee from the houre of temptation*.

Here first observe, that God hath appointed certaine set houres and times for the triall of his Church, as well for the gifts of his grace, as of their wickednesse and hypocrisie. Thus hee led the Israelites *forty yeares in the wilderness to try them whether they would obey him: and he sent false Prophets among them, to try whether they would turne from the true God or no*. And as God thus dealeth with his Church, so he hath appointed particular times and houres wherein he will trie particular persons: *God bid Abraham kill his son, and then was his triall*. And *Hezekiah* was left unto himselfe, *That the Lord might see all that was in his heart*. And so for every Christian. God hath a set time of triall, wherein hee will either make manifest his grace, or disclose their hypocrisie.

Deut. 8.

2 Chron. 32.

This point ought to bee well weighed, for herein the Lord dealeth like the worthy founders of great schooles, who have appointed certaine set times of posing, for the triall of their Schollers, to see what every ones proceeding is, that they may be accordingly rewarded. And as it is a shame for one to have beene long in a good Schoole, and to have made no proceedings in learning: so it is for any one, that hath lived long in the Schoole of Christ, and hath not profited in grace. This therefore must teach us these duties: First, to trie our selves, and that straitly concerning our progresse in knowledge, faith, repentance and obedience: for God himselfe wil try us, whose eyes we can never blind, though we may deceive mortalls: wil lay open our hearts, and make known what is in us, whether it be true grace, or false hypocrisie. Let us not cover our selves with figge leaves, for God will strip us naked; but rather let us search our selves, touching our sins and Gods graces: and never rest concerned, till we have found in our soules the good gifts of grace, which will abide his triall.

C

Secondly, hereby wee are admonished, as neere as we can to conform our hearts and lives unto the word and will of God; for he will try us. Wonderfull it is to see how common the reproach of precisenesse is, and if it were not well knowne that the world is full of Atheists, that might discourage many a Christian. But the remembrance of this triall, wherein hypocrisie will vanish as the stubble before the fire, must move us to labour for sincerritie. When we have done our best, we shall be farre short of that wee ought to bee. And therefore through the reproach of the world, let us hold on our good endevour, and labour to have the maine graces of true faith, and a good conscience, with a resolute purpose not to sinne: that so we may stand in the day of triall. But if wee want these and live loosely, wee shall be found like the foolish Virgins, that have onely the blasing lamps of an outward profession, and want the saving oyle of grace, which may make us acceptable unto God at his appearing. We have beene trained up in the schoole of Christ; what a shame will it bee, if when Christ comes to prove us, we be then found barren and void of found grace? *David* bethinking himselfe of this triall of the Lord, doth conforme himselfe

D

unto

unto the will of God: and therefore offereth himselfe unto this triall, saying, *Lord prove me*: meaning in regard of the truth and sincerity of a good conscience, not of the perfectnesse of his owne wayes. And heereunto must we endevour, not suffering any sinne to reigne in us.

A

Psal. 5. 2.

Quest. But how was this promise verified touching their deliverance from persecution, seeing no Church was free from it? For even the Churches of Asia, whereof this in Philadelphia was a principall one, were persecuted by *Trajanus*. *Ans.* This and such like promises of deliverance to Gods children from trials and afflictions, must be understood not simply, but with condition: to wit, so farre forth as they may be hurtfull unto them, and in the least measure hinder their salvation: and indeed they are promises of deliverance, not from persecution and perfecution; not from persecution and temptation it selfe. Psal. 91. 10. The Lord promiseth to him that trusteth in God, *The plague shal not come neere his dwelling*: and yet by experience we know that Gods children in generall plagues are taken away as well as others; and therefore that promise must be understood of deliverance, not from the plague it selfe, but from the hurt thereof; so as it shall not hinder the good or salvation of any in the godly mans house. Wee pray, *Lead us not into temptation*; which we must not understand of freedome from all temptation; for it is the will of God we should be tried: but therein we are taught to pray, that God would not forsake us in our temptations, or give us up wholly to the power of the deuill; but that it may tend to our profit and not to our hurt, as well in respect of grace, as of salvation. And so farre forth was this promise accomplished to this Church.

B

Vse. The due consideration whereof, is most comfortable to Gods Church and people; teaching them not to feare the crosse in any temptation. God will have his Church tried, but the faithfull therein need not to bee dismaied; for God by his promise hath taken away the evill and poyson of all triall and temptations, to them that have care to keepe faith and a good conscience, though they suffer a thousand crosses in this world never so long; yea though they die under the crosse: which may put comfort into the heart of any distressed soule whatsoever, and revive those that are oppressed with temptations.

C

Against, in that this promise is not made simply and absolutely, but with restraint: hereby we are taught, that the petitions of those persons which pray simply and absolutely to be freed from all temptation and adversities, are not according to Gods will and word: For every petition must depend upon some promise of God: but we have no absolute promise of free-dome from all trials and temptations, but only so far forth as they be evill. And therefore in praying against temptation, wee must qualifie our petitions for temporall deliverance, according to the tenor of the promises of Christ: that is, so far forth as may most advance Gods glory, and best further our salvation.

D

Quest. How can this great persecution be called but *an houre of temptation*, seeing it lasted fourteene yeares? *Ans.* In divers respects it may be so called: First, in regard of God, *with whom a thousand yeares are but as one day*: and therefore fourteene yeares with God are but as one houre. Secondly, in regard of that punishment which every man by his sinnes deserveth in hell eternally: Thirdly, in the affection of Gods people which were tried. When *Jacob* served *Laban* seven yeares for *Rachel*, his affection made him thinke *it was but a short time*, *Gen.* 29. 20. So when Gods children suffer for the name and Gospell of Christ; the consideration thereof will make them thinke long afflictions to be but short. This affection caused *Paul* to wish to himselfe eternall perdition for the glory of God, in the salvation of the Jewes, Rom. 9. 3.

2 Pet. 3. 8.

The end of this phrase touching the shortnesse of time, was to comfort this and all other Churches in the time of this grievous persecution: for the consideration of the shortnesse of the time, is a meanes to ease any affliction; and to arme an impatient man with some measure of contentation.

III. Point. The prophecie or prediction of this affliction, is in these words: *Which will come on all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth*. Here Christ foretelleth a thing which was to come, simply by himselfe, and from himselfe: not by the helpe of any cause, or any man or Angell. And hereby he proves himselfe to be true God: for it is a property and privilege of the true God, of himselfe, and by himselfe, to foretell a thing to come, before it can be seene, either in it selfe, or in the causes thereof: no man nor Angell can so absolutely foretell that which is to come; but in their predictions they first see the things present in their causes, unlesse they be revealed unto them from God. But some may here demand, whether Christs foreknowledge and prediction were the cause of this grievous persecution. *Ans.* Not so: for things come not to passe because of Gods foreknowledge thereof, but because they would come to passe, therefore God foresee and foretelleth them: there is a higher cause of all things than presience and prediction, to wit, the good will and pleasure, and decree of God. So Christ is said *to be delivered to be crucified, by the determinate will and counsell of God*: and from the same eternall counsell and this persecution under *Trajan* originally proceed: for the first cause of the event of every thing is Gods decree, either ordaining or disposing the same. It will bee said, if this bee so, then is God the author of sinne. *Ans.* God forbid: For the manner of Gods will and decree is divers: some things hee decreeth to cause

Act. 2. 23.

and

and effect of himselfe, and by himselfe, as all good things: some other things God decreeth to be effected by others, as sin. And so evill things, thoughthey be not according to his revealed will, yet they come in some sort from his will and decree: for if he simply nilled them, they could never be. Beside, in Gods decree are set downe, not onely the things to be done, but also the meanes and circumstances thereof; as wee may see in the persecution, the place and end are plainly noted. This we must remember, and on the contrary, take heed of the opinion of some Protestants, which hold and teach, that sundry things come to passe, God onely foreseeing them, and no way decreeing or willing them: as namely, sinne. But to give unto God a bare foreknowledge, without a decree, is to put upon him an idle providence, which the nature of God will not admit.

The end why Christ alleageth this prophecie, is to expound his former saying: For it might be asked, why doth Christ call this persecution, *the houre of temptation?* Christ answereth, because it will certainly come to try them that dwell on earth. Where we may note what is the propertie of afflictions and persecutions, be they publike or private: namely, they serve to discover the state of mens hearts: either by making manifest their faith, repentance, and feare of God, or by detecting their impatience and hypocrisie.

v. 11. *Behold, I come shortly: hold that which thou hast, that no man take thy crowne.*

Here is Christs commandement to this Church; wherein consider, first, what he enjoyneth them: the the reason thereof. The thing he enjoyneth is this, *hold fast that which thou hast*; that is, hold as it were with both hands that little measure of faith and grace which thou hast received from me, and in no wise part with the same. This commaudement hath been before expounded, Chap. 2. vers. 25.

The reasons to enforce this commandement are two: One going before it in these words; *I come shortly*: that is, either in the generall judgement, or by death unto thee particularly. Before this reason is put a note of attention, *Behold*; to give us to understand, that the speedy comming of Christ unto us, either by death in particular, or in judgement generall, is a matter of great moment, never to be forgotten, but laid up and treasured even in the bottome of our hearts. Herein we must not flatter our selves, and say with the bad servant, Matth. 24. 48. *My master doth foresiow his comming*: for that is the cause of so much wickednesse and impenitencie as is in the world: but rather with an ancient Father, thinke we ever heare the sound of his trumpet.

Before.

This daily persuasion of the speedy comming of Christ, is of notable use. For first, it will daunt the most desperate wretch that is, and make him to tremble in himselfe, & restrain him from many sinnes. And if a man belong to God, and be yet a loose liver; this persuasion will rowze him out of his sins, and make him turne unto God, by using the meanes of repentance: for who would not seeke to save his soule, if he were persuaded that Christ were now comming to give him his finall reward? Secondly, if a man have grace and have repented, and doe beleeve, this persuasion is a notable means to make him constant in every good duty, both of piety to God, and of charity towards his brethren. Thirdly, this serveth to comfort any person that is in affliction; for when he shall beleeve this which Christ hath said, *I come shortly*: he cannot but thinke but his deliverance is at hand: for at his comming hee bringeth perfect redemption to all his Elect.

The second reason is set after the commandement; *that no man may take thy crowne*: that is, *the crowne of thy glory, even everlasting life*. This must not be restrained to the ministery of this Church, taking it onely for the crowne of his ministery, though it be also understood of him; but the same must be referred to the whole Church: as if our Saviour Christ should say, If thou hold not fast thy faith and other graces, thou wilt lose the crowne of glory that is ordained for thee.

Hence some gather, that a man ordained to life may finally perish, because another may have that crowne which was ordained for him. But this is a flat abuse of this and such like texts of Scripture: for the words are not absolute, that a man may lose his crowne, but *conditionall: Hold fast, or else thou shalt perish and lose eternall life, though it be ordained for thee.* Now the use of such speeches, is not to signifie falling from grace, but to shew unto us our owne weaknesse in our selves; that we might acknowledge, that if we were left of God wholly to our selves, wee could not, but perish. Therefore they serve to stir up the childe of God to humble himselfe in the acknowledgement of his owne weaknesse, unto a carefull using of the meanes to come to salvation. Like as a father that takes his child and sets him on a horse, guiding the horse with one hand, and holding him with the other; and then saithto the childe, *take heed least thou fall*: Not meaning thereby that the childe shall fall, but intending to make him sit faster; and let him know, that if he should leave him he would fall.

Secondly, Christ useth such speeches, that thereby he may make his Church persevere in grace unto the end; for all exhortations and threatnings in Gods word, are instruments of perseverance in grace unto Gods children: because as God hath appointed who shall be saved certainly, so hee hath ordained certaine meanes to bring the same to passe: part whereof are

are exhortations and threatnings, which doe not import any finall relapse, but serve as means and causes of perseverance: and for this end doth Christ here bid this Church *hold fast, left another take her crowne.*

In this threatning we may note, that when God withdrawes his grace from one man, or his blessing from any one people, for the abuse thereof, hee hath others ready to bestow the same upon, who will use the same well: when *Iudas* was cut off from the Apostleship, *Matthias* was chosen in his roome: and when the Jewes by infidelity fell away from God, he had the Gentiles in store to ingraffe in their stead: for the name of God is not shortned. When any one people shall abuse his Gospell, he can give it to other that will bring forth the fruit therof, Matth. 21. 43.

Use.

This must be thought upon, for by Gods mercy, we are now Gods people, and doe enjoy his Gospell; but we must not flatter our selves herewith, for if we abuse the same, wee must know, that he hath another Nation in store, whom we now contemne, whither he can send his Gospell, and cause them to bring forth the plentifull fruits thereof. We therefore must embrace and hold fast this blessing of God which now we enjoy, and shew forth the power of obedience, or else God will take it from us. And wee know not how neare this judgement is, seeing other particular judgements have not brought us to repent. And what else meane the rumours of warres? are they not Gods warnings, bidding us hold fast his Gospell, or else it will be taken from us? Although therefore we lose all other things, as honours, riches, lands, or life it selfe; yet let us hold fast our crowne: When the Arke of God is gone, no glory is left, 1 Sam. 4. 21.

v. 12. *Him that overcommeth, will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall goe no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the Citie of my God, which is the new Ierusalem, which commeth downe out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.*

v. 13. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit faith unto the Churches.*

These words are the conclusion of this Epistle, which containeth two parts. First, a promise in the 12. verse. Secondly, a commandement in the 13. For the promise: In it we are to observe two points: The party to whom it is made; and the thing promised. The party is, *he that overcommeth*, of whom wee have spoken before: for this promise hath beene propounded six times, for substance the same, though in other termes. Yet here the very word *Overcommeth*, doth give us to understand, that he doth would have his service pleasing, must dispose himselfe to a battell or combate, (for overcomming presupposeth a fight.) The enemies which he is to fight against, are spirituall, to wit, his owne corrupt nature, the wicked world, and the devill: and in this spirituall combate a man must be a good souldier, before he can be a good Christian: for all these enemies will seeke to draw him backe and hinder him, so soone as he shall any way endevour to please God. Indeed God could have freed his servants from all temptations, but he will not; it is Gods pleasure by temptations to have his servants tryed. Wherein it is manifest, that they are deceived, that imagine the state of a Christian to bee a freedome from all miseries and temptations, or a state of ease, wherein is no strife or trouble to disquiet the minde: nay, it is a souldiers condition, in which hee must wouldst overcome, must wage a perpetuall battell against all his enemies, both within him, and without him, and that unto death.

The thing promised; *Will I make a pillar in the house of my God, and he shall go no more out.* Here Christ doth most notably expresse the state and condition of eternall life. In the description whereof he doth allude to the custome and practice of men, who minding to preserve the memory of their names after their death, used to erect durable pillars of wood or stone, in some towne, valley, or mountaine, with their names engraven or written thereon. This practice is common in humane histories: and *Absolom* wanting issue, *set up a pillar which his owne name spoken it, in the Kings dale, thereby to continue his remembrance with posterity.* The meaning then is, as if Christ had said, others for the continuing of their memory after their death, doe in some speciall place erect some durable pillar of wood or stone, with their owne names written or engraven thereon: But to him that *overcommeth*, I will not set up such a pillar, but even make him a pillar durable and everlasting, whose memory shall always continue.

= Sam. 18. 18.

He addeth further, he shall be a pillar *in the Temple of my God*: as if he should say, Others set up their pillars in valleyes and mountains, or such places where some notable exploit hath been wrought, but the place which I will chuse (saith

(saith Christ) is the Temple of my God; that is, the Church triumphant, which was figured by the Temple in Jerusalem, and by the Tabernacle, as we may see, Hebrewes 9.9. and Revel. 21. 3. for those were two places where Gods people worshipped him; and where God testified his presence in a speciall manner unto his people. And so in the true Temple, the Kingdome of Heaven, Gods Saints and Angels doe worship him immediately: where God is present with them in most glorious and comfortable manner. This then is Christs meaning: he shall not onely be a part of that Temple, but an excellent part, even a pillar in the triumphant Church in heaven. And to shew what is meant by this Temple, Christ calleth it *the Temple of his God*: thereby noting the highest Heaven. B Where observe, that God is called Christs God: which argueth inferiorities, and therefore it must be understood of Christ, as he is man, and as he is Mediator: in which respect he receiveth from his Father all his Offices, and power to execute the same. But as Christ is God, he is equall with his Father, and receiveth nothing from him.

And to instruct us yet further herein, (Christ saith) *Hee shall goe no more out.* When men erected pillars for their memoriall, in processe of time they would weare away: and therefore they caused them to be renewed, or else their remembrance thereby would not continue; but he that is once made a member of the triumphant Church, shall there remaine for ever and ever: C and no time shall ever come, wherein he shall cease to be a pillar in the same.

Further, in the pillars erected by men, their names were written or engraven: And to this practice Christ alludeth, saying, That he that is made a pillar in the triumphant Church, shall have names written on him: these names are three: 1. *The name of my God*; that is, I will make it manifest, that this man is indeed the Sonne of God, and that God is all in all unto him. The second name is, *The name of the Citie of my God*: By Citie, he meaneth not the triumphant Church, but the place where the triumphant Church shall be; to wit, the highest Heaven: as it is taken, Revel. 21. 10. So that hereby Christ would teach us thus much, that he which overcommeth, shall be knowne to be a Citizen of Heaven, and that the privileges of that kingdome belong unto him.

And lest any should doubt, what is meant by the Citie of God, Christ here describeth it: first, by the resemblance thereof, calling it *Ierusalem*: because that Citie, in regard of the Temple especially, was a figure of the Kingdome of Heaven. Secondly, he calleth it *the new Ierusalem*; that is, the place of the triumphant Church, even the highest Heaven: which is not called new in respect of being, for it was from the beginning; but in respect of the manner of revealing and manifesting it: for in the old Testament the new Jerusalem was revealed to the A Jewes onely, and that obscurely: but under the kingdome of Christ, it is more fully revealed not onely to the Jewes, but to all the world. Thirdly, he addeth that it doth now descend out of Heaven from his God. Therein answering to an objection; for it might be said, this Temple of God in Heaven is so farre off, that we cannot ascend or attaine unto it, how then shall wee come thither? Christ answereth, that this new Jerusalem commeth downe from God out of Heaven. *Quest.* How (will some say) can Heaven come out of Heaven? *Ans.* As *Paul* saith of Christ, that he was crucified among the Galatians before their eyes, because his crucifying was so lively represented unto them in the ministerie of the Gospel: So here Heaven may be said to come downe from God out of Heaven, in regard of the preaching of the Gospel, which doth most visibly represent and set open Heaven unto us, that Gods people may enter therein: by the faithfull embracing whereof, we become Citizens with the Saints, and of the houshold of God, Ephes. 2. 19.

The third name which shall be written on him, is *Christs new name*: whereby is not meant any title of Christ, as *Iesus, Mediator, &c.* but the dignitie, power, and glory of Christ. *Quest.* How can that be called new, seeing hee had power and glorie from all eternitie? *Ans.* It is called new, because it is received of Christ, as hee is Mediator, God incarnate; being that which was given to him after his death and passion; standing in his *rising againe, in his ascension, and sitting at the right hand of his Father.* Hereof *Paul* saith, Philip. 2. 9. *God gave him a name above every name*: that is, dignitie, power, and glory: as it is expounded, Hebr. 2. 7. And this glory, power, and dignitie, will Christ give to them that overcome. And thus wee have eternall life set out unto us by the Author of life himselfe. The summe whereof is this; That he which overcommeth shall be made a true member of the triumphant Church, and there continue for ever: and shall have three names written on him; *The name of God*, having this made evident, that he is the childe of God: *The name of Gods Citie*, being made partaker of the privileges of Gods Kingdome of Heaven: *The new name of Christ*, communicating with Christ in his glory and Majestie.

And Christ doth thus describe life eternall unto us for speciall causes; which may be these. 1. To comfort them which have care to keepe faith and a good conscience; and to encourage them against all hinderances and miseries of this life: for what can more hearten a man in good duties, than to set before him his recompence and reward? whereby we learne, that in all miseries and troubles that may befall us for the maintenance of true Religion and good conscience, we must comfort our selves and not faint. And to encourage us herein, we are carefully to propound and set before us the due consideration of life eternall: for this it was that caused

Moses

Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26. Heb. 12. 2.

Moses to despise worldly honour, and to choose affliction with the people of God: We must also looke unto Christ, *Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the crosse, and despised shame.* Souldiers that are uncertaine of any reward are yet content under their Generall to adventure their lives at his command; how much more then ought Christian Souldiers to fight manfully, and stand fast in all troubles for Christs sake, who hath set before them such a great reward? A

Secondly, it is thus described, to bring Gods people to a view and taste of life eternall, that thereby they may the more affect it. Many cast off all care of religion and good conscience, for the present delights of earthly things; they can see no goodnes nor pleasure in spirituall things. The sweetnesse of earthly pleasures putsmens mouthes out of taste, in regard of any rellish of life eternall; but this must not be so with us, we must be of *Moses* minde, who desired to see the land of Canaan when he was not permitted to enter into it; and thereupon God tooke him up into Mount Nebo, and shewed it unto him: So considering Christ hath thus largely described this kingdome unto us, we must labour to comprehend in our understandings, and in our hearts to possesse by faith, something of life eternall, though we cannot as yet fully inherit the joyes and pleasures thereof. B

Thirdly, it is thus described, to teach us to practise *Pauls* rule, 1 Tim. 6. 12. namely, *to passe through all the miseries and troubles of this world, and to take hold of eternall life.* This is a most necessary duty, but yet little practised: men with both hands lay hold upon the things of this world, upon riches and pleasures; but who considereth that is prepared by Christ in heaven for them that overcome? and who laboureth to hold thereon, and to keep that sure, though he lose all things else? C

Lastly, this description of eternall life, here serveth to make the people of God to feare no death, though it were most cruell and terrible; for death is but a strait doore, whereby the child of God must passe to all glory and happinesse, when he shall be made a pillar in Gods temple. Thus much generally of the thing promised: Now follow in particular the parts thereof.

First, whereas Christ promiseth to make them that overcome, pillars and chiefe members in the church triumphant: Hereby we are taught to labour to become true members of Gods Church in this life. For life eternall must begin here, and they that would bee pillars in his church triumphant, must now become members of his Church militant: for not onely Ministers and teachers are pillars in Gods Church; though they be chiefe pillars therein; but every one young and old, man and woman, that is a true beleever. And thus shalt thou become a pillar in Gods Church on earth, by maintaining and upholding the Gospell of Christ: D which thou must doe, partly by teaching those, whom thou art bound to teach within the compasse of thy calling; and partly by good example of life and conversation; and chiefly by a true and bold profession thereof, not onely in time of peace, but even in the greatest trials and afflictions.

Secondly, he addeth; He will make him a pillar *in the Temple of God*: that is, in the Church triumphant: for in the new Testament we have no other temples, but Gods Church triumphant and militant. Hereby then we must learne to renounce that ignorant opinion of the world, who judge every materiall Church to be the Temple of God, and as holy as the Church in Jerusalem was. But the distinction of place, and place in regard of holinesse, which was under the Law, is taken away by Christ. The house is now as holy as the Church; churches indeed must bee regarded and maintained, not for holinesse, but for order sake: now men may every where offer the calves of their lips, and lift up pure hands from a pure heart unto God.

Thirdly, *I will write upon him the name of my God*; that is, whereas God the Father is my God first, I will also communicate unto him the same name of God; and he shall have God even my God, to be his God also. By this it is plaine that no man can have fellowship with God but by Christ: we must not looke to have immediate fellowship with God of our selves, or by any other, but by Christ: God heares not, God helpes not, God saves not, but by Christ; nay, God is no God unto us out of Christ. For first, he is a God unto Christ, and then in him and by him unto us. Therefore if we would call upon God, we must call on him through Christ; if we would give him thanks, it must be in and by Christ: for in him onely are we heard. If we would know God, it must be by Christ, for hee is the very engraven Image of his Father, in whom is manifested the wisdome, justice, and mercie of God, in him dwelleth the fulnesse of the Godhead: and to conceive of God out of Christ, is to make God an Idoll in the braine. Lastly, if wee would receive any temporall blessing from God, it must bee in and by Christ; as meat, drinke, and cloathing. For if we receive them from God out of Christ, we are but usurpers of them, and the use thereof shall turne to our further condemnation.

Fourthly, hee saith, *I will write on him the name of the city of my God*: that is, he shall have the privileges of the kingdome of heaven. We doe all desire and looke for the inheritance of Gods kingdome after this life; therefore here wee must live as citizens of Gods kingdome; conforming our selves to Gods Commandement, abandoning all sinne, and so living in faith and a good conscience unto the end, that after this life we may assuredly persuade our selves, we shall be made partakers of the privileges of this kingdome.

Fifthly it is said, this Citie of God is the *new Ierusalem, which commeth downe out of heaven from God*: that is, by the preaching of the Gospell. Hereby we are taught more carefully to seeke to attaine to the kingdome of God; for behold Gods endlesse mercy herein: our sinnes shut heaven gates against us, but by the bloud of Christ he hath opened them; and by the Ministery of the Gospell he makes heaven come downe unto men; God therefore would not see us damned; hee hath made open a way, even a new and living way, whereby we may come to heaven and escape hell. God hath brought downe heaven among men, we must therefore with the people in *Iohn Baptists* time, *violently enter into this kingdome, and strive to take it by force*, Matth. 11. 12.

Lastly, he saith; *I will write my new name on him*: that is, I will make him partaker of that glory and dignity wherewith I my selfe am glorified since my death and resurrection. Marke this: All that after this life must have Christs new name, must in this life become new creatures: So *Paul* saith, *If any man bee in Christ, he is a new creature*. And againe, *Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creation*. Would wee then partake with Christ in his glory? we must here be partakers of his grace: herein standeth true religion, to become new creatures, and not in bare knowledge and profession. *We must therefore put off the old man which is corrupt with sin, and be renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousnesse and true holinesse*. But if we content our selves with the image of the old man wherein we were borne, we shall never partake of Christs glory: for this new name must be given to the new creature, old man and it cannot agree together.

1 Cor. 5. 17.
Gal. 6. 15.
Eph. 4. 23, 24.

V. 13. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the spirit saith unto the Churches.*

This conclusion hath beene handled in the former Epistles.

V. 14. *And unto the Angell of the Church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith Amen, the faithfull and true witnesse, that beginning of the creatures of God.*

Here followeth the seventh and last Epistle to the Church of the Laodiceans; whereto is prefixed a commandement unto *Iohn*, whereby hee is authorized to pen the same, in these words, *And unto the Angell of the Church of the Laodiceans write*, which hath beene handled before.

The Epistle it selfe hath three parts, a Preface, the substance or matter of the Epistle, and the conclusion. The Preface, in this 14. vers. wherein is set downe, in whose name this Epistle is written; to wit, Christs: who is here described by two arguments: 1. Hee is called, *Amen, which is that faithfull and true witnesse*: II. *He is the beginning of the creatures of God.*

For the first (*Amen*) is an Hebrew Adverb of assevetation, signifying as much as *verily, truly*, or *certainely*. This title is given to Christ, and the reason therof is expressed in the words following, which are a full exposition of the same. *Amen is that faithfull and true witnesse*: So that Christ is called *Amen*, to testifie that he is a *witnesse, a faithfull witnesse, and a true witnesse*: which title was given to Christ in the fifth verse of the first chapter; where it was expounded, and reasons rendred why he is so called. Unto which title is here added, that he is *a true witnesse*; because he speakes the truth, according as every thing is in it selfe, without errour, deceit, or falshood: for that which he receiveth from his Father, is the will of his Father, which is the rule of all truth.

That wee may come to the right use of this Argument; we must first search out the ends, for which Christ is here called *Amen*, that is, a faithfull and true witnesse, which by the contents of the Epistle, we may easily gheste to be these. First, to set forth himselfe unto the Angell of this Church, an example and patterne of fidelity to his Ministery: in the duties whereof he had beene slacke and negligent: Christ therefore by his owne example, would teach him without respect of persons, to instruct the Church of God truly and faithfully. How this duty is to bee performed, hath beene shewed before, Chap. 1. 5. And not onely to the Angell of this Church of Laodicea, but also to all the Church, and to all them that professe themselves to be his members, doth Christ propound himselfe an example of two most worthy vertues: Faith, and Truth. For the first: *Faith* is a vertue, wherby a man makes good all his lawfull words, promises, oathes, leagues, compacts, and bargaines whatsoever, so as his word is as sure as an obligation, as we use to speake. *Truth* is another vertue, whereby a man without fraud, lie, or deceit, speaketh the truth from his heart, that is necessary to be knowne for his owne good, the glory of God, and the good of others.

We must therefore set before our eyes this president of our Saviour Christ: As he is a *witnesse*, yea a *faithfull and true witnesse*, without any faining or falshood, so let us labour to shew our selves faithfull in all lawfull promises, and true in all our speeches; that so by these vertues wee may bee knowne to bee like unto Christ, through our whole lives and conversations.

Secondly,

Secondly, Christ is here called *Amen*, to induce this Church of Laodicea, to apply unto her selfe effectually the Word of God, whether threatnings or promises. This Church had been negligent in the duties of Religion, which came for want of applying Gods Word unto themselves. The right manner of applying Gods word is this: In Gods word we are to consider the Law, and the Gospell. In the Law, there are Commandements and threatnings: now a man must apply to his owne person and life Gods commandements particularly, that thereby he may come to know his particular sinnes: then hee must also apply the threatnings of God unto himselfe, that thereby hee may bee humbled through the sight of his misery, and so made fit and capable of Gods grace. Thus the prodigall sonne applyed the law unto himselfe, when he said, *I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and am no more worthie to be called thy sonne*. So did *Daniel*, and *Ezrah*, by applying the law unto themselves, humble themselves and their people: for this is the way to humble any man, and to make him fit to receive grace: *for the Law is our schoolemaster to bring us to Christ*, Gal. 3. 24. and the want of this speciall application of the Law, was a cause of the dulnesse of the Laodiceans, and is also of our slacknesse in Religion at this day.

Luke 15. 21.
Dan. 9.
Ezr. 9.

Secondly, the Gospell also must be applied: not onely by beleeving it to bee true, as the Papists teach; but also by applying unto our selves particularly the promises of righteousnesse and life everlasting by Christ. According as *Paul* saith, *I desire to win Christ, and to bee found in him, not having my owne righteousnesse which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ. Let us* (saith he) *as many as be perfect, be thus minded*; teaching every one this speciall duty of particular application. For as Saint *Iohn* saith, *hee that by faith* doth not apply the promises of the Gospel particularly to himselfe, *makes God a liar*. And the want of this application is the cause of negligence in Religion, and of so many lukewarme Gospellers as be at this day. For it is not sufficient to know the Gospell to be true, or to be able to teach it unto others, unlesse we can thus apply it to our selves. This then serves to prove that justifying faith must not onely bee a bare assent to the truth of the Gospell, but a speciall faith which doth apply unto a man those promises which are propounded concerning righteousnes, & life everlasting by Christ.

Phil. 3. 8, 9, 10.
1 Ioh. 5. 10.

The second argument and title whereby Christ is described, is this; *That hee is the beginning of the creatures of God*. The meaning whereof is, that Christ is he that is the Creator of all Gods creatures that were created: so it is said, *By him all things were created in heaven and in earth*: and though this be true, yet I doubt not but that Christ is here called *the beginning of the creatures of God*, for a further respect; namely, because he is the beginning of the new creature in regeneration: for this said, *wee are the workmanship of God, created in Christ unto good workes*. So that every regenerate person is a new creature; to which purpose it is said of Christ, *When we shall give his soule an offering for sinne, he shall see his seed, &c.* Because Christ is the root and seed of all that are borne again. How is Christ (will some say) the beginning of a new creature? *Ans.* Two wayes: 1. As hee is the author of regeneration; for he is the cause whereby a man is regenerate, in which respect hee is called *the Father of eternitie*, Isay. 9. 6. And againe he saith; *Behold I and the children whom thou hast given mee*. Secondly, because hee is the matter and root, out of which a new creature doth spring; and so the Church is called *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*: alluding unto *Adam* and *Eve*, who were a type of Christ and his Church. For as *Eve* was taken out of *Adams* side, so the Church and every member thereof sprang of the bloud that issued out of Christs side, which was of infinite merit, being the blood of him that was God.

1 Pet. 1. 12.
Isa. 53. 10.
Isa. 8. 18.
Col. 2. 16.
Eph. 5. 30.

The end why Christ in this Epistle is called the beginning of Gods creatures (as wee see by the contents thereof) is, to meet with this common vice of this Church; that they had more care to seeme to bee religious, than to bee religious indeed: Now Christ would by this his title give them to understand, that their chiefest care must bee, to become new creatures indeed. And no doubt this is the fault of our dayes; our care is lesse for the power of godlinesse, than for the name thereof; wee more respect shew, than substance, and shadow, than truth it selfe. Which ought not to be, for if wee would be in Christ, we must become new creatures. To exercise our selves in the Word, and Sacraments, and Praiers, are good in their kind; but without this new creation, they are not sufficient to salvation.

Secondly, hereby hee would meet with this speciall pride of theirs, whereby they did boast themselves *to bee rich and to want nothing*. But Christ tels them, that there was no dignity in any thing out of this, whereby in Christ they are made new creatures. Wherefore wee must learne by them, not to bee puffed up with outward privileges of nobilitie, wealth, strength, or such like, as many doe: but he that would rejoice, must rejoice in this, that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Further, by calling himselfe *the beginning of the creatures of God*, Christ would teach them and us, that hee doth love his Church, and preserve the same. *Eve* was created by the hand of God, not apart from *Adam*, but of his ribbe, for this end, that he might love and protect her, and that shee might reverence and serve him: Even so every new creature springeth out of Christs hart bloud, which God hath to wrought that wee might know how Christ hath loved

us, and that wee ought to magnifie and honour him: *Adam* was not the author, but the matter onely, whereof *Eve* was made: but Chriſt is both the author, and the matter of our regeneration; wherein appeareth his exceeding love unto us. And looke as the root ſpends it ſelfe for the preſervation of the branches, ſo did Chriſt ſpend his owne bloud for the ſalvation of his Church.

Fourthly, whereas he is called, *The beginning of his generation*; hence we may gather, that the doctrine of the Church of Rome is erroneous, which teach, that a man in his firſt converſion, hath uſe of his naturall free wil, and can diſpoſe himſelfe in the act of his regeneration. But the creature of God cannot diſpoſe himſelfe in his creation; now every man that is regenerate is the *new creature of God*, and therefore hath no power to diſpoſe himſelfe in his new creation.

v. 15. *I know thy workes: thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wereſt cold or hot.*

v. 16. *Therefore becauſe thou art luke-warme, and neither cold nor hot: it will come to paſſe, that I ſhall ſpew thee out of my mouth.*

In theſe words, and ſo forward to the 21. verſe, is contained the ſubſtance or matter of this Epiſtle: and it hath two parts: A diſpraiſe, v. 15, 16, 17. And Counſell, verſ. 18, 19, 20. They are diſpraiſed for two vices: firſt, for luke-warmeneſſe, v. 15, 16. ſecondly, for their pride, verſ. 17.

I know thy workes. This is a generall reproofe, ſignifying thus much: *All thy workes are known unto mee, and I utterly diſlike them.* Then followeth the reaſon of this diſlike, *Thou art neither cold nor hot*: which is a compariſon borrowed from waters, whereof there be three ſorts: hot, cold, and luke-warme. Now hot and cold waters doe not ſo much annoy the ſtomacke, as luke-warme water doth: they are ſometime comfortable to the ſtomacke, but luke-warme water doth diſquiet it, till it be caſt up: and to thoſe three kinds of waters, he compareth three ſorts of men. By *cold water*, he underſtandeth ſuch as are enemies to religion: as at this day are the Jewes and Turkes, and other barbarous people. By *hot water*, he underſtandeth men that are earneſt and zealous of the truth. So that when he ſaith of this Church, *Thou art neither cold nor hot*, his meaning is; thou art neither an open enemy, nor truly zealous of my Goſpell.

A *I would thou wereſt cold or hot*: Chriſt wiſheth not ſimply, that they were enemies unto him; but only in reſpect of that eſtate of *luke-warmneſſe*, in which they were: as if he ſhould ſay, I had rather thou wereſt either cold or hot, than thus luke-warme as thou art. For if wee would underſtand it ſimply, we ſhould make Chriſt to deſire that men ſhould bee his enemies. By *luke-warme men*, he underſtandeth a people, who are in ſhew Gods Church, but in truth want the power of godlineſſe, and the zeale of the ſpirit. *Becauſe thou art ſuch* (ſaith Chriſt to this Church) *therefore I will ſpew thee out of my mouth*: that is, looke as he that hath drunke luke-warme water, cannot abide it on his ſtomacke, but muſt needs ſpew it up againe;

B ſo am I weary of this thy ſecurity, I cannot abide it, and therefore will I caſt thee off from all fellowſhip with me, and make thee which art a Church in ſhew, to be no Church.

Thus we ſee their fault, namely, luke-warmneſſe; the greatneſſe whereof, he aggravats, firſt by comparing it with the extremes, cold & hot, both which he prefereth before it, as may appeare by his wiſh and deſire: And ſecondly, by the puniſhment therof, namely, utter rejection.

Hereby wee muſt examine our ſelves, whether this fault may not juſtly be charged upon us: after due triall, it will appeare, that we are guilty of this ſinne. The which that it may the better appeare, I will note the ſeverall kinds of luke-warme Chriſtians. *Vſe.*

C The firſt luke-warme profeſſor, is the Prieſt; as the tenor of his religion, and the manner of his worſhip of God, doth plainly ſhew: for he doth partſtakes with Chriſt in the matter of ſalvation, affirming that hee receiveth from Chriſt to worke out his owne ſalvation, and ſo aſſumeth part of Chriſts glory to himſelfe.

Secondly, all *time ſervers* are luke-warme Goſpellers; that is, all ſuch as alter their religion with time and ſtate: and of this ſort are the body of our people, who profeſſe themſelves to bee of the ſame religion the Prince is of: which ſheweth evidently what they will doe in time to come, namely, turne with the time as their forefathers have done.

The third ſort, are the followers of *Nicodemus*, who came to Chriſt by night only: that is,

D ſuch as ſay and think that they may go to maſſe with their bodies, if they keep their hearts unto God: theſe halt between two opinions, and neither ſerve God nor *Baal*.

Fourthly, all *Mediators*: ſuch as will make pacification between the religion of the Proteſtant and the Papiſts; ſo holding our religion, as not caring to embrace theirs alſo, becauſe they thinke they differ not in ſubſtance, but in circumſtances onely. Let theſe pretend what they will, they are in heart Laodiceans.

Fifthly, all *Worldlings*, which as God ſaith, Luk. 16. 13. *Serve God & Mammon*, God & the world, by ſetting their heart upon riches. Theſe men abound every where, for though they heare

heare God in the miniſtery of his word, and as it were touch him in the Sacrament, yet their hearts are farre from him, running after their covetouſneſſe, Ezech. 33. 31. and who are ſuch their conſciences will witneſſe: yea, their behaviour proclaims it to the world: for though they will heare the Word, yet their wit and ſtrength is ſpent upon the world, and the things thereof.

Sixthly, thoſe that profeſſe Chriſts religion in outward actions of his worſhip, but yet in their lives give themſelves to the common ſins of the time, ſome to drunkenneſſe, to fornication, to covetouſneſſe, or cruelty: ſome to this ſin, and ſome to that. To this ſort we muſt referre thoſe, that in the word approve religion, and yet their hearts delight is in furniſhing themſelves with the monſtrous, brutiſh, and irreligious formes of ſtrange and forren attire: Theſe ſpend their time and their wit in decking of their bodies, and ſo ſuffer their ſoules to goe to wracke: when as apparell ſhould be an occaſion to put us in minde of a ſhame through ſin: and by modeſt attire, we ſhould expreſſe the vertues of the heart, but theſe hereby profeſſe the vanity of their minde.

Now though we be not intangled with theſe groſſe ſinnes, yet wee cannot excuſe our ſelves from this ſinne of luke-warmeneſſe. For the want of zeale of Gods glory, of love to his truth, of care to obey his commandements, and to keepe good conſcience, the want of hatred of ſinne, what argue all theſe but luke-warmeneſſe? Herein we muſt lay our hand upon our mouth with *Iob*, for we cannot plead with God no nor for this common ſinne. But that we may be out of all doubt, that this ſin of luke-warmneſſe hath infected our congregations as it did the Church of Laodicea, I will make it plaine by the ſignes thereof, which are common amongus, that ſo we may the better know our fearefull eſtate.

The firſt ſigne is, *Negligence in the duties of that true religion which we profeſſe*. This appeareth ſundry waies: for firſt, howſoever we come to the aſſemblies where the Word is preached, yet few doe profit there, by increaſe in the knowledge of that religion which is taught, and in the amendment of life. This may any man ſee to bee true, that hath halfe an eye to looke into the eſtate of our aſſemblies, and mens owne conſciences will herein witneſſe againſt them. Againe, where Gods Word is ordinarily heard, there are very few that ſpend any time in ſearching out, and trying whether the things beſo or not which are taught them. Nay men will not be at coſt to buy a Bible: and if they have one, yet they will not take paines to read the ſame, at leaſt in ſuch a conſtant courſe as they ought to doe. Thirdly, the Lords Sabbath is broken, for though moſt men at ſet times will come into the congregation; yet there is not that priva e ſanctifying of the Sabbath after the congregations are diſſolved, which Gods word

A reqireth. For men bent the themſelves to their owne affaires, and to their own delights; to ſuch ſort that have no care at all of hallowing the Sabbath in any ſort. Now theſe perſons muſt needs want both knowledge, obedience, and all ſound grace, that will not ſeeke a part ſome time, wherein they ſhould imploy themſelves in Gods Word: And by theſe ſignes it is evident, that there is a grievous diſeaſe of negligence in the duties of Religion, that infects our congregations. Now where this negligence is, though coldneſſe be not, there cannot be zeale, and ſo luke-warmeneſſe muſt needs abound.

II. *Signe of luke-warmneſſe.* The Religion of moſt men is this; in the generall calling of a Chriſtian they ſhew religion, but in the aſ-

B faires of their particular callings where is religion? In the Church they are good Chriſtians, but in practice of the duties of their particular callings who ſheweth his religion? For when as men ſhould practiſe their callings, according to Gods Word and true godlineſſe, they follow the deſires of their owne hearts. Hence conſcience is made of lying and oppreſſion: that love and plaine dealing which ought to be between man and man, is wanting: which proveth than plainly to be luke-warme Goſpellers.

III. *Signe.* There bee many that profeſſe themſelves to be luke-warme, neither hot nor cold. For though all generally come to the hearing of the Word, and the receiving of the Sacraments, yet many when they ſee ſome

C make conſcience to become anſwerable in ſome meaſure to the word which they heare, and the Sacraments which they receive, doe take up in their mouthes this ſlander of peecizeneſſe againſt them; mocking them for doing that which in the Word and Sacraments themſelves profeſſe ſhould be done. Theſe men will not be enemies to the Religion of Chriſt; and they profeſſe themſelves not to be zealous, by reproching zeale in others: Therefore they doe more than theſe Laodiceans did, even profeſſe themſelves to be luke-warme. For he that reprocheth another for zeale in religion, brandeth him elſe with this ſinne of luke-warmeneſſe. And who knowes not how many of this ſort are every where? I dare ſay with good conſcience, our congregations generally conſiſt of ſuch. Now

D marke what followeth hereupon.

Firſt, that our common profeſſors of religion are in worſer caſe than heathen men, Jewes and Turkes, that know not Chriſt. This Chriſt teacheth in preferring cold perſons before luke-warme: as if he ſhould ſay; I had rather thou wereſt a Pagan, than a profeſſor without zeale. And S. *Peter* to this purpoſe ſpeaking of ſuch, ſaith; *It had beene better they had never knowne the way of truth, then after they have knowne it, not to obey the Commandements of God.* So that

2 Pet. 2. 21.

unleſſe there be further matter in us than knowledge and bare profeſſion, our caſe is worſe than the caſe of Jewes and Turkes. Religion knowne will not make thee better than them

but it is zeale and obedience that must preferre thee before them.

Secondly, from the consideration of our estate, I gather that we are in danger to be spued out of the mouth of Christ, as luke-warme water out of the stomacke. This is the punishment here threatned, which was written for our instruction, that wee might know where luke-warmenesse takes place, there this punishment will follow. We may flatter our selves as the men in the old world did, and thinke all is well, never regarding till the judgement come: but the truth is, that in regard of this sinne, we are in danger to be cut off from the Church, and from true societie with Christ: God can doe this sundry waies, either by bereaving us of his Gospell, and making us as the heathen: or by sending the enemy among us, to destroy and root us out of this land: and even in our neighbour countries and townes, he sets spectacles before us, that by them we may see how hee can spew us out, and cut us off from being a people. And thus much of the first fault, namely luke-warmenesse.

v. 17. ***For thou sayest, I am rich, and made rich, and have need of nothing: and knowest not how thou art wretched, and miserable, and poore, and blind, and naked.***

Here is the second sinne of this Church, namely, spirituall pride. The words depend upon the former, as a reason thereof: before hee charged them with deadnesse in religion, and here he painteth out the cause thereof: namely, spirituall pride of heart. As if he should say, Thou thinkest thus within thy selfe, *I am rich*, for it is the manner of the Scripture to expresse the thoughts of men by their speeches; because the thoughts of men are as evident to Christ, as any mans speeches can be to another.

Vse. In that Christ doth expresse mens secret thoughts, and propound the same in this book; we may hence gather, that it is a part of Canonicall Scripture: for it is a privilege of the Scriptures to set downe the thoughts of Churches, and of particular men, even as they conceive them. This can no man doe in any booke of his owne devising. And hence we may gather an argument against Atheists, That Scriptures are the Word of God, because they reveale mens secret thoughts.

Now followeth the thought it selfe of the Angell and people of this Church, *I am rich*, that is, I have many excellent gifts and graces of Gods spirit: by this effect he expresseth their spirituall pride in overweening their estate before God. This is a common sinne in the world: and ever hath beene. Christ said, *Hee came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*; By righteous, meaning such as thinke themselves righteous. And the proud Pharisie in his praier, which he conceived in his heart, thought himselfe *farre better than the poore Publican, or other men.* And *Paul* bringeth in the Corinthians thinking proudly of themselves, saying, *We are full, and made rich, &c.* This sinne takes place in the Papists at this day; who perswade themselves, that they can satisfie Gods justice by temporall works, and fulfill the law of God, and merit for themselves, and for others.

Mat. 9. 13.

Luke 18. 9, 10.

1 Cor. 4. 8.

To come to our selves: this same proud thought hath place among us. First, we thinke we are rich, in regard of knowledge: both yong and old scorne to be catechized, because they would not seeme to bee ignorant; some sticke not to professe this pride by bragging thus, that they know as much for substance as any man can teach them, when as indeed they know nothing, but that wich nature will teach a man. I limen plead that they have a most firme faith, so as they never doubted of Gods mercy: which is nothing but the presumption of a proud heart; for true faith is troubled with doubting. Thirdly, men will professe, that they are rich in love, both towards God and their neighbours; when as they love the world and the pleasures thereof, more than Christ; and so have no true love of God in their hearts. III I. (to make more plaine, that this spirituall pride reigns in mens hearts) marke this; let any bodily calamity be made knowne to a man, that is newly befallen him, oh how is he presently perplexed! but let Gods Ministers out of his word make knowne unto him his inward fearefull estate, that by reason of sinne, he is in danger of Gods judgements, and a firebrand of hell, he is not afraid. Worldly newes doth affright men much, when as the threatnings of the word move them nothing. What argueth this, but that their hearts are forestalled with this false conceit, *I am rich*. The drunkard in his drunkennesse, the filthie person in his uncleannesse, and every man in his sin sootheth himselfe with this, *God is mercifull, I am rich, and in his favour he will not condemne mee.* Well, it being thus manifest that spirituall pride is our common sinne; wee must labour to see it in our selves, and use all good meanes that it may be removed. The meanes follow afterwards.

And increased with goods: or, am made rich, so the words are: these words are added onely for amplification, to shew that this Church had not any finall portion, but an exceeding measure of spirituall pride: The doubling of the words, sheweth the strength of this conceit. Whats the cause, that this Church was growne to such an height of pride? *Ans.* It may be it was knowledge, wherewith no doubt the Angell of this Church, and many therein did abound:

1 Cor. 8. 3. bound: now the holy Ghost saith, *That knowledge puffeth up.* This is true in all places: great knowledge, (without special grace) great pride. This is the sinne of the Schooles of learning. Where knowledge abounds, there pride of heart abounds, and men are puffed up according to the measure of their gifts, unlesse by his grace, and the sight of their sinnes, God doe humble them.

And have need of nothing. This is a further sign of their great pride, that they thought they needed not the helpe of any thing, or any person beside themselves: And all such as thinke they have no need of the bloud of Christ for the washing away of their sinnes, doe surfeit and abound with this spirituall pride of heart. This serves further to convince our congregations of this damnable spirituall pride. If any one be sicke in body, he straight sendeth unto the Physitian; but not one of a thousand seeketh to the Minister till the pangs of death draw neere. The soules disease by sinne is not felt; there is no complaint for want of the bloud of Christ. But if we would be emptied of this pride, we must labour to see that we stand in need of Christ, and every drop of his bloud; till such time as we feele that in us, there is no goodnesse in our hearts: We are but the proud Laodiceans, and our case is wretched and damnable.

And knowest not how thou art wretched, and miserable, and poore, and blind, and naked. Christ intending to strike this sinne of pride to the very heart, doth here set downe the true cause thereof; to wit, *Ignorance*: as if he should say, Thou knowest not thine owne naturall estate, as thou art borne of *Adam* out of Christ, and therefore thou art proud, and thy pride maketh thee luke-warme. Then hee sheweth whereof they were ignorant, namely, of their naturall estate.

For the first, Christ making Ignorance the cause of their pride, teacheth us that pride is not the first sinne that ever was in the world, as many both Papists and others have thought. True it is, pride is a great and mother sin, and the cause of many foule iniquities: but yet ignorance is a mother sinne, whereof pride springeth. The cause why any person swels with pride in himselfe, is ignorance of his owne naturall estate. By this then wee are taught to learne to know our owne estate, what wee are by nature in our selves without Christ, for that is the way to pull downe our hearts. For this cause the Prophets of God used to call them, *To a searching of themselves*, Zeph. 2. 1. when they would bring the people to humility and grace; that men seeing their estate by reason of their sinnes to be damnable, might be humbled and caused to forsake themselves, and come unto Christ. And surely till such time as men bee humbled for their sinnes, they will never get found grace, but be as the proud Pharisie, hypocrites and dissemblers, though they have much knowledge. But when a man hath searched his naturall estate, then besides knowledge of himselfe come other inward excellent graces; as humility, the feare of God, and true obedience with good conscience. And therefore first of all, let us labour to be acquainted with our owne estate in our selves, and with our personall sinnes, and with Gods judgements due unto us for them. For this is the ground of true grace. The spots and blemishes of our bodies wee can soone espy, and wipe away: and why should we be lesse carefull of our soules, which be farre better?

That Christ might fully make knowne unto them their ignorance of themselves, it pleaseth him to describe to them their naturall estate, and so proportionally the naturall condition of all Churches, and of all people: which is the state of mans miserie. This he propoundeth two waies: first, generally in these words, *And knowest not how thou art wretched, and miserable*: then by the parts thereof, which be three, *povertie, blindnesse, and nakednesse.*

For the first. The word translated *wretched*, signifieth one subject to calamities, griefes, and in a word to all miseries. And that wee may know who is thus wretched, I will enter into a description of mans miserie: whereof that wee may conceive aright, two things are to be considered: First, the root, and fountaine thereof, for therein we shall best see what misery meaneth. This root is *original sinne*, and it hath two branches: First, that particular transgression whereby *Adam* sinned, which was not only the sinne of his person, but also of the whole nature of man, spreading it selfe to all his posterity, Christ excepted. Secondly, the defacing of Gods image, and the corrupting of mans heart, which by reason of the fall of our first Parents, hath in it a proneness unto all sinne, both in will, affection, and in all the faculties of the soule. In these two stands original sin; and in them, and with them we must conceive of mans misery, as in the root thereof. Secondly, wee must conceive of mans misery under the forme of punishment, having relation to the first sinne of *Adam*, and to the corruption of each mans nature thereby received. The punishment of sinne must be considered finally waies, according to the divers kinde of mans being: either in this world, or after. For it is either in this life, or at the end of this life, or after this life. And so accordingly is misery to be considered.

Now of the punishments in this life, some concerne the whole man, some the parts of man, some his estate. Punishments concerning the whole man, be of two sorts: The first, is subjection to the wrath of God, whereby a man since *Adams* fall is made the childe of wrath: a misery of all miseries, and yet the more grievous, because without some grace, a man cannot discerne and see the same. The second is *a bondage under the Devill*, whereby a man in his mind, will, and affections, is subject every way to the will of the devill; which though we cannot

not deſcribe, yet we may thus conceive of it. The regenerate man ſaith, *I ſinne, but I would not ſinne:* The naturall man ſaith, *I ſinne, and I will ſinne:* It is my nature to ſinne, and my delight; and this was the ſtate of this Church.

Puniſhments concerning the parts of man, be either miſeries of his ſoule, or of his body: the miſeries of his ſoule be theſe. Firſt, in the underſtanding, ignorance of Gods will: and in ſundry, madneſs, and fooliſhneſs: and in all men, paine and difficulty, both to learne and remember whatſoever is good: which was not in man by creation. In the conſcience alſo, be accuſations, ſecret feares, and terrours. In the will, is rebellion to Gods will. In all affections, perverſneſſe. All which are miſeries of the ſoule.

The body alſo hath theſe miſeries. I. It is ſubject to all infirmities, ſicknesſes, diſeaſes, and aches; which we ſo many, as all the books of Phyſitians neither do nor can record the ſame. II. Mans body is mortall, and ſubject to temporall death, which no man can poſſibly avoid or prevent by all the arts and skill in the world.

Puniſhments of mans eſtate, concerne either his goods, or calling. In goods there be theſe miſeries; want of things neceſſary: for by reaſon of ſinne it is a puniſhment, and in it owne nature a curſe: and all the hurts that come by the creatures, for their enmity towards man, and toward one another; as alſo their ſubjection to vanity; all theſe be miſeries and the puniſhments of mans ſinne. In mans calling there is miſery: for therein is man ſubject to trouble, to loſſes, and ſorrow: which come as a puniſhment of mans firſt ſinne. And all theſe bee miſeries of man in this life.

At the end of this life, comes *bodily death*, the ſeparation of ſoule and body aſunder; which in it ſelfe is a moſt fearfull curſe, for ſo, it is the very gate of hell.

But after this life, is the accompliſhment of all miſeries, and that is *eternall deſtruction and condemnation in hell fire* which to be the end of all miſeries, appeares by this, becauſe it is a ſeparation of mans perſon from the ſociette and preſence of God; and an enduring of Gods wrath in the whole perſon, even in the place of the devill and damnable ſoules, and that not for a time, but for ever and ever eternally. And thus we ſee what puniſhment is, and anſwerably what miſery is: whereby we may ſee what it is to be *wretched*, namely, in a word *to be ſubject to all miſeries, whether we conſider them in the root thereof, originall ſinne; or under the forme of puniſhment in this life, in the whole perſon and in ſoule and body ſeverally, in goods and calling, at the end of this life, and in the world to come.*

The proper end that moves Chriſt to ſay to this Church, *ſhe know not that ſhe was wretched*, is this; to teach this Church, and in them us, and all Churches to learne to know their owne miſeries, to feele the ſame, and to be touched in conſcience for them. We therefore muſt learne not to flatter our ſelves with hope of our good

A ſtate: but labour to ſee our miſery both in ſin, and the puniſhment thereof: And ſeeing it, ſtrive to be touched with it, that we may cry with the Jewes, *What ſhall we doe to be ſaved?* Act. 2. 37. for till ſuch time as this in ſome meaſure bee wrought in us, we ſhall be but luke-warm profeſſors, having a ſhew of godlineſſe, but wanting the power thereof. The true ſight of our miſery is the gift and grace of God, but yet we muſt uſe all good meanes, that we may come to ſee the ſame, & to be touched with it, that ſo we may have hearts herby fit to receive the goſpel, which containes the remedy of this our miſery.

And *miſerable*; that is, *worthy to be pitied*: this is added, not to ſet downe another thing, B but to expreſſe the greatneſſe of their miſerie: as if he ſhould ſay, Thy miſery is not ſmall, but ſo great and ſo grievous, as indeed thou art in that regard to be pitied of all men.

Hence we learne, that we muſt not deſpiſe parties miſerable by reaſon of their ſinnes, or ſcorne and contemne them; but contrariwiſe lament and pittie them. When *David* ſaw men ſinne, and ſo pull heapes of miſery upon them, *he ſhed rivers of teares.* The Lord makes it a good mans property *to mourne for the abominations of the people.* *Jeremie* for the ſinnes of the people *wiſhed his head were full of water.* And juſt *Lot* grieved *his righteous heart for the abominations of Sodome.* It was the fault of the Corinthians, which *Paul* reproveth, that when C the inceſtuous man had ſinned that grievous ſinne, *they were not humbled, but puffed with contempt againſt the partie.* And it is a fault in ſundry men at this day, that they are not humbled in themſelves when they ſee other men ſinne. We muſt not doe ſo, but ſhew the grace we have above others, in being grieved for the miſeries which men without grace by their ſins pull daily upon them. Thus much of their miſerie in generall.

The parts of their miſery are three, which Chriſt noteth particularly, that if it were poſſible, he might cauſe this Church to lay aſide this damnable pride; for theſe in all men are maine miſeries. The firſt is poverty: *And poore*; that is properly one that hath not a rag to his back, D nor bread to his mouth, unleſſe hee begge the ſame of others. But here it is taken for one that is ſpiritually poore: which poverty wee ſhall better conceive, if we doe underſtand what be true ſpirituall riches. True riches be Gods grace and favour in Chriſt: as the pardon of ſinne, and life everlaſting. The poore man therefore is he, that wanteth Gods favour for the remiſſion of his ſins, and the gift of eternall life: and hath in him no good thing that is acceptable to God, but in regard of his ſoule, is as filly and poore as any beggar in regard of his body.

The end why Chriſt calleth this church poor, is to beat downe the proud conceit of her own good eſtate, and to cauſe her to feele her ſpirituall povery, and to become poore in ſpirit. And we in them are likewiſe taught to labour

to

to feele our owne povertie, how by nature there A is no goodneſſe in us: but we are utterly deſtitute of the grace and favour of God, that ſo we may goe out of our ſelves, and in regard of our ſelves even deſpaire of our ſalvation: for till this poverty of ſpirit be wrought in us, we may make a ſhew in profeſſion, heare the word, and receive the Sacraments, but we ſhall never have found grace. And bleſſed were our eſtate, if we could lay aſide that deviliſh pride, which puffeth up our hearts, and become poore in ſpirit; then were wee in the right way to receive the Goſpel, and the graces thereof: but till we be beggers in our ſelves, we never begin to be rich in Chriſt.

How can Chriſt truly charge this Church with poverty; for the Laodiceans were a rich people, and had great ſtore of wealth? *Anſ.* True it is, they were rich in wealth, as hiſtories ſhew, and yet poore to God. For all honour and wealth in the world is nothing without the grace and favour of God in Chriſt. *Paul* ſaith, *Wee are compleat in Chriſt*: forth of him therefore we have nothing. To the Corinthians Col. 2. 10. he ſaith, *All things are yours, and you are Chriſts,* 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. *and Chriſt is Gods.* But nothing is ours till we have Chriſt, and Chriſt us.

Vſe. As it was with this Church, ſo it is with all other. Every perſon and all people are but poor and beggerly, if they want Chriſt: and therefore if God have given any man riches and wealth, he muſt lay this good foundation; uſe them as helpes to further his ſalvation: for by them he may attaine to the meanes of ſalvation, and alſo ſhew forth the fruits of faith. But they that have wealth and uſe it otherwiſe, ſhall finde it turne to their deeper condemnation.

The ſecond part of their *miſery*, is *blindneſſe*. *Queſt.* How can they be ſaid to be blind; for they had a learned teacher no doubt, that both was able and did teach the will of God; and the people likewiſe knew the points of religion, and beleeved the Goſpell? *Anſ.* They had knowledge indeed; but yet they were blind: firſt, becauſe the knew not their owne eſtate. If a man had all skill in all arts and ſciences, and great knowledge in the word: yet if he know not himſelfe in ſome meaſure, he is but a blind man. Secondly, becauſe they did not know God in Chriſt: They knew no doubt, that there was a God, and that Chriſt was a Saviour, but they could not apply it to themſelves, to be able to ſay, God is my God, Chriſt is my Redeemer, & the holy Ghoſt my ſanctifier. Thirdly, becauſe they could not diſcerne of things that did differ; as betweene good and evill, betweene evill and evill, betweene temporall things and eternall bleſſings: This ſpirituall diſcerning, is a gift of Gods grace.

In that Chriſt ſaith, *They were blind*, though they had knowledge: we may learne, that all knowledge is but meer ignorance before God, to thoſe perſons that know not themſelves, and

B God to be their God in Chriſt. For want hereof Chriſt calleth the Angell of this Church *blind*, though otherwiſe he were a very learned man. Which muſt teach us not to reſt content with any humane learning, no nor with the literall knowledge of the Goſpell; but we muſt labour further to know our ſelves, and to know God in Chriſt, and Chriſt our Redeemer: and bee able in ſome good ſort to diſcerne betweene things that differ. *David* a moſt worthy Prophet intituleth the 32. Pſal. *his learning.* What learning ſheweth he there? *Anſ.* Surely nothing but the knowledge of the pardon of his ſinnes. And indeed that is it which ſeaſoneth all our learning: and therefore above all things we muſt labour for it.

The third part of their miſery, is *Nakednes.* Nakedneſſe is twofold; to the eye of man, and to God. Nakedneſſe to the eye of man is bodily, and that is alſo twofold; either that which was before the fall in the bodies of our firſt parents, whereby their bodies being uncovered, appeared very glorious without ſhame: or that which is after the fall, whereby the body being naked and bare, appeares full of ſhame; which is ſo exceſſive by reaſon of mans ſinne, that if neceſſity would permit, the whole body both face and hands ſhould be covered. Nakedneſſe before God, is when any man lies before God a deformed ſinner. In this caſe *Moſes* ſaw the Iſraelites, *when they had made a golden* Exod. 32. 25. *calfe*: for thereby they deprived themſelves of Gods Image, and were guilty of that moſt C grievous ſinne of Idolatry. This is a miſery of all miſeries, and the greateſt nakedneſſe that can be: and this is the nakedneſſe of this church in this place. *Quæſt.* Why doth Chriſt call them naked? *Anſ.* To move them, and in their perſons all profeſſors to have care not to flie from God, *and to hide their ſinnes with Adam*, but to Job. 31. 33. bring themſelves into his preſence and there lay open their ſinnes, that they may obtaine a covering for them by Chriſt. It is the practice of the world, to hide their ſinnes from men, but never to care how bare and naked they bee in the ſight of God, who yet ſeeth them all as plainly, as wee the ſores of any poore lazer that ſhewes the ſame to move our pittie towards him; which if we could ſee, we ſhould D be aſhamed not to ſeeke to cover our ſins before God. Wee muſt therefore labour in our owne conſciences to ſee the nakedneſſe of our ſoules before God: and ſeeke to be touched and humbled for the ſame, that ſo we may earneſtly intreat for the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt, to be a covering to cloath our ſoules. This was *Davids* practice: for when hee ſaith, *Bleſſed are they whoſe ſinnes are covered.* Pſal. 32. 1. hee would give us to underſtand, that he uſed to uncover his ſinnes, and lay them open before God; that at his hands in Chriſt, he might get a cover for them.

Theſe are the particular parts of a mans miſery, which every man muſt labour to feele in him.

himselfe, if he would be partaker of the righteousnesse of Christ: for thus hath Christ both in generall and in particular, set downe the misery of this Church; that hee might prepare them to receive the blessed comfort which followeth in the next verse.

v. 18. *I counsell thee to buy of mee gold tryed by the fire, that thou mayest be made rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be cloathed, and that thy filthie nakednes do not appeare: and annoynt thy eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

Here beginneth the counsell of Christ unto this Church. Wherein, first he propoundeth a notable remedy for her misery before noted. In this remedy, we are to consider three things: the manner of prescribing it: the remedy it selfe; and the meanes whereby it is obtained.

For the first, this remedy is propounded; not in any sharpe commandement, but a milde and gentle advice, *I counsell thee*. And herein Christ doth take to himselfe the office of the Counseller of his Church. For as God hath his Church and people, so he hath his Counsellers, by whom in mercy he hath revealed his counsell unto his Church. The principall Counseller is Christ; so he saith in the person of Wisdome, Prov. 8. 14. *Counsell is mine*. And *Isay* saith: *To us a Childe is borne, and hee shall call his name, Wonderfull, COVNSELLER, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*: yea, hee is both King and Counseller to his Church. This office Christ challengeth to himselfe, for these causes: first, because he adviseth his Church, touching the way whereby they must escape everlasting death, and come to eternall life. Secondly, because he teacheth them how they may practise every businesse, so as it may please God. Thirdly, because he teacheth them how they may in grievous dangers and distresses finde a good issue, or else be able with patience to beare them. These things he worketh daily in his Church, not by extraordinary meanes, but ordinarily by his word and spirit; and therfore may justly challenge this honour, to be called *the Counseller of the Church*.

Isa. 9. 6.

Vse. From this office of Christ, wee learne two things: First, to doe all the honour and reverence wee can unto his Majesthe; for hee is our professed Counseller, who imployes himselfe for the good of his Church. Counsellers of the State and of the Law, are highly honoured and respected of all sorts, even for their counsell in worldly matters, though often it failes: how

A much more ought wee to honour Christ our heavenly Counseller, whose counsell leadeth unto glory, and is stable and sure for ever. Looke how much his counsell excelleth theirs, so much ought he to be honoured above them all. Secondly, in all distresses and grievous temptations, and dangers either of soule or body, wee must take counsell and advice from Christ Jesus: for to this end doth hee reveale himselfe to be a counseller, that men in distresse comming to him, by his advice might be comforted and eased. When *Moab*, *Ammon*, and *Mount Seir* banded themselves against *Iuda*, the people were in great distresse and danger; but marke what good king *Iehosiphat* did, he betooke himselfe to the Lord his counseller, B saying, *Lord we know not what to doe, but our eyes are towards thee*, 2 Chron. 20. 12. that is, direct thou us in this danger, for of our selves wee know not how to escape. This practice ought to be followed of all men, especially in time of any danger, such as these dayes are by reason of time. The counsell of Wizzards, Sorcerers, and Astrologians, ought not to be sought after; but by prayer we ought to humble our selves, and call only and continually on this our only true Counseller.

II. Point. The remedy it selfe: which hath relation to the former Verse, for there hee sets downe the misery of his Church in three parts; which were all great miseries. And here he so propoundeth his remedy, that it is answerable C to their miseries in the severall parts thereof. For first, here is gold to make them *rich*, answerable to their poverty; Secondly, *rayment* to hide their *nakednesse*; Thirdly, *oynment* to take away their *blindnesse*.

For the first, by *gold*, according to the Analogie of the Scripture, we are to understand the *graces of Gods spirit*: as *true faith, repentance, the feare of God, love of God*, and *the true love of man*: 1 Pet. 1. 7. *Faith is compared to gold in the tryall thereof*: and so may all other gifts of the spirit be hereby understood. Secondly, by *gold*, we are to understand *Christs merits*, yea, *Christ himselfe*, as the fountaine of all grace.

This *gold* is further said to be *tryed by the fire*: that is, most pure and precious *gold*, purged D from all drosse, as fine as can be made by the art of man. This is added to expresse the property of Gods graces and gifts, namely, that they are more precious unto God than *gold*; yea, than *gold tryed by the fire*, as *Peter* saith.

Vse. By this every person is taught, how to beautifie himselfe both in soule and body: It is the common blind opinion of the world, that forren attire and rich Jewels doe adorne the body; and indeed in some cases the body may be adorned with pearles and Jewels: but the right way to adorne any person indeed is, to furnish the soule with these graces of the spirit, which unto God be more precious than fine gold. Our bodies and soules ought to bee the dwelling places of the *Holy Ghost*; and therefore

fore we must adorne them, and make them fit for so worthy a Guest: which must be done by the good grace of the spirit, and not by strange and forren attyre, which no good man could ever abide.

Secondly, these graces have a further effect than to beautifie; and that is, to *make rich*. Here then see the common folly, yea the spiritual madnesse of men in this world; who spend all their time, wit, and strength, to furnish their houses with treasure, and to enrich their bodies, and in the meane time leave their soules ungarnished. What a madnesse is this, that men should neglect the true riches, and follow after that which is nothing else but counterfeit copper? Seeing therefore Gods graces be the true treasure which fadeth not, let us seeke after them, as Wisdome counselleth: Pro. 8. 10, 11. *Receive mine instruction, and not silver: and knowledge, rather than fine gold; For wisdome is better than precious stones*. The second part of this remedie is, *a white garment*; that is, *Christ himselfe, and his righteousnesse imputed*. So *Paul* saith, *All that are Baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*; There Christ is made a garment, whom every one that beleeveth in him, doth put on. Against the fruits of the spirit are a garment; and therefore we are commanded to *put on tender mercie, kindnesse, humblenesse of minde, meeknesse, and long suffering*. Further, *Christ* he with the end of this garment; namely, to cover *the nakednesse of our soules, lest the filthinesse thereof which we by our sinnes have brought upon us, doe appeare*. The third part of this remedy is, *annoynting with eye salve*: where, by *eye salve*, we must understand the *spirit of Illumination and knowledge, wrought in the minde by the holy Ghost, whereby men know themselves and their estate*: for as eye-salve sharpens the eyes and cleares the sight, where it was by some occasion dimmed, so doth Christ by the Illumination of the spirit, make a man know God in *Christ*, and to discerne betweene good and evill, and betweene things temporall, and blessings eternall.

Col. 3. 17.

Col. 3. 12.

Thus we have the meaning of the words: whereby we may see, that by all these three, we can understand nothing else but *Christ* himselfe and his merits. Now one and the same thing in *Christ*, is signified by divers termes, to shew that there is in *Christ* the fulnesse of all grace, and plentiful redempsion; yea, store of supplies for all our wants. The *Laodiceans* were poore, but *Christ* was their riches; they are naked, but *Christ* was their garment: and lastly, they were blind, but *Christ* was their eye-salve. So that what wants soever be in us, there is a store of supply thereof in *Christ*. This must the more diligently be marked, because the Papists make *Christ* but halfe a Saviour, in putting our merit unto his: and so disgrace him in his glorious worke, wherein he is a most absolute Saviour and Redeemer.

III. Point. The meanes whereby these wor-

A thy gift of God may be gotten, is by buying and bargaining: to *Christ* saith, *I counsell thee to buy of me*. Where he alludes to the outward state of this City, for it was rich, and also given to much trafficke, as Histories record: and therfore he speakes to them in their owne kinde, as if he should say; You are a people exercised in much trafficke, and delighted with nothing more than buying and selling: well, I have wares that will serve your turne; as *gold, garments, and oyle*, therefore come *and buy of me*. These words must not be understood properly, for so we can buy nothing of *Christ*; because there is nothing that is good in any, but it proceedeth from the free gift of God in *Christ*. This is onely spoken by way of resemblance to B buying and selling; which stands in these points which are the principall things in bargaining. First, a man feeleth his want, and desires to have it supplyed; and therefore goes to the place where such things are to be sold. Secondly, hee seeth the thing, and he liketh it. Thirdly, he prizeth and valueth it. Fourthly, he maketh exchange for it, by money or by money worth. Fifthly, if it be a great summe, he giveth earnest. Sinnes in getting of *Christ* there is a kind of resemblance to all these. First, a man must feele himselfe to stand in need of *Christ* and his merits; because men see want of bread, meat, and drinke in their houses, therefore doe they goe to buy the same. Now looke how sensibly any man feeles C these worldly wants; so evidently should we feele our want of *Christ*, and his merits. For this is the first beginning that causeth us to seeke to receive *Christ Iesus*. Secondly, feeling our wants, wee should hunger and long after *Christ*, that we might be made partakers of him and the vertue of his merits: as a man that is to buy a thing doth take liking thereof, which doth stir up a desire in him to buy; so must we labour to have a liking of *Christ*, which will move us to seeke unto him. Isay 55. 1. *Hoe, all they that thirst, come and buy*: to that none makes this bargaine, but he that thirsts. Thirdly, wee must prize and value *Christ* above all things in this world, even at so high a rate that we account all things in regard of him to *be but losse; yea, even drosse and dung*, as *Paul* did. Phil. 3. 8. Fourthly, we must make exchange. How? we D can give *Christ* nothing but his owne. *Answe.* Properly there is no exchange, and therefore he saith, Isay 55. 1. *Hoe, come and buy without money, for nothing*. *Simon Magus* is heavily checked and accursed, for offering to buy the gifts of the holy Ghost, Act. 8. 10. And yet there is an exchange to be made. *We must give them our sinnes, and receive his righteousnesse*; and therefore he is said, 2 Cor. 5. 21. *To bee made sinne for us, that wee should be made the righteousnesse of God in him*. See a most blessed exchange; for our sinne and shame, wee receive his blessed grace and righteousnesse. *Quest.* How is this exchange made? *Answ.* In the practice of faith and repentance: for when we humble our selves

and

and confesse our sinnes, praying earnestly for remission, and beleeve our reconciliation by Christ, then is he our righteousnesse. Lastly, though we can give nothing unto Christ, yet he giveth unto us an earnest in this bargaine; to wit, some portion of Gods Spirit, and some Eph. 1.13. 2 Cor. 1.22. small measure of his graces: as grace to bewaile our sins, to humble our selves, and to pray for the pardon of them, with purpose not to sinne againe: these be the earnests of this bargaine. And thus is heaven bought and sold betweene Christ and us; the receiving of his true saving graces, be they never so small, even as a penie is a sufficient earnest for a bargaine of an hundred pounds.

Here wee see wee are commanded to buy Christ, and to make a bargaine with him, wherby we may have right to him and his merits. But how goes the case with the world? surely many come where this bargaine is offered, but few there be that buy. Wee are like to Passengers on the sea, who see many goodly buildings, sumptuous cities, and fruitfull Islands, but they make no purchase of them; they onely praise them, as they behold them, and so passe by: so we come and heare the doctrine of Christ and his merits, and approve of the same: but where is the partie that maketh this bargaine? Come to particular points, and it will appeare, that few bargaine for Christ. For who feeles his owne miserie as he ought? Who perceives himselfe to stand in such need of Christ as he doth? worldly wants we feele, and are affected with them, but in regard of spirituall wants, we are senselesse, and yet till we truly feele our misery, wee never come to make this bargaine with Christ. Againe, come to our desire and hungring after Christ: In bodily thirst and hunger, we can say; *I hunger, or I thirst*: but who can say, I hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousnesse? Alas, our hearts are full, wee feele no want: may they are dead, we feare none evill; and as for our valuing and esteeming of Christ, we are plaine *Gadarens*, and *Esanes*; we preferre the world and the basest things therein before Christ. And for the exchange; we are loth to part with our sinnes, and to put on Christs righteousnesse. Which plainly shewes we make no exchange; and though we be willing to lay heapes of sinnes on Christ, yet who takes Christs righteousnesse and declares the same by the fruits thereof? And lastly, for the earnest of the spirit, though some there be that have received it, yet the body of our people, as their conscience can tell them, have not received it: for they want knowledge, faith, and other graces.

By all these, it is more than manifest, that this bargaine is not made: and yet true it is, that for worldly and base bargaines he must rise early that must goe beyond them. But what a shame is this, that we should be so expert in vile earthly things, and have no regard of this excellent and heavenly bargaine? Wherfore seeing Christ

A calleth us hereunto, let us make this one bargaine with him, and that presently; which we shall testifie by doing the five former duties: let us never be at rest, till we may say each one for himselfe, I have bargained with Christ, and received his earnest. Yea, our care should bee, that this bargaine be made not with us alone, but with our children. Many are forward to bringup their children in good trades, wherein they may buy and sell for their living; wherein they doe well, but withall they ought to be as carefull to teach them to make this bargaine with Christ, and then they doe farre better. For this is the cheapest and the chiefest merchandise that ever was set to sale, which wee may buy without money, and yet it wil make us rich for ever. Many labour in trafficke and take great paines, and yet often lose thereby: but make this bargaine once, and then thou shalt never lose it, nor any thing thereby, but continue for ever rich in God.

B

V. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: bee zealous therefore, and amend.*

Because our Saviour Christ hath so sharply rebuked this Church, they might thereby take occasion to distrust, and despaire of his favour and mercie; here therefore it pleaseth him, to take away all occasion of doubting, after this sort: *If I use to rebuke and chasten all those whom I love, then you are not to despaire of my mercie, by reason of my sharpe reproofe, whereby I have threatened to spew you out of my mouth for your sin of luke-warmenesse. But thus I use to deale with all those whom I love; and therefore in this regard you need not to doubt of my love and favour.*

C

The meaning. *As many as I love*; Christ loves the creatures two waies; as he is *Creator*, and as he is *Redeemer*. As he is the *Creator*, he loves all his creatures, with a common and generall love, whether they be living or dead, reasonable or unreasonable. As hee is *Redeemer*, he loves his creatures with a special and a peculiar love; which is not common to all, but proper to that part of mankind, which is chosen to salvation before the world was. And of this peculiar love he speaketh here, *I rebuke*: The word in the originall which is translated *Rebuke*, is more significant than can fitly be expressed in any one English word; thus much is meant thereby, as if Christ had said; First, *I will convince them of their sinnes, and after reprove, admonish, and checke them for the same. And chasten*: This must be understood of a kind of correction, which a father useth of his childe, called *nurturing*: which is correction to breake the childe of his fault and bad manners, and to teach him his dutie. This then is the meaning: All those whom I beare speciall favour unto, doe I convince of their particular faults, and

D

and then checke and reprove them and nurture them, as a Father doth his childe: to make them leave their particular vices, and to walke in obedience. And to assure us that this is the true meaning, read *Prov.* 3.12. whence the words are taken, and Heb. 12.5. where they are more fully explaned.

Here then Christ sets downe his ordinarie dealing with them, whom he taketh and chusetth to be his Disciples and members; namely, he convinceth them of their faults; he reproveth and chasteneth them for this verie end, to breake them of their sinnes, and to bring them to reformation. And this dealing of Christ belongeth to everie servant and member of Christ without exception; yea, Christ layeth rebukes and chastisements on all his children, and that in divers measure, according to the nature of their sinnes, and the disposition of the parties. Such as are hardly broken of their sinnes, hee layeth on them more heavie judgements and chastisements, that they may bee brought to deeper humiliation, and so to true repentance. And therefore everie one that would be a Disciple and member of Christ, must looke to goe under his correction, and his sharpe and severe rebukes; according as they are in heart disposed unto sinnes either more or lesse; *He must passe under the rod, that would come into the bond of the Covenant*, Ezech. 20.37.

The use of this doctrine is twofold, set downe, Prov. 3.12. The first is thus; *My sonne, despise not the correction of the Lord: for the Lord correcteth whom hee loveth, his chastisements are tokens of his love*: that is, whosoever the Lord either in the ministerie of his Word reproveth thy sinnes, or by affliction chasteneth thee, despise it not, neither set light by it, but make good use thereof unto thine owne soule. The second use is, *Faint not when thou art corrected*: that is, let not the greatnesse of it daunt thee, but arme thy selfe with patience; because hee useth to correct all those whom he doth love, making his chastisements tokens of his love.

Secondly, Christ here setteth before all Governours, an example to follow, especially to fathers and masters: his example is this: *On everie childe that he loveth, he layeth corrections, for this end, to breake them of their sinnes*: So answerably, Governours must their tokens of love towards those that are under them, by due reproofe and correction, that so they may be broken of their misdemeanour, and brought unto obedience to God. It were to be wished, that both Parents and Masters would follow Christ in this example, and to seek the reformation of those that be under them: but more lamentable is the case; Parents and Masters doe think it sufficient for them, if they provide for their children and servants, food, and rayment, and necessaries for the bodie: and so altogether neglect the good of their soules, which is the cause of many sinnes, and so of many judgements, both which ought to move them to put in practice this duie.

A

Thirdly, the verie order of Christs words doth minister unto us necessarie instruction, touching his manner of correcting his servants. For first, hee propounds a direct end of all his corrections upon them; to wit, their nurturing and reformation; then, that hee may attaine thereto, he proceedeth thus: First, he doth convince their consciences of their sinnes, then by reproofes he rebukes and checks them, and lastly, correcteth them, by laying chastisements on them. A most excellent and blessed order, in using correction for the good of the partie chastised, which ought to be followed of all Governors, Parents and Masters especially. First, they must propound a good end of their corrections, even the amendment and salvation of the partie: and that they may then proceed aright, they must first convince their conscience of the fault, then reprove, checke, and admonish them: and if that take not place, they must proceed unto meet and convenient bodily correction: all which must bee done, not for revenge, but to bring them to amendment, and to make them obedient to the will of God. Whereby we see, how far many Parents & Governours overshoot themselves, whenas they make their corrections matters of revenge and choller; wherein they seldome intend the reformation of the offender: which is a fault flat against the word of God; and therefore to bee considered of everie good Christian.

B

C

Be zealous therefore, and repent. In the former verse hee propoundeth a remedie against their *Spirituall pride*: in these words he doth directly propound a remedie against their *luke-warmnesse*. But first observe the coherence of these words with the former. Christ had said; *Whom I love, I rebuke and correct, according as their fault is*: therefore saith he to this Church, *Because I have rebuked and corrected thee by severe threatnings for thy luke-warmnesse, therefore now become zealous and amend.*

D

Here see the proper end of all reproofes and corrections: namely, the reformation and amendment of mens faults and misdemeanours whatsoever, that so they may be more carefull of their wayes, and more zealous in good duties than ever they were. Whensoever therefore wee are reproved by the word of God: or when the Lord shall visit any in body, mind, or goods, by any kinde of crosse, we must remember to take occasion thereby to repent and amend, knowing that by all these, as by so many Sermons, the Lord cals us to amendment.

Now come to the remedie of their *luke-warmnesse*; *Bee zealous.* That we may understand this Commandement, wee are to handle some points touching *zeale*. First, what is *zeale*? *Zeale* is a burning affection in regard of Christian religion, and the true worship of God. This *zeale* is compounded of two affections: of love, and anger or indignation: so

that in this Commandement we are to desire enjoyned more this Church, First, that they should love Christ and his Religion above all things. Secondly, that they should be grieved especially for this, that Christ was dishonoured, his worship prophaned, and his doctrine not imbraced, but in stead thereof false worship, and false doctrine entertained: when both these concurre, then *zeale* is in the heart. A most notable example hereof we have in Christ, Psal. 69. 9. where the Prophet *David* in his person saith, *The zeale of Gods house had eaten him up.* Whereby this much is signified, that the heat of his love for the maintaining of his Fathers glorie, had even consumed him: and that his indignation was so great, because his Fathers name was dishonoured, and his worship prophaned, that it did even eat him up. This we shall see to be true in Christ, if we read the historie of his life, Joh. 2. 17. yea, he professeth of himselfe, *that it was meat and drinke unto him to doe his Fathers will.* Joh. 4. 34. That thing he preferred before his owne life or safetie: nay, for the accomplishment thereof, hee was content to suffer the pangs of Hell. The like *zeale* was in *Elias*, when all Israel was fallen to Idolatrie; *his heart was zealous for the Lord of Hosts.* 1 King. 19. 14.

A we be out of our minds, it is unto God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of God constraineth us. So whersoever this true zeale is in any measure, it offereth violence to the heart: so as a man cannot but endeavour to doe his duties, for the love hee beareth unto Christ. *Elihu* said, *The graces of God was in his heart as new wine in a vessell, which must needs vent out,* Job 32. 18, 19. Secondly, true zeale makes a man endevour to serve and please God with all his heart, power, and strength. So good King *Josiah* hearing the words of the Law read, hee turned not slackly or negligently, *but with all his heart, and all his soule, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses: so as like him was no King* B *before, neither after him arose there any like him.* Psal. 51. *David* humbling himselfe for his sinnes, prayes for the pardon of them with such marvellous zeale as no tongue can utter: *Desiring God to remember him according to the multitude of his mercies,* often repeating the same thing in divers termes, that in some sort hee might expresse the earnest desire of his heart: And in giving God thanks for his benefits, hee putteth all the strength of his heart thereto, crying out; *My soule praise thou the Lord, and all that is within me,* Psal. 103. 1. And thus wee see what a thing it is to be zealous; whence true zeale ariseth, and what it worketh in mans heart.

- King 23. 25.

Seeing wee (as hath beene shewed) are C tainted with the sinne of *Lukewarmnesse*, and *coldnesse in Religion*; let us here learne how to redresse this vice. Wee must become zealous, having in our hearts a fervent love of true religion, and vehement indignation when the same is disgraced, and false worship takes place. Let Religion therefore take place in our hearts; and let us bee fervent and shew the same in our lives by zealous obedience. Away with all slacknesse and lukewarmnesse; it were better to bee Jewes and Turkes, and to hold no Religion, than to bee lukewarme in the true profession. And thus much for zeale.

Vse.

The second part of this remedie is, to *Repent, or amend.* This they are also enjoyned, because zeale without repentance is nothing but rashnesse. *Jehues* zeale was no true zeale, because he wanted repentance, even then when he was zealous. But wherefore was this Church enjoyned to repent? Namely, for *lukewarmnesse*: not for that shee had committed any horrible sinne, but because shee was slacke in good D duties.

Here then wee have a good lesson for the ignorant sort, that challenge Gods mercie unto themselves, because they are no notorious malefactors; as murtherers, and adulterers, they hate no man, but doe good unto all; but here they are taught to reforme this their blindnesse & ignorance: For repentance must be for want of good duties, yea for slacknesse therin: therfore

fore let no man sooth himselfe in his ignorance A with a false persuasion that all is well, if he live not in grosse sinnes. This is the enchantment of the Devill, whereby hee rocks many asleepe in their sinnes, till he carrie their soules to Hell. A good meaning will not serve the turne, God requires zeale in well-doing.

V. 20. *Behold, I stand at the doore, and knocke: If any man heare my voice, and open the doore, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

Here Christ, to keepe his Church from despaire, ministers unto them the signes and tokens of his love and favour: and before the same sets downe this note of attention, *Behold*, hereby intending to make them more attentively to marke the tokens of his love; that plainly seeing the same, they might not doubt thereof.

Hereby in generall we are taught, that if we would arme our selves against desperation and distrust in any distresse, we must both often and seriously consider, and marke the tokens of Gods love unto us, and that will fortifie our faith. Read Psal. 23. In everie verse save the last, he sets downe tokens of Gods love and favour towards him; and then in the last concludeth thus; *Without doubt, kindnesse and mercie shall follow me all the dayes of my life, and I shall remaine a long season in the house of the Lord.* Our hearts are naturally filled with doubting, which will bewray it selfe in any distresse. But to prevent and cut off all hurt that may come thereby, let us marke the good dealing of our God towards us, and observe the tokens of his love and mercie in his ordinarie providence: and these will notably strengthen us against distrust. And surely, no person is so full of despaire, but if hee could looke backe into the mercies of God, from the beginning of his dayes, and lay them to his heart, they would minister comfort unto him, in regard of his love and favour at that instant.

More particularly; Christ ministring comfort unto this Church, doth expresse his meaning by a borrowed speech, comparing everie man unto an house, his heart unto a doore, whereby entrance is made, and himselfe unto a guest or stranger, desiring to come and enter in, not so much to finde courtesie, as to shew favour and kindnesse.

In the words of this verse, there bee two signes of his love set downe. First, an heartie desire of their conversion, which he earnestly seeketh: Secondly, a promise of mutuall fellowship, after their conversion. The first in these words; *Behold, I stand at the doore and knocke.* In this desire Christ is possessed with two things; First, that this Church (if we regard the greatest part thereof) had no true fellowship with Christ, nor Christ with them; for he stands at the doore of their hearts, which were closed up against him. This may seem strange, but the case is evident: for though they had in them many good things, as knowledge of Gods will, and did professe the Gospell, and were partakers of the signes and seales of the Covenant of grace; yet they are tainted with this notorious sinne of *lukewarmnesse*, which closed up the doore of their hearts against Christ, and barred him out.

Here then we are carefully to observe, that a man may have in him many good things, and B yet by living in one sinne, be quite cut off from all true fellowship with Christ. *Judas* had many excellent gifts, he forsooke all and followed Christ, hee preached the Gospell, and administred the Sacraments; and yet by covetousnesse, the doore of his heart was quite barred against Christ. So *Herod* reverenced *John*, and heard him gladly, and did many things at his instruction, Mark. 6. 20. yet by the sinne of incest, his heart was so closed, that he had no fellowship with Christ. And so it is with us: It is good that wee know the will of God, approve the same, and professe the Gospell and also receive the seales of the Covenant: but yet for all these, our case may be such, as wee shall have no true fellowship with Christ. For if wee nourish, C though but one sinne, and live therein, that will make a separation betwixt Christ and us, bee the sinne what it will; as covetousnesse, adulterie, profanenesse, or such like. Hereby then, all that desire to have true fellowship with Christ, are to bee warned to purge their lives from all sinne, so as their hearts bee not tainted with nourishing any one sinne; for even one sinne, whatsoever it bee, is a strong barre, that will keepe Christ from comming into us.

Secondly, whereas he saith, *I have stood at the doore*: (for so the words are.) Here he speaketh to this Church, as he used to speake by his old Prophets. As by *Jeremie*, *I have spoken unto you all my Prophets, rising early everie day, and* D *sending them.* And by *Esay*, *I have spread out mine hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good; even after their owne imaginations.* So here, *I have stood at the doore*: that is, long, even till night, as the word *stipping* importeth.

Jeremie 7. 25. & 25. 3.

Is. 65. 2.

Hereby Christ would signifie his great patience, in waiting for the conversion of this people of *Laodicea*. In justice he might long agone have cast them into the pit of destruction for their sinnes, and yet in mercie hee waiteth for their conversion; and complaines that he hath waited long. Here then wee have just occasion to take a view of Gods patience in waiting for the conversion of a sinner. And that which hee saith to this Church, he may as justly say unto

us; for he hath stood verie long at our doores, even 36. yeeres and upward, and yet still continueth knocking, so as he may justly complaine of his long waiting. Let us then here learne to know the day of our visitation, which is then to any people, when Christ stands at their doores and knocks, and unto us this day is present. Wee have the Ministerie of the Gospell; and therefore we must be persuaded, that this is the time of our visitation, and hereupon learne the dutie which Christ teacheth the Jewes: namely, *acknowledge the day of our visitation*; which if we doe not, wee must looke for like vengeance which fell upon the Jewes, because they regarded not when God sent his owne Sonne from his bosome, to knocke at the doore of their hearts.

And knocke. Here is a further signification of his desire of their conversion: wherein wee may behold his grace and unspeakable mercie towards this Church, and in them towards all other his children. This Church hath bard out Christ by their sins; and yet hee pursues them, hee *knocks*, hee useth meanes to enter for their good, and vouchsafes them mercie, even then when they refuse it. Thus when *Adam* had sinned, and fled, and hid himselfe, did the Lord seeke in the garden, and make with him the covenant of grace. And therefore it is truly said in *Esay*, *The Lord is found of them that never sought him.* Luk. 15. 4, 5. *Christ fetcheth the lost sheepe that was gone astray.* All which shew and set out unto us, the unspeakable greatnesse of Gods mercie in Christ, unto miserable man, who then shewes mercie unto him, when hee never seeketh it. This his mercie is verified in all Churches, and unto us; Which must be an occasion to enlarge and stirre up our hearts, to blesse the name of Christ for this unspeakable mercie, in vouchsafing us favour when we never sought it, but refused it.

Esa.65.1.

Quest. How doth Christ knocke?

Answ. The words going before, whereto these have reference, give light unto the question. Before Christ had threatned this Church, even to *spue her out of his mouth for her lukewarmnesse*; and after he counselleth her to *buy of him gold, and other remedies.* Now, upon this greevous threatning, the Church might despaire of his mercie: But Christ to comfort her, tels her here, that these reproofes and rebukes were but knockings at the doores of our hearts, to make them open: For then Christ knocketh at the hearts of any people, when he vouchsafes them meanes to see their sinnes, and threatens them for the same; and withall gives them counsell, whereby they may escape the fearefull punishments thereby deserved.

Here then note the state of any people that have the Ministerie of the Gospell vouchsafed unto them; they have Christ among them, standing at the doore of their hearts, and knocking to come in, by exhortations, admonitions, threatnings, and by promises, which is a great and endlesse mercie.

Vse.

First, seeing we have Christ knocking at our doores, there ought not to bee in us such dulnesse and deadnesse of heart, in hearing him knocke. If a man of any account come and knocke at the doore of our house; oh what a stir will wemake to let him in quickly? What a shame then is it, that wee should bee deadhearted, when Christ Jesus the King of Heaven knocks at the doores of our hearts? Secondly, this must admonish us with all speed to turne unto God by true repentance; for we know not how long hee will continue knocking; and if we doe not heare, and turne before he withdraw himselfe from us, we perish eternally. For if we refuse when he knocketh at the doore of our hearts, hee will refuse when wee knocke at the doore of his mercie, Prov. 1. 25, 26. Matth. 25. 11, 12.

Note further, this knocking is not ordinarie, but is joyned with crying: for he saith, *If hee heare my voice:* so that hee both knocks and cries. It is then the knocking of one that would enter: we therefore ought answerably, with serious regard to receive the threatnings of the Law, and the promises of grace, and so bee as earnest in receiving and embracing him, as he is in knocking to come into us.

The second token of Christs love, is a gracious promise of fellowship with them, in these words: *If any man heare my voice, and open the doore, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* These words have beene much abused, and therefore I will stand to set downe the true use and meaning of the same. Marke, the forme of speech is such, as gives unto a mans will and soule, an action in his conversion, whereby he comes to Christ, and receives Christ.

This may seeme strange, but it is for just cause used by the holy Ghost: for in the conversion of a sinner, there bee three workes, the holy Ghost, the Word, and mans will. The holy Ghost is the principall Agent inlightening the minde with true knowledge, softning the heart, and changing the will from evill to good. The Word is the instrument of the holy Ghost; for now he worketh not by revelation, or speciall instinct, but ordinarily in & by the Word, when a man is reading, hearing, or meditating, either publikely or privatly: for the Word preached is the power of God to mans salvation from faith to faith. Thirdly, mans will, though by nature it be evill and dead unto grace, yet being renued by the holy Ghost, in the first act of conversion moveth and striveth to be turned. It is not like a peece of wax onely passive, which without any action receiveth impression. But as fire, so soone as it is fire doth burne, and so soone as it burneth it is fire: so the will, though by nature it move not, yet being renewed by grace it moveth, and so soone as it moveth, it is renued. And hereupon it is, that the holy Ghost ascribeth action unto a sinner

sinner that is to bee converted: which argueth not, that by themselves men can have a will to bee converted, but that being renewed, they may will their conversion. And for this cause is the Gospell preached in these termes, *Repent and beleeve:* not to shew that man by nature can repent or beleeve; but that God in mans conversion, doth give him grace to will and desire the same.

Hence then it followes, that this Text hath been divers wayes abused: First, by the Papists, who hence would gather *free will of conversion in a sinner by nature.* True it is, a man hath free will in his conversion; yet not by nature, but by grace, neither can any more bee gathered hence; for here it is only said, *If any man heare, and open when I knocke.* Nay, hence we may rather gather, that a man by nature cannot heare, nor open, because the counsell is given to such as are poore, and blinde, and naked by nature.

Secondly, they also abuse this Text, that hereby would prove a *flexible free will by grace* to be in man, which is this; Sundrie men thinke, that after the fall of *Adam*, all being wrapt up in sinne, God gave a generall grace, whereby a man might will, and receive that which was good; and this grace though it dispose the will in some part to that which is good, yet it takes not the corruption away, but that remaines still; whereupon if he will, he may receive Christ by that generall grace: or if he will not, he may refuse Christ by his naturall corruption, which yet remaineth in him. It is said, this may be gathered from this Text: But the truth is, here is no foundation for *flexible free will:* all that can here be gathered is, that man hath free will in his conversion, yet not by a generall, but by Gods speciall grace. Nay, Christs ministerie serves for this end, that those which before could not turne of themselves, might by grace bee converted. This flexible grace is against Gods word; Christ saith, *Everie one that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, commeth unto me:* He saith not, may come if he will, but peremptorily *commeth:* For mans will cannot dispose and overrule the work of God; but the work of God overrules the will of man: though man be unwilling, by reason, when God calleth effectually, he cannot but come: For the creature cannot reject or resist the will and calling of his Creator.

Joh.6.45.

If any man open unto mee, I will come, &c. The proper intent of Christ in this conditionall promise, is to provoke them that bee dull and heavie, to listen diligently to Christs words, and to receive the doctrine of salvation from him gladly.

In the example of this Church we are taught our dutie. Seeing Christ in the ministerie of his word, knocks both by threatnings, by promises, and good counsell: therfore wee must all of us listen unto the words of Christ, and open the doores of our hearts, and receive him into the same. But alas, the practice of the world is farre otherwise: men are christian *Nabals* unto Christ, who though he come friendly, yet they repell him, making no account of such a guest. Nay, we are *Bethlemites*, such have no roome for Christ in the Inne of our hearts: Christ will needs lodge with us, hee must lie among the beasts in the filthy stable. Nay, many send him out of their gates with the Jewes, and crucifie him with their sinnes. But let us abandon this greevous sinne, for it is the right way to plunge our soules into the pit of destruction.

Quest. How must a man open his heart to receive Christ? *Answ.* By doing two things: First, he must labour to see his owne vilenesse; that hee is unworthy to receive so blessed a Guest; then hee must humble himselfe, and acknowledge that his unworthinesse. Even as the Ruler did when he said unto Christ, *Lord, I am not worthy thou shouldst come under my roofe.* This humiliation is the beginning of grace. This done, hee must by true faith lay hold on Christ, that is, believe that Christs death and passion is for the pardon of his sinnes, and for the salvation of his soule: For, as Christ dwelt in mens hearts by faith, so by faith he must bee received into their hearts. Here some will say, If this be to receive Christ, then all is well. But take heed thou deceive not thy selfe; with a vaine imagination of thine owne braine, instead of faith. Looke therefore that thy faith be true and sound: if it be true faith, it will worke by love, even a true love of Christ and his members, which will appeare by keeping his Commandements, Joh. 14. 23.

Matth. 8. 8.

I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with mee. Here is the thing promised; to wit, mutuall communion and fellowship with Christ. This is the principall token of Christs love, being indeed the verie ground of all true happinesse, joy, and comfort, and therefore it is added to move them to *open* unto Christ. This societie is here propounded in two parts. First, the sinner being converted makes a feast unto Christ, *I will come in unto him, and sup with him.* Secondly, Christ makes a feast unto him, *And hee shall sup with me.* And in these two consists the summe of *Salomons* Song of songs; where Christ entertaineth the Church, and the Church againe feasts Christ.

For the first, some may aske, how can a poore sinner make a feast for Christ? *Ans.* Cant. 4. 16. The Church, or everie Christians soule, calleth Christ unto a feast, *in his Garden to eat his pleasant things.* This feast consisteth of these things. First, of the fruits of true repentance: Psalm. 51. 17. *A broken and contrite heart*, is a daintie dish acceptable *unto God.* Secondly, of an heart beleeving the word and promises of God: for without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6. Thirdly, the penitent sinner must *give up himselfe in soule and bodie, a holy and acceptable sacrifice unto God*, by serving God faithfully, not only in the duties of pietie, but also in the faithfull performance of

Rom. 12. 2.

the duties of his particular calling: theſe bee the delightfull dithes wherewith Chriſt is fed.

The ſecond feaſt is made by Chriſt, *and hee ſhall ſup with mee.* Chriſt comes not to be entertained only, but to entertaine: And the feaſt which he makes, is his owne bodie and bloud: *For his fleſh is meat indeed, and his body is drink indeed.* The veſſels whereon theſe meats are carried, are the *Word* and *Sacraments.* And all that bee his welcome guests, are true penitent ſinners, which have hungring and thirſting hearts after his bodie and bloud, Luk. 1. 52. And from this feaſt ariſe theſe bleſſings; *Righteouſneſſe, peace of conſcience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

Joh. 6. 55.

Rom. 14. 17.

Uſ. Seeing this fellowſhip with Chriſt is here promiſed to thoſe, *that open and receive him into their hearts:* Firſt, hereby wee are taught to renounce all earthly & carnall pleaſures, and not to addict our ſelves to drinking and quaffing, or ſumptuous fare; for here is a better feaſt ſet before us, whereupon wee muſt ſet our hearts, turning out eyes from all worldly pleaſures. We know by experience how friends entertaine each other; but wee muſt labour to know how to entertaine Chriſt, and to feaſt him with his owne graces, that he may ſup with us, and we with him, and ſo have true fellowſhip with him.

Againe, by this wee may ſee a notable abuſe of many that come to the Lords Table: for here wee ſee is required an interchange of feaſting betweene Chriſt and a Chriſtian; but many there be that will come to the Lords Table, and feaſt with *Chriſt*, that will never feaſt *Chriſt* againe: And yet we ought to be as careſull to feaſt him, as to feaſt with him. It is a ſhame to ſup often with *Chriſt*, and yet like ungratefull *Nabals*, never to have one good diſh of grace and holy obedience to ſet before him, wherewith indeed wee ſhould feaſt him daily. Others will ſeeme to give him good entertainment, for that day whereon they feaſt with *Chriſt*: but ſoone after they give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drinke, by their daily ſinnes.

A

B

C

V. 21. *To him that overcommeth, will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and ſit with my Father in his throne.*

V. 22. *Let him that hath an eare, heare what the ſpirit ſaith unto the Churches.*

Here is the concluſion of this Epiſtle, and it hath two parts. A promiſe, verſ. 21. and a commandement, verſ. 22. In the promiſe note two things. Firſt, to whom it is made, *To him that overcommeth.* Hereof we have ſpoken. Secondly, the thing promiſed; that is, fellowſhip with *Chriſt* in glorie: *I will grant to ſit, &c.* whereby is not meant equalitie of glorie and honour; for that is not poſſible for any creature to receive; but a participation only of ſome part of his glorie, ſo much as ſhall ſuffice for his perfect happineſſe. And becauſe it might bee thought no great matter, therefore it is illuſtrated by a compariſon, *as I overcame, and ſit with my Father in his throne.* As if he ſhould ſay; I will advance them that overcome their ſpiritual enemies, into the participation of my glorie, even as my Father (when I had overcome) advanced me into the fellowſhip of his glory. Now *Chriſt* as he is Mediator, is inferiour to his Father, and in that regard is not advanced to equall glorie with his Father, though he ſit with him: So the members of *Chriſt*, being inferiour unto him, may ſit with him in his throne, though their glorie be unequall. Theſe things for ſubſtance have beene handled, chap. 2. verſ. 25, 28.

The ſecond part of this concluſion, *Let him that hath an eare, heare, &c.* hath alſo beene handled before.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life: And hee that winneth ſoules, is wiſe, Prov. 11. 30.

FINIS.

THE COMBAT BETWEENE Chriſt and the Devill diſplayed:

OR,

A COMMENTARIE UPON The Temptations of CHRIST.

Preached in CAMBRIDGE by that reverend and judicious Divine, M. WILLIAM PERKINS.

The third Edition much enlarged by a more perfect copie, at the requeſt of M. *Perkins* Exequutors, by *Thomas Pierſon*, Preacher of GODS Word.

Hereunto is prefixed an Analyſis or generall view of this Combat.

ROM. 16. 20.
The God of peace ſhall tread Satan under your feet ſhortly.

LUK. 22. 28, 29.
You are they which have continued with me in my temptations: Therefore I appoint unto you a kingdome, even as my Father hath appointed unto me.

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